

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
--------------------------	---------------	------	-------------

001. fax	Fax re: list of names (partial) (1 page)	01/26/2000	P6/b(6)
----------	--	------------	---------

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Andrew Rotherham (Education)
OA/Box Number: 21294

FOLDER TITLE:

Failing Schools/ Turnaround

2011-0103-S

rc155

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

LOW-PERFORMING

Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

A Guide for State and Local Leaders

I won't mislead you about the challenge we face: it takes hard work and a sustained commitment to turn around failing schools. The temptation is to look for a short-cut, a faster way to claim victory in the struggle to make every public school a good school. The real answer to the problem of failing public schools is not to abandon them, but to pursue a proven reform agenda, provide the resources necessary to fix those schools, and help provide a good education to all students.

-Secretary Riley, September 1999

I want to emphasize something that I think is very important. I believe that it is not enough to say, no social promotion, strict accountability, and even summer school and after-school programs for kids, unless there is a strategy to turn around low-performing schools. There is a lot of evidence that low-performing schools can be turned around.

-President Clinton, September 1999

November 1999

November 1999

Dear Colleague:

Last year, in response to a directive from President Clinton, the U.S. Department of Education released *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders*. The publication spoke to leaders and educators committed to ensuring that *all* students achieve to high standards and highlighted efforts across the nation to help schools focus on high standards of teaching and learning and implement strategies to raise student achievement.

I am encouraged by the fact that everywhere I go, governors, mayors, superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents are focused on the same basic strategies for improving our schools by emphasizing: high standards for all students, mastering the basics in the early years, smaller class sizes, encouraging parental involvement, improving teacher quality, expanding after-school and summer learning opportunities, increasing accountability for student performance, and modernizing our schools.

The strategies are beginning to pay off. The latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report gains in math and reading achievement, including progress for low-achieving students and for students in our highest-poverty schools. For example, the 1998 NAEP reading assessment showed substantial gains for low-achieving students, suggesting that it was improvement among these students that raised the national average of all fourth graders. Similarly, high-poverty schools have registered the largest gains in NAEP math scores since 1992. Results from the States show similar positive trends. The National Education Goals Panel reports that between 1990 and 1996, 27 States significantly increased the percentage of 8th graders scoring at either the proficient or the advanced level on the NAEP math test.

Yet, despite these improvements in achievement, we know that there are still too many schools that are failing to provide a high quality education to our children. In some schools, expectations of students are low, teachers and parents are frustrated, and academic performance is poor. Many problems -- poverty, limited resources, family stress, poor teacher training, unsafe learning environments, and other factors -- contribute to frustration on the part of teachers, disillusionment on the part of communities, and discouragingly low levels of student achievement in such schools.

These problems are serious and highlight the complexity of the challenges facing schools. But they cannot thwart our efforts to improve our schools. Fortunately, we know a great deal and continue to learn more about how to fix persistently low-performing schools. Raising standards, better teachers, smaller class sizes, increased accountability, and greater parental involvement can turn around the worst of schools. A key part of improving failing schools is making sure that every student gets the extra help he or she needs to get back on track academically.

I am re-releasing this updated guide in 1999 in order to share with you some of the promising trends and examples of states and districts that are intervening in and improving persistently low-performing schools. This guide also highlights how the U.S. Department of Education is supporting efforts to help turn around low-performing schools with programs — such as the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration, Reading Excellence Act, Class Size Reduction and Teacher Quality Initiative, GEAR UP, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers — designed to improve teaching and learning, particularly in our nation's most disadvantaged schools.

The answer to the problem of failing schools is not to abandon them, but to pursue a proven reform agenda, provide the resources necessary for improvement, and help provide a world class education to all students. From California to New York, and Chicago to Boston, public leaders are raising their expectations for students and schools, supporting system-wide reforms that work, and demanding school and student accountability for performance. Across the nation, there are examples of schools that, with a bold set of strategies, are changing what happens between teachers and students in the classroom, focusing on learning, and improving student achievement.

While the task of fixing failing schools is not easy, the alternative is unacceptable. As we enter a new millennium, it is time to renew our commitment to future generations — to raise our expectations for all children, to refuse to accept failure, and to work together to strengthen our schools so that every child can strive toward high levels of achievement and learning.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

Executive Summary

As we approach the 21st century, American public education is rising to meet a new challenge — high expectations and achievement for *all* students in *every* school. Across the nation, states and school districts are raising academic standards and making efforts to align curriculum, assessments, teacher training, and instruction with challenging standards. Educators are more focused than ever on helping students master the basics by creating smaller class sizes, improving teacher quality, encouraging parent involvement, expanding after-school and summer learning opportunities, increasing accountability for student performance, and modernizing our schools. The U.S. Department of Education is supporting these efforts with programs and resources to help improve teaching and learning, particularly in our most disadvantaged schools.

There are many reasons to be proud of these efforts. The latest results from the ongoing National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported solid gains in math and reading achievement, including substantial improvement for low-achieving students and for those in the highest-poverty schools. For example, the 1998 NAEP reading assessment showed substantial gains for low-achieving students (those scoring in the bottom 10 percent and bottom 25 percent), suggesting that improvement among these students raised the national average of all fourth graders. Similarly, high-poverty schools have registered the greatest gains in NAEP math scores since 1992.

The National Education Goals Panel reports that between 1990 and 1996, 27 states significantly increased the percentage of 8th graders scoring at either the *proficient* or the *advanced* level on the NAEP math test. North Carolina, for example, more than doubled the percentage of its 8th graders scoring at the *proficient* or *advanced* levels on the NAEP math test. Connecticut registered the largest numerical gain of 10 points and the highest overall 4th grade score of 232 on the 1998 NAEP reading test.

Despite this progress, the data also reveal that there is still much work to be done. Year after year, NAEP results show that the academic performance of students in our nation's highest-poverty schools is several grade levels behind that of students in low-poverty schools. The children in our nation's poorest communities are at greatest risk of being left behind in an economy driven by expanded information, increased knowledge, and higher skills. Overcrowded classes, crumbling school

Fixing Low-Performing Schools: Pathways to Progress

- ✓Set high expectations for students.
- ✓Hold schools accountable for performance.
- ✓Provide a safe learning environment.
- ✓Create leaders at school and district levels.
- ✓Let leaders lead.
- ✓Recruit and retain the best teachers.
- ✓Train teachers in instruction and curriculum.
- ✓Support students with extra help and time.
- ✓Involve the community in schooling.
- ✓Create smaller schools.
- ✓Close or reconstitute bad schools.

-Adapted from *Education Week*, January 8, 1998

buildings, and unqualified teachers are all too common in high-poverty schools, where students have the most pressing educational needs. In some of these schools, we know that teachers sometimes have low expectations of students and feel that they can do little to improve student performance. Often the environment in these schools is not conducive to learning — teachers are burnt out, school safety is a problem, and students and the community are disengaged. Many failing schools are located in impoverished communities where family distress, crime, and violence are prevalent. Limited financial, human, and program resources can leave these schools without the support they need to deliver high-quality instruction.

Turning around low-performing schools is not easy — but it can be done. Across the U.S. there are examples of high-poverty, low-achieving schools, serving diverse communities and facing difficult obstacles, that have turned around and raised student performance:

- ▶ A few years ago, Harriet Tubman Elementary School in New York City, where 99 percent of students come from low-income families, was one of the lowest-performing schools in the city. After being assigned to the Chancellor's District — a special school district created for the lowest-performing schools — school leaders, parents, and teachers devised a plan for comprehensive change. The school adopted a comprehensive reform program including an intensive reading program. By 1997-98, it had been removed from the state's list of low-performing schools and reading scores had improved; the percentage of students performing at or above grade level on the citywide assessment rose from 30 percent (in 1996) to 46 percent.
- ▶ Hawthorne Elementary School in Texas is a high-poverty school where 96 percent of students qualify for free lunch and 28 percent of students have limited English language skills. In 1992-93, Hawthorne implemented a rigorous curriculum to challenge students in the early grades. In 1994, only 24 percent of students in the school passed all portions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). In 1998, almost 63 percent of students passed the TAAS, with the largest gains made by African American students.
- ▶ Despite the many well-documented cases of failing schools, there is evidence that high-poverty schools can be high-performing schools. Recent reports by the Education Trust, the University of Texas at Austin and others suggest that high-poverty schools are not doomed to failure. In a survey of more than 1000 top-scoring high-poverty schools with at least a 50 percent poverty rate, the Education Trust found that: 80 percent reported using standards to design instruction, assess student work and evaluate teachers; 78 percent provided extended learning time for students, particularly in reading and math; 80 percent had systematic ways to identify and intervene early for at-risk students; and a majority of schools were subject to accountability for performance. These high-performing, high-poverty schools also devoted a large proportion of funds to professional development focused on changing instructional practice and emphasized activities to encourage the involvement of parents in reviewing students' work.

Turning around low-performing schools involves making strategic decisions about instructional practices and focusing all school staff on aligning every aspect of school operations, from professional development to parent and community involvement, in order to support and sustain efforts to improve student achievement. However, low-performing schools rarely have the capacity to make these kinds of changes on their own. While much of what it takes to turn around a low-performing school can occur only within the school itself and with the cooperation and commitment of school staff, the federal government, states, and school districts must provide the critical impetus and support for the process of change.

This guide describes some of the strategies that states and districts are pursuing to help turn around low-performing schools. It also suggests concrete actions that state, district, and school leaders, as well as parents and community members, can take. The guide concludes with an inventory of federal resources that can support efforts to turn around low-performing schools.

Raising the Stakes: Setting High Standards for Performance

By setting high academic standards, holding all schools accountable for performance, and identifying schools that do not meet those standards, states and districts are taking important steps to raise expectations for all students. Across the nation, states and districts are raising the stakes by establishing procedures and standards to define expectations for students, identify poor performance, and hold schools accountable for student achievement. Today, nearly all States have standards in place. Thirty-six states produce "report cards" on the performance of schools.

States and districts also are sending strong signals to students about their own accountability for academic performance. Ten states and many districts, including Chicago, New York, and Boston, have committed to eliminating social promotion — the automatic passing of students from grade to grade regardless of whether they have mastered necessary skills. As part of setting explicit policies about student promotion, these states and districts are taking responsibility for making sure that students receive the help they need to meet academic requirements rather than be left back to repeat a grade.

Holding schools and students more accountable for performance is forcing states and districts to face the issue of low-performing schools head-on. Once these schools have been identified, how can states and districts help them do what it takes to improve student achievement?

Focus on Learning: Promising Strategies for Improving Student Achievement

The bottom line is for low-performing schools to make changes that will allow them to deliver high-quality curriculum and instruction so that all children reach challenging academic standards. This may seem straightforward, but it is not easy — for any school. Effective schools are places where there is a coherent program for teaching and learning and where all key

elements in the school are aligned with that focus. In the case of low-performing schools, states and districts can provide assistance by:

- ▶ **Helping schools gain control of the learning environment.** This is a prerequisite to focusing on learning. Schools cannot effectively implement instructional changes if they do not first address student discipline, safety, and high absenteeism. Districts can help school leaders by instituting a "zero tolerance" policy for violence and drugs and by consistently and fairly enforcing such policies. School uniforms and effective classroom management strategies also can help create an environment conducive to learning. Gaining control of the school environment means more than just implementing get-tough discipline policies; it also involves showing respect for students and giving them responsibilities, as members of the school community, for maintaining a safe environment for learning.
- ▶ **Concentrating resources and efforts on providing students with challenging curriculum and high-quality instruction.** If students are to be held accountable for reaching high standards of performance, then they must be offered the kinds of curriculum and instruction that will help them meet that challenge. Districts must demand that all schools offer challenging coursework to all students. To help ensure that every student reaches high standards, states and districts can use resources to increase instructional time, extend the school day or the school year, and offer after-school assistance to students who need it.
- ▶ **Providing services so that young children come to school ready to learn.** A child's early environment is critical to intellectual development and school success. In recognition of this fact, states and school districts can help ensure that more children benefit from early childhood services. In addition to providing pre-kindergarten for children, many local education agencies are partnering with community organizations to implement family literacy programs that support early childhood education, school readiness, and parent involvement in learning activities.
- ▶ **Creating a professional development program aligned with the content of curriculum and focused on improving instruction.** Professional development is an often neglected element of the academic program in low-performing schools. To be effective, professional development activities must center on the classroom. Community School District #2 in New York City, for example, concentrates its professional development resources and time on engaging teachers in learning about the materials they teach and skills they need to improve classroom instruction. The district works to identify teachers that need assistance and helps to counsel teachers out of the profession if they do not improve.

- ▶ **Helping schools implement comprehensive school reform programs.** Creating coherent educational programs in low-performing schools usually requires changes in all aspects of a school, including its curriculum and academic standards, school governance, community-school relationships, staff development, technology, parent involvement, and services to meet children's needs. There are a number of research-based models and designs available to help schools address these multiple aspects of school effectiveness.

Building School Capacity: Systemic Support for the Process of Change

Research tells us that high-performing schools align curriculum, classroom practices, and professional development with high academic standards for all students. These schools also build a sense of teamwork among staff, work in partnership with parents and the community, and use performance data to inform choices and create a cycle of continuous improvement.

District support for these practices is key for building the capacity of schools to improve student achievement. Yet, low-performing schools are sometimes embedded in troubled school systems that cannot support the school improvement process. Individual school efforts can be thwarted by districts that fail to provide leadership and that lack the focus and long-term commitment necessary for turning around low-performing schools.

Therefore, part of the process of building the capacity of low-performing schools involves setting priorities on the district level, such as:

- ▶ **Ensuring strong leadership at the school.** Districts must recruit principals who will serve as instructional leaders.
- ▶ **Promoting policies that encourage teacher commitment to reform.** Districts should hire teachers enthusiastic about change and willing to work in low-performing schools. Districts also can be flexible, allowing teachers the chance to leave a school if they do not want to participate in the school reform process. Teacher and staff commitment to improving schools can be fostered by efforts to create smaller schools, which generally have better communication and collaboration among staff — two ingredients that are essential for creating a shared purpose and collective responsibility for school improvement.
- ▶ **Using resources strategically.** Schools must make tough choices about the ways they allocate their resources if they are to focus on improving teaching and learning. Low-performing schools and school districts often have multiple competing priorities. While districts and schools may implement separate programs intended to address specific needs, the programs can be unfocused, disjointed, or work at cross-purposes. Pieced together, these multiple efforts often do not add up to a coherent whole. Districts must help schools coordinate and concentrate their resources on classroom instruction.

- ▶ **Helping schools use performance data to drive improvement.** Using data is important for identifying patterns of failure, diagnosing problems, and matching concrete solutions to educational needs. More and more, states and districts are analyzing and interpreting test scores and other student and school data to help identify causes for low performance, develop appropriate improvement strategies, and monitor progress as a strategy for continuous improvement.
- ▶ **Working in partnership with the community.** Schools cannot do their jobs alone. Low-performing schools, in particular, need the assistance of community stakeholders to raise student performance. Parent involvement is essential. Local businesses, colleges, and universities can be invaluable sources of support. Teacher unions can be cooperative allies in the process of change if they are invited to work in partnership to improve low-performing schools.
- ▶ **Providing incentives for change and support for innovation.** Districts can help support school-level change by following the lessons of high-performance organizations. In many states, local educators, parents, community members, and school board members can create public charter schools that operate under performance contracts that provide greater autonomy along with accountability for results. Public school choice and open enrollment policies also can provide incentives for school improvement. Districts also can provide incentives for school improvement by rewarding success.

Intervening in Chronically Low-Performing Schools

Because low-performing schools often have little capacity to make major reforms demanded by accountability policies, many states and districts are providing systemwide support for school improvement. Twenty-three states have policies for intervening and mandating major changes in chronically low-performing schools — from helping “redesign” schools to, as a last resort, reconstituting failing schools.

In many cases, intervention has been a collaborative experience. For example, New York State has developed a process to help redesign low-performing schools. Teams of teachers, board of education members, union representatives, parents, and curriculum experts led by district superintendents conduct four-day visits to low-performing schools to examine all aspects of school operations. Based on the recommendations of review teams, schools and districts develop corrective action plans. In New York City, the process includes assigning low-performing schools to the “Chancellor’s District.” A school assigned to the special district receives extra resources and technical assistance until the district determines that the school has the capacity and commitment to support its redesign plan.

Districts such as Chicago and San Francisco have employed reconstitution measures in attempting to turn around chronically low-performing schools. While the strategy encompasses a number of practices, it generally represents the extreme along a continuum of intervention strategies. In its basic form, reconstitution involves closing a school and reopening it with new school leaders and usually with new teachers and staff. Reconstitution policies are controversial and there is no conclusive data about whether reconstitution is an effective strategy for school improvement. Some believe that the threat of reconstitution has been an important force for leveraging change in chronically low-performing schools.

Regardless of the individual policy, state and district intervention in low-performing schools cannot succeed without the cooperation and commitment of those who actually work in the school. Turning around low-performing schools is difficult work. It requires high expectations, a focus on learning, a commitment to students, strong leadership, trust among school staff, and collective responsibility for student achievement. States and districts cannot impart these characteristics on schools, but they do have a critical leadership role in setting the context for change and raising the capacity of schools to acquire these attributes.

U.S. Department of Education Support

President Clinton and the U.S. Department of Education are committed to providing the support needed to help turn around low-performing schools. In order to help states, districts, and schools, the Department has developed programs and proposals designed to support the strategies discussed above. In particular, the Department's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization proposal -- the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 -- reflects what we know about the most promising strategies for raising student achievement. For example:

- ▶ School accountability measures in Title I and the Education Accountability Act would continue to help states develop rigorous systems for holding schools responsible for making continuous and substantial gains in student performance; publicly report on school performance; and identify and intervene in low-performing schools. However, the recent National Assessment of Title I indicates that states have limited capacity to deal with the number of schools that need assistance. In 1998, only eight states reported that school support teams have been able to serve the majority of schools identified as in need of improvement. For this reason, the Administration's proposal for reauthorizing Title I would require States to set aside 2.5 percent of their Title I allocation to strengthen state and local capacity to turn around low-performing schools.

- ▶ **The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration** program is now providing \$145 million per year to more than 1600 schools to help create coherent educational programs in high-poverty schools that address all aspects of school operations, including curriculum and academic standards, school governance, community-school relationships, staff development, technology, parent involvement, and services to meet children's needs. The Department's proposal would reauthorize the Title I demonstration authority and the Fund for the Improvement of Education to provide stable support for continuing reforms, enable the program to be fully implemented, and allow for the evaluation of its effect on student achievement.
- ▶ Programs such as **Even Start** are already supporting early childhood education, school readiness, and parent involvement in learning with 750 Even Start projects throughout the U.S., serving over 34,000 families. Enacted in 1998, the **Reading Excellence Act** is providing \$260 million in assistance to help 500,000 children learn to read using scientifically-based reading strategies. The reauthorization proposal continues support for the Department's goal of helping all student read well and independently by the end of the third grade.
- ▶ **The Class Size Reduction and Teacher Quality Initiative** aims to help schools improve student learning by hiring 30,000 highly qualified teachers so that children — especially those in the early elementary grades — can attend smaller classes. School districts are currently receiving \$1.2 billion in funds that is enabling them to recruit, hire, and train teachers for the 1999-2000 school year.
- ▶ The ESEA reauthorization proposal includes the **Teaching to High Standards Initiative** which would help educators apply high standards to improve learning in American classrooms. The initiative would support state and local efforts to: align curricula and assessments with challenging state and local content standards, provide teachers with sustained and intensive high-quality professional development in core academic content areas, support new teachers during their first three years in the classroom, and improve teacher quality and help ensure that all teachers are proficient in relevant content knowledge and teaching skills.
- ▶ **The 21st Century Community Learning Centers** program is funding school-community partnerships to expand after-school and extended learning programs for school-age children. In three years' time, the program has expanded from a \$1 million demonstration program in fiscal year 1997 to a \$200 million program that will serve about 400,000 children and over 200,000 adults this year in 1999.

- ▶ Under the new **GEAR UP** program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) the Department is spending \$120 million to support early college awareness activities by helping inform students and parents about college options and financial aid, promoting rigorous academic coursework, and providing comprehensive services—including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other activities such as after-school programs, and summer academic and enrichment programs.
- ▶ Public school choice and open enrollment policies are also providing incentives for school improvement through the **Public Charter Schools and Magnet Schools** programs. To help ensure that public school choice contributes to excellence and equity for all children, **OPTIONS: The Opportunities To Improve Our Nation's Schools** program would encourage the development of high-quality public school choice across the nation. The program would promote choices that would benefit all students by reducing barriers to effective choice, creating new diverse learning environments, and helping decrease the isolation of students by racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- ▶ Turning around low-performing schools also requires attention to the physical conditions of our nation's schools. According to recent figures, a record 52.7 million children are enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, and this number will climb to 54.3 million by 2008. The average public school in America is 42 years old. The Administration's **School Modernization** proposal would help state and local governments repair or replace 6,000 overcrowded, out-of-date, and unsafe schools with Federal tax credits to pay the interest on nearly \$25 billion in bonds.

As we face a new century, it is time for America to renew its commitment to future generations. There is a role for each and every member of the school community in raising our expectations for all students, providing a safe learning environment, aligning educational resources and instruction with high academic standards, and choosing long-term improvement strategies. This guide provides examples of promising state, district, and school practices for helping children to learn, and suggests concrete steps that state and local policy makers, school leaders, parents, and community stakeholders can take to fix low-performing schools. Through these efforts, we can work together to make all schools places where students strive toward high levels of learning and achievement.

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO: L. UCELLI^W

K. KULLMAN^X

S. BOYD^{P-5}

P. GLASTRIS^{SW}

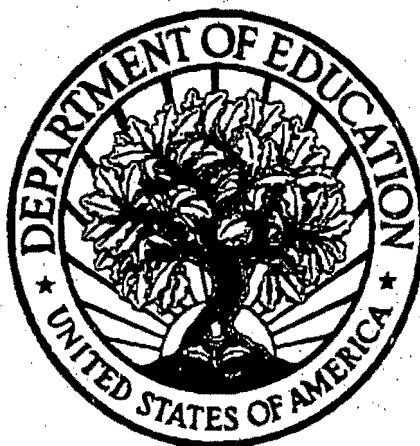
J. EDDY^{Schee}

✓

FM: SEAN

67074

RE: BLUE RIBBON
SCHOOLS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
INTERAGENCY AFFAIRS**

Date: 10/22/99

No. of Pages (w/ cover):

To: Sean O'SHEA

From: WILL TANNER
Deputy Director, Community Services
202-205-7993 (phone) 202-205-0676 (fax)
Will_Tanner@ed.gov (e-mail)

Comments:

U.S. Department of Education, Room 5E229
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20202

MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination

TO: Will Tanner

FROM: Stephen O'Brien *Shure 20 pages*

SUBJECT: Blue Ribbon Schools Principals

DATE: October 22, 1999

*Jackson Room
Washington Hilton*

Please remember that we have never met any of these people. We are only going by the written document.

Here are six schools from which we think the White House might choose the person to introduce the President:

Roanoke Avenue School, NY

Washington Irving, NY

D.T. Cox Elementary, MS (principal is African American woman; Dr. Jerry Rogers who visited the school for us said she is very articulate.)

turn-around Eastridge Community, CO

turn-around Beaufort Elementary, SC (principal is white woman)

turn-around Cannons Elementary, SC (principal is white woman)

turn-around Hillcrest Elementary, TX

*5 schools in
NY district
have all received
blue ribbon
Nassau County*

Kathy and I suggest that you also take the principal(s) to go to the White House from the above group.

Here are our suggestions for the pool for the other people:

Lynn Johnson, Title I Reading Teacher, Abney Elementary, Slidell, LA (504-643-4044)

Kay Bolle, Teacher, Festus Elementary, Festus, MO (214-937-5720)

David Woods, 5th Grade Teacher, Indian Lane Elementary, Media, PA (610-627-7100)

Columbine Michael Maffoni, Teacher, Willow Creek Elementary, Englewood, CO (303-773-1765)

heard good things, articulate Marilyn Wheeler, Superintendent, Coronado, CA (619-522-8915) Also has New American High School in district.

Lynne Rauch, Superintendent, Elk Grove Village, IL (847-301-2150)

Heidi Dziendziel, Parent, Greenfield Elementary, Greenfield, NY (518-893-7402)

Patricia Wilcox, Parent, Union Center Elementary, Valparaiso, IN (219-759-2544)

Roanoke Avenue School

Address:
549 Roanoke Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901

Phone:
(516) 369-6813

Principal:
Ms. Dorothy Moran

Location:
Suburban

Grade Levels:
K-3

Enrollment:
395

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	49.0%
African-American:	45.0%
Hispanic:	6.0%
Asian:	0.0%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	29.0%
Limited English:	8.0%
Low Income:	0.0%
Special Education:	17.0%

Roanoke Avenue School is located in Riverhead, New York. A drive down Main Street in Riverhead reveals the beauty of the Peconic River, the historic presence of the County Court House, and colorful Polish Town. Amid the densely populated neighborhood stands a majestic seventy-six-year-old, three-story brick building called the Roanoke Avenue School. We think of it as a community school and safe haven for 400 children and their families, affectionately known as the "Roanoke family."

Roanoke is an inner city school and one of the most diverse of four K-3 schools in the district. Sixty percent of our students are on free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Approximately 45 percent of the students are African-American, 49 percent are Anglo, six percent are Hispanic, Polish, Vietnamese Chinese, or Indian. Roanoke has a high transient population. Families move in and out of the district as they seek jobs and affordable housing. Between 30 and 40 percent of our parents struggle with poverty and have significant problems with substance abuse and other poverty related ills.

Despite the fact that between 40 and 50 percent of our incoming kindergartners score in the first to fourth stanines on the incoming kindergarten screenings, all of our nonclassified students score on or above grade level on the third grade New York State DRP and PEP tests. Thirty-eight percent scored in the sixth-grade mastery range on the 1997-98 New York State testing.

The Suffolk County Reading Council has recognized Roanoke Avenue School as an Honor School for the last six years. Roanoke has also been recognized by Title One as a Schoolwide Project since 1996 and an exemplary model to which the State Education Department has sent many school districts to visit.

Through team building of staff and community, our shared vision for all students is based on high performance standards, a collaborative program design, ongoing staff development, parent and community involvement, cultural inclusiveness, and constant monitoring of student progress. Our academic and social programs individualize education through a modified "Success for All" program that focuses on the research of Robert Slavin's "Best Evidence Synthesis on Grouping." Our curriculum is based on the premise that every child is capable of learning. Reading, math, and "habits of the heart" are our highest priorities.

Our unique reading program uses parallel block scheduling to reduce class size with two hours of concentrated, flexible group reading and writing each day. Resource room and remedial reading teachers work together with nine reading aides to provide 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 intense, accelerated remediation so that all students are challenged.

Our Assured Readiness for Learning (ARL) Program provides developmentally appropriate readiness and phonemic awareness activities that are integrated with literature and thematic units. The emphasis is on writing and authentic assessment for all students. Many students select their own work to be included in portfolios. They are directly involved in developing rubrics, demonstrating their strengths, and designing goals for improvement during student led conferences with parents and teachers.

Our student progress related directly to the high quality of communication among teachers. Grade level teams meet weekly to identify problems and solutions and develop new strategies. There is a cooperative, collegial relationship among children, teachers, and parents as they plan classroom and building theme units that integrate the disciplines. Our thematic units emphasize activities that help children solve problems through the use of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Creating responsive, caring classrooms where teachers model and students role-play cooperation, assertive talk (Brave Talk), responsibility, empathy, and self-control has combated violence in our school. As a result of our strong social skills and character education curriculum, there is a noticeable, positive difference in the language, spirit, and behavior within our walls. Students help each other with their words and actions as we help to fulfill our responsibility to diminish the violence in the streets around us.

Professional development is ongoing and coordinated with State standards, district, and building goals. It is centered on high academic achievement and authentic activities with performance assessment including portfolio assessment. Inclusive classrooms, interdisciplinary and multicultural curriculum, and cooperative learning reflect our collaborative atmosphere between teachers and students. Teachers use a variety of learning styles and state-of-the-art methods to ensure that students "get" what has been taught as they motivate students to want to learn. Our Assured Readiness for Learning Program is multisensory and child centered. Our Math emphasizes problem solving and self-initiated learning as recommended by the math standards. Last year we developed instructional units that reflect the State standards as teachers train to integrate technology into our curriculum. Technology consultants are working with us to install sophisticated wiring and hardware which will enable teachers and students to conduct research, communicate with scientists in laboratories, and share with peers in other cities and countries via the Internet.

Our success has depended on the great support we have received from parents, businesses, and our community. We have networked with the community we serve through the shared decision making model of our site-based team. Our parents and community have gotten involved in all facets of education from laying sod on our school playground to wiring our building, bringing technology into the classroom and getting Roanoke onto the information highway.

In order to help students make better choices we are proud to have the Riverhead police bring D.A.R.E. to our school. We have an ongoing project with Alternatives, a social service agency in our community, to work with our children in helping them to make better choices with drugs and alcohol.

Roanoke is proud to be a collegial, collaborative, multicultural school community. Children, parents, staff, and principal collaborate and cooperate in the quest of excellence for all. Teachers have become architect designers of curriculum with ongoing, embedded assessments in their lessons. Teachers talk concretely about teaching as they observe other teachers. They share expertise and ask for and provide assistance to each other as well.

The emphasis is on critical thinking and New York State standards. Students are encouraged to solve problems, assess their own goals, and reflect upon their own work as they set goals for improvement.

Everyone who enters our historic building recognizes our family-like atmosphere where parents, teachers, and children feel welcome. We have seen increased parent involvement in the classrooms and sustained high student achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the New York State DRP and PEP. tests with many of our third graders achieving mastery level.

Our PTO sponsored a sign in front of our beautiful building conveying the message, "Roanoke Avenue School, An Honor School. Welcome Parents." We are truly one world and one family, the Roanoke family.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

D. T. Cox Elementary School

Address:
304 Clark Street
Pontotoc, MS 38863

Phone:
(601) 489-2454

Principal:
Mrs. Phyllis High

Location:
Small city/town

Grade Levels:
3-4

Enrollment:
356

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	67.42%
African-American:	32.31%
Hispanic:	0.0%
Asian:	0.28%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	17.0%
Limited English:	7.0%
Low Income:	45.0%
Special Education:	13.0%

D. T. Cox Elementary School is a third through fourth grade school in the small, rural town of Pontotoc, Mississippi. Pontotoc is located in the northeastern part of the state which is legally classified as Appalachia. The school is one of four schools in the district. In the poorest state in the nation, our district is in the bottom five percent of the state in per pupil expenditure, as reported by the Mississippi State Department of Education. Our students are not from affluent families; almost half receive free or reduced lunches. Over one third of our population in Pontotoc County did not graduate from high school. The community environment is unable to provide many of the essential cultural experiences that prepare students for successful competition in a global society.

The population of the community is homogeneous in nature. The majority of the citizens are lifetime residents of the area. An excellent work ethic has attracted major industries, and unemployment is low. The industry in Pontotoc consists primarily of low technology furniture manufacturing, with most of the citizens being blue collar workers. Agriculture remains a vital part of the economy, though of lesser importance than in the past.

There are approximately 2200 students in the school district. The student enrollment at D. T. Cox is 356. The students proceed from D. T. Cox (3-4), to Pontotoc Junior High (5-8), and then to Pontotoc High School (9-12).

The building was erected in 1960 and includes an additional facility with classrooms and a science lab. Continuous renovations, additions, and the reorganization of the grades at Pontotoc Junior High to include the fifth grade has provided for increasing student population and changing educational needs. The buildings are well maintained, and the school has traditionally served as a meeting place for various school and community activities. The campus and building are used by the community for many of the after school soccer, baseball, softball, and T-ball practices. The gymnasium is used for high school cheerleader practice, indoor tennis practice, and various organization meetings.

D. T. Cox is both a unique and successful learning institution. We are successful because of our commitment to excellence and our willingness to recognize and rectify our shortcomings. We are unique because of our bond with the community. As our school continues to prosper, it is the community that becomes the ultimate beneficiary. Not only is our school enmeshed in all facets of the community; but it is the very success of D. T. Cox Elementary and the other schools in the district that have been a catalyst for attracting business and industry. As our school continues to prosper, it is the community that becomes the ultimate beneficiary. Business wisdom adopts the theory that an enterprise operating in the top five percent of its field while meeting the needs of the

bottom five percent of its customers will result in wealth. D. T. Cox Elementary demonstrates this same principle, but the end result is success not wealth. Our business is teaching, and it is through the application of practical principles of learning and effective decision making by faculty and administration that D. T. Cox has become a successful learning environment.

Over the last five years several significant challenges were identified: - provisions for problem solving and application skills in all curricular areas to all students through an ongoing program of high order thinking skills - involvement of all students in activities which promote good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility - enhancement of the instructional program through the addition of computers in all classrooms.

Community support for the school has been a key factor as evidenced by the Endowment for Excellence in Education, an ongoing facilities improvement program for the district, and community volunteer services. We attribute much of our success to the restructuring of the teaching-learning process. Teacher decision making skills have become a focal point. Curriculum management requirements have been reduced which has resulted in an increase in student contact time (time on instruction), learning expectations, and cooperation among teachers. As with other schools and other school districts across the nation, D. T. Cox has faced many challenges; but we have also accomplished many milestones. Specific examples are:

- National Blue Ribbon School recognition in 1989-90
- National Redbook Magazine recognition in 1993
- Statewide recognition in 1993
- Increased parental involvement
- A change in district wide grade spans which established D. T. Cox Elementary as a grade three-four school, rather than a three-five school as reflected in our 1989 application
- The incorporation of music into the curriculum
- The hiring of an assistant teacher to coordinate the science lab and implement more "hands on" activities for students
- Renovation of the school to increase space for the students in the cafeteria, provide an office for the counselor, and a workroom for teachers
- The construction of an outdoor classroom
- Renovation of the playgrounds with additional playground equipment
- The implementation of technology in each classroom and media center
- The restructuring of the instructional organization of fourth grade teachers.

D. T. Cox Elementary has created a highly focused learning environment for all students. Innovative efforts have promoted our success toward accomplishing National Education Goals through the improvement of our professional staff and their perseverance with limited monetary resources. Our resources of faculty and community support, under the guidance of a principal whose focus is on learning, equips our most valuable resource, our students, for

Washington Irving Intermediate School

Address:
103 South Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Phone:
(914) 631-4442

Principal:
Mr. Sal Tricamo

Location:
Suburban/urban

Grade Levels:
4-6

Enrollment:
450

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	44.0%
African-American:	8.5%
Hispanic:	45.0%
Asian:	2.5%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	6.94%
Limited English:	18.0%
Low Income:	51.0%
Special Education:	10.6%

Washington Irving School (WI) is an elementary school serving approximately 450 children in grades four, five, and six from the villages of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, New York. We are an ethnically diverse school located in the lower Hudson River Valley (Westchester County), about 20 miles north of New York City. Our district, the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns, has instituted the Princeton Plan, which organizes our elementary program around four schools serving different grade levels: a kindergarten building, one for first grade, a second-third grade building, and of course, Washington Irving School. In this way, all of our children are educated together, regardless of their socioeconomic status or address. Contrary to the common perception of the "affluent Westchester suburban school," socioeconomically our population runs the spectrum from upper class to very poor. Many of our parents work two jobs or double shifts to make ends meet.

Approximately 20% of our school's population receives public assistance; 51% of our children receive free or reduced lunch services. The ethnic background of our students is as follows: 2.5% Asian or Pacific Islander; 8.5% African American; 44% White (non-Hispanic); and 45% Latino. Thus, the majority of our school is actually minority. Many are struggling with a new culture, language, and school system. Many of our new entrants come from areas of the Caribbean or the Americas where they had little, interrupted, or impoverished schooling. They may be illiterate in their native language as well as English. We have been classified in the past as a "suburban district with characteristics typical of an urban school," but have recently been reclassified as an urban district.

Our mission, as developed by our staff, parents, and community members, reflects our commitment to our children.

The community of faculty, administrators and parents of the Washington Irving School will create a learning environment which will meet the needs of our children. Our mission is for all youngsters to learn and to strive for academic excellence through the cooperative efforts of the school community. We are committed to democratic values which will foster responsible citizens.

The Washington Irving School is dedicated to the development of a well-rounded child who will work cooperatively with others; who will cultivate a variety of artistic and special interests; who will develop a positive self-image; who will make prudent decisions and choices; and who will develop an understanding and an appreciation of the diverse cultural traditions and differences that make WI a unique community.

A key feature that must be understood about WI is that we are not

a typical elementary school; we are an intermediate school, educating children in grades four, five, and six to bridge the gap between primary and middle school. While early literacy is not usually an issue for us, literacy development is still essential in these intermediate grades. Each grade level is organized to meet the specific developmental needs of our children. In grades four and five, our classes are self-contained; grade six is departmentalized. Our heterogeneous grouping policies teach students to respect and appreciate differences and to work cooperatively in groups. Each of the three grades provides a strong academic program, supplemented by grade-appropriate activities, special events, and exposure to a variety of special area subjects such as art, health, computers, music, library skills, and more. Thus, we teach to the whole child, taking into account his or her physical, intellectual, emotional, and social needs.

Our staff is deeply committed to providing the best educational experience possible for our children. We have a record of innovation, creativity, and high standards that is recognized and supported by the community. Through constant professional development, ongoing research, and extensive efforts in planning and implementation, we have created a well-rounded program designed to meet the needs of all our diverse students. Teachers assume leadership roles as we train each other during team and faculty meetings. As we continue to align ourselves to the new, higher New York State Learning Standards for all subject areas, we are developing innovative teaching strategies and performance-based assessments. We have created exciting new programs for bilingual, special education, and gifted and talented children. In addition, we have established extensive collaborations with colleges and universities, cultural institutions, community organizations, and local corporations and businesses, which have allowed us to extend our curriculum into the "real world." Because of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Tarrytown, Sleepy Hollow, and our surrounding communities, the Hudson River Valley has become our classroom. Our efforts and creativity have been recognized and supported through a large number of grants, including a \$250,000 Title VII grant for our innovative bilingual program.

We pride ourselves on our academics, but also on our extensive co-curricular programs. Some of these activities include a Superstars Homework Club, hands-on science club, chess club, newspaper club, computer club, yearbook club, and geography club. Our music program is a particular source of pride, involving more than 64% of our students. This past year, fourteen band students and one orchestra student were accepted into the All-County Music Festival. Our physical education program includes after-school sports and school-wide events that involve all our children and teaches them good sportsmanship and teamwork.

As noted, at WI we are all aware of the importance of addressing the needs of the whole student. Often, a child's academic success is inextricably interwoven with their personal and social wellbeing. We have extensive pupil support services available for our children, including a bilingual social worker, a school

psychologist, a speech/language teacher, a bilingual family outreach worker, a full-time nurse, and special programs ranging from D.A.R.E. and Juvenile Law to Junior Achievement.

Another important strength of WI is the active involvement of our parents. Teachers, parents, and children form a three-way partnership, which is a key component of student success. Regardless of their language or cultural background, parents feel welcome at our school and know that there is never a language barrier; we have many bilingual staff members who are always available to help. Parents teach after-school programs, work with teachers to find ways to bring their expertise into the classroom for special projects, and participate in our school's leadership by serving on various committees. The Elementary PTA is very supportive of the school's efforts, sponsoring Cultural Arts programs, book fairs, and student scholarships for special activities. The EPTA honors the staff at an annual Faculty Appreciation Lunch, preparing home-cooked specialties reflecting the diversity of our community.

Another key partnership for us is our relationship with the Foundation for the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns, a private, not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to raise funds to help our schools in a variety of ways. The Foundation is administered by a group of community members who may or may not have children in the school system, as well as teachers and administrators. Through their efforts and those of our Elementary PTA, our school has acquired up-to-date technology. Teachers are also encouraged to apply for grants sponsored by these groups for classroom projects and materials; our school has won many of these grants.

These partnerships between the school, the family, and the community allow us to work together to help our children succeed. No school operates in a vacuum; the tools our children need can be best taught through this triad. We strive to build a culture of inclusiveness, respect, consideration, and academic excellence for all, and we enlist the support of parents and other members of the community.

Washington Irving School is an exciting place for students, parents, and teachers. We pride ourselves on our accomplishments and look forward to meeting the challenges of the 21st Century together.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

turn-around

Eastridge Community Elementary School

Address:
11777 East Wesley
Avenue
Aurora, CO 80014

Phone:
(303) 755-0598

Principal:
Dr. Robert Villarreal

Location:
Urban

Grade Levels:
K-5

Enrollment:
738

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	64.18%
African-American:	19.73%
Hispanic:	8.5%
Asian:	6.53%
American Indian:	1.06%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	34.0%
Limited English:	9.0%
Low Income:	36.0%
Special Education:	12.0%

Eastridge Community Elementary School was built in the early 1960's to serve the residents of a newly developed subdivision in southeast Aurora, Colorado. The school opened on September 3, 1963, with 12 classrooms and 300 walk-in students. The school was extensively remodeled in 1968 to add four open-space learning areas accommodating 100 students each. In 1988, the school was again remodeled to add nine classrooms.

Over the past three decades, the Eastridge community has undergone profound change. A predominantly middle and upper-class community of single-family homes has given way to a more socially and ethnically diverse community that includes a large number of multi-family dwellings as well as government-subsidized low-cost housing units. Over the years, the student population at Eastridge has more than doubled from 450 to 730, necessitating the transition to a year-round four-track calendar in 1994.

Today, Eastridge has a minority enrollment of 37%, an average mobility rate of 40%, 73% of the students are transported to school by bus, 37% qualify for a federally subsidized free or reduced lunch program, 12% qualify for special-education services, and fifteen foreign languages are spoken by a 10% ESL population.

Despite many changes, Eastridge has not only maintained an effective educational program, but has transformed itself into one of the liveliest and most innovative K-5 learning environments in the state. Student outcomes continue to meet or exceed district and national grade-level averages, particularly in reading comprehension and in minority student achievement. Among major distinguishing features and accomplishments:

- Multi-age, straight-grade, team-taught, self-contained classrooms and looping are designed to address the diverse instructional needs and learning style of students.
- Proficiency-based curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Assessment practices that drive instruction via the teaching-learning cycle (assessment, evaluation of assessment, planning for instruction).
- A nationally recognized, student centered library/media center.
- An instructionally effective teaching staff, (70% with Master of Arts degrees) who has a high level of expertise and understanding in: reading instruction, math manipulatives, technology, standards-based curriculum, multicultural curriculum, and performance assessment.

After-school child care

- Staff-initiated professional development activities, which include on-site study groups, mentoring, peer coaching, hands on workshops and the award winning Eastridge Literacy Project.
- An extracurricular program offering high-interest activities ranging from intramural sports to Odyssey of the Mind.
- A full array of family-centered programs and services, off-track child care, kindergarten enrichment, off-track Inter-session enrichment classes, before and after school child care, a breakfast program and family counseling and assistance services.
- Partnerships with colleges and universities, the lower business community, education reform organizations and school networks.
- Classroom-based computer network and a high level of teacher-student access to multi-media technology.
- Full inclusion of special-education students.
- Shared decision making and accountability that requires a high level of teacher, parent, and student involvement.
- Numerous awards and honors, including a DeWitt Wallace Library Power Grant, 1996 Colorado Conservation School of the Year, CCIRA Exemplary School Reading Program of the Year 1997, and Milken Award winner, principal, Dr. Villarreal.

At Eastridge, our mission is "to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care". The teaching and learning environment at Eastridge is vibrant, engaging, and firmly grounded in the concept of the "Helping Relationship". It encourages a strong sense of partnership, connectedness, responsibility and collective purpose.

The faculty and parents are strongly committed to high personal and academic standards for all students. We strive to ensure that each child is well prepared for the challenges of living, working and learning in a changing world.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Beaufort Elementary School

Address:
1800 Prince Street
Beaufort, SC 29902

Phone:
(843) 525-4282

Principal:
Mrs. Ruth Summerlin

Location:
Small city/town

Grade Levels:
Pre K - 5

Enrollment:
573

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	34.0%
African-American:	65.0%
Hispanic:	1.0%
Asian:	0.0%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate: 20.0%

Limited English: 0.0%

Low Income: 86.0%

Special Education: 34.0%

Beaufort Elementary School (BES) in Beaufort, South Carolina defies the odds in offering world class initiatives by creating success for its predominately low socioeconomic minority population. This group of committed staff has collaborated to break the chain of failure. Five years ago, the school was classified as one of the worst 200 in South Carolina. Instead of blaming the parents and community, this enthusiastic group took ownership of the problem and began planning for the renewal of their school. The first step was a faculty retreat whereby team building helped these professionals know they had to focus on team planning and practice daily, respectful habits to overcome unbelievable barriers. This committed group of teachers then began to work on a five-year plan (1995-2000) which is used as a blueprint of high expectations for all aspects of the school's program. This plan contains a belief statement, school mission, performance goals, needs assessment, technology plan, and strategies for implementing a world class curriculum, involving the community and families, developing staff effectiveness, promoting optimal student achievement and creating an environment conducive to learning. When the community and parents were asked to participate in this worthwhile planning phase, they came to our aid. Not only did they help plan, but they also began to volunteer in amazing numbers. They wanted to be involved and assist in the redesigning of their only city elementary school within this rural district. Business partners such as Sea Island Rotary, City of Beaufort Police Department, Marine Corps Recruits, Naval Hospital Corpsmen, American Association of University Women, Ministerial Association and Operation Good Neighbor committed volunteer hours and money to help bring the school to the level of excellence it is today. Beaufort Elementary adopted a Full Service philosophy. We could no longer restrict ourselves to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. The five year plan specified that Beaufort Elementary would become site based to increase and improve overall involvement of the people closest to the children- parents, teachers, and community. The site based plan was written and approved by the Beaufort County School Board four years ago. This plan allows school personnel to utilize their funding in creative ways to best meet the needs of the students. The varied site based committees, ten in all, are comprised of interested teachers, assistants, parents and community members. These committee members work during the school year and summer to ensure effective implementation of their plans. For example, when necessary the personnel committee works diligently to interview and recommend appropriate personnel. Other programs which have been planned by these committees include: After School Enrichment (ACE) and remediation, extended year summer camps for reading and math, enrichment in the arts (dance, drama, string, keyboarding, bells, chimes, chorus, sculpting, etc.), business partnerships for mentoring and tutoring, continuous progress made possible by small group reading and math instruction, multicultural and multidisciplinary instruction, community service projects,

5yrs. ago one of worst 200
S.C. schools

After-School

Summer Camp for reading
+ math

Prof. Development

Site-based manage.

turn-around

test numbers
pop. vet

Spanish, International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, Full Service School concept, Family Literacy Projects (adult education with day care at the school for parents improving their education at BES), Well Baby Plus (Duke Endowment Grant Program for early intervention health care), Early Childhood initiatives (ABC voucher programs for children ages 6 weeks to pre-kindergarten providing an enriched early start), family involvement (Pre-School Club, Family Reading, Family Math, Science Nights, Family Fun Fests, Fall Fling, Sidewalk Art Contests, etc.), Exemplary Writing Award initiatives, technology networking and training, Student Study Teams, Portfolio and Criterion-Referenced and Computer Assisted Assessment, Go for the Gold Schoolwide Discipline Plan, Student Council, School Ambassadors, Academic and Artistic Gifted and Talented Programs, Student News Staff for monthly publications, Video Club for morning announcements, Ecology/Science Club, Flow Room (to identify learning strengths), Booksharp (computerized assessment of novels to monitor independent reading), Principal's Reading Challenge, Read-a-Thon (buddy reading), Reading Recovery, Student of the Month, Author's Tea, Meet a Writer Day, Safety Patrol, Odyssey of the Mind and Academic Challenge competitions, Science Fair, Invention Convention, and Professional Development and Evaluation plans worthy of putting these initiative into practice in a logical and manageable fashion.

Their mission statement is to ensure the highest quality educational outcomes providing a challenging, multi-cultural curriculum that develops the unique abilities of each child, frees each person to pursue opportunities, incorporates advanced technologies and engages the full commitment of the staff, parents, students and community. Since this mission statement was written in 1995, the school staff has focused untold energy and commitment to make this a continuing reality for students at Beaufort Elementary. Overcoming the stigma as a low performing school has been a challenge. By including the community and parents and making them part of the solution, partnerships, relationships and trust have been the foundation upon which this dream has been built.

Beaufort Elementary is a large, beautifully maintained two-story facility located next to Northern Beaufort County's only housing project and most of their subsidized housing. Beaufort Elementary staff and students have risen to a coveted academic status in the district and state. Numerous editorials and newspaper articles tell of their success story and challenge other schools to, "Play follow the leader." They have been asked to discover the Beaufort Elementary secret of success and to replicate it because test results reveal that our students are performing well above expected norms. This previously 100% free and reduced lunch school is now attracting other students from private academies and other suburban schools as parents and teachers have taken note of their inventive and non-traditional approach to education. Allowing students to advance at their own pace supports innovative programs and flexible schedules (7:30AM-5:00 PM for 200 days a year) making this Full Service School concept a successful reality for our 573 eager students age six weeks to adulthood.

Quality national, state and local awards that Beaufort Elementary School has received in the past four years are numerous. National recognition includes the Project Arts program for outstanding development of artistic talent and appreciation for cultural diversity and Well Baby Plus for early intervention efforts. South Carolina honors include the Exemplary Writing Award; State Incentive Award; Early Childhood Demonstration Site; Department of Education Volunteer Organization of the Year, Family Literacy Initiatives Award and Learn and Serve America Grant. Locally we won the Beaufort County District Incentive Reward for Academic Progress; Sea Island Science Fair first, second and third place winners for the last three years and the Red Ribbon Week Award given by the Beaufort County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program. Our principal received a Paul Harris Fellow from Sea Island Rotary for her commitment to excellence in education. Grant monies awarded include: \$60,000 Bell South Grant for collaboration; \$360,000 Duke Endowment grant for Well Baby Plus; and \$10,000 Target 2000 Arts in Education grant for performing arts.

The Beaufort Elementary School family has successfully refocused on guiding all children through their personal journeys of discovering and maximizing their unique gifts and talents. They leave no opportunity to chance.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Cannons Elementary School

Address:
1315 Old Converse Road
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Phone:
(864) 579-8020

Principal:
Mrs. Donna Lipscomb

Location:
Rural

Grade Levels:
PreK - 5

Enrollment:
398

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	62.0%
African-American:	35.0%
Hispanic:	1.0%
Asian:	2.0%
American Indian:	0.0%
Other:	0.0%
Mobility Rate:	25.0%
Limited English:	2.0%
Low Income:	60.0%
Special Education:	27.0%

60% free/
reduced lunch
Gain in test scores
After-school
Summer school
Violence prevention
workshops

Bright lights, strong colors, and a cacophony of sounds punctuate Cannons Elementary. It's a place of love, a safe place for children threatened by circumstances. The children provide the music: the sounds of active learning, the silence of concentration, and the laughter of friendship. The teachers provide the steady beat of love, knowledge, and acceptance. Spring in South Carolina is bright--mercifully low humidity and gentle breezes--creating beauty and expectation. Children respond with enthusiasm. Even on testing day, they are excited. But it hides the dark side that over 1/3 of the children at Cannons contend with daily. "I didn't sleep last night, Mrs. Lipscomb." "Why not?" "Lots of noise. Shooting. Police. We hid in the closet all night." "Who's we?" "All of us." The children, 118 of them residing in Lakeview Manor, have borne silent, terrified witness to a drug territory battle between two dealers. The police were called when the shots came, and continued. But they come to school this morning and rush to surround their principal and tell her of the happenings of the night. Stability is important to them. Cannons is their fortress. Even the children who move, continuously in and out--49% (227) in a cyclic pattern to find a place to live, a pattern established because the parents cannot pay the rent--move in, be evicted, move out--are excited to return to Cannons, some such as Debra as many as four times during one school year.

Despite the transient population and a rapid increase in lower socioeconomic rates as measured by free/reduced lunch counts (an increase from 48% in 1995 to 60% in 1998), Cannons' test data reflect steady gain in student achievement, a testament to the use of innovative pedagogy and instruction. The school serves primarily lower middle-class, rural children. 51% of our students live in impoverished, neighborhoods. The school population is diverse, both in skills the children possess when they walk through the doors and the language and customs of their native countries. In spite of these circumstances, by the third grade 20% of the children are identified as academically and/or artistically gifted and receive services in Atlas (Action Team for Leading Accelerated Students).

Cannons Elementary School, originally constructed in 1939 for fewer than 100 students, moved into a new facility in 1995. A collaborative group, representing a cross-section of the population, worked on design and features for five years. A theatre for musical and dramatic productions, an art gallery featuring a different artist each month, and a state of the art computer infrastructure that includes a Local Area Network connected to the district Wide Area Network were included.

Located in the center of the new structure is the media center. Natural light from the cathedral ceiling's skylight floods the open space filled with computers and materials for research, preschool toys for parents to check out, and thousands of books that include: books written by students, books written by students in

collaboration with senior citizens: books that incorporate every stage, every level, and every interest. The media center is also home to the broadcast studio, the publishing center, and the hardware for the school wide computer network. Each classroom has two or three multimedia computers with direct access to the Internet through a T1 line.

Other needs are met through an English as a Second Language teacher and the Therapeutic Preschool for high-risk three and four-year-olds. Grant writing is encouraged as a way to meet the diverse needs of students. In what was described by the Department of Education as their most competitive grant competition in history, Cannons was awarded a 2.6 million-dollar grant, *The Three Faces of Need*, to transform Cannons into a community learning center. The school now provides after-school programs for first through fifth graders, Saturday activities for children and parents, and summer classes for children that integrate the visual arts, physical education, music, and technology into the basic academic curriculum. Children receive an additional 33% more instruction in reading and mathematics in the after school program. In the first summer program through the grant, 80 third through fifth grade students attended the academic acceleration classes offered through grant funding. Adult education, parenting, and pre-employment skills training are available during the day with babysitting, a meal, and transportation provided. Cannons is proud to house two district-wide, self-contained, emotionally handicapped classes, a learning-disabled class, and a preschool handicapped class. Our entire building is handicapped accessible. We offer inclusion education to enhance the academic skills and social skills of our learning disabled students. Cannons makes every effort to eliminate barriers to education, be they tangible structures, intangible attitudes, or basic needs such as quality childcare or a hot meal.

Cannons understands that stress is a fundamental cause of failure and violence, and we are taking steps to lower distress in families and in school. Violence prevention workshops are given on the district level, and Cannons will host a county wide two-day workshop on the subject in November of this year. Fifty-eight percent of the highest risk families of preschool children receive home visits through the Therapeutic Preschool, the Preschool Handicapped Program, and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. Children and parents are able to receive counseling on a regular weekly basis, and the guidance counselor has collaborated with area businesses and churches to ensure every child has a warm coat, shoes that fit, and a present from Santa. Every teacher is mentor to a small group of students in the Family Ties Program that emphasizes respect for others and conflict resolution. Other programs that emphasize social and behavioral skills are the CARE (Care and Respect for Everyone) group, CHAMPS (Champs Have And Model Positive Peer Skills) peer mediation program, Student Council and CHOICE (Choosing Helpful Options in Coping and Education) summer program for children with emotional problems.

The usual dread of a "trip to the office" isn't found among students at Cannons. Good citizenship is rewarded by an "office sucker"

and students who master the Accelerated Reader tests are encouraged to bring their test scores to the office to be signed by all present. The principal spends Friday afternoons socializing with the "Principal's Pals," and student work is displayed in classrooms, in the halls, in the principal's office, and in the teacher's lounge. Support staff play an important role in this feeling of family. The head custodian acts as "Papa Bear" to the Therapeutic Preschool, providing a positive male role model to the children. The Parent Teacher Organization provides over 2,000 volunteer hours annually in tutoring children, working in the Publishing Center, answering phones, and providing support service for teachers.

Cannons has won the South Carolina Exemplary Writing Award two consecutive years. Students write in journals, write books in the publishing center, and learn the elements of creative verse as well as expository prose. The multimedia format of Hyperstudio helps students make their presentations come to life, and students are encouraged to use approved Internet sites for maximum up to date information for research.

Recent honors and grants awarded Cannons and her teachers include 'Write' Way Publishing Company, Project COMPUTE, Coping Skills for Successful Living, and Care and Respect for Everyone. Three Learn and Serve America grants as well as grants from the Greater Arts Partnership have been awarded. Our school has been a School Incentive Award Winner for the past four years. Reading programs, math programs, and technology for impaired students have all been subsidized through grant monies.

We have a motto among our family that states, we care because Children Are Really Everything to us. This is not only a motto, but also a way of life, which is evidenced by all who enter our school. The Cannons' family feels that every child deserves a safe, compassionate place to learn. Each child is accepted as a unique individual with potential, and teachers view themselves as promoters of the child, the school, and the community. One fifth grade student wrote the following in an essay about our new school: "The most important and special part of my school is the people. All the teachers, all the janitors, everyone is loving and kind. I would love this school even if we had class in a doghouse. Even if it were that way, one thing would still stay the same - there would still be love!"

Cannons Elementary School is steeped in history and focused on the future. The focus is real and the results are measured with a test found in our hearts. Cannons can be summarized by one elegant sustained note - the universal "A" of success.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).

Hillcrest Elementary School

Address:
1701 Crozier Lane
Del Valle, TX 78617

Phone:
(512) 385-1427

Principal:
Mrs. Jean MacInnis

Location:
Suburban/urban

Grade Levels:
3-6

Enrollment:
726

Student Characteristics:

Caucasian:	14.0%
African-American:	14.0%
Hispanic:	70.0%
Asian:	1.4%
American Indian:	0.6%
Other:	0.0%

Mobility Rate:	27.0%
Limited English:	40.0%
Low Income:	84.0%
Special Education:	16.0%

Hillcrest Elementary School (HES) sits amid a shaded cove of towering 100 year old oak trees on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River and the Austin, Texas skyline, in the Del Valle Independent School District. It serves a diverse population of 726 students from four separate communities: Garfield, a rural community on the eastern edge of Travis County; Williamson Creek, a community on the western edge of the school district; Montopolis, a poor, largely Hispanic inner-city community with large housing projects; and within walking distance, three apartment complexes which previously served off-base military housing needs before the closing of Bergstrom Air Force Base.

Besides the meshing of four communities, Hillcrest serves students as diverse as their neighborhoods; 70% of the students are Hispanic, 14% are African American, 14% are White, and the remaining 2% are Asian and American Indian. Hillcrest serves 86% of its students hot meals through the federally funded free- and reduced-lunch program, while teachers continually adjust their programs to support a very mobile population of 27%. Five years ago, Hillcrest Elementary was experiencing the same frustrations as many other Texas schools with challenging demographics.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) scores were as low as 28% of Hispanic children passing math. The school was concerned about being identified as low performing by the Texas Education Agency. This concern was channeled into action by a new principal and staff who would not consider anything but high achievement for all students. Today, Hillcrest has been identified as a "Recognized" campus by the Texas Education Agency, and only missed the Exemplary status by the scores of two students. A research team from Texas A&M University cited the district as one of the most successful in Texas for educating African American students. A great number of African American students in the district attend Hillcrest, and their progress has been significant--in 1994, 40.9% passed the math TAAS and in 1998, 87.1% passed; a 42.2 point gain.

Hillcrest serves Del Valle's limited English speakers in the district bilingual program and English as a Second Language program. HES believes that these children need extensive exposure to both formal and informal English to accelerate their progress toward language competency. Hillcrest teachers have made a conscious effort to gradually bring limited English speakers into regular classes as soon as they demonstrate they are capable of assimilating successfully. The multisensory approach to instruction for all students has helped the bilingual students make the leap -- math results: 1994, 43.4% passed; in 1998, 96.1% passed. The principal was the catalyst for change in creating this model of success for special populations, but the teachers were the instruments of change. The district dyslexia program opened at Hillcrest 10 years ago and has served as a model program for other campuses. Students identified as gifted are served on a daily basis

with special services provided by a visiting teacher. Students with other special needs are served in regular settings with small-group instruction in reading, writing, or math. There are also specialists to support children with special behavioral and emotional needs, as well as supporting students with severe mental and physical disabilities. Although there appears to be a program for every special need that may arise, Hillcrest works to provide a challenging and enriched program stressing literacy, communication skills, and problem solving for every student.

Hillcrest teachers devote a significant amount of effort and personal time to improve their teaching skills, making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. A support system of instructional teams have brought teachers closer together to brainstorm, share strategies, and plan. Over the last five years, Hillcrest has undergone intensive staff development to restructure its instructional delivery system. This restructuring has been achieved incrementally. In 1993-94 TAAS writing scores were 68.1% passing. Teachers focused on improvement of writing through training in the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas and the teaching of process writing. They also implemented the teaching strategies of differentiated instruction for diverse learners. Today, writing scores are above 95.2% overall. The focus on improving mathematics instruction was initiated by the realization that Title I remedial math students were outperforming all other student populations. This sparked a staff development initiative which includes teaming a master teacher of mathematics with one teacher at grades 4, 5, and 6. After a year with these teachers, the master teacher begins a new school year with three other teachers, and the process continues until all teachers are trained in hands-on, highly interactive methodology for the delivery of mathematics instruction. This master teacher also runs the math demonstration lab where students come for lessons involving games, literature, and manipulatives. Since the implementation of this staff development model, TAAS scores have improved over 40 points in mathematics. Last year, 100 percent of all African American students in grades 5 and 6 passed the math portion of the TAAS.

The comprehensive Reading Renaissance program stresses the importance of daily silent, sustained, reading practice. Computerized reading tests taken by students encourage individual and collective goal setting. The Hillcrest library circulation last year was 65,000, nearly 100 books per child! Reading scores have climbed from 70% to 93% in the last five years. Teachers who are trained in particular programs and content present on-campus model lessons with students. These same trainers are available for consultation to those teachers who are implementing these newly learned math techniques, technology training, and reading improvement strategies. These efforts of both the trainers and the teachers seeking improvement have raised the level of expertise in instruction on the Hillcrest campus. Test results confirm a focused instructional program. Just as innovative strategies are necessary to improve performance of at-risk students, aggressive efforts are necessary to involve their parents.

Parent and community partnerships continue to show growing

support for students through personal involvement. Family Fun Nights bring parents to the campus to learn reading and math along with their children. The Science Fair involves over 300 parents, not only as projects are displayed for recognition, but also in helping their children research and report their findings in a scientific manner. Hillcrest continues to prepare more and more communications in both English and Spanish. A campus liaison provides parents transportation to school for necessary meetings. The community demonstrates its support of Hillcrest's successful efforts through gifts of human resources and funding. Sematech, an Austin computer company, contributes funding and professional staff to conduct Science Day, a project that engages and excites students about science. The Eckrich Fun house, a van shaped like a colorful playhouse, arrives to supply snacks for after-school tutorials. The University of Texas participates in a cooperative with Hillcrest to train teachers in a three-year program to improve math and science instruction. The program, which stresses hands-on activities and experiments, is open to all Del Valle ISD teachers, and is housed on the Hillcrest campus.

With all of the work required in the last five years, it might appear that Hillcrest Elementary would be a very serious, no-frills place to visit. Actually, the opposite is true. The principal, the staff, and the students are inspired by success and love the process of learning as it occurs at Hillcrest. The day begins with a rousing cheer of "Hooray for reading at Hillcrest!" led by the principal in the library hallway. As students work in small groups, three different activities may be taking place in the library, and learning rarely occurs while quietly working alone at a desk. Students mentor other students, and teachers facilitate independent learning. When students investigate Colonial America, one student might use the Internet to learn about blacksmiths, while another interviews the art teacher about weaving, and a third may be reading a novel about the period. The students collaborate on a finished product, just as their parents do in the world of work. It is a public school's responsibility to prepare students for this world at every grade level. When students leave Hillcrest, they are confident, able learners seeking new methods to attain even higher levels of student achievement. These challenges will be similar to those in many parts of Texas. Hillcrest can be a model to schools that are experiencing the challenge of educating students with the dual obstacles of low socioeconomic status and limited English proficiency. Hillcrest sends the message that these are obstacles, not barriers. "Pride in Progress" is the campus motto, and it is an ongoing creed. Visit Hillcrest to see a campus where the statement that all students can learn is not a goal, but a reality.



1998-1999 Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools

This page last modified May 21, 1999 (saw).



NOVEMBER 18, 1998

EDUCATION WEEK on the WEB

EDUCATION WEEK

IN CONTEXT

THE ARCHIVES

TEACHER MAGAZINE

THE DAILY NEWS

SPECIAL REPORTS

PRODUCTS & SERVICES



THE PEW
FORUM ON
EDUCATION
REFORM

Forum

Special Advertising Supplement

Strategies for Fixing Failing Public Schools

By Ron Wolk

Finding a glint of silver in the dark cloud that is urban education is becoming somewhat easier. Many districts are reporting rises in standardized-test scores. Some are requiring their schools to adopt a break-the-mold-model as part of a whole-school reform strategy. And in virtually every big-city district, some of the boldest and most promising reform experiments are underway.

Note: This FORUM originally appeared in the Nov. 4, 1998, print edition of *Education Week* and is reprinted here as a courtesy for our readers. The content of the FORUM is an advertisement prepared by the participating organization. *Education Week* does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of the statements and/or any views or opinions expressed therein.



Still, every big city district has too many low-performing, persistently failing schools. And while one failing school is too many, in some districts, they constitute a majority.

Functioning largely as custodial institutions, they are usually found in the poorest neighborhoods, where children are mostly black and Hispanic or immigrants who are not proficient in English. Often, but not always, they look like failing schools from the outside—seedy, unwelcoming, graffiti-covered. For the students, getting to and from such schools is often a high-risk journey.

But it is what goes on inside these institutions that creates a tenacious culture of failure. There are no goals, no sense of mission, and little positive leadership. The schools are usually mismanaged, and use their resources inefficiently and unwisely. They are usually larger than average, with larger classes, and teachers know little about their students. Many of the teachers are inexperienced first-year novices who are ill-prepared for the challenge confronting them. Some will not finish the year, and as many as half of them will leave the school after only one year. Those who return usually transfer out as soon as seniority permits; those who stay, more often than not, do not know how to reach children who arrive in class unready to learn and often wounded. Some of these teachers simply go through the motions, counting the days to retirement. Some are true professionals who strive heroically to help their students learn. Parents are missing partners.

The United States would simply not tolerate medical malpractice even approaching the educational malpractice so evident in America's worst schools.

Low-performing schools, not surprisingly, are so named because children in them perform poorly. Often, fewer than 20 percent score at grade level on standardized tests. It is not unusual for 75 percent of them to be several grades behind in reading, mathematics, and science. On any given day, one out of five high school students may be absent, and, on average, a student in the worst secondary schools may be absent a quarter or more of the school year. When they come to school, they are likely to sleep in class or roam the halls creating disciplinary problems. Suspensions and expulsions tend to be much higher than average. Many students change

schools at least once during the year-nearly always moving from one bad school to another. More than half drop out before they reach 12th grade. Some of those who graduate cannot read or calculate well enough to hold a job or succeed in college without remedial education.

The United States would simply not tolerate medical malpractice even approaching the educational malpractice so evident in America's worst schools. What else can we call the failure of schools to teach so many children to read? But these dysfunctional institutions continue to operate even though they have been failing children for decades. They were largely invisible to all but those who lived near them until courts required some districts to report performance data broken down by racial groups and states and cities began putting into place accountability systems that mandate the collection and publication of performance data for all public schools. Now, with their dismal records publicly displayed, failing schools stand out like pathological lesions on the education system, compelling the attention of state and local policymakers. And the greatest challenge to those who would transform public education is to fix the persistently failing schools. In the past few years, a growing number of states and urban districts have been formulating strategies for dealing with the lowest-performing schools-notably Kentucky, Maryland, New York, and Texas; San Francisco, Houston, New York City, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Portland (Ore.), and Philadelphia.

Researchers, analysts, and practitioners have also begun to study various strategies for fixing failing schools, including reconstitution-which generally means closing a school, replacing all or most of its staff, and reopening it under new management. In May 1997, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education and the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform held perhaps the first national meeting on the topic of fixing failing schools, with special emphasis on reconstitution.

Papers and studies began appearing in the past few years, and, last summer, the U.S. Department of Education responded to a growing demand for information by publishing, "Turning Around Low Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders."

The Pew Forum revisited the subject in July 1998 in a four-day conference on "Strategies to Improve Failing Schools." Most of the participants came from cities and states with failing-school strategies and have had experience dealing with them. This paper is a result of that meeting, but is not a report of the discussion.

The Cross Cities Campaign for Urban School Reform will publish a report this fall on how its member districts are dealing with failing schools.

At its simplest, a failing-school strategy decides how "failure" is to be defined and measured, and how the causes of failure are to be identified and corrected. The operating premise is that the worst schools will be identified, a plan for improvement will be adopted and pursued until the school improves, and the district or state will provide substantial assistance toward that end. If the school does not improve after a reasonable period of time, it will be reconstituted—a new principal and new teachers will replace all or most of the existing staff and will vigorously pursue an agreed-upon blueprint for improvement. The district and/or state will provide technical assistance.

The use of reconstitution as a reform tool has spread rapidly in the past few years. Since 1994, San Francisco has reconstituted 10 schools. Chicago reconstituted seven last year. Rudy Crew, head of New York City's public education system, created the "chancellor's district" that comprises six elementary and six middle schools which he says will either be fixed or shut down. In Detroit, a clause in the district's contract with the union allows reconstitution of schools that have lost state accreditation and failed to improve despite additional help. Last year, newly reconstituted schools opened in Prince George's County (Md.), Denver, Chicago, Cleveland, as well as in San Francisco. But the process is controversial among parents, students, and, especially, teachers. The teacher unions have opposed reconstitution even to the extent of filing lawsuits to prevent it. Last year, an arbitrator sided with the union to overturn the Philadelphia School District's plan to reconstitute two schools. Portland's first reconstituted school reopened in September 1998 with virtually an entire staff of first-year probationary teachers because the union persuaded its current members not to apply for jobs in the school.

Those who have had the most experience with reconstitution insist that it is a strategy of last resort—an option that should be exercised only when intensive and sustained efforts to improve a dysfunctional school do not succeed. Moreover, they argue that reconstitution is not a solution in and of itself, but rather a mechanism to open a school to change by replacing an existing staff that resists change or doesn't know how to accomplish it with a staff committed to change and eager to improve. Opponents counter that wholesale "dismissal" of teachers further destabilizes a weak school, and that it makes more sense to leave existing assets, however few, in place and build around them.

Because there is little consistent evidence that reconstitution works and because it has been so vigorously opposed by the unions, parents, and students, most districts that have used it are now seeking alternative and less draconian ways of shaking up low-performing schools.

If the teacher unions cooperate to find other ways to replace incompetent or intransigent teachers in failing schools and clear the way for change, reconstitution would become largely irrelevant to the problem of persistently failing schools. The central issue is not whether schools are reconstituted, but rather what must be done to transform a failing school

into an effective school. The right interventions are essential whether or not a school is reconstituted.

Dealing with persistently failing schools is a process fraught with difficult political and educational questions, but the three most important are these:

What are the definitions of "failure" and "success?"

What interventions are most likely to transform a failing school into a successful school?

And what is in the best interest of the children?

Defining Failure and Success

Depending on how a state or district defines "failing schools," a strategy to deal with them is as likely to be based on political considerations as it is on educational factors. Judging by student scores on reading, writing, and math basic-skills tests, failure is more common than success in virtually every major urban educational system. So where the line is drawn between schools that are deemed failing and those that are not is somewhat arbitrary. Most strategies target the lowest-performing schools, but for the majority of urban districts, that is a subjective decision and just a matter of degree.

Chicago, for example, placed about a fifth of its schools (109) on probation in October 1996, threatening to reconstitute them if they did not improve. The criterion for identifying the worst schools and putting them on probation was that fewer than 15 percent of a school's students were reading at grade level as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. This is a standard-ized, norm-referenced, multiple choice test. Scores on a criterion-referenced test with items pegged to high performance standards would surely be even worse.

Nobody could dispute that a school is failing when more than 85 percent of its students are reading below grade level. But what was the rationale for selecting 85 percent as the cutoff? Why wouldn't a school in which 75 percent or more of its students are reading below grade level also be considered failing? What about schools with 50 percent of their students below grade level? If Chicago had used 50 percent below grade level as the criterion to target schools for probation, close to 80 percent of its 557 schools would be on probation.

It is reasonable to conclude that Chicago's criterion for defining failure was based on what officials perceived as "doable"-what they could afford in terms of time, money, and expertise-and what would be politically acceptable. Intervention is expensive and time-consuming. Working with the staff in a failing school to develop improvement plans, providing special training for teachers, bringing in outside expertise, finding more money and strong leadership-all are formidable challenges. Doing that in 109 schools, let alone four times that number, would strain any large urban system.

The decision to put the 109 lowest-performing schools on probation was intended to shock the system and send a clear message to all schools that the district was deadly serious about improving failing schools or

reconstituting them. It was also intended to reassure a worried public that this seemingly intractable problem of endemic failure was at last being seriously addressed. By setting a standard for failure that encompassed one-fifth of the schools, officials were acknowledging the scope of the problem. But by setting the cutoff point so low, they also fostered at least an inference, if not an illusion, that the other four-fifths of the schools weren't failing.

Had Chicago used a tougher definition of failure and put half or three-quarters of its schools on probation, attention would surely have shifted from failing schools to a failing district. That would have raised different, but equally perplexing, questions. Is the problem with the schools or with the system? Do schools become dysfunctional because of something they are doing wrong, or because the system has failed to provide the means they need to develop the capacity to succeed? Can individual schools be transformed without transforming the district?

Consideration of those questions would force state officials to conclude that the rate of failure and its concentration in major urban systems is too great for the cause to be found only in schools. The roots of the failure have to be in the larger institutional structures and the power relationships in urban districts that allow it and, indeed, cause it to persist and recur.

For educators and political officials, it is obviously easier and more practical to address the problems of a failing school than a failing district. Most districts have been struggling for more than a decade, with little success, to raise student achievement substantially. Few districts have the funds and the personnel to minister simultaneously to the needs of every low-performing school. And few states have adopted urban-education policies that recognize the special problems confronting big-city systems and provide programs and resources to assist them. So the districts define failure in a way that reduces the problem to a practical scale that central-office officials can do something about. And state officials rarely press the point.

Understanding the reasoning behind a district's failing-school strategy, however, does not make it more acceptable. If every child has a right to attend a successful school, then a policy that focuses only on some but not all low-performing schools is inherently unfair to some children.

A few states have attacked the problem at the district level. Both New Jersey and Kentucky have exercised the authority to take over school districts. Though their efforts have largely focused on eliminating corruption, nepotism, and bad management, there's an obvious link to school quality.

Maryland began placing schools on probation five years ago and almost a third of Baltimore's schools have made the list, which triggers a timeline requiring the district to propose and implement a plan to turn the schools around. The district's financial mismanagement and the existence of so many identifiably failing schools prompted a state-city deal to appoint a new governing board in place of the Baltimore school board and require a change in district leadership. It remains to be seen whether the shake-up at the top will lead to a substantially different approach to school failure in Baltimore.

The way states and districts define success is just as important as their definition of failure. Presumably, the goal of an intervention strategy is to turn failing schools into successful schools where students are actually learning at high levels. There are enough examples of failing schools being transformed into effective schools to prove that it can be done. But it is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming work.

The 109 schools put on probation in Chicago could get off the list if they increased the percentage of students reading at grade level to 20 percent or showed two consecutive years of gains in test scores. District officials were jubilant when the 1997 ITBS scores were markedly higher-especially among the schools on probation. The scores were offered as evidence that the strategy was working. The elation was not diminished by skeptics who noted that scores did not increase in half the probationary schools and argued that the increases were more the result of teaching to the test than any increase in real learning. As one Chicago reformer put it: "Getting less than a quarter of the kids reading at or above grade level is not anything to write home about."

Chicago recently removed 28 schools from probation because they raised reading scores to above the 20 percent level.

Defining success to be progress-raising test scores a few percentile points each year-sets a goal that may well be attainable and politically popular, but not necessarily very worthwhile educationally. Real success would require intensive and sustained assistance and resources. The Chicago district provides each probationary school with a "probationary manager" and requires it to partner with an "assistance organization" like a university. Plans and budgets have to be cleared with the probation manager, who reports monthly to the district. Each school receives from \$40,000 to \$75,000 in the first year, but the amount is reduced by half in the second year, and to zero in the third year. In addition, the district provides help with business matters to each probationary school and assistance teams of 13 people each are given responsibility for 10 schools. Whether a probationary school improves or doesn't over a three year period, the district's assistance tapers off significantly, and the burden shifts back to the school. Is that effort likely to build the capacity necessary for a school to succeed?

Although there are dramatic examples of failing schools being turned around, there is still great doubt about whether it can be done on a large scale, say, for most of the schools in a district. Given past performance, to believe that the interventions being undertaken in most districts will truly transform the worst schools is probably the triumph of hope over experience.

Again, Chicago illustrates the point. It launched one of the most sweeping system overhauls in the nation about a decade ago. Then, in 1995, in a brilliant political coup, the mayor took control of the district and appointed his chief budget officer as the district's chief executive officer. Despite enormous effort, Chicago has not yet been very successful in transforming even the best of its low-performing schools into truly effective schools.

Chicago is not exceptional in claiming success for its failing-schools

strategy. New York City officials expect the schools in the chancellor's district to be returned to their own districts within the year. In Miami-Dade, the list of critically low-performing schools is down from more than 45 to 11. All but 17 of Kentucky's original 53 schools identified as in decline have met their benchmarks. Houston identified 68 low-performing schools in 1992 and now only 10 are so designated under state system. These are impressive statistical gains, but the key question is where the standard for success is set.

How Is a Failing School Transformed Into a Successful School?

There are no quick fixes for low-performing schools. Indeed, the only sure way to transform dysfunctional schools into effective schools is to build capacity in them—to provide smart, strong leadership, a mission clearly and intensely focused on children's learning, highly competent committed teachers, clean lines of responsibility, adequate financial resources, and an environment that fosters collaboration, trust, and continuous learning.

That kind of capacity is not built overnight on the cheap. The process is underway in several districts, including El Paso and San Antonio. But the most notable example in the United States of an urban district completely committed to the strategy of capacity building is Community School District 2 in New York City.

With 22,000 students in 24 elementary schools, seven junior high schools, and 17 alternative schools with different grade configurations, District 2 is one of the most diverse in the city. The student body is 29 percent white, 14 percent black, 22 percent Hispanic, and 34 percent Asian; 20 percent speak English as a second language and 50 percent of the students come from families below the poverty line. In 14 of the schools, more than 70 percent of the students are poor, and in five schools, poor students constitute more than 95 percent of the enrollment.

As District 2 Superintendent, Anthony Alvarado spent 10 years transforming a rules-driven bureaucratic system into a very human, performance-based system that focuses almost exclusively on children and teachers continuously learning. By placing unwavering emphasis on professional development, Alvarado worked to build professional competence at every level of the system. In his first four years, he replaced 20 of his 30 principals. By 1995, he had replaced about half of the district's teachers. Every position was filled only after the most careful appraisal of the candidates. If no candidate met the high expectations of the staff, the search was reopened. Prospective principals were taken into schools and classrooms to observe teaching and asked to comment on what they saw; not uncommonly, they were asked to teach a class. Alvarado's careful attention in selecting principals reflected his belief that they are key to a school's success if they are given the responsibility for their schools and autonomy to lead. The central administration in District 2 is smaller than it was 10 years ago and leaner than in most other districts and made up of people who must justify their jobs to Alvarado in terms of the services they provide to schools.

From the outset, District 2 gave great emphasis to literacy and reading, and determined that every child would learn to read well. Outside expertise was hired from wherever necessary to work with teachers in school for as long as it takes. The premise is that the key to improving

student performance is to improve teacher performance.

The accountability system is clear and effective. It is based on as much relevant data as can be gathered-information about what is going on in each school, data about each individual student. In what resembles a medical model, the focus is on the history of the individual student and the status of each child. Students are not allowed to slip through the cracks. Principals and teachers make it their business to know each child and how he or she is progressing. The staff does whatever is necessary to help the child succeed, seeking assistance and advice, if necessary, from other teachers in other schools and even bringing in expertise from outside the district. Schools have considerable autonomy, and every adult in system is held accountable for actual performance. Like supervising physicians, Alvarado and his two top assistants "made the rounds"-visiting several schools each week in the belief that on-site observation and supervision are essential.

District 2's budget increased annually while most of the city's districts experienced serious decreases. The administration not only worked relentlessly to find outside funding, but it was ingenious in diverting every penny it legitimately could into teaching and learning. Funding for the professional development of teachers and principals, for example, increased from less than 1/10th of 1 percent of the total district budget when Alvarado took over as superintendent to about 6 percent last year.

Everyone is expected to be working constantly to improve some aspect of his or her practice, and the professional development toward that end routinely takes place in the school-in the classroom-where master teachers and principals coach other teachers. Outside expert consultants are ever-present in the schools, working with teachers and principals to help them improve their practice. Teachers work together in teams, observe each other teaching, visit other schools in and outside the district, and collaborate on ideas for reaching students or improving practice. Principals visit each other's schools and meet regularly to discuss instruction (and only instruction). In short, the uniqueness of the district is that it is a systemwide approach to school and teacher performance.

Alvarado is quoted as saying, "Our vision of instructional improvement depends heavily on people being willing to take the initiative, to take risks, and to take responsibility for themselves, for students, and for each other." He talks about hiring people who have a "deep personal and professional respect for each other" and "who are interested in making education work for kids."

"Without collegiality on this level," Alvarado insists, "you can't generate the level of enthusiasm, energy, and commitment we have. The worst part of bureaucracy is the dehumanization it brings."

The District 2 strategy for dealing with low-performing schools is to do what one would do for all schools, only do it first, do it more intensively, and do it continuously. And the "it" in this case is building capacity throughout the system. The approach might be considered "rolling reconstitution" in that the corrective interventions (including moving less effective people out and more effective people in) are undertaken continuously over a period of time in an effort to prevent the dramatic

step of abrupt reconstitution from ever happening.

When one of District 2's schools was put on New York's probationary list, Alvarado took the state's judgment as an indication of district failure. He and his top aides worked with the principal and school staff to formulate a detailed plan of action to turn the school around. They implemented a new professional development approach. Every teacher in the system is constantly engaged in professional development but teachers in the probationary school received more intensive coaching and supervision. Distinguished teachers were paid \$10,000 more to work with the school's teachers. The superintendent and his aides visited the school monthly instead of every four months as they do all other schools. In the case of District 2's probationary school, the percentage of students meeting New York state's standards rose from 27 percent to 74 percent in one year.

When Alvarado took over District 2, it ranked 10th among the city's 32 districts in reading and fourth in math. Last year, his district ranked second in both reading and math. So District 2 is indeed a success story. But it must be remembered that the success was a decade in the making. And Alvarado did not have to cope with the most dysfunctional of all types of public schools-the urban high school. It is also significant that as District 2 was attracting national attention for its unique model and hard-won gains, none of the other 31 districts in New York City-whatever reforms they may have been pursuing-were going all out to emulate District 2.

Last summer, Tony Alvarado left District 2. To assure as much as possible that the district would stay on course, he had groomed his successor over the years. As the new chief academic officer of the San Diego public school district, Alvarado will attempt to apply in a district six times as large as District 2 the lessons he learned and taught in New York.

What Is Best for the Children?

A question that is not asked often enough is: What about the children? At worst, a failing-school strategy may give the appearance of making progress without fundamentally changing the culture of schools to enable real teaching and learning. That result would continue to doom thousands of children year after year to a bleak future.

At best, a failing-school strategy will provide the resources, skills, and motivation to build capacity in dysfunctional schools and transform them into effective schools, as has happened with some, but not many, schools in urban America. But that strategy, sound as it is, takes years to produce results and requires a commitment and perseverance rarely demonstrated in urban systems.

While the worst-case scenario is unconscionable, even the best-case scenario begs the question: Is it fair to consign children to dysfunctional schools while an inept, bureaucratic, government system tries to muster the skill and the will to reinvent itself?

Fifteen years after national attention zoomed in on education (with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*), some reformers fed up with the lack of change are concluding that the best strategy for dealing with persistently

failing schools is to help children escape from them. They argue that alternatives to failing public schools must be created as a "rescue" operation. It is immoral, they insist, to allow children to be sacrificed year after year because public education cannot fix itself and probably is incapable of being fixed without major changes in the governance structure and the power relationships that dominate it.

Advocates for market alternatives to the traditional public school system array themselves across a policy spectrum that has parental choice among public schools at one end and vouchers redeemable at private and parochial schools at the other. In between are those who favor publicly funded charter schools freed from most of the constraints that hamper public schools and advocates of contracting the operation of public schools and districts to private entrepreneurs.

Public school choice, initially resisted by policymakers and educators, is now widely accepted. Some 32 states now have legislation permitting charter schools and there are perhaps 800 now in existence. A growing number of public schools are being run by private firms like the Edison Project under contract with school districts and states. And two major cities-Cleveland and Milwaukee-have enacted limited voucher programs, the most controversial of the proposed alternatives.

All of these alternatives are part of a market-driven reform strategy. Its premise is that public schools are mediocre or poor because they are part of a gigantic government monopoly and would work to improve themselves if forced to by fair and open competition. So far, there is little evidence to support that premise, although the market strategy is still in such limited use that it has not been fully tested. It is more likely that failing public schools in a competitive situation would simply continue to decline, lose students, and eventually go out of business-which free market advocates consider a proper result.

Opponents of the market strategy argue that charters, contracts, and, especially, vouchers will drain scarce dollars away from public schools and erode the foundations of the common school, which holds a place of high honor in American mythology. And that may indeed be the hope of the most ardent advocates of a free market educational system. But there is little reason to believe that private institutions would be significantly more successful than public systems in finding the highly qualified teachers and principals who are essential to an effective school. Or that privately operated schools would somehow overcome the enormous deficits that are inflicted upon the disadvantaged, immigrant children, and special education students they would now be serving.

Opponents further argue that voucher programs would eventually end up channeling public money to parents whose children are already enrolled in private schools. But limiting vouchers to the neediest of families in urban districts would seem to avoid that problem.

The case for a rescue operation can be argued persuasively. Howard Fuller, former superintendent of Milwaukee's public schools and an advocate for vouchers, does not believe they are the answer to the problems plaguing the nation's public schools. Nor does he think that competition is likely to motivate low-performing schools to transform themselves. Even if they were motivated, they would still lack the capacity for dramatic improvement, he notes. Fuller works for vouchers,

he says, because they offer the only hope of getting children out of failing schools as quickly as possible. Public education, he argues, is mainly an employment agency for adults, and children are not high on the agenda. Vouchers, Fuller suggests, would change that.

Charters, privatization, and vouchers based on need could legitimately constitute a strategy for dealing with the lowest-performing schools. And if public disenchantment with public education continues to increase, support for these alternatives might well increase proportionately. The majority of poor, minority parents, according to polls, would now send their children to private schools if money were not an obstacle.

But as a failing-school strategy, the market approach also faces formidable obstacles. Apart from the political opposition, particularly from very powerful teacher unions in every major city, the market strategy would be hampered by serious supply problems. If the Milwaukee voucher program, approved by the state supreme court last spring, were expanded from 1,500 to 15,000 urban students, would there be enough openings for them in private schools or good suburban public schools? If new schools were to open to meet the demand, is there any assurance that they would be effective alternatives to the low-performing public schools? Would there be an adequate supply of competent, committed teachers to staff them?

There is research that concludes that private schools are no more effective than public schools when socioeconomic circumstances of students are controlled for. Many private schools are successful because the students who attend bring significant assets with them. How would they fare when a majority of their enrollment was made up of the severely disadvantaged children who enroll in the most dysfunctional public schools? Catholic schools seem to be more successful with disadvantaged children than public schools generally, but researchers attribute that largely to the social capital provided by the Catholic religious community.

Many private schools are successful because the students who attend bring significant assets with them.

A market strategy would also be severely constrained if the dollar amount of vouchers was not large enough to cover the cost of education in private schools. The Cleveland vouchers are worth less than \$2,500 and Milwaukee vouchers are worth \$4,400. (The average public school per-pupil expenditure in the two districts, respectively, is about \$5,340 and \$5,560.) The funds available to charter schools in most states are not equivalent to the average per-pupil expenditure and do not include capital needs.

It should be clear to state and local officials that there is no strategy for dealing with low-performing schools that will do the job quickly or cheaply. Nor is there any real promise in interventions that are primarily designed to raise scores on standardized tests to some minimally acceptable level.

If policymakers and educators are serious about turning around low-performing schools they must begin by correctly analyzing the

problem of failing schools and crafting realistic solutions that address that problem. They must:

- * Recognize that school failure is essentially a systemic problem rather than just a school-based problem. Failing schools cannot be transformed on a broad scale without fundamental changes in the structure and political relationships of urban districts and the way their schools are governed.
- * Acknowledge that failing schools lack the capacity to improve themselves and require substantial and continuing assistance and support from the district and/or state to accumulate the necessary human, social, and financial capital.
- * Collaborate at the state and federal levels to formulate an urban-education strategy that gives first priority to city schools and provides the human and financial resources necessary to build capacity in the majority of urban schools that are achieving below acceptable levels.
- * Create educational safe-havens for the children who are being victimized by dysfunctional schools. The plight of these children is tantamount to a national emergency and requires the same bold and timely actions that this nation takes when dealing with major emergencies.
- * Change immediately the policies and practices that contribute to the problem and not to the solution, such as the practice of assigning the newest teachers to the most difficult schools, and using norm-referenced, multiple-choice tests and encouraging teachers to teach to them.
- * Recognize that failing schools are as much a political as an educational challenge and enlist the support of parents and the public in solving the problem.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education, which first sounded the alarm in 1983 with publication of *A Nation at Risk*, used the metaphor of war. "If an unfriendly foreign power had imposed on America the mediocre education performance which exists today," the report declared, "we might have viewed it as an act of war." That was years before most of the public was even aware of the real pathology in poor urban and rural schools. *A Nation at Risk* didn't even address at-risk students or dysfunctional schools. Mediocrity was enough to justify the comparison with an act of war.

The unrelenting destruction of human potential and the constant erosion of our economic and political foundations caused by the widespread failure of urban public schools is not unlike the damage that war inflicts upon a nation. Because it is not as dramatic or as sudden, and does not lend itself to nightly horror stories on the evening television news, it persists just below the alarm threshold that would galvanize policymakers into bold action.

The greatest challenge may not be finding ways to fix failing schools but finding ways to convince those with the authority to act that creating a system of effective public schools should be their highest priority.

*Ron Wolk is chairman of the board of Editorial Projects in Education
and a member of the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform.*

Reprints in smaller newsletter format can be obtained from:

The Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform,
Harvard Graduate School of Education,
Gutman Library, Room 461,
Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138.
Tel: (617) 496-0947.
E-mail: revillpa@hugsel.harvard.edu.

SUBSCRIBE	ABOUT THIS SITE	FEEDBACK	SEARCH THE SITE	JOBS	HOME
---------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

(c) 1998 Editorial Projects in Education

Vol. 18, number 10 page 43-47

Jefferson D. Diggs Academics and Arts Magnet
950 Mock Street
Winston-Salem NC 27127

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: 1/27/00

TO: J. B. Buxton

PHONE: (202) 456-5567

FAX: (202) 456-7028

FROM: Bobby

PHONE: (336) 727-2424

FAX: (336) 748-3151

Number of pages including cover sheet: 3

This is our state report that compares 1997/1998 when we were low performing and 1998/1999 when we were exemplary. If you need more give me a call I will be here at school until around 2:00.

Hopefully this helps. Let me know when you use this, if it will be published I would like a copy.

Parent Involvement Activities:

Walk through the neighborhood for Open House by the staff

Smart Parade through the neighborhood

Monthly parent meetings

Quarterly PTA meetings

Motheread-Sponsored by the local library

Weekly meetings with parents of students with discipline, academic and attendance problems.

Assemblies quarterly for students with improvement attendance, academics and behavior

"Dare To Dream At Diggs"
Excellence in Academics and Arts Education

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
 Number of Students Tested/Percent of Students at or above Proficient Level
 School: Diggs Elementary

Reading

All Male Female

Grade 3 1998	30/26.7%	12/25.0%	18/27.8%
Grade 3 1999	52/34.6%	24/29.2%	28/39.3%
Grade 4 1998	31/54.8%	13/38.5%	18/66.7%
Grade 4 1999	20/30.0%	7/28.6%	13/30.8%
Grade 5 1998	30/46.7%	13/53.8%	17/41.2%
Grade 5 1999	27/51.9%	15/46.7%	12/58.3%

White White Male White Female

Grade 3 1998			
Grade 3 1999			
Grade 4 1998			
Grade 4 1999	1/100.0%	0/0.0%	1/100.0%
Grade 5 1998			
Grade 5 1999	2/100.0%	2/100.0%	0/0.0%

Black Black Male Black Female

Grade 3 1998	28/25.0%	12/25.0%	16/25.0%
Grade 3 1999	52/34.6%	24/29.2%	28/39.3%
Grade 4 1998	28/53.6%	12/41.7%	16/62.5%
Grade 4 1999	19/26.3%	7/28.6%	12/25.0%
Grade 5 1998	27/40.7%	11/45.5%	16/37.5%
Grade 5 1999	25/48.0%	13/38.5%	12/58.3%

Mathematics

All Male Female

30/23.3%	12/16.7%	18/27.8%
53/35.8%	24/37.5%	29/34.5%
31/41.9%	13/46.2%	18/38.9%
21/81.0%	8/87.5%	13/76.9%
30/56.7%	13/84.6%	17/35.3%
27/85.2%	15/86.7%	12/83.3%

White White Male White Female

1/100.0%	0/0.0%	1/100.0%
2/100.0%	2/100.0%	0/0.0%

Black Black Male Black Female

28/21.4%	12/16.7%	16/25.0%
53/35.8%	24/37.5%	29/34.5%
28/39.3%	12/41.7%	16/37.5%
20/80.0%	8/87.5%	12/75.0%
27/51.8%	11/81.8%	16/31.2%
25/84.0%	13/84.6%	12/83.3%

SCHOOL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT REPORT 1998-99

Supplemental Data -- State, School System and School (in percent' unless otherwise noted)

340 360 DIGGS ELEM

The school system is accredited by the State Board of Education through 2000.

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White			
School	0.7	0.0	97.0	0.0	2.2			
System	0.2	1.0	38.1	4.6	56.0			
State	1.5	1.7	31.1	3.1	62.6			
						Attendance (9th month: ADA/ADM)	Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (March) 1997-98	Number Violent Incidents per 1000 1997-98
School	Male 49.1	Female 50.9				93.2	95.7	School
System	51.1	48.9				94.1	35.4	5.8 System
State	51.1	48.9				94.8	38.9	6.3 State
	Percent with Disabilities		Student Membership					
			1997	1998	1999			
School	16.2		259	305	265			
System	13.4		41,160	41,399	42,105	Avg. Teacher Supplement Local (\$)	Per Student Expenditure Local (\$) 1997-98	System
State	13.5		1,171,782	1,198,994	1,229,907	\$3,015	\$1,855	
						\$1,078	\$1,268	State

we are higher than system + state

*Percentages may not total 100% across subgroups due to rounding.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
--------------------------	---------------	------	-------------

001. fax	Fax re: list of names (partial) (1 page)	01/26/2000	P6/b(6)
----------	--	------------	---------

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Andrew Rotherham (Education)
OA/Box Number: 21294

FOLDER TITLE:

Failing Schools/ Turnaround

2011-0103-S

rc155

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

01/26/00 12:48 FAX 217 231 2030

GREDF QUINCY IL

004

Quincy Sam Davis
Joe Bogue 217-223-8700

Sandra Davis is an organizer of Quincy's Neighborhood Watch program, teen watch and other law enforcement programs.

Lynn Carr is the owner of Twainland Cheesecake Company in Hannibal, Missouri. P6(b)(6)

P6(b)(6)

P6(b)(6)

Mike Humphrey is a teacher at Quincy High School who heads a multi-cultural program to positively impact the graduation rate.

Ben and Helen Bumbry are active leaders of the black community who are involved in the Jackson-Lincoln Swimming Complex, the Redmon and Lee Community Center and Young Achievement for African-American girls.

*Terry Mickle is the principal of Washington Elementary School which serves Quincy's poorest residents for grades K-3. 91 % of the enrollment receives free or reduced lunch and 1/3 of the school is minority. In 1992 the school utilized Title I funding to reduce class size to below 16 students. Washington School has shown improved scores in reading, writing and math and had the second highest score in the district on IGAP writing assessment.

5 teachers
1/4 day
over
A

Joyce Staff is involved in planned approach to community health which reduces youth's access to tobacco, increases immunizations, and was instrumental in establishing a free dental clinic, an adult clinic for those without insurance or medical cards, and works on health issues within the school system.

Ann St. John is involved in Quincy's beautification project which utilizes volunteers including the handicapped to plant flowers. They recently planted red, white and blue petunias along the entrance to the Illinois Veterans Home.

War Veteran: One of two Illinois Veterans Homes is located in Quincy. We could arrange for a resident or official from the home to be on stage.

Cindy Roope is the coordinator of Teen REACH which meets daily at five sites in Adams County.

Beth Leach is an Americorp Promise Fellow working with the TeenREACH program and HC-HY to promote goals of America's Promise.

Frank Musholt is the General Manager of Hollister-Whitney Elevator Corporation, one of Quincy's oldest manufacturers which moved from an outdated facility near the river to

2 American Volunteers

Washington School

Utilization of Federal Funding

■ Title I

Hire teachers to lower class size

Average class size:

Kindergarten	10.5
Grade 1	14.7
Grade 2	15.7
Grade 3	14.6

After school and summer reading classes

Teacher training in reading

■ Title II

Teacher training in math

■ Title IV

Counseling services for students and families

■ Title VI, Innovative Education

Technology - computers in classrooms

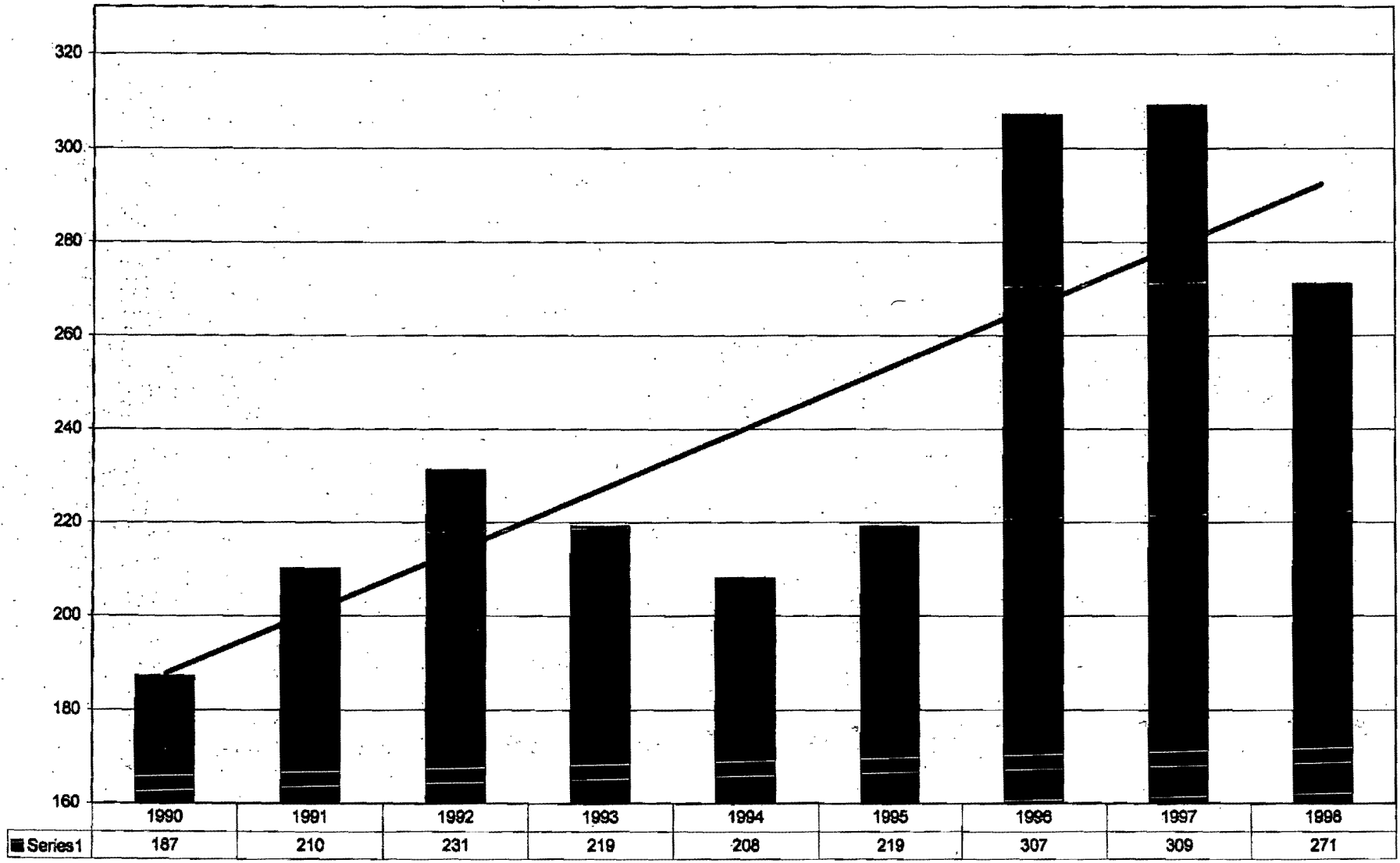
Teacher training

Instructional materials for students

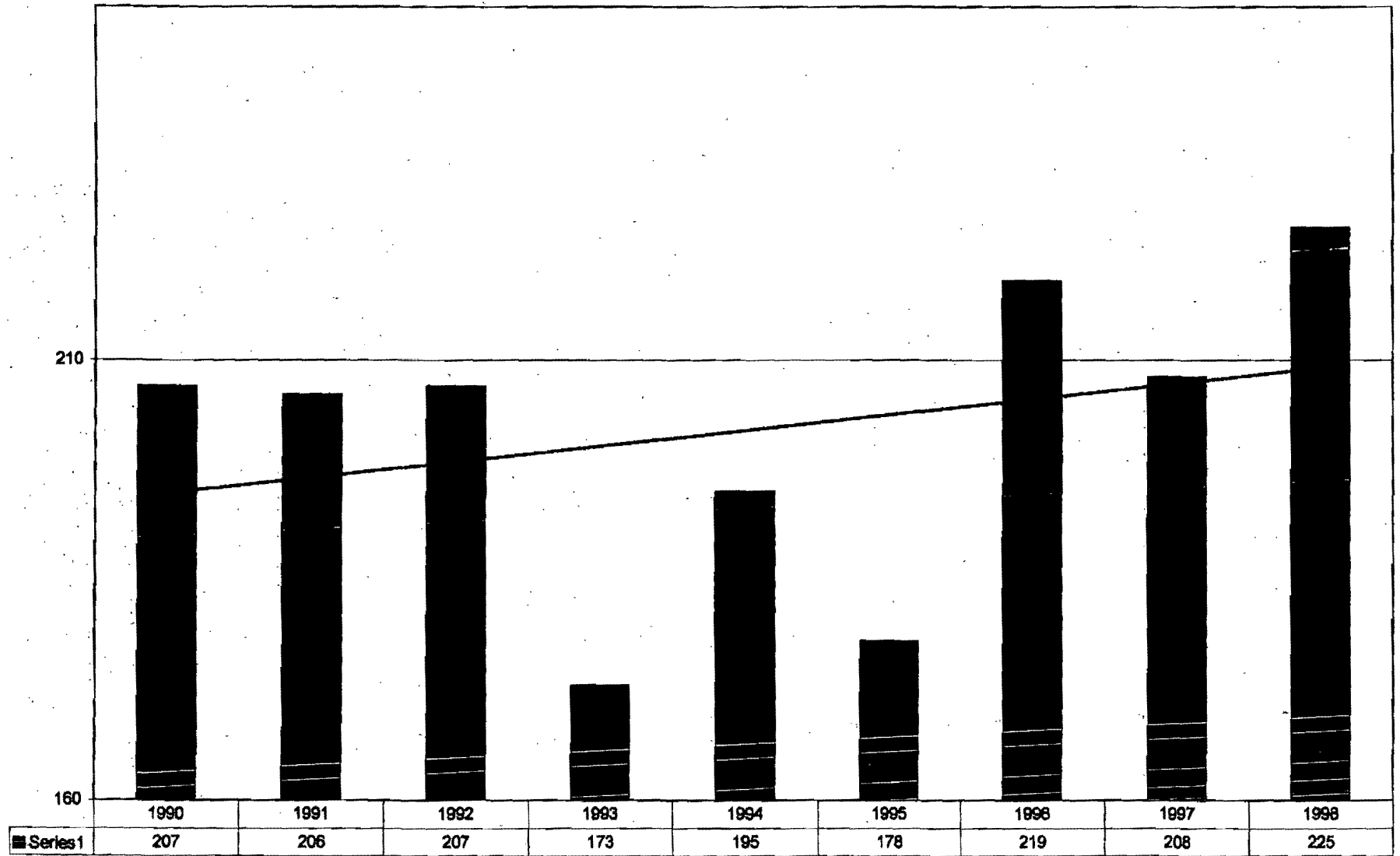
■ Title VI, Class Size Reduction

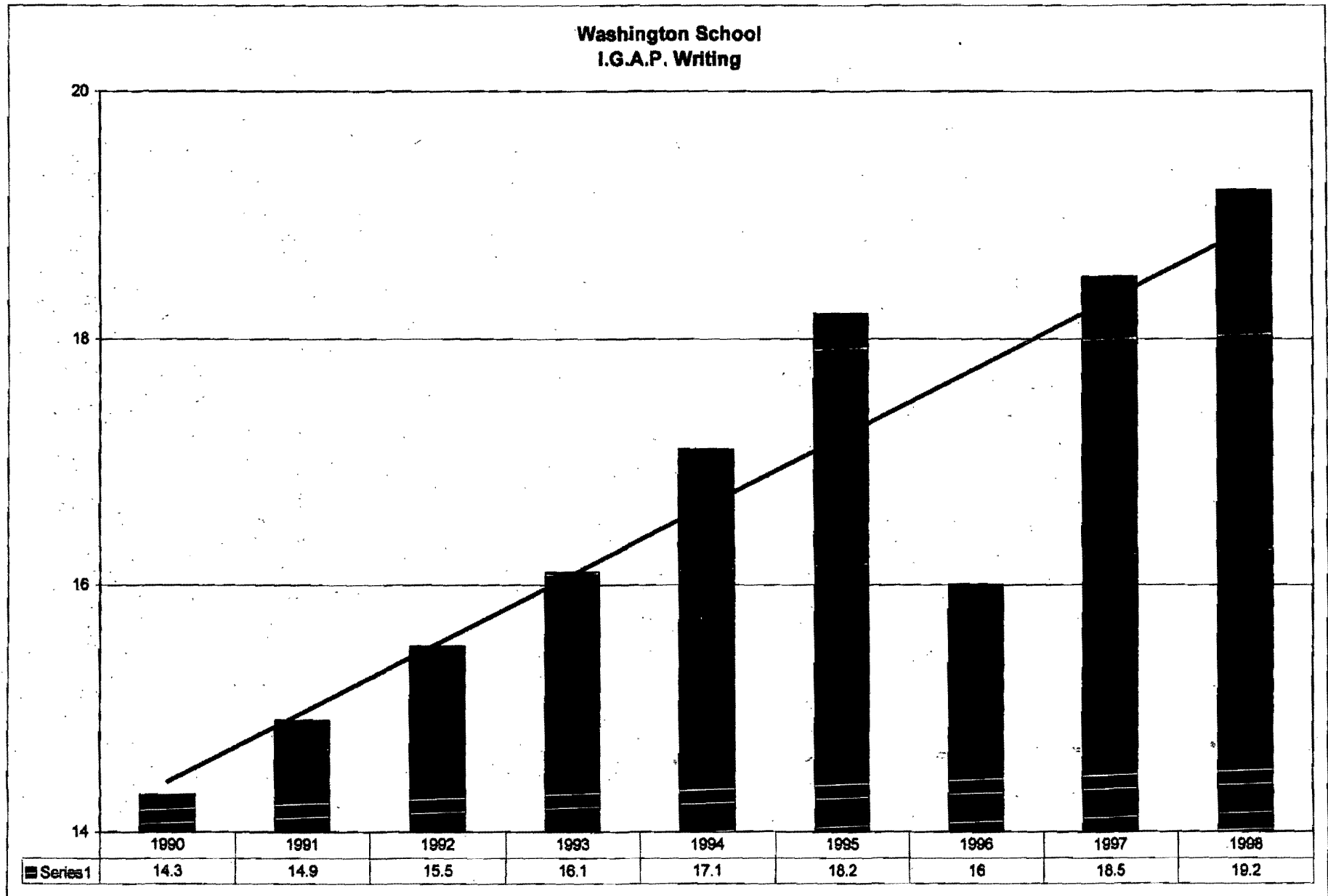
Hire teachers to reduce class size

**Washington School
I.G.A.P. Mathematics**



Washington School
I.G.A.P. Reading

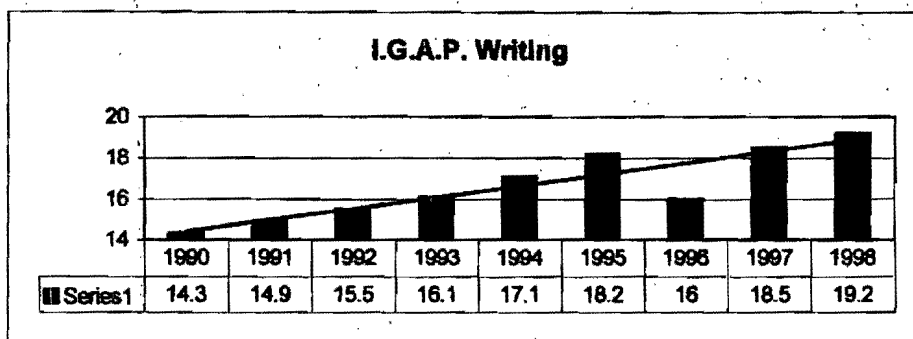
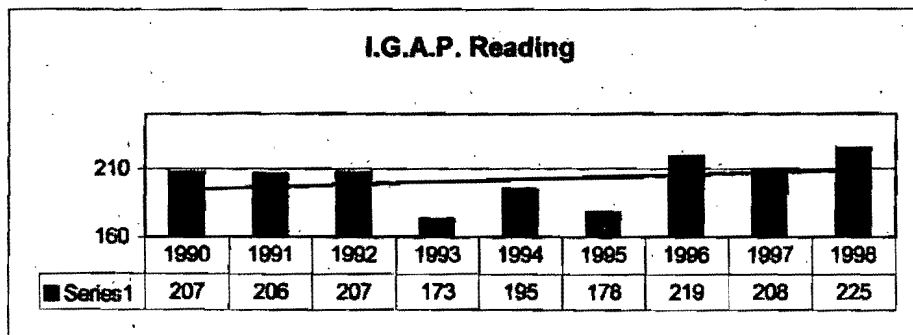
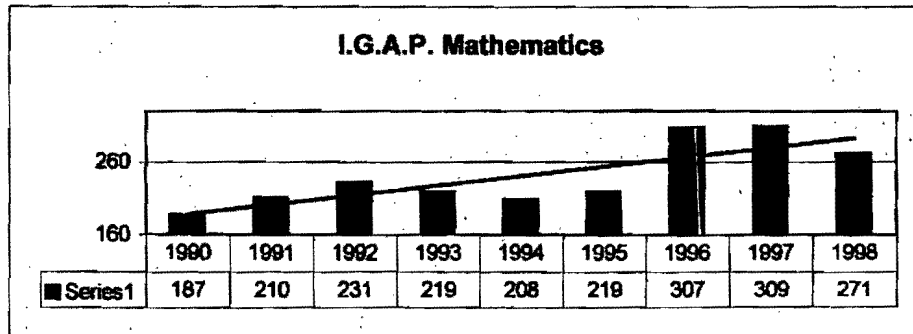




IGAP Data - Yearly Totals & Charts

Washington School
I.G.A.P. Testing
Scale Scores

	Grade 3 Mathematics	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 3 Writing
1990	187	207	14.3
1991	210	206	14.9
1992	231	207	15.5
1993	219	173	16.1
1994	208	195	17.1
1995	219	178	18.2
1996	307	219	16
1997	309	208	18.5
1998	271	225	19.2



SHEARER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shearer Elementary School takes pride in saying that we are "on the road to Shearer excellence." Our mission is to provide a safe, orderly and academic rich environment in which our students can experience success while nurturing every student to reach his/her maximum educational potential. Through combined efforts of students, parents, faculty, administration, and the community every student will become a lifelong learner, having the capacity to think, reason, and interact in a diverse society.

We have a diverse student population of 360. Our staff consists of 30 certified and 22 classified staff members. We are a school based council school and we have a very active PTO. We have had a very unique challenge for the past two years. Our school was destroyed by fire on October 29, 1998. We are presently holding classes at Central Baptist Church. We feel that this challenge has affected us in many ways. However, the staff, students and parents are to be commended for their extraordinary efforts. The new school is scheduled for completion by June 2000.

Shearer school is a school-wide Title One school. Because of this status, federal funds are used to enhance student achievement. We also offer many different support services such as: a family resource center, school nurse, before and after school child care services, and a very strong ESS program.

SHEARER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Volunteer participation has increased during the 1999-2000 school year. We have a solid line of communication between staff/faculty and volunteers. A core of three PTO mothers forms the nucleus of our volunteer efforts. These women spend a great deal of their time at the school. They run errands, run copies, and perform a wide variety of support services. In addition, they identify staff and student needs and use the PTO organizational committee structure to see that these needs are met.

Each of the nineteen classes in the school has a head room mother. These mothers organize events utilizing the services of other parent and extended family volunteers in the classroom. There are about seventy-five classroom event volunteers overall throughout the school.

The PTO, Family Resource Center, Library, and Title I collaborate to sponsor several large school wide events throughout the year with each organization working hand in hand with the other. In order to make these events a success, about twenty regular extended family members cook food, keep sign up sheets, clean tables, take money, provide information, and innumerable other tasks.

Three to four parents assist teachers with special projects in the classroom. One parent helps students whose parents are non readers with their homework. A retired teacher and three parents assist the librarian. Several parents help provide supervision for field trips. A local retired businessman provides support to the children in a family who do not yet have good English skills.

Rotary members have been involved for several years in a mentoring program at the school. About twelve participants have been coming on a regular basis to each lunch with students nominated by teachers and matched by the Family Resource Center. Recently three East Kentucky Power Cooperative employees are also participating.

Bib Brothers/Big Sisters of the Bluegrass and the Family Resource Center are sponsoring an in school mentoring program which now includes six community volunteers.

The Family Resource Center is recruiting parent volunteers to help in the classroom. Teachers have expressed a need for a variety of types of assistance. We now have one active parent plus five who are being matched.

Several individuals, organizations, (Altrusa, Lions, etc.), businesses and church groups give money and/or requested items either on a regular or as needed basis. For instance, the youth group at the First Christian Church has just completed a sock collection drive for us for winter needs and will soon be starting to collect gloves. Two ladies will sponsor dance or gymnastic lessons for children. Two local opticians will repair glasses for free. Local dentists donate tooth brushes and toothpaste to our hygiene packs. Motels give us small soaps and shampoos.

Jefferson D. Diggs Academics and Arts Magnet
950 Mock Street
Winston Salem NC 27127

Fax Cover Sheet

DATE: 4/26

TO: J.B. Suxton

PHONE: 202-456-5567

FAX: 202-456-7028

FROM: Beahy

PHONE: (336) 727-2424

FAX: (336) 748-3151

Number of pages including cover sheet:

Will send more tomorrow

202-725-5256

"Dare To Dream At Diggs"

FROM J D DIGGS ELEMENTARY 3367483151

1-26-2004 4:58PM

DIGGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

NC Testing Program -- Proficiency Summary

	1996 / 1998		1997 / 1998		1996 / 1997	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grade 3 Pre-Tests						
Math	25	41.7%	4	16.0%	0	0.0%
Reading	19	32.2%	9	36.0%	0	0.0%
End-of-Grade - Math						
Grade 3	19	35.8%	6	20.7%	13	50.0%
Grade 4	17	81.0%	13	41.9%	1	25.0%
Grade 5	23	82.1%	0	0.0%	7	43.8%
End-of-Grade - Reading						
Grade 3	18	34.6%	7	24.1%	11	42.3%
Grade 4	6	30.0%	17	54.8%	1	25.0%
Grade 5	15	53.6%	0	0.0%	8	50.0%
Writing - Grade 4						
≥ or = 2.5	13	65.0%	7	23.3%	2	40.0%

WORK IN PROGRESS
DATA HAS NOT BEEN VERIFIED

DIGGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student Population

	1999 / 2000						1998 / 1999						1997 / 1998					
	Male		Female		Totals		Male		Female		Totals		Male		Female		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
AMIN	3	1.2%	0	0.0%	3	1.2%	2	0.8%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	2	0.8%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
ASIA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
BLACK	105	42.7%	135	54.9%	240	97.6%	133	54.1%	139	56.5%	272	98.2%	138	56.1%	150	61.0%	288	98.2%
HISP	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
MULT	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	4	1.6%	5	1.8%
WHITE	0	0.0%	2	0.8%	2	0.8%	2	0.8%	1	0.4%	3	1.1%	7	2.8%	5	2.0%	12	4.2%
Totals	109	44.3%	137	55.7%	246		137	49.5%	140	50.5%	277		148	48.2%	159	51.8%	307	

WORK IN PROGRESS
DATA HAS NOT BEEN VERIFIED