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ABSTRACT

The United States must find ways to improve the quality of education for all its citizens, particularly those young people who are most at risk of failure. This document, the second of three volumes, contains detailed case-study data from 18 schools located across the United States. The case studies were conducted as part of a study that identified the essential mechanics of effective reforms for students at risk. The study also identified the incentives for and barriers to implementing and sustaining reforms and their effects on students. It focused on three aspects of school reforms: raising academic standards, enhancing the academic climate of schools and out-of-school environments, and preventing dropouts through the provision of second-chance programs. Each school profile contains a site overview of the context and program outcomes, a site description, a discussion of the existing elements of systemic support and high-resource-organizational (HRO) characteristics, an analysis of features that build community, and day-in-the-life student scenarios. Appendices contain an overview of programs and budgets for one school, the percentage of students passing "major" subjects at one school, a "three-column" Paideia School Illustration, a sample 1993 school report card, and an example of monthly outlays completed by a teaching staff. (LMI)

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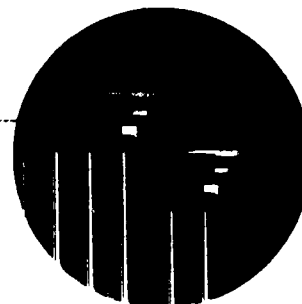
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*Education Reform and  
Students At Risk:  
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Volume 2*

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## *Table of Contents*

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<b>School A - West Central Texas</b>	<b>5</b>
Site Overview	5
Site Description	7
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	12
Analysis of Community	16
Students' Days	22
<b>School B - Northeastern United States</b>	<b>33</b>
Site Overview	33
Site Description	34
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	45
Analysis of Community	53
Students' Days	58
References	67
<b>School C - Midwestern United States</b>	<b>71</b>
Site Overview	71
Site Description	73
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	81
Analysis of Community	85
Students' Days	93
<b>School D - Texas</b>	<b>101</b>
Site Overview	101
Site Description	104
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	111
Analysis of Community	114
Students' Days	120
References	128
<b>School E - Pennsylvania</b>	<b>129</b>
Site Overview	129

---



Site Description	130
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	137
Analysis of Community	141
Students' Days	147
<b>School F - Pennsylvania</b>	<b>149</b>
Site Overview	149
Site Description	150
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	154
Analysis of Community	158
Students' Days	163
<b>School G - Midwestern United States</b>	<b>169</b>
Site Overview	169
Site Description	173
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	188
Analysis of Community	195
Students' Days	202
Bibliography	211
<b>School H - Northern California</b>	<b>213</b>
Site Overview	213
Site Description	214
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	219
Analysis of Community	222
Students' Days	233
<b>School I - Utah</b>	<b>251</b>
Site Overview	251
Site Description	252
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	264
Analysis of Community	268
Students' Days	276
<b>School J - Central California</b>	<b>281</b>
Site Overview	281
Site Description	282
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	285
Analysis of Community	289
Students' Days	295
References	306
<b>School K - Philadelphia, PA</b>	<b>307</b>
Site Overview	307
Site Description	307
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	316
School-Community Analysis	319
Students' Days	323
<b>School L - Connecticut</b>	<b>329</b>
Site Overview	329

Site Description	330
Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics	336
School-Community Analysis	338
Students' Days	342
<b>School AA - Pennsylvania</b>	<b>353</b>
Case Study Description	353
<b>School BB - California</b>	<b>359</b>
Case Study Description	359
<b>School CC - California</b>	<b>363</b>
Case Study Description	363
<b>School DD - Texas</b>	<b>367</b>
Case Study Description	367
<b>School EE - Southeastern United States</b>	<b>369</b>
Case Study Description	369
<b>School FF - Northeastern United States</b>	<b>373</b>
Case Study Description	373
<b>Appendix A</b>	
Overview of Programs and Budgets for School F	
<b>Appendix B</b>	
Percentage of Students Passing "Major" Subjects at School F	
<b>Appendix C</b>	
"Three-Column" Paideia School Illustration	
<b>Appendix D</b>	
1993 School Report Card for School G	
<b>Appendix E</b>	
Example of Monthly "Outlays" Completed by School G Teachers	

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## *School A*

### *West Central Texas*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

Many have asked the question how poor rural areas with limited resources can meet the complex needs of students at risk? For this reason, we chose to look at one reasonably effective approach to this situation. Eight cooperating districts in the rural hill country of west central Texas, attempting to overcome fiscal limitations, have pooled their resources to develop the Cooperative Alternative Program (CAP) at School A. CAP serves at-risk students and dropouts drawn from the participating districts. Decreases in student dropout rates and measured gains in grade averages have been carefully documented over time and are most encouraging (Rossi, 1993). The superintendents of the eight districts, with the leadership of the CAP principal, make up the program's management and governance board. Designated as a model at-risk and dropout recovery program by the Texas Educational Agency because of its favorable student outcomes, CAP's strategy of pooling resources from several school districts has been replicated in other rural areas of Texas. In 1992, CAP was recognized by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory as an "Outstanding Rural Program for At-Risk Students" from the southwest region, which includes schools in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana and Arkansas. CAP was also recognized by the Governor's Committee on Excellence in 1993.

Not all schools have the necessary resources or strategies to overcome barriers to reform. Also, as has been noted by DeYoung (1994) and others, rural schools face a number of fiscal and environmental challenges. Therefore, what are the systemic and school community factors that undergird CAP's success in economically and socially depressed west central Texas? How has CAP responded to its fiscal and environmental barriers?

Our aims in visiting the CAP program were to examine the robustness of reform elements in a rural setting and to assess the effects of system and school-community dynamics on the performance of these elements. Also, we wanted to investigate how CAP has adapted reform elements to meet the unique needs of their students. Finally, we wished to examine how CAP has adjusted over time to sustain itself in its environment.

Drawing upon the combined resources of the eight districts, including the compensatory funds available to these districts, CAP has many of the features that research suggests are key to successful at-risk and dropout prevention programs: small classes, individualized instruction, school-to-work links, flexible scheduling, sensitivity to differences in learning styles, and opportunities to participate in accelerated programs. When properly implemented, these reforms have shown promise at improving the performance of students at risk (Legters and McDill, 1994). By pooling the resources from the participating districts, the CAP program is able to provide individual and group counseling, vocational training, and paid-work experience.

### *Lessons from CAP*

Several key lessons emerge from a study of the CAP program. First is the school's willingness to adjust school schedules to fit with other demands (e.g., work, parenting) on at-risk students' time. Second, programs and schools like these need to be well connected to the wider community. Otherwise, for example, students may fear that a diploma will not lead to a job because community perceptions of the school and its students will lead potential employers to pass over students from the school when making hiring decisions. Third, it is very important that students feel cared about and taken seriously as students and as members of the community by both adults and other students at their school; with this also comes the mutual understanding that students will take on the attendant responsibility of such a roll. Fourth, the principal's view that "the system is not as important as the people" is also an important factor in the strength of the school. It is reflected in the valuing of "sidewalk meetings" and administrative open door policies, in the amount of involvement on the part of all staff in decisions and in dealing with problems—this flexibility is extremely important. Fifth, hiring decisions emphasize talent for working with at-risk youth, rather than assuming credentials are appropriate indicators, and some talented individuals who lacked the necessary degree have been encouraged to get their credential. Sixth, high quality vocational classes and classes that include explicit help in preparing for college (for example, knowledge about and help with financial aid forms) are also extremely valuable for these students. Seventh, for students and teachers with parenting responsibilities, the provision of high quality on-site day care helps both groups to keep their mind on their "job" since they don't have to worry about their children. Any of these aspects of CAP's program could improve the quality of programs at other schools. In combination, they help to explain CAP's success.

## *Site Description*

### *Setting*

School A is located on the outskirts of a small town in west central Texas, a small town of 5,410 residents surrounded by ranches, farms, and light industry scattered over rolling hills. The total population of the county is 9,710; about 85 percent of residents are white non-Hispanic, about 12 percent are Hispanic, and about 3 percent are African-American or "other". School A's County is not the only area from which CAP draws students, but the students it sends comprise over 25 percent of CAP's student body. Over 40% of the students at CAP are Hispanic. A look at School A's town may tell us much about the setting of CAP High School and the background of its students who live in this west Texas town and similar areas.

### *Poverty and Migration*

According to data collected by the Chamber of Commerce in School A's city, the population of the county has declined somewhat over the years, dropping about 15 percent between 1960 and 1990. The median age of the 1989 population was 44.2 years compared to a statewide average of 30.9 years. Lack of local jobs has forced many young people to move out of the town to seek jobs in larger cities. While there are some well-to-do families here who have benefited from ranching and other endeavors, average wages are low and poverty rates are high. In 1990, County A's per capita personal income was \$14,653, and the percent of its population living below the poverty line was estimated at 27.5 percent.

### *Social Problems*

Although City A's crime rate is lower than that of big cities, it shares many of the problems associated with impoverished urban areas. According to school staff, welfare dependency, dysfunctional families, violence, depression, child abuse, gangs, and alcoholism and drug addiction are major problems in the area. Educational and recreational opportunities for young people outside of school are few. CAP students report that besides driving around on the highways and throwing parties, there is not much for young people to do for fun in the area.

### *Lack of Community Support*

Many local people are not very sympathetic to students at risk. According to the school district superintendent, their attitude is that "if a student doesn't want to go to school, then why should my tax dollars go to keep him in class?" There is a long tradition of conservatism among the ranchers and farmers in this county, and a deeply entrenched belief that each person should pull himself up by his bootstraps. Describing County A, a newspaper article of 1878 states, "The creature most despised in this county is a 'dead beat'" (Terry, 1994). As a result of many local residents' suspicions that young people

who are getting into trouble in school and in the community are little more than "deadbeats," it is difficult to get local people to provide financial support for at-risk programs.

### *Positive Environmental Aspects*

Keeping in mind the challenges posed by CAP's environment, we should not overlook its strengths, which are also rooted in its rural setting. As one CAP teacher noted, the lack of exciting things to see and do outside of school has bad points and good points: on the negative side, it may foster boredom and acting-out behaviors; on the positive side, it may make it easier for teachers to engage students in classroom activities.

Another strength of CAP's setting is the seclusion of its large, rural campus, which may help school staff maintain a safe and supportive environment for learning. Unlike the setting around many urban schools, outsiders with drugs or weapons are not waiting on nearby street corners to start trouble or lure students away from school—there are no street corners in front of the school, just a wide country road between a quiet, green expanse of fields. The areas where students live are not within easy walking distance; students are bused to the school each day. Perhaps partially because it does not have to guard against vandalism and violence from outsiders, CAP is not barricaded by high fences and does not have security personnel. A few students mentioned that when they first agreed to go to CAP, they were afraid that because it was a school for students at risk it would look like a prison, surrounded by walls and iron bars on the windows. The peacefulness and beauty of the CAP campus quelled their fears and helped them to relax and feel comfortable in the school.

In addition to the advantages of CAP's physical setting, we should not overlook its human resources. The relatively low crime rate suggests that, in spite of the serious problems of dysfunctional families and poverty, the sense of community and social ethics here may not be as badly frayed as it is in many urban areas. CAP school staff noted that some residents who left City A seeking jobs elsewhere have returned. As one local resident noted, although the city may lack much industry and formal programs of assistance, "People around here know and take care of each other."

### *Program Development and Implementation*

About six years ago, new state requirements mandated that every school district must have an at-risk program and must carefully document how compensatory education funds are being used to serve students at risk. Under the new regulations, compensatory education funds cannot be used for school-wide resources (e.g., regular education teachers) unless schools can clearly show how these resources are being used to serve students at risk.

To meet these new requirements, the school superintendent reported reviewing research on effective programs for students at risk and deciding to create a regional alternative school for students at risk, paid for by pooling the resources of surrounding districts. He had developed a similar program in Carrollton. He believed that trying to implement meaningful reforms would be too difficult in the existing high school. Also, he felt that if

school-wide reforms were implemented, it would be hard to document how compensatory education funds were being used to serve the particular needs of students at risk. The superintendent at School A also dismissed the idea of creating an at-risk program within the existing high school. Although an after-school or pull-out program would be relatively easy to implement, he did not believe he could create an add-on program with available resources that would address the myriad academic and personal problems of dropouts and potential dropouts. He believed that young people need a more supportive school climate overall in order to stay in school, not just remedial assistance or extra counseling.

From CAP's inception in 1988 to the present, the number of participating districts has expanded from five to eight, serving students from four counties. School District A serves as the lead school district, overseeing administrative and fiscal matters. According to the school district superintendent, CAP initially faced a number of challenges. Some community members resisted the development of CAP, fearing that it would become a "dumping ground" for minority students. CAP also suffered in its first few years from poor relations between staff and students and a high staff turnover rate. The superintendent believes that the administrators and teachers who were initially hired to staff CAP were not prepared for the challenges of working with young people at risk. According to the superintendent, the staff felt "personally insulted" by the students' dysfunctional backgrounds and rebellious behaviors, and thus were unable to forge ties of mutual caring and respect with students. In the early days of CAP, the superintendent constantly had to run over to the school to respond to crises among staff and students. As new staff were hired, care was taken to make sure that they had the proper attitudes, skills, and experience for working with students at risk.

Over the years, as CAP has solved its initial staffing problems and demonstrated its effectiveness with students at risk, the support and confidence of the participating districts have grown. According to the superintendent, fears that CAP would become a dumping ground for minorities have not materialized: CAP's student demographics reflect the ethnic mix of the communities from which the students are drawn. Also, people within the communities from which CAP draws students can see the positive effects that CAP has on young people who were considered incorrigible.

#### *Staff and Participants*

Currently CAP is staffed with one counselor and twelve academic and vocational teachers. All of the staff were aware before they were hired that the students were at risk, and that many students had major problems. Once experienced teachers who want to work with this difficult population are selected, school administrators encourage staff to attend workshops, observe other school and community-based programs, and receive training in assertive discipline techniques, classroom management skills, learning style differences, and in other related areas. All of the teachers hold valid Texas teaching certificates, with several holding master's degrees and specialized certificates in vocational major or special education.



The primary screening device for the program is the Texas Education Agency's list of at-risk dimensions. Many CAP students are at risk on almost every dimension, including over-age for grade, high truancy or suspension rates, below grade level on basic courses, substance abuse, and pregnancy. Some students have been abandoned or abused by their parents, and some of these students are in foster care or live on their own. Once students are identified as the most likely to be at risk in their own home schools, faculty, administrators, and counselors refer them to CAP. Some referrals also come from juvenile authorities, who work together with the district schools to find optimum placements. In addition, both students who have already dropped out and those who are in danger of leaving school are recruited by word-of-mouth, through radio and television spots, newspaper articles and notices, and flyers distributed at area gathering places (ranging from Laundromats to pool halls).

The enrollment of a student requires the review and consent of both the sending principal and the receiving principal. Students who are expelled from their home schools as dangerous or violent can be accepted into CAP after extensive review and agreement among all parties, but they are not considered for acceptance when their needs for assistance are ones that CAP is unprepared to provide (such as would be the case for a student involved in persistent, violent law-breaking).

#### *Project Services*

CAP serves as a comprehensive high school for students from 9th through 12th grade, and it also operates a pre-high program for 13 and 14 year old students who are identified as at-risk. In addition, it provides educational services for adult students up to 32 years of age. CAP operates an on-site licensed day care for students and staff. More than a dozen students are single parents, learning child-care skills in the vocational program in which their own children receive care. Almost one-third of the students are eligible for and work through a JTPA-funded training program. Transportation is provided to all students, and many are bused daily from as far away as 60 miles.

In addition to the guidance provided by the school counselor, the entire staff informally assists students in finding solutions to many problems, such as obtaining food stamps, housing, or AFDC stipends. Because some students are completely independent from their families, school staff often serve "in place of parents." Drug and alcohol abuse is a major concern, and counseling services include referral and placement in off-site rehabilitation clinics. However, school staff note that there are too few off-site drug abuse treatment centers in the region. Lastly, CAP is unable to provide bilingual or ESL education; home schools have the trained staff for these classes and for special education programs.

#### *Resources*

CAP High School revenues and expenditures during 1993-94 were approximately \$796,000. Not surprisingly, most of the revenues (about 85 percent) came from the state of Texas. By contrast, only 5 percent of total revenues came from child nutrition funds, the second highest source of funding. Slightly more than 50 percent of total expenditures were related to instruction. About 20 percent of total expenditures pertained to plant



maintenance and operation. The remaining expenditures (slightly less than 20 percent) included food service expenditures (about 5 percent), costs relating to data processing (about 5 percent), library costs (about 3 percent), and guidance and counseling expenditures (about 3 percent).

Approximately 85 percent of expenditures pertaining to instruction were attributable to teacher and teacher aid salaries. Further, an additional 7 percent of costs pertaining to instruction were related to benefits given to teacher and teacher aids. Only about 3 percent of instructional expenditures were related to instructional equipment or teacher supplies.

Salaries also made up the highest percentage of administrative costs (almost 60 percent). Slightly over 20 percent of administrative costs were related to building payments. Lastly, most plant maintenance and operation costs were related to salaries (approximately 30 percent) and utilities (approximately 25 percent).

### *Project Outcomes*

All students who were enrolled in CAP during 1989-90 and who were between the ages of 14 and 19 years were selected for the evaluation (N=102). One hundred students at a neighboring high school who also met the state criteria for being at risk (according to the CAP counselor) and met the demographic requirements of the matching strategy were selected as a control group. Analyses of baseline differences between these students revealed that CAP students had recorded one-point higher grade-point averages for the year prior to participation in the program (i.e., 2.02 versus 1.02). The difference in recorded absences between the groups during the baseline year was not statistically significant. Virtually complete data were available for comparing average GPAs during the baseline year, and data for approximately 80 percent and 60 percent, respectively, of the student samples were available for comparing absence rates during this period.

Furthermore, as noted above, CAP has been recognized by several organizations for its work, including the Governor's Committee on Excellence in 1993, and the Texas Educational Agency; in 1992, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory designated it as an "Outstanding Rural Program for At-Risk Students" among programs throughout the southwestern U.S. Its approach has been replicated in other areas as well.

Parental involvement is a stated objective of CAP, but only a small group of parents participated as advisory board members, attended open house and back-to-school nights, and conferred with teachers. School staff note that some parents do not get involved because they do not care, while the majority may simply live too far away or have job responsibilities that do not allow them to attend school events.

## *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

The success of an intervention for at-risk students relies on two factors: the value of its guiding premises and the quality of its implementation. Ample educational research literature supports the concepts underlying CAP: individualized instruction in a supportive, stable community setting can meet students' social needs and enable them to address academic needs; and the content of the curriculum, if it is relevant to students' lives and life options, will maintain students' attention and effort. However, a concept is only as good as its implementation. To analyze the implementation strategy, we turn to an emerging literature on High Reliability Organizations (HROs), organizational structures which promote a consistently high level of operational reliability. Several elements of HROs are especially pertinent to educational programs. In the following pages, CAP is discussed through the lens of HRO characteristics.

### *1. Public and staff perception are that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

Perceptions of the importance of CAP may undermine the reliability of the program. The community initially objected to the program as a "minority trap." Evidence of its success has converted most of the detractors. However, lack of resistance does not translate into strong community support. Like the community, the teachers might be disappointed if the program failed, but not see failure as disastrous.

### *2. Program has clear goals, staff have a strong sense of their primary mission.*

CAP players agreed on central goals for CAP: prepare students for work or continuing education. Teachers and administrators stress helping each student acquire a skill and learn how to operate in the real world; this emphasis is evident in the course offerings (including sociology, psychology, parenting, and vocational electives) and scheduling (students' schedules are adjusted to accommodate work or other real-world demands). CAP's goals are most clearly seen in contrast to the goals in the sending districts; because these districts are accountable for test gains, they focus on test scores and college preparatory programs.

### *3. Program extends formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs).*

Management practices at CAP are determined by standard operating procedures including non-violent crisis intervention and Fred Jones strategies. Instructional practices are guided by practices such as individualized and cooperative learning and a policy of providing instruction through three to four different approaches for each class. Teachers have more flexibility in adopting prescribed instructional strategies than management strategies. During observations, several teachers used only one or two instructional approaches. However, all teachers responded consistently to behavior problems by ignoring small problems and quietly defusing potentially explosive situations.

#### 4. Program recruits and trains extensively.

*Hiring.* CAP teachers frequently face crises in which they must make immediate, sound decisions. The school relies on their professional judgment, and prepares for these situations by emphasizing management skills in hiring and training teachers. In hiring teachers, the principal looks for "a cross between Mother Theresa and Atilla the Hun." He has found that he can help teachers develop academic credentials but not management or interpersonal skills; in some cases, he hires teachers without certification and helps them earn their credentials.

This strategy has evolved over the course of the project. In the first few years, there was large turnover and very little training. Of the original staff, only three individuals remain. Initially, staff were hired for their academic credentials. It soon became apparent that many of the original staff were unprepared to deal with the behaviors of the at-risk students. For example, the first principal, whose background was in special education, was personally affronted by the students' behavior and was unable to interact constructively with students. Teachers now are recruited for their ability to work with this population. Teacher turnover has dropped: 100% of the teachers will remain for FY95, and only three left in FY94. Most staff are originally from outside the immediate area. Most of the teachers apply to CAP either because they want to work with at-risk students or because they have had trouble getting certified or finding other teacher jobs. CAP's credibility as a HRO is challenged by hiring teachers from the second group: on what basis is professional judgment valued at CAP if some of the teachers do not have the qualifications to be certified or hired elsewhere?

*Staff Development.* In addition to recruitment, staff development has developed over several years. In the first year, there was no preservice. During the second year, CAP had inservices on discipline management, changing modes of instruction, lesson plans, and individualizing instruction. In FY94, there were 10 days of inservice: two days on non-violent crisis intervention, management, and discipline; four more days on management strategies, using the Fred Jones commercial videotape; two days on cooperative learning, one day on learning styles, and one day planning an evaluation. In addition, staff go to workshops, sometimes at the behest of an administrator.

#### 5. At peak times, professional judgment is valued.

The combination of focused hiring and training had contributed to a staff competent and confident in dealing with crises. Several times during the observations, teachers subtly defused emotional situations before the situations could escalate. For example, one teacher dealt with a student's temper tantrum in class by waiting a few minutes after the outburst, and then taking the student aside to quietly talk with her. The student visibly relaxed, and contributed to class after that.

The principal claims that "the system is not as important as the people." It is clear that the staff contribute to CAP's success. However, the system of focused hiring and training contributes to the strength of the staff and the reliability of the school's program.

**6. Program has initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.**

CAP is in a constant state of informal self-evaluation and revision. For example, the middle school will be dismantled after a one-year trial period because students developed a negative culture in isolation; the older students (ninth grade) will be integrated into the high school instead. The teacher-student mentoring program was dropped when it became clear that teachers could not manage the additional responsibility. CAP does not hesitate to change inadequate approaches. Inadequacies often are identified by teachers and shared with administrators during the "sidewalk meetings" that occur while staff supervise the boarding of afternoon buses. Encouraged by the principal's open-door policy, teachers often drop by to discuss concerns. However, there is no formal structure through which standard operating procedures are systematically reviewed.

**7. Program is sensitive to areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required; it pays attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the organization's processes.**

CAP is sensitive to the schooling process, including both teacher and school performance. CAP relies on professional, competent teachers. Those who were not an asset to the program were counseled out during the early years of high turnover rates. During FY94, CAP implemented a new type of teacher evaluation involving two walk-throughs (five to ten minutes each) and write-ups, one observation, and a year-end conference with the teachers. Overall, the evaluation for FY94 suggests that teachers are on different levels, but in general implement the recommended approaches.

The program as a whole is not formally evaluated. However, each year the principal reports to the board regarding CAP's progress and other issues, including student outcomes.

**8. Monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.**

As noted above (4), teachers and administrators have a daily opportunity to informally share suggestions and criticisms during afternoon "sidewalk meetings." Beginning with the final workshop of FY93, teachers completed a two-page evaluation of administrative services. Teacher feedback is valued. For example, administrators have increased their contact with students in response to teachers' suggestions. Although the administrators value staff input, the principal is ultimately responsible for setting policy. According to the counselor, the most important factor contributing to the school's success is the balance of authority: the principal makes final decisions but does not single-handedly run the school.

**9. Program is alert to surprises or lapses; prevent small failures from cascading into major system failures.**

CAP operates under a school policy of defusing situations before they escalate. Staff frequently hear about and intervene in fights at the rumor stage. For example, during the study observations, the principal received word that two students would have a fight during break time. He patrolled the break area, and physically stepped between the two students when they eventually approached each other. Then he mediated a private discussion and resolution between the students.

**10. Program is hierarchicallly structured, but during times of peak loads, utilizes a second layer of behavior emphasizing collegial decision making regardless of rank; staff assume close interdependence and relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent.**

CAP operates within a clear hierarchical structure: the Cooperative Board of superintendents makes final decisions regarding the school, the principal hires personnel and makes decisions about the learning environment, and the teachers determine elements of the classroom. However, in times of crisis, any school employee is empowered to deal with the situation. According to the principal, the person closest to the problem—"I don't care if it's me, a teacher, or a janitor"—makes the decision. After the immediate problem is resolved, the principal, vice principal, or counselor discusses the issue with the student. The principal becomes involved if the action is malicious and directed. Administrators and teachers concur that there are approved methods to recognize and address problems—a handbook outlines expectations of students and training equips teachers with a common set of problem solving strategies. This type of agreement enables all staff to make appropriate decisions in crises.

**11. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order; responsibility for checking readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.**

Modern, hi-tech equipment allows CAP to offer a highly marketable technical program. The school maintains all the equipment required to operate professional print, business, welding, and carpentry shops. Maintenance expenses run between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year; keeping equipment current and operational is a high priority for the principal and teachers. Teachers maintain and update equipment for their programs, often selling student products to pay for materials. For example, the carpentry shop will build and sell a full house for the cost of the materials.

**12. Program is valued by supervising organizations.**

The eight superintendents on the Cooperative Board value CAP for several reasons. The school superintendent sees the program as the last opportunity to turn around debilitating cycles in the lives of at-risk students. Further, all of the superintendents need some program which targets at-risk students in order to receive Chapter 1 funds. Removing the

most troubled students from district schools serves the dual purpose of providing a targeted program and easing daily functioning for the district schools. Part of the value of CAP is fueled by fear of its absence rather than appreciation for the program itself.

*13. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

A long-term vision guides decisions about the program. Aspects of the program which develop students' post-graduation potential or affect a student's likelihood of graduating are protected from budget cuts. For example, the principal feels that it would be a mistake to economize on vocational equipment for short-term savings because of the eventual cost in skills and expertise of students. Social programs, such as health and parenting, and the three administrative positions are also high priorities; staff feel that the individualized attention and guidance provided by programs and administrators provides students with the support they need to remain involved in school. Reliance on Chapter 1 may preclude such difficult decisions by maintaining funding stability.

Overall, CAP shows many of the characteristics of HROs. Reliable implementation of sound educational theories helps explain the success rate of CAP students. However, there are several weaknesses in the program's implementation; especially important is its value to supervising organizations, the community, and the staff. If the districts were to confront a major budget shortfall or other crisis, support from these players might be critical.

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*Analysis of Community*

*Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Relations among teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between teachers and other staff seemed to be very good. Teachers spoke of working together to help students, and of a work environment that enables them to focus all their energies on helping students: 'Teachers aren't tied up with a lot of frivolous things outside the classroom; you can just teach'. Teachers and administrators have "sidewalk meetings" to deal with issues as they arise. Teachers spoke of feeling confident that the administration would provide the kind of support they need. This support included making it clear that gang rivalry—or rivalry of any kind—would not be allowed at the school. It also included a principal's door that was always open, an accessibility to the principal that students experienced first-hand as well. Teachers were also given the feeling that they could try new ways of teaching and of reaching students. They also mentioned that all staff play a role in making students feel wanted and in helping them to handle their personal and academic problems. Teachers seemed to feel they were part of a large family at the school, a feeling apparently shared by students as well, judging from their comments.

Students and the staff at the school seem to get along quite well. Students felt that their teachers and the principals cared about them both on a personal and an academic level, and this seemed all the more dramatic when compared with many of their experiences at their former schools. With the exception perhaps of newly-entering students, who are still



dealing with the baggage of their experiences at other schools, teachers find that students make them feel appreciated. Perhaps this occurs in part because teachers demonstrate genuine respect for students' potential. As one teacher put it, "These kids were told at their old school that they were just taking up space, yet these kids are brilliant. These kids are so creative. There's a lot of artistic talent here, writing talent, musical talent." Students at CAP seem to have responded to this type of treatment, turning themselves around thanks to the academic and social/emotional support they are receiving.

Parents do not seem to play much of a role at CAP, perhaps because of the distance many parents would have to travel to come to the school. Also, many of the students do not live with their parents. Teachers did mention that they are thinking about having a bus pick parents up to come to the school occasionally. With respect to the surrounding area, both students and teachers indicated frustration with the somewhat lukewarm community support—support that began as a lack of regard but which over time has improved. It seems that the remoteness of the school may help the focus on students but make it harder for parents and other members of the wider community to know what is going on at the school.

Relations among students seemed to be quite positive. Teachers said that students get along well together both inside and outside of the classroom, and students made similar comments. In general, students seem happy to be at CAP. "I really like this school," said one of the student focus group participants.

#### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Teachers and administrators at CAP share a simple and clearly-articulated vision: "The student is the most important thing in the school." One commented, "Teachers like the concept of the school—that it is here to help the students." That this idea means more at CAP than just rhetoric is indicated by the concentration teachers and administrators put into teaching and understanding the students with whom they work. This effort to understand students has led teachers over time to raise the standards they set as (by having confidence in students to begin with) they have learned that these students can do more than teachers originally asked of them.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* The vision held by the staff seems to have facilitated a day-to-day way of interacting that indicated they have a shared sense of purpose as well. Teachers and administrators do not seem to let conventions like status differences between staff or scheduled meeting times interfere with their mission. Sidewalk meetings and open doors seem a way of affirming the importance (and urgency) of addressing problems and issues at the school, and taking a new teaching approach is supported since the feeling is that the best teaching approach is the one that will help the student. (Compare this with a number of schools in which you would be more likely to hear comments like "We've always done it this way.") In general, teachers noted that the fact that School A is a small school helps to make it so there is not a lot of red tape in the way of getting things done. Similarly, the noted that the counselor has more time to talk to students than do most counselors at other schools. Teachers spoke of this ability to change, to be flexible, as one of their favorite aspects of the approach of the school: "If what we try doesn't work, we try something

new; we have the backing of the administration to do so." "School staff have sidewalk meetings in the afternoon—changes start right there; we don't have to wait." "We're not locked into something that's unlivable or that doesn't work."

*Shared Values.* One of the key values that seem to be shared by teachers and administrators is the right of students to start anew and to learn. Teachers mentioned that every classroom posts a list of students' classroom rights—"the right to be heard, the right to learn, etc." As one student put it, "Students are free to say what they think and to say what they want." Teachers here place a lot of emphasis on cooperative and individualized learning, values that spring from their shared vision. Teachers feel the importance of not being judgmental, and of truly caring for students. Students' comments indicate that these values are truly put into action, and their appreciation of the work of CAP staff clearly stems from this.

*Trust.* Teachers mentioned that their experience with administrators at the school has been a very supportive one. "They back us up if we're having problems with a student; they're very supportive." They also mentioned another key aspect of their experience at CAP: "Teachers don't feel they have to fill a norm here, they can be themselves." Part of how trust is achieved at the school seems to be the fact that "the classroom environment is very open—a lot of trust": students don't have to ask to use the rest room, and they can get down on the floor to do their work if that's what they feel would work best for them at that moment. "They can do just about anything unless they abuse the privilege." Students have come to believe that their teachers' really want the best for them, even if it's not always easy on the teachers. Two of the teachers in the focus group have had students show up on their front door, looking for help.

*Caring.* One of the teachers described how students are surprised and pleased that these teachers want to teach them and that they care about them: "The first year I came out here, some kids were talking, and they didn't even think we were real teachers—they thought we were just people... [pulled off] the street... I said, 'No, we're all certified teachers'...and they said, 'you chose to come out here or it's just you couldn't get other jobs?' And we said, 'No, no, no, we really wanted to teach here'..." Both teachers and students noted that students like this school because it is not as strict; there are no dress codes, and they're not judged by the way they look. As one teacher put it, "They're judged as individuals because all of them are, inside." Some teachers felt that the school's approach fosters an environment in which students themselves became less judgmental of others. "When you come from a judgmental society, then you tend to be more judgmental, and out here, we're not judgmental, and they kind of let their barriers down." One student said that this school gives you a second chance: "I quit seven years ago, and now I have me a second chance to graduate."

CAP staff clearly put a lot of caring into their work, and they have felt cared about and rewarded in turn. One teacher mentioned that students call her "Grandma." Another commented, "I think they like... the more involved—the family feeling that we have..." Teachers also seem to genuinely get along well together, socializing informally (carpooling, "nights out", and so on). "I think the teachers set a good example, because the teachers will visit with each other and with the students, and you know you don't feel bad



walking up to a group; there's maybe another teacher there, and they accept everybody into a group." Teachers perceive students as feeling close to a lot of people at the school, "everybody here, including the janitor, who's Hispanic; I bet everybody here has done some counseling of students."

One of the aspects some students particularly appreciate is the day care at school. "You can see three year olds doing a lot of good things." In general, students seemed to feel that "everybody's pretty close here." They commented in a number of ways on the caring and friendship shown to them by school staff; let's let them speak for themselves: "The administrators are nice—if you ask the principal for a piece of gum, he'll give it to you." "The administrators care about students and treat them with respect." "Teachers notice if we have problems." "If you're not feeling well, they say, 'What's wrong?'" "Teachers talk to us about the things we're interested in and the things they're interested in." "At my old school, teachers would talk behind your back to other students—they wouldn't care about your feelings." "Here school staff listen to you; at my old school, people would just ignore you and pretend like you're not even there." "If you have a problem, you go to a teacher." "They encourage you." "Everybody here is really close."

*Participation.* Teachers seem to have full participation in decision making at the school. They seem comfortable putting forward ideas and, after sidewalk meetings, etc. to confer with colleagues, putting those ideas into action. Decisions at the school seem to lack the one-sided nature characteristic of some schools ("This is my decision for you to implement"). Perhaps this is a contributing factor as well to the active involvement students have come to take in their own learning and in dealing with potentially problematic social situations at their school.

*Communication.* Communication at the school seems to have an open and caring nature. Teachers emphasized that the communication lines are always open at the school; they don't have to wait to talk to the principal—his door is always open, and communication among teachers and administrators occurs when needed. Students gave the same impression of how problems and issues are handled. "If anything happens to anybody, everybody knows about it." "We always handle it real quick—with teachers and everybody—take care of the problem." Students noted that "if you're absent, they call and find out why." They also suggested the importance of communication when comparing CAP to their old schools: "At my old school, nobody talked to me unless it was about me, to start a fight." "At my old school, you had to be a basketball player, a football player, or a cheerleader, to have teachers talk to you." "They didn't care—if you fail, you fail!" "They didn't care—I mean, they thought it was not right for a girl my age to be pregnant, and so they just treated me mean." "I have problems at home, too, you know; at least I know I got someone to talk to... I can talk to the principal or the assistant principal [here]... I can talk to someone... People listen to you."

*Respect and Recognition.* One of the things that at-risk students often suffer from (especially once they are labeled "at-risk") is the sense that they are inferior students or "bad kids". Added to this is probably often the sense that they have been put in classes that are themselves not very good. In this context, some of the anecdotes provided by teachers are particularly illustrative: "One of the students said today... 'Miss, didn't this place out

here start for bad kids at one time?" She went on, "The student knew full well that he'd gotten kicked out of his old school, so he himself could be described as a bad student, but he doesn't view himself or the school as being like that anymore." This respect for students as persons and recognition of their potential as students seems to be a key contributing factor to the way students have responded to instruction at this school, and teachers noted a few times that "most of the students don't want to go back to where they were. They're comfortable with this school, and they know people here care about them." Student comments echoed these, especially the part about CAP being a better place to be. They felt that the administrators and other treat them with respect. As one student put it, "Everybody treats me real nice and everybody's real respectful. So that makes me feel real good. Because at regular school, nobody cares about you, they just laugh at you and stuff and in your face, and here they respect you... They don't give you a reason to not want to come to school." Other students added their own similar experiences.

Teachers also spoke about how the "hands on projects that students get involved in [e.g., building things for the school such as bookcases]—I think it makes them respect [things]... They know the work that goes into it, so they, you know, have a little more feel for it." One student, commenting on their experience at CAP, said, "I've got my self-respect back."

*Incorporation of Diversity.* Teachers feel that as students spend time at the school, they become more receptive to making friends across boundaries, rather than, for instance, staying in small groups based on the district they come from. They noted that the Hispanic students tend to stay together somewhat more outside class, and they suspected this was due primarily to language barriers. They felt that students of different cultural backgrounds related quite well together. Students confirmed this: when asked "How do students of different ethnicities relate to each other here?", they responded, "We just all get along. There's no discrimination against anybody—none." "Everyone's treated equal—no discrimination."

*Teamwork.* Teachers remarked that the stress on cooperative learning seems to be beneficial both academically and socially. "Working in groups helps the students get along." They also noted that "there's no competition between teachers...it's like family." This latter point seems evident from the way teachers and students respond to problems at the school.

*Affirmation.* Although both students and teachers wish that the surrounding communities were more aware of what is going on at the school, teachers indicated that, with each year, as they graduate more students with better grades and test scores, the communities from which the students come are "starting to look at us and say, 'Hey, you guys really are doing a good job.'" The Superintendent of School A recently commented, "You guys are really doing something—you're not just running them through—you're working with them." Business people have been among those who are starting to appreciate the school; students have the concern, though, that the school has not yet gotten the credit it deserves. They feel the school has a bad reputation: "If you go looking for a job, and you put down [where] you're from...they don't call you 'cause you're from this school."

22

Nevertheless, teachers feel affirmed by their students: "Kids can be out of school two and three years, and they'll still come up to you and hug you and tell you that they appreciate you."

*Conflict Resolution.* The only time conflict was mentioned during the teacher focus group is itself very indicative: "The goal of the school since it started [was] we're here to help the kids. And, if we get in conflict, we can't help kids." Students said the school has very few fights, especially when compared with the schools they came from. Some added that they themselves are less prone to getting in conflicts since coming to CAP: "When I was going to my other school, I was always in trouble... I was always fighting and stuff like that. I came over here and, you know, I changed a lot 'cause you know a lot of these people... they're real nice about it... You ask them something [and] you know they won't come up with a smart remark... It's all right... They don't start saying something behind your back or nothing like that. At the other school, they would start talking to other students about you. They wouldn't care about your feelings, you know..." Another said, "I don't pick on people anymore." Students noted, "If there's a problem with students, school staff find out, and they work with the students here." "If something's going to be said about you, it's said straight to you...[there's] no little groups."

*Development of the New Members.* Students are encouraged to play a role as members of the school community through adding to the physical resources of the school and through helping to socialize new students.

Also, as noted above, both students and teachers agreed that students who have been at CAP for awhile are easy to get along with. This may be in part due to the role students who are acclimated to the school play in helping other students adjust to a caring, understanding environment. Teachers observed that the older kids often take newer kids under their wing. "After they've been here a couple of years, they realize what the school is all about and they begin to realize what education is all about, and they begin to take it seriously or they have by then... [Then] they're a good influence on the new students, and, say, tell them to straighten their act up."

*Links Beyond the Community.* Although not much was said about trying to create links beyond the school community, staff do seem to be trying to establish stronger and more positive ties with parents (such as providing them with transportation to the school) and with the community surrounding the school. There seems to be a growing recognition on the part of families, neighbors, and business people of the work the school is doing

#### *Community Investment Behaviors.*

Teachers described some of the ways in which students invest in the school: The shop class constructed the school's tether ball pole, built book shelves, and made things for the school's day care. Other students make puppets for the kids in daycare, and students in the reading class read to the kids in daycare. Also, as noted above, students tend to participate in socializing new students to the school. Students themselves volunteered that they "always defend this school" when other people say bad things about it. Teachers indicated that parents, however, do not invest much of themselves in the school. One student, on a

related note, made the following comment when asked what need to be changed to make education better: "the love that parents have for their kids... My mom never pays attention to [my little thirteen year old sister]. She don't show her any love... Little kids need attention from their parents—and love—and support. Because if they don't have that from their parents they're going [to] look for it out in the street, or anywhere, and that's sad."

Although it is probably an "investment" that all schools serving at-risk youth should make, students repeated over and over again how much of a help they found the vocational courses (e.g., graphic arts, welding, computers) and help with preparing for college. They mentioned that six weeks of their English class was devoted to college, and also how teachers help them with financial aid. Students indicated interest in going to college, and volunteered career aspirations that included becoming a nurse, doctor, or lawyer. Also, the availability and quality of the day care seems both to be an indication of the school's investment in its students and to allow students who are parents to concentrate better on their studies. "I can come back to school and don't have to worry about [my baby]."

### *Community Resources*

The layout of the school itself seems to act as a resource for community, at least among school staff and students. The commitment of the teachers who have chosen to teach there is also a resource, as are, increasingly, the school's students. One student, for example noted that they've gotten two cousins to start at CAP.

### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

The small size of the school was thought to be important by both teachers and students. In trying to explain the difference between CAP and other schools, one student said: "There's so many students in the other schools—there's a lot more students than there are here, so I guess we get individual attention. Over there, if they give each student individual attention they'd never finish 'cause there's so many students."

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting the CAP program, two students were followed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe a typical day in the lives of two students, whom we will call "Luz" and "Bobby".

#### *A Day with Luz*

"Luz" is a warm, friendly sixteen year old Latina with an engaging openness and sincerity. In the corridors she speaks to everyone she passes, complimenting a teacher with a new dress, patting students on their arms to ask how they're doing. Her thoughtful responses to questions show a maturity beyond her years. One of her teachers comments that Luz's

radiant personality just seems to light up the classroom. Generally hard-working and respectful in the classroom, it is hard to imagine that Luz is a student with a history of poor academic progress. To understand why Luz is a student at risk, we need to understand her family background and previous experiences in school.

Luz' family members are migrant farm workers. Before Luz came to CAP, she missed a lot of time from school traveling with her family to pick crops. Her living conditions have often been harsh. Last year, while picking crops in Minnesota, she stayed in housing that lacked hot water and an indoor bathroom. The long hours of stoop-work exhausted her, and the hot sun and the chemicals sprayed on the crops gave her rashes. Even when it rained, she had to work in the fields. She says she doesn't know which was worse—being soaked by the rain or burnt by the heat.

Currently Luz lives with her aunt while her mother travels picking crops. Luz doesn't want to pick crops this year because she likes CAP and doesn't want to lose any more time pursuing her high school diploma. Luz is concerned about her family, especially about a younger sister who is only thirteen yet might be pregnant. Luz says she thinks her sister gets into trouble because her mother doesn't show enough love and attention. "When kids don't have someone at home to give them love," Luz says, "they look for someone to love them on the street."

Before Luz came to CAP, she didn't enjoy school. She said that at her old school teachers yelled at and were rude to students. The campus felt like a prison—students had to show their identification cards and passes to move around in the school. Students often treated each other badly, putting down students who were different in some way. A short, chubby young woman, Luz says softly that her old school "was for middle class kids. You had to be pretty or have money or dress nice or be skinny, you had to fit in, or you were nobody. Nobody...People would just laugh in your face." At CAP, she enjoys the way teachers care about and respect students, and she feels accepted and liked for who she is by the other students. "At this school," Luz says, "you're somebody no matter what you look like, or if you're rich or poor."

On this particular morning, Luz's first class is English. There are only nine students in the class. Luz sits in the front of the classroom, actively involved in the day's assignment. The English teacher is focusing on developing the students' skills at describing things they perceive with their senses, with an emphasis on the sense of touch. She begins the lesson by having each student close his or her eyes and pull an object out of a "stuff" bag. Each student has to describe how the object feels (e.g., rough or smooth) and determine what the object is without looking at it.

Luz and most of the other students seem to enjoy the guessing game, but a few students seem shy and afraid to speak aloud. One young man in the back of the class mumbles he doesn't want to participate; on the previous day, this student mentioned in a focus group that he is a loner. He stares at his desk, his long legs sprawled out, absorbed in his own thoughts. The young man sitting beside him says eagerly that he wants to participate; his enthusiasm seems to spark the interest of the withdrawn young man.



After the guessing game, the teacher involves the students in a fast-paced, progressively harder series of writing assignments related to the sense of touch. While the students work, the teacher plays a soothing jazz recording by Kenny G. Some students choose to complete their assignment stretched out on the floor. (The teacher later explains to me that she tries to provide a flexible, comfortable environment for students with varying learning styles.) If students have trouble spelling a word as they write, they call out the word and the teacher spells it for them. After each assignment, the teacher asks students to read what they have written. Luz seems eager to please and do a good job, asking more questions than the other students. To help her with her work, she asks to use a thesaurus. The withdrawn young man in the back of the classroom murmurs reluctance about writing; the teacher sits next to him and quietly encourages him to think of an experience to write about. After the teacher speaks to him, he tries to work on the assignment.

Luz finishes her assignment early and asks the teacher if she can go to the library. The teacher gives her a pass. Luz and I amble over to the library, a small bungalow located a short distance from the main school building. It is a warm, gorgeous day outside. The sky is a deep blue over the large, green campus. Along the pathway to the library, we pass by the pre-school's yard decked with colorful toys. The school counselor passes by, asking if we've seen any of the wild turkeys that sometimes strut past the school fence. The school's border is so far away that I have trouble seeing the fence, let alone any wild turkeys.

Inside the library, Luz explains to me that ever since she was a child, she's been writing down the lyrics to country singer George Strait's songs. She types up her handwritten copies on one of the computers in the library's small computer lab. Eventually, she wants to make a book with a laminated cover filled with George Strait songs. While Luz works, she whispers to me that the librarian is very nice and helpful to students. The librarian circulates among the young people, chatting with them and asking about a student who dropped out. Luz tells me that one boy who dropped out of CAP was a gifted poet. She's saved the poetry he gave her on a floppy disk. Although he was very smart and talented, he dropped out after a friend of his was killed in a gang fight. Luz says "he felt too hurt" to continue going to school.

A bell rings for the mid-morning break. Luz and I walk over to the gym, passing the smoking area. A few students stand around or sit on the benches in the smoking area, puffing on cigarettes. School administrators are ambivalent about the smoking area. On the one hand, they don't like students smoking. On the other hand, they're afraid that if they don't allow habitual smokers to have their cigarettes, they might be less likely to come to school. Also, they fear that students might sneak off campus to smoke in the fields surrounding the campus and accidentally start a fire when they drop the cigarette butts.

Inside the gym Luz joins students playing a friendly game of basketball. Luz, one of the few girls playing basketball, is often thrown the ball after the boys catch rebounds to allow her a chance to make shots. The gym is old and dimly lit by high windows, but the students seem to have fun.

When the bell rings for the next period class, the students stop playing. Luz' next class is biology. There are fifteen students in this class, and on this particular day they are restless and fidgety. The teacher tells students they will have a test and a desk assignment today.

One student reminds teachers they haven't watered their plants. The teacher allows the students to water their plants in an adjoining lab. Each student has his or her own plant to care for. In addition to plants, there are fish and guinea pigs in the lab. The students seem to enjoy being there.

After about ten minutes, the students return to their desks and begin work on their desk assignments and "open-book" tests. There is a lot of chitchat and fidgeting. As students work on their tests, some call out "ma'am!" or "miss!" in frustrated or surly voices to get help from the teacher. The teacher circulates patiently among the students. If a student sounds rude, the teacher does not respond. One student in the back of the room mutters for the teacher to "get her butt over here now," and his buddies snicker. The teacher ignores the student, perhaps trying to avoid an escalation of the situation. The student who spoke rudely resumes working on his assignment.

Although Luz is not disrespectful, she appears to be doing more chatting than working. About half an hour after the teacher gives the desk assignment, I overhear the girl she's been chatting with sigh, "Okay. I guess we should get started on this test." While the two girls work on the test, they continue whispering to each other. Finally, the teacher breaks up the chatting by making Luz sit across the room.

After the class completes their test, they go to lunch. Luz, her friends, and I stand in the cafeteria line. The young people banter good-naturedly among themselves. A girl whispers that one of the cafeteria workers is mean and won't give students food if they are late. Many of the students moan that they wish the cafeteria food was better. Today's lunch is spaghetti--the young people say I'm lucky I came today, because the spaghetti here is pretty good.

During lunch, Luz and her friends talk about themselves. Luz' lunch buddies are a diverse group: Latina, African-American, European-American, and multi-ethnic young women. One young Latino man sits at the table and bashfully teases Luz. Luz tells me that she and the young man went to the same school before they came to CAP. The students tell me that they like this school because people care about each other here, the schedule is flexible for students with jobs, the daycare for students with children is excellent, and the school only requires you to take the basic courses you need to get a diploma.

As most of the students finish their lunch and wander away, Luz shows me pictures of her family and talks about her background. She says she comes from a culture where people share things such as food and money with each other. If one person doesn't have money, he or she isn't made to feel bad because everything is shared in common. Although students at CAP are nice, they don't share very much. Luz says that because students here don't share much, she doesn't know if she's going to go to a statewide meet with the other students in her welding class. All of her travel and hotel expenses will be paid by the school, but she won't have any spending money. She's afraid that she'll be the only one there with no money to spend, and she'll stick out and be embarrassed. She says that in her culture people share whatever they have, and so people don't feel self-conscious if they don't have as much as someone else.

While we finish our lunch, two of the cafeteria workers, a Latina and a European-American woman, come over and sit at our table. Like Luz, the European-American cafeteria worker has been a migrant worker. The woman and Luz exchange stories about picking crops. They debate which crops are harder to pick. Harvesting artichokes is back-breaking stoop-labor; picking corn suffocates you as the thick green leaves close in around you. Luz says that her experiences as a migrant worker make her want to succeed in school, because she doesn't want to do that kind of work all her life.

After we finish our lunch, Luz and I walk over to one of the administrative offices. Luz wants to make photocopies of pictures of her baby brother to send to her cousins. A staff person chats with Luz and helps her work the photocopy machine, adjusting the setting until the copies come out not too dark and not too light. The staff person teases her about having a "shadow" following her all day. The atmosphere in the office is relaxed and friendly.

After we make the photocopies, Luz goes to her last class of the day, a double-period in which she works in the welding shop. Luz says that welding is her favorite class. As we enter the shop, Luz shows me the swing that she has welded from scrap materials for her little brother. It seems well-constructed, and she appears proud of it.

As the first welding class of the double-period begins, there are four students in the class. One side of the welding shop is open to the outdoors. Behind the welding shop are the houses of the vice-principal and the counselor, who live on campus. The students unload a motorized go-cart from a trailer outside and push it into the workshop. They work on the go-cart, monitored by their teacher. The two girls in the class clean and pump the tires; the boys work on the engine. At one point, the girls mumble to each other about how girls always end up doing all the cleaning.

The go-cart, the "CAP Odyssey," was fabricated by the students from miscellaneous parts and materials. For example, the wheels and tires were obtained from an abandoned lawn mower. The students and their teacher drafted the blueprints last spring and completed building the go-cart this year. The go-cart won a district meet, which entitles the students to compete with others across Texas in a statewide meet in Dallas. A few of the welding shop students, including Luz, have been selected to attend the meet. While the other students work on the go-cart, Luz walks over to her teacher and quietly tells him she's not sure she should go because she won't have any spending money or nice clothes to wear. The teacher reassures her that she won't need any spending money, and what she's wearing at the moment will be fine to wear to the meet.

While the students are busy with the go-cart, the teacher shows the "shadow" project descriptions that describe the assembly of the go-cart and other projects that students have worked on. The trailer that the students will use to transport the go-cart to the state meet was built by a previous welding shop class, and it was also a prize-winner at vocational education meets. The teacher appears proud of his students and their work.

After about an hour, Luz remembers she needs to take a make-up algebra test. With the permission of her welding teacher, she leaves the shop to search for her algebra teacher. After asking a few people if they've seen him, she finally finds him hunched over a



chessboard in the library with a student. The student, grinning easily, is beating the teacher. The student's proud girlfriend clasps his arm. A few other students stand around gently teasing the teacher. The teacher accepts their teasing good-naturedly, making a few self-deprecating remarks about his playing. Finally the teacher has no where else to move on the board, and the student wins.

After the chess game, the math teacher and Luz walk over to his classroom. Before Luz takes the test, she's given a warm-up sheet to work on. The teacher answers her questions about how to solve warm-up items. When Luz finishes the warm-up, she starts the test. During the test, she asks the teacher if many of the other students passed the test. He says he hasn't graded the tests yet, but he knows she will pass the test. Luz and the teacher occasionally talk to each other during the test. At one point, Luz asks the teacher why does he make math tests so hard. The teacher says he doesn't know, he guesses it's just in an algebra teacher's blood to make math tests hard. A few minutes later, Luz starts to ask the teacher a question then she says "never mind. I was about to ask a dumb question." The teacher tells her there are no dumb questions. She asks the question, and he clarifies the problem for her without giving her the answer.

After the make-up math test, Luz returns to the welding shop. The number of students in the shop has increased to about ten. Some work outside, others work in the shop. Luz joins some students outside who are cleaning the trailer for transport to the meet.

While observing the students, the vice-principal walks over to chat. He says that earlier today he got wind that there was supposed to be a fight between two students. He began to keep a close eye on the students involved. When he saw the two boys approach each other, he stepped between them and was able to prevent the fight. The vice-principal says that it is not unusual for him to hear about fights before they occur. Often students or teachers let him know that a fight is brewing, and he is able to defuse the situation by getting the students to resolve the situation between themselves.

Soon it is time for Luz and the other students to finish up their activities and go home. The school buses are waiting in front of the main office. As we walk to the bus, Luz asks questions about AIR's study of school reforms. The shadowing researcher answers her questions and thanks her for allowing herself to be shadowed throughout her day at school. Summing up what she likes about CAP, Luz says that since her first day at CAP, "everybody has been real nice and treated me with respect...they don't pressure me and they accept me for who I am...people here don't give me a reason to not come to school...everybody here is treated like somebody."

#### *A Day with Bobby*

Bobby, who is one month short of 17, is in the tenth grade. His sending district had tried unsuccessfully to curb his inappropriate behavior and recommended that he attend CAP. He is taking a full course-load of seven courses in eight periods and hopes to graduate early. According to Mr. A, the CAP principal, Bobby is working at a slightly lower level than the average CAP student. Bobby seems to have no more trouble with the work than other students; tasks seem challenging but not impossible for him. In most of his classes, he finished more work than his peers, but that could be attributed to his tendency to stay on

task. He began his work when directed to do so, worked independently, asked frequent questions of the teachers, and voluntarily helped other students when his work was completed. Compared to the other students, he seemed to need more of the teachers' attention. In a less egalitarian school, he might be a teacher's pet.

On the day he was shadowed, Bobby's first class was Home Economics. The teacher returns workbook chapter tests; students get up to collect their folders from the front of the room and sit down again. Bobby and a few other students are sitting on the floor. After returning the papers, the teacher directs students to work on other chapter tests. Bobby is on chapter 34; a few students are on chapter 17. There is no required order for completing chapters.

The teacher works with each student individually; she makes a loose circuit of the room, but responds to student questions as they come up. She repeatedly directs students to work together, but few do so. The routine seems well established.

Bobby calls out questions fairly frequently while the teacher is helping other students. The teacher responds to students' questions thoughtfully. For example, one student asks the question "Does a coach need a college degree?" The teacher responds, "A Little League coach does not, but other coaches do." In response to another student's question, she asks, "Think—are you going to get an entry level job as a manager? There's your answer."

Although students are urged to work together, they are expected to do the work rather than copy each other's responses. The opposite seems to be the norm. Students are slow to form work groups—students work independently until 20 minutes into the period—but hand each other completed tests to copy the answers. Bobby asks another student, in a stage whisper, "What did you get for number 6?". Some students are much more blatant; several pass one student their completed test so he can copy the answers. The teacher does not comment on any of this. However, she seems unusually aware of the students' activities. From halfway across the room, she interjects when a student conversation strays from the work.

The teacher has high expectations for the students' output, but this may not reflect high expectations for their learning. If students score below 70 percent on the chapter tests, they have the option to redo the test. As she circulates, the teacher urges students to redo failed tests. She reminds them to read the chapters in order to find the answers, but does not comment when it is clear that they have not done the reading. The teacher informs one student that "we have to do a lot in this six-weeks. Finish all your lessons."

The teacher has a good rapport with the students, especially Bobby. In one good-natured exchange, she directs him to work with a peer after she has helped him through several questions. He prefers to have her work with him. She responds, "I have to help others, and I'm too old to get up and down." This prompts a brief class discussion on the teacher's age.

In this, as in all classes, special treats are incentives to complete work in class. The teacher promises that students can "work on the house" on Friday if they complete a set number of lessons. In all classes, the last 15 minutes are "break time". Students who have completed

their work for that class and who are not being punished may use that time as they want. When there are 10 minutes left in the class, the teacher stops the work and asks students about their progress. Students who have finished their work are allowed to go on break.

There are two popular areas used during breaks: the basketball court in the gym and the outdoor smoking area. Both areas are supervised by teachers. All teachers have one "conference" period per day; in the last 15 minutes of that period, they supervise the break.

Bobby spends at least part of every break in the gym playing basketball. The gym had been used for classrooms, and was recently redone to house a single basketball hoop. The pre-high school is housed at one end of the gym behind a prefab wall. Reclaiming the gym is an important project in several ways. First, this provides a popular alternative to smoking during the break. Many of the smokers prefer to play basketball, given the opportunity. Second, reclaiming the gym has become a community building exercise. The shop class put up the backboard and hoop. Some teachers are volunteering to work on painting and redoing the floor during the summer. There are no funds for this activity, although the principal hopes to garner some community support. Finally, the gym was the social center of the school when it was a regular school some years ago. Community members who attended the school were unhappy about the gym being used for the classroom, and so its reclamation may build some community support for the school.

During this break, approximately eight students shoot baskets. Two-thirds are boys. Girls and boys play well together. They take turns, and there are no disparaging remarks.

Bobby's next class is Consumer and Family Economics. As with the last class, students do seat-work all period. They are learning about writing checks. In a later conversation, the teacher mentions that some students are reluctant to do this lesson because they feel they will never have their own checking accounts. Most of these children are very poor. The teacher reminds the students of their assignment, directs them to work in pairs when possible, and circulates as the students work. The assignment is to complete financial worksheets, which includes one section on writing checks.

Eight students, including Bobby, are sitting on the floor; the other nine sit at tables. Students are slow to get to work. Most chat or stare off into space until the teacher reaches them. Then they begin to work while she is working with them. There is a constant undercurrent of chatting, but much of the talk seems to be about accounting. Some students are off-task as they wait for one of the three calculators; Bobby, however, starts working right away. Only two students are consistently off-task: the boy sitting next to Bobby does nothing all period, and another student talks, sleeps, and listens to his Walkman for the entire class.

Again, the teacher seems to be accepting and non-judgmental of the students. Tabitha, reprimanded for filing her nails in class, announces that she broke her nails in a fight and looks to the teacher for a response. The response is not forthcoming. After a minute or two, Tabitha gives up and gets to work.

A few minutes before the start of break, the students begin to get restless. The movement and talk increase. The teacher lists students who owe her work and will need to stay in during break. In one friendly exchange, a student asks, "Don't you want me to have a break?"—to which the teacher responds, "Only if you've done your work." The student says, "I've done this entire worksheet. I think that's pretty good." Teacher: "I think that's expected."

During the break, Bobby goes to the smoking area first. There are approximately 20 students and two teachers in the area. Students are in coed groups; there is no clear segregation by ethnicity or gender. Bobby has a cigarette he bummed off a fellow student in the previous class. Bobby seems to be less mature in his interactions with his peers than an average 17 year old. He teases and pokes at the girls. After a cigarette, he returns to the gym for more basketball. Bobby used to be on a basketball team, but his mother made him quit.

During lunch, the cafeteria staff are very personable. They greet the students by name. There is a table for teachers, but teachers do not interact much with students during lunch. Bobby has lunch with three friends, and they discuss the program during lunch. They like CAP because they can work at their own pace and graduate early. A boy, who is taking the GED course, is able to work at an outside job because his classes are flexible. A girl feels that she is learning more in two weeks at CAP than in her entire career at her previous school. She was expelled from her previous school because she sprayed mace on three other students who attacked her. She said they had been teasing her since fifth grade, and no one at the school would intervene. Her sense is that that would not occur here; she feels that teachers take a genuine interest in students.

After lunch, Bobby goes to his next class—Biology. The class is held in two rooms: a laboratory with a classroom attached. After watering their plants in the lab, the teacher directs students to organize their notebooks. The teacher circulates to answer questions.

After students finish organizing their notebooks, they collect and complete a six-week test. Some are faster than others; Bobby is not the first nor last to finish organizing his notebook and begin working on his test. He is not very focused; he pulls his chair close to another student and starts to ask her questions about her married life. For the most part, she ignores him and does her work. Most of the students are working hard. Several, clearly exasperated, tell Bobby that he is talking too much and too loudly. Eventually, the teacher asks Bobby to move his chair away. One student stretches out on the floor to take a nap. This is the only student with whom the teacher does not talk during class. Asked about this student later, one teacher says that he is spoiled and lazy.

The teacher responds quickly and supportively to requests for help. She is soft-spoken, with a even demeanor; when students request help, she finishes working with the current student and then responds to their question. The students wait their turn patiently. In one case, the teacher teases a student about losing blood in his hand because he has had his hand raised for so long. (The student had been waiting for about two minutes.) Students tend to call out, "Miss" rather than to raise their hands.

The students ask for help frequently, but otherwise work on their own consistently. As they finish, students collect passes to go to the library. The teacher does not exercise authority arbitrarily, but doesn't allow students to show disrespect. For example, when Bobby tries to grab his pass from the teacher she does not hand it to him. Instead, she instructs him to turn to an assignment because she wants to show him something. Although he protests, he turns to the assignment and listens to her comments. Then he receives his pass and can leave.

In this class, as in the morning classes, Bobby seems to be slightly above average. He finishes his work on time or early with few mistakes, helps other students, and seems confident about knowing the material. He returns to the gym for basketball during the break.

His next class of the day is English II. The teacher walks into the classroom one minute after the bell rings and puts a video in the machine at the front of the room, talking the entire time. The class is watching *Taming of the Shrew* in honor of Shakespeare's birthday. They read the play earlier and follow the story well. The teacher reminds the students about the story and the point where they had stopped. As the movie plays, the teacher comments on the plot, motives of the characters, and ironic undercurrents. The students are rapt. Occasionally they ask questions, such as "How much clothing did they wear?" The teacher's answers expand on the ideas. She compliments a student on making a "good observation" (that Kate had no friends). After the video, the teacher asks the students to compare this with another Shakespeare play and to explain their preferences.

The teacher is accomplished at defusing situations. One student leaves the classroom for a few minutes. When she returns, she slams the door, thrusts a note at the teacher, and clumps to her seat. The teacher walks quietly over to the student and talks quietly with her for a few minutes. The student settles visibly.

In the last few minutes of class, Bobby is summoned by the assistant principal. The two have a private discussion with Bobby's counselor. His exit creates a small stir, but the class quickly returns to discussion. Class ends, and the students gather their books and line up for the bus. All the teachers and administrators supervise the loading of the buses, chatting informally among themselves. They maintain the balance of authority and personal interest towards the students that has marked the school atmosphere throughout the day.

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## *School B*

### *Northeastern United States*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

Educational reformers have begun to explore public-private partnerships as strategies for improving schools. School B, an inner-city, public elementary school, has operationalized one such partnership by adopting the curriculum and instructional approach of a highly competitive private school. However, the school remains a neighborhood public school, staffed by public school teachers and administrators. The strategy and success of this program could inform discussion of similar and more broad public-private ventures. The duration of the program (begun in Fall 1990) makes it useful for exploring issues of gradual, sustained reform.

Under this program, student achievement and attendance improved dramatically, and special education and Chapter 1 assignment decreased. These unusually strong positive outcomes are consistent with the reliable implementation of a proven curriculum.

##### *Lessons from School B*

Both the strong and the weak aspects of programs like that at School B can teach us valuable lessons with respect to improving schools serving at-risk youth. First, School B may have improved as much as it did in part through the increased control over teacher hiring—it no longer had to accept teachers rejected from other schools in the district. Second, the program stressed high academic standards. (Students, for example, have to rewrite work in which there are mistakes.) Third, this emphasis combines with monthly reviews of student progress, allowing for the early identification of students needing additional help. Fourth, stable, long-term funding was valuable in persuading teachers that they will have the support needed to change the way they and their students do things.



Through its partnership, School B obtained funding that kept the goals and methods of the program solidly in mind, also protecting it from the tendency of many school districts to make budget cuts at the expense of teachers and students.

Fifth, on a less positive note, School B illustrates the tension between targeting all students at the same time and phasing a reform in a grade at a time: When the implementation is started in some grades but not others, students in the grades above the reform can not, by definition, benefit from that reform. However, this approach helps teachers and community members to see the changes more clearly, building stronger support for a successful program and does not expose older students to a curriculum so demanding as to virtually guarantee their failure. Sixth, and related, this site is troubled by problems arising among staff because of the slowly rolling nature of the implementation; the school needs to work at integrating all the faculty into the program and achieving consensus regarding aims, and this includes district administrators responsible for Chapter 1 and regular district funding.

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### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

School B is a neighborhood school in the Baltimore City Public School system. The K-8 school serves the surrounding community, which is predominantly, although not exclusively, African-American. The student body at School B is 95% Black, and over 70% of the students receive free lunch well above the city average. School B serves many impoverished families, yet overall school and community composition do not place this community among the highest or lowest poverty areas in the city. The high levels of parent and community support for School B are unusual within the school district. A small percentage of parents are graduate students at the nearby university. Almost all the graduate student families are from abroad with languages other than English as their native tongues.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

In the mid-1980's, the principal and PTA had become very concerned that students at their school were not achieving at city or national averages on a variety of measures. Achievement test scores and attendance rates had fallen to disconcerting levels, and student discipline in the classrooms and halls was no longer at a level deemed satisfactory by faculty or administration. The principal observed that staff and parents wanted the students to succeed, but that the public school system did not give them the tools to help students succeed. She felt that adopting the curriculum and instructional approaches of a highly touted private school in the area would provide those tools.



In selecting the program, the principal asked, "Do you try to invent another gimmick? They weren't working. They assumed that kids couldn't learn or weren't motivated. They didn't challenge. They gave no hope. We did not want to reinvent the wheel. We had tried various 'programs' and they had not worked. This private school had the structure, the curriculum. They had the teacher development already worked out."

The private school is a unique institution located in the same city. In addition to operating a well regarded private elementary school, the institution offers the Home Instruction Course. This curriculum is highly structured and allows parents or other small groups to provide elementary curricula to children in areas where appropriate education is not available or where parents do not choose to use existing public or private schools.

The curriculum for both the private school's in-school classes and Home Instruction Course have evolved through the institution's considerable history. The high level of detail provided in the curriculum, combined with the faculty's strong sense of place and history have served to buffer the school and its curricula from many of the fads which have ill-served American education. Rather, the incremental changes in the curricula reflect the long-term practical experiences of staff, and the more abiding trends in U.S. schooling.

Over the last ten years, School B has been one of the highest visibility elementary schools in the Baltimore City School System. The school's efforts to implement the private school's program have resulted in several articles in the city newspaper and repeated exposure on local television. An article on the principal appeared in the December 1993 issue of *Readers' Digest*. The debate over whether School B should be allowed to implement the program lasted several years and eventually involved the (now former) superintendent of schools, the school board, two successive mayors, and a very active local parent/community group which has steadfastly supported implementation.

#### *Staff and Participants*

In its fourth year of implementation, 10 teachers and seven aides were involved in the private school's program at the School B. Teachers and aides who lacked a commitment to the project were counseled out of the school or the program. In one case, a new, untenured teacher's contract was not renewed. Their replacements were drawn from a pool that included teachers applying to public schools and the private school. The private school headmaster helped identify potential teachers and aides. For example, one fourth grade School B program teacher was a former student at the private school. As the first program cohort finished fourth grade, just over half of kindergarten through fourth grade pre-program teachers and aides were still teaching in the same School B grade as in 1990. This was a heavier than average turnover rate for Baltimore.

Some school districts, rather than retrain or terminate manifestly unskilled teachers and principals, assign them to schools serving the least advantaged families in the districts. Such was not the case at School B. At the insistence of the private school's headmaster, the Abell Foundation contract with the Baltimore school board included a provision that gave the principal and headmaster veto power over any new staff assignments, including the

replacement of the principal. There were no longer any "involuntary transfers" of teachers into School B, and each new hire was scrutinized as a unique opportunity to improve the school. The hiring process at School B was unusually thorough.

The program began with kindergarten and first grade teachers and students and has advanced one grade level each year. All students in selected grades participated--for the first year, all kindergarten and almost all first grade teachers participated; in the fourth year, all kindergarten, first, second, third, and almost all fourth grade teachers and students were involved.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Project Services*

The private school's headmaster insisted that no effort to transplant the curriculum without the instructional program be undertaken. In his judgment, such an effort was doomed before it began. The curriculum provided guidance on unit subjects and materials. Critical elements of the instructional program included small homogenous reading groups, student folders, and a criteria of error-free work achieved through constant revision.

The headmaster and the School B principal further agreed that any effort to implement the curriculum immediately above grade one would be unfair to under-prepared students in grades two and above. Therefore, the original plan, and subsequent implementation, called for implementation of both the curricula and the instructional program in kindergarten and grade one during the 1990-1991 school year. By agreed-upon design, one grade was added each year. The practical effect has been that the students completing fourth grade in the spring of 1994 have had four years of the program, and none of the fifth graders have participated. The other effect has been a slow restructuring of elementary education at School B. Beginning in the fall of 1994, the project began a similarly gradual restructuring of the middle school grades (5-8).

In School B, project teachers engaged in more teamwork than before, but still had responsibility for managing independent classes. The classes were somewhat smaller than pre-project, with classes rarely having over 25 students. All K-2 classes had full time teachers' aides. With the exception of one aide paid by the Abell Foundation, this was a continuation of previous staffing patterns. Finally, there was a full time program facilitator for the School B program. That person led summer training for incoming teachers, provided staff development, read student folders, modeled lessons, and, on occasion, took a first grade reading group.

The curriculum contains a great deal of writing, beginning in first grade. The private school's headmaster noted that first graders complete "32 correct compositions." By third grade, students are studying and producing expository writings, letters, and outlining. In both School B and the private school, primary grade students' descriptions of Egyptian,

1. In year one, there was a small first/second grade split class that did not receive the Calvert Curriculum. That split class has continued through fourth/fifth grades outside the School B/Calvert project.

Greek, and Roman gods were often extraordinary both for their levels of detail and for the structure of students' writing. By sixth grade the private school students produce extended reports, and there is every reason to believe School B's inner-city students will as well.

Second, the private school's answer to the current "phonics" vs. "whole language" debate would be "yes." They provide a great deal of phonics instruction, combined with an even larger amount of whole language reading of extended, interesting text. All students read a lot, and young students are read to a lot.

Third, the math is an un-watered down version of the math taught in the "best" schools thirty years ago, plus estimation, geometry, probability theory, "coordinate graphing", and, beginning in sixth grade, the basics of algebra.

The most noteworthy components of the areas of "Science, Poetry, Geography, and Art" is that instruction in each course begins in kindergarten and continues through the grades. The curriculum provides "opportunity to learn" at a level considerably advanced from that found in most American public school systems. Similarly, History instruction begins in grade three and continues through the curriculum. In grade four the curriculum uses Hillyer's *A Child's History of the World*, which, if nothing else is highly endorsed by NBC's Gene Shalit.

In each of these areas, the curriculum is demanding while spiraling. There are no obvious short cuts in the curriculum as implemented at the private school or at School B. The content regularly blends high standards with high interest.

#### *Classroom Instruction*

Nothing changes in students' schooling unless something changes between the student, the curriculum, and instruction. Many interventions never reach the students. The program reached the students at School B. This can be seen at many levels.

First, the curriculum was in place. An observer could leave the private school having watched a spelling lesson, drive to School B and watch the same lesson. The same was true in reading, writing, and math. This curriculum was simply more demanding than the curriculum it replaced at School B.

Second, much of the instructional system was in place. It would be unrealistic to expect veteran teachers to completely jettison instructional methods they perceive to have worked for them for years. But all the teachers made significant changes in their teaching. The changes were greatly facilitated by the two weeks of summer training, by the modeling and feedback provided by the coordinator and by the relentlessly high expectations held by the School B principal and the private school headmaster.

Student "on-task" rates in program classes at School B were often very high. Over the last 20 years of educational research in the U.S., "time-on-task" has been one of the most stable positive predictors of student achievement gain. The ability to sustain attention on specific problems is obviously a skill these students will need in the adult world. So, for several reasons, high on-task rates are a welcome finding. This was a formal finding which has frequently been informally verified by School B project teachers. Teachers reported a

much appreciated seriousness among students regarding their academic tasks. Given high quality instruction and instructional support, the School B students responded well to the raised demands.

Students' joy in productive work was often notable. It is possible for students to be "on task" but in a forced, prison-like environment. At School B, the on-task work was more typically the result of stimulating tasks and firm, but not harsh, classroom management. Students' writing was visible around the room. Much of their work was creative and affectively positive.

Finally, the high quality of student work in the folders speaks to successful implementation. Students simply produced more in the program than at most schools. They wrote more (and more accurately), they produced more math, they drew more. The folders, which were checked by teachers, by the coordinator and principal, and by parents, were strong evidence of implementation. Those same folders constituted strong evidence of program success.

### *Instructional Support*

Program teachers were provided extensive support on a routine basis, and could call upon the coordinator for special situations. All K-2 School B project classrooms had aides, both aides and teachers received substantial training, and the principal, coordinator, and other staff assisted in teaching on a regular basis.

The presence of well-trained, articulate aides (several of whom held college degrees) increased the probability that students would get accurate feedback and encouragement on their work. The aides in the program were rarely passive or relegated to bureaucratic work. They tended to be actively involved with students in academic work. The aides also seemed to have more nearly professional relationships with teachers than can be observed in some schools. The teachers had a confidence in the competence of their aides. In fact, one of last year's aide/volunteers has become a fourth grade School B project teacher.

For four consecutive summers the program coordinator led new program teachers and aides at School B through a two-week introduction to the program's philosophy, curriculum, and instructional materials. During the year she modeled lessons, provided help preparing lessons, gave feedback on lessons, and lent support in teachers' thinking through problems faced by individual learners. By teaching reading, math, and especially writing groups, she significantly eased the burden of teaching generally and program implementation specifically. No written work was displayed in the classrooms or hallways until it has been checked by both the teachers and coordinator.

### *Resources*

The Abell Foundation invested over \$300,000 in the program at School B over four years. This was less than the school would receive as a Chapter 1 school-wide project however, the school had not been allowed to apply for schoolwide project status, and, in fact, the school's Chapter 1 funds had decreased dramatically as achievement test scores rose.

Expenses over four years include staff development time (\$23,000), books (\$47,000), the salary of the full-time coordinator, and other equipment and materials. The Abell Foundation has committed to funding the program for four additional years, 1994-1998.

One of the gifts of Abel's involvement in the program was the knowledge shared among the staff that "things will work out." Materials arrived on time. Back-up materials were made available. Training and backup support were of high quality, and were not taken away during any of the school district's regular fiscal crises. If the principal needed to negotiate with central administration of the district, she had unusual leverage which accrued through her individual tenacity and the Abell grant. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this funding stability.

The private school headmaster reported that several School B teachers were skeptical about the project until they visited the private school and saw the materials stockpiled in the basement. When they realized their books would arrive before the beginning of school, and that materials would not be in eternally short supply, they eagerly signed on.

Stable long-term funding eliminates one of the greatest inhibitors to change in teaching practice—an often well-founded skepticism among teachers. That typical skepticism might be stated as, "I've seen new programs come and go. This one will leave, and I'll still be here. I'll just outlast it, and not change." Thanks to the tenacity of the principal and the Abell Foundation, School B staff believed the Abell program will remain. This is an unusually firm foundation for change.

#### *Non-Fiscal Resources*

The foundation, its project manager, the principal, the program coordinator, the private school, and the community form an almost uniquely strong base supporting program implementation. It would be critical in any attempt at replication to ensure that similar supports were available throughout the multi-year program implementation process.

The program received unusually strong and diverse support through its implementation. Not only was the Abell Foundation steadfast in its fiscal support, the foundation's officer was diligent in her oversight of the process. She was involved in regular staff meetings, in fiscal decisions, and in regular efforts to anticipate and solve problems.

The principal was unusually talented and determined. She was unflagging in her efforts to obtain and support the program. She read students' portfolios and made comments to the students and their teachers. She visited classes, attended meetings, and was very active in involving parents. "Some of these parents know," she declared, "that if they don't come to parent meetings, I'll be at their door the next morning." If a child was threatening to "fall through the cracks" at School B, the principal and the program coordinator were quick to become involved.

A third source of support for implementation was provided by the program coordinator. She came to School B with over 20 years experience at the private school, and seven in public schools. She has remained the School B project coordinator since the program's inception. She brought high levels of knowledge, competence, and enthusiasm to the



program implementation. She trained new teachers and provided support to all teachers. During the year she modeled lessons, provided help preparing lessons, gave feedback on lessons, and lent support for teachers' thinking through problems faced by individual learners. By teaching reading, math, and especially writing groups, the coordinator significantly eased the burden of teaching generally and program implementation specifically. She has been utterly dedicated to the project. The principal said about the coordinator "The thing that has really kept the program strong is that she has been allowed to stay the course and focus right in on these students. I have the security of knowing it's going on every day. The teachers, students, and parents know that a strong force is there."

The fourth leg of support came from the private school itself. The headmaster remained a staunch supporter of the project. He oversaw much of what was implemented at School B, and he held out for fidelity to the model. Among other things, he assisted School B in searching for new faculty and aides. He visited classrooms, and repeatedly made himself available for consultations. Throughout his private school administrative career, the headmaster has seen the effects of teachers holding and acting upon high educational expectations for each student. He consistently advocated for nothing less than educational excellence at School B. The private school's assistant headmaster and headmaster came to School B and assisted in checking student folders. As with the headmaster, the assistant's support did not flag. The school board quietly but firmly and regularly reasserted that if the school or district attempted to compromise the program, the private school simply would take its resources and go home. Such stances tend to discourage would-be equivocators. The unusual autonomy in hiring, combined with the headmaster's guidance, contributed to a cohesive and dedicated staff. Teachers adopted the strategies and work well together.

### *Project Outcomes*

Previous sections indicate that the School B program received unusually strong and consistent support, that implementation was progressing, and that the effects of implementation could be seen across School B program classrooms and in student productions. The next question becomes, "So what?"

If the program is valid, results should be visible in several areas. Student achievement test scores should rise, student attendance should rise, parents might actively choose to keep their students at School B, Chapter 1 and Special Education referrals should decrease, and admissions to the district's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) should increase. Data regarding each of these testable assertions follow.

### *Academic Performance*

Data from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), Educational Records Bureau Test (ERB), and the new Maryland State Performance Program Test (MSPAP) show students' academic growth in the program. The first two produce vertically equated scale scores which can be compared to national norms in a variety of sub-test areas.



The School B program began in grades K-1, and added one grade per school year. This implementation plan produced an unusual opportunity to use School B's own pre-program students as a control group for this evaluation. First through fourth grade School B students were tested during the spring before the School B program was begun in the spring 1990. Those first through fourth grade students provided a within-school control group for the following students who were in the program. The following year's testing captured the first graders who had finished one year of the program, and the second through fourth students who received the standard rather than the private school's curricula and instruction. Following this logic over three full years allowed the design to have a within-school control group over time: the pre-program students who attended School B in the grades rolling forward in front of the special program.

*Reading.* At nearly every comparison point, students in the program performed at a higher level on the ERB Total Reading test than had their peers (including brothers and sisters) in pre-program cohorts at School B. The differences, especially at first and third grade, are dramatic: at both grade levels the mean Total Reading scores for students in the program were more than 20 national percentile points above the mean for the School B students who preceded the program. The CTBS Total Reading scores tell an almost identical story. At every point but one, the students who participated in the program scored well above the national average. At every point, the pre-program cohorts scored, on average, well below the national average. Again, control students were from the same neighborhood, often from the same families.

*Writing/Language Arts.* ERB Writing scores for students who participated in the program are contrasted with the scores of the students from the pre-program cohorts at School B. (The ERB does not produce a first grade Writing score, so data are only presented for grades two and three.) The results are even more dramatic. At both second and third grades, the average program student scored above the sixtieth percentile. When the same-grade data for the pre-program cohorts were examined, they revealed that none of the pre-program cohorts averaged above the 47th percentile, and two had averages below the thirtieth percentile on the test of writing skills.

As was the case in reading, the CTBS results closely paralleled the ERB data. In all but one case, the students participating in the program scored, on average, above the national average. The program students' older peers scored below the 46th percentile on the CTBS Language Arts scale at every grade. The first program cohort to finish third grade scored a full 20 percentile points above any of the previous three non-program cohorts.

*Mathematics.* As was the case in writing, the average Mathematics score for each program group was near or above the national average, and the average of these cohort scores above the 60th percentile. By contrast, none of the pre-program cohorts scored at the 60th percentile, and by grade three, the highest of the groups only scored at the 20th percentile.

On the CTBS, the two pre-program third grade cohorts averaged at the 32nd percentile, a full 10 percentile points below the first program cohort.

Maryland State Performance Appraisal Program (MSPAP). MSPAP was deliberately designed to be a very demanding, "raise the criterion dramatically," performance test. The test is relatively new, having been piloted in spring 1991, and administered for the first times in 1992 and 1993. While some technical problems with scoring and interpretation remain, in general the MSPAP is being praised as a leading example of the "next generation" of performance assessments.

The initial assumption of the state department of education was that the majority of students would not score high during the initial years, but that scores will rise as schools adjust their curricular and instructional offerings to the higher demands of the state. The test is administered at three grade-levels-third, sixth, and eighth. The state's goal is for every school's percentage of students achieving satisfactory ratings to reach 70+% by 1997.

MSPAP data for third grade program students were compared to data for non-program students, as well as city and state averages. Maryland students in general were far from achieving the state standards in 1993. Across the three content areas, the average percentages of students achieving satisfactory or higher ratings were nearly 40% below the state's criteria. Clearly, the MSPAP requires skills above those currently held by the majority of Maryland third graders. (The same pattern can be seen at higher grades as well.)

Students in the Baltimore City school district performed at a level well below that of the average for the state of Maryland. Where the state averages were around 30% of students achieving "satisfactory" scores, the averages for Baltimore city schools were less than 10% of students achieving "satisfactory" or higher scores. This pattern of low scores for a district serving predominantly inner-city children is not atypical of the nation.

In the areas of Mathematics and Science, the 1992 (pre-program) cohort of School B students scored very nearly the (low) city average. Under 10% of students achieved "satisfactory" scores. In the area of Social Studies, however, a relatively high percentage (23.1%) of the pre-program cohort scored above the district average, though the percentage of students obtaining "satisfactory" scores remained below the state average of nearly 32%.

The first cohort of program students reached third grade in time for the spring 1993 MSPAP testing. The percentages of these students achieving "satisfactory" MSPAP scores rose in both mathematics and science. The gain was from 7.7% (1992, pre-program) to 11.1% (1993, first cohort) in math, and from 7.7% (1992) to 15.6% (1993) in science. At the same time, note that in neither area did the program cohort approach the (on average, much more affluent) state averages, and in all three areas the program scores, like those of most schools in Maryland, were far from the state "standard" of 70+%.

In the area of social studies, the 1992 (last pre-program) cohort scored well above the city average, but below the state average. The first program cohort also had 20-25% of its students obtain "satisfactory" scores, so their achievement represented no improvement over the previous non-program cohort. While both year's School B students scored well above the city average, neither cohort approached the Maryland state average of 31.9%.

Given the newness of the MSPAP and the problems being encountered with scoring and interpretation of the test, conclusions based on this test should be regarded as tentative. Having noted that, like the ERB and CTBS findings, these MSPAP data show a general positive trend. However, MSPAP data add a cautioning note. While program students have been scoring above the national average on norm referenced tests, and while MSPAP data indicate improvements over the non-program cohort in two of three areas, the MSPAP data do not indicate that program students are yet obtaining state-average scores on this "next generation" performance appraisal.

#### *Evidence of School "Holding Power" and Other Outcomes*

Academic success is a primary goal of schooling, but far from the only one. A school should be a place to which students want to go, and a place where parents want their children to be. Particularly within a specific school's catchment area, a change in attendance patterns would be a reasonable measure of students' and parents' acceptance of a specific program. Over the first three years of the program, the students had lower absence rates. The sizes of the differences varied each year, but the average 1.2% difference amounted to two extra days of schooling per year for the students participating in the program. Perhaps more important is that while the absence rate for the non-program students appeared to be stable at around 10%, the program absence rate declined each year.

Similarly, if parents perceive a school to be providing unusually valuable service, the parents might be expected to go to unusual lengths to be sure that their children continued to receive the services of that school. Of the three cohorts of non-program students who potentially could have remained at the school for one to three full school years, only 49% remained at the spring 1993 testing. Of the program cohorts, 75% remained. This suggests that the parents viewed the program as valuable. Apparently the program parents were less willing than their non-program neighbors to leave the school catchment area; or if they must leave, they were more willing than their neighbors to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain their students' attendance in the program.

*Chapter 1.* Chapter 1 is a federally funded program designed to provide additional services to low-achieving students who are attending high poverty schools. Baltimore City schools defines Chapter 1 eligibility as students having Total Reading or Mathematics achievement test scores which are below the 32% on nationally normed tests. Test scores and teacher nominations can make a student eligible for Reading services, Math, both or neither. If a student received both Reading and Math services they were counted in each area. There were three years of data which provide the clearest test of the effects of the program on students' need for Chapter 1 services. For the 1990-91 school year, students were assigned to Chapter 1 based on spring 1990 test scores. Therefore, the 1990-91 school year was the last year during which students at School B were assigned to Chapter 1 prior to any students having received program services. By contrast, all kindergarten through second grade School B students received the program during both the 1991-92 and the 1992-93 school years, so that first through third grade participation in Chapter 1 during the following school years (1992-93 and 1993-94) reflects continued need for services in the presence of participation in the program.

Not only were there fewer students eligible for Chapter 1 after two to three years of the program, the effect was so great that the total number of students eligible for Chapter 1 summing across two years was less than the number eligible during a single year pre-program.

*Special Education.* In simplified form, there are three broad categories of special education services. The need for two of them, services to profoundly disabled students and services to students having clear speech and language difficulties, are largely beyond the control of an instructional program. However, the need for the third type of special education services, services to students labeled learning disabled ("LD"), could be at least partially affected by the school's instructional program. That is because the diagnosis of learning disability is defined as a significant, measurable discrepancy between aptitude as measured by a cognitive test and learning as measured on an academic performance test. If a student performs well, he or she is not eligible for these special education services. In this regard, the 1993-94 learning disability rolls of School B school were informative. In grades one through four combined a total of three students received LD special education services in 1993-94. Based on the measured severity of their needs, the three students received 3, 10, and 15 hours of special education services respectively.

By contrast, in 1993-94's grade five alone (the last pre-program cohort), four students tested as needing LD services. Based on the measured severity of their needs, they received 15, 10, 15, and 5 hours of services. So that four combined grades of program students required fewer LD services than does the single preceding grade of non-program students.

*Disciplinary Removals.* A Disciplinary Removal (DR) occurs when a student is sent home from the school for one to several days for reasons related to utterly unsatisfactory deportment within the school. DRs are used only when the behavioral problem is so severe that, in the judgment of the principal and the teacher, the student's presence in the classroom during the following days would itself be highly disruptive of normal classroom processes. School B's principal was not an advocate of keeping students out of school for other than the most severe problems, so the school did not have an historically high rate of DRs.

During the 1989-90 school year, the last year before the experiment was begun, the principal reported a total of 9 DRs in grades kindergarten through four. In the three subsequent years, there have been no (0) Disciplinary Removals for students enrolled in the program.

*Gifted and Talented Education (GATE).* Students can be nominated into the district's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program beginning in third grade. The rules by which students have been selected into School B's GATE program have changed somewhat from year to year, so that exact quantitative comparisons over time can not be justified. However, gross generalizations are defensible. During the late 1980's, the number of School B students who qualified for GATE services had declined to the point that the school was in danger of having to share its one GATE teacher with another elementary school. By contrast, for the 1993-94 school year, the program third and fourth

grades alone contributed 20 students to the school's GATE reading program and 37 students to GATE math. These numbers were well above previous totals, and the school again qualified for a full time GATE teacher.

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### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

The program has now completed three full years of implementation at School B. Observations and interviews indicate that the effort was unusually well supported and led, and as a result was unusually well implemented. Teachers reported considerable enthusiasm for and confidence in the program.

Data from two separate achievement testing programs (CTBS and ERB) indicated that students in the program achieved academically at a rate significantly above their pre-program School B peers. This finding was consistent across Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, and is particularly striking in writing.

Data from the Maryland State Performance Appraisal Program (MSPAP) also indicated progress, though more modest, in the areas of Mathematics and Science. No greater percentage of program students achieved "satisfactory" scores on the Social Studies section of MSPAP than had the previous cohort, although both cohorts scored well above the city average. Neither the program nor the pre-program cohorts achieved state average "satisfactory" levels on the math, science, or social studies sections of the MSPAP.

Additional data indicated that the project reduced student absences, reduced student transfers from the school, greatly reduced the number of students requiring Chapter 1 services, reduced referrals to and diagnoses of "learning disabled," eliminated disciplinary removals, and increased the numbers of students found eligible for the district's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Taken collectively, these diverse measures indicate a very successful school improvement project. Yet from reading the curriculum and observing the program as implemented at the private school, the evaluation team saw little "new" in the intersection of students with curricula and instruction. How are such results then possible?

The authors believe the results are derived much more from the extraordinarily high quality of implementation (both at the private school and at School B) than from any particular component of the curricular and instructional package. Elsewhere we have argued that the underlying common characteristic of several programs-as-implemented serving at-risk students has not been solely the "validity" of the programs' ideas, but also the "reliability" of the implementations (Stringfield, 1993b, 1994a). Educational reformers are well advised to remember that in real-world data, reliability sets the upper boundary of validity. Stated more colloquially, "If it isn't implemented, it doesn't matter to the students what 'it' is."



In considering the relationship between program validity and reliability, a subset of the organizational management research base can be helpful. The great bulk of the management literature deals with trial-and-error, often surprisingly fault-tolerant environments. Yet there are organizations all around us that, like schools, work in highly visible public arenas (especially when they fail), and that are required by public and political pressure to operate repeated "trials without errors" (LaPorte & Consolini, 1991). Regional electric power grids, for example, use what are expansions of straightforward technologies to provide a source with 99.99% reliability. The average home or business in America receives electric power within the designated voltage and amperage range for all but a few minutes per year. The local water company, air traffic control towers, and some aspects of military operations (e.g., no country has ever accidentally launched a nuclear headed missile) offer similar examples. Recently, researchers have begun investigating these "High Reliability Organizations (HROs)" as a special set of organization working within unusual public demands (Roberts, 1993). The most important shift in considering HROs is not in the specific characteristics of the organizations; it is the intellectual shift which precedes the evolution of the characteristics.

Stringfield (1994b) has extracted characteristics from studies of extremely reliable organizations, and applied them to the broad study of school improvement. Note that the creation and maintenance of high reliability organizations is dynamic, and any attempt to list characteristics of such organizations runs the risk of making the dynamic appear static. However, with that caveat in mind, School B's implementation of the private school program can be viewed from the perspective of 12 common characteristics of highly reliable organizations (HROs). Those comparisons follow:

*1. The most important characteristic of HROs is a perception, held by the public and the employees, that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

As an example from the world outside of schools, mid-air collisions of aircraft are invariably disastrous, and therefore air traffic control has evolved remarkably reliable organizational structures. The private school headmaster, his assistants, the principal of School B, the implementation facilitator, the Abell Foundation, and the parent organization had all made significant investments in the project. Failure would have been quite public and viewed as particularly egregious by the private school board, whose expensive private school program would have been called into doubt had the effort not succeeded. More than in most novel program implementations, critical people in this effort saw the opportunity and the stakes as being very high.

*2. HROs require clarity regarding goals. Staff in HROs have a strong sense of primary mission.*

The private school had clear, high academic and social goals for its students. The training of School B teachers into the private school model always began with an extended discussion of the history and goals of the private school and of the project.



*3. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.*

The private school curriculum was very nearly "scripted." Experienced teachers were encouraged to invent variations, but the basic curriculum was written to the level that a home-schooling parent could conduct lessons. The program had a very unusual level of standard operating procedures. The curriculum is reviewed, grade by grade, on a rotating basis every few years. Both the curriculum and the basic instructional processes may be altered on those occasions.

*4. HROs recruit and train extensively. This is true in part because at peak times, professional judgment is valued.*

At the insistence of the private school headmaster, the Abell Foundation contract with the Baltimore school board included a provision that gave the principal and private school's headmaster veto power over any new staff assignments, including the replacement of the principal. There were no longer any "involuntary transfers" into School B, and each new hire was scrutinized as a unique opportunity to improve the school. The hiring process at School B is unusually thorough.

The two weeks of pre-implementation staff development as each new grade entered the project represented an unusual and valuable feature of the program. During interviews, School B teachers repeatedly mentioned the pre-implementation training as a key component of the transition. School B closed at noon every Wednesday, and teachers have school-based staff development. This was a larger than average commitment to staff development.

The ongoing, in-class modeling and feedback provided by the facilitator constitutes an additional, unusual support for full implementation.

*5. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in Standard Operating Procedures and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.*

As noted above, the private school regularly re-examines the effectiveness of their curriculum. In addition, the School B principal, the private school head master, and the program facilitator met regularly to discuss possible needs for modification of the program in the School B context. Students' and teachers' legitimate needs, not abstract theory, guided the adaptations.

*6. HROs are sensitive to the areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required.*

They therefore pay considerable attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the processes of the organizations.

The professional judgment of teachers was accorded considerable respect at School B, so long as student folders showed ongoing, significant progress for all students. When individual students did not progress, a team including the teacher, the facilitator, and, as needed, the principal, parents, and the private school headmaster worked to find solutions.

It is important to note that the central measure of teacher and student performance is not a process but a set of products. The headmaster was quick to explain that when he looked over a student's folder, the student was often with him. The students often pointed out particular things they had done well, and were insistent that the headmaster take note of those accomplishments.

These were not end-of-year test scores that could not readily be adjusted. These were student performances from the previous month. The student remembered each one clearly. If a student had not done well, it was not too late to correct the mistake. Every month, parents saw the same folder at home.

*7. In high reliability organizations, monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

Regarding the folders from # 6, if some of the products the headmaster or parents expected to see were not in the folder, or if products contained uncorrected errors, this became a course of conversation between the teacher and the parent or the headmaster, and between the headmaster and the teacher. There was strong, mutual accountability build into the private school's system, both at that school and at School B. In the end it was not as important how the teacher taught the particular lesson as whether all of the students completely correct work is in their monthly folder.

As a practical matter, the folders became a source of shared pride in accomplishment much more often than a source of criticism of parents, teachers, or principals.

At School B, given the emphasis on folders, students were more responsible to teachers, and their parents, than is typical, and teachers were more responsible for ongoing student progress. The facilitator was responsible for assisting both teachers and students, and if she failed in that responsibility, the teachers could appeal to the principal. The principal had unusually broad spheres of accountability. She was responsible to the district, and to an unusual list of program oversight persons and teams, including but not limited to the very active parent group, the Johns Hopkins evaluators, the headmaster and the Abell Foundation (which played an unusually active role).

*8. HROs are alert to surprises or lapses. The experience of HROs is that small failures could cascade into major system failures, and are hence monitored carefully.*

The simple freezing of a rubber "O Ring" caused a series of cascading malfunctions which led to the Challenger space disaster. A squirrel working his way into an electric box "caused" the great New York power failure. But in both cases, it was the fact that the initial, simple failure was able to have cascading effects that turned a small problem into a disaster.

It takes years for a child to learn that he or she hasn't learned to read and probably will not learn to read. During those years, schools have hundreds, if not thousands, of opportunities to successfully intervene. At both the private school and School B, the creation of student folders, and the regular monitoring of those folders by a variety of people virtually eliminated the possibility of a child "falling through the cracks." When a child was having trouble, the teacher, the parents, and the administration knew it, they knew about it early on, and they took steps together to address the problems.

*9. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize a second layer of behavior which emphasizes collegial decision making regardless of rank. This second mode is characterized by cooperation and coordination. At times of peak activity, line staff are expected to exercise considerable discretion. Especially during times of peak performance, staff are able to assume a close interdependence. Relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent.*

Both the private school and School B, like most schools, were hierarchically structured. Expectations during "peak" times have not been systematically studied in American education generally, but probably vary greatly. During busy times at School B, steps were taken to protect academic time.

Getting rid of hierarchy in education may not be an important goal. Allowing exceptions to hierarchical rules and communication patterns at moments when that side-stepping of hierarchy can save a student from illiteracy may be what is needed. This program made a variety of such side-steps possible.

One of the enduring problems at School B was the inability to achieve practical integration of the district's Chapter 1 program and staff with the program. Efforts in this area are continuing.

A second example concerned the district's central administration. If the school could demonstrate that over 75% of its students received free lunch, it could qualify for Chapter 1 schoolwide project status. Such a status would allow the school to fully integrate Chapter 1 services with regular classroom services, and would bring additional funding to the school in an amount greater than the cost of the project. In short, it would allow the program to function fully without having to rely of private foundation support. The principal and a central office administrator checked the free lunch paperwork on every single student at the school, and found that the rate was above 75%. However, central administration at higher levels refused to validate the result, insisted that the school was below 75%, and continued the current, inefficient practice

*10. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order. Responsibility for checking the readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.*

This was true at both schools in a variety of simple, atypical ways. In the simplest case, the program called for teachers and aids to always have sharpened pencils available. If a child broke a lead, this did not cause disruption. A new pencil was handed to the child. Books and paper were never in short supply. Materials arrived on time. Teachers could count on it. The computer laboratory worked. If a machine broke down, it got fixed.

An exception to this rule was observed during the summer 1994 "computer camp." The computer room had a recently installed central air conditioning unit. The unit was installed to reduce the number of computer failures. The unit itself failed, and had not been fixed for several weeks. A humid Maryland heat wave was making the students' task of concentrating a challenge, and was increasing the probability of computer failures. The system had been repeatedly notified, but had not fixed the air conditioner.

*11. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.*

There is some evidence (e.g., Wimpelberg, Teddlie & Stringfield, 1989) that school districts provide more attention and support to some schools than others, and that it is often the schools in the least advantaged neighborhoods that receive the least attention and local support. Stringfield and Teddlie (1988) have observed that some school districts, rather than retraining or terminating manifestly unskilled teachers and principals, assign them to schools serving the least advantaged families in the districts. Such actions do not indicate high valuing of all students and schools by central offices.

School B was highly valued by the Abell Foundation, by the private school, and by the parent organization. The Abell Foundation's contract with the district specifically allowed the school to refuse involuntary transfers of "marginal" teachers into the school. When the district moved toward seemingly arbitrary decisions that might harm the project, whole columns of outspoken groups appeared at public meetings and private consultations with the superintendent. Much more than most projects, this was allowed to proceed as though its success mattered a great deal. The parent focus group gave strong evidence that parents valued the program.

Evidence that the district valued the program was mixed. The district orchestrated a press conference to announce third year test results. The superintendent and mayor attended the conference. That may have been a plus. However, the school's claim that during the 1993-1994 school year the district had allocated over a hundred thousand dollars less to School B than similar sized schools, a claim now being investigated by an independent accounting firm, would appear to indicate a "negative valuing" of the school and program by central administration.

*12. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

U.S. education has spent much of the last 30 years attempting to become more efficient. Much public dialogue concerns ridding education of "wasteful management."

The Abell Foundation and the private school repeatedly took unusual steps to ensure that the district's fiscal crises and other attempts at short term efficiency were not allowed to harm the program. At one point, the Abell Foundation paid a teacher's salary for several months. The total costs of these efforts were not huge; but teachers noted and appreciated the extent to which their classes were buffered from the normal, unfortunate rises and falls within a big city school system. The teachers felt supported, and they responded accordingly. The larger school district was regularly buffeted with fiscal crises, and was constantly on the look out for ways to make short-term cuts in budgets. This process served the students and schools poorly.

In summary, the High Reliability Organization literature describes 12 characteristics of organizations which are required to operate trials without cascading errors. This is the requirement increasingly being made of schools. The project suggests linkages with the HRO literature.

School B operated in a much more reliability-enhanced manner than is typical in public schools. The sources of that enhanced reliability include the site leadership, the supporting private foundation, the private school, and the parent/community neighborhood organization. Collectively, those supports allowed whatever validity the program has to be tested.

This finding is in great contrast with the implementations of most "innovative" projects. For example, the "Rand Change Studies" (1977), the "Follow Through" studies (Stallings & Kaskowitz, 1974), and the more recent "Special Strategies Studies" (Stringfield et al., 1994), each of which found that even in highly-nominated-as-exemplary implementations of various "promising programs," implementation could often be best described as "mixed" or as "mutual adaptation." While there has been some adaptation at School B, the basic curriculum and instructional package were implemented with often striking fidelity to the model.

The effects of the program at School B speak to the "public-private" school debate. In describing Catholic vs. public high schools, Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) include increasing academic standards, promoting human engagement, strengthening parent-school relations, greater school autonomy (including, though not limited to, hiring decisions and a much smaller extra-school bureaucracy), and the value of "an inspirational ideology to catalyze change" (p. 325). All of these characteristics fit well within the High Reliability Organization framework.

We believe that the essential characteristics of the private school, which the program facilitator and school headmaster were successful at transmitting, were evolved through a strong sense of purpose always honed by the simple reality that if this school failed in its core mission (if it did not provide a high quality education to its charges), the institution itself would cease to exist. This is true of virtually all private schools, including Catholic schools. In such environments, these schools meet the first HRO characteristic: a perception held by the public being served and the employees that failures within the organization would be disastrous. The school must succeed or die. Similarly, had the project failed at School B, the credibility of the principal, of the Abell Foundation's education initiatives, and of the private school itself would have been questioned.



By contrast, when most public schools adopt most innovative programs, the majority of the schools' faculties regard the initiatives as novelties or nuisances, but not as matters critical to the operation of their schools. Until both the general public and the professional communities working in public schools come to perceive that the success of every single public school is a matter of great public concern, we believe the reliability of any and virtually all innovative program implementations will be so low as to make measurement of innovative program validity on a significant scale a largely unattainable goal. (Note, for example, that Ted Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools, recently remarked about his own reform efforts, "I'm prepared to say it [CES] won't work in most cases." (Riggs, 1994). That may be acceptable for a university-based reformer, but it hardly seems a reliable building block for the improvement of schools serving at-risk youth.) For air travel to be safe, all wings have to stay on all airplanes, not most wings most days, or some wings, some days. For all at-risk children to have a brighter future, developers must attend to implementation reliability at least as much as program validity. In the real world, as in research, reliability sets the upper boundary of validity.

To the extent that the concern with reliability is warranted, much of the public/private debate may be miscast. It is possible that it is not so much the instructional or curricular structures of private schools, but the organizational structures, derived from the differing historic consequences of individual schools' failures, that may explain private school effects. Failure of the private school, or of the program would have been viewed as disastrous by several concerned groups. The ongoing failures of programs in other inner-city schools surrounding School B and across the country evoke little to no notice in the district's central administration, or in the media. Parents often are not aware that innovations are being attempted, let alone failing.

Stringfield (1993b) has argued that we are in the early phases of achieving public recognition that the continued failure of inner-city schools places a large burden on all taxpayers, even middle-class suburban families. As the larger public applies continued (as opposed to spasmodic) pressure for improvement of all students' education, and especially the education of at-risk children, we believe school districts will be well advised to place at least as much energy into creating reliability enhancing schooling structures at both the central administration and school levels as into the search for "innovative programs." The experiment points to the wisdom of achieving broad-based support for a clear set of academic goals, clear, formal decision analysis, school-based recruitment (including the right to refuse "involuntary transfers" into a school) and training, remaining systematically alert to identifying curricular and instructional flaws and correcting them, retaining sensitivity to areas in which judgment-based, incremental improvement strategies are required, mutual monitoring of and by students, teachers, parents, and various levels of administration and community, clear feedback systems that are constantly on the alert for potential cascading errors ("kids falling through the cracks"), a willingness for hierarchy to "go flat" when crises arise, high maintenance of equipment, and a realization that in reliable organizations efficiency must often take a back seat to reliability. Some things have got to work, regardless of the "program."



We regard the program as a valid option for improving an inner-city school. In our judgment, the processes surrounding implementation of the program—processes which have evolved at the private school over the last 80 years and which are consistent with the high reliability organizational literature—are at least as important as the curriculum in achieving the program's considerable successes.

The replicability of the project will be tested during the 1994-1998 school years. During that period, the program is scheduled to be replicated in one additional inner-city Baltimore school, and then in additional schools.

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### *Analysis of Community*

#### *Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Thoughts about the nature of relations among teachers, between teachers and parents, and between teachers and students varied somewhat by type of respondent. In general, parents, teachers, and students had trouble focusing on the questions asked concerning relationships and other dimensions of community and tended to stray into talking about other aspects of the program or to make personal remarks about particular individuals. However, some teachers spoke of how they loved their students or let them confide in them. Another teacher talked of trying to avoid engaging herself in conversation with a parent who wanted to confide how the child's school experience was being affected by the parents' marital troubles.

Teachers also mentioned divisions between members of the teaching staff (and comparable problems among students) resulting from half the school being excluded from the program. They suggested there might be a sense of community within the two groups, perhaps one resulting from the program itself and the other forming around feelings of exclusion. A student recommended getting rid of the program because of the jealousy it causes.

Parents felt that there was a sense of community at the school. Students reported teacher fights in the hallways, talked about the teacher they like o.k., the aide they liked a lot who's no longer there, and the current aide they didn't like. All this occurred in surroundings that were not generally supportive of education or of good relations between people—one teacher noted, "I never believed [in censorship] before...until I got into this classroom and I realized what an amazing effect some movies...and T.V. shows that they see at home and how much they mimic some of the people on these shows, down to the exact dialogue, and a lot of it's violent...I think...[even] when there's no real malice intended toward another student, they'll still ...say something that's real rude and not appropriate at all, and it's just because they've heard it before on T.V...."

Relations between the administration and other parts of the school community likewise varied by group and within groups. Parents tended to like the principal a lot; students didn't much like her and thought she was not fair with students, and teachers were mixed, though they generally had regard for her work with the parents and knowledge of the children's backgrounds.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* There was no shared vision expressed, although some teachers did seem to take pride in acting as surrogate parents, counselors, and nurses in their students' lives. There was also an implicit sense among parents that the teachers and principal were making a difference in the academic success of their children, and that the children were given the feeling that they were cherished. Some parents felt that their child was not challenged enough. Parents also seemed to want to go beyond the current curricula and to feel that the children should have access to more knowledge about other countries, be able to learn another language, learn more music and art.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Teachers did not explicitly indicate a shared sense of purpose, although they did note the extreme pressure within and on the school for the program (which applies an elite school curriculum to an inner city school) to succeed, pressure which some said distracts the administration from the day-to-day needs of the school. Also perceived as a problem was the conflict within the school because half the teachers and students are not included in the program, in a sense, stratifying the school. One teacher's attempt to spend extra time working with students sometimes conflicted with parents' wishes—even third grade students had responsibilities at home, such as take care of siblings.

*Shared Values.* Teachers and parents seemed to emphasize increasing involvement of the school's parents in the academic lives of the children, both at home and at school. The parents' discussion suggested that the faculty really wanted the school to be successful at teaching their children; parents noted the pride teachers took in parents who were pleased at their children's progress or new parents impressed with the school.

*Trust.* Nothing was mentioned about levels of trust in the school. The relationship between parents and the principal seemed to involve a strong sense that she can be relied upon. Parents trusted that the principal would look out for the children, and even help with parents' problems such as having to move due to being evicted and trying to find a new place within the school's jurisdiction. "They know, that they can come to her. If they need money...they'll come to her." Trust between students and teachers was weaker. A student indicated that students felt their teacher blamed them for things they didn't do; another mentioned that if the teacher wasn't right there, they talked instead of doing their work. Some children seemed to lack any faith that people or their school could improve with work. It was generally agreed by them that bad kids should all be sent to the office and be suspended—one student said to make things better you would have to move the school ("This is a bad area.") Another replied, "You can't change the school—only God can change things." The only dissenting voice was a child who argued, "The problem with

getting rid of the bad ones is that good ones turn into bad ones....In my old school, people brought guns and razor blades to school...This affected me because I was the only good person...When I got home, I started acting bad...."

*Caring.* Some of the teachers seemed to genuinely care about students and were eager to provide challenging experiences so that students would want to learn. They also understood that the problems the children had to deal with in their daily lives affected their ability to concentrate in school and necessitate additional attention. "They need us to say, 'O.K., Baby, everything's going to be o.k.'" Caring among teachers was not mentioned, but parents spoke of how the principal truly cared for the children and took a personal interest in them. One teacher, however, commented that the principal was sometimes too easy with the children. Another parent mentioned that a member of the janitorial staff complimented her daughter. Although she didn't use the phrase caring, one student talked about caring adults in the school: the assistant principal who was sometimes the only one who will listen to her when she got in trouble, and the secretary who listened to her problems and sometimes let her work with her. One student said of a teacher, "She understands my problems, and when I need to be yelled at, she yells at me." Others made comments like this one: "People treat people hard. They scream and yell at each other, and they start pushing each other and stuff." Another student remarked about a shoot-out next to them, "When you come to school, violence that is outside, you pick it up and be mean to people."

*Participation.* Opportunities were provided for parents to help out in classrooms, and a parent-child literacy program was very popular—parent and child pairs worked on projects together on a computer, some of which were designed to help them learn more about each other. It provided an opportunity to "see their student growing". Parents mentioned a number of ways in which the school tried to get them to participate either directly in the school or in their child's education at home. Other than this, there was no mention by any of the groups of participation in, for example, decision making or teaching.

*Communication.* Communication between teachers and students about the personal problems of students and between the principal and parents can provide a basis of knowledge about students' situations that allows staff to do their jobs more effectively. No participants mentioned this link. Communication between parents and the school tended to be strong. Teachers mentioned that they tried to start with something positive when talking with the parents, and they emphasized what parents could do to help their children at home. Parents mentioned that their children questioned more since being in the program. Parents received a weekly homework assignment sheet informing them of their child's work for that week. One parent mentioned they never talked with the teacher; another said they got a call from the teacher saying their son did a beautiful job in class.

Students complained of poor communication between students and teachers and among staff. Students talked of a lot of hollering on the part of teachers and other students, but they seemed to particularly like an aide who was no longer at the school and who, instead of "scratching out almost every work in compositions" and "hollering" like his replacement did, would only holler "if we were doing something really bad". They noted

that if they were doing something wrong, he would take them outside and talk with them. Also, he would race with students who stayed late to clean up, and he would draw them pictures of anything they asked for. The incidents mentioned by students of communication between them and teachers or the principal tended to have a different quality. They spoke of teachers yelling at students, and students yelling if a student did something wrong in gym class. The principal, "if she's having a bad day, she will treat us like 'dirt'". Another commented, "If she's having a bad day, why should she take it out on us, she should go home and stay home and deal with it by herself...When she walks in that door, you don't know if she's having a bad day or a good day." They also mentioned two teachers "having a fight" in their classroom once. The teachers ended up going into the hallway to finish the fight. "Then, the teacher came into our class and started fighting." Some did mention teachers who let them know when they were doing something well.

*Respect and Recognition.* Some parents felt that their children's work was not sufficiently acknowledged. Parents generally seemed to appreciate the work done by teachers, and one mentioned that the librarian organized something for Black History Month. In general, not much was said about the role of respect or recognition in the school.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The teaching staff in the group interviewed was about two-thirds female. Parents were about evenly divided into men and women; one parent was from Kenya. Except for the comment about the exhibit for Black History Month and the interest in having the children learn more about the world, nothing was said by parents or teachers concerning issues relating to ethnic diversity. Students made three comments of interest. First, they talked about an aide who "in class talks like the teacher" but who "talks like us when we go outside", unlike his replacement, who "doesn't talk like us". A newer student said that when he first came, other students made fun of him because he was short. Others confirmed the tendency of students to make fun of people. One girl seemed to have had a particularly hard time (although her classmates in the focus group responded kindly to her): "When my father died 'cause of AIDS, and then, the people in school, some of them still call me the AIDS girl, 'cause they think I got AIDS just because my father had AIDS." Others in the group replied sympathetically, "That's not right." "That's not right at all."

*Teamwork.* Parents mentioned that the principal often quotes the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to teach a child". The emphasis on getting parents involved probably contributed to feelings of teamwork. Students mentioned a lack of consistency in discipline across teachers (and even within the same teacher's behavior). Students said they would like to see a school where people work on things together. "A peaceful school...where everybody would share." Another added, "I would follow Dr. Martin Luther King's dream, and then the school would be peaceful...Blacks and whites can go to school together..."

*Affirmation.* Teachers talked of how pleased they were to see their students doing so well, and parents made similar comments. Students' work was displayed in the hallways. Students mentioned one teacher in particular. He'd give them something or do something for them if they got the work right or finish all their work. One student said that "when I get everything done right, he encourages me to 'keep up the good work'".

*Conflict Resolution.* Not much was said about conflict resolution, in spite of the clear need for it. For example, a boy whose brother died and who, hassled by other kids in the neighborhood, said it makes him mad: "I might end up killing them or hitting them in the head with a bottle." Other students talked about people threatening to shoot students or have them shot if they come to school. Teachers spoke of students who brought a lot of anger into the building, and who "live very closely together". Students felt that the way students act at school and incidents in the neighborhood discouraged parents from coming to the school, although one student commented that maybe if more parents were at the school, the children "wouldn't act so bad".

*Development of the New Members.* Students mentioned that the principal told them to show a new student the ropes. In some ways, students felt that membership was not well developed among student. Students were disturbed by the ability of kids to get away with improper behavior- climbing on desks or talking back to teachers. The students gave the sense that teachers primarily tried to control them, rather than to teach them to help each other and contribute to the strength of the school. Teachers said nothing about the ways in which new teachers or students are brought into the school "community".

*Links Beyond the Community.* Teachers mentioned that some had had good intentions to get involved in the community, but there has been little follow-up on these intentions, and some feel teachers lacked energy for involvement.

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Some teachers' complaints had to do with restrictions put on special resources, such as counselors who were not allowed to help non-Chapter 1 students and so didn't. The principal, however, often stayed late and came to the school on week-ends.

#### *Community Resources*

Through the program, the school seemed to be relatively resource-rich for an inner city school, but the way in which these resources were used did not seem to be sensitive to the need to build effective and caring relations between students and teachers.

#### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

A geographically stable, but economically unstable neighborhood.

A principal who by virtue of her outreach efforts and long tenure has developed detailed knowledge about many student families.

The program applied to only part of the school, creating a have/have not situation among both teachers and students.

According to a parent, the present coordinator has played a key role in the success of the program; the parent thought that if attempts were made to replicate it at another school, it might be watered down.



## *Students' Days*

While visiting School B, four students were followed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The section below describes a school day in the lives of four students, whom we will call "Vladimir," "Michael," "Delta", and "Fred".

### *Vladimir and Michael*

Class starts for Vladimir and Michael on the day they are to be observed at about 8:30. In their classroom, children begin by working on individual projects, a somewhat unstructured activity. Some chat with each other. The teacher gives one student a rice cake, since the student missed the free school breakfast this morning.

At 8:45, the teacher begins assembling students to go to reading. Vladimir stands off by himself; then, he sits on the steps, holding his stomach. The teacher's aide asks him how he is feeling, and he says he's sick. Meanwhile, another student in the class begins to vomit; she is taken away to the bathroom.

When they reach the resource room at about 9:05, Vladimir puts his head down. The teacher's aide feels his forehead, and then sends him back upstairs to his class.

He only stays there a few minutes before he says he's going to be sick. Another teacher's aide rushes him to the bathroom. He is then sent to the office, and his grandparents are called to take him home.

Meanwhile, five other students are working with an aide in the resource room doing reading. The aide shows them flash cards and asks students to say the words. The students are restless—the aide works hard to maintain their attention. After ten minutes, the students take turns reading aloud. One student mumbles that he doesn't want to read. Another student becomes upset, slamming her hands on the desk because she wasn't chosen to read. (Later the aide told the observer that the girl is hyperactive.) By about 9:25, three out of five students are off task. The students show signs of anger and frustration, and the teacher's aide spends most of her time trying to get students' attention. Soon the aide is beginning to show signs of anger and frustration too.

At 9:40, the full class of students (20 are present on this day) is doing a spelling drill called "Tic-Tac-Toe". The class is broken into teams. If students get a word correct, they get to put an "X" or an "O" on the Tic-Tac-Toe on the board. They are very engaged. Vladimir has been returned to class—the office was not able to reach someone to take him home. He sits at a table in the back of the classroom. As the game proceeds, he lifts his head from the table and watches with interest.

A few minutes before 10:00, the teacher passes out riddles to the students while asking them about St. Patrick's Day in March. The teacher asks a producer who is visiting what time she is going to leave; the teacher doesn't want her to leave before she gets to hear the children read their riddles. The producer tip-toes over to a student and reads the riddle.



From the back of class, Vladimir raises his hand to participate. His teacher calls on him to read his riddle.

The producer leaves—she claps her hands and says the students are so smart. The students snicker in response and look puzzled. They mimic her after she leaves the room. Their teacher tells them they need to learn how to take compliments. However, the observer tended to find the children's reaction more genuine as the producer sounded quite phony.

At 10:20, the teacher administers a written spelling test. She reads a story, and the students write down the words in the story that she asks them to spell. The teacher asks a student if "corn rows" is a compound word. The student says yes. The teacher tells the student no. Although the teacher may be right regarding the spelling of one meaning of the phrase, it should be noted that "cornrows" is also a term for an African-American braided hairstyle, and in that context it is a compound word.

At 10:35, over the Public Address System, comes the announcement that Vladimir can come down to the office as his grandfather has come to pick him up.

After the drill, the teacher steps out of class briefly. The teacher's aide leads the class in Simon Says. At 11:00, Michael, who didn't participate in Simon Says, goes to tell the teacher that his stomach hurts.

The teacher returns and lines children up to go to the bathroom. The children are restless and talkative, and the teacher has trouble maintaining order. She tells the students that the thing she hates most is that the children are only acting up because they have a visitor in class.

At 11:25, the teacher writes math patterns on the board and asks students to complete them. (There are currently a coordinator and three visitors in the classroom besides the observer.) Michael participates actively, excitedly waving his hand. The other students also seem enthusiastic and engaged.

At 11:35, they switch to learning to count change. Most students seem engaged and enthusiastic. One puts her head down for a minute now and then. About five minutes later when the teacher asks students to gather round, this student stays by herself at first. The teacher has the students brainstorm ways of measuring the classroom with paper and pencils. She gives a piece of paper to students to help them visualize what they would do to measure the classroom. Then, the teacher asks students if they can think of something else they could use to measure the classroom. One student suggest using the teacher's belt.

Michael seems to work hard to show he is doing his best—he is very attentive and polite, following the teacher's directions quickly. At 11:55, the other visitors leave, and the class on measurement ends. When the teacher says that everybody should give themselves a pat on the back, Michael gives himself a big pat. Afterwards, Michael goes up to the teacher's desk to compare the length of his belt with her belt. He seems eager for attention.

At 12:00, the teacher's aide takes students to the lunchroom. Michael mingles well with other children.

Later, the teacher told me more about Michael's life outside school and his eagerness to do well and to please his teachers. Michael's father has multiple sclerosis, and his father's condition has affected Michael's behavior somewhat. Before developing multiple sclerosis, his father was always very active, but now he is in and out of the hospital a lot. Michael's mother spends a lot of time caring for the father, and so Michael gets less attention than he used to.

She also mentioned that she had noticed that Michael keeps a spelling test in which he got a perfect score on the top of his papers in his desk. When she asked him why, he said it was because she wrote on the paper that she was proud of him.

### *Delta*

Delta is a fourth grade student in Mr. C.'s class. This is Mr. C.'s first year as school teacher. Mr. C. is familiar with the program in part because he attended the private school as a child and in part because he was a volunteer tutor in the program last year. Delta transferred to School B as a third grader. She was an advanced student in her previous school, yet her mother had been concerned that she would not be up the level of her peers at School B. According to the program coordinator, Delta is slow, not a real academic success, but perfectly content with her own progress. In class, she seems slower than her classmates at completing assignments, but able to understand the assignments and work independently. Today is somewhat unusual in that the first hour of the day 10 fourth grade students, including Delta, participate in a focus group for this study. They miss part of the reading lesson.

At 8:20, students enter the building. Classrooms for the entire special program are on one floor. Students line up on the stairwell and file by the program coordinator. She shakes hands with and has a personal comment for each student. Students seem accustomed to this routine. If she is preoccupied, they wait to shake hands. They are exceedingly polite. When one student interrupts the coordinator's discussion with the observers to shake hands, she says, "Excuse me for interrupting." The coordinator quizzes some students with mathematics problems or other tasks, such as telling time. Each problem seems to be appropriate for the students' level; although no one has the answer immediately, each student does answer correctly. One shy boy does not look the coordinator in the eye when shaking hands. She stops him and will not let him go to class until he looks her in the eye. When the first wave of students has passed, she congratulates herself: "That was pretty good. I only didn't know one name." Next year, when the program moves to the fifth grade, program students will be on several floors. When asked how she will greet the students then, the program coordinator did not know. She seemed satisfied that they would find a solution when that time arrives.

At 8:40, 10 students from the two fourth grade classrooms are brought by the coordinator to the cafeteria for a one-hour focus group. After warm-up questions ("How many brothers and sisters do you have?" "What is your part in the upcoming production?"), the children respond to questions on topics such as their favorite part of the day, relationships between students and teachers and among students, effect of community events on school life, etc. They are eager to respond, but polite when others are speaking. Delta raises her hand and

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answers several questions assertively, but does not interrupt others. She seems able to grasp the sense of somewhat abstract questions. For example, she cites a situation in which external events affected the school atmosphere. At 9:40, the program coordinator returns to send the students back to class.

Mr. C.'s classroom contains individual workbooks, a library, maps, a Macintosh, an overhead projector, games, a sink, and a teacher chalkboard. During the morning, Mr. C. uses the workbooks and chalkboard. In the afternoon, a television and video player are wheeled into the room.

Twelve children, including Delta, are in the classroom for reading lesson. The other students from the class are in the computer lab this hour. Mr. C. and a student teacher from the local state university are in the room. When she comes into class, after the focus group, Delta goes to her desk in the back row, finds the appropriate book, opens it, and starts reading and writing. Two student "checkers" (peers) check each student's workbook. The other students work quietly in their seats. When the checkers are done, they sit down. Mr. C. asks students questions about the reading. Students raise their hands to answer. One child leans back in her chair, visibly sulking. Delta continues to do her work as the rest of the class responds to the teacher; she seems oblivious to the class. Class seems very orderly.

At 10:03, a different reading activity begins. Mr. C. tells students to open their books to a specific page and start reading. He circulates in the room, talking with individual students. After about five minutes, he makes a general announcement that he is collecting homework. Students look up at this interruption, then start talking among themselves and asking the teacher questions such as "Will we have to make up snow days?" The school office asks for a notebook over the intercom. Although six or seven students volunteer, Mr. C. tells Delta (who did not volunteer) to take the notebook to the office. He says to another student, "You need to do your reading. Delta's not doing that now." She has been trying to catch up from the hour missed earlier in the morning.

Mr. C. sits at his desk. Some students come up to ask questions, although a few first sit at their desks with their hands raised. The established procedure for getting help is unclear.

At 10:20, Mr. C. calls for the class' attention. He asks them some trivia questions using a boxed set of flashcards. Before asking the questions, he says several times that these are seventh grade questions, and therefore very hard. The first question is: "Name four Ivy League colleges." Students guess a number of local schools, none of which qualify. Mr. C. gives some examples, but does not quite define the term. He notes that this is a very difficult question. It seems to me that this question might be less relevant for fourth grade than for seventh grade students, but perhaps this kind of exposure may plant ambitious ideas in the students' heads. Delta sits at her desk, not responding but attentive.

The entire class (23 students) moves to another room for the history lesson at 10:25. In the history classroom are workbooks, a library, maps, a globe, audio tapes, a sink, and a teacher chalkboard. The class uses workbooks and the chalkboard. Class is led by one teacher without an aide. The teacher starts the lesson exactly on time, despite the late entrance of a few stragglers. The room is very hot, and some students appear sluggish. The

lesson is about Romans. The teacher reads a passage to students in a monotone. Some students' attention starts to drift. They snap back to attention when she interjects questions, first about Roman numerals and then about Baghdad.

After reading for 15 minutes, the teacher asks questions from the workbook about the passage. Again, it is unclear how students should respond. The teacher answers the first question herself, despite the raised hands of most of the class. For the next few questions, students tend to call out answers; a few raise their hands. The teacher's background in some areas is a bit incomplete: she doesn't know how to pronounce "mosque" (from the reading) and how to spell several words. Students, including Delta, drift in and out of paying attention. The lesson ends at 11:00, and students go to the gym.

Students play dodgeball. When they are "out" they are supposed to sit on gym mats, although some students race each other around the gym and others play hopscotch. There are no organized activities for "out" students. The coach works in two other schools; he comes to School B two days per week. Mr. C.'s class goes to gym on Thursdays and the other fourth grade, on Fridays. Apparently, students have no other exercise time during the day. This may explain some of the excessive energy in the classroom.

It takes students five minutes to walk down one hall from the gym back to class and to settle down. At 11:20, Mr. C. brings out the flashcards. This question is on forming comparatives: big and dangerous. Mr. C. gives a brief explanation of comparatives. Students have trouble with "dangerous," but get it eventually with some prompting. Almost all students are engaged. Again this exercise seems to make productive use of the time between scheduled activities. As students work on comparatives, the aide comes in (for the first time today) and hands out lunch tickets. Lunch is from 11:30 to noon.

After lunch, the class prepares to watch Julius Caesar on video. The coordinator leads a class review of the story. A new student asks if Caesar dies; the coordinator directs a fellow student to update the newcomer. This introduction helps focus the students and connects today's viewing with yesterday's. However, there is no real link to other activities (such as the Romans studied earlier in History class), explanation of reasons for studying Julius Caesar, or guidelines for synthesizing information from the video. The other fourth grade class comes in quietly a few minutes after the video starts. Now there are 42 students and two teachers in the classroom. In the back of the room, two students work on a construction paper mosaic and two others (including Delta) work on a computer activity. The rest of the class is watching the video attentively, especially when a nearly naked woman dances through the streets. The coordinator interrupts the video at one point to suggest, "Think about why they would bring in a sphinx." She does not want immediate responses. She does not return to this question later.

Gradually, more students are losing interest in the video. By 12:15, several students have drifted back to join the computer group. They are told by the original two to ask for permission. At 12:18, when there are five students at the computer, Mr. C. calls all but the first two to sit down. Delta and her classmate continue to be engrossed in the computer activity. It seems to be some kind of grammar game using "Super Mario" characters.

At 12:30, the coordinator turns off the video. She tells the class that she has kept a list of talkers. Apparently, students wrote class evaluations the week before in which they complained about the entire class suffering for the misbehavior of a few students. The coordinator says that only those students who talked cannot watch the movie on Friday. She praised, by name, several students who have their books out and are ready for the next lesson.

Mr. C. introduces the math-geography lesson by reviewing terms and reminding students of memory tricks: "Remember latitude because the line lies flat; remember longitude because the line goes a long way down." As a review, one student shows the class on the blackboard how to plot dots. Mr. C. then explains a rather complicated activity which involves plotting dots on a grid, connecting the dots, and identifying the state drawn. Students ask repeatedly for directions; many are talking, some off-task. At 12:40, Mr. C. yells at the class, "I've already explained this. You should get it...I will explain one more time because it's difficult to do." Although he concedes, he is clearly irked.

Kelly is sent to the back of the room for the second time today, although he does not seem to be any louder than any other student. He disrupts two students on the way back. At the back table, he creates a mess with the mosaic materials. He calls quietly for the teacher twice, then fidgets with everything in reach. Finally, Kelly goes to Mr. C.'s desk to ask for directions.

There is a continuous huddle of three or four students at the teacher's desk. By 12:50, there are eight students grouped around Mr. C.'s desk. Most of the students seem to be able to do the first half of the assignment—plotting dots—but are stymied by the second half. At 12:54, Mr. C. sends all the students to their seats and promises to help them individually. Bill is the first student to complete this assignment. At 12:58, Mr. C. gives up on the exercise: "Put these away; we'll go right to the books—you guys cannot handle this exercise...There we go, more proof. Try to do something a little more exciting than looking in a textbook..." He criticizes the students for asking too many questions instead of trying to work on their own. Throughout this outburst, Delta continues to work complacently on the assignment. She has finished plotting her points and is trying to connect them. A few more students have finished the assignment, but most put it away incomplete. Perhaps more clear directions would have helped.

Students read on their own in their books. Mr. C. interrupts them to say, "When you are done reading, get ready for a quiz." As each student finishes, Mr. C. whispers the quiz question. Students are very absorbed. Delta is last. She gets the question after Mr. C. has written the answer on the board, but seems unaware that the answer is available.

On the left side of the blackboard is a list of subjects and initials next to each subject. If a student misbehaves, Mr. C. writes in the student's initials and s/he misses an event (e.g., movie). On the right side of the board are students' initials. If a student has been "good," s/he puts a check mark by his name. At 1:15, Mr. C. asks several students to put check marks by their names. Delta does not get to do so. Mr. C. threatens to have students write three-page compositions instead of watching a movie in the afternoon as punishment for misbehavior.



Students divide for math class. Delta's group (five students) goes downstairs to work with Ms. B., who does not arrive in the classroom until 1:25. Janis is sent back for her math workbook. Delta, who stopped at the bathroom on the way down, shows up five minutes later.

Students complete review problems on the board. Ms. B. coaches them through each step when they have difficulty. She is attentive and demanding. The students are eager to get and work on their problems. This is the most enthusiastic I have seen them all day. As they become more adept, they work on speed. The first to complete the problem gets a treat. Although Delta is never first, she completes her problems as competently as the others.

When their work is faultless, they sit down to work in their workbooks. Ms. B. patiently coaches students through difficult problems. When they read a new kind of problem, she stops the class and works through an example on the board. She has the students explain each step. She gives a little lecture: "I know this is hard, but think of it as a game, as fun." Towards the end of class, students work individual problems, one at a time, on the board. The inactive students fidget, are inattentive.

At 1:55, a student asks if they get a "Z" ("PIZ" is written on the board). Ms. B asks if they deserve a "Z"; three students vote yes and two vote no. One of the students who voted no points out, under duress, that they don't deserve a "Z"; they have not been very good that day.

Students return to Mr. C.'s classroom at 2:02. After some confusion, he sends them to the other fourth grade classroom for play practice. There is no practice, so the students return. More time is wasted as Mr. C. waits for students to be quiet. He repeats his threat of a composition assignment.

The science lesson begins at 2:10. Students watch a video on diving in shipwrecks. Approximately 12 students are watching the video, seven are writing, three are preparing their materials to leave, and one is playing with baseball cards. It is unclear what students are supposed to be doing now. Mr. C. announces that students can use this time to work on their homework. This seems to undermine any sense of purpose for watching the video. According to the program coordinator, the video is part of a larger science project which involves a field trip to the aquarium and will culminate in some students working directly with scientists. However, Mr. C. does not mention this connection or the purpose of the video either to the class or to me. Students become progressively less attentive. Class is over at 2:45.

#### *Fred*

Fred is a thin, quiet fourth grade student. According to the program coordinator, his work is well below average. His regular teacher is on vacation, so Ms. B., the aide, is teaching class for three days. This is her first day with full responsibility for the class. The coordinator comes in periodically to assist. Visible materials in the classroom include textbooks, workbooks, maps, a globe, audio tapes, games, other hands-on materials, a sink, and a teacher chalkboard. During the day, Ms. B. uses workbooks and the chalkboard.



The entire fourth grade is going to the aquarium today from 9:30 to 12:30. Students are clearly excited and excitable. This school day is likely to be atypical because of the change in teachers and the field trip.

At 9:00, students take a spelling test of 20 words and one dictation sentence. Students are told to raise their hands if they don't hear a word, but many call out "Huh?" instead. The words seem advanced for the fourth grade. The students are clearly challenged. Most think before writing the word on the paper, but all except one student write something for each test word. Three or four times, students write down a word with the fervor that shows they know the answer. (Note: during the field trip, Janis tells me that she is angry at Ms. B. because the aide did not approve the student's request to take the test on Monday. Janis didn't feel prepared on test day.) Ms. B. tells the children to be quiet frequently. One student has not written any words on his paper. The coordinator notices and tells him to take the test. Ms. B. follows up by suggesting he start with the current word and promising to return to earlier words. The student tries, but cannot keep up with her rapid review of earlier words. After the test, students line up for the bathroom and then for the field trip. Throughout the day, boys and girls form separate lines. This seems to be standard procedure.

Several things are striking about this field trip. First, there seems to be no overall direction or purpose. Although the coordinator told the observer earlier that the trip was to prepare students for a project working with scientists, there was no direct reference to that. In fact, when asked how this trip related to any special project or the regular curriculum, Ms. B. said that she didn't know of any special project. It may be that the other fourth grade class is involved in the project. In this two-day site visit, neither teacher discussed with their class the purpose of the trip. Ms. B.'s only reference before the trip was a threat to cancel it. At lunch, she asked a few students their impressions of the aquarium after I had asked that question within her hearing.

The second significant impression is the marked unruliness of the students. They show none of the politeness and self-control expected from reading about the school and observing their behavior the day before. They (literally) race through the aquarium, and only focus on three or four of the exhibits. Clearly, much of that is related to general excitement about a special activity. The lack of physical exercise also may factor in; Mr. C. does jumping jacks with his students before reboarding the bus. Behavior might have been better had the students been more involved in the sights at the aquarium. For example, one of the most rowdy students sits quietly on the bus ride back, filling out a worksheet on the animals she has seen that day. If all students had such worksheets, they might have been more directed and focused in their visit. Ms. B. mentioned several times that she wished she knew more about the beasts at the aquarium so that she could teach the students something, and encouraged the observer to share any relevant knowledge.

The focus of the trip was to be the tropical forest. The group spends approximately 10 minutes in this section. Ms. B. asks the students to find an oriole, but otherwise does not focus their attention. Leaving the tropical forest, the students find a lost frog. That generates quite a bit of enthusiasm until a staff member rescues the frog. Ms. B. maintains that energy by asking the students to find camouflaged frogs in the amphibian display.

Fred is quiet and slightly distracted during the field trip. He talks with his buddy and seems to shy away from adults. Occasionally, an exhibit such as the octopus captures his attention. Then he asks a question or two. At 12:30, the students return from their field trip and go to lunch.

When they return from lunch at 1:00, students sit at their tables. One representative from each table gets to put a check mark on the board if the table is quiet. Two tables get check marks. In the general din, some tables might not have even heard the request to be quiet. When Ms. B. announces that the class will go to Mr. C.'s room to watch Julius Caesar, there is general rebellion. Most students do not want to watch the movie. During lunch, Janis said that she had seen enough movies. However, all students are herded into Mr. C.'s room.

The next hour is not used effectively. Mr. C. takes some of his students to another classroom to work on compositions, but Ms. B.'s students remain in Mr. C.'s room. Mr. T., Mr. C.'s aide, is the only teacher in the room. Some students build shapes with blocks, many chat, and a few write or draw pictures. Fred chats with a friend throughout. Mr. T. tries to locate the point where yesterday's viewing ended while he tries to maintain discipline. Fewer than five out of 40 students are watching the video. Mr. C. and Ms. B. come into the room occasionally to move students between rooms. At 1:20, approximately 11 students leave the room for math. At one point, when Mr. T. takes a child outside for discipline, I am the only adult in the room with 20 unoccupied children. At 1:25, the aide is ready to run the video. The coordinator visits several times: first to tell Mr. T. that the first grade needs the video equipment, and second to ask Mr. T. to control the class and focus students on the video. There is no introduction or discussion of the video.

At 1:30, Ms. B. takes her class back to their room. She distributes certificates and stickers to the students. Students are quiet as they wait their turn, and particularly attentive to their prizes. They want to know what the certificates are for (Ms. B. seems unclear on this) and want to pick their own stickers (Ms. B. lets them until they start to get noisy; then she distributes them herself).

The class has been growing more rowdy and Ms. B., less patient. She tells Doris, a tall gawky girl, to return to her seat. Doris' seat is isolated at the front of the room. She has been sitting at a table with several other students. Doris asks to stay; when denied, she refuses to move. In the final showdown, Doris gathers her books and stomps out of the room. After this event, the students rebel at all of Ms. B.'s directives. They do not line up for math, get quiet, or sit down. Ms. B. is yelling at this point.

Finally, at 1:50, most students leave for their math classes. Ms. B. remains with approximately seven students. Students wander off to get their workbooks. Ms. B. overreacts to small annoyances by yelling. Mr. T. comes in to work individually with students.

Doris returns to class. She talks with Ms. B. from outside the room, trying to negotiate a truce. Ms. B. allows her to return if she will sit in her own seat.

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Students are now doing seatwork. Ms. B., Mr. T., and the coordinator offer individual assistance. Students seem to respond positively to the coordinator and Mr. T., where they would confront Ms. B. Ms. B. makes an aborted effort to do a math relay on the board, but returns to seatwork when the students become too loud.

There are two math classes in the room. Some students tell Ms. B. that they have already completed the assigned work and she tells them to do it again. Again, it is unclear how students are to ask for help. Ms. B. tells Molly to sit down and raise her hand for help; when Molly does so, Ms. B. remains at her desk and coaches the student from across the room. However, other students are allowed to get up and ask Ms. B. for help. Fewer students actually work on the problems. One student, when asked why she was not working, said she didn't want to ask for help and risk being told to start all over again.

As students finish their math assignment, they are sent to the computer room. Ms. B. tells Eloise, "I'm letting you go not because you have a bad attitude but because you did so well." This is the first positive academic reinforcement I have heard from her for some time.

Fred alternates between struggling through a problem and gazing into space. He does not ever ask for or receive help. When, at 2:30, Ms. B. tells Fred to work, he does. He seems reasonably willing, just not particularly focused.

At 2:34, Ms. B.'s students return from math. The coordinator has them copy down the homework assignment. The class has grown quite loud. Finally, the coordinator tells the students to put their heads down for 53 seconds. Each student is dismissed once s/he has done so.

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## *School C*

### *Midwestern United States*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

Many at-risk students have multiple needs. Recognizing this, administrators in this school district combined two program components believed to help at-risk youth: (1) smaller class sizes with more individual attention and (2) work experience combined with job-related skills acquisition. Students in the New Horizons/School-Within-a-School (NH/SWS) program attend SWS classes and receive instruction in academic subjects identical to the regular curriculum, as well as life skills and career exploration activities. As long as students remain in school, they receive after-school, paid jobs for an average of three hours per day, 15 hours per week. Three work advisors hold weekly group sessions for participants on job-related behaviors and skills, make job placements, monitor students' performance on the job, and visit students' homes. Looking at both the comparisons of dropout rates for individual years and the cumulative comparisons of the lengths of time to dropout for individual students over a four-year period, the New Horizons/School-within-a-School Program has demonstrated its effectiveness in keeping students at risk enrolled. This program was designated as a dropout demonstration project by the U. S. Department of Education. The program has also benefited from an Iowa state law allowing for local taxes to be levied to help fund programs for at-risk youth instead of requiring districts to go through the more-typical process of trying to pass a bond measure to increase funding to schools.

New Horizons/School-Within-a-School (NH/SWS) has many of the features that research suggests are key to successful at-risk and dropout prevention programs: small classes, individualized instruction, school-to-work links, and opportunities to participate in accelerated programs. When properly implemented, these reforms have shown promise at improving the performance of students at risk (Legters and McDill, 1994). The program provides counseling, attendance monitoring, career-related instruction, and work



experience to its students. Our aims in visiting the NH/SWS program were to examine whether the effectiveness of the reforms had lasted over time and to assess the effects of system and school-community dynamics on the performance of these elements.

### *Lessons from NH/SWS*

Although only one NH/SWS site was visited, several lessons seem to emerge. First the program has articulated specific goals for reducing the drop-out rate among at-risk youth. Second, smaller class sizes and the increased attention students receive as a result appear to have a positive effect on students' academic achievement and graduation. Third, the combination of extra help academically and paid, supported work experience seems to be appreciated by students, increasing their interest in school and motivation to graduate, in part through helping them to see how the skills they are asked to learn in school are relevant for jobs they will get after finishing school. Fourth, looking at the work component of the program, its approach of monitoring students' work experience through weekly phone calls to their employers and monthly visits to their job sites helps to support students in their development of work-related skills. Fifth, important to the success of the program is the effort it makes to see that participating employers understand that the work aspect of the program is supposed to complement students' academic work. Helpful also is the fact that the work experience program is well established in the community. Lessons to be drawn from this site also include more problematic aspects of the program and its environment. For example, a sixth point is that the program's separation to a certain degree from the "regular" school facilitates a situation in which other staff at the same school are not aware of the program's success or supportive of its goals. Similarly, although staff aim to visit participating students' homes at least once a semester, comments by some students and teachers suggest that the program has had limited success in forging links with some of the more difficult parents. Thus, while students may benefit from their interaction with NH/SWS teachers, the support of other teachers and parents may often be lacking. Seventh, the disturbing presence of racism among students and their families does not seem to be something this school is addressing effectively, yet it affects both sense of community at the school and, probably, the self-concept and associated academic and social outcomes of students. Think, for example, of the effect on a student who is from a Hispanic background hearing—and herself reinforcing—opinions that European-Americans are superior to African-Americans. Although she is considered by some to be "white" or European-American, she will presumably be affected by the ranking of ethnic groups that goes on in such contexts, coming to see herself, if "better than blacks", at least inferior to "whites." Likewise, even during a focus group on community, an African-American student had to sit there quietly while several of her classmates talked about violence against blacks and suggested that "they are different." Although the program was certainly not set up to address these problems, and teachers are making some attempts (the NH staff predominately display in their office a poster noting that hate crimes are against the law in Iowa), doing more to address racism would certainly help the goals of the program.

Although the program has been operating successfully for about five years, it may be that in the current year (1994-95) it will face its biggest challenge yet. This is due to a recently-implemented law passed by the Iowa state legislature decreeing that any student missing seven days of school in the course of a school year for any reason whatsoever has dropped out of school. Although there is a formal petition process if students who "have dropped out of school" wish to remain in school, the New Horizons (NH) program coordinator indicated that successful hearings (successful in the sense of allowing the student to remain a student) have been the exception. The law has created what can best be called the kick-out method of dealing with potential high-school and junior-high-school dropouts.

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### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

NH/SWS serves a midwestern city with a population of approximately 400,000. The district's mission statement says, "The 'City C' Independent Community School District will provide a quality educational program to a diverse community of students where all are expected to learn." The NH/SWS school C we visited which serves a population of "inner city" youth. Although City C's inner city at first glance looks like a nice place to live compared to the inner cities of Philadelphia and New York, it now has a sampling of the problems characterizing other urban areas. The main low income housing project in City C is nicely landscaped and currently managed by a former resident. However, the first night of the site visit, the fire trucks audible from our downtown hotel rooms, two children were rescued barely in time from a burning apartment there, and early reports were that no one was with them at the time. A look at City C may tell us much about the setting of School C and the other schools in the program, and about the background of its students.

#### *Social Problems*

Although City C's crime rate is not as high as in some cities, it shares many of the problems associated with impoverished urban areas. Students' problems may include illicit use of alcohol and other drugs, parents' drug use, violence, unstable and/or violent or racist families, and pregnancy. Also, there seems to be a fair amount of racism generally in the area, although Iowa does have a law forbidding hate crimes. Unlike other areas, though, where many groups seem to be targets and to do the targeting, in City C the major problems seem to be between African-Americans and European-Americans.

#### *Lack of Community Support*

The state legislature and some teachers, as well as other community members probably, are not very sympathetic to students at risk. The state has clearly taken a very hard-line view on the subject in their decision that seven absences are enough to warrant telling a student she or he has no right to attend classes with other students. It should be stressed that these absences are not just unexcused absences: potentially even if a student missed

attending classes due to a life threatening illness and spent the time in the hospital, the student could be deemed to have dropped out of school. Of course, most students who miss classes may be merely sick or cutting class, but the law seems designed to weed out potential dropouts early even at the expense of increasing the dropout rate (as well as creating other problems, such as encouraging students with easily communicable diseases to come to school and pass them to other students and school staff). It is too early to judge whether the law is having a deterrent effect on lowering the number of students who drop out of school in the end, but it is clearly ensuring that many students will leave school earlier and thus with less education to take with them—and under conditions that will make them think less favorably of schools. In other words, even though students who “drop out” can attend evening school to get a degree, it seems unlikely that they will see school as a sufficiently welcoming and approachable place to enable them to pursue other educational options. This, of course, will have a multiplier effect as these “dropouts” become parents themselves. Also, according to one of the New Horizons counselors, some teachers in the wider school hold views consistent with this policy, and so this policy may reinforce views that will be detrimental to all students learning. Such teachers, for example, may maintain the attitude, “Why should I have to teach students who can’t keep their attendance at acceptable levels?” One of the teachers, who works on construction projects with students from NH, commented that ‘the new policy is making my job much easier because the ones who would have missed a lot of classes and then dropped out of school by about March are now gone by September.’ The law allowing local taxes to be levied to support programs for at-risk youth probably helps to mitigate some of this lack of sympathy by others in the area by allowing direct access to financial support for at-risk programs.

#### *Positive Environmental Aspects*

Keeping in mind the challenges posed by NH/SWS’ environment, we should not overlook its strengths, which include the supportive links it has formed with businesses in the area. (The New Horizons Program has been in operation for over 25 years.) For example, in addition to accepting some NH/SWS students for placement, the ‘State C’ Methodist Medical Center has created the Corporate Academic Institute, which “is designed to be a ‘hands-on’ learning experience that emphasizes an apprenticeship approach for the delivery of career, social and academic skills in a ‘real world’ setting within the ‘State C’ Methodist Medical Center.” Also, the ‘State C’ Methodist and the city’s public schools have created the ‘State C’ Methodist Neighbors Youth Mentoring Program which combines volunteer work experience, academic credit, and work-mentoring relationships, and special outings for students and mentors to get to know each other better. One of the staff members at the ‘State C’ Methodist mentioned the value of these mentoring and supportive relationships to the staff of the medical center and to the wider community as well. She noted that the mentors often are people who themselves need additional career support, and mentoring has helped in some cases to bolster self-esteem and positive work behaviors among the mentors, in addition to helping students. She also noted that the program’s requirements that all student interns and volunteers must have vaccinations up-to-date and the fact that the medical center provides participating students with periodic complementary physicals benefit the wider community as well.

In addition to the linkage with the 'State C' Methodist Medical Center, the New Horizons Program receives both financial and community resource support from the state's Conservation Corps/In-School Component, the state's Conservation Corps/Summer Component, and the state's Conservation Corps/Young Adult Year Round Program, as well as the State Elderly Service Funds-CrossRoads of state Area Agency on Aging, Inc., the Title III, Older Americans Act-CrossRoads of state Area Agency on Aging, Inc., the Mid-City Vision Committee, and several other agencies. Much of the funding provided by these agencies is used to hire young people from the 'State C' Public Schools to perform services for elderly members of the community and to hire counselors to supervise the work of the youth. These "crossroads" programs serve as links between adolescents of the community and the elderly. Young people provide services such as lawn maintenance and household chores for elderly people who would otherwise be forced to leave their homes because of their own lack of ability to continue to care for them.

Another very positive linkage with the community is the Home Construction Class. The city "sells" to the school system, for the price of title transfer—\$15—a house that the city owns because of delinquent taxes. The Home Construction Class then has the responsibility of renovating the house. The teacher is a non-degreed, certified teacher who provides instruction for two crews of students per year—a morning crew and an afternoon crew. During the other part of the day, students attend regular classes at their home schools.

Since the teacher is not licensed to do some of the jobs such as plumbing and electrical wiring, he invites members of the community who are to provide instruction for the class and to return to inspect their work once it has been done. In some cases when the job is a large and highly technical one, the plumber or electrician will complete it himself. Once the renovation is completed, the house is sold, and the program retains any profits for further program development.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

Since 1968, the New Horizons (NH) project has offered counseling and career-related instruction to at-risk high school students in the City C public school system. Separate from the New Horizons project is the School-within-a-School (SWS) program, which provides smaller classes with more personalized instruction. In this program, average class size is about 12 students. The SWS operates in five City C high schools.

The primary goals of both the NH and SWS programs for students in grades 9-12 are to improve students' achievement and increase their graduation rates. The NH/SWS project attempts to achieve this by emphasizing the applicability of what they are being asked to learn in school to the world of work. Toward this end, the NH/SWS project offers work experience outside of school.

NH/SWS participants attend SWS classes during the school day, receiving academic instruction, as well as instruction in life skills and career exploration activities. NH/SWS students are placed in after-school jobs for an average of three hours per school day. Grant-funded work advisors hold weekly sessions with participants concerning job-related behaviors. In addition, the advisors make the job placements and monitor students'

performance through weekly telephone contacts with employers and monthly visits to job sites. They also visit each student's home every semester. In addition to these advisors, each of the five participating high schools provides a counselor offering referral services, and individual and group counseling to NH/SWS participants.

Private-sector employers are responsible for paying the students they employ and for assigning an on-site work supervisor to interact with school-based work advisors. The wages paid to students varied, and students employed in the public sector were paid by New Horizons, with most receiving minimum wage. Most jobs appear to involve routine tasks, such as sorting mail, stocking supermarket shelves, sweeping floors, and, sometimes, serving customers.

### *Staff and Participants*

Nine work advisors currently share responsibility for the five schools. Some have extensive experience as teachers. While they are responsible for placing students in jobs, they are not responsible for recruiting prospective employers. Rather, they use lists of employers developed by other NH staff. Teachers work in the SWS (or related LXL) program either part or full time. (Some teach "regular" classes for part of their day.) The directors of NH and SWS are located in the same building, an annex of the City C Public Schools Administration Building, with the NH director serving as project director of the collaborative project.

Approximately 240 students are in the SWS program at the five participating schools. All are eligible for job placement services available through the joint program. The vast majority of students are placed in jobs; however, a small minority are not deemed mature enough. Nevertheless, these students are included in the weekly group sessions to prepare them for future placement. Students are referred to the SWS program by their junior high counselors or teachers based on their grades, ITBS scores, and attendance. Approximately 80% of the students who received NH/SWS services are European-American. At School C, the NH/SWS site visited most recently, in 1994, approximately 120 students participate in the NH part of the program, and approximately 100 students are in the SWS program. Of these, approximately 60 students are currently being served by both programs.

### *Project Services*

Participating students receive an average of 10 hours of service per week for 22 weeks. The SWS program provides transitional academic instruction in math, English, and social studies for youth at risk in their freshman and sophomore years, as well as special academic assistance to students in their junior and senior years. Classes are taught by regular teachers who generally share time teaching regular classes and SWS classes. The SWS curriculum is identical to the regular curriculum but is offered in classes no larger than 15 students. Average class size is actually about 12 students. Because of the small class sizes, teachers are more able to individualize the instruction and attention given students.



In addition to the work advisors, each SWS site has its own counselor. Counselors provide referral services, individual counseling largely on a drop-in basis, and some group counseling. The student-counselor ratio in each school is approximately 60 to 1.

Students receive, in addition to the work experience component, weekly group sessions run by the work advisor at their school, covering such topics as on-the-job behavior, résumé writing, and interview skills. Work advisors also visit each student's home once every semester and collect ratings of students' work by their job supervisors concerning their work performance and attitudes toward work.

Students seem very satisfied with the personal attention and assistance they receive from their SWS teachers and from their NH/SWS work advisors. One exception to this (perhaps to be expected) was that some were frustrated by the life skills teacher whom they perceived as "nosy" because she asks them questions about behaviors that could get them into trouble (e.g., drug use). Some students felt that their classes or work was boring at times. Other students disagree; one commented, "I am more responsible at home since I started working". Another added comments like this one: "I used to skip a lot in junior high, but not anymore. I want to work... The program is great."

### *Resources*

As noted above, School C combines services from various programs to aid students at risk. Although this report focuses primarily on the NH/SWS combination, a new umbrella program called SUCCESS is currently in place which ties together several of the currently-existing services and includes pre-natal and early infant care. Like its predecessor, NH/SWS, it seems likely to make a difference in helping at-risk youth and their families. Although the programs are well-coordinated, their funding and expenditures are kept fairly separate. What follows is thus available information on funding and expenditures of the NH program.

The New Horizons program had revenues and expenditures of \$1,709,928.97 during 1992-93. Funding for the program, perhaps because of the program's grant consultant, has been obtained from a number of sources. City C Public Schools was the second largest contributor, providing approximately 27% of total funding. The Instructional Support Levy, the largest funding component, provided 37% of total funding. The other large source of funds (18%) came from the City C, Department of Housing and Community Services. The 'State C' Conservation Corps provided funding through its In-School Component (4% of total funding), Summer Component (1%), and Young Adult Year Round Program (2%). Funding was obtained as well from the State Elderly Service Funds-CrossRoads of 'State C' Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (1%), the Job Training Partnership Act (2%), the Department of Education Career and Education Enhancement Program (Carl Perkins Act) (1%), the 'State C' Methodist Medical Center (1%), and the Commission on National and Community Service (2%). Additional funding sources contributing less than 1% of total funding were: Title III, Older Americans Act-CrossRoads of 'State C' Area Agency on Aging, Inc., the Department of Education-



Vocational Education, the Mid-'State C' Health Foundation, the Department of Education-Career and Education Enhancement Program (JTPA), and the Mid-City vision Committee.

The NH program's three primary areas of expenditure were salaries, benefits, and youth wages, comprising, respectively, 57%, 14%, and 20% of total expenditures. Additionally, purchased services comprised 2% of total expenditures, and supplies and materials, 4%. The remaining expenditures included equipment, telephone, travel, inservice training, student enrichment, and instructional materials.

### *Project Outcomes*

*The Dropout Demonstration Assistance Project, 1989-92.* When the program was studied as part of the Dropout Demonstration Assistance Project, we selected comparison students at each of the five City C high schools in which the combined NH/SWS program was operating. Specifically, we selected 111 students at random from among the total number of NH/SWS participants at these high schools, and our comparison sample was comprised of 98 students at risk, mostly 9th and 10th graders, who participated in (either) the NH program (four students), the SWS program without the supervised work experience component (nine students), or who were enrolled in the general school programs at the sites (85 students). Selecting students as comparisons from the same schools at which the NH/SWS program was operating raised questions of possible selection bias; that is, that the students in the program might have been judged as more capable despite various at-risk conditions or that they were more motivated to seek special services. We found no evidence of the former being the case (i.e., interviews failed to disclose any systematic efforts on the part of teachers or counselors to find the "best" students for the program), and the lack of specific entrance requirements (e.g., application forms) suggested that NH/SWS students who were identified for the program were assigned without much opportunity or necessity for their volunteering for services. It is the case, however, that the comparison group at this site was comprised of a greater number of over-age 9th-graders than were in the treatment group, and that the treatment sample had a greater number of over-age 10th-graders and 11th- and 12th-graders generally than did the comparison sample.

Baseline differences existed between the program and comparison samples in terms of the grade averages that had been earned during 1988-89, the year prior to formal entry into the program. Based on records data available for 99 and 81 students, respectively, we found that NH/SWS students had recorded higher grade averages (i.e., 1.67 versus 1.28) during the baseline year. In contrast, there were no baseline differences between the groups in percent days absent; the rates for NH/SWS students and comparison students were 5.9% and 6.5%, respectively, a difference that was not statistically significant.

The more intensive follow-up of students at this site, which involved the gathering of grade and absence data from school records, was discontinued after the 1989-90 school year. This was due to our judgment that the NH/SWS "treatments" being delivered to students at each of the five high schools were sufficiently different to make specific

statements about "NH/SWS strategies" impossible. Notwithstanding these treatment differences, however, students in City C were continuously followed through the 1991-92 school year with respect to their enrollment status.

Improved academic performance and improved attendance were judged by the implementation study team to be plausible short-term outcomes of project efforts in 1989-90. The key longer-term outcome that was identified for the project was increased student persistence to graduation. More specifically, these outcomes were deemed plausible because project staff were judged to have carefully integrated a key incentive, i.e., paid work, with performance expectations regarding both performance in remedial classes and school attendance.

*Student academic performance.* In 1989-90, some evidence of improvement in grade averages was found for the treatment students in City C (i.e., they raised their averages by about .147, or about one-fifth of the baseline mean standard deviation, while comparison students lowered their averages by about .189); however, the response rates on which this result was based were low (about 59%). When adjustment was made for nonresponse and the analysis was re-run, this gain was not significantly different from that recorded by the comparison group, although the direction of the effect continued to favor the treatment group. Given the higher grade averages of NH/SWS students during the baseline, it also is difficult to attribute this gain to the content of the project alone; that is, the selection mechanism used to assign students to the combined program may have served to involve students in the project who were more likely to take advantage of project activities. In contrast to the data from school records, student self-report data related to perceived improvements in class participation and homework (which were collected in Spring 1990) did not evidence any differences between the groups.

*Student attendance.* No statistically significant differences were found between NH/SWS students and the comparison students in changes in absence rates from the baseline to the first follow-up year. Looking at each group, however, NH/SWS students increased their rates of absence by about .5% while comparison students increased their rates of absence by about 1.8% (or almost one-third of the baseline standard deviation for the group). The rates of data availability in this case were 86% and 65%, respectively, for the two student samples. As in the case of academic performance, no differences between the groups were revealed by 1989-90 student self-report data on perceived improvements in getting to class on time.

*Student persistence to graduation.* With some evidence of having raised students' grade averages and having helped to contain students' absence rates (although the differences between the treatment and control groups were not statistically significant on this latter measure), it was perhaps less surprising that the combined NH/SWS program succeeded in retaining students. Based on virtually complete data for the student samples, dropout rates for both 1989-90 and 1990-91, whether computed based on school-classified dropouts only or on school-classified dropouts plus moved and expelled students, were consistently lower for NH/SWS students, and the differences in every case between NH/SWS students and the comparison students were statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . For 1991-92 (also based on virtually complete data for the student samples), dropout rates for

NH/SWS students, when moved and expelled students are considered along with school-classified dropouts, also were statistically significantly lower than those for the comparison sample. The difference in rates between the groups for 1991-92 when school-classified dropouts only were considered also very nearly approached statistical significance. In this case, the dropout rate for NH/SWS students (in 1991-92) was 17%, compared to a 30% rate for the control students, and the level of significance for this difference was  $p < .059$ .

In addition to comparison of dropout rates, survival analyses using the Cox Proportional Hazard test to compare the rates of persistence of the student samples in each of the three years from 1989-90 to 1991-92 showed that NH/SWS students remained in school longer. The results of these analyses were the same when either school-classified dropouts only or dropouts, moved, and expelled students were considered, and they were the same whether or not the analyses were stratified on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and age differential with respect to grade. The results of survival analyses for the 1989-91 period overall confirmed the findings for the individual years; that is, NH/SWS students remained in school longer. In addition, these analyses suggested that the risk factor associated with dropping out for NH/SWS students was not constant over time but increased somewhat from year to year. This pattern may indicate the changing compositions of the treatment and comparison groups over time, or it may reflect some change in the salience or lasting-effect of the treatment for participants. In any case, these results do suggest the NH/SWS approach had definite, positive effects on students' persistence to graduation.

*Factors affecting realization of outcomes.* The key factors that affected dropout prevention outcomes in School C appear to have been (1) the integration of paid-work experience, as an incentive, into an established school-within-a-school program, and (2) the articulation of specific numerical goals for reducing the dropout rates of high-school-aged students at risk of failure. In addition, the fact that the work experience component of the program was well-established in the community meant that (1) work experience coordinators had models of behavior in carrying out their responsibilities to ensure that students' jobs did not interfere or jeopardize their schooling, and (2) the majority of employers relied on by the program understood clearly that the work experience of students was intended as a complement to their school work. Finally, this demonstration had an experienced management team familiar with both the NH and SWS programs and their staffs, thereby ensuring a "sensitive" approach was taken in combining these strategies so that staff from neither of the programs felt left out or that their missions had been unduly compromised.

*Recent outcomes, 1992-93 to 1993-94.* Data on recent outcomes is based on reports written by the district program staff in School C. The New Horizons Program's primary objectives are related to attendance rates, dropout rates, and work experience placements. With respect to attendance rates of students whose poor attendance and achievement caused them to be placed in the NH program, NH students had attendance rates that were within 1.2% of the total school attendance rates in the 1992-93 school year, and that were within 0.4% of total school rates in 1993-94. Similarly, the dropout rate for NH students was 0.9% less than the dropout rate for all students at the same schools in both the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years. NH's objective concerning the dropout rate is that the "withdrawal rate will not exceed 5% of the rate for all students at the same school". At

School C, the NH/SWS site recently visited, the dropout rate for the school as a whole in 1993-94 was 3.6, the rate for NH students was 0.0, and for SWS students, 3.2. The program planning/evaluation report also notes that 97% of all families of NH and SWS students were contacted, and approximately 85% of all families were visited by advisors as well.

### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

Because of the long history and success of the New Horizons Program and its current linkage with the also successful School Within a School Program, it seems apparent that the dropout prevention program in Des Moines is fully institutionalized. The stability of the program seems to be the result of two major factors that support its maintenance. First, the program director, Mr. M., is an integral part of the community and the school district. He is a native of City C and has spent his professional life in the school system. Mr. Montgomery is also a man with a vision for programs for students placed at-risk and uses creative means to insure that the programs are supported and maintained. For example, he saw two successful and complementary programs—New Horizons and School Within a School—and merged them to obtain new funding from the federal government.

The second factor that provides stability for the program is the synergistic relationship among many community agencies that includes the school district and, specifically, New Horizons/School Within a School. Agencies in City C have joined forces to support each other. For example, the summer Conservation Corps and the Crossroads Program for elderly citizens utilize funding supplied for senior citizens to provide summer jobs for at-risk youth. These summer jobs involve caring for the homes and yards of the elderly to enable them to stay in their homes rather than being moved to group homes. This kind of program clearly links the two agencies and provides for the needs of both youth and senior citizens.

The New Horizons/School Within a School Program (NH/SWS), then, seems to be relatively stable. Another way to examine its stability is by looking at the program in terms of the characteristics of "High Reliability Organizations."

*1. Public and staff perceptions are that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

The NH/SWS faculty who are part of the program feel a deep commitment to it and to the students it serves. The director, Mr. M., believes that the community would not allow the program to disappear. The synergistic relationship among community agencies and this program are evidence of much support from the community. The students in the program also seem to feel very positively about its value to them. It seems, however, that faculty not involved in the program do not have the same commitment to it. It also seems that some parents of children in the program see it as a program for "lazy" kids. These people

would obviously not see failures within the program as disastrous but rather they almost expect them. The new attendance laws seem to have little commitment to working with students who are at-risk of dropping out of school.

*2. Program has clear goals, staff have a strong sense of their primary mission.*

The goals of the New Horizons/School Within a School Program are very clear—"to provide supportive services' in conjunction with other community agencies "to meet the needs of a selected population of students and their families to improve life skills, school achievement, graduation rate, and visions of their future." And, to "provide a program of high quality, small group instruction and support to youth at-risk, fostering a sense of belonging, personal responsibility, and student ownership of the educational experience." The staff we interviewed seem to have a commitment to these goals. Teachers and administrative staff very clearly articulated these goals to us.

*3. Program extends formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs).*

We were told by Mr. M. that should crises arise in the program, the person closest to the problem makes the decision about how it should be handled. The program is based on site-based management at the building level, with the program counselor at each site having the authority to handle problems. Who handles the problem (crisis) may also depend on the problem. One of the problems that arose during the Fall of 1994 pertained to students within the program who had reached their seven day limit of absences as imposed by the new state law and were facing the threat of being dropped from schools' rolls. Since this law is particularly problematic for at-risk students, the program counselor must make a decision as to whether they will act as an advocate for the student when the case comes before a school committee of teachers, administrators, etc.

When students are failing in their schoolwork, they are not allowed to continue their jobs. If they miss school but continue to work, they receive no pay for the work they do. This is an example of a "standard operating procedure" within the program. When students are in danger of failing out of the program, there are both meetings between the student and teachers and conferences among the professionals involved in the education of the particular student.

*4. Program recruits and trains extensively. At peak times, professional judgment is valued.*

Positions within the program are advertised and applied for by people who feel qualified for them. There is no need to recruit because of the level of interest in working in the program.

In preparation for the initiation of the program, staff met monthly with those offering jobs to students in the program. They still meet monthly to receive training and information on topics they deem pertinent to their students. For example, during the 1994-1995 school year, proposed staff development issues ranged from discussions with employers



concerning the skills they seek, to information about community resources available to the schools, to information about the availability of technology district-wide. Staff within the program were polled to ascertain the issues in which they were the most interested.

The district requires teachers to take one course per year for staff development. Topics for those courses range from "Effective Schools," to "At-Risk Students," to "Effective Teaching," to "Computers." The district held a Fall Conference focusing on programs with curriculum area teachers meeting with their supervisor to discuss the programs.

This kind of input from teachers and counselors appears to indicate that their judgment is valued by central administration. In addition, the site-based management philosophy described above would support this as well.

*5. Program has initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.*

Although the kind of monthly meetings attended by the staff of the program would enable them to discuss problems within the program and its SOPs, the problems presented by the newly enacted state absentee policy would indicate that this kind of initiative may have a dead-end point. It will be interesting to see whether Mr. M. will apply for special dispensation from the state law for students in his program as he did for dispensation from federal child labor laws which would have prevented young students in the program from working.

*6. Program is sensitive to areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required; it pays attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the organization's processes.*

Building level program coordinators periodically (monthly in some cases) submit data pertaining to Employment Positions, Personal Contacts, Individual Counseling, Staff Consultations, Related Instruction, Job Supervisor Contacts, Community Agency Contacts, and Non-New Horizon Contacts to Mr. M.'s office. They receive formative feedback for each category that indicates the total number of such activities, as well as whether or not they have met the objectives for the year. In categories where there is a high level of performance but it is not yet at the level to meet the objective, they are told that "If you continue to provide service at this level, you will surpass the objectives related to ..."

Summative evaluations of the program are conducted each year as well.

*7. Monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

This appears to be true in that the Planning/Evaluation Report for 1992-93 includes a section entitled Outcomes from Program Supervisor Objectives which reports the activities of the supervisor.



**8. Alert to surprises or lapses.**

The NH/SWS Program is designed to prevent the "cascading" effect of allowing at-risk students to reach high school before they are identified for participation in the program. Students are identified during middle school so that they may begin participation in the program upon entry into ninth grade (high school). This is because the program developers realized the potential disaster of allowing students to get to the point of almost dropping out of school before providing retention-producing services for them.

**9. Program is hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, utilizes a second layer of behavior emphasizing collegial decision making regardless of rank; staff assume close interdependence and relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent.**

The program is clearly hierarchically structured with Mr. M. as Central Administration Supervisor for the program. Each school has a Work Experience Advisor for the students, while classroom teachers provide the academic instruction. School-level personnel must also follow the administrative structure within their buildings. While it was reported that in a time of crisis the person closest to the problem would be able to make decisions concerning the best avenue of action, during the site visit we did not obtain a concrete example of this. In fact, there may be an example of just the opposite. This is the case of the female student described in this document (Melani) who ran away from home because she was afraid of her mother's boyfriend and missed her allotted seven days because she was unable to get the needed support from the school to obtain protection from him. This was because the rules state that parents may come to the school at any time and have access to their children, which, in this case, meant that the mother and her boyfriend could come to the school to get the girl. The best the teachers and counselors in the program could do was to be Melani's advocate when she had to petition for readmission to school.

**10. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order.**

Although there is no particular equipment necessary for this program, the machinery that is in place seems to be well maintained. In fact, wherever we went we saw students working on machines (computers, construction tools, etc.) that were well maintained and ample.

**11. Program is valued by its supervising organization.**

The New Horizons/School Within a School Program is a point of pride for the central administration, as are many of the programs within the City C Public Schools. Central Administration staff showed us many more programs that were not part of this study, because they were so proud of what the district is doing. In fact, one of the most compelling characteristics of the city is that it appears to provide a "web of support" to many programs that are beneficial to its citizenry, no matter what their socio-economic status or age.

*12. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

The reduction in numbers of students in academic classes within this program is an indication of this program's attention to high reliability over "efficiency." Classes are comprised of approximately 15 students rather than the 30 or so that is typical in the regular school program in order to provide students with the individual attention they need.

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*Analysis of Community*

*Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Relations among teachers in the New Horizons/School Within a School (NH/SWS) program at School C seemed positive. The SWS teachers who participated in the teacher focus group, though, noted that they really aren't familiar with the New Horizons part of the program. A parallel problem exists between NH/SWS teachers and the other teachers at School C. One teacher stated, "I hear it from different teachers...I sometimes find myself defending what I do and what I teach. I have the same academic goals for my SWS kids as I do my regular quote-unquote students, and they have to meet the same goals...I have to give my 9th graders the same district test that every other 9th grader [gets], and if they don't meet the requirements, I'm going to hear about it from my supervisor downtown..." All the teachers in the focus group affirmed that they get comments from other teachers suggesting that the program is not academically rigorous. Similarly, one of the NH work experience counselors showed his concern that if the visiting researchers asked questions about the program to teachers not connected with it, it would give the other teachers a chance to "dump" on the program and try to undermine it. He noted that some teachers have commented to him that there shouldn't be special programs for students who don't do well—if they don't keep their attendance and grades up, they don't deserve the extra attention. NH/SWS teachers seem to derive most of their support from each other and from the positive reactions of students.

Administrators' relations with teachers have been very supportive, and administrators have given the program their backing. One "had the program sort of dropped in his lap when he came, but he worked real hard to figure out what this is all about." Teachers agreed that "...the support...[has been] nothing but positive."

Students and teachers in the program generally seem to get along well. There was some dissent on the part of some students, however, mostly centering on their not appreciating the personal questions asked by the teacher of the life skills class. In other words, students who were doing things they knew teachers wouldn't approve of found interactions difficult with the teachers most likely to try to talk to them about their actions. For the most part, however, students seemed to be appreciative of the effort NH/SWS teachers put out for them and for the caring they show. Likewise, teachers seemed to feel appreciated

by students, in spite of the tensions inherent in being part of a program some colleagues don't approve of. Students also seemed to appreciate the opportunities to work the program provides. "Burger King's pretty cool 'cause I get money and school credit for it."

Relations between teachers and parents did not seem to be very well developed. Some parents were reported as liking the program; others were against it or even perhaps unaware they had signed the papers allowing their student to participate. Teachers indicated that they wished more parental involvement would occur, and they noted that they had made some efforts in the past. With respect to the wider community, the NH part of the program seems to have developed excellent working relationships with businesses in the area; for instance, contacts with the local hospital (described above) help to provide some students with internships, mentors, jobs after graduation, and basic medical care.

Students in the focus group seemed to get along o.k. together, but the stories they told were of continuing, though perhaps lessened, ethnic tension in the school as a whole.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* The teachers in the focus group did not seem to have a clearly articulated vision, although perhaps in the case of this program, the vision is strongest in the district administrators who developed this and other programs to help at-risk students. Teachers did say that they are trying to catch students up to the level of their age cohort.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* The teachers in the program seem to work toward "giving these kids a chance to be successful." They are very aware of the degree to which these kids are behind and the urgency of getting them up to speed quickly. "Most of these kids have missed a significant amount of junior high." Many of the students seemed to feel they were learning a lot because of the program.

Part of what teachers find they need to do to be successful is to become surrogate parents: "Society doesn't necessarily do the wonderful job of parenting that is used to. Now we've got the ratio down to 18 in 44 minutes, so we've got two to three minutes... a child that we can spend, sometimes being pseudo parents—that's a lot of time what I end up doing..." They also see the work they do as interrelated. Teachers exhibited a lot of appreciation for the work the counselor does—the day of the focus group, the counselor had the following problem 'on her desk': "A student's out of the home; she doesn't want to return. Police are investigating...[We're] trying to work out where she's going to go at 2:40." She added, "Some of these kids have an environment that doesn't help their education." A teacher added, "...we get these kids, and we start teaching them, and they just blossom!"

The NH work experience advisors have a related goal: using the work experience component to keep students motivated in school and teach them work-related skills and habits. The newest area in which NH and SWS staff are working together concerns the need to keep students in school absolutely as much as possible, given the new state dropout policy. Now not only do they work together to teach students and persuade them that school is a worthwhile place to be, they need to try to make sure student absences do not hit the maximum allowed (six per school year) and to try to defend students who inadvertently find themselves being "dropped out" of school.

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*Shared Values.* Teachers seem to want students to do the best they can. Upon realizing that "these kids will do as little as you allow them to do... we changed and said, "We don't give Ds—you get 70% or better in order to be successful... Our first grading period just ended, and it worked very well; I had very few people that failed, comparatively speaking, because if you tell these kids, 'This is what you need to do to pass,' they'll do it [and no more]." Teachers try to give students the message that they have confidence in their ability to learn if they try hard and stay in school. The biggest deficiency seems to be that the values that support the program may not be widely held in the school as a whole, ultimately causing those in the program to feel somewhat insecure. Although teachers did not articulate this, it seems that trying to create shared values supportive of helping at-risk youth throughout the school would be extremely beneficial.

*Trust.* Although trust seems pretty good among those in the program (but not among teachers in and out of it), teachers' comments regarding the relationships between students and their parents suggest that some students do not trust their parents. "A lot of times I think the students don't want their parents to be involved." Clearly, some of the stories told by teachers and students suggest that trust is lacking in some of the parent/student relationships at the school; either the student doesn't really trust their parent or the parent doesn't trust the student (or the teacher, in some cases). Take, for example, the case of the student who was afraid to come to school if her mother or her mother's boyfriend were allowed to come on campus. This student, Melani, felt to protect herself she needed to be assured that they could not come near here. The school, however, told her that they couldn't provide that type of protection, and so, given the level of trust she had for her "family" (partly a function of having been recently beaten by her mother's boyfriend), she chose to not come to school even though it might mean being dropped out of school. In her words, "When I had my seven days for running away, I told them before I left what I was doing—what I was planning to do, and why, and I had good reasons for leaving home.... I came back, and I had my meeting [the conference described below] and [the counselor] was sitting there saying that I didn't go to her and I didn't ask here... I [had told her before] I'd still go to school if I knew my mom couldn't come up here and drag me out. And she said, 'We can't do that. She can come up here anytime she wants to and get you.' So [anyway], when I came back, she was going on about how there's all these people in the building, and I should have gone to somebody for help, and I did: I went to Mr. M., I went to her, I went to Ms. U. [the life skills teacher]."

*Caring.* Teachers genuinely seem to care about students. Although students did not for the most part explicitly say they care about their teachers, some mentioned they think their teachers are "cool." Also, teachers expressed the suspicion that when they "accidentally" run into students in the hallway or lunchroom, that the students "actually seek [them] out..." Teachers expressed the wish that there were more support for these kids in their later years of high school. "Some of them we lose, because of that. They don't have someone they can feel like is still caring about them on a daily basis." One teacher made a popular comment with regard to the program, "[It gives] you a chance to build relationships with kids—let them know that it's important they're there: It's important to me, and it should be important to them, and hopefully that will stick with them...With the smaller numbers, it gives the kids the feeling that they belong to something, and I think

that helps a great deal." Another added, "...Sometimes we get tough with them too. And I think that's the whole thing—we let them know we care, but we're just like, 'Hey, this time you're not going to do this.'"

The students seemed especially appreciative of the extra help NH/SWS gives them. "They try to help you out...." Another said, "I probably wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for it; they help you out a lot... 'Cause I wasn't motivated before." "I had a bad attitude." [Several echoed this for themselves.] Another felt, "I would probably be a dropout 'cause when I was in middle school, I got real low grades, and now they're really up there...The classrooms are smaller, and they help you out a lot more." "We get one-on-one attention."

Teachers also said of one of the administrators that he "really tries to see where the kid's coming from". Some of the students mentioned a vice principal they think is cool. Some students also said that they get along with the kitchen workers really well.

*Participation.* Although teachers seem to have some say in how they teach students, the biggest problem with respect to participation appears to be the fact that a minority of the school staff participate in or are even aware of the positive outcomes associated with the NH/SWS program. The second biggest problem seems to be the lack of positive parental involvement. At the last special function (three years ago), which involved forty-five students, ten parents came. "Very few of them will come to parent conferences... They're not willing to be involved." One teacher commented, "And, I don't think we [have]...been seeking them out. Some of these kids' problems—I personally wouldn't want to seek these parents [out and get] to know [them]."

*Communication.* Teachers commented that the smaller class sizes in the program enable them to "develop relationships with the kids, and to spend more time understanding where they're coming from, and to take that into consideration in the classroom..." "Even teaching math...if they have a problem with whatever you're working on, you've got the time to help them, or you've got other students who are better that you can really pair off. I've taught some full classes; you can't do that as easily and still know what's going on, and still make sure that kids is understanding it and not just copying... I think it affords us the ability to interact a little bit better with these kids."

With respect to the problem of communication between staff involved in the program and those who are not, teachers in the focus group debated the cause of attitudes critical of the program. Some of the problem seems to come from teachers whose values seem fundamentally opposed to the goals of the program. Or, "Sometimes I think they're critical 'cause they just don't understand... And they don't choose to find out." "Well, really, we don't choose to tell them either. It's like we sit down there and be this little mystery." Although the origins of the problem are not clear, it does seem as though problems in communicating about the program between NH/SWS teachers or administrators and the school's other teachers is a primary source of tension among staff at the school.

On a brighter note, communication between teachers within the program seems to be a strong source of support, both for themselves and for students. Teachers' perspectives were as follows: "I think we get along great—'cause there's a community. It's almost like a big family, in a way... It gives [students] some stability." Students are perceived as



having their favorite teachers within SWS, so teachers ask each other's help in talking to a student they're having a problem with. "It usually gets taken care of within the four or five of us. It doesn't need to become a big issue where you have to send them up to the office..." "I think we're all delivering more of the same message too, just because we've sat down together a number of times and talked about it..."

One of the difficulties in communication at this school seemed to be related to the life skills class' emphasis on talking about students' involvement in potentially harmful activities. Some of the students objected, acting as though they attributed the discussions to the teacher's being "nosy." "She wants to know everything." "She ask you if you do drugs, pot, hash, and all this stuff." "And then when you tell her, she jumps all over your butt." Several students came to the teacher's rescue at this point: "I love [her]." "[She's] nice." "Yeah, she's cool." When students were asked whether they thought there was a better way for teachers to express their concern for students' involvement in risky activities, students didn't respond directly; instead they mentioned another teacher: "[She] is really nice. I can talk to her about anything." "She gives you her phone number, and you can call; she wants to know that everything's o.k."

Lastly, with respect to communication between parents and teachers, according to the perceptions of students, there's a recording parents can call in to check attendance, but usually teachers don't contact parents, except for parent-teacher meeting times. (Some of the students didn't even seem to be aware of these conferences.)

*Respect and Recognition.* One of the things NH/SWS teachers do is to try to counteract the lack of respect and recognition these students get from other quarters, even within the school. One teacher said, "I can't think of anything I dislike about the program other than the stigma that's kind of attached to it. These kids kind of feel like they're put in this program because they're stupid, and that's not it at all. From day one we tell these kids, 'You're not in this program 'cause you're not intelligent; it's because you were absent for half of middle school, and we need to provide a different type of environment...'" Students seemed to have accepted this explanation at least somewhat: One volunteered, "They told us we were only in this class because of bad attendance."

Recognition of both the program and of students' work was cited several times as being a problem. At least at School C, in spite of the results the program has had, it has failed to elicit either respect or recognition from most other teachers at the school, as well as from some parents. According to those in the focus group, "a few, though not many [teachers] do appreciate the program and what it's all about..." It was also believed that these teachers appreciate getting these students out of their own classrooms. One teacher, however, told her colleagues the following story: "One of the kids that dropped out program was told by a faculty member here in the building that she should get out of there because if she wanted to be an attorney she'd never make it to law school coming through the SWS program. [The other teachers in the focus groups gasped at hearing this story.] She went to [the counselor] and signed out."



While some students said their parents like the program (in some cases parents attended School C when they were young), others had no understanding of what the program is about and no respect for it. 'My step-dad wants me out of it; he told me it's just a class for lazy kids...'

*Incorporation of Diversity.* Nothing was said in the teacher focus group about ethnic or other types of diversity at the school; the student focus group, however, was entirely different—students brought the issue up themselves (for good or for bad). Students said that the main problems in students getting along were due to "racial stuff." The problems the students described were mainly between "whites and blacks," and they involved both "things they do and say." (The Hispanic student in the group seemed to be considered "white" in the context of white-black tensions.) Students felt that ethnic tensions in the school had improved over the last couple of years: "At least it's not as bad as it was two years ago... There were... four ambulances... There was... a big racial fight." "It's a lot better than last year, with all the riots and stuff." "Even in the middle school there were riots." "...People who are racist are getting kicked out, so it's dying down." When asked how teachers were, students thought they were generally fair.

One student in the focus group who seemed to resent comments another student (Melani) had made some time back said, "You were at me, talking about how everybody should be equal and stuff, and going on about how I was racist... And now [addressing the researcher] she's going out with like somebody who's like more racist than anybody ever dreamed of being." Another student added, "He's always laying some kid up against a car." When students were asked if they themselves had been involved in fights and stuff, one responded, "I don't 'cause I'm not racist." The students began to talk about the role of parents in these things. "Some parents are racists." "My dad grew up in the south." "So did mine." "And my mom, I don't know where she gets it from..." "My grandpa's racist. Really racist. Salesmen, black salesmen, come onto the porch, he chases them off..." "My mom and Chuck are." Several other students volunteered similar comments. The student above who had been told she was racist said, "My parents aren't racist—they just don't believe in mixed marriages." When it was suggested that maybe there are degrees of racism (of a sort), another student noted, "There's also racist people against gays."

The girl with the boyfriend the others called racist (Melani) tried to explain the change in herself, "When I was in seventh grade... I went out with Devin... Devin, he's black, and my mom's boyfriend just about killed me. He chased me around the house with a broom and everything... He wanted to kill me. He was going on, calling me a 'Nigger-lover' and everything. I was screaming all this stuff about how everybody should be equal and everything. Then the year after that, I kind of chilled out... I started hanging around a lot of people who were in white supremacist gangs, and I just—" Another jumped into the conversation, the girl who had been called racist, "—Now, don't get me wrong, I have some black friends, you know." "Oh, so do I—like her [gesturing toward the only African-American in the group], she's really cool." A student trying to bring another perspective in said, "I think it's like any kind of race—some people can be real nice, and some people can be real jerks." "There's a difference, you know." "—Some white people, you know, are jerks too, you know." "Some people... they get suspicious, like different ethnic groups, they think that once they know one person they think they're all the same way... I've

known a lot of different people—black, white, Mexicans, and Chinese people even—my step-sisters are half-Chinese, and some people can be nice and some people can be real mean. I mean, well, not mean, stupid.”

*Teamwork.* Part of the teamwork that goes on among staff involves, in some sense, each person doing their part so that the jobs of others go better. For example, the English teacher commented that he really appreciates the life skills class because it allows students to deal with issues, but allows him to focus on getting students to get their academic work done. One of the teachers commented that students working together on projects not only teaches them the material and allows the students having a harder time to get help from their peers, it teaches them the skill of working together, which some students may not have much experience in doing.

Teachers also felt that their working together to help students really pays off. They were also grateful for the larger blocks of time they have with students and for the common planning time that the administration recently arranged. “Now it’s more of a team of us [that addresses student problems].” “And that makes a big difference.” “It sure does.” “You can see it in the kids.”

*Affirmation.* One teacher described a recent talk with a student who wasn’t sure how to handle the positive comments he gets in the program: “‘Man, everybody tells me they’re so glad I’m in class.’... ‘Well, why wouldn’t we tell you that?’” she replied. “‘We’re watching how you’re turning your life around and really straightening up and doing a good job.’ ‘Well, I don’t normally hear that....’” One problem is that students’ own parents not only don’t affirm the work students are accomplishing—in some cases they don’t even believe it. “Some of [the parents] that do come to parent conferences will tell you that they don’t believe their grades. They’ll come to conferences and sit down in front of you and say, ‘Well, did you just give him his grade?’ I mean they seriously don’t believe that the kid earned the grade. And there’s this poor child that’s sitting there going, ‘Man, I worked for this thing.’ And that’s what we’re saying, and they’re just going, ‘Well, there’s something wrong here.’ ‘No there’s not—they really did this.’”

*Conflict Resolution.* Not much was said concerning conflict resolution. A student and several of the teachers mentioned the effort expended by one of the work experience advisors to act as an advocate for students in danger of being “dropped out” of school.

*Development of the New Members.* Not much was said about bringing new teachers into the program. Although it seems likely that funding will remain limited, it would be preferable to see more of an attempt made to bring other teachers at the school in as assisting members of the NH/SWS community, to develop their support for the program. Also, students do not seem to have been brought into the type of leadership roles that they have been in some schools.

*Links Beyond the Community.* The NH part of the program seems to be fairly strong in making links with the surrounding community in order to obtain internships, jobs, and mentors for students. SWS teachers have also made some attempts at getting students involved in the community. One teacher in particular wished that she could arrange some community service projects for them, “because they don’t get that example at home... My

parents were very involved, with us and in the community. And I think that's real important because these people don't understand constructive time spent at home. They will talk a lot about destructive things they do at home 'cause there's no supervision. [Students in the focus group on community spent time talking about things like how one of them put his cat in the microwave, and another put hers in the dryer.] They don't have alternative things to do... Let's get them out there and show them how positive the community can be."

### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Teachers and students in the program don't tend to see each other much outside of school. One student grumbled, "Some of the teachers don't even talk to you outside of school."

Nevertheless, when students are in trouble, the teachers try their best to be there for them, as in the case mentioned above of a student (Melani) who hid from her mother and mother's boyfriend after he beat them both. "When I ran away, I called Mr. M. 'cause I had to work for him and everything. And Ms. J. went over and talked to Mr. M., and she had him give me her phone number to call and stuff to make sure everything was o.k., if I needed anything. She's pretty cool." When the student came back to school, Mr. M. successfully (for now) argued her case—not an easy thing to do, according to a district administrator. In the student's words, "I got a parent-teacher conference, 'cause I missed my seven days, like by a long shot, and I had to get let back in school. And, I had to sit up there in the office for an hour, arguing with—there was one chick up there that was going on about not letting me back in.... (The meeting involved the counselor, Mr. M., Ms. J., the vice principal, me, my Mom, and the attendance officer person.) We were all in there, and we had to talk about letting me back into school. And, they were like, if I miss another day, I go to night school. And, if I miss my days in night school, I have to go to [an] Alternative [School]... They don't think that I can go to school all the time."

In spite of the energy particular staff put into helping students, it seems safe to say that the recent law regarding expulsion from school indicates a de-investment on the part of the citizens of State C in students at risk. Teachers pointed out that it is not even just a matter of the "bad students" (in terms of grades) being kicked out—'One kid who's getting As and Bs is close to getting thrown out of school due to the attendance policy.' (This was said in October, not exactly very late in the school year.) This condition is exacerbated by parents who aren't investing enough in their student to know what's going on. "My mom don't really know I'm in [the program]. She signed the paper, but..." Other parents are clearly too involved in their own lives to pay much attention to their children, even to minimally provide them a safe place to live.

### *Community Resources*

The program is doing a fairly good job of tapping nearby businesses as resources for the program, although more could be done in developing contacts with individuals who might bring further resources to the program. Teachers mentioned, for example, that they wish they had the resources even to take students out for dinner at a classy restaurant and help

them to learn manners. The development and integration of programs in the district (such as SUCCESS) designed to serve at-risk children and youth and their families seems to be one of the strongest resources for the future.

### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

The strong leadership and support from the district level seems to have a positive effect on the sense of community experienced by NH/SWS staff.

The separation of the program from the rest of the school in which it is located has a negative effect on the sense of community experienced by staff and students in the program.

The NH/SWS program's status as add-ons or 'schools within a school' limits the strength of the sense of community

Racism in the surrounding community, however, seems likely to limit the potential for community at School C unless this is addressed. Similarly, state and local efforts to punish students with poor grades and attendance lead to a stereotyping of the problems faced by these youth and decrease the chance for a wider sense of community.

Location in an area where racism seems to be a lingering problem affects relationships directly. Students perceived themselves (possibly correctly) as not being as racist as their parents and grandparents, but they clearly still have a lot to learn. While the school should be able to overcome this, it certainly affects the ease with which community can be built.

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting the NH/SWS program, two students were followed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe a typical day in the lives of two students, whom we will call "Larry" and "Melani."

#### *A Day with Larry*

Larry is in his first year of high school and enrolled in the New Horizons Program. He is a slender, well-groomed, good-looking teen-aged boy with blond hair and blue eyes. He wears a striped tee-shirt, blue jeans, and suede sneakers. Larry is friendly and quick to smile and greet classmates in the hallways between classes. He seems to be on good terms with both teachers with whom he was observed, although his demeanor with each is quite different. With his English teacher, Mrs. G., Larry appears quiet and almost studious. With his history teacher, Mr. A., Larry is bold and clownish, seeking the attention of both peers and instructor.

Like most of his peers in New Horizons, Larry has had problems with school attendance in the past. And, although the strict attendance policy in effect this year prohibits them from missing more than 7 days, Larry is absent on the second day of my observations.

Therefore, I have little time to talk with him, except for walking to his two afternoon classes through very crowded halls. Larry's job is in the school cafeteria where he works with food preparations. He seems to like it and the program.

His English class begins at 1 p.m. It is Larry's first class after his lunchroom duties. The room is a large, typical classroom in a school building erected in the 1960s. One side wall is lined with large, paned windows, the front wall is covered with blackboards, and the other side wall holds bulletin boards. There are only 14 students in the classroom, 10 boys and 4 girls. The girls are all European-American; there is one African-American boy and one Hispanic-American boy.

The English teacher is a middle-aged woman who is very pleasant with the students and with the visiting researcher. She introduces her to the class and then begins a review of vocabulary words. She uses events going on in the school as contextual clues in explaining the meanings of the words. For example, "Anthony is dressed up today. He looks very \_\_\_\_\_. The word is from the list last week." The class answers in unison, "Chic."

Following the brief (3 minute) review, the students get out worksheets. The teacher assigns Exercise 2 on the worksheet. Five minutes later, Larry is playing with his pen. Then, he puts his head close to his paper to begin his work. By this time, many of Larry's classmates are finished with the exercise. One boy is humming the tune from the Jeopardy game show as those who have finished wait for the others.

At 1:10, the teacher asks if one of the students will read the first question and call on someone to answer it. A boy in the back of the room says he will. Then he changes his mind and says no and then changes it back again, agreeing to read and answer. He actually agrees to answer three questions. During the first 10 minutes of class, all students have been on-task.

Larry reads a question, "Has a disaster ever annihilated a whole town?" He calls on a classmate to answer. Then he reads two more questions and, in turn, calls on two more classmates. A female student does the remainder of the questions.

At 1:15, the teacher begins giving instructions for writing a Descriptive Paper. She stops her explanation to talk about the disorientation caused by assemblies and other disruptions to the ordinary school week that have occurred this week.

After this, the students begin their writing. As Larry reads his worksheet, he jiggles his legs and chews his gum. Mrs. G. walks around the room checking the students' work and talking with individuals about their writing.

By 1:18, Larry is the only student still working; the others are talking among themselves. By 1:28, Larry stops writing to talk with a classmate who has come to the front of the room near Larry's desk. They speak briefly, and Larry returns to writing. A few minutes later, he stops to take a pen-and-ink drawing of a skeleton with Indian headdress from his notebook. He begins pulling the spiral fringes off the paper. Then, he lays the drawing on his desk and leafs through his notebook. The teacher finally stops the talking among the students.

By 1:34, Larry appears to be bored. He glances at the clock, drums on his desk, and leafs through his notebook again. Students are quiet but not working.

1:46 - Mrs. G. compliments the students on their behavior and ends the class.

The next class is History. This room is very much like the English classroom, a large pleasant classroom with plenty of windows and light. The desks, though, are arranged facing a side wall, which means that the desks are arranged only 4 or so deep and 7 across. There are 17 students in this class. There are two female teachers previewing software at a table in the back of the room. Their talking is distracting to the observer, but the class and Mr. A. seem accustomed to it.

Mr. A. begins class at 1:52 with a quick review of what they had done the day before. He collects papers from the students, most of whom are talking among themselves. Larry is waving his paper and saying, "Mr. A., Mr. A., Mr. A." Larry's behavior during this class is very different from that in English class. Mr. A. sees him as a class attention seeker who can easily distract the other students from their work and will.

At 1:55, Mr. A. tells the students to turn to page 152. He assigns small groups of students to read portions of the chapter to themselves and to be prepared to answer questions about the topics they have been assigned. Larry says, "You have such a good memory, Mr. A. How do you do it?" Mr. A. quips, "I lost all my hair and my memory got better." He writes the topics he has assigned on the board—Pinkney Treaty, Jay's Treaty, Treaty of Greenville, Whiskey Rebellion. He goes to another board to give clues to the questions—Pinkney Treaty set up \_\_\_\_\_ (commission) to settle disputes with \_\_\_\_\_ (England).

Jay's Treaty opens up N \_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ (New Orleans) to Americans. During this, Larry begins to fidget in his seat. He swings an imaginary lasso in the air. Mr. A. asks him, "What's behind the TV screen?" Larry responds, "Seems to be a corner." Mr. A. says, "Seems to be an empty corner, Larry." Students are in and out of the classroom getting a drink of water in the hallway. The teacher continues writing on the board—Treaty of Greenville opens up \_\_\_\_ (NW) to Americans. Whiskey Rebellion shows \_\_\_\_\_ (Federal) Government. Washington Farewell Address warns against s \_\_\_\_\_ (sectionalism) and E \_\_\_\_\_ (entangling) A \_\_\_\_\_ (alliances).

At 2:08, after writing these statements on the board as "fill-in-the-blanks," Mr. A. goes back and fills in the blanks with the answers provided in parentheses. He explains things between filling in the blanks. Larry stretches in his seat. He watches Mr. A. He twirls his pen in his mouth. He stares at the wall. (The observer continues to be distracted by the teachers at the computer at the back of the room.) Mr. A. asks Larry to read the sentence in his book that describes John Adams. Larry reads the sentence, which is basically a series of adjectives. Mr. Anderson explains them—"willful, prickly, strong-minded," etc. Mr. A. then goes to the board and writes Aliens Act-Sedition Act. He also writes Federalist -----> Manufacturing

Republicans -----> Farming and Immigrants wanted L---(and).



At 2:21 students begin working in small groups on the first topics on the board—"What it is and what it does." Most are working independently, except for one group of three boys who appear to be talking together about something else. During the cooperative learning time, groups stop to chat for a minute and then return to their work. Larry is working with three boys who are talking about nonacademic topics. Mr. Anderson monitors them and admonishes them to get back to their work.

At 2:35 Mr. Anderson tells the students to move their desks back around into rows. They do so quickly. Mr. Anderson collects their finished papers. He says that he will collect the rest tomorrow. Mr. Anderson wraps class up by handing back a test. Larry is standing at this point. Mr. Anderson calls out number to the students. He says he will put the range of scores on the board. The scores range from the 100s to the 300s. He writes:

337 - 313 A

312 - 286 B

258 - 236 C

285 - 259 D

The bell rings and students leave the room.

#### *A Day with Melani*

Melani is a friendly, outgoing, intelligent, and nice-looking student, in her first year of high school. On the first day she was observed, she was dressed very nicely, hair drawn back at the sides, wearing a slim green skirt and a dressy blouse with a shawl collar. She seems to be Hispanic-American, but seems to identify as white—in other words, according to the school's ethnic dynamics, not black.

Some of the other students in Melani's program spent their first period after lunch in a class related to the New Horizons or work component part of the program, a class centered on résumé preparation, led by one of the NH staff. Five of the eleven students in the class were working on filling out a sheet listing community services available to teens (e.g., suicide prevention hotline, AIDS Hotline, Rape counseling, Alcohol programs, job service organizations); State law mandates that all students should be familiar with the existence of these types of resources. The students were given the white and yellow pages of the local phone books to use to locate this information. Three other students were doing a similar exercise with the yellow pages to identify local social and recreational resources, places they could visit, such as where they could "rent canoes," "see exotic art," "visit a 1940's farm," or "tan on a nearby sandy beach." Both exercises involved writing the correct address, phone number, or business name on a fill-in-the-blanks sheet. Three other students were using computers to work on their resumes. There are 9 Apples, mostly Apple IIGSs. Students were at first all on task; now and then one or two would get sidetracked or stare into space. The teacher, Mr. M., floated from group to group. He asked the students working on the computers about their interests, probing for more information that could be included on their résumés.

One of the students working on the worksheets grumbled that it was a stupid activity. In response, Mr. M. said, "If you say the word stupid, you get to come in and talk to me about it [so I can help explain why these things are important]." He quietly told the student to schedule an appointment with him, but the student objected, saying he objects to having to meet late. "Can't go." The teacher told him that his mother will have to bring him or he'll have to walk. Mr. M. is generally soft-spoken, but firm. He said, "It's important to me how you act towards others." The student continues to protest—"I'm not walking." Mr. M. quietly goes on to help other students. Another student raises his hand to ask a question, and the teacher comes over after about a minute. Students have to work by themselves on the easier task (getting phone numbers of specific organizations), but share phone books for the harder one.

The student who was told to meet with the teacher is now sitting staring at his fingers. Another student talks to him—"I don't want to do it anyway." The teacher steps out of the class for about 3 minutes. A student is out of the room as well. A girl speaking with another say, "When is this class out? It's making my head spin." Kids who finish one project near the end of class get to relax since the teacher says, "There's not enough time to start the next one." Still most of the students keep occupied with the assignments. The teacher complements one boy on working quietly. It is time for them to go, but two students continue for a second, looking up a last answer.

Melani came quickly to meet the person scheduled to observe her, after first checking in with her teacher for that period, Mr. M., who teaches the class in world history. Back in class, she takes her seat. Students are asking questions about the current assignment. The teacher asks the students to let him finish explaining the lesson—he gives them a map of Greece, and they have to fill in 15 places on it. Also, they have to write a half-page essay on where they would rather live—Sparta or Athens.

One of the varsity football players and a cheerleader come in the room, and the teacher lets them do a quick pitch for students to buy homecoming shirts.

Going back to the assignment, students start to complain about the essay, and the teacher says, "Don't moan or I'll make it a whole page." There appears to be about two African-American and two Hispanic-American students (Melani being one) in this class of eleven students. Meanwhile, during the first few minutes of class, an older teacher works at a desk in the back of the room; he goes out for a while, and then comes back in, but is not part of the ongoing class.

Students seem comfortable asking questions—Mr. M. goes from one to another answering questions and giving small tips for doing the assignment. Students ask each other questions as well from time-to-time. The teacher mentions to the observer that because it's homecoming week, everyone is trying to adjust to the different schedule. Melani seems to focus carefully—at one point, she asks a clarifying question concerning where the information is located. A student loses his book off his desk. Melani mentions to Mr. M. that she and another student switched books and wonders, since the other student left, will she have to pay for the book? "We'll worry about that later," he replies. As students start to search the text for answers as to how to fill out the map, Mr. M. pulls out his Mac

PowerBook to work on something at the desk in the front of the room. (He has it wrapped in a towel in a shoulder bag to protect it since he moves from room to room depending on the period.) But, he gets up to help a student flip through the student's book. Throughout the class, the students stay on task, perhaps in part due to his attentiveness. Students ask about their grades since recent assignments were turned in. "You got a B... You got a B." Mr. M. seems reasonably friendly with the students.

The classroom has old-fashioned and nice wooden blackboards, a built-in filing cabinet, and closets. The students are reasonably nicely dressed—some have on oversized T-shirts; some girls are wearing dresses and nylons and pumps.

During this period, most of the students call out for help from time to time, one or two raising their hands. Melani asks if she may go to the rest room; the teacher gives her a pass, and she goes out. A couple of students say they can't find an answer in the book, so Mr. M. asks them where else they might look. "In an encyclopedia," one replies. One of them is given a pass to go to the library. "Tell them you need an atlas," Mr. M. says.

Some students offer the page numbers to others still looking for particular answers. In the room across the hall, a choir practices, "Tis a gift to be simple", the well-loved Shaker tune.

One student wanders toward the door and back. "I don't go out, I just stuck my head out," he says to the teacher. Mr. M. replies, "You didn't have to do that." Students have until the end of tomorrow's class (but not during class tomorrow) to finish the assignment, but most start to work on it right away. It turns out that one student missed a class, but didn't ask the teacher for the work to make up. Mr. M. reminds him that he's supposed to let him know what assignments he needs—"How am I supposed to remember with about 150 students what assignments everyone needs?" He has the students turn in an assignment on vocabulary from the other day. Some students forgot it and are worried about the effect on their grades.

Almost at the end of class the student who went to the library came back with the missing information—the location of Ithaca. An announcement comes over the P.A. system, but is hard to hear because of the ringing of the bell, and the students step into the stream of students moving in the hallways, going to their next class.

Melani works in the cafeteria for the New Horizons work experience part of the program, giving ice cream cones to students who ask for them. She enjoys her job; it allows her to earn money and also allows her to visit with students as they come by. She mentioned that even students who make fun of her at first later come to be friendly as they go by. She also enjoys working with the other cafeteria workers, who are very friendly to her. Watching her, she did seem to enjoy the interaction with others, and though staff supervised her, they seemed equally to work with her, assisting with tasks so that she could leave on time for class. They chatted as they worked. As she left, one worker came up to her to tell her where she should have put her apron, but did it in a very friendly way and wished her a great week-end.

Melani appreciates the opportunities and the academic and social support the New Horizons/School Within a School program is giving her. Although in 8th grade she was absent about 60 days out of the year, this year her record has been better—if her attendance record had not already improved, she would have been kicked out of high school already (within the first month) because of the state law that went into effect this year. (Any student having 7 absences of any kind in a school year is considered to have dropped out of school—i.e., is kicked out.) Like a typical 9th grader, she is not yet sure what type of job she would like to have someday, but seems to be trying to make the most of her current opportunities for education and work experience.

Her mother is originally from Mexico, and no one in Melani's extended family has ever gone through college. Melani hopes to be the first. In spite of her intelligence, though, it is not likely to be easy for her. In mid-September of this year, her mother's boyfriend moved back in, bringing with him drugs for her mother. Melani says that when he was with them before, she thought he would have liked to kill her when he found out she was dating one of her African-American classmates. He chased her around the house screaming and wielding a broom and shouting obscenities about their relationship. (Perhaps as a result, that relationship is no longer going on.) After his return, he beat both Melani and her mother. Melani wanted to run away from home, but put it off for awhile out of concern for her eight-year-old sister. She called Mr. M. because she was supposed to start a job with him, to explain what she was planning to do. She said she planned to run away from home but that she would like to come to school if the school could promise that her mother and her mother's boyfriend would not be allowed to come after her at school. When she was told the school could not do that, she ran away and moved into her boyfriend's car with him. Another teacher asked Mr. M. to give Melani her phone number and to ask Melani to call occasionally to let her know she was o.k. and whether she needed anything.

Melani's mother ended up getting a restraining order against her own boyfriend, and Melani came back to school. But, by then she had missed 7 days of school—meaning she would be kicked out of school and listed as having dropped out of school. She would not be allowed to go back to school, but could attend an afternoon/night school to work toward graduation. Mr. M. and another teacher were able to get a hearing for her case. (Most such hearings have not had a successful outcome for the students involved.) The attendance officer met with Melani, her mother, Mr. M., another of Melani's teachers, the SWS counselor, and the vice principal. Mr. M. argued her case. They were successful in getting her readmitted to school in spite of strong opposition, but with the stipulation that one more day of absence (including, for example, if she missed school because of an emergency operation but still made up the work) would cause her to "drop out" permanently.

Melani spoke of trying very hard to avoid such a situation again, but it is easy to imagine that her home situation could again make her afraid to attend school, and probably for any student not missing one day of school over a nine-month period is not an easy thing to do. Also, Melani is now pregnant.

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## *School D*

### *Texas*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

School D serves is located in a large city near the U.S.-Mexican border. The larger district serves a population that is 84% Hispanic, 5% African American, 8% Caucasian, and 2% Asian. Eighty-four percent of those students receive free or reduced price lunch, and 14% of the district's students are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). All of the above are "at risk" indicators (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). School D has higher than the district numbers on all of the above. Fully 96% of School D's students receive free or reduced price lunches, 28%, double the district average, are classified LEP, the school has the 12th highest mobility index among the district's over 60 schools, and the school's annual per pupil operating expenditure is below the district average (Schubnell, in press). Finally, the school is located in an area of dilapidated industrial buildings and warehouses. By all rights, a visitor would expect this school to be a terrible place.

In fact, School D is a delight for visitors, for teachers, for the community, and, most importantly, for students. The halls and classrooms of School D are virtually bursting with students' interpretations of South American and African art, Egyptian, Greek and Roman Gods, and European architecture, and Hispanic, free lunch, elementary grades students referencing Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet. By fifth grade, both attendance and state test scores are well above the district averages (Schubnell, in press).

School D is an example of a school serving a population of bright, outgoing students to whom another school might have been tempted to offer a simplified curriculum, or whom another school might have written off. This is because School D serves "at-risk" students. That is, the school is somewhat ethnically mixed, primarily Hispanic-American or first-generation Hispanic-American, and most students qualify for a free lunch.

Though our visit to School D was more structured by the school's administration than some of our visits, there were far too many good examples of effective and engaging classrooms (no terribly weak ones) to be just a matter of steering us to the best teachers or warning teachers to be on their best behavior. In the opinion of the more seasoned of the two researchers conducting the site visit, a student of programs to help at-risk and poor youth for about 15 years, it is the best such school he has ever seen.

School D seems less like a "program" or a "reform" and more "just" like a school where responsible teachers and administrators have sought to educate themselves and do the best for their students, even when that means additional time investments on their part. They are connected with other parts of their community—a department of education at a local private university, businesses, school-business partnership organizations, non-profit organizations, and public agencies—who can contribute to the resources and goals of the school. They have also made use of E. D. Hirsch Jr.'s ideas regarding cultural literacy (*Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*), initially with understandable caution and skepticism, given the academically perceived potential of such an approach to be "Eurocentric" and/or irrelevant to students from non-European-American ethnic backgrounds.

Thus, instead of a curriculum focusing on basic skills, students learn basic and not-so-basic skills through materials conveying useful and interesting information (historical, cultural, literary, artistic) that they can, and do, share with their parents and other adults. For example, one lesson observed during the researchers' first day at the school was a superb cross-disciplinary, multi-dimensional first grade math lesson that used chocolate chip cookies to practice counting by fives and tens, to learn to estimate, and to learn about—and how to conduct—an archaeological dig (teaching patience on the side). The school's approach shows how curriculum can be multicultural and also grounded in the "classics" (for example, Greek and Roman mythology, Shakespearean literature, Mayan temples and foods, African villages, Asian customs) that have been at least superficially part of U.S. education since the 18th century. Students seem to leave School D with substantial academic gains, solid skills (see Schubnell, in press), and broad knowledge and understanding of non-European and non-U. S. parts of the world, and a substantial amount of what has been called "cultural capital"—types of knowledge that are useful in gaining access to the upper class and to more prestigious jobs. It was in part this approach that got School D a reputation for having something special to offer at-risk and other youth.

#### *Lessons from School D*

School D is a very special school. A careful study of it can teach other regarded-as-at-risk and not at-risk schools several lessons. First, School D has obtained community support from and through key organizations in its community such as the YMCA and a local college. These organizations have brought many volunteers into the school, and School D makes use of them in a wide variety of ways. Volunteers get to work directly with students and provide the much-needed backup support for teachers by helping with tasks such as sewing and copying. Second, the school has a number of innovative ways for parents to get involved. For example, some parents are paid tutors for half their time and volunteers



for the other half. Third, the school has special events, such as parties at the local museum in which parents, teachers, and students dine together, students watch a movie while parents and teachers meet, and then students act as docents for their parents through the museum. (No wonder this event at this school of mostly "at-risk students" turned out 500 parents from a population of 525 students!)

These organizations (the YMCA and the local university), working together with teachers, help students to make the intellectual connection between classroom learning and the world around them. School D conveys to its students their responsibility for making the school the best it can be; students are expected to help anyone who might need help and to work to maintain the positive learning environment. It is, in part, the difference between seeing students as an important part of the school and seeing them as products to be produced. Perhaps this attitude has also contributed to the very positive interethnic relations at the school.

School D has been blessed with two consecutive principals who have taken the school's potential "problems" on as a challenge—to make it successful for all students. She's not merely trying to 'do her best to help at-risk youth (be better than the average at-risk youth).' A variety of staff are used for making this school the way it is; note, in particular, the important role played by the counselor and by the other teachers (art, music, library, P. E.) who by their work (and by wise scheduling decisions) provide planning time to other teachers. Seventh, the mutual nature of the relationship between the faculty at this school and that of the university they work is also extremely important to understand (see Fruzee, in press). Teachers not only receive help from their "peers" at the university, they at the same time are involved in helping university staff to develop, whether as student teachers, as education department teachers, or as researchers (see Mentzer and Shaughnessy, in press). School D's teachers receive needed help and professional development and Trinity's teachers and students have a research and training field to work in in which they are welcome. Eighth, on top of this, through this partnership School D is able to—and has—made the most of this opportunity to screen and to train future applicants, thereby bolstering the quality of their elementary school faculty. Ninth, the university, for its part, has had the important insight that training teachers in inner city areas will produce teachers well qualified to work in all schools. One could go on about the small things at School D that help students to develop a drive to learn, like reading plays aloud and getting a pizza for a student and their family every time the student reads nine books. However, tenth (and certainly not the last lesson that can be learned from this school), the ideas behind the "Core Knowledge" series—learning built on Americans' shared, diverse, and cultural heritage—and the way in which teachers have worked with it—making sure, for example, that it is not overly Eurocentric—has provided students with a curriculum that is interesting, motivating, and which relates to things they can spot in their daily life—a curriculum through which they can learn history, culture, art, and science, as well as their "reading, riting, and rithmetic" (for review of the Core Knowledge series of books see Nesselrodt, in press).

## *Site Description*

### *Setting*

School D is located in the inner city area of San Antonio, Texas, in an industrial and warehouse district of the city. Many neighborhood buildings are in advanced decay, some are virtually covered with graffiti. There is no graffiti on School D's walls, however. The school grounds and interior are nicely maintained. The walls inside are covered with displays by teachers and by student work.

### *Social Problems*

Although not very visible at the school, School D's students come from areas in which many residents are poor and some are learning English as a second language (28% classified LEP). The students know of incidents at other schools involving guns, and they refer to graffiti as "gang writing." Most of the students in the focus group said they often hear gang-related gunfire in their neighborhoods. They seemed particularly aware of the use of things like hats and bandannas to signal gang affiliation, and alert to keep gang symbols and fighting behavior out of their school. Students in the focus group unanimously agreed that at School D students from different ethnic backgrounds get along well. Thus, although students come from areas with more than their "share" of poverty (96% free lunch) and violence, the school seems to help (and to help its students) address and confront these problems. This makes for a school in which such social problems do not invade the children's school day.

### *Presence of Community Support*

Unlike some schools, even some in this study, School D seems to have a great deal of community support. Through a variety of programs, outreach activities, and innovative arrangements, including close ties with Trinity University and the YMCA, School D has recruited and rewards over 100 community volunteers, several dozen of whom were at the school during the site visit. These adult mentors help the school in a variety of ways, from working directly with students to providing support services for teachers.

### *Positive Environmental Aspects*

Although School D is located in a high-poverty, inner-city area, San Antonio's inner city does not seem to have the sense of desperation and hopelessness that the neighborhoods on the west side of Chicago or northern Philadelphia communicate.

School D has particularly good facilities when compared to many elementary schools. For example, because of the building's history as a middle school, it has two gyms.

Some might argue that School D's success will be difficult to replicate because not many schools have a college like Trinity University dedicated to helping them. Nevertheless, the history of School D's connection with Trinity suggests that it is not the presence of the university per se that has made for success, but the mutually-supportive connection

developed in recent years between the two schools. Many poor elementary and secondary schools are located near colleges, and developing partnerships like the one between School D and Trinity could do a lot to raise the quality of inner city public school and college education, not to mention research.

### *Program Development and Implementation*

Part of what makes School D's educational program special is the close ties it has developed with Trinity University, the San Antonio Museum of Art, and the YMCA, among other organizations (see Mentzer and Shaghnessy, in press). The most tangible aspects of these links are the volunteers at School D, recruited in large measure through these community organizations—over 100 volunteers, many of whom are at the school at any given time. These adult volunteers help the school in a variety of ways, from working directly with students to providing support services for teachers. School D also has a corps of parent tutors who work at the school; each works ten hours a week, five hours as a paid tutor and five hours as a volunteer.

In addition to providing many of the volunteers, the YMCA works with the school to coordinate a broad set of activities involving the surrounding community that helps students to connect reading, math, art, music, citizenship, and their self-concept with the world around them.

A different aspect of program development concerns the effects of School D's education program on its partners, particularly Trinity University, an elite private university. Trinity University's department of education enlisted the help of School D's faculty in restructuring its undergraduate and graduate education program. This was described by both members of School D's faculty and by the professor holding the chair of the education department. School D continues to be involved in the training of Trinity graduate students.

To understand better this partnership, it will be helpful to know more about the Center for Educational Leadership at Trinity University and how it got involved with School D and other schools (see Frazee, in press). Trinity is committed to systematically helping to improve public schools. The chairman of Trinity University's Department of Education has been at Trinity for 27 years and has served as its chair and guiding force for many of those years. Similar to School D's principal, he is guided by a sense of mission. He has pursued two primary ends: to train excellent teachers and to contribute to the quality of San Antonio's public K-12 schools. In order to do so, in 1987 he arranged funding for an independent evaluation of his department. The evaluation, the "Brackenridge Report," suggested that the department restructure its program, stop offering undergraduate degrees, and move to a five-year program driven by practical, within-school experience; the department carried out these changes.

The Center for Educational Leadership at Trinity has assisted School D in many ways. This assistance ranges from contributing staff, to helping to secure grants, to providing moral support and validation to existing teachers. Teachers at School D, even those who

got their degrees at institutions other than Trinity, were quick to note their satisfaction with the support from Trinity and with the opportunity to participate in the shaping of Trinity's teacher education program.

First, with the adoption of the Brackenridge recommendations seven years ago, Trinity invited School D to be one of four "professional development schools" (two of the schools are elementary and two are secondary). Each semester, School D (as well as the other schools involved) receives 10-15 teaching interns. These interns, already well educated, are fifth year students in Trinity's teacher training program. Each intern receives support and ideas from the university and provides School D with an extra instructor at no cost to School D. Their schedule follows School D's schedule, rather than their regular academic schedule, allowing them to start the school year with the students with whom they will be working. Each student instructor spends 9 weeks in a primary class, followed by 9 weeks in an upper grade class, followed by 18 weeks (the 2nd semester) back in one of the previous classes. Each intern is supervised both by the School D teachers and by a Trinity faculty member.

Second, School D's participation as a professional development school gives it a superior ability to recruit talented new teachers. In many schools, recruitment can be dicey because the information a school normally has on an applicant may be only slightly relevant to the actual tasks of the job. For example, a teacher who is doing well in another school might not work well at this school, or college grades may not be an indicator of ability to teach and work well with children. In contrast, School D gets 10 to 15 bright Trinity fifth-year students each year; the faculty get to observe them over a full 36 weeks in at least two classrooms as they are engaged in increasingly-responsible teaching tasks. School D then has the first shot at recruiting the best of this group of generally excellently-trained new teachers, indeed, of helping to ensure that they are well trained by the time they apply for a job. (Schools can, of course, reap similar benefits by conducting ongoing, high quality training of their current faculty as well.) Several of the teachers we observed were 2nd and 3rd year teachers who were former Trinity students, some of whom were extraordinarily skilled young teachers. Were it not for the School D-Trinity connection, it is likely that these teachers would have ended up being snatched up by wealthier suburban school districts. Thanks to this partnership, these terrific people are bringing their training, their intelligence, and their energy to the teaching of "at-risk" inner city children.

Third, the Center keeps a continuous look-out for good ideas and current trends, several of which it brings to the "Smart Schools" network of which School D is a member. (For an excellent summary of the social contracts and design principals central to Trinity's "Smart Schools" network, see "Smart Schools for San Antonio's Future: A Report on Public Education," by the Center for Educational Leadership, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas.) In "Smart Schools," faculty and administration receive training in such topics as school restructuring and change, authentic assessment, and "whole language" instruction, by presenters such as Fullan, Boyer, Gardner, and Hirsch. School D has implemented many ideas first presented to it through the "Smart Schools" network, including Core Knowledge, which will be discussed further below.

Also, the Smart Schools network is involved in what is called Expeditionary Learning. Aspects of expeditionary learning include building on children's curiosity, real-life challenges, learning to take responsibility for one's own personal and collective learning, sustained caring, helping students to both experience success and deal well with failure, collaboration, time for solitude and reflection, teaching "students to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence," heterogeneous grouping to facilitate a developing appreciation of diversity, learning to become caretakers of the earth, and an emphasis on service and compassion (taken from "Expeditionary Learning San Antonio: A new design for smart schools").

Fourth, Trinity, together with School D, does continuous networking and encourages community involvement. Trinity was largely responsible for bringing the YMCA program to School D. The Y program placed a full-time staff member at School D who reaches out into the community and brings back everything from Police Athletic League (PAL) sports, to corporate "partnerships," to 100+ volunteers, to art museum connections, to the use of the Y's buses. Clearly, the YMCA connection is one of the most substantial contributions Trinity has made to School D.

Fifth, in addition to participation in the "Smart Schools" network, School D's alliance with Trinity brings the technical assistance of a professor in the education department who works well with School D faculty members. For example, he assists when a student instructor is having problems with a class, when a class is having trouble with a unit, and when teachers were having trouble creating a particular Core Knowledge unit.

Sixth, when Trinity offered the Core Knowledge approach to School D, it brought with it a \$100,000 per year grant from a local foundation. This grant continues to fund staff, staff development, and materials.

Seventh, Trinity provides School D and the other "Smart Schools" with a kind of moral support that money alone can not buy. When the full-time Core Knowledge coordinator at School D was interviewed, she quickly volunteered the observation that Trinity treats the School D faculty as equal partners. Several of the faculty volunteered the same sense of collegial status, and they noted it with pride. The school's faculty believe that they are truly a "Smart School"; they take pride in their accomplishments, and Trinity helps give them the sense that their pride and progress are well-grounded in an appropriate methodology and curricula.

Eighth (and lastly in this report), School D's relationship with Trinity has also affected its use of "Core Knowledge" ideas in structuring its curriculum. The chair of Trinity's education department learned of the Core Knowledge program through a local foundation, looked into it, and suggested it to the current principal of School D. The faculty looked at it and decided to adopt it, and they not only learned about it through Trinity but also got much of the necessary support to effectively implement it from Trinity and its connections.

Core Knowledge is a curricular program derived from E. D. Hirsch Jr.'s Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know. A Core Knowledge Foundation was funded, and through it a series of detailed curricular and content guides have been published. These

100



include, Core Knowledge Sequence (updated January 1993); Core Knowledge Resource Guide; The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (2nd edition); A first Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Our Children Need to Know; and a series of six volumes titled, What your First (Second, etc.) Grader Needs to Know. (For review, see Nesselrodt, in press)

A central thesis of Hirsch's is that the very meaning of "culture" implies a common set of knowledge, a common set of understandings of who we are, of how we came to be here. Hirsch's argument is that content matters and that schools should pay more attention to content. He argues that while obviously we must help students obtain specific skills (reading, writing, mathematics), those skills can be taught just as effectively (and ultimately, more effectively) by studying "classic" works of literature, coherent presentations of history, and scientific problems. At School D, and at another inner-city school in New York city that has a mostly African-American enrollment, teachers have adapted "Core Knowledge" to include African-, Hispanic-, Asian-, and/or Native American content.

### *Staff and Participants*

The principal at School D during our visit (School D has had four principals over the course of the past nine years) was in her fourth year at School D. She was the principal of one of the more highly regarded middle-class schools in the district and came to School D as soon as the opening became available because she felt she needed a new challenge. At that time, School D was one of the elementary schools on the state's "troubled" list based on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) achievement and attendance. She saw in School D a series of unusual opportunities. First, School D would be a personal challenge in that her prior school had been successful at serving a more affluent community—could she help School D to be as successful? Second, School D is only 10 minutes from her home. Third, School D had some pre-existing strengths: it had once been a middle school and so had unusually solid facilities for an elementary school; it had a reputation for innovation; and, it was a member of Trinity University's "Smart Schools" network.

School D's principal brings to the school many strengths common among exemplary principals. Her approach and style convey openness, energy, and a positive attitude. She seems likely to be familiar with and effective at applying educational and management ideas coming from books like *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (observed on her bookshelf). She is one of those people to whom people bring problems and are almost instantly redirected to make something great out of this opportunity. In short, she serves as an example to the rest of the staff.

School D's teaching staff seem very supportive of the school. For example, an art teacher was able to arrange to have an international art exposition come to the school. It is worth noting that the support these teachers give their school and their students seems to pay off for themselves as well. Teachers at this inner city school describe their joy in coming to work and in growing with their colleagues. Some teachers left before the end of our site visit to attend math staff development workshops or to give presentations on Core



Knowledge. The atmosphere they had created seemed to carry on as the students remained task-oriented and committed to learning with the 13 substitute teachers brought in on that Friday.

School D has 523 students. Of these, 96% receive free or reduced-price lunches. Because of School D's ability to use their Chapter 1 funds for schoolwide projects, all students in the school are able to participate in the special programs School D offers. In 1994 the ethnic distribution of the student body was as follows: 84.8% Hispanic-American, 9.1% European-American, 4.4% African-American, 1.8% Asian-American, and 0.0% Native American.

#### *Project Services*

As noted above, School D offers an interesting curriculum supported by a variety of programs such as the YMCA. The program is designed so that all students at School D are able to benefit from these programs; for example, note the availability of a counselor who not only meets with students, but to whom they can go when they need extra help or attention.

#### *Resources*

School D's special funding comes from a variety of sources. The following is a description of some of these.

*Chapter 1/Title I Schoolwide Project:* School D receives \$279,000 per year through its Chapter 1 schoolwide project status. This is the largest alterable source of fiscal support for the project. The school has re-directed its Chapter 1 funding toward increasing the proportion of teachers relative to aides, staff development, and additional materials. School D's success is in part due to the ability to use Chapter 1 funds for schoolwide projects.

*Governor's Gold Star Schools Award:* This program was set up by Governor Richards. The school receives \$6,000 per year for five years, plus some much-needed freedom to close school for up to 10 extra days per year to offer program-specific staff development. School D has made good use of the flexibility and has found the extra staff development days to be very important.

*Ewing Hassell Grant:* This money, \$100,000 per year, was arranged through Trinity to support the start of the Core Knowledge program at School D. According to the principal, this year one quarter of the money will go to supplies, one quarter to staff development, and the rest to parent involvement (parent coaches, Dine-A-Versity, etc.), TVs, VCRs, and so on.

*An Unusually Supportive collaboration with the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD):* In negotiating their collaboration with School D with the district, Trinity requested certain things for School D, among them a full-time librarian and full-time art teacher. Normally, elementary schools the size of School D would have part-time staff in

both positions, but Trinity and Hassell argued that the full-time positions were necessary so that teachers would have adequate planning time. The district agreed. Also, the district is implementing site-based management, allowing School D more freedom.

Some State Mandates work to School D's advantage: The most notable of these is that each elementary child in Texas has 45 minutes of physical education per day, provided by a trained P. E. specialist. The school pairs these P. E. periods with students' art, music, or library times, and this allows 90-minute periods several days a week during which entire grades of teachers can team-plan. Again, although the state mandate makes this possible, and the negotiations among the district, the school, and Trinity resulted in additional library and art teacher staff time, it is in part School D's scheduling choices that provide this valuable planning time to teachers.

For all of this School D's per pupil expenditures remain below the district average. (Schubert, in press)

### *Project Outcomes*

School D shows improving attendance and academic achievement.

The halls and classrooms are filled with student work: student writing, drawing, informational bulletin boards, portfolios, 2' by 3' student-and-teacher-made books full of collages on topics from ancient Egypt through modern children's literature, a detailed, three-dimensional model of an African village (made by 2nd graders), large, student-made posters comparing various Greek gods. Teachers and students have developed films and videos of students' work, including plays written and performed by the students. Just as impressive as the visual products of student learning were the conversations, discussions, presentations, and play readings evident in several classrooms at the school. A small example of this (detailed below) was when fifth graders described studying Macbeth, and compared Macbeth with Romeo and Juliet.

School D has recently been honored by the receipt of the 1994 Luby Prize. The Luby Prize is awarded to two schools in this city that have shown substantial improvement. It comes with a cash award of \$2,000.

Another tribute to the work being done at School D was a memo shown to us by the chair of Trinity's education department. It was by the chairman of the board and president of a locally-based company to his executives. It describes a style of management he witnessed in a School D classroom and which he urges his company to follow and to keep in mind when recruiting and promoting managers. "... You could feel her presence when we walked into the room. In a quiet way she obviously commanded the children's respect and attention... You could see that through her smiles, focused attention and intense interest in each child she was really furthering the learning experience... As I sat there watching her, I realized that this is what management is all about...that willingness to focus on individuals and help them achieve their potential... This is not warm, fuzzy stuff. These are the very concrete issues of finding ways to unleash human potential and are the key issues for both our company and our country...."

### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

Whether a school serving potentially at risk students is successful depends upon both the goals and approaches it takes—the guiding premises of the program— and how well the means to achieve those goals are implemented. Dedicated teachers and principals who offer (1) a supportive, stable community setting that can meet students' social needs and (2) curriculum that is relevant to students' lives and bolsters their life options, will capture students' attention and enlist students' own desire to learn and do well. However, programs are only as good as their implementation. To analyze the quality of the School D approach, we can use the emerging literature on High Reliability Organizations (HROs), organizational structures which promote a consistently high level of operational reliability. Several elements of HROs are especially pertinent to educational programs. In the following pages, School D is discussed through the lens of HRO characteristics.

#### *1. High Reliability requires*

Shared Clarity regarding Core Goals.

The principal and the university coordinator had worked with the faculty for several years to establish and maintain a clear, focused set of goals.

*2. A perception, held by the public and all of the employees, that failure by the or the organization would be disastrous.*

The principal and the staff were committed to providing students with better educations, and a better future.

#### *3. High Reliability Organizations are alert to surprises or lapses.*

(Small failures can cascade into major failures, and hence are monitored carefully.) How?

The principal kept in constant touch with her faculty. She was in and around classes continuously. The university coordinator was regularly visible. The staff worked at identifying and solving problems early.

*4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve it's Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:*

- Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),
- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

School D was a stunning example of an entire building becoming a data base. Children's art, writing, and other academic tasks covered whole halls. Students' academic progress was available throughout classrooms. Many teachers created rich portfolios of students' academic work. The work was invariably related to the Core Knowledge tasks, and continuously available. The principal and the University coordinator were well aware of each classes progress, and the progress of individual students. If a student fell behind, there were grade-level teams, and central administration to call on for help. Help came.

High Reliability Organizations MUST rely on individual professional judgment, regardless of the person's position or rank. Therefore:

*5.HROs recruit extensively.*

School D took full advantage of its contacts with Trinity University. It served as a training site for Trinity's masters program students, and recruited largely from the "pick" of this excellent pool.

*6.HROs train and retrain constantly.*

Using Chapter 1 schoolwide project funds and others, School D has engaged in a long-term, almost bewildering barrage of well targeted, largely team-focused staff development activities.

*7.HROs take performance evaluation seriously.*

Some teachers chose to leave School D. Expectations made of teachers for participation in the program are high. The intense teaming makes "sluffing off" plainly visible to the principal and, more importantly, to fellow teachers and parents. We met no malingerers at School D.

*8.HROs engage in mutual monitoring (administrators and line staff) without counter-productive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

And How! (See 7 above). The level of professionalism expressed by faculty was sky-high. The teaming and the project-focused work meant that all staff, young and more mature, Black, White, and Hispanic, all were aware of one another's projects and productivity. Several staff had chosen to leave when the program began, but those that remained, and the new staff that replaced the old, display a remarkable level of open communication and professionalism.

Because the flight of time is the enemy of reliability:

**9. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.**

A great deal has been "worked out" at School D (for detailed discussion, see Mentzer & Shaughnessy, in press). Schedules were worked out, and re-worked out, until all staff felt that the best practical one had been evolved. Potentially complex routines were simplified. People know, not only Core Knowledge, but the "School D way" of doing a wide variety of tasks.

**10. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs, honor the flaw-finders, and support the nomination and validation of changes in inadequate procedures.**

There is a remarkable ongoing ferment at School D. Again see Mentzer & Shaughnessy (in press).

**11. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize and honor collegial decision making, regardless of rank.**

Again, it is not perfect, but teachers have learned that they can rely on one another. In many circumstances, barely bilingual parents are treated as "the experts" in several contexts. While the principal is clearly "the principal," a great deal of decision making is collegial.

**12. In HROs, key equipment is available and maintained in the highest working order.**

Things work at School D. We saw no malfunctioning overhead projectors or discarded videos.

**13. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.**

The district, the university, and the community all take clear pride in the schools. The administration goes out of its way to remind the faculty and students of the extent to which these considerable honors have befallen them. The attention and honoring clearly serve to encourage teachers in their daily and annual efforts.

**14. In HROs, short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.**

The school, the university, and the district have done everything in their power to maintain a stable base off of which to operate. It helped a great deal that, in contrast to Philadelphia or Baltimore, the 1990 census resulted in Texas getting more, not less, Chapter 1 funding.

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## *Analysis of Community*

### *Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Relations among teachers were reported to be quite strong and positive; several teachers commented that relations at the school are unusually good. Teachers also felt that relations between teachers and administrators were very good. The focus group produced many examples of teachers caring for one another and for students.

Relations between teachers and parents also seemed to be positive. One teacher commented, "I like the parents. They are not rich, but proud." Some combination of the Core Knowledge approach, the school's connection with the YMCA, and the Trinity Smart Schools Alliance seems to have greatly increased parent participation in the program. Students echoed the sense of positive relations between school staff and parents.

Relations between teachers and students appear to be positive as well, in fact, as the students put it, "Super!" Students gave many examples to back up their opinions. They added that other teachers whose classes they haven't been in, when they see them as they get on the busses or at other times during the day, are nice too. Teachers and students both reported that students generally respect and like the principal. "Everybody gets along with the principal," one student said. Teachers felt that students and support staff get along well together, and they described how members of the support staff serve as teachers in the school. Students described how the office and cafeteria staff help them out, and also how much help the counselor can be.

Relations among students were felt by teachers to be very positive. While the students come from very different neighborhoods, and while there is gang activity going on outside school, students get along well at the school. Students, too, felt that students get along pretty well together, painting a very different picture especially with respect to ethnic differences than is the case at some other schools. "Students study together." Although they were aware of problems outside the school, such as "gang writing" and a problem with guns at the local high school (recently a girl was caught bringing a gun to school for her boyfriend), they felt that their school was protected from those sorts of things. When students were asked how they would make the school better, they replied, "Nothing." "It's perfect." "I like it just the way it is."

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* The teachers seem dedicated to utilizing the Core Knowledge framework in a way that is developmentally sensitive to the needs of all students. They are clearly dedicated to seeing that their students learn all they can, and this vision and the interesting material they have to prepare lessons with seems to carry them through a lot of hard work and long hours.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Teachers seemed to have a strong sense of shared purpose, both on academic and social levels. They seemed to be focused, directed, and positive about themselves and their school. They work together often and jointly formulate the approach



they take to presenting material. They seem to go out of their way to make sure the research they do in preparing materials is of a high quality. Their approach to students themselves has a similar character.

*Shared Values.* Teachers at School D put a lot of emphasis on giving their students lessons that would be motivating and exciting to work on. They spoke of "all the extra things we try to meet the needs of the children," and of "trying to pull the parents in." Dedicated to learning and teaching about history, there seems to be a perhaps unspoken yet strong desire to give all students the best foundation for both academic success and for learning about other cultures and individuals. This is perhaps best reflected in the comments of students in the focus group, all but one of whom were Hispanic. Students were adamant that their school doesn't have people calling others who are different than themselves names and being mean to them.

*Trust.* There seems to be a lot of trust among staff at the school. Students, too, seemed to feel that they could trust school staff and that they were trusted as well. They liked teachers giving them points for each day so that grading is fair— "They're not just grading on what happened yesterday." They also explained that since they are not allowed to roam the halls in the morning, there is a movie playing each morning in the auditorium so they can go in and watch. If they're working with a teacher, though, they get a pass. "All you have to do is show them the paper and you can go." "[Most of the teachers] will say, 'Oh, we trust you here. Go ahead and go up.' Or, 'You can get the pass and come back down and show me.'" Or, they'll offer to drop by your class and ask your teacher, as students put it.

*Caring.* Teachers seem to care a lot for each other and for students. Several people in the focus group volunteered that this is a very close faculty. They seem to know each other very well. Students felt that the teachers and other school staff care about them. "If we've got a problem, we need somebody to talk to. We can talk to a teacher; we can talk to a friend; go to the counselor. The counselor will talk to us and tell us, 'What's the problem?'" "If you're crying or something, she'll calm you down by giving toys, or a game. And, she'll play with you."

Students also mentioned how nice the cooks are to them. "If there's leftovers, 'Who wants chicken livers? Who wants...?' 'Me!' 'Me!' 'Me!'"

Students seem to care about their teachers and about other students. They told the following story: "We had a new student come in. He was in a wheelchair... we had to help him start walking. We had vacation and half of the class came to school and helped him, and when the three weeks were over and we came back, he was walking." "Yeah, without a wheelchair." In general, the students seem to feel, "We're like a big family here."

*Participation.* One of the things teachers seem to appreciate about the Core Knowledge approach that they are using is that it doesn't dictate teaching style; one felt that it "liberated my professionalism." The school also has an elected leadership council which functions quite well.

The school seems to do a great job of getting everyone to participate and take leadership roles in the learning process, including janitors, volunteers, aides, parents, other members of the community, and students themselves. For example, the school has recruited parent tutors, who volunteer for 5 hours a week and work for pay an additional 5 hours per week, and who do all sorts of things to help, like reading to students, copying, sewing, cooking, laminating, and translating. The school has also created a program to increase parent involvement called "Dine-A-Versity" in which every two months the teachers cook and serve a meal for teachers, parents, and students, and the teachers and students make presentations for the parents. A recent one was held at the San Antonio Museum of Art. The students, who have been studying art and who had already visited the museum, served as docents for the parents. This event drew in over 500 parents (the school has 525 students total).

*Communication.* Teachers generally felt that communication at the school is excellent. Communication between the school and parents seems to be exemplary as well. The school sends materials home to parents every three weeks, folders that chart the student's progress in several areas. A student added that her mother likes the school because if her daughter forgets something, the mother can just deliver it to the office, and they'll take it up to her; it's not a hassle, like at some schools. They said that teachers and parents meet a lot—PTA meetings and stuff—and not just for bad kids. And, there are Dine-A-Versities. As they described it, parents come and eat while the students show them what they're doing. One time they did it at the art museum and the kids acted as docents, students noted. Also, the students watched a movie while their parents and teachers talked.

The students were eager to talk about the books and plays they are reading. One boy mentioned reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and the class as a whole was reading *Macbeth*. The teachers are communicating a love of reading to students it seems, and helping them to be open to fascinating plays that some adults in their ignorance mistake for boring, "required reading"-type stuff. The students went on and on about how much fun reading Shakespeare has been and about the plays they put on, including the difficulties of producing *Romeo and Juliet*.

Students felt that the way material was communicated to them was excellent. "When Mrs. F. wants to teach us something, she does it in an activity. Some teachers just write it on the board, and you get bored." "Or they'll read a story, and then have a paper to fill out about it." They also described how teachers communicate with them in a positive way, even when their behavior is negative. When students act up, teachers "talk to them, by themselves," as students put it. "Our teacher makes us sit by ourselves and think about what we did wrong for a couple of minutes." "Or go outside in the hall and copy the dictionary." "So we can learn new words," another added. Students mentioned that sometimes a student who has been acting badly has to miss something fun while they take time to sit and think about what they did.

*Respect and Recognition.* The teachers in the focus group seemed particularly pleased with the respect that their administration and the Trinity University faculty they work with show them. Teachers' interactions suggest a good deal of respect for each other.

Students also mentioned that the parents generally like the school a lot. One mentioned that her mother wants to move, but in doing so doesn't want to move her out of the school. When talking about the disruption they felt had been made by some visiting students a while back, they said, "It's like a dinner table here [in the cafeteria]." "It's like a family. It's a tradition—you have to take off [your] hat." "If you bring a hat, you can't wear it in the school, you have to wait 'til you're outside on the playground..."

*Incorporation of Diversity.* One of the initial concerns teachers had concerning the Core Knowledge framework (also voiced by a key faculty member at Trinity) was its possible Eurocentric nature, but as they became more familiar with it, they realized it could be built upon if necessary, adding in more information about African, Hispanic, and other parts of the world.

Teachers said that ethnic differences are not a problem in classes, and only occasionally on the playground or during other school-related activities. Students reported no problems arising from differences in ethnic backgrounds. They said that they're told by teachers to be sensitive to the feelings of children with handicaps and children who don't have mothers. They talked about a student in a wheelchair whom they help get around the school. Students at the school seem to care for each other enough that they feel comfortable joking with each other: "Nobody calls nobody else names just 'cause they're handicapped or black or white or Mexican." They sometimes call each other teasing names, but in good humor, for example, "White bread." Everyone knows there's no meanness or racism behind it. There was general agreement among students in the focus group on this, regardless of ethnicity. This characteristic of the school was further indicated by the way the students in the focus group interacted. Another example of it came when one of the Mexican-American students (who had already mentioned that his favorite book was a book of jokes) told the following joke, "Why do Mexicans—some Mexicans—have short necks?" When the researcher leading the focus group looked confused, he shrugged and said, "I don't know."

*Teamwork.* Teachers in the focus group talked about how they get together to create units, and how this working together has brought them closer. They feel they work together unusually successfully, both on specific units and on more general school-related issues as well.

*Affirmation.* As noted above, the school frequently reports to parents concerning the progress their student is making. The aim is to demonstrate the student's growth rather than just assigning grades. Students said, when asked what they liked best about the school, "They make us feel proud." Another said, "They don't push us that much, and they don't push us down, mostly. They tell us, if we can't do something, they'll just say, 'Don't think of that—think that you could do it.' And sometimes we'll think of that and we could reach our goal." Another noted, "I like the challenge."

Students also talked about the little rewards teachers give when they get a project done. Sometimes, students get tickets that they can use to buy things at the school store. Some teachers give prizes the next day if students have been good all day. Students get a free pizza when they have read nine books. They also mentioned the competition for which

class has the best attendance. They told as well of going to Trinity University and giving a speech about how much they like their school, and about the excitement when they won the Luby Prize.

*Conflict Resolution.* Not much was said by teachers about conflict resolution, perhaps because the positive focus of their teaching styles drastically reduces the need for it. One student commented that some students and teachers don't get along, mostly 'cause the kids act up. "[The teachers are] trying to help them," she added. Another added the story, "One student didn't want to do hardly any work, and the teacher told her, 'Look, the faster you do it, the higher number you'll get [to in the reading units].' So now she's past me." 'Sometimes, if a student gets in trouble, the teacher will put them in the class of one of their former teachers.' "And our old teachers are mad at us for getting in trouble." One student described a student who got out of control, and other teachers came in the classroom to take her to the principal's office; students said the office has a system for helping kids who have severe problems with hyperactivity to remember to take their medicine regularly. It is clearly not that there is no potential conflict in the school, it is just that teachers on a daily basis deal with it in positive ways so it doesn't become a problem.

Students also said that there haven't been many fights at the school. The ones that happen mostly happen in the neighborhood. A few occur occasionally outside or in the gym, but the teachers get right on top of it. As they put it, one aide would run way over to where a fight is starting, and break it up, and so there haven't been that many fights. Even when there are fights, sometimes the kids involved end up laughing with each other. Students often go to tell teachers that a fight is about to start. "Some boys will try to separate them, if there's not a teacher around. Take them somewhere else to play a game inside the building." School staff seem to have fostered an environment in which students work to help maintain good relations among themselves.

*Development of the New Members.* Teachers in the focus group mentioned how they try to help new teachers get started. They also spoke of how nice it is trying to pull the parents into the school. The school seems to do a good job of developing all its members, for example, getting janitors involved in some of the students' school projects, widening the number of individuals students view as their teachers. Students also suggested that their teachers treat them as full members of the school community, for example, getting their help in appropriate ways with discipline problems. "In one class, there was a student who tried to make the others laugh [when they were supposed to be doing their work], and the teacher told the students to 'never laugh at her, because she'll just keep on doing it.'" Students also have jobs assigned to them before school: cleaning, straightening up the books, perhaps taking care of animals. Another job is 'public relations—if a visitor comes, you tell them about the pictures outside your room.' The older students also help to teach the younger ones: for example, these students had made coloring books with simple language for use by the younger classrooms in studying the Aztecs.

*Links Beyond the Community.* Teachers often mentioned their involvement with Trinity University. Two teachers mentioned neighbors and family members getting intellectually involved in one of the units they were developing. The school itself has over a hundred individuals from the community acting as mentors.

Students also brought up the link with Trinity. One student, talking about the principal, said, "She's nice 'cause she took me to Trinity... the college school. She took me, and I said this speech about how our school is so good. Almost everybody liked it, 'cause we won the Luby Prize." Another reminisced, "Remember in 2nd grade, we went up to Trinity and we sang that song?..."

They also enjoyed a recent district wide marathon competition to which most of their school got to go. There was also lots of animated talk about their trips to the art museum. They learned a lot in school that helped them to enjoy the museum—like about the Incas, the Aztecs, the Mayans, the Greeks, and now the Renaissance. One student noted, "It means 'rebirth.'"

### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Teachers described times when they would take students to special events after school, or even take a student home for the week-end. One teacher takes a student out on an expedition each week. There is a wonderful sense of investing in students, in caring, thoughtful ways, whether helping them out in emergencies or taking special effort to make the material they're learning interesting and motivating. Teachers noted that they all work many extra hours per week, but that the material they are using (based on "Core Knowledge") is interesting enough to keep them going. They also remarked on how they themselves learn a lot about the material as they research it for their students. The subject matter that the "Core" involves is itself inherently motivating, they felt, and they try to present it well.

Students mentioned that some come in early in the morning to work together with a teacher to get extra help. They showed their investment in the school in other ways as well. For example, they described the following occurrence. "Last year we had some visitors, and they were wearing caps. Usually when we go inside the lunchroom, we take off our caps. And they had some red bandannas and things, and we didn't like it, 'cause they were mostly gang signals... And we were all, 'What are you doing? We don't do that at our school.'" "Take that off; we don't want that here." "We couldn't say anything, 'cause they're visitors... We tried to ignore it." "But, if they were at this school, 'Take it off!'"

### *Community Resources*

The teachers feel they get a lot of support from special members of the school community (resources that most schools never develop): from the parent volunteers, the mentors, several local businesses, the museum, and the YMCA.

Teachers also seem to have done a wonderful job of making other aspects of the surrounding community into resources as well. One student told of working on a project with her teacher on the week-end (which looked like it must have taken more than just one week-end): they made a map of the neighborhood that shows which houses have Doric, which have Ionic, and which have Corinthian columns.



### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

Particularly important is the strong support that the school has received via Trinity University, an example that could be followed by more schools and universities.

School D's facilities are better than those of many elementary schools, as it was previously a middle school.

Local and state allocations of physical education, music, art, and library staff have created an opportunity at School D to schedule those periods so that other teachers can plan lessons together.

The fact that School D is an inner city school was one reason Trinity decided to work with it. The chair of the department of education at Trinity wanted his students to work in the central city because not only can such schools use additional staff, but also because he believes that if you prepare teachers to work in inner city areas, they will be prepared to work anywhere.

Although not mentioned by staff, it seems likely that School D's role as a professional development school has also contributed to the sense of community at the school. First, empowerment of current teachers as supervisors of the student instructors seems likely to affect community among current teachers and, if the supervision is done well, between current teachers and student instructors as well. Also, by drawing some of the graduates of the program into School D, this program could create a context in which many of the newer teachers have shared experiences even prior to beginning their professional teaching at School D.

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting School D three classrooms were observed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe part of a typical school day for 3rd and 5th graders at School D.

#### *A Morning in Third Grade*

*Ms. C's class.* The school day begins in Ms. C's third grade class with announcements over the P.A. system: The principal talks of the ongoing class attendance contest—how the class with the highest attendance over the next month or two will get free tickets to the IMAX movie theater for the whole class. There is a contest for the teachers too, and this week the teacher whose name was drawn is in school and so wins two tickets; the principal urges all the teachers and students to congratulate her and to keep up the good attendance. (The students in Ms. C's class bemoan the absence of one of their classmates and the recent absence of another and wonder whether they'll still be able to get the prize for best attendance.) The principal reads and discusses the quote for the day: "Good fences make good neighbors," by Robert Frost. And, though the lesson the principal draws from it for the members of the school community ignores how the context of this quote within



the poem gives emphasis to points opposite from those she makes, she does give a nice lesson on the value of being honest and protecting your own personal space from unwelcome intrusions by others. Next comes the pledge of allegiance, then the School D Bears school song, and an upbeat pop tune (with the base track missing) ends the announcements for the morning.

The children in Ms. C.'s class sit at desks placed in a U-shape that has room to walk through. In the center of the room is a campfire—needing little imagination to make it real, constructed as it is with rocks, logs, and flames made from red cellophane, with flashlights that can be placed under the cellophane. Within an extremely short time, the children are engaged in a written language exercise, working on their own to fix sentences that, as Ms. C. puts it, you might say but that are not grammatically correct. She goes to one student, an African-American boy, who has recently gotten glasses and helps him to put them on. She notices that another student isn't wearing her glasses either (she forgot them at home), and so Ms. C. helps her to move her desk up close to the blackboard so she can better see the sentences on the board. Most of the students seem to be Hispanic-American; two seem to be African-American.

As the students work, Ms. C. takes the opportunity to introduce herself better to the observers. She has her aide, Andrea, come over as well; both are as friendly to the visitors as they are with the children. Tapping one visitor gently on the shoulder, she says, "It's going to be rough, so hang on!" All the students are on task (the norm, it seems, in spite of her smiling comment to the observers). The teacher and aide circulate to give the students help.

The "Take a Bite out of Crime" dog sits on top of a bookshelf. There is also a mosaic of an elephant on the wall with the story of Hannibal crossing the Alps. Art and information from a unit on the Cherokee is displayed on the wall. There are illustrations showing clothing and paintings, and a chart with information on housing, occupations (for instance, noting that doctors tended to be women and hunters men), food leadership, etc. Books about the Cherokee nation are displayed on a table in front.

The three sentences on the blackboard that the students are working to fix are: "1. ain't robert home from the baseball game" "2. no, the game are over around six" "3. the players ain't even at the ball park yet" After the students have had a few minutes to work on them by themselves, Ms. C. goes to the front of the room and has them volunteer corrections to each sentence. She calls on them by name, and students seem eager to volunteer information. She jokes with one volunteer who commented, "'Ain't' ain't a proper word."

At 8:30, the students split into three groups. Ms. C. works with one group of five students, showing them how to use quill pens. The students are generally dressed nicely. While one student passes out papers, Ms. C. goes to get an apron to cover the dress of one of the girls who was particularly dressed up. She has students take paper from a paper bag and cut the edges in a rough fashion so as to make it look more like the birch bark paper the Cherokee used. She shows them a small sample of birch tree bark. A sixth child, who arrives late due to being sick, joins them.

Another group of five students sit with the aide, Andrea, around the campfire. They are working on a worksheet based on a story in their book called "Sequoyah and the Riddle of Talking Leaves." The children seem comfortable asking questions. All are on task. One of the students working with the aide overhears the other students choosing their Indian names and asks Andrea if she knows his Indian name. The questions they are working on are based on the text; the questions ask the author's name, where the story takes place, etc. The aide goes over and pulls down a map of the U.S. so students can see where the story took place.

Five other students work on computers. The computers have a program that teaches students touch typing; it shows students which fingers should be used in typing each key. When the teacher has a moment, she goes over to remind a student to "hold position" (to keep to the proper typing position). The program first has students type letters, then words. The teacher catches a student who is about to load up a game: "Jimmy, you haven't been doing the other long enough." He starts to cancel it, and she says, "One is o.k." One program has a math and coloring program. Another has the student copy long, complicated sentences about Greek history. Some of the students have headphones on as they work on the computer.

Ms. Carter is helping the students in her group to choose Indian names for themselves and to learn how to write their new names using the quill pens and liquid ink. The students then do illustrations as another way of writing their Indian names. They are also to write short compositions explaining why they chose the name they did. "Rain Cloud", "Howling Wolf", "Bad Storm", "Little Rabbit", "Silent Wolf", and "Small Bear" are the names of the students currently working with the teacher. Ms. Carter asks a student questions to help her think about why she chose the name she did—"Why 'Bear'? What are they like—sweet, cuddly, mean, fierce, soft?" She asks another, "What are the characteristics of a rabbit that make you think you'd like to be called one?" After they have written their name both ways, they get to crumple and uncrumple their paper, so that it looks more like bark.

A girl is asked to come to the principal's office. A few minutes later, the principal comes in with her to get more information, then goes out by herself. The student, Naona, politely says, "Miss?" and shows me her folder of pictures she made using the computer.

The children seem to get along well. They occasionally help each other out on their own, and their teacher encourages this. Naona goes over to start work, but the teacher doesn't come to help her get started, so, after waiting for a while and talking with another student, she goes to get things out of her desk. Then, the teacher notices and calls her back to the group. However, Ms. Carter is still busy with the students working on the computers and so doesn't show her what to do for quite a while. Another student tries to explain what to do. For her Indian name, Naona chooses, "Red Robin."

*Ms. H.'s class.* Across the hall is Ms. H.'s third grade class. At the start of the observation, at 9:12, she had eighteen students and one aide. She got a chair for the visiting researcher and introduced herself before returning to help her students finish up with their journal

writing. The desks are arranged in the pattern of a backwards E and a regular E, both underlined. Two students in this class seem to be African-American and the rest to be Hispanic-American. Ms. H. appears to be African-American.

On the boards, and on coat hangers hanging from the ceiling, are signs entitled Bathroom, Hallway, and Classroom Rules. For example, "1. Respect - fellow students, teachers, all visitors, your right to learn. 2. Listen—to the teachers and follow directions—to each other. Do not talk while someone else is talking. 3. Leave each others' things alone. 4. Do not hurt anyone with words or by fighting."

As they put away their journals, she then asks them about the tribe from the Great Lakes region whom they have been studying. A couple of students have been sitting slightly apart with an aide. However, the aide has to leave, so the teacher tells students that "We have to remember to translate for the two new students." She takes out the book "Her Seven Brothers" and asks a student to go sit with the two new students and translate for them. Ms. H. has the class give information about the book based on what they can learn from looking at the cover. She has them raise their hands to volunteer information—"Oh, my, what a good answer; too bad your hand wasn't raised," and so the next student gets credit for the idea. She asks a student a question, and when another responds, she says softly, "Let me hear from Bella, Sweetie."

She writes the information they come up with on a piece of butcher paper clipped to the blackboard, writing in both English and Spanish, one below the other. Part-way down the paper, one student asks, "Is the top one Spanish?" Ms. H. points out that the ones that have the lines beside them are English. She asks the girl who is new to the class a question in English and in Spanish, and she carefully waits and helps her to give an answer. As Ms. H. writes the Spanish, she occasionally asks the other students how to say something properly in Spanish. At one point, she goes back to the back of the classroom to check whether she is writing large enough for students to see everything. The lesson outlining the book goes as follows: "What I know" (based on the cover and prior information), followed by "predictions" based on the information they already have, then the "purpose", and, finally, a summary of the book. When the students get too noisy, she quietly and non-aggressively signs "Time out." Some of the students notice her gesture and say, "Time out," and then everyone quiets down. Then, Ms. H. goes on with the lesson, and the students remain focused. She has some trouble coming up with the word in Spanish for "hunting," and the students have trouble supplying the word, so she tries to use a roundabout way of saying it to get the two new students to understand the comment. The students have to ask a "who question," then what, where, why, and when questions in turn. A student she calls on has trouble giving an answer, so she has him pick someone to help him out.

As class ends, she reminds them that they go from here to P. E., then to the library, and for counseling.

In the halls are fliers about the "Core Knowledge Series" or "Cultural Literacy" program by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., on which School D's curriculum is based. A sign in the hall advertises an upcoming PTA meeting in which a guest speaker from the police department will make a presentation on gun control.

The students from Ms. H.'s class assemble with other classes on the playground for P. E. There are two gym teachers, a man and a woman, both of whom seem gentle and very nice. They give a student an award for "stopping, looking, and listening." They remind students to practice making transitions well (i.e., moving from one task to another quickly). They have the students do calisthenics as they wait for other classes to arrive. Then, they tell the students to go three times around the track today ("We have been doing fewer laps lately because of the humidity, but today the weather seems better.") Students who want an outstanding should do four laps. The laps can be done walking, jogging, or running, as the student prefers, and the teachers remind them that they can stop for water anytime they feel like it. As they complete a lap, the students get their card punched. Some look dressed for running; others do the laps in black patent leather shoes.

### *A Morning and Afternoon in Fifth Grade*

At 10:05, when the visiting researcher enters Ms. N.'s 5th grade classroom, the students are studying Macbeth. The students are given a few minutes for small group discussion. Their teacher reminds them, "Make sure everybody talks." The class appears to have one European-American student, one African-American student, and most of the rest appear to be Hispanic-American, with possibly some Asian-Americans as well. There are 21 students in the class.

There are no fewer than ten posters of Einstein around the room. Another poster has the word, "Transformation" in English, Latin, Spanish, French, and Italian, along with its definition in English. The same wall has a map with explorers and poster portraits. Another poster lists "over 300 ways to say 'said.'" A bookshelf is positioned so as to make a small closet curtained off by a curtain with pictures of movie stars on it. Mobiles and a dream catcher hang from the ceiling. There is a table with interesting books displayed; for example, a book called, "Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and what the neighbors thought)." There is also a photographic card, created by their former 4th grade teacher using photos and 2 post-its under a plastic frame; it says, "I love you guys. Thanks for letting me learn with you. You taught me more than you know! Keep going after your dreams! You can do it! © Ms. M., April '94."

The groups each come up with summary statements about the section of the play they have recently read. For example, one group says, "Lady Macbeth is losing her mind. She's seeing things." Another's summary is: "Saw Macduff's army marching at the woods." Another group says, "Lady Macbeth was going crazy because of the murders." The groups vote for which group's summary is best, and they have to defend their choice. All choose their own except the group who had noticeably discussed the summary statements the most. Ms. N. tells the students that they'll be doing a test in which they will have to choose a sentence that best summarizes a reading. She points out that one group noticed that Macbeth was going crazy too, and she asks them to discuss it for another minute in their groups. Meanwhile, classical music plays in the background. One group describes Macbeth as "losing his heart," in other words, becoming meaner. She then has the students get copies of the play, allowing them to trade seats so that some can have more light to read by. She turns off the indoor lighting, and takes volunteers for roles.

Macduff is very popular. A girl, Ruby, volunteers for the role of soldier. There is a big contest for Macbeth's role, and a lot of disappointment among the others when a student is chosen. Ms. N. turns the music off, and they begin.

As the students read the play (haltingly, in places), Ms. N. occasionally breaks for discussion of the text. (The adaptation uses mostly, possibly entirely, Shakespeare's original text.) For example, she asks students if they know the word, "bough." None recognize it at first, so she sings a bit of "Rock-a-bye, Baby" and helps them to get the meaning from their knowledge of that lullaby. One student comments that that's not a very nice song to sing to children when they're supposed to be going to sleep—"It'll give them nightmares." Smiling, Ms. N. comments, "Why did I know you would point that out, Mark?" She asks them to explain phrases like "supped full of horrors" to help make sure they get the meaning. All the students are engaged, quietly listening to the play. Ms. N. asks lots of questions to help them talk about the story. The students are even calm during the fight scenes, though obviously enjoying the reading. At one point in the story, a student gets excited and calls out a comment while Macbeth is speaking. He is quieted and told that it is rude—it doesn't show respect for the reader. At the end of the play, the children clap and exclaim, "Cool!" "It's a good one."

Ms. N. has them return to their regular seats and work alone to think about the part they just read, then they make groups to discuss the final scenes: Two minutes to discuss and decide the two main events in the last part of the play. She has constructed building blocks with the students' summary sentences from the play, and these now make a structure nine stories high. The class discusses the last part of the play, including how "Macduff leads the army to look like the Birnam Wood is marching." Ms. N. explains that in a later class they will take the building blocks of the story and look at the flow of the story (the rising parts, etc.), linking the chain of events, the development of the character of Macbeth. She asks students to think about what part of the play they want to perform for the Shakespeare festival in November.

Then, they go into "transition time" to get ready for presentations on the explorers. They seem very good about getting set and quiet on their own. She reminds them how the presentations are scored: 0 = no or little effort, and is equivalent to an "F"; 1 = not really done, a "D"; 2 = information not really complete, a "C"; 3 = facts presented well, a "B"; and, 4 = "wowed 'em", additional information, an "A". Also to be counted is the overall impression their presentation makes on other students, judging from the information from the presentation recorded in their classmates' "learning logs."

As the first pair of presenters gets ready, the class begins the section by reading and singing a song about Ponce de Leon. The presentations are done in teams of two. The first two put a chart on the board—their report is about Pedro Cabral. They tell about how he was a Spaniard who lived in Portugal and went exploring for King John. He got lost and found Brazil. They use the world map on the wall to show the route of his expedition. As the second group gets ready, one of the presenters tapes his forehead, and then gets back to work. Meanwhile, the class sings a song about Pizarro to the tune "When the Saints Go Marching In." The second pair tells of an explorer called Cheng Ho from China. These two students seem to do a better job of speaking out; Ms. N. doesn't have to keep



reminding them to speak loud enough for everyone to hear. Their chart with its key questions (the outline for these presentations) is done with nice illustrations as well. They describe how Cheng Ho got to the Atlantic in the early 1400s. Students clap after the presentation and ask good questions.

Again, as the next group gets ready, the class learns another song from the sheet. The next presentation is on Diaz. The students listening take lots of notes, and their teacher takes a photograph of each team as they present. The third pair of students are tolerably good at presenting so that everyone can hear, and the others are good at asking questions. The presenters consult their notes at one point in order to answer a student's question.

The next talk is on Prince Henry the Navigator, who vowed to sail around the world. They talk of his founding a navigation school, and they bring up the fact that he invented the quadrant, the compass, the astrolabe, and other tools. He sent others out looking for him.

The next pair of students present a report on Magellan. They mention that he died on his own birthday. All the students presenting have handouts and give the observer one as well. The teacher hands me a card done by two of the students (Ruby and another girl who is wearing a T-shirt that says "Thailand" on it) using their handout on Henry Hudson (they were not presenting until the next day), on which they had listed all the names of the girls in the class. Later, the same two make up another illustrated card, this time with the names of all the students in their class. The teacher later mentioned that both students have learning disabilities; Ruby is reading 3-4 grade-levels behind the norm. Ruby, she said, does it all aurally but is still learning so much. In talking to Ruby later, she told me a little bit more about herself. "I was born here, my Dad's Mexican, my Mom's Mexican, but she was born in Colorado." Her six year old sister was just barely born here. Ruby says she has a reading disease she can't remember the name of—it's like when she sees a word, her brain turns off, as she puts it.

After the presentations, Ms. N. asks the students to volunteer something they have learned about each explorer. They are full of knowledge from each other—almost all the hands go up. One describes Prince Henry as having "a map in your mind"; Ms. N. comments, "I like that—that's a beautiful way to put it." The students ask questions about the map. She tells them, "Getting really good at taking notes will help you when we do the unit starting next week on the Renaissance. We'll be exploring history through art." She tells them more about the field trip they're taking this afternoon. Later in the year, they'll be going to the National Gallery of Art and the Louvre by video.

It's Burt's birthday, so he brought candies to share. He passes some out to all (including the visiting researcher) as Ms. N. reads a story from the book "Wayside School." She seems to be a great reader, really gets into it, and seems like a lot of fun. The story she reads is about a teacher in a peculiar school who doesn't listen very well and is kind of kooky. As she reads, students come and go quietly to put their candy wrapper in the trash, or to the bathroom, without making an interruption. After the story, Ms. N. asks, "Have you ever been in a situation where somebody asked you to do something that doesn't make any sense?" For example, the old trick of a worksheet that tells you to read all the directions first, the last direction of which tells you not to do any of the prior things? Then, she reads another story from the same book about a boy with big ears—they think he has



good listening skills because of his ears, so they make him the class president. But his only job is to turn the light switch on at the beginning of the day and off at the end. He saves the life of a dog, but gets in trouble from his foolish teacher because she "had to teach in the dark" because he was late to school as a result of saving a life. The students listen attentively. Afterward, Ms. N. asks them what makes a good class president. "Has anyone asked you a question that treated you like you were stupid?" They talk about feelings related to the story. She says, "If I ever treat you like you're not a smart person, will you politely let me know?" The students file out to lunch, passing a clinic with a few children sitting down, one of whom is in a wheelchair. In the cafeteria is a poster talking about "behaving, excelling, achieving, responsible students."

After lunch, Ms. N.'s class reassembles in the classroom, and she asks them, "How do you touch the art work?" "With your eyes," they answer. We get into a bus to go to the San Antonio Museum of Art, along with the other 5th grade classes. Although the original intention had been to see the Renaissance part of the collection in order to give them a nice introduction to the next unit, the docent starts out in the Greek and Roman exhibits, and, with the student enthusiasm for these and the Mayan and Aztec exhibits, the class never makes it to more recent history. The docent seems surprised by the amount of knowledge these students already possess about these four cultures, and she seems to have a good time answering questions and telling them about particular pieces. The students are able to pick out who the gods and goddesses depicted on pottery or in statues were likely to be and relate stories about them. Ruby has me come over to see pieces she thought were particularly nice. Students tend to be careful around the exhibits and did appear to be much more interested and well behaved than other schools visiting at the same time. From time to time, Ms. N. points out a feature of a particular piece of art, relating it to what they studied, for example, pointing out an Aztec statue of a little boy in which he is wearing a board strapped to his head designed to smooth his profile, since this was seen as a sign of beauty in Aztec culture. Although on the bus coming over, some students acted like they've been here too many times already, in the museum they were full of knowledge and interest in what they saw. A couple of the boys were afraid of heights, though; when we went up in a glass elevator, Ms. N. put her arm around them supportively and reassured them.

Back at school, Ms. N. announces that the reading group that meets after school will start Tuesday, and the math group on Thursday; students can come if their parents agree it's o.k. for them to stay for it. The students are filling out sheets saying the names of books they've read since the start of the school year. When they have read a certain number of books, they get a pizza gift certificate as a prize. They begin to work on their journals; others come individually to the teacher to report what books they have just finished and what poems they've memorized. They are generally quite self-directed. When students have finished a book they spin a spinner posted on the wall and, where the arrow lands determines what part of a summary they do for the book they just finished reading. In other words, the spinner shows the parts of a complete book summary: the setting (time, place), the plot of the story, the most exciting part, etc.; for each book they read, they do a

report that contains one of these elements, rather than having to write a full report each time they finish a book. So, they have more time for reading and still gain practice over time in doing the various parts of a full book review. Students seem to enjoy the process.

As they work, students can go and get a cupful of Cheerios if they're hungry. Someone, however, has made a bit of a mess in doing so; Ms. N. notices this and announces, "If the cereal's not cleaned up within five minutes, it will be gone." A few students go to clean it up. She reminds one student who is reading that this is the time for writing. One of the students is working on a PowerBook; another works at another computer. Some are using their journals to write stories. Four students work at one grouping of desks, three at another, three are working at a table together, one student is working in the hallway, sitting in an old-fashioned peacock chair, and two others who are supposed to be catching up are talking. Students often raise their hands to ask questions. A student recites "Trees" by Robert Frost.

Ms. N. reminds them that on top of a bookshelf is a box into which they can put ideas for carving a pumpkin. She says that if they want, she could probably get more than one pumpkin. A student goes around with a note for other students to sign for a teacher whose grandfather recently passed away. Ms. N. passes out fliers on the upcoming book fair—the students get really excited as they look at the books that are for sale. She tells them it's time to go home, but the students seem quite happy to keep working. She keeps telling them it's time to go, but not one student acts like they're glad to leave. Their homework for the night includes reading for at least thirty minutes. As they finally leave the building to meet parents and buses, teachers and students from different classes seem to interact in friendly ways. The feeling of enjoying being in school seems to linger after them.

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## *School E*

### *Pennsylvania*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

The program model, Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) is in the forefront of the school-restructuring movement in the United States. Over 700 schools were using CES ideas in 1994, and the program developer, Theodore Sizer, has recently received a substantial grant to extend research and development. Widespread implementation, combined with minimal evaluation, suggests the need for a closer look at the model. School E was nominated as an exemplary CES site by the Education Commission of the States, a group which helps operationalize CES ideas.

Findings from this case study reinforce findings from the limited research base on CES. Program implementation is compromised by difficulty incorporating all students and staff. For example, scheduling difficulties prevent groups of students who receive advanced or remedial assistance from participation. Staff opposition to the program can divide the school. However, within the program, staff and students seem to have developed a sense of community. Teachers feel that CES allows them to work more closely with students.

##### *Lessons from School E*

Several lessons emerged and should be kept in mind from our study of School E. First, when all teachers are not involved in the program, by definition, the program fails to serve all the students. Although it was felt at this site that teacher opposition was such that more could be accomplished by involving only those teachers who volunteered to participate, more needs to be done to gain acceptance and participation by all if indeed the program is worth applying. Furthermore, students at the opposite ends of the spectrum (those most and those least at risk) are currently not able to participate in the program, limiting the generalizability of any positive results generated by the program. Second, it is worth

noting that faculty members have been concerned about the demands on their time due to the program, and about possible teacher cut-backs. Third, funding problems have made it so that the school is not even meeting the target classroom size specified by CES; thus, one question that needs to be asked of "reforms" like CES is whether schools can actually carry them out on their own or whether the program developer can provide funding as well as ideas. Fourth, training at this school is largely voluntary. Fifth, even the superintendent of School E is unable to make real plans and promises since such decisions can be voted down by the school board. On a better note, the school does have some promising aspects. For example: Sixth, the increased, and more positive, contacts made with parents through calls to follow-up on student progress have increased not only parents' involvement in their children's education but also students' sense of accountability. Seventh, The common planning time given teachers helps them in planning lessons and facilitates communication regarding students' problems as they arise. Eighth, students are able to get help their assignments from other teachers (regardless of discipline differences), and teachers make an effort to organize cross-disciplinary teaching.

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### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

School E is located in a blue collar, working class community, with an increasingly white collar population. The community is 20 miles north of a large state university and serves as a bedroom community for university employees. The school also draws students from the surrounding rural, farming area. The school population, ninth through twelfth grades, is approximately 99% white, with only 8% of the high school students disadvantaged (as determined by free or reduced lunch) and no LEP students. Approximately 12% of the high school students go to the vocational-technical high school.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

School E began implementing the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) in the fall of 1990. The school selected this model because the superintendent at the time and some members of the faculty expressed concern about students' feelings of alienation, student drop-out rate, and what they felt were students (and teachers) blindly going through the paces toward graduation; and because a Re:Learning grant became available to support the effort. They saw the CES model as a way to revitalize students' education (and teachers' teaching) and to help students establish a better, more positive attachment to school.

CES is based upon Ted Sizer's *Horace's Compromise* (1984) and *Horace's School* (1992). The basic tenets are that secondary schools are too large, too departmentalized, too routinized, too dependent on passive learning and generally too impersonal. As a result, students lack attachment to school, find the content unimportant and learning boring, and experience success infrequently, and consequently too many students drop out or drift

through school. In an attempt to resolve this problem, CES decreases the teacher-student ratio and attempts to focus learning on important usable skills or knowledge. Further description of the model is provided in the next section.

The CES revolves around nine principles:

- a. Schools should focus on helping students learn to use their minds well.
- b. Students should master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge.
- c. The schools' goals should apply to all students.
- d. Teaching and learning should be personalized; teachers should have no more than 80 students.
- e. Student as worker should be the prime metaphor; prominent pedagogy should be coaching student performance.
- f. Obtaining a diploma should be based on successful demonstration of mastery; performance should be evaluated based on exhibition of things students do.
- g. Develop positive and supportive school atmosphere; parents as collaborators.
- h. Teachers should see themselves as generalists first and content specialists second.
- i. Teachers should be on interdisciplinary teams and have adequate time to plan integrated curricula; yet cost per pupil should not exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10%.

Most of these principles are vague by design. The CES model allows teachers and schools to figure out on their own what these nine principles mean in practice. Clearly each essential school will look different from the others. As the first principal said, "The key to success is teacher ownership; let them make the changes."

#### *Staff and Participants*

The faculty was a typical high school faculty in terms of their experience; most had 15 or more years of experience. One important factor was the geographical proximity to a large university. This gave teachers regular opportunities for staff development and advanced course works in their field; also it drew a somewhat more broadly educated population to the faculty than what you would see in a typical small town American high school.

There was very little turnover of the school staff. The initial participating faculty all had 10-20 years experience; there were also faculty members at the high school with 20 or more years of experience and almost no teachers with fewer than five years. It was doubtful that this program will affect faculty turnover rate.

Not all school staff were involved in the program, although most seemed to have strong opinions about it. Seven teachers participated in two teams during the 1993-1994 school year: English, social studies, science, and math teachers on the ninth grade team and three teachers for the Senior Institute. One of the Senior Institute teachers was the school's CES coordinator and another was the assistant principal. A group of 15 to 20 faculty members

discussed problems and solutions of the CES program, worked on articulation of philosophy in terms of instruction and curricula, and worked on recruiting more teachers and spreading the model in the school. During the 1991-1992 school year a 10th grade team operated. An effort to run a second ninth grade team during 1992-1993 was only partially successful, and a second effort was scheduled for 1994-1995.

### *Support for CES*

There is a fundamental difference between a program involving a volunteering subset of a faculty and one mandated for all (e.g. schoolwide implementation). CES faced active resistance—even insurrection—when teachers believed it might be forced upon the entire school. The teachers were much less hostile when they were allowed to choose to join the program. Generally, the CES staff was selected by volunteering: people heard about the program and decided whether to get involved. Very active administrative encouragement was required to get participants from the math department. The teacher assigned to the ninth grade math team in 1992-93 was the only teacher who had been on leave the preceding year, and was assigned, not "volunteered." However, she chose to remain the following year. Many of the non-involved faculty were against the program in part because they were concerned about their jobs. For example, shop and mechanical drawing teachers were concerned that their courses were "not viewed as essential," and that they could lose their jobs. Other faculty disliked teaming and still others felt more comfortable with the status quo.

Administrative support for CES fluctuated with changes in personnel. Part of the original impetus for CES came from the superintendent at the time. When the program first was implemented, the principal's cautious support of the program hinged on its success and acceptance among the faculty. The next principal was both well versed in and enthusiastic about CES. He left after two years and the vice principal was the acting principal during 1993-1994. In the interim, the new superintendent actively guided school business. He supported the ninth grade team by considering their needs in scheduling, and, in return, expected them to be accountable for student progress. He and the new board president seemed more inclined to "adapt" the program to School E than to adapt School E (especially the budget) to CES.

### *Training*

The 1990-91 principal and coordinator went to Brown University for a Sizer-led orientation meeting. The general consensus was that the program specific training gave teachers little direction on how to implement the model in their school and class. It was great in developing the theory and goals, but left the "how to do it" up to the teachers. The 1991-1993 principal got his M.A.T. at Brown University with Sizer and was unusually well prepared for CES. Several teachers cited courses they'd taken at the local university, along with other professional development as helping them make the nine principles of an Essential School work in their classroom. One teacher said the superintendent influenced teachers to take additional courses by paying more for courses taken and paying more per course. As a result of those financial changes, the teacher said he has taken 3/4 of his graduate level credits in the last three years—he'd been teaching for about 15 years. He



also said that some of those courses have helped him greatly in changing the curriculum and instruction in implementing his view of the Essential School. The people involved in or interested in the CES model attend a weekly class to discuss their implementation problems, and to plan improved implementation and growth of the model. There was some suggestion that this dialogue and the way it was facilitated helped their interdisciplinary planning. However much of the implementation discussion revolved around school and local politics and the impact they have on the existence and expansion of the program.

### *Student Participants*

At the time of the site visit, approximately 100 of the 200 ninth graders and 30 seniors were participating in the program. The ninth grade team had a slightly higher proportion of students with behavioral or academic problems. In the first year, the single ninth grade team was randomly selected among students who were not at the very top or very bottom of their grade. The two-period senior humanities course, a combination of English and social studies taught by an English and an art teacher, was open to all interested students. A second ninth grade team, incorporating the remaining ninth graders, and a tenth grade team were added for the second year only. The tenth grade team was comprised of students who had been on the team during year one and who chose to be on the team in tenth grade.

Student participation remained voluntary, although administrators and teachers together selected students to recommend for the program. Initially, enrollment for the ninth grade team was low. Teachers held orientation sessions to acquaint students and their parents with CES. By the second year, interest had increased so a second team was added.

Scheduling influenced participant selection at times. Students were excluded from the team because of scheduling conflicts with advanced math courses or vocational technical courses. By the time of the site visit, most ninth grade scheduling conflicts had been resolved.

### *Objectives*

After two years of planning and four years of implementation, the faculty had not reached consensus on school restructuring goals or processes. The first principal seemed to share the CES principles. He wanted to spread the CES model schoolwide over five years (money permitting) and he hoped to have every teacher buy into these kinds of changes. However, when significant resistance arose, he equivocated. The second principal actively promoted CES but did not insist that all teachers participate. Many of the faculty liked the core of the CES program but were very concerned about additional demands on their time and the financial impact in terms of their own jobs. They could see that the program might help, but felt it might cost too much. The loss of even one colleague's job in a manner which was even indirectly attributable to CES would constitute "too much."

### *Project Services*

*School-wide restructuring.* To some extent, the CES model establishes a school within a school. In School E there were in effect two ninth grade programs. The students in the CES program were integrated with the regular program students for "specials," courses like art, music, and physical education.

*Scheduling.* Scheduling proved to be the critical factor in the successes and failures of CES at School E. In the second year of the program, students on one of the ninth grade teams had a math teacher on the tenth grade team. The two ninth grade teams had their team time at different times during the day, meaning the teams couldn't meet with each other. The tenth grade teachers had both students on the team and those not on the team. These problems made it very difficult for the teachers to "discuss" common students during their team time. Also at least one of the ninth grade teams had 120 students on it. The teachers on the team said they would not teach on the team under these conditions the next year. They made that clear to the principal and superintendent. The new superintendent, who verbalized support for the CES program, addressed these problems by assigning a specialist to assist with scheduling.

The tenth grade team was dropped after one year because of difficulties scheduling advanced and elective subjects while maintaining a team block schedule. This might be endemic to small school districts that try to offer advanced academic and vocational electives to their students. Larger schools have more redundancy of offerings, and more students in each that may give them more scheduling flexibility. However, Sizer identified large, impersonal schools as part of the problem, not as a solution.

*Classroom Instruction.* The would-be Chapter 1 students were fully integrated into the regular classroom program. A number of things were "special" or set the CES model apart from traditional high school instruction. The obvious components were that class size and teacher-student ratio were significantly reduced in an attempt to make school more personal, increase students' attachment to school, and help teachers know their students so they can help them with and prevent academic problems. The CES model has 20 students per class and each teacher sees only 80 students per day. At School E, team members served approximately 100 students per day. The teachers said they had previously served around 30 students per class and 150 per day. For a year, they were able to meet the model class size, but financial constraints increased the student teacher ratio to a point above the ideal and below the school average.

Two other aspects of instruction, interdisciplinary instruction and performance-based evaluations, were well integrated into the CES classes. Students commented that teachers worked together so that assignments overlapped; they praised the teachers for providing support in all academic areas rather than the teachers' special area. Year-end evaluations in both the ninth grade and Senior Institute were based on projects that demonstrated skill and content coverage. For example, students in Senior Institute conducted exit interviews in front of the class to explain what they had learned in their internship.

The CES model at School E worked with students' individual needs by providing academic and affective guidance. For example, there was a "flex time" or remediation period during the day. During flex time students may go to any one of their teachers for additional help or a teacher may assign specific activities to students during flex time. For the second semester of this year, students attended a "personal development" class. Students described this class as similar to Health; they discussed teacher-selected issues such as sex, drugs, and personal responsibility.

CES team teachers had one shared planning period to permit the entire ninth grade team to discuss their students. This was an attempt to improve teachers' monitoring of students and to prevent them from falling between the cracks, either academically or personally. In the first year of the program, they had two more planning periods, one for "dual planning" and one for individual teacher planning. A district focus for the past several years has been on moving toward cooperative learning. Many teachers at the high school took an extended cooperative learning workshop before school began this year.

*Curriculum.* Essentially the CES students received the same curricula as the regular students. Each teacher coordinated what they would cover with other teachers in their departments and with the school's goals: "The students have to be prepared to go into tenth grade."

The state of Pennsylvania is studying major overhauls of its entire curriculum. The general theme is restructuring with a focus on several hundred areas in which students must demonstrate competence. A reduction or elimination of "clock hour" requirements and a shift toward performance outcomes are being proposed. At the high school level, it reads like something written by CES. However, when introduced at the state level, this outcome-based education initiative was hotly criticized from the political and religious right, and now is undergoing "further study." Plans for the future include starting some Advance Placement (AP) classes for the college bound students. The advanced students had not been served by the CES in the past because of the scheduling problem created by the advanced science and math classes. They began attempting to include the highly able students on an "AP Team." (Note that an "AP Team" would be antithetical to the third of Sizer's nine principles, "The school goals should apply to all students.")

The CES goal is to integrate curriculum across content areas and to focus on "essential skills" that can organize the content from two or more areas. The objective is to determine what the student is to do rather than what the student is to know—mastery of skill rather than content coverage. However, the implementation of this change is left entirely up to the teachers; and the degree to which teachers change curricula and instruction is entirely at their discretion.

There were, however, some concerns on the part of faculty who taught electives—like industrial arts, agriculture, and music—as they perceived the declining enrollment in their courses as a direct result of CES. Enrollment changes might have reflected the changing population in the School E School District. There was a growing white collar population and a declining farming population. More students were interested in college preparatory courses (note the planned addition of AP courses) and fewer saw agricultural courses and industrial arts courses as avenues to future employment.

*Individualization.* Teachers discussed academic performance of specific students during team planning time. Teachers on the team selected students who were in danger academically and called the parents. In the team meeting, teachers discussed results of the calls to parents and the next steps. Each student was responsible for developing his/her own exhibition at year's end.

### *Resources*

*Funding.* Funding for School E's CES project has been uncertain since startup. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, using Chapter 2 funds, and the district each contributed \$25,000 to implement CES. The Pennsylvania Department of Education offered \$14,000 per year for the next five years, but only provided \$10,000 in 1991-92. Additional funds enabled the teams to reduce the student-teacher ratio to 80:1 in the first year, but after startup, CES class size and work load returned to levels almost commensurate with the rest of the school.

*Non-Fiscal Resources.* Much of the additional work CES necessitates was done voluntarily by team teachers on evenings and weekends. The additional demands on the teachers were substantial enough to dissuade many teachers from joining the teams.

### *Project Outcomes*

School E did not conduct a formal evaluation of the CES program. Staff felt that the program had been successful over the years, citing better attendance, increased parent involvement, and more positive student attitudes towards school. The current superintendent felt that CES teams should be accountable for their program, but did not specify desirable outcomes.

*Academic Performance.* School E did not test its high school students.

*Student Attendance and Discipline.* The faculty and principal felt that attendance improved in CES classes. Teachers suggested that students responded to individual attention and the close teacher-parent relationships with regular attendance and good behavior.

*Parental and Community Support.* A major goal of the CES model is to get parents more involved in and supportive of the school. Parents were invited to orientation programs to learn about the CES model and the plan for the year.

During the school year, members of the team discussed individual students in team planning; often a member of the team called the parents to discuss problems with them. This had a positive impact on parents and made students realize there was accountability—parents would find out.

The team had monthly parent-teacher conferences, and about half to a quarter of parents showed up (which is a much greater percentage than typical PTA meetings). Two of the teachers said the increased dialogue with parents was one of the major strengths of the

CES model at School E, because of the phone calls and monthly conferences. The current acting principal also said two of the strongest outcomes he's seen so far are "more parent involvement and better student attendance."

Despite nearly complete turnover, the school board consistently supported CES. The current chairperson attended CES planning meetings and her son participated in the program. Other members have learned about the program through short presentations to the board made by CES staff each year.

*Teacher Attitudes and Behaviors.* One aspect that clearly makes the CES model different is that it is greatly empowering to teachers. They acted and talked as if they had some control over and impact upon students' education. As one teacher said, "This program gives the teacher a chance to improve and enjoy his/her career more, but doesn't guarantee it."

Every revolution produces a counter-revolution, and must either deal with it or be overrun by it. Some of the teachers who taught "specials" (like shop, mechanical drawing, and choir / vocal music) felt that the CES program was a threat to them and their positions. Some teachers were unenthusiastic about the potential increase in their workload. Some were resistant to change of any sort. Many teachers coalesced into a vocal, antagonistic group, and in conversation teachers repeatedly referred to other teachers as "us" or "them." Attempts to restructure the entire school raised such resistance that the program was limited to several teams. Staff noted the lessening of tension, and some proponents pointed out that, ironically, non-team teachers seemed to be adopting CES strategies such as performance based evaluation, when not under pressure to commit to the CES program.

### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

Most of Sizer's principles (except the low cost goal) are validated by school effectiveness research and make sense intuitively. Given the validity of these ideas, reliability of implementation becomes critical. In the academic lives of students, as in research, reliability of service delivery sets the upper boundary of practical validity. An emerging literature on high reliability organizations (HROs) helps focus on criteria for highly reliable implementation. These characteristics are described below, with notes on the degree to which School E's CES program meets the criteria.

#### *1. Public and staff perceptions are that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

There was a division among those who believed that the program was essential and those who advocated the previous status quo. Involved staff and the chair of the school board struggled to maintain the program in the face of opposition, administrative turnover, and budget crunches, but other staff worked actively to undermine the CES program. Support from parents was surprisingly strong. The first superintendent and his hand-chosen

(second) principal had very significant intellectual and emotional involvement in the success of the project. The second principal in particular would have perceived that he had failed had CES "gone under."

The community took great pride in their school and its progress. The community wanted the school, including its academic programs, to succeed for all children

*2. Program has clear goals, staff have a strong sense of their primary mission.*

CES has nine goals, but most are not expressed in readily measurable terms. The lack of clarity may have presented a problem. The ninth grade team and senior institute teachers were committed to the CES goals, which revolved around focus on the "student as worker." They worked together to provide interdisciplinary lessons. Evaluation was based on exhibitions, such as the exit interviews performed by students in the Senior Institute. Parents worked with the teachers, maintaining frequent telephone contact and helping with special projects such as placing Senior Institute students in internships. However, consensus on goals was limited to CES staff. Non-CES teachers picked and chose among CES goals. The four-year battle lines drawn over CES indicate that teachers across the school did not share goals; some teachers prioritized student needs and others, teacher working conditions. Further, the administration sacrificed some program goals for budgetary reasons. For example, the ninth grade team had more than the prescribed 80 students.

*3. Program extends formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs).*

The team together identified, discussed, and resolved student problems. Team teachers reached an understanding about appropriate responses to behavior and academic problems. For example, any available team teacher would call the parents if a student misbehaves. Teachers who were not on the team were less consistent in following through with the parents. Scheduling, a clear example of a technologically addressable problem, was handled differently each year. No SOP for scheduling evolved.

*4. Program recruits and trains extensively.*

Coalition teachers were chosen from existing staff. The school hired almost no one for at least five years. Most teachers volunteer, but in some cases an administrator strongly encouraged specific teachers to volunteer. In one case, the one new math teacher was assigned to the CES team without first ascertaining his interest in the effort. Similarly, training was voluntary but encouraged. Financial incentives, instituted by the former superintendent, encouraged teachers to take graduate level courses; some of those courses helped in actualizing the CES principles. The coordinator and original principal attended an orientation meeting at Brown University years ago. The second principal was recruited in part because of his prior CES training.



These CES teachers clearly were above average. They were professional and highly motivated. They knew their goal was clear—to help students learn, and ultimately graduate. Yet for the most part the teachers' plans for professional development were individual; they made their plans independently, and were left to their own devices. There was little or no guidance from the school or CES program. In cases where a school doing the CES model was not near a university, it was not clear where teachers would get staff development, how good the staff development would be, or if they would go at all.

HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve it's Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:

- Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),
- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

The ninth grade team accrued valuable, unwritten data bases on their discussions of students' progress. The data were rich, relevant, available and used in real time, and regularly cross-checked. However, little of this knowledge was passed on to the 10th grade team.

*5. At peak times, professional judgment is valued.*

Under normal operating conditions and at peak times, the CES teachers made most decisions concerning the students and the program other than scheduling. The common planning time greatly facilitated this work. At one point, the superintendent intervened to guarantee that a trained professional organize the schedule to ensure that CES and other school requirements would be met.

*6. Program has initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.*

CES team teachers met daily to discuss students, classes, and problems with others. Discrepancies in standard operating procedures were resolved at this time. When the team detected systemic problems that adversely affected their work, they often went, as a team, to propose solutions to the administration. This often proved effective. Otherwise, there was no formal review.

*7. Program is sensitive to areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required; pay attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the processes of the organizations.*

In general, the teams developed and managed program processes. The first principal did not oversee team activities or strategies, the second principal was quite interested in team processes but did not evaluate, and, in the absence of a principal, the superintendent this year allowed the teams to operate without oversight. He expressed concern, and said that

he may pay closer attention to processes next year. The ninth grade CES team made incremental progress, constantly battling among the CES ideals, repeatedly changing leadership, new scheduling adventures each year, and declining funding.

*8. Monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

The relationship between administrators and teachers was unusual this year, as there was no principal. Staff had very little input in the choice of administrators or their decisions. Generally, the ninth grade team and senior institute seemed quite autonomous. The team members constituted an informal network of mutual monitoring, though none reported any power to evaluate their principal. The principal's evaluations of staff were similarly minimal. At the end of the 1993-94 year, however, the superintendent mentioned his intention to monitor the programs, especially senior institute, more closely. His comments suggested a loss of confidence in the class, and this may affect its autonomy. Teaming clearly facilitated productive, mutual monitoring.

*9. Program is alert to surprises or lapses; prevent small failures from cascading into major system failures.*

This was a strength in general of CES and in particular of School E's CES program. Daily communication among team teachers and frequent contact with parents helped identify and address academic and discipline problems before they became patterns. The interrelated nature of the curriculum provided a safety net for struggling students. Students were able to get support in one class for topics or skills taught in another class. For example, several students pointed out that teachers, working outside their own subject area, helped students master material from other classes.

*10. Program is hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, utilizes a second layer of behavior emphasizing collegial decision making regardless of rank; staff assume close interdependence and relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent.*

The school was hierarchically structured, but adherence to the hierarchy was somewhat arbitrary. The number and fluctuations in key players complicated the structure. For example, in the past four years, there have been two superintendents, three different school boards, two principals, one acting principal, and a fourth principal scheduled to arrive this summer. Because decisions made by the superintendent were subject to school board approval, the personnel changes affected delivery on promises made by the superintendent to the program. Teachers became apprehensive about believing administrators because "the rug has been pulled out so many times, we're reluctant to stand on it and say that's gospel." The lack of a principal also shook the structure somewhat. Team members repeatedly emphasized their lack of interaction with administrators over the past year. In the leadership vacuum, CES teachers took

responsibility for the program. While this shows collegial decision making within the team, the interdependence did not fully incorporate the potential strengths of the existing school hierarchy.

*11. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order; responsibility for checking readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.*

Each classroom teacher maintained his/her own equipment (video cameras, VCRs, televisions, etc.). In some cases, equipment was not maintained because of lack of funds. For example, one teacher could not use a video camera because he did not have the funds for a \$20 battery pack. All teachers had televisions for Channel One, but not all had VCRs available to take full advantage.

*12. Program is valued by supervising organizations.*

The chairperson of the school board reported valuing CES. Other than the chair, the school board was relatively uninformed about the program. The initial superintendent clearly placed high value on the CES project. However, teachers and administrators reported receiving no practical help from state or national CES or Re:Learning sources.

*13. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

Theoretically, this should be a strength of CES. During year one of the project, the board and superintendent agreed to fund an 80-1 ninth grade team. The plan was to expand every year, and in year two a 10th grade team was added. However, when that superintendent left, the 10th grade team was dissolved and the ninth grade student-teacher ratio slowly rose, always with "cost" as the given reason. Short-term efficiency sometimes took higher priority than high reliability at School E. In the second year of the program, the student-teacher ratio went up and scheduling considerations, rather than student needs or program reliability, shaped team composition.

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## *Analysis of Community*

### *Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Relations among students and teachers generally seemed positive. Teachers noted that they were learning more about their students and that this knowledge helped them to see "the whole student". Students seemed to respond to the increased contact with teachers. Some teachers spoke of the appreciation their students showed them, and how students who were supposed to be "problems" in many cases seemed to turn around. Some teachers seemed to feel that there were close relationships between themselves and their students.

Teachers felt that relations among students improved as well during the year. Students made friends with students of other cultural backgrounds, and they tried to be supportive of a student with a disability. The teachers mentioned that a student with a disfigurement would spend time with the students on the team. Students themselves seemed to enjoy the continuity in the program—having the same classmates for different classes.

Relations among teachers in the program were reported as particularly supportive. This did not extend unfortunately to relations between CES teachers and other teachers at the school. Some felt that this was partly due to jealousy on the part of teachers not in the program, as well as to the other teachers' unwillingness to put in the extra work. Relations between teachers and administrators did not seem to be too positive. Some felt that administrators could be difficult to find, and were not as supportive of the program as they might have been, although perhaps the presence of the program suggests at least token support from administration. Some of the problems seem to arise from frequent turnover in administrators and the school board; the school board was reported as having turned over twice in the last four years, and this, combined with the board not giving teachers much time to tell the board about the program, meant that many of the board members were not knowledgeable enough about CES to support it. A notable exception, however, was the current president of the board, who was seen as very supportive and understanding. Her son, a student at the school, was reported to have 'sold her on the program'. Students, likewise, felt that relations between themselves and the assistant principal centered almost entirely on disciplinary actions; those who weren't in trouble don't know him. Relations between teachers and other staff varied somewhat: teachers felt they worked well with the guidance counselors, but had problems with certain of the office staff. Students mentioned good relationships with the maintenance crew and librarian.

Teachers felt that their relationships with parents were very positive and effective since the program began. They also spoke of the support parents provided in setting up internships, coming to meetings, etc.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Teachers felt that the school lacked a unified goal or mission, even one shared by the 9th grade team and the senior institute, although at one time they seemed to be moving in that direction. They found the teachers outside the program to be initially hostile, ironically, they felt, because of the effort put into trying to get the whole school involved in the program. While this situation improved, there didn't seem to be much shared vision concerning the program among the bulk of teachers at the school, nor did the administration seem to be contributing much to the shared vision. (One teacher noted that this might have been a result of administrators not being included originally.) Teachers mentioned, however, that one of the administrators indicated his interest in seeing all the 9th grade teachers working in teams next year. The teachers in the focus group did feel that the 9th grade team itself shared a common goal.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* In the early phases, there were monthly planing meetings that seemed to help build a shared sense of purpose, but these stopped. Teachers in the program decided to put their day-to-day energy into working with the students and their

parents. The biggest indication of a shared sense of purpose seemed to be teachers' descriptions of agreeing as a team about how to handle a particular student, 'the fact that we are consistent and persistent with students...that all of us together try to get a kid closer to a goal...'

*Shared Values.* Teachers described their work as 'student-centered', putting in the effort with students and their parents, and discussed ways they together held students accountable and provide them with the structure that some of them need. One teacher noted that in the beginning, when the emphasis had been on teaming the whole school, there was a feeling that all students should have certain opportunities. Nothing explicitly was said concerning shared values, however.

*Trust.* Although not much was said about trust directly by teachers in the focus group, one mentioned having some of the students baby-sit for their children. With respect to administrators, however, they mentioned that they were afraid to believe them because "the rug had been pulled out so many times, we're reluctant to stand on it and say that's gospel." Part of the problem seemed to be a lack of follow-through on the part of administrators, especially following through on the promises made by previous incumbents. Also, it was suggested that the number of players (e.g., principal, superintendent, board members) contributed to the problem as well.

*Caring.* Although caring was not much mentioned specifically, teachers expressed the feeling that they didn't receive much support from teachers outside the program or from administrators. On the other hand, they found the teachers in the program to be a strong source of support: "Not just for school, but whenever you have a bad day, whatever—including things from your personal life. If you have problems that you can't talk about, you carry it with you throughout the entire day." Some mentioned that by working as a team to help students, they seemed to be able to reach students better: "The fact that we are consistent and persistent with them, that we agree as a team, that all of us together are trying to get a kid closer to a goal, this can eventually strengthen the kid's weaknesses. Kids are aware of the process and eventually realize that teachers are trying to help. Even if initially the relationship seems adversarial, it becomes a constructive relationship." Teachers also mentioned the camaraderie that developed between classmates, and how sad some students were that some of their classmates didn't make it to graduation with them. Students showed great sensitivity when one student's mother was murdered, supporting her through it as much as they could.

*Participation.* The primary comment made with respect to participation was that parents participated quite a bit in activities connected with the program. Some suggested that programs like this one help to break down walls, encouraging parents to come in who previously may have felt intimidated or afraid to come into the school. Teachers noted a change in students' attitudes to having their parents come to the school: instead of being embarrassed, increasingly students seemed proud when their parents come in. There were hints that teachers felt that their participation in faculty meetings was unwanted, although those who defended the meetings cited them as useful sources of information.



*Communication.* One of the teachers mentioned that they were learning more about students' backgrounds, adding a new dimension to what they learned about students' performance in the classroom, and changing how they reacted to the way a student comes across in the classroom. Teachers found discipline easier to handle with the support of a team, and "problem kids" didn't seem to remain as much of a problem. If a program student acted up at school, the parents were informed about it. An important new communication phenomenon was that parents heard from teachers at times when their child was doing well. Progress reports were issued every three weeks, and students had to bring them back signed by their parents within a certain time or follow-up calls were made to the parent. The guidance counselor attended the parent meetings so that parents didn't have to come in during the day to speak with her. The more frequent communication with parents seemed to help students be more accountable and give them the structure that some needed. "They know they can't lie anymore." Teachers reported receiving frequent calls from parents; all gave out their home phone numbers. One teacher logged more than a hundred calls from parents in the current school year. In general, it was felt that CES greatly increased the amount of contact between parents and teachers compared to what went on in the rest of the school and to previous interaction patterns. Communication between teachers was thought to help identify students' trouble spots, and to help teachers coordinate assignments and know what is going on with students currently at home and in other classes. Students were clearly aware of this; one noted that "all the teachers work together so you don't have five assignments due all at once". Some students said, however, that there was little interaction between students and teachers outside of the classroom—most of their contact was formal. This was perhaps indicated by one student's comment: "It's kind of hard to think of the teacher as a person".

*Respect and Recognition.* Not much was said about respect or recognition. One teacher mentioned, though, that a student who criticized every activity in the class last year, came up this year to say that she really appreciates that class now. Also, teachers commented that while students were very well behaved by the end of the year, at the beginning they had very little respect for themselves or their teachers. One of the students in the focus group mentioned they would like more choice about whether to be in the program or not—they want to be treated like adults, able to make their own decisions.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* Teachers mentioned that students seem to relate well across cultural backgrounds, citing the cases of a Chinese girl who developed close affiliations with other girls and a Russian boy who, while not very social, did seem closest to other students in the program. They also mentioned that they felt "disabilities had brought out the best in their students"—students rallied around a boy in a wheelchair (although it wasn't clear whether this particular boy really wanted the extra attention), and made a student with a disfigurement feel comfortable hanging around them. Students noted that most students come from similar backgrounds.

*Teamwork.* Teachers expressed the desire to work more often as part of a team and have a common planning time in which they could discuss curricula and the needs of particular students. The initial effort to involve the whole school operated under the philosophy that for the program to work, the whole school had to be involved and had to be supportive of the program. This, however, was strongly resisted on the part of other staff, and so the



teachers turned their energy toward working with the parents and students. There was some indication (hope?) that teachers not initially supportive of the program may change their opinions as they saw the efforts of others bearing fruit. With respect to teamwork among program teachers, one teacher commented that they liked the teamwork—"working together to get on a kid, hold them accountable". Teachers felt that the guidance counselors had been great to work with; they provided important information to teachers on particular students.

*Affirmation.* Teachers mentioned that they get more signs of appreciation from students than are normal in high school. One mentioned receiving cards and presents, including a big bouquet of flowers. At an awards ceremony, a group of students gave each one of them a rose in appreciation for "what we've done for them". One said they'd never had as many kids come back to visit as they do now.

*Conflict Resolution.* Nothing directly was said about conflict resolution. Teachers did express the feeling that modeling rather than "proselytizing" seemed to be a less painful and more effective way to reduce antagonism toward the program and perhaps win others over to it in time. One added "Don't vote, build consensus—when you vote, it sets up winners and losers".

*Development of the New Members.* Nothing was said in the focus group about how new teachers are brought into the program.

*Links Beyond the Community.* The program seemed to have worked hard to involve parents in a number of ways, in addition to the progress reports mentioned above. The program had what it called "Good News Parents"—teachers called one parent who was responsible for calling three to four other parents to let them know about students' accomplishments and other good things the students have done. Parents were invited to come into the classrooms, do interviews, and go on trips, and they were been vital in setting up internships through giving contact names and taking on interns. Nothing was said about links beyond what might be considered the school community.

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

The overall tone of the teacher focus group seemed to suggest some investment on the part of both teachers and parents, though specific instances were mentioned only in the case of parents (e.g., taking on interns).

#### *Community Resources*

Teachers in the program seemed to have an increasing awareness of the resources parents could add to the program, both through supporting their own student and by providing opportunities such as internships to other students.

*Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

This was a relatively in-tact small-town school system, with one high school. The economy had been in a long recession, but was far from moribund. The school board was willing to go to the community and ask for higher taxes, so long as they felt certain that the changes would constitute a good long-term investment.

The original principal was a true educational leader. He viewed this as his last job before retirement, and already had enough money saved that he didn't "need" the job. He saw himself as free to lead toward better schools, and acted accordingly.

The CES effort had been led by a combination of the superintendent and a hand full of high school teachers. All were enthusiastic. The second principal was chosen in part because of his experiences with CES.

The ninth grade team was largely viewed as a success, and expansion plans were in place. Then several things went wrong, and were not addressed in ways that bolstered the CES effort. In our judgment, the fact that several things went wrong was absolutely unsurprising, and in fact, quite normal. What was unfortunate, and ultimately hobbled the intervention, was that the responses were not unambiguously supportive of CES expansion.

The school's community, in the sense of faculty, had been almost immediately divided by the CES initiative. The old-line "haves" of the school, the most senior members of the faculty, typically including department chairs, were often less than enthusiastic about the potential directions of the change. In particular, several saw the potential of moving away from a tracking system, and in particular, any movement away from a college-preparatory stream (typically taught by the most senior faculty), as potentially quite undesirable.

By contrast, the youngest, often least powerful ninth grade teachers drew pleasure from participating in a new initiative. They thought it was working. Their sense of "community" within their team was very high. But at some point they simply stopped attempting to persuade their more senior, higher grades colleagues that the teams were a good idea. In creating community in a micro-sense, the CES initiative was creating dissension in the larger school. And the first and third principals were unable or unwilling to address the subsequent problems.

The instability in the system (two superintendents , three principals plus an acting principals in five years) tended to politicize factions within the school, making consensus building around CES unlikely. When the most recent principal was hired, he was had not been informed by the board or the superintendent that the school was a CES site. The prognosis was far from favorable.

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## *Students' Days*

### *Senior Institute*

Senior Institute is a four-credit class that meets daily for periods one through four. Three teachers and approximately thirty students concentrate on thematic strands integrating English, art, humanities, and science. In addition, students tutor younger students through the Literacy Corps and interned at area businesses. In preparation for their internships, students visit businesses in the fall. In the spring, they were placed in businesses or industry for four consecutive weeks, three mornings per week, to experience service learning. The observed class is the culminating Senior Institute Essential Skills Exhibition, in which students are expected to discuss their acquisition of essential skills in the Literacy Corps, internships, creativity, communication, and science. The presentation criteria suggests that students dress up, bring visual aids, and prepare for a 15 to 25 minute presentation including questions and answers. Students are required to invite parents, two underclassmen, and a school staff member.

Senior Institute is scheduled to begin at 9:30 am, but the seniors are in a meeting. At 9:45 the meeting is adjourned and, after some bustling in the hall, students drift into the classroom. The teachers wonders aloud where the students were and whether they will be able to do everything that was planned, but doesn't seem very concerned. Class begin at 9:55. Half of the students go to the library with one of the teachers and the other half remain in the classroom. There are at most 12 students remaining.

Two students sit on a dais in front of the room and interview each other. One student interviews the other for approximately 10 minutes, then they switch roles. Students dress for the occasion, with the boys wearing ties, and some even suits, and the girls wearing dresses and makeup. The interviews are videotaped. Interviewers use notecards, but interviewees are not allowed to have prompts. Although students had been asked to invite several guests, there are few visitors. One boy's mother and three siblings and one girl's teacher from another class come.

The interviews follow a set format: first, the interviewer describes Senior Institute; second, the interviewee answers questions about the Literacy Corp.; third, the interviewee answers questions about his/her internship; finally, the two switch roles and repeat the process. Some of the interviewer's questions are consistent across interviews, and clearly scripted, and others are original and spontaneous. Students sometimes pause to consider their answers before responding, suggesting that not all questions are rehearsed. One scripted question is "Which essential skill did you use the most in your internship?" Some students, when asked that question, look at a chart of essential skills on the wall. This chart reads:

- 1) Ask meaningful questions
- 2) Justify two sides of an issue
- 3) Work cooperatively and productively in groups

- 4) Evaluate plausible solutions to problems
- 5) Demonstrate creativity through originality of thought and expression
- 6) Speak and write effectively
- 7) Communicate global awareness
- 8) Apply acquired knowledge to experiential and service learning.

One student responds to the question, "Apply acquired knowledge. I learned about plants in science class, and then worked in horticulture." For almost every question, whether scripted or spontaneous, students give thoughtful, involved answers. In response to a question about her nursing internship, Kelly describes some of the activities and elaborates on her feelings about participating. She discusses the impact of her internship on her career decisions. Some of the students bring visual aids. For example, Tim brings a picture he painted; he says that the essential skill he learned was to "express my feelings through creativity--I guess maybe something like that is on the chart." Nathan brings a book on wolves he put together for his work on the Literacy Corps.

Internship experiences are described as diverse and challenging. A student went to Pittsburgh to talk with educators about the need for the Literacy Corps, learning communication skills in the process. Another student wanted to switch plant DNA, but found that project too ambitious; instead, she documented the results of feeding plants sugar water.

All students tutored younger students as their Literacy Corps experience, but specific activities varied. Nathan worked on similes with his students, and entered their creations in the mall young writers contest.

Attention is sporadic. Some students complete the (AIR) Community Assessment questionnaire during the interviews, one student videotapes each interview, and several chat. Some of the conversations are clearly in preparation for interviews, as the students are comparing notecards. Several times, students leave the room. At the end of each interview, the students clap. At 10:41, students become especially restless. The teacher states, "You are going to stay until all the interviews are over. I'll write you passes." Despite this, seven students leave within the next three minutes. They don't go far—many stay in the hall and chat—and they return soon. Class is officially adjourned at 10:56, but students stay to compliment each other on their presentations and ask the teacher about their work and grades.

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## *School F*

### *Pennsylvania*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

The growth and development of the Comprehensive High School in the United States came about as a way to pool resources to provide a wide array of programs not affordable to small, individual secondary schools. For some time this was a viable solution to the problem of limited offerings in a diversified and specialized society. However, the downside of attempting to educate large numbers of adolescents under one roof is that these comprehensive high schools are usually impersonal places where students move from teacher to teacher and course to course without any coherence to their programs or continuity in the faculty that serve them. This, coupled with the problems created by the fracturing of the American family unit and other societal issues, means that American teenagers often feel disconnected to anything larger than themselves and/or their peers. They also find school and life in general to be a rather meaningless hodge-podge of people, places, information, and "stuff" with which they must deal without support.

One of the solutions to these problems of impersonal environments and a lack of coherence in the education of adolescents is the concept of charters—somewhat like the school-within-a-school idea—where a cohort of teachers works with a cohort of students during their high school years in a coherent program with a particular focus. According to Michelle Fine (1992), "charters"<sup>2</sup> such as these provide students with both emotional stability and intellectual engagement. Fine also states that these charters change the context from that of placing students at-risk to that of "educational communities of resilience."

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2. Note that the "charters" visited in the "at risk" study are schools within schools, (e.g., the Fine, 1992, use of the word "charters"), not the current political movement of starting whole new schools outside traditional bureaucracies.

In 1988, the Philadelphia Public Schools began the implementation of charters in their 22 comprehensive high schools. Since Philadelphia also has a system of magnet schools that historically has attracted the better students from the system, the comprehensive high schools in this district serve primarily students most at-risk. Therefore, the Philadelphia Charters provide a potential context in which to study the effects of school-community dynamics as well as other environmental support systems that likely influence the institutionalization of a program that seeks to address many of the problems related to large, urban high schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged youth.

### *Lessons from School F*

Although some efforts are being made at School F to help at-risk youth, unfortunately the lessons most evident from this site are those that highlight the problems that continue to exist in such schools. First, the level of investment in (and by) these students continues to be fairly low, as evidenced by an average daily attendance rate of 60-70% and the statistics showing that barely half of School F's students pass their required classes. Leaving aside the actual dropout rate, teachers' reporting enrollment to be 30 students in classes where only about 8 are present on a given day suggests a grievous lack of follow-up on students who miss classes. It seems that many students feel neither pressure nor incentive to attend classes on anything resembling a regular basis. Second, while teachers' ideas that classes should be thematic (allowing students to link information from various classes) is laudable, in actual practice, many teachers at School F don't seem to know how to actually structure a class in that way. Third, the idea of counseling sessions (while it remains a good approach for helping at-risk youth to deal with a myriad of problems) must be followed with thoughtfully-constructed sessions that make good use of students' time, helping students to pick up skills and handle problems, whether by means of group or more individualized settings. There is no doubt that a school like School F as it currently stands needs a lot of dedication to change the outcomes of at-risk youth; nevertheless, without such dedication and determination to change things at the school, students will not see a reason to learn to do their part in improving their school or their own outcomes. The determination would have to come from the teacher's union, from central administration, and from the school board. Not one or two of three. At the time of the visit, zero of three seemed focused on Kensington's obvious problems.

In such an environment, the "Charter" was an interesting, but far from adequate intervention.

### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

Once an all-girls' school in Philadelphia's north side, School F serves students in grades 9-12. A formerly thriving mill community of lower-middle class European immigrants, the neighborhood of School F has fallen into a state of deterioration. The textile mills have



moved to the southeastern United States and left boarded-up, empty buildings where once there were thriving businesses. The predominant business now is that conducted covertly on street corners of the neighborhood—drugs and prostitution. The “father, son, and holy-ghost” three-story townhouses are still occupied by immigrants—mostly Polish or Italian, but there are few jobs to support them in the immediate neighborhood, leaving many on pensions or welfare. This poverty stretches beyond the immediate neighborhood into those occupied by African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian immigrants. Many send their children to School F because the law requires them to do so. Most students come from families where finishing the ninth grade is the norm and where there is little encouragement for them to do more. Many of the “best and brightest” students take the subway to magnet schools.

The school building itself is a fortress against the crime that pervades the neighborhood. With only one door unlocked during the school day, visitors and students alike have a difficult time gaining entry into the facility. Once inside the very tattered building one must pass security guards who not only post themselves at this door but who also patrol the hallways throughout the day to insure the safety of teachers, students, and visitors. Few adults in the building are without walkie-talkies. Even during classes, it is not unusual to hear the faint voices of administrators and security coming from the small black box on the teacher’s desk.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

School F is of the 22 comprehensive high schools in Philadelphia to be “chartered.” With the help of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative under the leadership of Dr. Michelle Fine of the CUNY Graduate Center, the charter concept in the Philadelphia Public Schools was initially implemented in 1989. (See Fine, 1994).

School F is almost fully “chartered” with three charters and one academy. Each is described briefly below.

The Trades Charter provides four academic classes—social studies, math, science, and English—which are thematically based to provide some focus for students. During the afternoon, students are transported to “a participating skills center for lunch and their vocational courses.”

The Cities in Schools Charter serves approximately 200 students who “are repeating at least one grade level, with over-age 9th graders enrolled in Excel classes” which enable them to complete a subject they have previously taken and failed in 1/2 year. Students can also receive “nontraditional credit” for community service.

The Hospitality Charter is “designed around career exploration and hands-on experience in travel and tourism.” Students in this charter also work in community service projects and experience “internships” in the 11th grade, and “apprenticeships” in the 12th grade in hotel, restaurant, and tourism industries.

The Business Academy is the most rigorous of the programs at School F. Its purpose is "to prepare our students to succeed in obtaining and maintaining quality jobs after graduating from high school." It "can also accommodate the required course needs for students wishing to continue on to college after graduation." Although the program is "similar to the four-year state mandated program," it does require students to take several business courses as well.

### *Staff and Participants*

The staff at School F is arranged hierarchically with the Principal at the top. Under the principal are two Assistant Principals with one in charge of the Sciences Department—Science, Math, Home Economics, and Physical Education—which have one chair, and one in charge of the Humanities—Social Studies, Business, English, Music, Art, Foreign Languages, and English as a Second Language—which have one chair. Under the Humanities Chair are the Charters and Academy Coordinators.

There are about 1,100 students enrolled at School F. Of those, approximately 775 are enrolled in the three charters and the academy. The two major problems in the school appear to be those of a high absentee rate and a high drop-out rate. School records show that, on average, a ninth-grade class will begin with nearly 600-700 students and end the twelfth-grade with around 100. Although there were classrooms that were full or nearly full with ninth and tenth graders, observations in senior classes typically yielded 8-10 students present. When asked about numbers of students on the rolls in these small classes, teachers reported that the enrollments were around 30.

Of the students enrolled at School F, 43% are Hispanic; 32% are European; 17% are African; and 8% are Asian. While these students are, to some degree, integrated within their classrooms, the hallways during class changes reveal a segregation not only by skin color but by language. Many of the students at School F were either born in other countries or have parents who were and still speak either Spanish or one of several Asian languages.

### *Project Services*

The intention is that each of the charters provides a focus for the academic portion of the participants' program of instruction; courses in English, social studies, mathematics, etc. are taught with a thematic focus related to the purpose of each charter. Although this is true, teachers seem to have little notion of how to actually do this, and their instruction, for the most part, appears to be rather traditional in nature. (See, for example, Students' Days.)

In addition to the intention of having a thematic focus for integrating content areas, the schedule provides a half-hour daily for an advisory period. This half hour is to be used for counseling with students about both school and personal issues. However, one observer witnessed this time being used simply for announcements by teachers to groups of students, and then a social time for students, rather than anything really productive.

### *Resources*

The projected budget for the 1994-1995 school year was \$5,540,285, of which \$4,311,580 was money for the basic operating budget. \$478,669 came from Chapter 1 moneys for School Wide Project Status. \$750,580 came from funding for Special Education, \$63,730 for Education for Employment, \$328,520 from ESOL, and \$27,000 from Charter moneys. \$139,940 were moneys allocated for Extra Curricular Activities including athletics, music, drama, debate, and other activities. Other funding was to come from ESOP/LEP, Career Development, and Special Education. (See Appendix A - Overview of Programs and Budgets for School F.)

### *Project Outcomes*

The school district report on the percentage of School F students passing their four "major" subjects for the February, 1994 report period indicates that, of a total of 1088 students in grades 9-12, 51.9% passed English; 51.2% passed social studies; 50.5% passed math, and 57.4% passed science. (See Appendix B - Percentage of Students Passing "Major" Subjects at School F.) As might be expected because of the population of students enrolled in the Business Academy, its scores tended to be better than the other charters. And, students enrolled in charters tended to pass more frequently than those not enrolled in charters.

Average daily attendance rates indicate an overall attendance rate of 70.3%. Ninth graders averaged 63.2%; tenth graders averaged 71%; eleventh graders averaged 80.3%, and twelfth graders averaged 70.3%. Students enrolled in the four charters tended to have higher attendance rates than those not enrolled.

### *Overall Impressions*

Both the School F neighborhood and the high school are in a serious state of decay. The school building itself is like something from Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*. Walking through the halls, one wonders why Americans send their children to places that are in such a shambles physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The building is in need of repair and refurbishing. The outside shows graffiti, the inside peeling paint and cracked plaster. There are many nooks and crannies in the building that make one feel unsafe. Perhaps one of the most telling pieces of evidence is the trophy case in the main hallway outside the office. Most of the awards were dated during the 1960s and 1970s. There is an award plaque with medallions from 1985-1990. However, for the most part, a time-warp seems have occurred in the participation in extra-curricular activities.

The instructional materials in classrooms are tattered and scarce. Classrooms are mostly nearly empty and/or chaotic. And, although teachers with whom we spoke painted a picture of a vital academic setting striving to provide the kind of program described by Michelle Fine, there was little to indicate either the emotional security she calls for or the intellectually-enriched program she describes.

School F appears to be a dead-end for both faculty and students. Students indicated that they are ashamed to tell anyone they go to School F because it shows that they either messed up at one of the magnets and got sent back to their neighborhood school or that no one cared enough to enter their names into the magnet lottery. Either way, it is an embarrassment to them.

Even just at the walk-around the halls level, School F seems to lack many of the correlates of effective schools; it seems to be failing miserably at providing its students with the real academic and emotional supports they need and deserve.

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### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

#### *1. High Reliability requires*

Shared Clarity regarding Core Goals.

School F had broken into four "Charters" and one "Academy" in an effort to create smaller, more workable educational units. At least one, but almost certainly not all of the "charters" had achieved clarity regarding Core Goals. The administration's and faculty's inability to cross this first bridge probably doomed all related efforts at this particular reform.

#### *2. A perception, held by the public and all of the employees, that failure by the organization in its core task(s) would be disastrous.*

The public perception, and, in fact, the perception of many of the staff, was that failure of the school was a simple fact of life. Something to be survive and work around. Many staff seemed too burned out to even point fingers. The primary goal among many seemed to be to survive until retirement.

Note that this is not the "fault" of the program, but the program had been unable to overcome the problem at School F.

While School F and its replicate shared a few positive and several negative characteristics, School F's faculty's and administration's inability to cohere around student-based goals and around the need to guarantee student success constituted a school-specific second step toward failed reform.

#### *3. High Reliability Organizations are alert to surprises or lapses.*

(Small failures can cascade into major failures, and hence are monitored carefully.) How?

Lapses were continuous, "cascades of significant failures" were assumed.

**4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve it's Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:**

- Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),
- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

Not at School F. Data from anything other than the district's management information system seemed virtually unobtainable and utterly suspect in the eyes of diverse employees at the school. The school Two Year Summary indicated that in 9th grade the only one of four major academic areas in which over 50% of ninth graders had receiving passing course credit in either of the two previous years was Social Studies, in which 50.5% passed in one of two years. During 1992 and 1993, of over 1,200 students attending the school each year, exactly 27 and 21 students even took the College Board Test (SAT).

High Reliability Organizations MUST rely on individual professional judgment, regardless of the person's position or rank. Therefore:

**5.HROs recruit extensively.**

Student enrollments at the school and in the district were dropping. The staff was shrinking, largely through retirements. The entire district, one of America's largest, had not hired a high school English teacher in over 10 years. When a position came open, union-rule-based transfers were the rule.

**6.HROs train and retrain constantly.**

The Charter program had brought some staff development. It was hardly constant. This faculty and school needed a great deal of focused staff development, and it wasn't getting it.

**7.HROs take performance evaluation seriously.**

Not at this school. Not for teachers, not for students. No.

**8.HROs engage in mutual monitoring (administrators and line staff) without counter-productive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.**

No. The isolation of individual adults and students could almost be felt in the air. In a context where individual psychological survival seemed to be up for grabs hourly, mutual monitoring would have been almost unbelievably threatening, and clearly not the place to start.

Because the flight of time is the enemy of reliability:

**9. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.**

Procedures were standardized to the extent that a strongly unionized faculty were willing to follow them. The freshman class here was perennially four to fifteen times the size of the graduating class (40 graduates in '92, 26 in '93), over a fifth of the students were assigned to Special Education, for two consecutive years, average daily attendance was 61%, and no one seemed alarmed. Very little was being done to make the charters "work." (For at least moderate contrast, see the replication site.) The school felt a few inches from anarchy, every hour, every day.

**10. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs, honor the flaw-finders, and support the nomination and validation of changes in inadequate procedures.**

Systems were malfunctioning every hour, every day. At its best, the school was providing a type of triage that no medical professional would condone. They were providing a service. If you thrived, good. If not, so be it. Less than 20% of the students survived to graduation. Many of the more motivated or academically able students took the nearby subway to other (magnet or private) high schools in the system.

**11. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize and honor collegial decision making, regardless of rank.**

Borderline chaos. Again, the replicate, for all of its problems, provided a much more educationally defensible alternative.

**12. In HROs, key equipment is available and maintained in the highest working order.**

No. Even the contrast in maintenance with the replicate was stark. Getting almost anything to work here was a challenge.

**13. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.**

There was very little evidence that anyone at the central administration was doing anything to help support or improve this clearly highly-needy school. The district was publishing annual School Profiles that indicated the extent to which the school was being allowed to hemorrhage very badly. The final evidence to suggest that the district was willfully out of touch with the school was that the district nominated this site for our study of exemplary programs serving at risk students.

**14. In HROs, short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.**

No. This school was serving a kind of local expediency. The faculty were tenured in, and it would be hard to get them out of the system, so they were being allowed to stay at School F until they retired. The fact that the school was clearly failing a huge percentage of its students did not seem to be a matter of great concern, either to the school or the central administration.



"Fixing School F" was going to be one very tough journey. The faculty was aging, the community's economy was virtually barren. Although 56% of the student body was white, Kozol's Savage inequalities could have been written at School F. It is understandable that not a lot of people were volunteering for the task of "fixing" the school. Certainly no one could do it alone, and cadres of reformers weren't exactly lining up for the job. Neither the union nor the central administration seemed interested in focusing on School F. To that extent, the school's problems were understandable.

Yet, what is public schooling for? What is central (and school site) administration for, if not fixing School F? What are professional unions for, if not maintaining professional standards?

The students we interviewed wanted to be successful. They understood the relationship in modern America between academic success and long-term financial success.

### *Summary*

A very sad place. An embarrassment to American education. It was often hard to blame specific staff, but it was also hard to give a lot of credit to anyone. The Charter program probably was the best thing that had happened to the school in years, but by itself the Chartering was far from enough to right this badly listing ship.

The contrast with the replicate was clear. The other school was much less chaotic, the principal was all around the school, and knew the names of most students. The charters had clear shape and at least two of the charters/academies at the replicate had clear purposes and senses of mission. Outcome measures indicated gradual progress at the replicate, vs. continued deterioration at this school.

The failure at School F could not be laid at the feet of the "Charter Schools" program, but nor had the program proven a strong enough lever to "fix" the school. Certainly, any other "program," receiving no more control over staffing and staff development, would have been extraordinarily hard pressed to "fix" School F.

### *A footnote on School F and the replication site*

The At Risk study's sampling frame began with several considerations, not all of which could be maximized in a finite time frame and on a moderate budget. Our first consideration was to select schools that had clear, multi-year evidence of positive outcomes, verified by researchers in whom we had confidence. As a practical matter, this criterion leaned strongly toward highly successful sites that had been involved in prior research focused on at risk students and conducted by Johns Hopkins University's Center for the Social Organization of Schools, and by the American Institutes for Research.

A second criteria was for a mixture of highly successful elementary, secondary, and "magnet" or "alternative" schools. Of the three categories, we had by far the greatest challenge filling the "highly successful secondary schools serving large numbers of students placed at risk" category. The very fact that such sites are relatively rare may be instructive.

Because we were impressed with Michelle Fine's work with charter schools, we asked her to nominate schools. Dr. Fine chose to ask a large city's administration to nominate sites. We asked persons at central administration to nominate high-implementation, non-magnet, culturally diverse success stories. The administrators appear to have focused on the non-magnet, culturally diverse requirements. They later told us that several of the charter schools projects were much higher implementation sites than those to which we were sent. Unfortunately, by the time this clarification had been achieved, the fieldwork phase of the at risk study was over.

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### *Analysis of Community*

#### *Results from a teacher focus group*

*Overview.* Teachers and students sometimes have very different things to say about the strength of community dimensions at a school; unfortunately, however, for School F we have only the voices of the teachers. Teachers at School F who participated in the focus group did however feel that relationships between students and teachers at this school are generally good. As one teacher put it, "I work with the kids, trying to figure out what they need, and where they stand, and where they're going. So they get to know me through that, and in the classroom, I think it makes for a pretty good relationship." Another mentioned how when they went to a buffet restaurant on a trip, the students wanted to serve their teachers, to have them try things they liked. The teacher felt that it made the students proud to be able to do this. She also noted that their students' behavior made a very good impression on the restaurant's management.

Teachers talked a fair amount about how well behaved the children are, and they seem to feel that the children generally get along well with each other. "When I go on trips I'm always amazed—they're so well behaved... I'm so proud of them... I think they get along very well." While teachers noted that students separate somewhat into their different ethnic groups, they seemed to feel that students still get along well across ethnic groups.

A few teachers, however, hinted at tension stemming from the increased (and required) ethnic diversity of the staff; although their remarks were not specific, it seems that this is one area that should be worked on at School F. As far as relations between teachers and other staff members, one teacher said, "I think the relations are very good between the teachers and the people who work here." Others described sharing knowledge about particular students among themselves, and how the difficult circumstances at this school seems to bring people together. One spoke about how she herself gets along with the administration and the example the administration sets for teachers, security people, and so on. In her words, "I get along well with the administration... Those people who might be, when they first walk in the door, a little conservative and a little, kind of, toe the line, they get the informal message very quickly, from the top down, about what her philosophy about kids is. And you can see over the years them tempering the way they work with the children. I... think of people like security... They very quickly get the fever that it's not quite done that way here. That we work in terms of trying to understand students..."

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Not much was said suggesting that teachers hold a shared vision. Some feel that an attitude of giving children the support they need pervades the school. Some suggested that they would like to see the children becoming more caring toward each other. One teacher, perhaps suggesting the need to develop a shared vision, said, "...We got to work to make sure that [the charters don't split us up], because the bottom line is that the charters do benefit the kids, and if that is true, then we as a staff have got to figure out how we are going to be a community—to support that."

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Although teachers did not say much about a shared sense of purpose, one teacher made a somewhat-related comment. The teacher noted that for students who have to repeat a year, teachers try to present things differently. They structure the work as a review course so that students can do it in half the time. "We can say to the students, '...If you do everything you're supposed to do, and you pass, you can get to the 10th grade by February, and hopefully to 11th grade by the end of the year.' And we work with them as much as we can to help them achieve that goal so they can get back on track." A teacher commented, "For special ed students, one thing that's always been very important is normalization; that is, helping our students to feel that the instruction they're getting is not... so inferior... So we try to integrate as much as possible..."

*Shared Values.* Teachers did not say anything explicitly about shared values during the course of the focus group. One did mention "how [she feels] morally" coming into a class discussion of a recent crime that occurred in the neighborhood. In general, what comments were made suggest that this is an area that could be developed at School F.

*Trust.* Teachers generally seem to feel that they and their students trust each other, though such trust has not always been present between teachers. A teacher explained that one teacher was transferred out of the school and now the school is much happier. "You don't have to be afraid to do or not to do something. He was the type of person who would report you or instigate things... [Now] you don't have to look over your shoulder..."

Concerning the presence of trust in the classroom, one teacher said, "The other thing I stress in the classroom is trust. The students know I trust them..." Another added, "I show my kids a lot of love and respect and trust, and I always get it back from them." She noted that she feels able to introduce new things, or change the set-up of the class, and it works fine. One teacher said, "When I tell people that I have no fear teaching in this building, or walking down the fire tower, or in the parking lot, a lot of people who are not familiar with the school or the neighborhood are very surprised. You hear things about School F, and you think the worst..." Another, however, asked why many teachers at School F seem insecure about innovating to make their class better. "Why then, don't more of the staff attempt and really jump both feet into non-traditional teaching techniques? Because if you think about it, if you've got a student body that's generally pretty cooperative, as a whole, a pretty friendly group of kids, a warm group of kids—that's the word I would use—then why do so many of us cling to traditional teaching methods...?" Another teacher suggested that perhaps it's due to pressure to cover certain material.

*Caring.* As noted above, one teacher said, "I show my kids a lot of love..." feeling that students give it back to her as well. Another said, "Our students are very close to us..." Successful teachers, some felt, could be characterized by the closeness of their interaction with students. "In order to be an effective teacher at School F, you've got to be a lot more than a teacher; you have to be part teacher, part parent, part social worker, part priest, part psychologist. The students who come here generally need a lot of support, and they get it from a number of people here. That's what the core of the success is." A teacher noted, however, that "They're not nearly as kind to each other as I would like them to [be]..." Another teacher added a second important ingredient, "We also give each other a great deal of support." Others confirmed this: "I came brand new last year, and I couldn't have asked for a warmer reception, a warmer feeling of welcome.... I was able to joke with them..."

*Participation.* Teachers in the focus group did not bring up the level of participation at School F.

*Communication.* One teacher said of her class, "It's not a content-bound class. Today we had to discuss the very tragic incident in the neighborhood where the priest was beaten up for attempting to thwart a car stealing. That was very much on the minds of my 9th graders... In dealing with them on that issue, I learned some new information about them, and I think they learned new information about me. They saw a different side of me. They... got a little more of an insight into how I feel morally, because I had to bring some of my moral feelings into that conversation..." Teachers also commented that students say "Hi!" a lot to each other in the halls.

With respect to communication among teachers, opinions seemed to vary. Some felt able to share their experience and knowledge of students. Though one teacher felt "...we communicate very well amongst ourselves..." one teacher said, "We owe it to the kids to communicate with one another. Because if we don't communicate with one another, in the long run, they're the losers too... I think we need to overcome those things, and I think we've done a good attempt at doing that... They pick it up immediately." This need to focus on communication is especially important in light of a somewhat weak incorporation of diversity among the faculty.

*Respect and Recognition.* A few teachers mentioned that they show their students respect and always gets it back. However, as far as students' ways of interacting with each other, "...They don't even realize they're not treating each other with respect." The teacher added, "But I also find that they're very conscious of—they want to be treated with respect, and that's a big word for them... but they don't really show it to others. And I try to teach them that respect is a two-way street. And, I find that I spend a lot of time stopping and addressing different behaviors that I find disturbing..." She ended, "[I feel they respect me] because I show them a great degree of respect..." Another felt that affirming students' accomplishments helps students to get the "sense that I respect them..."

*Incorporation of Diversity.* As noted above, a local policy of "force transfers" to redistribute teachers according to ethnicity was felt by one teacher to have lessened the cohesiveness of the teaching staff. Another teacher stated in response, "I, on the other

hand, welcome the diversity, and feel that we've got to really figure out effective ways to live in the diversity, and I don't think we've done that yet." Though not much discussed, these comments suggest that diversity among the teaching staff at School F has not yet been well incorporated; this seems to be an important area for the school to work on.

A teacher involved in outreach commented that the dire economic situation of the neighborhood around School F has contributed to a situation where the people in the surrounding community "just can't see the goodness of the school... it gets translated racially... They see the school as those minority kids mostly sitting in the school, sitting in this slowly decreasing white neighborhood..."

As far as the students go, teachers generally seemed to feel that while students are not hostile to each other based on ethnicity, they tend to separate into groups by it. A teacher commented that they are bothered by this and try to make seating assignments so as to lessen it.

As at other schools in the study, ethnicity affects student friendships and relationships in part through students' parents' attitudes toward other ethnic groups and interethnic relationships. Divisions along ethnic lines are in some cases encouraged and reinforced by parents. "One of the things that I have noticed, particularly in the last few years, is that in school many of these students, particularly the white students, are very friendly with Puerto Rican and black students, and they hide the degree of their friendship with non-white students from their families. Some of the girls date Puerto Rican or black students, or they'll have Puerto Rican or black girlfriends, and you see it's very natural for young people to borrow from different cultures, particularly when their friends are students from different cultures... Their families are not as tolerant of their relationships outside of their race as the students themselves are, and that sometimes poses a problem. [I mean] I saw... the degree to which that can be a problem last year when I was senior co-sponsor—prom time. Some girls had to scramble at the last minute to find another date because parents didn't want them to take the person that they were actually dating. Or, they came to the prom and met the person that they were actually going with at the prom... And then they go home and split up again."

*Teamwork.* Some teachers seemed to feel that cooperative learning is valuable. "We've found that to be important—because of the language, and it's supportive, and that's what's needed in my classroom." Another said, "I find that a more traditionally-structured atmosphere works for me. I do incorporate some cooperative learning, but only sometimes in some classes when I get the sense it will work..." One described an overnight trip that one of the charters took: "That, I really think, gets the students to know you, and you get to know the students a lot more through this thing. The kids are always friendly; they help one another, and the idea is to build teams, and teammanship, and confidence. The whole idea of going is to develop a sense of a group... The kids all pitch in..." Though another added too much red tape impedes these sorts of trips, one commented, "The kids love the trips, and they love to be with the teachers out of the classroom."

Teachers seemed to feel positively toward the use of teams. "One of the advantages of the team is that... we've been able to identify problems and to address those, to marshal resources, both within and outside of the school..." "Our charter works very much as a



team, all the way around, regardless of the subject that is taught. And we communicate very well amongst ourselves. We collaborate on things having to do with instruction, as well as on... personal issues regarding students. There doesn't seem to be a lot of ego. People don't seem to need to own an idea in order to buy into it..." "We work with many difficulties, and I think that... it just makes the people naturally closer... [They need each other more]..."

*Affirmation.* One teacher stressed about her own teaching, "Whether they're working together or individually, I give a great deal of individual, one-on-one attention. I go around and work with them at their desks, and I give them a lot of encouragement no matter what. Just the smallest accomplishment I try to praise, and I find they respond very well to that. I think because of that they sense that I respect them..."

*Conflict Resolution.* Not much was said about conflict resolution at School F. A teacher remarked about her students, "When an incident occurs, I like to stop and say, 'That really wasn't right—why did you say that?' I try to somehow smooth it over, but they're oblivious to it—they don't even realize they're not treating each other with respect..."

*Development of the New Members.* One of the teachers in the focus group noted that the business classroom is set up to be like a business: Students are expected to act like adults in a business environment, and their grades are based in part on the degree to which they act as leaders helping others to get their work done. "Their grade is based on what they learn and how much they're able to help other people, because the businesses stress the need to work together. So we tell the students, 'If you know it and learn everything, it's a B. If you can get up and help someone else, it's an A.' And plus, they learn it best by teaching it to someone else. That's the atmosphere."

Teachers seem to be good at helping out teachers new to the school. "I think one of the key questions is how much reaching out people do. I've always been one who tends to go grab the new person... It's not a kind of stand off where I'm going to wait to see who's going to say something to me first, and then I'll respond to that person." A new teacher said of her first year at School F, "Everybody seemed so willing to help me; I felt like they made me one of them right away..."

*Links Beyond the Community.* Although not currently happening, teachers mentioned that the world history class used to be in contact with the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, who would help them through reading assistance, class speakers, and field trips. Also mentioned was that the special education teacher in the hospitality charter works with the home economics and science teachers, along with people from the community (for example, from the poison control center) in creating an interdisciplinary program. Sadly, however, one teacher noted of the relationship of the school to the local neighborhood, "...Outreach... is a struggle, because these folk in this neighborhood, are plagued with such dire economic struggles and survival issues that they just can't see the goodness of the school..." This teacher's comments suggest a need for the school to focus more on outreach, especially on breaking down European-American neighbors' stereotypes about other groups and about integrated neighborhoods and schools.



### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Teachers said that some of the teachers spend time with the kids during lunch or after school. They explained that they alternate their release periods—while not apparently investing much extra time in students, at least they have scheduled classes so as to make it easier for students to get extra attention. A teacher explained how it works: "Any lunch period they can come up and do work or ask us to help them do work. But... it's not Greg giving up lunch; it's a release period so he's not teaching a class but he is there if people need help." On the other hand, "Most of us would go out of our way for another teacher in the school."

### *Community Resources*

As noted above, one of the teachers mentioned that the use of teams has itself helped to marshal resources for helping particular students. Still, teachers' comments suggest a need to further build School F's resource base, in part through building the cohesiveness of the staff. Furthermore, the horrible economic condition of the neighborhood around School F clearly has a negative impact on the financial and psychological resources available to the school.

### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

The charter structure of School F might be expected to affect the sense of community among staff and students. However, as students moved through their classes within a charter, there was little evidence of "charter-ness" among either staff or students. All the observed classes were taught by teachers working in isolation, using idiosyncratic methods; there were no common themes that ran through the different curriculum areas and no evidence that teachers had planned lessons or units jointly. Several teachers that were observed were particularly ineffective in their dealings and instructional efforts with students; one teacher actually took the opportunity to report that she had been transferred to the school against her will.

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting School F, a student was followed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe a typical day in the lives of a student, whom we will call "Cas."

#### *A Day with Cas*

Cas is a twelfth grader at School F in Philadelphia. She is enrolled in the Cities in Schools Charter there. Although she has the features of an African-American, Cas is Puerto Rican by birth. She is a small young woman barely five feet tall. She wears flannel-lined blue jeans, black leather sneakers, white crew socks, and a gray sweatshirt. She has short, chin-

length hair turned under page-boy style. She wears large earrings with her name written in them—many of the girls here wear them. She wears no make-up. Cas greets friends, all Hispanic, in the hallways in Spanish and hugs and kisses them. She smiles at both peers and teachers as she moves through the morning at School F.

Cas tells me that her parents want to return to Puerto Rico and that they want her to return with them. She has visited relatives there and thinks that would be okay. She also tells me that she does community service as part of the CIS program. She laughs slightly and looks sheepish as she tells this.

Although she is mostly friendly and willing to talk with the observer, Cas is guarded about what she will tell her. For example, during advising period, a boy left the auditorium, returning 10-15 minutes later clearly high on some sort of speed. Cas and her girlfriend who are sitting with the observer, say, "Oh, he's high." But, when asked if drugs are easily obtained at School F, they looked sheepish and shrug, but will not answer beyond that.

In class, Cas is more reserved than when with her friends. She appears to have missed some days prior to this observation and is somewhat lost. However, she gives the appearance of following along even though she obviously has trouble answering questions posed by her teachers. Cas wants to graduate from School F and to go on to college.

When asked whether she likes going to school here, Cas says she has no choice. She won't go to some of the other schools she might choose because there are fights and other problems at those schools.

The first class of the day is English. The room is a large typical classroom in an old school building. One wall is lined with huge, paned windows, one is covered with blackboards, one is lined with shelves, and one has a couple of bulletin boards that from a decorative point of view are not particularly attractive. The English teacher is a middle-aged man who is a native of Pennsylvania but who graduated from a small private college in Virginia. He apologizes to me for the lesson which consists of the students reading aloud from "A Tale of Two Cities", but says that he has only one class set of the book, and so it must be shared by all of his students. Although there are 30 or so desks in the room, there are only a handful of students present. The absentee rate at School F is phenomenal.

At 7:47, the bell rings, and students begin writing in their journals about the subject the teacher has written on the board: "What do you like and/or dislike about autumn?" Cas sits in back of the room. There are 33 desks in the room, but there are only about 5 students, with more boys than girls. A P. E. teacher brings 5 more students into the room. Apparently their teacher is absent today, and they need supervision. The teacher, Mr. B., is doing administrative stuff in front of the room. Students wander in and out looking for lost keys, returning books, and so on.

At 5 minutes to 8:00, Mr. B. goes to the back section of the room where the P. E. students are seated. He asks them whether they need something to do and asks them who their teacher is. They are working on homework. Mr. B. passes out copies of "A Tale of Two Cities" to his students and asks for a summary of the chapter they are reading. Before anyone can answer, he asks about the importance of the title of the chapter, "Knitting." "What is Madame DeFarge knitting?" A boy responds, "A code." He asks Cas, "What kind

of code?" She can't respond. She's been absent. He continues a series of questions involving both review and comprehension. "Would it be fair to put Charles Darnay on the list because of his family's involvement in the revolution?" The students say no. Mr. B. agrees. Three girls enter the room and join the P. E. class group. Then, three more join Mr. B.'s English class. Then, a boy comes to class. The students from the other teacher's class are listening to Mr. B. and his English students as they discuss "A Tale of Two Cities". Listening to the story one begins to realize that some stories really are classics. This novel seems to have some real relevance to the lives of young people growing up in North Philadelphia where jobs are scarce and life appears to be pretty dismal. The students in this class seem to see the relevance, even though Mr. B. doesn't discuss it (at least not during this observation).

At 8:00, the class finishes summarizing the chapter to the point where they had stopped. Cas appears to be paying attention. She is reading in the book while Mr. B. summarizes. "Why do you think DeFarge says it's good for the mender of roads to see how the common man lives?" He asks Cas, who does not respond. With barely any wait-time, he goes to another student. She doesn't answer either. He continues probing by asking related questions. Finally, a boy responds that "He (the mender of roads) will then be on their (the common man's) side." Mr. B. reads aloud the passage about the mender of roads, while the students follow along. Mr. B. reads a bit then stops to talk about the passage to be sure the kids understand what is going on.

Mr. B. continues reading a segment and stopping to ask questions about it. It's now about 5 minutes after 8:00. Cas continues following along in her book. The other students, too, are following along, except for one boy who seems to be listening to Mr. B. although he doesn't follow in his book. The kids from the P. E. class are quietly listening or daydreaming. Another boy with the P. E. class enters the room at 8:11. He hands Mr. B. a pass. The kids pay no attention to the entry. Mr. B. asks, "Who would like to read? I've had enough." He asks a girl if she would like to read. She nods and begins reading. He casually sits on a chair with his back turned to the front. He explains what she has read and then calls on another girl who reads. The students take turns reading. Mr. B. goes down the row in order, calling on students to read in turn. Many of the students have Hispanic accents. The reading and questioning continues.

At 8:22, Mr. B. calls on Cas to read. She reads quite well to begin, and then falters slightly. She finishes the chapter. Mr. B. makes the decision to continue in the 12 minutes left in class. He asks whether anyone has any questions. There is no response. Mr. B. asks, "Okay, so everybody's cool on it?" He signals for another student to read aloud. An Asian boy begins reading.

The class continues reading past 8:30, starting a new chapter, "Eight Years." A boy from the other class begins snoring. Another boy in Mr. B.'s class reads. Mr. B. asks questions about what they have read. Cas is looking back through her journal. She makes some corrections.

At 8:35, Mr. B. begins to wrap up the class. He says that they will have a quiz on the book tomorrow. He begins reviewing. He asks, "What year did this take place?" Cas is not attending to the review. She is writing in her journal. Mr. B. says that this is one of the test

questions. He says, "If you were paying attention it'll be easy. Any other questions? How about characters? Who are the main characters? That's not a question on the quiz." And, so it goes. A couple of minutes later, the students pass their copies of "A Tale of Two Cities" to the front of the rows. At 8:40, the bell rings to dismiss the class.

We walk to P. E. around the corner and up the stairs from English. Cas goes to the locker room to change. The observer goes to sit on a bench in the back of the gym. Students stroll in. Several girls sit on the bench too. As kids are dressed out, they wander out into the gym. The gym is a typical old gym. A teacher opens the equipment closet. Several boys get basketballs and begin playing. The girls have seated themselves on benches. Some boys join the girls on the benches and watch the other boys playing.

A male teacher tells the observer that he is substituting. He is the retired Athletic Director, but there are several teachers absent today and his help was needed. Cas has been standing at the end of the gym watching the boys play basketball. At 8:51, a whistle blows to signal time to stop basketball. The female teacher tells the kids to put away the balls and take their spots. They do. Girls and boys who have not been playing "take their spots," their positions in lines for exercise drills. There are kids who do not interact with anyone. Cas has a spot at the front of a line. She takes her arms out of the sleeves of her tee-shirt and holds herself. She and the other students are sitting on the floor during roll call.

The students begin exercising at about 9:02. First they do jumping jacks, and then they jog around the gym. Many of them walk. Cas is walking and talking with two other girls. One is European-American, and the other is probably Hispanic-American. The students gather in the center of the gym. The female teacher says that since there are so many people here today, some of them may go to the fitness center to work out. A group of guys lines up to go to the fitness center with the retired Athletic Director. The other teacher and a boy get the volleyball net. Cas is with some girls; she talks and laughs with them.

The students are noisy. The boys are volleying to each other. The teacher blows her whistle. She kneels and says, "I cannot deal with chaos. You must learn to follow directions." The students get quiet. "We'll practice sets," says the teacher. Two groups of boys and two of girls are setting up the ball to each other. Cas is with the larger group of girls. As a ball suddenly comes the way of the visiting researcher, she puts her computer away.

The next "class" is "Advisory." It lasts for a half hour and is a homeroom of sorts. The observer accompanies Cas to the auditorium where all the seniors (about 80 students should be here) come to meet with a teacher/advisor. There are four teachers, each of whom has responsibility for 1/4 of the senior class. The teachers appear to do little besides take attendance and make announcements to the students. The remainder of the time is spent with the kids chatting with each other and, to a certain degree, to the teachers, jamming and dancing to music from boom boxes, and basically cutting up with each other. Some clubs meet during this period, and some of the students leave to attend club meetings. One boy who is particularly gregarious leaves and returns 10-15 minutes later very "wound up." Cas and a friend who are sitting with the researcher observe that he's "high." He runs around the auditorium nonstop, jumping up on the stage turning flips and cartwheels, his face turning redder and redder (he's an African-American boy); he keeps

moving very fast around and around the auditorium. The observer begins to fear that he will explode! Not one teacher says anything to him or even acknowledges his presence in the room, much less asks him to calm down. In short, the advisory period is a complete waste of a good 30 minutes of possible instructional time.

The next class of the day is math. The math classroom is stunningly like the English classroom in terms of both layout and decor. Colorless—well, pale gray—with wood floors and many more desks than kids to fill them. There are approximately 30 desks in the room, but only about 8 students. The observer asks the teacher how many students are on his roll for this period. He says, "30." He says that the attendance this day is pretty typical after the first day or so of school. Kids rotate in and out, returning to school for a day or so to insure that they are not dropped from the roll, but not coming regularly enough to allow teachers to present a coherent program of instruction to any one of them.

At 10:50 the teacher begins class by showing students examples of comparing and ordering fractions using greater than, less than, and equal signs. On the board is TOPIC - To compare and order fractions using greater, less, and equal. Ex.:  $3/5 > 1/5$ .  $2-2/3 < 4-3/4$ . The teacher says, "Sometimes no calculations are needed because any 8 year could figure out the answer."

The teacher continues at 10:55 by showing students two ways to figure out whether a number is  $<$ ,  $>$ , or  $=$ : you can divide out decimals or find the common denominator. On the board he writes: "Method 1 - change to decimals," and shows his work on  $2\ 5/8$ : 5 divided by 8 = .625, and also works out  $2\ 3/4$  by showing how to divide 3 by 4. He then writes on the board, "Method 2 - find common denominator -  $2-5/8$ ,  $2-3/4$ ,  $6/8$ .  $2-5/8 < 2-6/8$ ."

The teacher continues showing students how to do problems. Then he assigns problems 1-5 on page 84. The students are attentive. Cas sits by the window at the front of the row. There is a boy beside her. Other students sit in other areas of the room.

At 11:00 the teacher finishes making assignment and sits at his desk while the kids work problems. He says that they will talk about the problems in about 5 minutes. A boy gets up to get a book that is on a desk on the side of the room. He returns to his desk and begins working the problems. The teacher approaches the visiting researcher and reminds her that we had met informally yesterday at lunch. He hands her the text and says that this is "Applied Math." It's a remedial class designed primarily for 10th graders. The text is written on the 8th grade level.

At 11:05 the teacher begins going over the problems: 1)  $3/5 < 4/5$  and 2)  $5/4 > 5/8$ . The second one gives the students problems. The teacher puts it on the board and uses the decimal way to determine the problem, and then he uses the common denominator method. Number 3:  $3-11/12 > 2-14/15$ . The teacher asks, "Do we gotta do any math to do number 3?" The students answer, "Yea." The teacher asks, "We do?" and looks at it more closely. The kids then decide that no mathematic operations are necessary. They go on to 4 and 5:  $5-1/2$ .  $7/8 > 11/16$

At 10 after 11:00 the teacher assigns p.85, 14-26 and number 32. Cas gets a restroom pass but doesn't leave immediately. She finishes working a problem and then leaves. The teacher hands back papers to the students and talks to them individually as he does so. Sometimes it's about the paper and sometimes it's about the problems they're working on.

At 11:22, the students are working at seats on the problems assigned. The teacher goes to help one boy at his desk. A girl comes into the room. The teacher talks to her about her absence and tardiness. He sends her out.



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## *School G*

### *Midwestern United States*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

In *Savage Inequalities* (1991), Jonathon Kozol vividly describes the disparities that exist in the quality of education received by American children of poverty and those born into affluence. Although ours professes to be an egalitarian society, Kozol points out that children in American schools do not have equal access to a high quality of educational opportunities. Children in communities with low tax bases suffer inadequate schooling, spending their days in substandard learning environments and being taught a watered down curriculum, usually by the weakest teachers using inadequate books and materials. Children in communities with high tax bases, on the other hand, enjoy the benefits of beautiful classrooms, above average teachers, rigorous and enriched curricula, and up-to-date texts and materials.

In many inner-city schools, students, teachers, and administrators feel demoralized by almost unspeakable environmental conditions and count themselves fortunate just to make it through the day without much turmoil. Teachers and administrators often work hard just to keep children of inner-city poverty and crime from exploding during the school day. These children come to school with such language deficits that teaching them basic communication skills is stressed while asking them to think about ideas is nearly ignored. Curricula are often linear in nature, initially focusing on teaching children basic communication skills such as the alphabet, reading, handwriting, spelling, and sentence and paragraph construction. When children enter school with vocabularies limited for their age and a lack of experiential knowledge, teachers' tasks are numerous and wide-ranging. This precludes any attention to critical thinking skills until the "basics" are taught. This means that children of poverty seldom are given the opportunity to explore ideas in the ways that children of affluence are.

School G School is a K-8 inner-city school on Chicago's west side. The student population consists of approximately 769 African-American children, most of whom live in the neighborhood, a neighborhood which becomes more infested with drug-related violence every day. 93.9% of the students at School G are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches. Most of these children begin school with severe language deficits that must be addressed by the school's faculty.

Prior to 1983, the school received adequate federal and state desegregation moneys to buy a multitude of programs that might help improve the basic skills the children needed to develop to function beyond the school's walls. However, the programs were simply a hodgepodge of instructional materials without real coherence and without an undergirding philosophy. In 1983, at the front of many of the reform efforts that began during the decade of the '80s, the superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, a member of the original Paideia Group, introduced the Paideia concept to the city's schools.

That fall, faculty at School G, along with three other schools in the system, began implementation of Mortimer Adler's Paideia Proposal (1982). The principal who began implementation of the proposal, Mrs. Matthew's, saw it as a way to organize the many existing programs into a coherent whole. It provides an organizational framework for those programs and the state curriculum and adds a critical thinking dimension as well (Personal communication<sup>3</sup>, May 20, 1994). We chose to visit School G because of its long involvement in the Paideia program.

The Paideia program is based on Mortimer Adler's concept of how children should be educated in a democratic society. Adler espouses the idea that all children, no matter what their abilities, are entitled to the same quality of education. That is, all children should be given "cream" rather than some being given "cream" while others are given "skim milk." The program seeks to develop all aspects of the students' cognitions: "acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual skills, and enlarged understanding of ideas and values" (Adler, 1984, p. 8). The program also makes curricular suggestions based primarily on great pieces of western literature and conceptual understandings along with three "modes of learning and teaching: didactic instruction, coaching, and Socratic seminars."

Didactic instruction is the kind of instruction currently found in most classrooms in which "teacher talk" is the focus of instruction. Adler believes that this type of instruction is most appropriate for "acquisition of knowledge" (p. 8). He describes coaching as one-on-one instruction in which the teacher/coach works with individual students to improve their skills rather than assuming that students are able to transfer general corrective statements to their own work. This kind of instruction, says Adler, is most appropriate for "development of intellectual skills" (p. 8). Coaching has been interpreted by practitioners as including peer tutoring and computer assisted instruction as well. Socratic seminars, the

3. To maintain confidentiality, personal communications cited in this text will not reference the speaker. For details, please contact the authors.

centerpiece of the program, are discussions among students and teachers based primarily on divergent questions so that a true exploration of ideas can ensue. Adler sees this kind of instruction as most appropriate for "enlarged understanding of ideas and values" (p. 8).

Adler points out that coaching and Socratic seminars are unusual in contemporary classrooms. He summarizes the three kinds of teaching on a chart with each method composing a column—thus a school that has totally embraced the Paideia concept is a "three-column" Paideia school. (See Appendix C - "Three-Column" Paideia School Illustration.)

Faculty at School G believe that the program provides the children with the opportunity not only to develop basic skills but also to develop critical thinking skills that they otherwise would probably not have the chance to develop (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). It is a way to provide these children with an education that more closely resembles that received by children in affluent college-preparatory schools than they would otherwise receive if the school had continued to use a hodgepodge of special programs designed for low-achieving children. The Paideia Proposal provides a framework for "a course of study that is general, not specialized; liberal, not vocational; humanistic, not technical" (Adler, 1984, p. 6).

The Paideia Program at School G is now eleven years old. The children's standardized test scores show no viable improvements as a result of the program. However, it appears to be inhibiting the potential rapid decline in scores seen in inner-city schools without special programs (Stringfield, 1993). The outcomes of Socratic seminars have been measured primarily by survey data obtained from students, teachers, and parents. The results range from the children's being better able to express themselves than years ago, or than might be expected, to their reading a wider variety of books. Mrs. Matthew's, who left the principalship five years ago, still describes School G as "becoming" a Paideia school.

Given that the program is still "becoming" and that it has yielded no viable, measurable outcomes, why should implementation of this particular program at this particular school be studied? The answer lies in that the faculty of the school and the members of the community believe that the program is a viable one for this population of children, and they are unwilling to give it up without working diligently to make it a successful program. This faith in the framework and basic philosophy of Paideia—that all children can learn and deserve a high quality education—in conjunction with an environment that has long supported the implementation of the program makes School G an interesting context in which to study the effects of school-community dynamics as well as other environmental support systems that influence the institutionalization of a program in a school whose constituents are virtually all at-risk.

Located in a low socioeconomic area of Chicago, School G is one of the original Paideia Schools (Adler, 1982). The school uses the writings of great authors in "Socratic Seminars" and tutorial contexts to try to ensure that all students receive a rigorous and rewarding academic experience. Not only are academic demands high, observers have described the school as an island of safety and comfort in an otherwise drug- and gun-

infested, dangerous part of Chicago. In addition to being a Paideia School, School G offers an opportunity to examine the Chicago school reforms in an "at risk" context. (Raised Standards, Supportive Climate)

### *Lessons from School G*

Several lessons can be drawn from School G. First, the context suggests that School G's efforts to increase parent involvement should be praised. Schools serving very disadvantaged populations can expect that many of students' parents may need academic help almost as much as their children. Getting parents involved in teaching and learning helps the children by increasing the amount of support they are likely to receive at home. Second, School G's participation in American National Bank's Saturday Scholar's Program helps students to gain access to additional learning opportunities and mentoring possibilities. Third, the Adler approach of using discussion to facilitate learning is no doubt valuable, and, in a certain sense, "innovative" (a sad commentary, perhaps, on what is expected of many such students).

Unfortunately, many of the lessons from School G are suggested by its shortcomings. The fourth lesson, for example, has to do with the difficulty of implementing a program that requires more from teachers without having the time and money to make sure that teachers' training is adequate to allow them to successfully and comfortably assume these new challenges. School G seems to be doing its best to implement the Paideia program, but using discussion as a means for learning implies a need for more skill than is required for administering worksheets and leading students in group recitation of answers. Implicit in Adler's approach is that teachers need to be comfortable themselves and in helping students to be comfortable with ambiguity; unlike with worksheets, there are, in many cases, 'No one right answer.' However, the overall tone of the school suggests that there often is. This leads us to the fifth lesson, which comes from the evident effect on staff and students of the principal's hierarchical, authoritarian or very top-down approach to making School G a better school. Strong leadership is important, and School G's principal has successfully obtained resources and some loyalty for the school, but much of what makes a good leader is their ability to elicit ideas and effort from others that are better than what they themselves could have come up with alone. In this respect, School G's teaching staff seem an extremely underutilized and underdeveloped resource; rather than seeing how they can think up ways and work together to overcome obstacles, teachers admitted that it is safer to keep your ideas to yourself and do what 'you're supposed to do.' Keep students in line and listen to what you are told in faculty meetings. As a result of what is expected of them, teachers at School G seem to lack that willingness to put themselves out for students and for each other that marks more exemplary schools. Sixth, and lastly for now, while it is fair to expect more from School G and other such schools, School G is a shining example of why real school reform entails changing the current school finance system and truly ending residential and school segregation. Adler's ideas that all children are entitled to the same quality of education are essentially impossible to implement given the current high degree of ethnic and income residential and school segregation, coupled with a system that finances schools in wealthy areas well and poor areas poorly.

## *Site Description*

### *Setting*

School G is a K-8 school on Chicago's west side. The three story building sits in the middle of a neighborhood made up primarily of row houses. Some of these appear cared for while others are abandoned and have broken windows which have been boarded over. In the neighborhood, there are signs admonishing residents to take care of their surroundings. There is a grayness about both the neighborhood and the exterior of the school facility. In contrast to the aged dark gray stone facades of most of the row houses in the neighborhood, a brand new, light-blue frame duplex house sits across from the school parking lot. This is low-cost housing provided by Project Bethel and the American National Bank. It was financed by these two organizations and "sold" to two families of School G students. The families earned their \$15,000 down payments through a "sweat equity" grant from the bank. They will pay off the mortgage with \$516 monthly payments for five years and own the homes (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The school has no playground; there is only a basketball goal in the parking lot which is fenced by wire. Approaching the front of the school, one is greeted by a African-American safety officer who smiles at both visitors and children; he also hugs some of the children whom he greets. Although most of the children who attend School G live in the immediate neighborhood, there are approximately 6 buses that bring from other neighborhoods children who elect the school because of its magnet Paideia program (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). Quite a few of the children who live in the neighborhood are accompanied by an adult as they walk to and from school each day. This is due to the rising gang-related crime on the streets surrounding the school. This year, a third-grader from School G was caught in the cross-fire of guns across the street from the school. Teachers, too, express uneasiness at staying late and having to drive through the neighborhood at dusk.

Once inside there is little opportunity to see the grayness of the external environment. Many windows are either frosted or curtained with opaque, drawn drapes. One of the few uncurtained windows which looks into the neighborhood instead of into the side of an adjacent building is in the teachers' lounge and has a clear view of the neighborhood store. The bright reds and whites of the paint on the front of the store are almost startling in the midst of so much gray. The lettering announces that the proprietor accepts both food stamps and WIC coupons and that he sells lottery tickets. He also sells "breakfasts" of candy and chips to School G students even though it is against school policy. Teachers and administrators are concerned because many children, 93.9% of whom are entitled to free breakfast, choose junk food instead of the school breakfast. According to one teacher, the principal periodically goes into the store and snatches out offending children. The proprietor, this teacher says, will not refuse to sell to the children because it would cut his profits (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The contrast between the exterior of the school building and the interior is surprising. Inside, the building is warm and cheerful. The halls in the new building are painted a bright yellow, while the old section has wooden trimmed windows and tile walls. The first

two floors which house grades K-5 are decorated with the children's work as well as charts showing grades students can earn and the criteria for earning them. Shelves in the stairwells display books which remain unguarded and unstolen (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

School personnel are friendly to guests and greet both them and each other warmly in the halls before the beginning of the school day. The teachers and staff use the formal addresses of Miss/Mrs. or Mr. along with the surname rather than the first names of their colleagues (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

This year, for the first time, the children wear "uniforms" of navy slacks and light blue or white shirts. This dress code has been adopted by the school to protect the children from involvement in gang-related violence that might occur if they were to dress in colors associated with any of the neighborhood gangs.

Throughout the day, the regimented movement of the children can be noticed. They are lined up for restroom breaks, for lunch, etc. Some are told to stand up straight "like little soldiers." Overall, the children's behavior is tightly controlled. They are reminded of rules in no uncertain terms (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

There does, however, seem to be a pride within the school. The day begins with the rituals of pledging allegiance to the American flag and then almost 769 African-American children, 93.9% of whom are eligible for free or reduced-priced breakfasts and lunches, in a school sitting amid a partially bombed-out neighborhood that shows few signs of relief lift their voices to sing:

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies.  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Then, a cheer is led over the public address system by a teacher. The theme of the cheer is "We may be poor, but we will always do our best. We will make no excuses for less."



*Program: Development and Implementation*

As noted above, the Paideia Program was introduced to the city's schools in 1983 by then Superintendent, Dr. H. Dr. H. was also a member of the original Paideia Group that worked with Mortimer Adler to formulate the principles set forth in the Paideia Proposal. The faculty at School G was introduced to the program that same year by their principal. The faculty agreed that the philosophy and goals of the program were appropriate for School G's student population. The plan was to implement the Paideia program in two of the city's elementary schools and in two of the high schools with the hopes that the elementary students would select the Paideia high schools following their eighth grade years. This principal left School G to take the principalship at Austin High School in the fall of 1983 and to begin the program there. The plan was that School G students would choose Austin as their high school. Unfortunately, for some reason, the Paideia program never really took off at Austin, leaving School G students without a continuation of the program for high school. [A reading of Hess's *School Restructuring, Chicago Style* reveals that in the early days of Chicago's magnet programs, before the restructuring of the school system, the magnet high schools and "selective vocational high schools" located in the ghetto neighborhoods of the city attracted "the best performing students" from their sending districts while "neighborhood high schools, like Austin High School, would receive only students from the bottom half of...already poorly performing...elementary schools, with the results that 80% of their entering ninth graders were reading below normal rates" (Hess, p. 19, 1991). It seems feasible that Austin never recovered from an already tarnished reputation as a weak school and, therefore, never attracted the students from School G that could have helped get the Paideia Program off the ground.]

In the meantime, Mrs. M.'s applied for the principalship at School G because of a personal interest in the Paideia program. She had researched the program during her master's studies and believed it to be a viable program. For further training, she was sent to St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico for eight weeks during the summer before she began her tenure as principal. The understanding was that most of the School G teachers would be attending the training, and Mrs. M.'s saw this as an opportunity to get to know the faculty and to begin working with them on developing the program for School G. To her disappointment, only one School G teacher arrived in Santa Fe—Mrs. B. who was the school's librarian for a number of years before becoming the Paideia Coordinator two years ago. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

Once Mrs. M.'s and Mrs. B. returned from Santa Fe, however, their training was still not complete. They attended, this time accompanied by most of the faculty of School G, a two week training workshop conducted by the University of Chicago. Here, the new principal and her teachers began talking about the kinds of materials they would need to implement the Paideia program at School G. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

During the first year, Mrs. M.'s established teacher seminars that were held twice a month as a way to continue the staff development begun during the two week summer workshop. She did not establish regular times for student seminars during the school week. Teachers who felt ready conducted those as they could fit them into their instructional schedules.

The Junior Great Books series served as pieces for seminars and they were duplicated for the children's use. Later, the faculty would establish School G's "Wednesday Revolution," setting aside each Wednesday morning for seminar in every classroom in the school. Mrs. M. says that if she had it all to do over again, she would use the first year entirely for staff development so that teachers would be fully trained and confident before they began conducting seminars with the children. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

In the second year of the Paideia program at School G, two important and potentially debilitating events occurred. First, the school district suffered fiscal difficulties (Hess, 1991). This appears to have had a direct impact on moneys allocated to School G. Second, Paideia advocate, Dr. Hope, left the Chicago Public Schools for employment elsewhere, also having a direct impact on the support given to School G's new program. Before Dr. Hope left, however, she brought Mortimer Adler's wife to visit School G, which would prove a very serendipitous meeting. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

The severe lack of funds to purchase materials led to some very creative remedies by Mrs. M.'s and her community. For example, one of School G's teachers wished to have copies of the book of "Job" from the Bible for her students to use as the basis of a seminar. Mrs. M.'s had no money either to purchase or copy the book. She thought about where free Bibles might be obtained. It occurred to her that she had seen Gideon Bibles in hotel rooms that were free for the taking. She called the Gideons to request Bibles for her sixth-grade teacher's class. When she was told that the Gideons would like to come to the school to pass out the Bibles and talk with the children, she knew that this could not be allowed on school grounds. Instead, the children and the Gideons met in the middle of the street in front of the school. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

In the meantime, Mrs. Adler had told her husband about the implementation of the Paideia program at School G. There was at the same time, much skepticism about whether the Paideia Proposal could work with economically disadvantaged children who are, by and large, also weak academically. Dr. Adler visited School G and was quite impressed with the work being done there. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.) He soon attended an executive seminar at the Aspen Institute where he met Chairman of Chicago's American National Bank, Mike Tobin. Adler described School G to Tobin and encouraged him to visit the school. Tobin did and soon the bank made a financial commitment of \$100,000 per year for four years to support the efforts of the school. This amount was ultimately extended for a fifth year and then reduced first to \$50,000 for several years and now to \$15,000 plus other commitments of human resources used within and on behalf of School G. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

In addition to this kind of windfall support that helped to stabilize the Paideia program at School G, the support of the community was also sought. Mrs. M.'s and her faculty emphasized parental involvement in the school. They held many events featuring the children and their work to entice the parents to visit the school and to embrace the program. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

While support for the program was building, so was the program. The faculty decided to focus on the seminar aspect of the Paideia program since it was the type of instruction that was totally new to both teachers and students. Some teachers left during those early years

because they were uncomfortable with this kind of teaching. Mrs. M.'s said that "you had to walk and talk Paideia" to stay at School G. She feels that African-American children "take to Paideia seminars like ducks to water" because it allows them to express themselves orally, an important aspect of their culture. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

After five years as principal of School G, Mrs. M.'s left to work at CANAL (Creating A New Approach to Learning), part of the restructuring of the Chicago Schools. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. E. was hired by School G's Local School Council. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

Until the 1992-93 school year, the school's main thrust in its implementation of the Paideia Program was in the areas of Socratic seminars and coaching. Staff development focused on developing teaching skills related to those two methods of instruction. However, Mrs. E., during her second year as principal, voiced concerns about the quality of didactic instruction at the school. Her main concern was that teachers were relying on worksheets completed individually by children and lessons dominated by teacher talk rather than their using a more interactive direct instruction model (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Because of this concern and interest in a direct instruction program developed at the University of Oregon, the emphasis changed in the fall of 1992. The focus became didactic instruction that year and has continued to be during the 1993-94 school year. Mrs. E. indicates that the main goal of the school and its instructional program is to have all children scoring at the 50th percentile on standardized tests in reading and mathematics. She sees the implementation of this direct instruction program with its emphases on the didactic teaching and coaching, two "columns", of the Paideia program, as a way to achieve that goal. She states other goals as being increasing attendance and parental involvement at the school. She believes that there is agreement among the faculty and the community about these goals. (Personal communication, May 20, 1994.)

The idea for implementing the direct instruction program at School G came from a group of ministers in the city who saw a Prime Time segment on the results of its use in an all-black inner-city school in Houston, Texas. The ministers and a group of administrators from the School G area schools visited the Houston school and decided they would like to try the program in ten schools in Chicago. After they contacted the University of Oregon, the home-base for Distar, Daryl Moore of U. O. approached the city's professional baseball team to ask for funding for the ten schools in this city to implement the program. The baseball team provided \$100,000 to begin the program in these ten schools. School G was one of the ten. Moneys were used to buy materials costing approximately \$3000 per classroom, to provide teachers with a \$200 stipend for time spent in training in the program, and \$14,000 to pay a consultant who came to School G four days per month September through June during the first two years of implementation. Additionally, two other consultants from the University of Oregon visited the schools periodically and were also paid from the White Sox moneys (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The principal and many staff members feel that the implementation of this "direct instruction" program has strengthened the didactic teaching done at School G. The program is actually a new-and-improved Distar program designed to improve the reading and mathematics skills of the children in a very systematic way. The principal believes that this "direct instruction" program will strengthen the Paideia program by enabling the children to become better readers who can better understand and enjoy the stories they discuss in seminar (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The efforts were originally concentrated on children in the primary grades since their reading skills were just being developed. Children in the upper grades received some remediation during the first year but not every classroom participated. Children are tested and grouped in classes according to their abilities to decode. For the first year of implementation, teachers in the upper grades who did not receive training in the summer were given children with stronger skills who did not need the program as much as others (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

During the 1993-94 school year, the program was expanded to include all grade levels and to include mathematics as well. Both faculty and students with whom we spoke seem to value the program. The children seem to like the systematic approach to instruction as well as its interactive nature (personal communication, May 19, 1994). Teachers and administrators are impressed with the improvement they detect in the children's skills. Although Mrs. E. is disappointed that they have not seen the gains she would have liked, the principal believes that teachers seem to be spending more time on task and that there are fewer discipline problems in the school because of the program (personal communication, May 20, 1994). [It is the impression of one of the researchers who has visited the school for three years prior to this study that the tone of the school has changed dramatically. It seems much more positive. Teachers use harsh reprimands less frequently than observed previously. It appears that both children and teachers know what is expected of them during the direct instruction and that teachers are praising the children more frequently than before. Also, although praise is built into the teacher's script for the program, it appears to have carried over into other situations as well.]

Mrs. E. admits that dramatic improvement in the children's standardized test scores will take time. She said, "We have to give this program time to work—even if it takes ten years to see a difference." She has plans to make several changes to improve the program. First, since the consultant who has been with the school during the first two years of implementation of the direct instruction program believes that it is time for the school to take the onus for monitoring itself, Mrs. E. has obtained funding for a coordinator for direct instruction who will be responsible for monitoring teachers' implementation of the program and for monitoring students' progress in the program (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

Second, because Mrs. E. believes that the success of the program depends on its proper implementation and that depends on individual teachers, she would like to get rid of weak teachers at the school. And, because third grade is a critical year for state testing, Mrs. E. has plans for next year to move a weak third-grade teacher to a kindergarten slot and replace her with one of the school's strongest teachers (personal communication, May 20,

1994). In addition, during the first year of implementation of the direct instruction program, the principal indicated that she had placed her better teachers with the poorer students because she felt that they needed good instruction the most (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Although the emphasis appears to have shifted from the seminar column of the Paideia Program to didactic instruction, both the principal and teachers at School G remain convinced that seminars are a very important part of what they do with the children at School G. Mrs. E. sees it as a very important way in which the curriculum is enriched for the school's students. She says that it will not be abandoned because it gives the children a forum for expressing their ideas, and that is important to both the community and the school (personal communication, May 20, 1994). The school has so far clung to maintaining the Paideia coordinator's position in the face of budget constraints and even death. (The primary responsibility of this position is to oversee the implementation of Socratic seminars and to enhance teachers' coaching skills (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).)

In the winter of 1991, the school's Paideia coordinator, Mrs. F., for whom the seminar demonstration room is named, died after a long bout with cancer. During the months prior to her death, Mrs. B., the school's librarian and the school's French teacher had picked up the bulk of Mrs. F's instructional and curricular responsibilities while the assistant principal assumed those related to administrative matters. During that time, the librarian and the French teacher both addressed the issue of making Paideia more than just a literature/reading program, and the issue of establishing a reading list that would provide a better-articulated program. They wanted to see Paideia methodology used in all content areas and to see seminar readings encompass more than just literary selections. The librarian, who helped to develop the original list of suggested seminar selections, began working on changing that list to establish a grade-specific reading list so that children do not read the same selections year after year. And, seminar day was changed from Wednesday to Thursday to accommodate the counselors who would not have the opportunity to participate in the seminars if they were held on Wednesdays (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Mrs. F's death was the single most significant event that occurred at School G during the 1991-92 school year. Mrs. F. was a long-time member of the faculty who was considered a committed teacher and stabilizing force at the school. While her illness was protracted, the faculty clearly was affected by her loss. Perhaps the best example of her importance to the faculty was the redesignation of the Mortimer Adler Seminar Room to the 'Mrs. F' Seminar Room. Upon her death, the librarian, Mrs. B., took Mrs. F's place as the Paideia Coordinator (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The principal indicated that Mrs. B. was chosen as Mrs. F's successor to maintain the stability she saw as necessary for the program due to the impact of the sudden loss of the coordinator. She reported that although Mrs. B. is neither as insightful nor as flexible as Mrs. F. (both seen as very positive qualities of the former coordinator), she does provide stability because of her tenure at the school and her experience with the program (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).



During her service as Paideia Coordinator, Mrs. B. has consistently expressed concern about the children's reading below grade level, the quality of the questions used during seminars, the lack of using novels as the basis for seminars, and the lack of variety in the analyses and interpretations of seminar selections. (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993.)

In the fall of her first full year as Paideia coordinator, Mrs. B. continued to work on improving the seminars. She completed her revision of the seminar reading list that she had begun the previous spring and scheduled selections at all grade levels into ten week segments. The scheduling was done for two reasons. First, Mrs. Brown sends them home to parents who are encouraged to help their children prepare for seminars. Second, teachers from the primary grades (K-2), intermediate grades (3-5), and upper grades (6-8) worked together for about a year and a half with consultants from the Nature of Questions program to develop good seminar questions for the selections. Teachers at grade levels continue to have common planning times and the same selections so that they are able to develop the questions together. This should result in better questions being used to stimulate seminar discussions. The focus for staff development has changed from training teachers to be better at coaching to training them to be better questioners (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Mrs. B. has not received training in the newly implemented "direct instruction" program, nor has she been involved in its implementation in any way. She sees it as the principal's project. It is interesting that the coordinator of a school-wide program would not be involved in the development of approximately 2/3 of that program (the didactic and coaching columns of Paideia) (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Instead, Mrs. B. has spent most of her time during the second year of her tenure as Paideia Coordinator performing clerical duties. She xeroxes selections that the teachers need for seminars, makes arrangements for teacher and parent seminars, and manages the seminar room's collection of books. Mrs. B. seldom works with teachers directly, either by working with them on formulating seminar questions or by monitoring their seminars in any systematic way that might be used as formative feedback for the improvement of seminars (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Next year, Mrs. B. will return to her position as school librarian and there will likely be no Paideia coordinator, per se. The district has cut funds that would normally pay for both the coordinator's and one teacher's aid for the 1994-95 school year. This cut came because the district has decided to provide less local funding to those schools that receive large sums of desegregation moneys. Mrs. E. plans to make classroom libraries in first and second grade classrooms, relieving Mrs. B. of responsibilities she might otherwise have for time with the younger children. She also plans to have an assistant principal who has primary responsibility for seventh and eighth graders work with Mrs. B. on activities related to seminars (personal communication, May 20, 1994). Mrs. B. did not describe these plans to the researchers. Her perception of what would happen with the duties she currently performs was that she might be expected to perform both these duties and those of a librarian. To which she added—"but I won't do all that" (personal communication, May 18, 1994).



### *Staff and Participants*

Since the Paideia program has been implemented throughout the school, the program staff includes all teachers in the school. The coordinator for the program has been on the School G staff for some twenty years. She became the coordinator two years ago when the previous coordinator died. The Paideia Coordinator has primary responsibility for facilitating the seminar and coaching aspects of the program (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

School G's staff is composed of approximately 50 people. There are three or four teachers in each of grades 1 through 7. There are two kindergarten teachers and one pre-school teacher. There are four for the primary grades 1 through 4 since thirty children at each of these grade levels qualify for ESEA services and their classes have only 15 children each. From fifth through seventh grades there are three teachers per grade level, each of whom has approximately 30 students. There are two eighth-grade teachers (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

In addition to teachers, there is the principal and one assistant principal (there are usually two but one left recently for a promotion). There is a director of curriculum and instruction (who deals primarily with helping to monitor the direct instruction program and has responsibility for making sure that state and local curricular mandates are met) and the Paideia coordinator (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Auxiliary personnel include a school librarian, a French teacher, a Spanish teacher, a P. E. teacher, and several special education resource teachers. There are two full-time secretaries in the main office. The school has an art teacher and a music teacher as well. Additionally, there are two computer resource teachers. One of these teachers is responsible for the math lab and one is responsible for the writing lab. There is also a safety officer stationed in the front hall during the school day. In addition to monitoring visitors to the school and the children, she has been assigned the duty of lending "uniforms" to children who "forget" to wear theirs (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

School G has approximately 769 students. The Paideia Program is an integral part of the school's total curriculum and is implemented in every classroom in the school; therefore, all children are a part of it. The population of the school is drawn primarily from the immediate neighborhood. As is typical of the west side of Chicago, the School G neighborhood is made up of a large number of day workers and "welfare mothers." Most homes are single-parent. Approximately 93.9% of the children qualify for free- or reduced-priced lunches. The students are all African-American and native English speakers (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

In addition to enrolling attendance-area students, magnet programs within schools may enroll students from outside the attendance area, if space is available, and in accordance with the racial guidelines established by the Comprehensive Student Assignment Plan of the 'City G' Schools. The School G student population, however, is 100% African-American and primarily from the immediate neighborhood. Only six buses are used to transport students from other areas of the city (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The student population at School G is fairly stable. Of any one classroom of 30 children, teachers indicate that they will lose and gain, at most, two children per year. This movement is usually the result of families moving (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). The school does, of course, graduate its eighth graders and receive a new cohort of kindergartners each year as well. The 1993 School Report Card reports that "student mobility" at School G is 33.2%. This "is based on the number of times students enroll or leave a school during the school year; students may be counted more than once." The report card also indicates that the attendance rate at School G is 90.2% and that chronic truancy is 2% with the number of chronic truants being 16. Chronic truancy is based on a count of those students "who were absent from school without valid cause for 10% or more of the last 180 school days."

As noted above, many of the children enter School G with severe language deficits that must be addressed by the school's faculty. These deficits are often a result of and certainly compounded by the home conditions in which these children find themselves. One of the children at School G this spring is one of the 19 children who received national press coverage during the 1993 Christmas season because of the squalor in which they were found by social services. The child is currently living in a foster home in the School G neighborhood. Although this is probably one of the worst cases of neglect which a child who attends School G has ever faced, it is far from an isolated incident (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

#### *Project Services*

As mentioned earlier, the focus of the school's Paideia program until the past two years has been primarily on the development of weekly seminar discussions of literature followed by a coached activity—two of Adler's "modes of teaching and learning" that were not part of the school's instructional program prior to the implementation of the Paideia Program as an organizational framework. The sessions are currently scheduled for 1 1/2 hours on Thursday morning. Teachers of students who can read usually assign the reading of a piece of literature several days in advance of the seminar discussion. The children are responsible for reading the selection once or twice before the discussion. Younger children who have not yet learned to read are read stories just prior to the discussion. Teachers may also precede seminar days with pertinent vocabulary lessons (sometimes generated by the students). Some teachers also encourage students to write questions that occur to them as they read the selections (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

On seminar mornings, the children and their teachers sit in their desks which are arranged in a large rectangle in the center of the classroom. During the seminar, teachers usually ask three to five prepared questions, one of which deals with the basic theme of the selection. This question is designed to permit divergent thinking on the part of students without a preconceived outcome on the teacher's part. As the seminar progresses, teachers must interactively develop follow-up questions that help students to clarify their opinions both through agreement/disagreement with a classmate's point of view and through

reference to text that supports their points of view. Although consensus does not have to be reached, the discussion leader must decide when the group has concluded meaningful exploration of the ideas presented in the selection (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Usually after seminar, follow-up activities related to the main idea of the selection take place. These follow-up activities are to be individual activities during which the teachers "coach" students to develop their intellectual skills. For older students, coached activities at School G are writing activities which employ staff and computer labs for the "coaching." During each marking period, the entire staff focuses on the same type of writing, which then changes with the beginning of the next marking period (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Children are held accountable for their participation in seminar by receiving an "honors," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory" evaluation on their report cards. Their positive and/or negative participation is monitored during the seminar sessions (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

In the fall of 1992, a direct instruction program was introduced at School G. This program addresses both the didactic and coaching elements of Adler's Paideia Proposal. The program is an updated version of the old Distar program developed at the University of Oregon in the '60s. The program is designed primarily to develop reading through a very systematic and formulaic teaching of decoding, comprehension skills, and mathematics, also using a systems approach in teaching computation and mathematical concepts.

During a typical lesson in either reading or mathematics, the teacher reads a scripted explanation of a concept from a handbook and then asks the children questions about the material just read. The children are not to respond until a hand signal (clapping or finger snapping) is given. Then, they respond to the teacher's question in unison. The teacher reads a bit more, asks a question, gives the signal, and the children respond in unison. When children respond correctly, the teacher is prompted by the scripted handbook to praise them. If they do not respond correctly, the teacher is prompted to correct them.

The segments of teacher-read content follow the direct instruction model popularized by Madeline Hunter. That is, following the teacher input, the children's understanding of the presentation is checked through questioning and/or exercises. The exercises are performed initially as a group (guided practice) and then individually (individual practice). The teacher is monitoring the responses throughout the presentation and practices. If there is misunderstanding among the children, the teacher immediately corrects the problem.

Individual practice provides the teacher with an opportunity to walk around the room checking children's work and providing them with either praise or corrective feedback as appropriate. This step in the process is actually coaching. It is also the piece of this model that can be ignored.

Classroom observations at School G yielded examples of math teachers who fell at the two extremes of the continuum of coaching and noncoaching. The seventh-grade math teacher, whom one of the researchers had observed in previous visits, did, in fact, coach individuals during this phase of the lesson. He never stopped moving around the room checking students' seatwork and helping those who needed it. He also praised those who

were practicing correctly. In several instances, many students were having the same problem with their practice. This teacher called for everyone's attention, went to the board, and retaught the concept.

By contrast, the sixth-grade math teacher sat on a desktop at the front of the room while children completed their individual practice problems and then called individuals to the front of the room to show their work on the board. Following the checking of their problems, the teacher asked for a show of hands of those who had not missed any problems, those who had missed only one, and so on.

In a typical classroom, English (Language Arts) is scheduled for approximately 117 minutes per day, and mathematics is scheduled for approximately 50 minutes each day (School Report Card, 1993). The principal foresees extending this time to try to bring children up to grade level in reading and math. Students at School G are typically two grade levels behind in both subjects. When asked where this time will come from in the school day, Mrs. E. responded that the content of the direct instruction program lessons is fully integrated with both science and social studies so that, in fact, there is not a need to schedule these separately (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

Children are homogeneously grouped in classrooms as a result of scores on decoding tests related to reading. This causes problems in math classes because children who are strong decoders are placed together; some of them are also strong math students and some are not. The math teacher responds to this situation by teaching to the middle (personal communication, May 18, 1994). In sixth-grade, the teachers have worked out their own regrouping for mathematics (personal communication, May 19, 1994). The only problem with this is that the sixth-grade math teacher observed had 35 students with her for a lesson. Had she chosen to actually coach, this number could have proven to be especially problematic.

The progress of the children in both reading and mathematics in the direct instruction program is closely monitored. Grades 3 and up play a "Fact Game" after every segment of 10 lessons to enable teachers to informally assess the understanding of the lessons in reading. If the group as a whole seems not to have grasped the concepts taught, they receive remediation before moving on to the next skill or concept. Oral reading "checkouts" are also conducted by parent volunteers and teaching assistants. Formal testing occurs after every segment of 10 math lessons (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Children are also scheduled for approximately one 1/2 hour of math lab several days a week. The instructor says that this is not directly linked to the direct instruction mathematics but it is directly linked to the mathematics tested by state mandated standardized tests (personal communication, May 19, 1994).

Other instructional services provided to the children in grades 1 through 6 include either French or Spanish and P. E. Students in the primary grades receive choral music instruction as do some of the upper grades. A period of library instruction is scheduled for grades 1 through 8. These classes are scheduled for about a 1/2 hour each week with the exception of P. E., which is scheduled for 40 minutes.

### *Resources*

The implementation of Paideia principles in local schools does not appear to be particularly costly. The low cost of the program was the intent of Mortimer Adler, the developer, who saw the program as an outgrowth of a commitment of teachers and school leaders to a strong academic program. The intent of the program was to foster intellectual growth rather than technical knowledge or specialization; therefore, the cost of the project can be limited to books and materials (considered to be standard costs by most schools). Other programs, many of them sophisticated and expensive, have however been included within the organizational framework of the program at School G. For example, School G has two computer labs with 25 computers each, as well as a Write to Read Lab. When these kinds of programs are used to address the three "modes of teaching and learning" described by Adler, the project might be thought of as high cost (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

School G's funding for the Paideia Project comes from a variety of sources, including the American National Bank (ANB), the Chapter 1 Program, and Desegregation Funds. In the mid 1980s, the support given to the school was in the neighborhood of \$50,000 for all school programs. In the late 1980s the school system underwent a major restructuring that led to greater local school autonomy. At this time, the budget funds that had been retained in the central office of the school district were transferred to the individual schools. The \$50,000 of the mid '80s became over \$320,000 by 1991 (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). The 1993 School Report Card reports that during the 1991-92 school year (the most recent year available) the district's "operating expenditure per pupil" was \$6,031 while the average for all unit districts was \$4,987 and for all large unit districts the average was \$4,363. The state per pupil expenditure was \$5,327. (School G is in a unit district.)

Support from the American National Bank began early in the implementation of the project with a \$100,000 contribution for training, resources, and books. The initial commitment of this amount was for four years, but was extended to a fifth (personal communication, May 20, 1994). For the 1990-1991 school year, the funding was cut to \$50,000. Nationwide financial downturn influenced the bank's giving, as well as criticism that the training could be done on-site at a lower cost than in previous years (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). For 1992-93, the amount decreased to \$20,000. In the 1993-94 school year, the bank's cash contribution to the school was \$15,000; that paid for guest speakers for the school and the maintenance of the Seminar Room. However, the human resources provided by the bank as well are clearly worth far more than this (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

ANB sponsors the "Saturday Scholars Program" for graduates of School G and a sister school, Sabin Magnet. "Students attend the bank-sponsored Saturday seminar from 10 am to 2 pm on alternate Saturdays during the school year. Over 40 Bank employees volunteer to serve as mentors and help approximately 75 students with their writing and math skills. The mentors also actively participate in the seminars with the Scholars. A variety of leadership and goal-setting skills are also built into each session. Students, together with their mentors, attend many cultural and 'Outward Bound' activities. Each summer, not



only do students spend a week at an outdoor education center, but also have an opportunity to spend a week on a college campus." Bank employees see it as an opportunity to mentor these young people (personal communication, 1994).

The bank is also sponsoring School G's participation in The Junior Achievement Program. This year, for example, two young African-American male employees of the bank have worked with classes at School G on understanding the concept of marketing (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

As mentioned above, the professional baseball team provided \$100,000 to support implementation of the direct instruction program in 10 schools in the city during the 1992-93 school year. Although another \$100,000 contributed by the team for the 1993-94 school year was returned to the team because the schools did not take advantage of the funding, School G will continue to be supported by the team by becoming a model school/training center for other schools interested in implementing the direct instruction program (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

The school also received a small grant from PayLess Shoes of \$5,000 for this year. This kind of small contribution from local businesses is typical of the kind of support that School G enjoys (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Most of the costs of the Paideia Program beyond a typical school's budget currently relate to: the employment of a Paideia coordinator, the costs of reducing class size for Chapter 1 students to approximately 15 students per teacher, and the cost of materials and training for teachers using the Paideia program in their classrooms. The budget cost beyond the reduction of class size and the cost of the Paideia coordinator were initially born by the private support of the American Bank. Other Chapter One funds support special programs at the school such as Reading Recovery and computer support programs in mathematics and writing (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

#### *Project Outcomes*

Students at School G are administered the state Goal Assessment Program Tests in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Third, sixth, and eighth graders are tested in reading, mathematics, and writing. Fourth and seventh graders are tested in science and social science. Scores reported in the 1993 School Report Card are appended. (See Appendix D - 1993 School Report Card for School G.) The school does not use a test of critical thinking or other higher order tests, though the past Paideia coordinator thought that a test of this nature would measure a major goal of the program. (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The school's description of the Paideia program states that the program has contributed to the effectiveness of the school through changes in students, teachers, and parents. For students these include:

- building of self-confidence
- application of skills to other subjects
- comparing and contrasting different styles of writing



reading a greater variety of books  
 defending points of view  
 relating ideas to their own lives  
 paying more attention in class.

For teachers these changes include:

more toleration of opinions  
 volunteering time for reading  
 sharing ideas with co-workers.

For parents these changes include:

increased visitation to classrooms  
 participation in parent seminars (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

An evaluation of the Paideia programs at both School G and other schools in the district found that "fewer Paideia students failed subjects...than did students citywide" (Sikorski, Wallace, Stariha, & Rankin, 1993, p. 85). Surveys used in this evaluation also found that "most students described the seminars as positive learning experiences" and that "program outcomes included increases in students' ability to organize thoughts more quickly (68 percent), talk about a subject (67 percent), write better stories, essays, and letters (66 percent), and organize thoughts better (65 percent)." Other outcomes included "increases in students' ability to understand themselves (75 percent), understand other people (74 percent), respect their teachers (72 percent), and work with others (69 percent)" (Sikorski, et al., 1993, p. 87).

Teachers in this district's Paideia schools reported increases in "students' ability to discuss a topic (90 percent), organize thoughts (82 percent), work with others (74 percent), like school better (70 percent), enjoy reading (69 percent), and respect teachers (68 percent)" (Sikorski, et al., 1993, p. 87).

Parents reported that the program increased their children's ability to read (76 percent), think better (72 percent), and speak better (72 percent), and increased their children's excitement for school (68 percent) and self esteem (60 percent); 80 percent of parents said that they wanted their children to remain the Paideia Program" (Sikorski, et al., 1993, p. 87).

### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

Given its relatively long history as a Paideia school, it seems apparent that School G's program is fully institutionalized. The stability of the Paideia Program at this site seems to be a result of a number of mechanisms that support its maintenance (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). First, although it is the view of the principal, the assistant principal, and the curriculum director that the central office of the Chicago Public Schools really has no concern as to whether or not the Paideia program exists at School G, the school district has recognized the program as an integral part of its magnet offerings and promotes this school in its magnet school literature. (Anast, 1994; Mitchell, 1994; Nash, 1994; Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1994). In fact, there are four Paideia schools in the system and "13 satellite schools" that were implementing the Paideia program to some degree in 1993 (Wallace, 1993, p. 511). And, because this site has a magnet program in a predominately African-American neighborhood, it receives a substantial amount of desegregation moneys from the federal government, which seem to support the sustaining of the program.

The 'City G' Public School System is divided into subdistricts, each of which has a district superintendent. The subdistrict office is next door to school G. The proximity to the school enhances the support provided to the school by the subdistrict personnel. Although the three school administrators at School G indicated that the subdistrict office usually provides requested support quite efficiently, they also reported that, for the most part, personnel from the subdistrict office respect the school's autonomy.

As described above, the school also has received and continues to receive substantial financial support from institutions within the greater 'City G' community—especially ANB and the professional baseball team. Mrs. E believes that this kind of involvement from the community would prevent the Paideia program from folding even though it may not achieve its goals. She also believes that the faculty would be disappointed if the school ceased to be a Paideia school because they enjoy the monthly faculty seminars.

In addition to funding from community sources, the school receives substantial support in the form of commitments of human resources. As noted above, ANB sponsors the Saturday Scholars Program and the Junior Achievement Programs. Other community support comes from a local religious organization, Project Bethel, which sponsors four parent seminars a year and which worked with the bank in financing the duplex described above. Approximately 60 parents attend the parent seminars each year. There is also a small cohort of about five parents who volunteer much of their time to the school, performing clerical duties. Another bit of external support comes from the school's ongoing relationship with the Adler Institute and the University of 'City G.'

Finally, it seems that the site-based management in place within the school system supports the continuation of the program. Because the principal is free to allocate funds as she deems fit, it is relatively easy to maintain and expand the program. This appears to guarantee leadership that enables the continuation of the program during her tenure at the school.

The Paideia Program at School G, then, appears to be relatively stable. A different way to look at this stability is by examining the school's program in terms of the characteristics of "High Reliability Organizations."

*1. Public and staff perception are that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

The faculty and the school community seem to view the program as part of the school's identity. The principal feels that the local community would not allow the Paideia program to fade from the school's curriculum. Certainly, the faculty and administrators we talked with feel a commitment to the Paideia concept. The financial support of the community at large is evidence of their belief that something must be done at schools like School G to improve the education received by the children there. They appear to see the time and money they invest as investments in the future not only of the children at School G but in their community as well.

*2. Program has clear goals, staff have a strong sense of their primary mission.*

The goals of the Paideia program are quite clear—equality of opportunity for all children to learn a curriculum that is based on the liberal arts tradition. While the faculty at School G does appear to have a common understanding of the program goals, the principal also stated that the primary goal of the school at this point in time is to get the children's reading and math scores on standardized tests to the 50th percentile. She hopes to achieve this goal through strengthening the didactic part of the program. This strengthening is being sought using the "Direct Instruction Program" of the University of Oregon. The direct instruction program seems to have enhanced the cohesiveness of the staff in their discussion of the goals of the Paideia program at School G.

*3. Program extends formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs).*

Both the Paideia seminars and the direct instruction program at the school have very well-defined procedures. Though the nature of seminar discussion is open-endedness, there are certain basic principles upon which the conduct of seminars rests. The direct instruction program is particularly formulaic and clearly has a set of standard operating procedures. Coaching seems to be an area where some teachers appear to "have it" and others don't. Coaching requires teachers to monitor individual students' work frequently and to give feedback, which sometimes requires reteaching a concept. The individualized nature of instruction can not function well if constrained by a too-highly structured standard operating procedure.

Management of the children at School G clearly lacks a standardized basis. Although the 'City G' Public Schools has in place a "Uniform Discipline Code" that provides not only general guidelines pertaining to student conduct but also very specific listings of "acts of misconduct" and "disciplinary action," the targeting of misconduct by teachers and administrators at School G is erratic. Students told us that their first job in the morning is to determine the "mood" of their teacher that day so that they could conduct themselves

appropriately. Teachers appeared to feel the same way about the principal's erratic temperament. Barring crises that require evacuation of the building, which mandates the following of the system's "Emergency Plan," other kinds of crises are handled by the principal. An example of this kind of crisis took place during a visit by one of the researchers during December, 1991. The heat in the building had gone out during the weekend making classrooms too chilly to bear on Monday morning. The principal made several telephone calls to the district office to get the furnace repaired, but to no avail. She then placed a telephone call to a member of the Local School Council who is an attorney in Chicago. The heat was fixed within an hour. Therefore, it seems that the principal, in concert with the LSC or whomever seems to be her best bet at the time, addresses crises. Personal crises among students are handled either by a school administrator or a school counselor. Unfortunately, the school has been without a counselor since November, 1993. However, there is also an intervention team made up of a school district psychologist and a social worker available to the children. And, one of the teachers has a psychiatrist friend who gives an hour or so each week to the school.

#### *4. Program recruits and trains extensively.*

Changes in the staff at School G were rapid and extensive during the first two years of the current principal's tenure. When she came, reported Mrs. E., a number of teachers had been teaching without certification for over five years. She felt that this reflected a lack of dedication to teaching and did not renew their contracts. As a result of this strategy and other changes instituted by Mrs. E., 60% of the faculty has turned over in the past two years. Mrs. E. saw no real effect of this turnover on the Paideia program. She says that some new teachers had "fallen right" into the seminar method, while others needed more help with developing their skills as discussion leaders (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

During the past several years, on average, the turnover has been relatively low, with approximately five teachers per year leaving the school. At times, when remaining teachers become angry with Mrs. E. about other matters, they will blame her for their colleagues' leaving (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993). Mrs. E. indicated that she finds out about possible new staff by asking constantly about people who are available to teach. She relies heavily on "word-of-mouth" recommendations of colleagues in other schools within the district and within her own building to keep apprised of good teachers. When she has positions to fill and knows of someone who may be appropriate, she will recruit that person (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

*Staff Development.* Staff development has continued to be an important aspect in the implementation and development of the Paideia concept at School G. Teachers receive continual staff development both at faculty retreats and at staff seminar/training sessions held once a month after school throughout the school year. Additionally, until 1991 teachers had the opportunity to attend Paideia training workshops at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico during the summer months. During the summer of 1989, eight School G teachers took advantage of the New Mexico training. Teachers can still attend these workshops, but the funding assistance previously provided for them by Chicago's American National Bank has been withdrawn (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

As new teachers join the School G faculty, they receive mentoring from veteran seminar leaders who conduct the seminars in new teachers' classrooms as demonstrations until new teachers feel ready to take over themselves. In addition, new teachers immediately become part of the faculty seminars and again learn through modeling. There are no orientation/training sessions for new faculty. Faculty from the Institute of Philosophical Learning which is loosely associated with the University of Chicago, have played an integral part in the staff development at School G by conducting both staff and student seminars at the school (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

The addition of the "direct instruction" program for reading and math also demands specialized training for teachers. Initial training for most of the teachers on the School G faculty took place during the summer prior to the first year of implementation to ready them for implementation of the program. A second round of training was held in January for those teachers who could not attend the summer sessions and for ancillary staff who wished to receive it. Additionally, two teachers from the seventh and eighth grades traveled to the Houston school during December 1992 to observe how the program works there (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

During the 1993-1994 school year, faculty had additional training in direct instruction, participated in two drug education workshops, and have been trained in STRAP, a district-wide truancy procedure. The math lab coordinator, Mr. W., holds bi-weekly staff development sessions for the staff to teach them to use the new computers in his lab. Each month, teachers present content-area staff development sessions related to classroom publishing, bulletin boards, and different kinds of writing (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Early in the year, the School G faculty were involved in the Sizemore Project through DePaul University. Although the project fizzled out before completion and School G's Local School Council has petitioned for a return of some \$75,000 paid up front to the University for this project, the teachers were trained to complete monthly "outlays" in lieu of their traditional lesson plans. (See Appendix E - Example of Monthly "Outlays" Completed by School G Teachers.) This was to enhance their long-range planning skills. In the spring of 1994, the faculty was involved in a weekend retreat led by Patricia Weiss, a Paideia consultant from Chapel Hill, North Carolina (Anast, 1994; Mitchell, 1994).

*5. At peak times, professional judgment is valued.*

The restructuring of the 'City G' Public Schools brought about significant reforms in the management structure and curricular program of both the 'City G' Public Schools and of School G. These changes included shifts of decision making to the local school, increased financial resources and responsibilities in the hands of individual schools' administrations, and a movement of curricular decision making to the individual schools. These changes allowed Mrs. E. to alter the Paideia program from the beginning of her tenure as principal and to continue to do so (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

Changes in the school's administration began with the election of the Local School Council (LSC) made up of members from the community served by the school. LSC took over major decision-making responsibilities from the school board and central office

administrators. One of these responsibilities is the hiring and retaining of the principal. The council also works in conjunction with the Professional P. A. Committee, to develop policy direction for the school and to review the philosophy of the school. The School G Program is not unique in its restructuring. All schools in the district have been altered through the city's school reform and site-based management initiative (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 1991-1993).

*6. Program has initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs and nominate and validate changes in those that proved inadequate.*

In his trilogy, "The Paideia Proposal, Paideia Problems and Possibilities, and The Paideia Program: An Educational Syllabus," Adler presents the theoretical underpinnings of the Paideia concept and provides "some tentative suggestions" (1983, p. 66) for the actual implementation of the program. He does not, however, provide teachers and school administrators with a model program containing specific guidelines for schools that want to be "three-column" Paideia schools. Instead, Adler leaves "the steps of implementation to practitioners on the spot" (1983, p. 75). As noted earlier, Mrs. M. describes the Paideia program as an organizational framework for instructional programs that can be used in concert to achieve the goal of equal opportunities for all children to learn a high quality curriculum. Therefore, schools are free to change the instructional programs within their organizations as long as they address the three "modes of teaching and learning" described by Adler.

*7. Program is sensitive to areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required; it pays attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the organization's processes.*

The implementation of the direct instruction program seems to have improved the attention to the performance and incremental evaluation of the students. As noted above, students are assessed either formally or informally following each segment of 10 lessons in the program. If the class as a whole is having problems, the teacher will return to the appropriate lessons. As in most school systems in the United States, this city's public schools publish average standardized test scores of students in each school in the district. The assessment of students' progress in critical thinking and discussion skills is a bit more problematic. Although the students at School G receive "Honors," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory" marks for participation in seminar, it appears that some teachers track this more systematically than others.

*Staff Evaluation.* Teachers in this city's public schools receive formal evaluations annually. They must each be observed and given a 45 day notice if there are any changes in their ratings from the year before. Because of the number of teachers and the time involved, the principal seldom changes the ratings from year to year although she believes it would probably be appropriate to do so. If there is a particular problem with a teacher, she will go through the required process to document the problem. Mrs. E. feels that on-going informal assessment and feedback is both easier to carry out and more appreciated by the faculty (personal communication, May 20, 1994).



Faculty receive no formal evaluations regarding their conduct of Paideia seminars. Although she reported that she knows the quality of seminar teaching among the faculty, the Paideia coordinator offered no systematic method for observing and assessing teacher performance (personal communication, May 18, 1994).

Administrators in the school report that teachers' implementation of the direct instruction model has been monitored substantially (Anast, 1994; Mitchell, 1994; Nash, 1994). Teachers report otherwise. Teachers feel that they would like more feedback about whether they are using the model correctly. One teacher, in fact, who teaches in the evenings at a community college where he also uses the model, invited his colleagues from the community college to observe him at School G and give him feedback that he felt was lacking.

The principal is evaluated by the LSC which rates her performance by looking at both the budget she presents them and the instructional program at the school. Mrs. E. feels that this is somewhat problematic because most of the members of the LSC are not educated and do not have the necessary expertise to properly evaluate the principal's work. She did, however, indicate that her contract will be up for renewal next year and that when she told the LSC that she was being courted by another school, they asked her not to leave School G and assured her that her contract will be renewed (personal communication, May 20, 1994).

*8. Monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

Many teachers see the principal at School G as being an autocrat who may ask the advice of some faculty whom she favors. The teachers with whom we spoke indicated that they seldom have an opportunity to share ideas with each other. They feel that faculty meetings are not open forums for discussion. Rather, they are meetings during which teachers are told what they are to do. Similarly, students are given few opportunities to make decisions. One teacher described an SCA project—a school store—in which students were allowed to make decisions and how important that project has become to the students.

*9. Program is alert to surprises or lapses; prevent small failures from cascading into major system failures.*

The kinds of surprises we have observed at School G have been (1) arrival on Monday morning when the heat has been off all weekend in December, (2) a large number of teachers being absent on the same day without notice prior to the morning of the occurrence, and (3) the pulling of the fire alarm by two kindergartners. In each case, the administration handled the "surprises" as quickly and efficiently as possible and school resumed its regular schedule.

*10. Program is hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, utilizes a second layer of behavior emphasizing collegial decision making regardless of rank; staff assume close interdependence and relationships are complex, coupled, and*

*sometimes urgent.*

The staffing is clearly hierarchical. There is no evidence suggesting that a second layer of behavior based on collegial decision making exists. It appears that the teachers have not been empowered to make decisions beyond their classrooms, and even those must fall within the parameters of the program. It is unclear what would happen if a teacher made a decision incongruent with the principal's perception about what should have been done, even in an emergency situation.

*11. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order; responsibility for checking readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.*

Observations at School G over a four-year period have seldom witnessed teachers using equipment except for the instructors in the computer lab and the librarian during the holidays. Equipment is stored in a closet, and teachers feel that the hassles of getting it are more than they wish to deal with. I am told that the equipment is kept in good working order by the school librarian.

*12. Program is valued by supervising organizations.*

Although it is the view of the principal, the assistant principal, and the curriculum director that the central office of the 'City G' Public Schools do not really care whether the Paideia program exists at School G, the school district has recognized the program as an integral part of its magnet offerings and promotes this school in its magnet school literature. In fact, there are four Paideia schools in the system and "13 satellite schools" that were implementing the Paideia program to some degree in 1993 (Wallace, 1993, p. 511). And, because this site has a magnet program in a predominately African-American neighborhood, it receives a substantial amount of desegregation moneys from the federal government, which seem to support the sustaining of the program.

*13. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

Perhaps the most telling remark by a member of the staff at School G is that of the principal in describing the direct instruction program. She said, "We have to give this program time to work—even if it takes ten years to see a difference." From one of the researcher's first visit to School G, it has been apparent that Mrs. E has a vision of what she would like the school to become. She has no patience with those who do not help to move the program forward and ultimately will either rid the school of them or move them into a position she sees as less damaging.

## *Analysis of Community*

### *Results from a teacher, a parent, and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Students seem to get along fairly well at the school, though there have been problems between School G students and students from a neighboring school. Students, however, have to deal with a lot of problems prevalent in the neighborhood: drug dealing, gang warfare—as one parent put it, “This has an effect on the kids, ’cause a lot of kids don’t get to go too far from their neighborhood because their parents are not able to take them to a better atmosphere for... a vacation... A lot of kids grow up thinking this is life—this is all there is to life—dilapidated buildings and drug addicts... as far as they can go, this is all they can see... You know yourself that it does have a lot to do with the kids and their learning... and their behavior... because they feel they have to fight and struggle—just to survive.” One problem within the school that students in the focus group mentioned several times was the pressure from some students on other students who are doing well in school or making friends with teachers to disassociate themselves more from school: students reported cases of students ‘saying stuff to try to break students away from their teacher,’ telling them not to spend occasional week-ends with a teacher, and putting down their attempts to study more.

It seems to vary quite a bit whether students and teachers get along. Several students and several teachers mentioned students and teachers getting along well, with some feeling like members of an extended family. Others, however, mentioned some teachers doing a great deal of yelling at students; one teacher commented about teachers who roll their eyes at children, call them names, and berate them. She added, “A lot of people don’t need to be working with children because they really can do some very destructive things...” There is a clear emphasis at School G on teaching the children “how to sit and be still”; while it may be a useful skill, one teacher argued that the school at least needs to give the students a chance to go somewhere (normal) outside of school where they could put that skill into play (for example, going to the theater).

Relations between parents and teachers, on balance, seemed to be positive, although it should be noted that the parents who participated in the focus group were probably not representative as they were rounded up (“ordered,” as one observer put it) to participate by the principal on short notice. Parents seemed to appreciate the program and the attention both they and their students receive from teachers. Some students mentioned that their teacher communicates with their parents occasionally; others said that parents don’t have much contact with the school except for picking up report cards or when a child gets in trouble. Students seemed to get along well with the assistant principal. However, relations between students and other staff members, especially the principal, did not seem to be very positive; likewise, relations, for the most part, between teachers and the principal seemed to be characterized by sporadic, one-way communications and feelings of stress on the part of teachers.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Students had their own shared vision it seemed; several mentioned that it's up to students to make their school and community a better place. Students and teachers indicated that teachers think students can succeed. As far as the administration, however, teachers seemed to think that what vision there is is often put on the back burner in favor of immediate results, for example, stressing the early grades where results may be easier to obtain; teachers argued that there needs to be follow through so that early gains are not then lost. There was also little sense that teachers share a vision of how the school should be; a few may, but there seem to be other teachers likely to be hostile to any such vision. One teacher said, "Let us act like adults. Let us grow beyond our petty biases, our little narrow world-views, and let us do what we can—what we say we're here to do, which is to educate these children..."

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Parents mentioned that the school is constantly struggling to improve, that this is stated at every meeting. One teacher appreciated the variety of programs because it allows them to serve students at different levels and with different learning styles; she also mentioned, though, problems in coordinating the different programs. In general, there did not seem to be a shared sense of purpose, except among small groups of teachers, perhaps. Teachers spoke of working at cross-purposes with each other and with the administration: "I don't feel like [the students are] treated like they're children." Students are often not allowed to express themselves: they often can't talk during lunch, nor in the halls, and even talking while waiting to go back in from a fire drill brought censure from the administration. Teachers also stressed, "Just because somebody does one thing... you can't just take away everything—like 'No trips. No nothing.' ... Those children sometimes... if they felt more important, it would be good for them." Some teachers tried to let students who were in trouble serve as helpers with younger children; however, because of the enthusiasm this created, the principal forbid it—students were talking in the hallway on the way back to class the first day it was officially tried; the teachers who had the idea tried to fight the objections, but to no avail. Also, several agreed that the faculty is not consistent in disciplining students or giving students more structure who need it. "We haven't established a plan that will help correct and change the behavior..." Another added, "If it's good on Monday, it's good on Tuesday... but we're not being that consistent." One teacher made the remark, "There's a tremendous lack of support... [from] administration and even fellow teachers..." Others echoed this, talking about teachers whose minds are closed to other people's ideas.

*Shared Values.* Many of the teachers seem to have come to value parent participation and make a special effort to make parents feel welcome and able to ask questions. (Comments suggested that this was not always the case.) Parents seemed to suggest that differences in education, etc. were not allowed to become status differences: "Nobody's different than anybody else." Students suggested that some teachers "expect you to do your best always." Students and teachers both mentioned teachers who are "serious about education." A few teachers said they felt that many of the teachers at School G are dedicated to their work. The focus group, however, suggested that there may be a serious lack of shared values: Several teachers would like more open discussion among the faculty, but the administration seems to focus more on controlling students and teachers rather than

working together to find better approaches—not an environment likely to foster the creation or identification of shared values. Some teachers felt that their high expectations for students were not shared by some teachers. Others said, "...a lot of people... have a fundamental disrespect for children. It seems like there's a lot of people who don't really like children here. You see people in the hall screaming at the top of their lungs at children, [people who do it on a regular basis]."

*Trust.* Although trust was not mentioned directly by focus group participants, it was alluded to several times. Students mentioned teachers who would punish the whole group for what one person did, teachers who would punish them and only later would students understand what they had done wrong, or teachers who when they have a bad day give students a hard time. Students also felt that the security people don't intervene fairly or when they should. Teachers mentioned fears that the janitorial staff were not doing a good job, and that this might be leading to allergy problems. Teachers also mentioned promises made by the administration that were never fulfilled. They mentioned feeling uncomfortable in meetings because ideas put forth might be ridiculed. One teacher said she wished the principal would participate with the children in an occasional class, "so that they don't have to fear." The most common, albeit indirect, references to trust at School G related the dangerous neighborhood surrounding the school. Students talked about gangs and "sending letters to the alderman to have him patrol this neighborhood to make sure we're safe." Teachers mentioned the constraints the neighborhood places on their ability to stay late to work with individual students, to get to know other teachers better, or to provide special activities for students. "When we leave at quarter to 4, 4 o'clock at night, many of us don't feel comfortable going around the block." Another teacher commented on the day-to-day effects: "I don't like the neighborhood for the children's sake that they have to get so scared... We can't do things after school easily, in a normal way. We can't have clubs and things like that—and I don't want to because I don't want them to be hurt, but it bothers me because there's not that extra activity for the children... particularly the older children...."

*Caring.* There seemed to be a fair amount of caring between students and teachers, but there was also clearly a lack of it between teachers and students (and among teachers) in some quarters, so it is difficult to judge the extent of caring at the school overall. One teacher mentioned enjoying the camaraderie. Teachers said their rapport with students was generally very good; one teacher said her students call her "Mom." Students said "The majority of teachers—they're nice when you get to know them, but then they'll pressure you into learning." "They're there when you need them..." Another said, "The teachers are the best 'cause once you get to know them, you get to talk to them and tell them if you have a problem or anything, you can go to them before you can go to your parents, because they are more understanding, and with the school work and everything, they might stay after school and help you a lot with the subject you're having trouble in." One student felt their teacher really enjoyed having them in class; "We joke around... and he helps us do our work.... we're a pretty fun classroom." The assistant principal was also seen as understanding and approachable. Students seemed to really appreciate that some staff, "if something happens, they try to talk to you and try to relieve you... if you're feeling down." Students are currently planning a baby shower for a teacher who's



expecting, and they note that parties are sometimes a way in which people become closer. However, some teachers and the principal, students and teachers noted, don't try to figure out what's wrong or what happened—they just react, and often yell at students, sometimes getting "real close to your face." They said the principal "won't ask you what happened; [her motto is] 'Shoot first and ask questions later.'" A student said, "I think the teachers need to be more understanding... If something happens, they [shouldn't] automatically assume anything, they [should] just try to figure out what happened, and then try to deal with it the right way, instead of going off the deep end." Students suggested the importance of student-teacher relationships to students: "Kids are not getting love at home." "You got parents out here that don't care about their kids."

*Participation.* Changes in the school in recent years seem to have facilitated parent participation and the extent to which parents feel welcomed into the classroom by teachers. Teachers have tried to make clear that the school needs the participation of parents and grandparents. Parents seem to feel that they generally have good parent participation for special events, and they appreciate the classes and workshops offered to them by the school. Students as well seem to have become more engaged: "I can't make a mistake...—because they are on it." One teacher who is visiting other schools through a staff development program noted, "I've had wonderful experiences where you go into a school and the principal is like one of the folks. There's not this division of staff [like] here... you can speak freely and not be seen as disloyal or undermining..." The principal seems to have established a culture in which teachers are not expected to give feedback to her or to each other; new ideas by teachers are not particularly welcomed, and meetings are seen as times for teachers to passively receive information, not to offer it themselves or to get to know one another better. "When you have a faculty meeting, there's usually no exchange." Most of the time ideas are just presented; they are not voted upon. Or if there is to be a vote, typically there is no discussion first: The matter to be voted upon is presented by the principal, and then "the next thing they say [is] 'Well, let's vote on it.'" Teachers feel they will be seen as negative if they raise objections or concerns. "There's not really a time when you feel like you can get some input into things..."

*Communication.* Parents mentioned that teachers seem "always willing to take time to give the parents information." Some students mentioned teachers calling parents to let them know how they are doing; others said parents don't have much contact with the school, except when a student gets in trouble. Communication between students and teachers in some cases seems to involve a lot of yelling and reacting without thinking on the part of teachers. In general, teachers don't talk with students much during lunch time. Communication between students and teachers, however, is very important to students. One teacher discussed how students need to know that there is someone they can talk to on a daily basis if necessary. A student may sit in a class distracted, and if no adult takes the time to talk with them to find out what's wrong, teachers won't be able to effectively offer the help and support the student needs. Thankfully, some students find their teachers and the assistant principal easy to communicate with.

The emphasis of the Padeia program on discussion seems to have improved the communication skills of students: their parents mention they question more at home; in school they are learning to express themselves and argue a point while allowing others to



make their arguments as well. "They learn to argue constructively... and support their arguments..." However, the picture of the faculty is not as rosy; after some thought, teachers seemed to conclude that their ability to participate and to communicate their ideas is limited in a variety of ways. For example, "I say almost nothing in meetings anymore because you say things in meetings and then—or you tell somebody something—and then the next week, people are rolling their eyes at you, you don't get spoken to in the hallway, and you get tired of it..." A teacher argued "You can't worry about the negativism. There are a few of us that are going to say, 'Yeah, let's go for it...' We're not communicating enough to feel free enough to speak out... We have to be adult enough to at least have the courage to ask. And, if they say no, they say no..." Nevertheless, the impact of this constraint has been undeniable; for example, one of the teachers in the focus group had bought a piece of land adjacent to the school for use in school projects, but the effect of others initially showing no interest in his project dampened even his enthusiasm and willingness to discuss it, having the effect that none of the other teachers participating in the focus group had heard of his acquisition. Another example is perhaps even more telling: an upper grades teacher, who for some days had been disciplining a particular student by sending her to the bench outside the principal's office several floors down in the building, had no idea that the kindergarten teacher, whose room was across from the bench, was using the student as an aide with much success all around. It seemed that the upper grades teacher thought the student was either sitting quietly or being sent home each day as a result of her evident inability to pay attention in class, while the student had offered to help the kindergarten teacher who readily accepted her assistance.

*Respect and Recognition.* Respect was mentioned a number of times in the focus groups, primarily by students, but teachers also referred to it directly, such as in the quote above concerning the tendency of some adults to hold a fundamental disrespect for children. One teacher's comment concerning respect was: "There's a sense of respect that should be there, and I make sure that I get that respect, and, in turn, I give them the respect that they deserve." Student (and teacher) concerns about teachers speaking and punishing without getting all the facts and "counting to 3" first suggest a lack of respect for students on the part of several teachers and the principal. Some students said that "we should teach the students to learn to respect their teachers." While some felt that students' studying harder was key to students gaining the respect of teachers, another noted, "I think it's more than studying; I think it's... the way you approach people [that matters]." Others described the reciprocal nature of respect—if teachers would show that students can be respected, students in turn would be more likely to respect their teachers. Also, "If they want respect from us, earn it." A particularly illustrative comment was made by one student: "They always saying they're adults and they ain't gotta give us no respect, but, still, they should give us some respect, and they might get some back."

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The only type of diversity mentioned in the focus groups was the lack of acceptance of people with opinions different from one's own. Although incorporation of diversity is clearly a problem when looking at individuals (i.e., most

individuals have trouble fitting in to the school well), not much can be said based on the focus groups about the incorporation of diversity occurring along ethnic, gender, or other group lines.

*Teamwork.* No mention was made of teamwork until the question was asked, "How would you improve the school?" Then, a teacher replied by saying that teachers who are team players, who are innovative, loyal, and dedicated could improve the school. "...If we all communicated and worked together, it'd be less stressful, and we'd get more enjoyment out of it." She also suggested, albeit obliquely, that the principal too could learn to be a team player. A teacher said that some improvement seemed to be resulting from the formation of teams: "...We're trying to break some of those walls down and learn to work together..."

*Affirmation.* Affirmation was not mentioned by any of the participants, although the lack of it coming up in conversation is suggestive of the situation at the school. Teachers mentioned co-workers who would reply seriously to a "Good morning!" from a co-worker with the comment, "What's good about it?" Even in a dramatic case in which one would think a teacher deserving of affirmation (the one who bought a lot adjacent to the school to donate to the school's use), instead of receiving affirmation (prior to the focus group, at least), he was ridiculed by some of the co-workers who he told about it: "What the hell are you doing?" and others were just "not interested in it at all." At least those in the focus group came out in support of his purchase. An earlier project of planting trees around the school likewise does not appear to have received affirmation; instead the trees were all mowed over. Nevertheless, focus group participants murmured sympathetically and urged him to try again and volunteered to help next time. "You put a little fence around [the trees]," one offered. As one person noted, "We need to work on that attitude that 'My success is your success too.'"

*Conflict Resolution.* Conflict resolution mechanisms at the school seem non-existent. While there is clearly a need for such training both among students and among faculty, the closest thing the school has to such a program seems to be the structured, turn-taking discussions of the Padeia program. However, although it is possible that students' ability to avoid and resolve conflicts has been affected by this academic program, since teachers and administrators do not themselves participate in this program, it is unlikely to affect the current needs of staff in this area. Teachers instead described situations that began as minor and were "completely blown all out of proportion" by the administration, and incidents where differences of opinion led to staff divisions—as one teacher put it, "If I've got some disagreements with you, let us talk about them; don't make judgments on me as an individual and hold that against me forever and make my life hell."

*Development of the New Members.* The program seems to be developing parents as members of the school community: encouraging participation in classrooms, building their skills as parents, and providing chances as well for them to grow as individuals through various programs and discussion groups. Teachers felt, however, that the staff development provided was either unrelated to their needs or not delivered. They felt that a primary job of the principal is to facilitate the work of her staff and to provide them with appropriate feedback, "but everything else seems to take priority." Teachers seem to feel

that they don't receive feedback from the administration; one first-time teacher would like to have been given a sense of how she was doing or to have had problematic areas pointed out to help her improve her teaching style. "I mean I had no idea—when the ratings came out at the end of the year, I didn't have a clue, because I hadn't received any type of feedback..."

*Links Beyond the Community.* Students mentioned that some people from the community come and help out at the school. One teacher brought in a friend who's a counselor to help students discuss important issues in their lives. This has gone on for about four years (some of the students are from her previous classes); the last time they got together (they meet about once a month), there were 42 students in the room. "The issues that they bring up—some of them are very, very mind boggling and quite sophisticated. Things that we worry about with the children, they worry about too, and they're able to open up... It's become quite a family." The teacher who related this story also suggested that a bond has formed between some of the teachers who have been there for a while and the community; both former students and other members of the community have come to rely on these teachers—"They need to feel those bonds."

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

One of the teachers said, "Any student that's in this school is my student..." A student commented that the teachers seemed to have changed a lot and are now investing more of themselves in the school. However, students can get in trouble for coming in early—which they would love to do if they could, so as to be able to work or socialize with teachers.

#### *Community Resources*

While School G no doubt has potential resources it could make use of, for example, the underlying dedication some teachers feel towards their students, at the present time the rather authoritarian approach of the principal seems to keep these resources dormant and unavailable.

#### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

School G seemed to rely on the maximum control of students to preserve order and limit fooling around. Punishments were severe and in some cases humiliating for students. Restroom privileges were not allowed to individuals; rather, whole classes were marched to the restrooms at appointed times and waited while one boy and one girl at a time used the facilities. Students were not allowed out on the playground during school hours (i.e., there were no recesses per se), and extraneous use of the in-school gym facility was not allowed. In the observed classrooms, order was a major concern of the teachers, who spent a considerable time in classroom management rather than instructional tasks. The principal at the school was reputed to be a very forceful individual and was observed more than once taking a direct hand in disciplining students. Teachers reported that they rarely shared information at staff meetings, usually because the purpose of these meetings was viewed by the principal as her time to share information with them.

### *Students' Days*

While at School G, students were observed to get a sense of interactions between teachers and students on a typical school day. In this case, a sixth grade classroom was observed. Although the instruction and general student responses are recorded for this classroom, two students in particular were observed. These two children have been observed by the same researcher each year since third grade as part of the Study of Special Strategies for Educating Disadvantaged Children. They were chosen for observation based on scores on the CTBS, which were obtained as part of the Prospects Study during their third-grade school year. One is a boy and the other is a girl. Both are African-American, as are all the children in the school. Both live in the School G neighborhood. Each comes from a somewhat different family structure, and each has responded somewhat differently to classroom instruction in the past. Both are quiet children who have never been behavior problems in school.

The boy, Thomas, is an average-size, sixth grade boy. He has very short hair and, like the other children, he wears navy-blue slacks and a white button-down shirt with his hightop sneakers. He is clean and neatly dressed. Thomas is a quiet child who appears to be attentive in class. In previous observations, Thomas appeared to be attentive, but this appearance was quite deceiving. At times, when called upon by his teachers, Thomas would have no response because he had been daydreaming. This year, however, Thomas still appears to be attentive but, usually, when called upon, he does respond—especially in math which he finds easy this year. He says that science is his favorite subject this year because his reading has improved to the point that he can more easily read his science book. He doesn't like seminars as well as last year because he thought the conversations were better then. [Actually, in the researcher's opinion, they were more chaotic.]

In third grade, Thomas scored at the 15th national percentile in math on the CTBS and at the 9th national percentile in verbal tests. He received ESEA services in third grade but was placed in a regular classroom in fourth grade. The school does not offer ESEA services beyond fourth grade.

An understanding of the dynamics of Thomas' home may prove important in understanding his current life and potential academic development. Thomas, who will be twelve on June 10, reports that his dad fixes cars at home. His grandma works at a Community Nursing Services and "cleans up people." His mother works for Acme Barron. Thomas' parents are divorced. Thomas lives with his grandma and dad. Thomas' auntie and her daughter live upstairs from Thomas, his grandma, and his dad. Thomas has 1 brother and 4 sisters. The sister who is 13 years old and a sister who is 11 share the same parents as Thomas. His 9 year old sister has the same father as Thomas while the 4-year-old sister and the 5-year-old brother were born to the same mother but to a different father. Although Thomas's fourth-grade teacher said that Thomas' family, especially his father, is concerned about his school work, no one from the home ever came for parental interviews held for the previous study. Thomas' fourth-grade teacher also revealed that even though he had offered additional after-school tutoring for Thomas, the necessary permission slip had not been returned for it.

Thomas, who like his classmates has grown taller since the researcher's last visit to the school, says that he likes baseball, basketball, swimming, and being a sixth grader.

Kalli, too, likes being a sixth grader and agreed with Thomas that the variety of having different teachers during the school day is part of what they like. She still likes seminars because she feels that she "gets to learn more stuff and read more stories." She finds the reading to be easy but sometimes needs help with "big words" when she writes.

Both children like the direct instruction methodology they have during reading and math. They like the rhythms and the hand signals given to indicate response time. Kalli, however, finds some of the math to be hard, especially prime numbers.

Kalli is a small girl with a ready smile and pigtails. She dresses in the school "uniform" of navy-blue slacks and white shirt and appears to be well cared for. She turned twelve in January. Kalli is the middle of three children with a 13 year-old sister and a nine-year old brother. Kalli is not as physically mature as many of the other girls in her class. And, although she has grown taller in the four years the researcher has known her, she still has the appearance of a little girl. In the third-grade, Kalli scored at the sixth national percentile in math and at the third national percentile in reading on the CTBS.

Kalli's home situation is a bit different from Thomas'. Kalli's family lives across the street from the school, allowing her mother to come by the school fairly often just to "peek in" on her children in their classes. Kalli's mother is a nurses' aid who works the graveyard shift so that she can be at home during the day for her children. Her husband is a lab technician. She remembers when the Paideia program was first being implemented in the school and has a good grasp of the concept and what it means in her children's education. Kalli's mother says that Paideia seminars have taught Kalli to read and "discuss things she used to be afraid or ashamed to talk about."

Except during fifth grade when Kalli's teacher had severe classroom management problems, Kalli's behavior in school has been consistently attentive. She likes school and, although she is a very quiet child, she does readily connect with adults and classmates. Kalli is diligent in attending to tasks and to her teachers. She finds sixth-grade science to be more interesting than science has been in the past. And, she likes learning the "big words" that are part of the direct instruction program this year.

After school, Kalli likes jumping rope and shopping.

At 8:58 the bell rings to begin the day. The morning pledge-of-allegiance to the American flag and the singing of the African-American national anthem are led over the public address system by a teacher and her class who have come to the office for that purpose. Then, the teacher leads a chant that "I must do my best. I am responsible for what happens to me."

Six minutes later the sixth graders in Mr. B.'s classroom begin to write in their journals about "dog days—The hot, muggy days of summer dog eat dog—Ruthlessly competitive—looking out for yourself."



After two minutes, the teacher, a young man in his second year of teaching at School G, begins moving student desks into a hollow rectangle in preparation for today's seminar. Two boys' desks remain outside the circle. A bell rings to begin seminar. Each student has a name tag on his or her desk. The teacher takes lunch count and says that someone else will be joining them and that the students should review their notes until they are ready to begin. Mr. B. comments on the fact that this is small group today.

Mr. B. begins the seminar session by reminding the class that they need to practice accepting each others opinions and not interrupting each other. He continues that they also need to support their statements with passages from the text being discussed. He has asked two students to keep track of each student's participation. Each of them has a list of the students' names. One student will place a check by the names of those who interrupt, while the other will place a check by those who contribute to the discussion. This is to be sure that they can process their actions after the seminar. (They do not return to do this today.)

At 9:12, a teacher who normally runs the writing lab joins the group. Mr. B. tells her about those who are tracking participation.

Two minutes later, the visiting teacher (Mr. B's mentor) begins the seminar by reviewing the story. This is done by having each student tell a portion of the story and end with "and then..." Toward the end of this "round robin" several children "pass" on their turns. Finally a boy picks up the story and resumes the retelling. Overall, the children are attentive to each other during the retelling of the story. Kalli yawns at one point. And, when his turn comes, Thomas passes, not an unusual behavior for him. The mentor teacher prompts Thomas by asking him to pick up with the last event which has to do with presents. Thomas cannot. The co-leader asks questions to get the class back on track about the presents. Kalli adds her piece of the story. She tells about the main character trading his bicycle for a pencil sharpener. During the retelling of the story, it is apparent that some children remember the story better than others. At one point, the co-leader joins in the retelling of the story. As the co-leader continues retelling the story, she stops to ask the children why certain events occurred.

The selection that the class is summarizing is a portion of a longer piece from the Junior Great Books series entitled "Soumchi." It is about a boy who is about eleven or twelve years old who has conflicts with his father and decides to leave home. He meets a female classmate and her father who take him into their home. The selection focuses on the attraction between the boy and the girl and on the father/son relationship that begins to develop between the boy and the girl's father.

During this, a boy enters the room grinning. Mr. B. and the co-leader look at him and then ignore him until he puts his jacket away and takes a seat in a desk that is outside the circle.

As the co-leader continues retelling the story, one of the boys says that he would like to hear someone else talk. The co-leader says, "I would too." The boy calls on a girl, who had previously passed on her turn, to continue telling the story. She adds a piece of the story this time. The children discuss the significance of the pencil sharpener in the story. It is difficult to follow their discussion because they are not taking turns but rather talking over



each other until the teacher stops them. Both Kalli and Thomas have been attentive throughout but mostly quiet. Kalli smiles at a boy beside her. Thomas picks at his fingers and looks back at his book. Kalli listens to classmates and appears to want to correct a misunderstanding that they are having but doesn't say anything.

Another tardy boy enters the room sullenly at 9:37. The co-leader takes his hand and speaks softly to him. Mr. B. gets out of his seat and goes out the back door of the room. He comes to the front door and knocks. He motions for the boy to come into the hallway. (Apparently, there has been some problem with stolen book bags.) The co-leader wants to finish retelling the story quickly and prompts the children to add the unfinished pieces quickly.

Much of what the children say is difficult to understand because of a combination of soft voices and strong dialects. Words are often not pronounced clearly.

The co-leader asks why Soumchi did things to annoy Esther whom he likes. The students have various views as to whether he tries to annoy her or is doing it unknowingly. The co-leader tells them to think about a boy and girl their age (not them) and why they might act annoyed at attentions from the opposite sex. The students discuss hitting someone you like. One boy describes it as "love touches" vs. "playing around." He explains that "playing around" might lead to "love touches."

At 9:50 the discussion turns to whether the young boy in the story should be allowed to sleep in the room with the girl he likes. Her father says that it is probably not a good idea. Kalli and Thomas have both continued to be attentive to the discussion although neither has contributed to it. The children discuss the decision from the father's point of view. (There is agreement and disagreement among them). Then, several girls come up with the idea that perhaps the girl was being hospitable to invite the boy to sleep in her room. They look at the book at a description of the differences between a boy's and a girl's room. A girl named April reads it for them. The passage describes the boy's room as being messy with cat skulls, knives, etc. The girl's room is neat and clean.

The co-leader asks whether this is a fair description of their rooms. A boy named Nicholas says he has screw drivers but no cat skulls. Another boy says he has cartridges on the window sills in his room. One boy says if he lived with his father his room would be like that but now that he lives with his mom he must keep his room clean. Mr. B. asks Thomas about his room. Thomas says he keeps everything on his window sill and his shoes under his bed. One boy says that his father would tell his wife that his son must have a messy room to learn to be a man. Men, he says, don't consider it a mess but as necessary for manhood. The boys discuss their rooms and not being able to find things when their moms organize for them. They ask both the teacher and the co-leader about their rooms when they were kids. Both admit to having been messy. Based on the description of their rooms, one boy suggests that Soumchi and Esther would be good for each other because they would complement each other. Others disagree and say that it would lead to conflict.

The discussion moves to whether the characters' homes were as different as their rooms. The students have examples from the story to support their opinions. They think that Esther was spoiled by her father. Thomas has started to wiggle and sits on his hands. He

joins the other boys in going "oooooh" when a girl makes a sexist comment about girls being treated better than boys. Mr. B. interjects a question—"How did Soumchi get to stay at Esther's house?" The children respond that he lied and said that he had no place to go. Esther's father is sympathetic to Soumchi. Teacher asks "what does this say about the father?" At this point, Kalli appears to have lost interest for a few minutes. She is leaning forward on her hand and is looking around but does not appear to be paying attention to the discussion. Thomas is writing in his book. Although to this point it has been good, the children's attention is dwindling.

At 10:15, Mr. B. asks whether students have their own questions. Several ask questions about the relationship between Soumchi and Esther. A boy brings up an unrelated point. A girl asks why Soumchi feels close to his uncle at the beginning of the story. Kalli says that it's because when he's with his uncle he can do whatever he wants but when he's with his father he can't. Other kids asks questions for clarification mostly. One boy asks about questions that are asked by Soumchi within the story. The co-leader reads the questions and asks the kids to ask one question that summarizes all of these. They answer that the questions have to do with why things are the way they are. The co-leader praises them for this correct response.

At 10:26, the students begin moving out of the circle. The visiting teacher leaves. Mr. B. says that they have a lot to do this morning and that they must move quickly.

About ten minutes later, Mr. B. walks around the room with a ruler and points to kids who are ready to begin. Students from another class come into the room. (The sixth grade teachers have regrouped their students for reading and math.) Mr. B. begins the reading lesson. He pronounces words from his "direct instruction" teacher's manual. Five minutes after he has begun the lesson, Mr. B. changes from word pronunciation to asking comprehension questions on a story the class has read. "Why does Al take a test on molecules?" Several hands are up. Mr. B. continues with questions about the story. The class is on task. Mr. B. asks Thomas a question. Thomas answers, "No." Mr. B. asks him to expand on his response.

At 10:45, students are reading a story aloud. Mr. B. stops periodically and asks questions about the content and also to predict what will probably happen. The children respond in unison on some "Yes" and "No" questions. Thomas and Kalli are both attending to the story. It appears that almost all of the children are on task. Mr. B. hits a desk with the ruler in his hand before each unison response. He praises the students' reading aloud with "Good reading." He also praises what is good about the reading.

While a girl is reading, a boy next to her raises his hand to point out that she made two errors in her reading. Mr. B. who has already corrected one of the errors ignores the boy's criticism.

Mr. B. says that the children must pronounce endings of words—especially the "s". Thomas is playing with his fingers during this reading. Kalli is following along. Several children are looking at the teacher rather than at their books. Mr. B. is tallying "Errors" and "Repeats" on the board. He praises a boy for his reading—"Good reading. No mistakes. We're doing pretty well today." He asks a girl a question then asks the class how

many actually remembered that answer. Most of the kids raise their hands. Mr. B. says, "Good remembering." A boy says, "Shut up" to a classmate. Mr. B. says, "Excuse me, we don't use that in here. I don't use that either."

Thomas is back to following the story. Kalli has continued to follow all along. When the class finishes reading the story, Mr. B. says, "We had six mistakes today." He also reminds them that he can't always hear the word endings and that they must remember to pronounce them.

At 10:56, the kids begin a "reading checkout." They read to each other. Mr. B. is listening to a boy read aloud and making corrections. Some pairs finish quickly and begin talking quietly to each other. Thomas and his partner have finished and are talking. Kalli and her partner have finished and are quietly working on their workbooks.

At eleven o'clock, Mr. B. tells the class to work in their workbooks and to do the first five questions. He will check with them in five minutes. The workbook has comprehension questions. Mr. B. reminds students when they have three minutes and then one minute.

In exactly five minutes, Mr. B. begins checking the group. When he gives the first answer the kids whisper loudly, "Yes!" Mr. B. asks, "How many got it right?" Most children raise their hands. Mr. B. praises them. After the second question, he asks again; fewer raise their hands. He says, "Oooh gotta remember those answers."

At 11:05, kids from the other classroom leave to go back. Mr. B. tells the remaining students to get out their comprehension books. He tells them that they must move quickly to get a lesson completed today.

He allows a few minutes for transition and begins going over an exercise dealing with singular and plural verbs and sentence combining. For example, Ned was running. It's singular. Ned and Jane were running. It's plural. Mary was sitting on that wall. James was sitting on that wall. Mary and James were sitting on that wall.

At the end of part of their checking, Mr. B. asks, "How many got 100 or missed one? Good. You're getting more right." They move to analogies. "Protection is to \_\_\_\_\_ as selection is to \_\_\_\_\_." Several kids leave to go to lunch. Mr. B. completes checking and tells kids to add quickly how many they have correct and to move on. Thomas and Kalli complete their counting.

At 11:20, the class moves to the next lesson. Mr. B. asks, "What is the verb that means to live somewhere?" In unison the class responds, "Reside." "What part of speech is reside?" In unison they respond, "Verb." "What noun comes from reside?" In unison students respond, "Residing." "No—residence." Mr. B. begins the series of questions and unison responses from the beginning again. This time, the children answer "residence" correctly. Then they are asked, "What is the adjective that comes from residence?" They respond, "Residential." Mr. B. asks questions about the School G neighborhood and Northwoods mall. Are they residential? Students reply, "Yes and no." Mr. B. reads from his manual a portion that explains derivatives of reside.

Thomas is paying attention to all this, but chewing on his finger. Kalli is twisting her braid as she listens.

Mr. B. then asks questions about what he has just read. This requires multi-word answers. "A part of town that has many residences." Before each response, Mr. B. hits his book with his ruler. He continues going over forms and definitions related to reside. Then he moves to systems of the body—muscular, skeletal, other parts of the body—trapezius muscle. Thomas is really with this. Kalli, as usual, responds quietly. As Mr. B. says the name of the muscle or bone, the kids are to touch the various muscles and bones on their own bodies. Following a series of unison responses, Mr. B. checks individuals. He asks by pointing to them with his ruler and asking, "Where are your ribs, etc.?"

At 11:37, the lesson moves to deductions. For example: "Thomas does not have a fish. A carp is a fish. Therefore, Thomas does not have a carp." The same style used earlier is still being used—Mr. B. continues workbook recitation, hitting his book with a ruler to signal students' unison response. Kalli and Thomas are following along with the teacher. Thomas is leaning on his desk and looking at his book. Kalli is sitting up straight. Some other students are playing with pencils or fingers. Although some are beginning to fidget, most are still with the teacher. After a few deductions, they move to a review of subject-verb agreements, using "was" and "were" correctly, for example. Mr. B. gives a subject and the kids must supply the verb. He stops to ask some people why they must use was or were. Thomas is writing during this. Kalli is listening.

At 11:41, they go back to practicing naming parts of the body. Again, Mr. B. calls out a body part and the kids are to touch it. This lasts for two minutes. Then, Mr. B. begins dismissing kids by rows to go to the restroom before lunch.

At 12:30, the class has returned to their room following lunch. Mr. B. has reprimanded them for their behavior this morning and at lunch time which, apparently, was somewhat disruptive. He then hands out information concerning activities for them offered this summer by the 'City G' Parks Service.

At 12:34, one of the other sixth-grade teachers comes into the room and switches with Mr. B. She will conduct the math lesson. Instead of switching the kids as is done in seventh and eighth grades, they switch the teachers. This enables the students to become accustomed to having different teachers for different subjects without the disruption of moving the students from room to room. Before the lesson begins, the children are working problems and waiting. The teacher begins direct instruction math with them. She reads about equivalent fractions and then reads a problem. She snaps her fingers, and the kids read in unison. The teacher refers to the children by Mr. and Miss So and So. A girl gets a box of calculators and passes them out. The teacher tells the kids to check their calculators and make sure they are working. She tells them to use calculators to work the first two problems. They are to raise their hands when they finish. One girl raises her hand almost immediately. The teacher puts  $27/38 (15/15) = \underline{\quad}$  on the board. She asks, "How many are finished?" Not many raise their hands. She says, "Hurry people." She then says, "This is what you should have -  $405/570$ ." Someone comes to the door to talk with the teacher. The children sit quietly while she talks. The teacher calls a boy into the hall to speak with the visitor. She comes back to the board, leaving the boy with the lady in the hall who reprimands him.

The teacher goes over the next problem  $3/4(118/118) = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ . Thomas is writing. Kalli is watching the board. The teacher puts  $354/472$  on the board. The next problem is  $15/11$  ( $25/25$ ) =  $375/275$ . Thomas watches the board then leans his arm on the bookcase next to him. The teacher says, "Raise your hand if you got everything right." Most kids raise their hands—Kalli and Thomas both raise their hands. The teacher says, "Very good. Great job." She moves to the next problem. They next move to problems involving prime numbers. This involves unison responses as practice. The teacher reads instructions for individual seatwork. The kids work quietly. The teacher stands in front of the room, then sits on a boy's desk. She asks, "How many are not finished?" Most kids raise their hands. Someone asks, "All of them?" She responds, "All of them." The teacher erases the board while she waits for the class to finish. Children's hands begin to go up. The teacher calls children to the board to put problems up.

Thomas volunteers to put the second problem on board.  $3 \times 3 \times 2 \times 3 = 54$ . (During previous observations, researchers have found it unusual for Thomas to volunteer for anything.) The teacher asks, "Is that correct, class?" They respond, "Yes." The teacher says, "Fine." She calls to the next kid who says he didn't get to that one. She says, "Work it anyway. Don't you know your prime numbers?" The boy shakes his head and slowly erases the board. Thomas writes as he waits. Kalli sits quietly twisting her braid. The boy, Corey, has written  $2 \times 3 \times 2$  on board. The teacher asks a girl, April, to help him. April comes to the front and erases Corey's work. April writes  $2 \times 3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 = 72$  on board. The teacher asks Corey whether he understands. He doesn't. She tells him that his homework will help him to understand his prime numbers. Next, a girl puts  $5 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 2 = 180$ . The teacher says, "Very good. Maybe you were absent when we did our drill, Corey." He agrees. The teacher moves on to the next part.

At 12:54, they begin checking their work on this part. There is a cycle of kids working problems and then checking them with the teacher at the front of the room. The teacher sits on a boy's desk at the front of the room except when she walks to the board to put correct answers up. Thomas seems attentive to this lesson. Kalli also pays attention. Most kids appear to be involved in the problem solving. The teacher reads a problem dealing with deposits and withdrawals from a bank account. Several of each are made. The ultimate question is "how much money is in the account?" Thomas is the first to raise his hand.

The children answer \$251 in unison. The teacher says, "Say it like you're sure about it!" The kids repeat it more loudly. They then subtract \$45 from it. They move on to comparing fractions. A bell rings at 1:06. The teacher stops the lesson and says, "Okay, we'll start here tomorrow." The kids put away their math books and get out their science books. A girl collects the calculators.

By 1:13, another teacher, Mrs. J., has arrived. In the meantime, Mr. B. has come back to check on a boy with severe emotional problems who has returned today and is on medication for this. Kids are asking Mrs. J. about her whereabouts yesterday. A kid asks why teachers live so far away from the school. Mrs. J. says they have no control over where they teach. If she did, there are many schools closer to her house. There is some exchange about books and invading each other's space. Mrs. J. leaves the room. Kids are



talking among themselves. One tells them to shut-up. Mrs. J. returns briefly and leaves again. One kid has told the others that they should be careful what they say—they'll be kicked out of school because I am taking notes on everything they say. The lady who has been talking with a boy in the hall during math has returned to talk with Mrs. J.. They both come into the room to talk to the boy and then leave. The children shush each other. Two girls go to the front of the room and monitor, listing names of those who are misbehaving. A boy erases them. One of the girls return them to the board.

At 1:28, the kids are still waiting. They are very worried about what I'm writing down about them. They have been back here to ask about it. The girl monitoring is still writing names on the board. Mrs. J. is still in the hall with the lady. There are now six names on the board.

At 1:35, Mrs. J. returns and apologizes to the class. She says that she has been talking with a parent. (The researcher observing the class later learned that that woman was actually another teacher.) Mrs. J. says that she will postpone a test they had scheduled because she wasn't here yesterday. She calls roll and asks about a boy who kids report as absent because he got into a fight. When Thomas is called he answers, "Aqui'." He apologizes. Mrs. J. says, "Don't worry."

At 1:36, Mrs. J. begins walking around checking outlines that kids have prepared. She gets to Thomas and says that she will not accept excuses from the kids. They should know what they are to be doing. She says again that they will not have a quiz tomorrow because she isn't comfortable that they are ready for it since she was absent yesterday. She continues checking their work.

Her checking takes four minutes; at 1:40, Mrs. J. begins to review what "communicable diseases" means. She also reviews "noncommunicable diseases" with the children. Then she points the class to the lesson review at the end of Chapter 2. Thomas has his head on his desk. Kalli is leafing through her book. Mrs. J. asks, "How do bacteria and viruses cause diseases?" No one answers immediately. Then she explains how bacteria reproduce using pink eye as an example. She moves to viruses. She directs the kids to the book and a picture that will show what a virus does. She differentiates between bacteria and viruses by saying that bacteria simply reproduce while viruses not only reproduce but also kill healthy cells. She uses AIDS as an example of a virus that kills healthy cells. "What are the two causes of noncommunicable diseases?" Mrs. J. reminds the class that these are diseases that will not transfer from one person to another. The kids give examples of heart disease, sickle cell anemia, cancer, and diabetes. Mrs. J. asks, "What causes some of these diseases?" The students respond, "The environment and heredity." Mrs. J. gives a silly example of "the bunkus and the kunkus" as being hereditary. She makes the point that even if there is bunkus and kunkus in their family, it doesn't necessarily mean that they will get it. She ends the session by telling the kids what they will do tomorrow.

At 1:50 p.m., the students go to the computer math lab. Each student sits at a terminal and works on skills that he/she has been diagnosed as needing to develop. Some are doing addition, some multiplication, some more advanced fractions, etc. Thomas is working on



dividing with a one digit divisor, and Kalli is working on computing multi-digit differences. The children stay on-task during the lab session and appear to enjoy working on the computers. The school day ends at 2:30.

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## *School H*

### *Northern California*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

School H is an example of a school that works to make sure all of its students do well academically, socially, and emotionally. It is committed to building good relationships between individuals, regardless of ethnic, gender, age, class, or other differences. It is a member of the Child Development Project (CDP), which emphasizes building community, and it participates in a number of other local programs designed to assist schools in providing high quality math and science classes, for example, "Project Ocean."

School H serves an ethnically mixed population in a California city, including several students from first- or second-generation immigrant backgrounds. Students come to the school from a wide range of language backgrounds, and some teachers are bilingual and/or have a Language Development Specialist (LDS) credential. Nearly half the students qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch.

We chose to visit School H because it is a Child Development Project site. The Child Development Project was designed to enhance children's sociomoral development as well as their intellectual development; currently its work is targeted at the elementary school years. 'Sociomoral,' a term that CDP project staff use interchangeably with 'prosocial,' includes elements in four domains: cognitive characteristics; affective, motivational, and attitudinal characteristics; behavioral competencies; and action tendencies. The CDP includes several programmatic elements—a comprehensive classroom program, a set of schoolwide and community services, and a parent program—and strives to create caring communities in schools. Currently, twelve elementary schools in six districts across the country have adopted the CDP. At several sites, the project has succeeded in revitalizing ineffective programs: changing teacher behaviors, affecting positively students'

perceptions of their teachers and their schools, and improving students' school performance. CDP sites serve a diverse constituency and include Chapter 1 schoolwide programs and programs working largely with Hispanic and migrant populations.

### *Lessons from School H*

Primary lessons suggested by our visit to School H include the following: First, striving to improve the teaching ability of all teachers is an important goal, since the differences by classroom at School H are part of the explanation of why test scores remain low, though many good things are happening at the school. Second, by bringing parents into the school, School H has benefited in a number of ways. Third, teachers at this school help each other a lot and, in part by example, have created a culture in which students help each other a lot as well. Teachers are developing not only their students' study and academic skills, but also their citizenship and leadership skills. This leads us to the fourth lesson: School H teachers are working to break down barriers of all kinds: ethnicity, gender, age, social class, and so on. They want students to develop as caring and responsible individuals, ones who will not choose their friends based on their skin color, gender, or social class. Fifth, this school, with its substantial immigrant population, suggests the problem with drawing firm conclusions about the quality of teaching and administration at a school from standardized test scores. It may well be that some teachers may not have high enough expectations for their students, but students who have recently immigrated and are only just learning English cannot be expected to score high on standardized tests, no matter how good their school is.

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### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

School H is an integrated neighborhood school serving grades kindergarten through five. The school is located on the top of a hill near the State University. The school building itself is two stories high, with kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms on the first floor, and third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms on the second floor. The main office is located on the second floor.

The interior of the school is beautifully decorated with student artwork. The halls, stairwells, and cafeteria display group projects and individual student work including essays, science projects, watercolor pictures, and so on. Particularly notable are the clay wall murals that depict undersea life and a view of the city, and the quilts done by each class. These projects were completed by students with the help of an artist in residence, parents, and community members. Outside the front office there is a bulletin board that says "School H... A Caring Community of Learners," accompanied by photographs of students working together in classrooms and of teachers working together. On the walls in the library there are pairs of masks that were made by pairs of student "buddies."

### *Social Problems*

As noted above, many of School H's students come from limited income homes, with nearly half qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. Students in many cases do not enter school with the type of preparation characteristic of more affluent communities. In some cases, they first begin to learn English after entering the school. Although mild compared to some schools, some students carry resentment toward other students who speak languages they do not, falling into the typical American trap of thinking that someone speaking a language that you don't understand must be talking about you and/or saying things they don't want you to understand. Also, although teachers stress that the class backgrounds of students do not matter, it does (along with their language backgrounds) likely affect how students do on standardized tests, and, therefore, how the school is perceived by others in the community.

### *Lack of Community Support*

Although the school appears to be somewhat supported by the surrounding community, perceptions of the school based on the ethnicity of the students and the not-very-high tests scores contribute to weaker support for the school than it probably deserves.

### *Positive Environmental Aspects*

Though located in a major city, School H is in a fairly nice area. Single family townhouses surround the school. From the playground, there is a magnificent 360-degree view which includes rolling hills and the ocean. While the school building is not new, it is in good repair and the physical plant kept clean. There is no evidence of graffiti in the school, although there is some graffiti on signs in the surrounding neighborhood.

The student body is ethnically mixed, and students benefit from the fact that the surrounding neighborhoods are somewhat integrated. While it still has a way to go, the area is in general more integrated than many parts of the U. S. In addition to being fairly residentially integrated, interactions between people from different ethnic backgrounds seem less characterized by racism and severe misunderstandings than is the case in some other areas around the country.

### *Program Development and Implementation*

Dr. B., School H's principal, described the school's vision: she and the teachers want students to leave their school academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for middle school. Their goal is to instill a love of learning in their students, and they want to promote the idea that learning is a lifelong endeavor. Excellence is key to their vision. They have tried to create an environment in which every child can excel, and (unlike some teachers and principals) they truly believe that every child can excel. In sum, they want every classroom to be one they would want their own children in. Dr. B. noted that they are constantly revisiting this vision. She described School H as having a climate of professional development and one that emphasizes constant learning for teachers. She noted that teachers (especially the teachers that are new to the school) are very giving of their time and energy. Collaboration is very important to the teachers at this school.

When asked how the school decides which students are at risk, Dr. B. said she believes that any child can be at risk at any given time. The school has an infrastructure in place to help at-risk students: Para-professionals may work with individual students that are targeted for assistance on the basis of teacher recommendation or low CTBS (California Test of Basic Skills) scores. The school also has an advisor, funded out of desegregation funds, who works with small groups of students who have problems with reading. There are also groups to work on self-esteem and student study teams.

### *The Child Development Project*

Dr. B. said she first became involved with the Child Development Project (CDP) and its president, Eric Schaps, five years ago. The deputy superintendent and another district office administrator had heard about CDP and visited implementation sites in San Ramon. Impressed with the program, they sent out information that they were beginning to look at the possibilities within the district. The assistant superintendent for elementary schools held an information session about CDP and urged Dr. B. to attend. Dr. B. said she was initially wary about taking on the program, given that they were already building community at School H. In addition, she described herself as a "process" person, skeptical of quick-fix programs. However, she was impressed with CDP and the notion of community-building, as she had been trained in "Tribes". She also liked the strong literature component, having been involved in the Bay Area Writing Project.

Dr. B. said that Eric Schaps visited School H and tried to convince her to have School H become a CDP school. She consented, believing that CDP fit in well with what they were already doing. She described the CDP concepts as "nuances" that brought them to new levels of understanding. Dr. B. felt that the release time provided by participation in CDP would give teachers more time to collaborate, and she was impressed with the parent component of the program.

In the first year of the program, the district funded School H and one other school. The first year was designated as a planning year. During the summer, two teachers went with Dr. B. to a two week institute in Berkeley. This "implementation team" then returned and worked with teachers in their classrooms. The staff planned together as a group for a full year. In the second year, there was school-wide implementation of CDP.

Dr. B. told us that the other school had difficulty in implementing CDP and pulled out of the program this year. She said that from the beginning there was a question of commitment on the part of the staff. This was not a site where teachers had spent much time talking about teaching and learning.

Dr. B. noted that, at School H, CDP was particularly helpful to new teachers in terms of establishing community in the classroom and using literature. For more veteran teachers, CDP heightened their efforts. Ms. E., a fourth grade teacher, went into the project as a teacher-leader, but even so has grown considerably through her participation. Dr. B. believes that all the teachers have bought into CDP. Those on the lower end of commitment to CDP were those that loved the school as it was and did not want it to

change. Now, commitment to CDP is high enough that the program continued to exist despite lay off threats a couple of years ago. Dr. P. said that even when the funding ends, the principles and values of the project will continue at School H.

CDP did not come in with a script for staff development, although CDP coordinators do come and work with the staff in their classrooms. There are also four paid CDP staff development days. The staff uses some of this paid time to read and discuss articles. The staff has studied constructivist learning, cooperative learning, and partner-to-partner reading. As part of CDP, teachers have learning partners with whom they work and plan. The partners may also study an article or watch a video together. They meet formally once a month, and also informally.

When asked about the role of the district, Dr. B. said that the deputy superintendent who had introduced her to the program was interested both in CDP and in what the school was doing and has continued to be very supportive. She serves on the leadership team for CDP in the district. The district has also funded a full-time facilitator for CDP who is responsible for scheduling and getting substitute teachers during release times for the regular faculty. Eric Schaps had a good relationship with the past superintendent. The current superintendent is supportive of the program, but has not visited the school.

Dr. B. talked about trying to replicate CDP. She believes that the key ingredients are: a principal who understands community, understanding of community among the staff as a whole, a shared vision, teachers who are engaged in talking about teaching and learning, and strong teacher-leaders. Resources are also necessary for release time so that teachers can reflect on practice and work together on an on-going basis. Teachers also need to see the district personnel as supportive. If these factors are not present, Dr. B. sees implementation as problematic. She said if she were to go to a new school that was not ready, she would begin building community on her own, building teacher collaborations and teacher-leaders—before implementing CDP.

When asked what indication she has that CDP is working at School H, Dr. B. said "walking into classrooms and looking at students' work and looking at relationships between teachers, between students, and between teachers and students."

#### *Other Aspects of the School's Approach*

The school has begun moving toward authentic assessment. Teachers have discussed portfolios and attended workshops. This year they have portfolios for writing and for math. School H is also expanding its bilingual education program. For the past several years, all classes have sheltered English instruction as all of the teachers have gotten their LDS (Language Development Specialist) credentials, through Dr. B.'s encouragement. This year, they also have a Chinese bilingual kindergarten with twenty students.

Dr. B. believes that all kids need art, and that art is an important component of integrated units of study. There is no full-time art teacher at School H. The school has been able to hire several artists-in-residence using P.T.A. money and school improvement funds. These



artists-in-residence work with classes for three months at a time. The school also participates in the LEAP program, and last year it was invited to participate in the Sand Castle Classic.

Using state school improvement funds, Dr. B. was also able to improve the science and art programs at the school. School H became a "Project Ocean" school, implementing a marine biology program that served as the model for integrating across the curriculum. In addition, she spent time building teacher-leaders in core areas. Two teachers became very involved with this science program, and two others soon thereafter, who were very interested in math, became involved in the Math Leadership Program.

#### *Parental Involvement*

The parents at School H are very active and bring a great deal of resources into the school, both fiscal and human. Dr. B. has also attempted to build a community of learning among the parents by having Family Math, Family Literature, and Family Art Nights. CDP has helped support those activities, as part of the vision of the program to build community at large. There is a school-wide community committee that has set up a class family quilt project. Each child takes a square home and decorates it with their family. Parent volunteers put the quilts together.

#### *Staff and Participants*

School H's principal, Dr. B., has been at the school for nine years. She appears to be African-American and in her mid 40s. During her time at the school, she has had the opportunity to hire many of the faculty herself and to chart a direction for the school. Eighty-percent of the teachers have been at the school nine years or less. Although she hired many of the new staff herself early on, she has since put together a hiring committee of teachers who interview prospective applicants. Many of the teachers who were hired over of the last few years were former interns at the school through the 'City H' State University Teacher Education Program. All of the teachers who have been at School H for some time serve as master teachers in the intern program. (The state university is a ten minute walk from the school.) Some para-professionals at the school have since become teachers through the state university, and in some case they have returned to School H after finishing their degrees. A fifth grade teacher who is currently taking the place of a teacher on leave is one example. Currently, there are 16 teachers on the staff, including special education.

The school has 385 students. Enrollment was much lower when the current principal first came to the school because many students were not attending their assigned school. Currently, 49% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches. The principal described the school population as "diverse middle class." with students from African-American, European-American, Filipino, Latino, Chinese, and Korean backgrounds. Twenty different languages are represented at the school.

### *Project Services*

In addition to the programs mentioned above, the YMCA runs an on-site child care program after school, paid for by parents. Some families are able to get subsidized child care through this program.

### *Resources*

School H gets some funding from the Child Development Project which is used to support staff retreats and planning. It also receives desegregation funds, which are used to help students who need extra help with reading.

### *Project Outcomes*

According to the teachers noted during the focus group, standardized test scores at School H have been improving, though they are still somewhat low. Other outcomes include the sizable increase in enrollment since the current principal with her community-building philosophy arrived at the school. When she first started at School H, many students who should have been at School H were being sent to other schools by their parents. It was not "just" a matter of poor academic quality; parents were concerned about basic things like the level of safety at School H. This principal was able to bring teachers together and to build community among them, as well as to reach out to parents. She created structures in the school, such as the buddy system, which seem to reduce the incidence of inter-student violence, creating an atmosphere in which students know they should look out and care for one another.

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## *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

### *1. High Reliability requires*

Shared Clarity regarding Core Goals.

The school has a clear mission, during our visit it was not clear that this translated into a clear, finite set of goals and objectives.

It is worth noting that the second school in the district undertaking this program pulled out. The deputy superintendent was of the opinion that at the second school people knew that they would be required to do "something different," that they didn't want to change, and given choices, they "paid lip service to this program, but didn't buy into it." When central administration and the program began insisting that the school actually do the things to which they had committed, the school pulled out. The next year, central administration dispersed the school's faculty and administration, and "reconstituted" the school.

School H's staff expressed a continuing commitment, and remained in the program.

**2. A perception, held by the public and all of the employees, that failure by the organization in its core task(s) would be disastrous.**

The principal seemed determined to make the school a success for all students. It was not clear how strongly the community shared this goal. Several people described parent and community support as excellent. The principal described parents as, "Incredible, incredibly supportive."

**3. High Reliability Organizations are alert to surprises or lapses.**

(Small failures can cascade into major failures, and hence are monitored carefully.) How?

The school seemed about average on this dimension. The specifics of the curriculum may have been a plus.

**4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve its Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:**

- Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),
- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

The specifics of the curriculum may have helped. The relatively public nature of so much of the classes work probably pushed this objective to some extent. The principal stated that the school has kept portfolios of all students, starting 4.5 years ago. However, evidence of active additions to the portfolios, or regular use of them in real time, was not obvious to the observation team. Several other schools in the study had more of this evident.

High Reliability Organizations MUST rely on individual professional judgment, regardless of the person's position or rank. Therefore:

**5. HROs recruit extensively.**

The school was able to recruit teachers very successfully. The principal says that 80% of the staff have nine or fewer years at the school. She has hired all but one of the paraprofessionals in her 8 years.

**6. HROs train and retrain constantly.**

A lot of staff development for the whole staff. The program requires regular release time for teachers to work together on new, and continuing program components. That has been supported by the school and the central administration.

*7. HROs take performance evaluation seriously.*

During her years, the principal dismissed a 2nd year teacher, "guided" two additional people out of the school, and did not discourage several retirements. The program's staff, from across the bay, took the school's performance evaluation very seriously. There is also a "summer institute" for all teachers in June, and principals in the spring.

*8. HROs engage in mutual monitoring (administrators and line staff) without counter-productive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

There was a fair amount of openness among some staff, but not all. The program requires, and the school supports "Partner study and support" efforts. Pairs and trios of teachers observe each other's classes, work and plan together, and meet monthly to plan and grow.

Because the flight of time is the enemy of reliability:

*9. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.*

The program extended the standardization of many components. The principal was well organized.

*10. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs, honor the flaw-finders, and support the nomination and validation of changes in inadequate procedures.*

The program conducts continuing, long-term, process and outcome monitoring, and upgrades itself based on this data. The school level initiatives were less obvious.

*11. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize and honor collegial decision making, regardless of rank.*

The school seemed relatively "flat." For example, the janitor stated with pride, "I don't even have a job description!" By that he meant that everyone, from the principal to the janitor, simply does what needs doing when it needs doing to get things done.

There was a substantial assumption of equality among faculty and administration. In contrast to his reflections on several other schools, Springfield, wondered whether the hierarchy ever came into play here.

*12. In HROs, key equipment is available and maintained in the highest working order.*

A great deal of art, video, and related equipment seemed to be in regular working order, and working.

13. *HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.*

The central administrator for the area clearly attended to the school. She was in contact with the principal. However, it was not clear that her schedule allowed anything approximating regular visits to the school. The programs staff had made regular visits to the school.

The district's deputy superintendent "made sure" that the grant money to support the project at this school was made available for each of four years.

14. *In HROs, short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

The district's budgetary concerns were real, and seemed very nearly omnipresent. They cast a pall over many discussions about the future.

The school received a four year grant from the city to undertake the program. This is to be the last year of grant support. How much will abide when the funds go away?

*Summary.* The program's headquarters were perhaps a 1 hour drive from the school. The program people seemed committed to achieving high levels of program implementation in all classrooms. However, they could only be at the school on an irregular basis, and had no line authority. The district's central administration was in the midst of downsizing, and providing "site-based management." The line-supervisor of the school was interested in the school's progress, and had clearly gone to bat to save funding for the program at this school on at least one occasion, but had little time to visit.

The school had provided a great deal of staff development to staff, but the funds for those services were near an end, with a probability that they would not be continued.

The program and the intentions of the developers were impressive. The implementation featured many well meaning, hard working people, including the principal. The staff development and staff teaming program had been impressive. However, it was not clear that an adequate, long-term system of supports had been or would be present to guarantee high reliability.

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### *Analysis of Community*

#### *Results from a teacher and a student focus group*

*Overview.* Relations among teachers seemed to be very positive; this was evident both from the way they interacted and according to their own reporting. They mentioned over and over again the way they help each other out and enjoy each other's company. One teacher noted, "I think that's why I've been here twenty-one years... We just get along so well..." Others agreed: "...I've been to other schools... I didn't realize..." "I think that's where you really notice it—when you go to other schools—" "You don't know 'til you go to somewhere else, and you're shocked." "—And visit, and give workshops, or when visitors come here, and they point this out. We're aware of it, but... the climate the

collegiality... I have a mentee that spent a whole day with me the other day, and he just kept saying, 'Oh, I didn't think it could be like this...' You really are more aware of it when you have outsiders come in and make these comments. Substitute teachers—they're always saying how they love to come back here..."

Teachers and students are both aware of the contributions others make to the school. They noted the valuable role that the janitor plays at the school, as a student put it, 'He adds a lot of fun to the school, besides making it clean.' Teachers at School H spoke well of their principal. Several credited her with setting the positive tone of the school. For example, one noted, "I think a lot of it is that [the principal] sets that kind of tone. I remember being able to kid around with her from the first year on..." She went on to note how the students observe these interactions, and what a good example it sets for them as well. The teachers also discussed the help they get from each other and how students are aware that "even teachers" help each other.

Relations between teachers and parents seemed to be quite positive. Several students in the focus group mentioned their parents' involvement as treasurers or presidents of the P.T.A. Teachers were especially appreciative of the contributions parents make to the school, both by generally being supportive of them as teachers and by helping to raise money for special equipment and events.

Relations between teachers and students appear to be particularly positive. When students were asked what things they like most about the school, several talked about the learning opportunities at the school: "The work is challenging." "It teach you things..." "You could learn a lot..." "It's fun, and the math is good. I learn a lot of math at this school..." Several students mentioned that they learn a lot and have fun doing it, whether in math, science, music, or spelling. A student complaining about the silent reading times felt that "It takes up time. I like reading and all, but... [I wish we'd spend more time doing] social studies." Although one student commented that "I don't like some of the student teachers 'cause I think they're boring," when asked what is the best part of the school, one of the first students to answer replied, "The teachers." Students in the focus group seemed almost unequivocally positive about the faculty and staff of the school. Teachers, for their part, seem to be very fond of their students. "They are friendly, and warm, and humorous." "And [have] great personalities," another teacher added. In an interchange indicative of both the relations between students and teachers and among teachers, "...They do slip a lot and call you 'Mommy.' And I think that may be a tip off." Another asked of a male teacher in the group, "Do they call you Mommy, Greg?" Greg: "Not yet." Another female teacher put in, "They call me 'Daddy' sometimes." Teachers in the groups spoke of ongoing relationships, ones that extend beyond the boundaries of a school year. As one teacher said of her students, "Overall, they're really supportive..."

Students in the focus group said that some students don't feel comfortable going to the principal or assistance principals for help, but that others do. Teachers noted that students are very aware of the positive relations among staff: "They listen for all their little ears are worth." The discussion among the teachers provided many examples of teachers enjoying and caring for one another and for students.



Teachers at School H feel that relations among students are very good. They see, and encourage, students helping each other. They noted that students in their classrooms get a lot of pleasure from seeing their classmates—especially those having a hard time—succeed. In fact, when asked what they thought would be good indicators of community in a school, and what the benefits for children would be, one teacher replied with: "I'd say look out on the school yard and watch those children play." She added, commenting on the incorporation of diversity at the school, "Who are their friends?" The teachers seem very proud of the way their students relate to each other and help each other, and this may well be as important as their "success" in academic fields. Students in the focus group for the most part feel that students get along pretty well together; though they mentioned occasional arguments and students taking things out on others, they felt that "Most of the time we get along good, but sometimes we get noisy." They confirmed teachers' comments that the arguments and fights that do arise come from differences of opinion, for example, "...like what we're going to do about games..." rather than having to do with ethnicity. In fact, students voiced their feeling that it was good to be at a school with different types of people. Students also described how they like helping other students. When students were asked how they would make the school better, some of their comments include, "It's good." "It is." "Nothing really."

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Nothing was explicitly said concerning a shared vision at the school, yet several of the teachers' remarks seem to suggest that they do share a vision of how schools should be, and the students' remarks suggest that they benefit from it. Teachers seem to want a school where children do well academically. However, they resent a situation in which students are pressured externally to meet standards they may not yet be up to. Teachers in the focus group exhibited a great deal of concern about the not-very-high test scores of School H, and they noted that these scores reflect in part the class and language backgrounds of the students, making it harder for them to succeed, and easy for them to feel intimidated. One teacher noted that this year out of 27 students in her class, 14 are officially considered limited or non-English speaking. Another observed, "These children for the most part don't come from the upper socio-economic bracket... They don't have the experiences that are necessary to do well on a lot of these tests. They just can't relate to many of things that are on the test." "And yet," another teacher concluded, "there are many other areas that they are exceptional at because of their background. And the test doesn't measure those." The teachers also see high test scores as to a certain extent reflecting a competitive atmosphere. As one teacher interjected into a discussion of parents who want to make sure their children do better than other children, "—We're looking for justice and fairness—" "Exactly," another replied. "That's what the parents want.—" "That could be part of what it is. We don't have... a group of parents who are going to make their kid stay up 'til midnight every day to get this high test score. In some schools you do have more groups of parents that are more competitive... The competition factor is not such a big deal." These teachers want the tests to assess their students' overall learning, especially if the tests are going to be used as indicators by government agencies and prospective parents.

These teachers feel strongly that a more general assessment instrument that tapped important school-related attitudes and experiences would place School H at least in the top third of schools: "Give an assessment instrument to kids that asks them, 'Do you enjoy coming to school? How many times this year did you wake up and not want to go to school? Do you feel accepted by your teacher? Do you feel you can talk to kids on the playground?' And have a nice assessment instrument like that that went out to all the elementary schools, and then publish the results of that in the paper..." "The measures are so limited... If we're trying to prepare kids to go out there in the world, and how well you read a little paragraph and answer five comprehensive questions on it to me doesn't matter as much as how you get along, how you work with your people at work, how you raise your kids..." Without diminishing the value of academic mastery, these teachers feel that all schools should be concerned with developing in students the type of skills that make them good, caring, responsible citizens, not just highly productive workers.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Throughout the course of the focus group, teachers described acting in ways that suggest a shared (if not explicitly mentioned) sense of purpose. "...We're like a... family. I mean, I can work with [her] kids; she can work with mine... It's not like we have this territorial thing where I can only deal with my children and no one else is allowed to interfere. We've never operated that way." "[It's] like I'm never done with my kids even when they go to [her]... It's like we still are involved with them at a whole bunch of different levels and different things. I never feel like I just have this class and that's it. They're all sort of our students." "The kids know that too, 'cause they can go to any teacher." Materials useful in the classroom appear to be shared easily as well. "At the end of the school year, you kind of have to go through your stuff and figure out whose stuff you have..."

*Shared Values.* Teachers spoke a fair amount about how they convey certain things to their students, both by directly emphasizing them ("...I have been known to say, 'We don't act like that here'") and by modeling behaviors that they'd like their students to develop in a natural way. Though there was no explicit discussion of values, their values were revealed in the way they care for their students and the way they try to set an example for them of good ways to treat others. This approach, as will be described further below, has created a community resource in that students themselves help to pass along these values to new students. In particular, these teachers like to see students learning and enjoying learning, enjoying coming to school, feeling safe in their relationships with others, taking pleasure in their own achievement and in the achievements of others, helping other students when they need extra help on an assignment or on the playground. Also, teachers emphasize community explicitly with their students, beginning in kindergarten. As one noted, "In my room, I still really work on community... Even if they've had it every year... It's something I think we all work on. It's a great place because we work on it. I think there are problems like any other place, but they don't erupt into major incidences..." The school in fact calls itself "A Caring Community of Learners." Lastly, they feel that children (and, by implication, adults) should relate to each other positively without letting differences by ethnicity, class, "ability," age, or gender hinder the way they interact with each other. Students' comments and behaviors in large measure suggest that these values are being effectively transmitted to them.

*Trust.* Teachers in the focus group emphasized that School H is a school where students feel safe in a number of ways. "[This is a good place for a child] if a parent came up and wanted a safe place where children could grow and be happy and nurtured and feel safe to walk down the halls, safe to talk to anybody..." They feel that students are comfortable asking for help from other students, from their teacher, and from other teachers as well. "...They'll come up if they have a problem and approach another teacher if their teacher isn't around. So there's a trust." Students seemed to agree that they feel comfortable talking with their teachers outside the classroom. One said of the principal, "Yeah, like if somebody's trying to beat you up and no yard teacher can do something, you can always go to [the principal]." When students were asked what they would do if they had a problem at home or at school, they replied, "Then we would go tell the teacher." A student interjected, "If it's a problem at home, we'd tell our mom." Another student explained how a different circumstance that might arise: "But if there's a big problem that you don't like at home, like if somebody's doing something to you you don't like at home, you can tell the teacher and they can put a report on it or something—help you out."

*Caring.* Teachers at School H can help us to see how a caring environment can increase at-risk students' interest in and love for school, as well as give them additional social support. A teacher volunteered, "I think there's a lot of nurturing [going on]." Another added, "I think this is the case throughout the school and in all the classrooms... The children really love to come to school here, and I think it's because we do have a special environment here. And there's a real caring; there's a real support system. Not only for the children within your classroom, but I think we feel like we're a total family..." "I think we thoroughly enjoy them too. We enjoy their humor; they enjoy ours. You know, we share the funny things that go on in our classrooms at lunch time or after school; we just get a kick out of them. And, I think they pick up on that; I mean they really know that we enjoy them, and we banter a lot with each other... We model, sort of, an appropriate way to behave. I feel we do. We sort of model good relationships among the members of the staff, and they sort of pick that up, and it's a real warm sort of environment here."

When teachers were asked how they get along with the students outside of the classroom, they responded: "They're like your own kids almost. They drive you nuts, and they make you cry, and they hug you, and haul you around, and they walk into the lunch room and they don't knock. They act like they own the place, you know?!" "And they don't want to go outside." "They don't," another exclaimed. "You can't get rid of them. You can't get them out at the recess." "They come in the morning, you know, before the bell rings. They want to be in the classroom—they want to be in the classroom during recess, during lunch; they don't want to go outside."

One of the reasons teachers feel that big problems don't develop is "...because things are dealt with... Like if a child is really having a difficult problem... and they try to take it on themselves, and they haven't been able to do that, I think we treat it as if it's important, and we'll sit down, even during recess time or whatever, and talk about it with the kids that are involved. And they see that we feel it's important, too." This kind of attitude seems to produce confidence in students that their problems do matter to teachers and principals, and that getting an adult's help may actually be worthwhile. Students' remarks also well indicated that this is the case.

Teachers also seem to care about each other, and to feel comfortable joking with each other, even in front of the students. As one teacher told the principal when the principal wondered whether the two of them should be joking with each other in front of the students, "...I think it's really good for the kids to see adults having fun together and having friendship, and interacting. And they love to see that..."

Teachers also spoke about how their students care what happens to each other, how they care about each other (and how pleased teachers are by this attitude on the part of students). Rather than competition, students support each others' achievement and take pleasure in each others' successes. As one teacher described her feelings and observed, "Something that I see that makes me really happy is that how pleased my little guys are with each other's progress. When somebody who wasn't reading is reading, the other ones are just so happy—they're like happier than the one who got better at reading. That sort of concern for how the other one's doing, and happiness when they succeed is really nice. I love that; it makes me really happy. When I see that I feel like the right things are happening in the room." Other teachers added, "They actually applaud sometimes, you know." "Yeah, when someone's had a really hard time with something..." Students said they will be sad to leave their school when they graduate. "I made a lot of friends and learned a lot of things." "I'm going to miss a lot of my friends 'cause... I'm not going to be able to see them any more—it'll be hard." Others added, "Cause you have little kid friends, like in fourth grade or something, and you feel like you're leaving them behind..." "I've been here since kindergarten, and all my teachers are here, and I kind of don't want to leave."

*Participation.* Although teachers in the focus group didn't volunteer comments about participating in school decisions, for example, they did talk a fair amount about another kind of participation: actively participating in helping each other with special needs (for example, those of a new teacher), and consulting with each other on a regular basis. There are also some get-togethers outside of the school day: "We have our carpools... we have our fun things; we have our occasional socials..." Though only some teachers get together socially on a regular basis, teachers generally seem to consult with each other and to interact a fair amount during the school day.

*Communication.* A teacher noted that "...There's a lot of interaction going on on a lot of different levels, not just a teacher and child, but on interpersonal relationships between adults and children—all the different adults that come through the school (and they know everybody)—and with each other." Another said, "If I say, 'Oh, can you go take this to—'... they know exactly who they are and where they are." Students described how their teachers handle difficult situations in their classrooms, giving us a glimpse of how teachers at School H communicate with their students. "Sometimes when we disagree... [about] what should we do in games and stuff, and sometimes we get mad at other people because they like did something wrong, our teacher tells us to cool down." "She don't want to get them in trouble, so she just tells them, 'Calm down.'... Sometimes you can't have no recess."

*Respect and Recognition.* Teachers, administrators, and students seem to have respect for each other and to be fairly quick to recognize the contribution others make to the school, though neither word came up specifically in the focus groups. As for the school itself, as described further below, it seems to get less respect from many community members, though, than a closer inspection of it would suggest it deserves.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The school itself seems to be doing a good job of incorporating the diversity of its student body and faculty; teachers are however aware of attitudes by some in the surrounding community that need work. One teacher noted that the school is often described by outsiders as a "black school," and they seem to have the idea that that means it is a bad school. She notes that this is both a racist and an elitist attitude (elitist since some are reacting more to the class position of the students rather than to their skin color per se). Nevertheless, students and teachers both reported that students get along well in spite of ethnic and other differences. As noted above, this is one of the goals the faculty at School H pursue. As a kindergarten teacher expressed it, "A lot of what I do is breaking down the barriers, between races, between sexes, between kids that look a little different than another kid, or kids who are more academically ahead—not to say that their potential is higher—but academically ahead compared to those kids who haven't had that kind of experience. Things like that. Break down these barriers, so that when they get to these grades they're able to support each other a little bit better." Another teacher, understandably pleased with her school, said, "...Watch those children play...They all play together; they don't really clique off that much in terms of culture or race. They have cross-age friends; they learn a lot from each other. They have disagreements, but they're based on the same kind of disagreement that Jennifer and I might have—just a different viewpoint, but not because of the family that they come from or the food that they eat. To me, that's really important. Every time when I'm out there on the yard... I look out there and I just feel really good because I know when I go to my son's school, it's just totally opposite." When students were asked whether there are any problems between students at School H because of ethnic backgrounds or disabilities, most students said no. One student, though, said "There's these like three Chinese people in our class, and they just talk in their language, and then they say bad stuff about us so we can't understand, so how can we like [tell] what they're saying." The student didn't make clear, though, whether the problem was her perception, in other words, she didn't explain how she knew that the Chinese-speaking students were saying bad things. Following up her comment, another student said that students sometimes comment about one student 'who needs to put Vaseline on his chapped lips.' The former student's comment suggests that there are some remaining problems, but the overall picture seems to be one of comparatively high incorporation of diversity. A couple of comments that students volunteered pay tribute to the faculty's incorporation of diversity: "Most of the other schools, they're mostly—one of them had mostly African-American, one had mostly white. So I like it here 'cause it's all mixed." One of the researchers followed up with the question, 'What do you think's good about having a mixed school?' "It fun to meet people that are maybe different from you...". Another added, "—from different places."



*Teamwork.* Teamwork at School H seems to often involve anticipating other's needs and being open to such help yourself. Teachers also noted that their students are able to observe this, bringing additional benefits. "We...model for the kids—teachers helping teachers. A lot of times we'll do things together as a team or we'll go consult each other, and sometimes I'll even just fake that I have to go do something and go into the next room and talk to Charlene for a second. So they see me asking for help from a colleague. So... they see that adults need help too. Or adults need to consult, too." "It's a very non-competitive situation... We... share materials; we share our ideas. We enjoy each others' company, I think..." Another teacher explained, "It's like there's not a bar at the door... The culture of the school is that we help each other..."

As suggested above, teachers also see teamwork as something important for students to learn to participate in as well. "Learn from the time they're in kindergarten to work with other people on projects and all sorts of things..." Teachers seem to feel somewhat fortunate that many of the children and families they deal with are not "cut-throat competitive... Occasionally you'll have a family that wants to make sure their child is the best, you know, 'Is my child doing better than so-and-so' and all, but we don't tend to get [those sorts of] kids..."

*Affirmation.* Not only is affirmation inherent in the way teachers support each other in classroom-related tasks, it appears as well when teachers have to present in front of each other. As a teacher who has visited other schools where this is not the case put it, "One thing I really appreciate, we do a lot of workshops, and everyone of us at some point need to be in front of our staff presenting. And even if it might be a little boring, or there might be some disagreement, or maybe it's not a great day for it, you know, I always know that people will be on task and looking at you and smiling, and be supportive, and if there's a long period where no one says anything, somebody will say something, just to bail you out..."

Though not much was specifically said about teachers affirming student work, the enjoyment students in the focus group seemed to take in their learning and students' tendency to affirm each others' successes suggest that it does probably play a significant role in the day to day lives of students at School H. Students in the focus group, including those who have been at other schools, agreed that they feel they belong here and that it is their school. They seem proud of their school, and feel sad to be soon leaving it.

Teachers were quick to volunteer, though, that the work their students do at School H does seem to prepare them well to go on. "...They come back and they say they're more than prepared. They know more; they're ahead... 'It's much easier' kinds of things. And they seem to do academically well, as far as the grades, because they report letter grades back..." A second teacher added, "To me that's really important. Are we preparing them to move along on the next step. And those kids who really want to grab for the brass ring, can they do it at this school? And I think they can." "And that's not to say that lots of individual kids don't score well, and that they're not scoring better and better all the time, too. Because we're not where we were; we've moved up even in those kinds of tests..."



*Conflict Resolution.* Teachers argued that, because of the focus on community, potential conflicts at the school do not become a big problem. "...Kids can step back, take time-outs..." Judging as well from student comments, teachers seem to have made an impact; when students were asked whether they learn anything in their classes about how to get along better, there was a chorus of "Yeah!"s. This was followed by a comment that was phrased as though the student thought the adults conducting the focus group should know better—"We learn that stuff in first grade." Others elaborated a bit further. "Our teacher told us to have self-control like don't yell across the room, things like that." "But some kids do it anyway." "Our teacher tells us like that we shouldn't start fighting people 'cause you'll get in trouble yourself... and that you should just say 'Stop it'..." Their concluding comments, advice to a student coming to the school in fifth grade, suggest that they feel comfortable in helping to maintain the norms of the school. "What would you tell them?" "That you've got to behave." "Get along with the teacher." "And not to come to this school thinking... you're going to be the boss of the school."

*Development of the New Members.* School H seems to do well at developing various types of new members. First, student teachers and para-professionals seem well incorporated into the community, judging from their interest in staying at School H and finishing their degrees. In addition, substitute teachers who have taught at School H try to come back.

Second, the faculty seems to be particularly good at helping new teachers to get started by giving them extra support and guidance. One teacher explained how it was her first year: "...Jennifer was next door to me during my first year of teaching... and she helped me all the time. You know, she helped me with kids that need some time out—her door was always open. She got me all kinds of supplies and things I needed. It was like all I had to do was walk into her room and ask. And that's like the way things are... You need some copies of some book, you just go around and ask everybody, 'Do you have this book?' Somebody will have it; they'll give it to you." Another added her first experiences at the school: "I certainly felt like that when I came. I mean, Sally was always in my room, the other second grade teacher who's not here this year. Letting me know about procedures. 'You know, Debbie wants to see the report cards before we send them home,' and just reminding me all the time. And a lot of things I didn't have to ask for, that she volunteered. She just always had a thought out for me basically; she was kind of holding a place for almost another student in her classroom. 'You need to know about this.' So I got a lot of that too..." Another teacher described feeling overwhelmed, when two colleagues suddenly appeared. "...They said, 'Joy, how are you doing?' ... Out of the blue at 7:00 in the morning. You know, they were right there, 'Do you need us to take your room? You going to be o.k.?' It was just fantastic, and you have so many insecurities when you're new, because it's such a huge responsibility. I think they took good care of me when I was new, and I'd like to think I—I would do that for any new teachers that were here, and just sort of keep it going like that."

Third, as came out over and over again in the teacher focus group, students are encouraged to be full members of the school—they are taught to help each other, tutoring each other and younger students as well. Teachers convey the importance of this to their students; as one put it, "There's a culture of kids helping kids. And we all kind of push that because we want kids to get help when they need it, and we can't be everything to everyone, so there's

a lot of peer tutoring, of asking kids to help other kids, and I think it's an expectation. I don't think I've ever had anybody say no to me when I ask, you know, 'So-and-so's having a hard time. Would you go over and help them with this?' And I think it's just we all kind of expect that, that they're going to help each other, both academically and on the playground. And there's structures that kind of support that—there's the big brother, big sister family (we call it 'partner buddies'). And then there's a lot of partner groupings in the class and small group stuff where it's modeled constantly that you help each other. You're expected to do that; kids want to do that, and so we tap in on that with all of the different programs." Students' comments confirm that teachers are helping students to internalize norms of helping each other and to get satisfaction from this role. Several students in the focus group agreed that they like helping students who don't learn as fast as they do. They also said they themselves get help from others as well. Some of the students mentioned that working with younger students was sometimes frustrating; one student explained, "Some of the kids in our class told the teacher that they don't listen when you try to read to them, and tell them about the story, but she said that they're little... and that they have more energy than us, and they really don't—you have to make them understand, so we can like just tell them what was the story about, and for them to just answer." As one child noted about helping those who need extra help, "You can make like new friends, and sometimes you can help one in need."

Teachers seem proud of the way they are helping their students to develop: "I personally feel like these kids are really articulate about how they feel about things. They have very strong ideas about the important things that will make them good citizens..." This suggests that over time, these students are likely to become the essential links between School H (and schools like it) and its surrounding neighborhoods, helping to remedy some of the current problems described below.

*Links Beyond the Community.* Parents support the school in various ways, and as a group are becoming more and more involved as part of the school community. As one teacher put it, "Everything you see new in this building is because of the parent group... They just are fantastic." Several of the students in the focus group said that their parents are involved at the school. One noted that her mom doesn't volunteer in the classrooms "cause she has a job in the daytime." One said, "My mom is the president of the P.T.A." Another volunteered, "My mom used to be the president of the P.T.A. She didn't even want to be president; somebody signed her up, and me and my sister told everybody to vote for her and everybody did, and she was president."

The biggest problem the school seems to face in this area is that many individuals outside the school have limited or outdated knowledge of the school, or otherwise currently hold problematic attitudes toward it. "...We need to get the word out. I know within the neighborhood there are people that are operating on a twenty, or even a thirty-year opinion of the school, and the school has changed dramatically in a number of phases over the years... They have no clue. When they get here, they love it. But I think we need to get the word out to the community somehow that this school is not what they think it is and, even beyond that, some of the assumptions that they have that are true are not negative. For example, I hear a lot that this is a black school. Well, it's a school. We have kids from every place all over the place... [That doesn't mean it's a bad school.] It's very racist, and

it's also very... elitist—it's an economic thing too. And we need to get the word out that you can go to school here. You can be from any background, you can be from any socio-economic class; it doesn't matter. You know, just come up and take a look!" Another teacher stressed, "When parents bring their kids here, though, and they look around and they observe in the classrooms, then they can't wait to get their kid in here." In response, a teacher commented, "For the sake of the kids... and because of how hard everybody works here, I would love to have high test scores because unfortunately, a lot of people look at the schools by the posted test scores; they don't even bother to come out. They, you know, they don't even have a clue... and yet when you come to this school you don't even ever see anybody who isn't bowled over by this place... It's like this Scarlet A..."

### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Not only do teachers seem to invest a lot of themselves in their work with their students, they also help to make sure their students do the same. The first type of investment is in the learning itself. A teacher told the following story: "...A student said something to me about... our classroom yesterday. He told me that in my classroom I make them figure out everything for themselves....It was his view that he got a lot of assistance, or he worked a lot with his other classmates... He perceived it as less a top-down kind of thing and more of a bottom-up type of thing..." The halls are covered with student work; one student explained the investments she saw in this work on display: "It feels like our school's like a very smart school... we do a lot of stuff. If we look at it, it means that they do a lot of stuff in their class, and not just playing or anything." A second type of investment at the school is in developing supportive, caring relationships, and through those relationships making the school a better place to learn and to be. Teachers also said that when a child has a problem that's too big for them to handle on their own, they will sit down and try to help them with it, at whatever time the child needs to.

### *Community Resources*

As noted above, because of the overall climate at School H, students, even young ones, have themselves become a resource for maintaining and developing community. A teacher described this situation as follows: "I think another thing that I've noticed over the years is when you get a new student, and... maybe the environment at the other school was very different, and so they come with this mindset of... what an elementary school is like. And right away they find out, not so much from what we do, but from the way the kids react to that kind of behavior. It's almost peer pressure that helps the child acclimate to our environment. They're so used to this environment where it's pretty safe and comfortable and there's not a lot of put-downs (to use their term) and stuff. So, when someone else comes in, it doesn't take very long for them to kind of get the swing of things, 'cause if they want to make friends and be a part of it, they really have to pick up on what happens here. So... we're helped a lot in that way by the children." Another teacher added, "I've seen other kids like that come in so—just—angry, like feeling completely unsafe, and then everyone is so surprised, and then they sort of figure out that they can be o.k. here. And then, there's a total change."

### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

The ethnic diversity of the school seems to have helped the school to strengthen its focus on community, but community reactions to it may be contributing currently to weak links between the school and some of its surrounding community.

The school probably also benefits from being located in an area where, when compared to some other areas of the country, there is on the whole more incorporation of diversity and better interethnic relations.

According to teachers, most of the students (and families) entering School H are more interested in justice and fairness than in making sure they do better than their peers. This tendency to be less competitive, while it probably hurts the test scores of the school, probably aides the school in fostering a sense of caring and teamwork among students.

The school's participation in the Child Development Project has probably strengthened its development of community, although they decided to participate in it in part because it fit their previously-existing commitment to building community.

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting School H, a student was observed during the course of her school day by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. Other classrooms were observed as well, including one for most of a day. The sections below describe typical school experiences for students at School H.

#### *A Day with Parla*

Parla is an African American fifth grade girl. She is tall and slender, appearing older than many of her classmates. She wears jeans, a white t-shirt with a bow, and a satin vest, and her long hair is tied back in a pony tail. A pink hooded sweatshirt hangs on her chair. Beside her is a backpack with the Los Angeles Raiders logo. Her appearance is nice, and she wears jewelry. She is friendly, well-spoken, and gregarious, and has many friends both in and outside of class. In class, she is hardworking, serious, and attentive. She is quiet when she needs to be, and speaks softly with her classmates during group work.

The principal, Dr. B., described Parla as a well-adjusted, conscientious student who is self-reliant and has strong opinions. Although she is a hardworking student, she performs in the middle range academically. In fourth grade, she went through a period of "lack of organization" in which everything seemed difficult for her. Dr. B. said she never figured out why Parla was having a hard time; she attributes it to a pre-adolescent stage she was going through. Parla is very involved with student activities, including the after-school YMCA program. Her mother is involved with the P.T.A. Dr. B. believes that younger students look up to Parla.

Parla's teacher, Mrs. D., says that Parla is on the upper end of her class in terms of academic achievement, though she said Parla is not identified as "gifted and talented." Mrs. D. describes Parla as someone who works hard and sees results. She is "a good kid" who enjoys reading and excels in math. Mrs. D. said that since the beginning of the year she has noticed Parla growing more mature, as things have sorted out in other areas of her life. (She was not specific, even after being probed, about what these other issues in her life were.)

In the student focus group, Parla said that what she liked most about School H is that the work is challenging. She has been at the school since kindergarten. She takes pride in her school, and says she will miss her teachers and friends when she goes to middle school next year. Parla said that her mother is the P.T.A. treasurer but does not have the opportunity to volunteer in her classroom because she works full-time. Parla thinks that students of different ethnic groups at School H get along well.

Mrs. D.'s fifth grade classroom is located on the second floor, across from the main office. The door to the room is left open through most of the day and not much noise is heard from the hallway. Students' desks are clustered into four tables; approximately six students are seated at each table. Two facing walls are covered with chalkboards. Large windows cover one wall; the shades are left closed to avoid the glare of the sun. Lighting in the classroom is adequate. In one corner of the room, there is a class library with a comfortable couch where students sit and read or work together in pairs at various times throughout the day. Mrs. D.'s desk occupies another corner; in between, there is a computer station.

Student artwork and projects are hung all over the classroom, including from the ceiling. Above the chalkboard, there are self-descriptive posters done by students; Parla's poster reads "Parla - Special, Happy, Amazing, Ravishing, Marvelous, Awesome", and includes a self-portrait. The room is well-stocked with resources—15 dictionaries, multicultural readings, several different books on Martin Luther King, two Apple computers, a large classroom library with many books, two globes, science lab trays, an overhead projector, an audio tape listening center, a film strip projector, three sets of encyclopedias, a shelf with many games.

The homework assignment is written on the chalkboard: 1) Study for spelling bee; 2) Read to end of MLK book; 3) List pages for pop-up. There is a large pad of butcher block paper upon which key words pertaining to the book on Dr. King are written, e.g., boycott, minority, slavery, segregation.

There is an observer from CDP in the back of the room taking notes. She leaves at the end of the first hour. A para-professional helps in the classroom during a portion of the time devoted to reading.

Mrs. D. is a maternal-looking woman who appears to be in her early 40s. She is casually dressed, and has a friendly demeanor with the students. She laughs, smiles often, and seems to enjoy teaching. She is described by the principal as a veteran teacher who is a



veritable expert in language arts, "a walking encyclopedia" who is very well-informed about children's literature. She is a bubbly, enthusiastic teacher who shows a great deal of love and concern for the children.

There are 28 students in the class. The approximate ethnic breakdown of the class is 35% African-American, 35% Asian-American, 20% Hispanic-American, and 10% European-American. About one third of the students appear to speak English as a second language.

Class begins at 8:00; the researcher entered the room at 8:25 due to short interview with the principal. The class is involved in a spelling bee. Half of the students are lined up on each side of the classroom, and the other half are seated at their desks. Parla is seated at her desk. All students are attentive and on task, whether involved in the spelling bee or watching from their desks. Students in each line take turns spelling words, and if they do not spell a word correctly, they must sit down. "Burglar" is the first word. Three students spell it wrong and return to their seats. An African-American boy spells it right. Several words follow, including "businessman," "cabinet," "calendar," "chapter," "chest," "comedy." Mrs. D. commends students for doing well, noting that these words are quite difficult. Eventually two students remain (an African-American boy and an Asian-American girl), and Mrs. D. announces that she is moving on to a fifth-grade word list since the students just "whizzed through" the fourth-grade list. Students at their seats attempt to whisper clues to the spellers and Mrs. D. tells them that while it is nice to be helpful, it is not fair to the students. Parla sits quietly, watching but not disturbing the spellers. The spellers get stumped on the word "alphabet," and they both sit down, signaling the end of the activity. The seated students all clap for the spellers, who receive stars on their cheeks from Mrs. D. for their performance. They will represent the class in an all-school spelling bee later in the week. Mrs. D. encourages the other students to help the star spellers study their word lists at recess.

At 8:35, Mrs. D. announces that the students are going to be making Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. pop-up books based on the book they are reading about him. Students will work in groups on this assignment. She suggests that each chapter be represented on one pop-up page. She shows the class a very nice example of a pop-up book made by the ESL students in the class. This pop-up book depicts rooms in their homes. Mrs. D. announces that next she will be reading with the ESL group and that the rest of the students will work on word searches and crossword puzzles related to the Martin Luther King book. She says they can help each other on the puzzles and that the puzzles will reinforce what they have read. When they are done with the puzzles, they may start working on the pop-up books. All students listen attentively as Mrs. D. gives directions.

At 8:37, to get students started on the puzzle, Mrs. D. asks the students several questions about the book on Martin Luther King: "Who can tell me something about Gandhi?" Several students raise their hand. One student is called on and answers "He was Dr. King's role model." Mrs. D. follows up with: "What country was he from?" Many hands go up. A student answers: "India." Mrs. D. asks: "What did he believe in?" Several hands. "Non-violence." Noticeably during this question-and-answer period, almost all the students who raise their hands are African-American; almost no Asian-American, Hispanic-American,



or European-American students participate, though at least 90% of the students are attentive. Parla raises her hand in response to the question of where Gandhi was from, but she is not called on.

At 8:40, Mrs. D. asks for student volunteers to pass out the puzzles. Parla volunteers, passes out the sheets, and returns to her table where she is seated with six other children. Her table is close to Mrs. D.'s desk and the front of the room. She faces the chalkboard, which is approximately ten feet away from her seat.

Mrs. D. works with a group of seven ESL students (about half are Asian, half are Latino) at a large table in the back of the room. She asks students to read portions of the Martin Luther King book and then asks follow up questions, such as "Was Dr. King a tall man?" A student answers that he was five feet, seven inches. Mrs. D. calls over a tall student in the class and then the para-professional to illustrate his height. These are straight comprehension questions, not requiring analysis. The remainder of the students work on the puzzles in pairs, while others continue to read the book. There are three pairs of students that are reading and completing the puzzle together. Two students are working alone on the computers during their assigned computer time. One is writing an essay. At about 8:45, eighty percent of the students at their desks are on task. Parla is on task, reading alone, mouthing the words as she reads. Those students that are not on task are walking around the room or chatting, albeit quietly, with their friends. Mrs. D. leaves the ESL group for a moment to circulate around the room, gently reminding students to get to work. A para-professional works with two Chinese-speaking ESL students on the couch. Three boys leave the room for band practice.

Parla begins to fill out the crossword puzzle, before finishing the book completely. An African-American boy to her right, Marc, asks her for help. She answers his question and then returns to working on her own puzzle. By about 8:55, 95% of the students are on task.

Shortly after 9:00, Marc asks Parla another question. Marc and Parla begin to collaborate on the crossword puzzle, looking through the book for answers. They appear to be good friends, smiling and enjoying working together. Mrs. D. comes over to tell Marc that he needs to whisper when they are working together. Another student, Rachelle, joins Marc and Parla in working on the puzzle. The para-professional leaves the room, and the two ESL students continue to work together, reading a book on the couch.

Ten minutes later, students continue working at their desks, some alone, but most in groups of two or three. Mrs. D. continues to work with the group of ESL students. She asks them: "What are three things that Martin Luther King wanted blacks to get?" The students raise hands and volunteer the answer: jobs, education, and housing. Mrs. D. asks: "Do you think if they had a better education they would be poor?" Students say "no" in unison. Mrs. D. asks why. One student says that they could get better jobs with a better education. Mrs. D. asks the students to raise their hands to indicate which of the three things is most important. All of the students agree that education is the most important of the three. Mrs. D. reminds one ESL student who is not seated with them and is daydreaming that she is allowed to read a book in Spanish. Ninety percent of the students in the class are on task; all the ESL students are attentive. Dr. B. comes into the room to

give Mrs. D. a message. On her way out she stops by to encourage an African-American boy who is seated on his own, away from the other children. She gently pats him on the back and whispers something in his ear.

At about 9:15, 80% of the students are on task. Another student, an African-American girl, joins Parla's group; they are now working on the word search after completing the crossword. She is welcomed by them, and they seem to collaborate well. Parla and her group appear to be getting satisfaction out of their work, pleased as they find words in the search. Mrs. D. continues to work with ESL group, now asking them about King's death and burial. She asks them how death is dealt with in their home countries: "How about in Burma?" "How about in Mexico, Juan?" "How about in China?" One student talks about attending her grandfather's funeral in China. Mrs. D. asks a student to read a caption below a photograph in the book.

By 9:25, Parla and her group have completed the word search and have moved on to a fill-in-the-blank sheet. The group of ESL students is still working together at the back table, but Mrs. D. has left the group and is circulating around the room to check on other students. 85% of the students are on task, including Parla and her group.

At half past nine, the ESL students return to their seats. Mrs. D. asks the class to stop working and listen to her. The entire class quiets down almost immediately and attends to her. She asks them some questions about Martin Luther King: "What prize did he win?" A couple of hands go up. An African-American boy answers: "The Bobel Prize." Mrs. D. says, "Not quite, anyone else know?" Another African-American boy answers: "The Nobel Peace Prize," and the teacher responds, "Very good!" She continues asking questions: "At what age did he win the prize?... At what age did he die?... How did he die?... What do we call it when a famous person is killed?" She asks the class if they think it is wrong that assassins often become famous. Students say yes. She asks what Dr. King might have wanted to be the fate of his assassin. Several students are called upon to offer their opinions. One says: "Confine him to his house." During this question-and-answer period, almost all the students who raise their hands are African-American, and all those that are called upon are as well. Parla listens to the other students' answers, but does not raise her hand.

Mrs. D. concludes the lesson by commenting to students that she has a feeling some did not finish reading the book before they went on to the puzzles. She asks how many actually read about the end of his life. A few hands are raised. She asks how many cheated a little. About eight students raise their hands, including Parla and her group. She asks them to go back and read the book as homework, and praises them for their honesty. 90% are on task; others are shuffling papers or daydreaming.

At 9:40, the teacher asks her students to clear their desks for recess and then dismisses them by table, giving them stars on the board for quick preparation. Students file out in an orderly fashion for recess. Parla and Rachelle go across the hall to the library for a brief meeting with Dr. B.. Six other students are in attendance. Dr. B. tells them to be there at 12:15 to be interviewed by AIR researchers. All students agree to participate.

At 9:43, Parla and Rachelle go outside together for recess. Parla spends her recess practicing cartwheels with a group of friends on the blacktop.

Mrs. D. brings her class back into the room after recess, at about 10:05. She asks the students to get seated and clear their desks. She puts stars on the board again for each of the tables; 2 stars for those that were very quick and 1 star for the slower tables. She announces that they are going to do "Jungle Money." She asks for a volunteer to be the banker. Rachelle volunteers, and proceeds to pass out money envelopes to each person. Parla arrives three minutes late and says she was in the bathroom. The students take their money out of the envelopes and count it. Two students now take their turns at using the computers, while the rest of the class is involved in the math lesson. 90% of the students are on task. Mrs. D. begins the lesson by asking a question which she pulls from an envelope of questions developed by the students. She asks: "The tigers eat \$5 worth of food per week. If you have \$20, for how many weeks can you afford to feed the tigers?" She announces, "Show me, don't tell me" and walks around to check to see if students have counted out the correct number of \$5 dollars increments. She asks two bilingual students to translate for their neighbors who don't understand English. The majority of students seem to have solved the problem. After several minutes, she gives the students another problem, crediting the student, Akmal, who came up with it: "A Hippo costs \$5 a day to feed. With \$35, how long can you afford to feed him?"

Eight minutes into the lesson, about 75% of the students are on task. Those that are not on task are playing with their money. She continues asking similar questions, giving students several minutes to work on each problem. Many students work in pairs, including Parla and her friend Rachelle. It appears that Parla was responsible for counting out the money, while Rachelle did most of the problem solving. After one question, which required division of a three digit number by a two digit number, Mrs. D. asked students to explain how they did the problem. She follows the students' methods, writing the equation on the board. She also demonstrated "the book way," showing a division problem on the board. None of the problems required an understanding of remainders.

She continues to give the students problems to solve, while circulating to check their work. She asks the ESL students to translate the animal names for their less fluent classmates: "How do you say Gorilla in Chinese?" 90% of the students are on task. Parla calls her over to her desk to ask her a question. Her teacher tells her to double check her math. Students sit quietly when waiting for the next problem. Shortly before 10:30, Mrs. D. gives the student their last problem, which involves a parrot which requires speech lessons. She spelled the word "parrot" incorrectly on the board as "parrott". Neither she nor the students caught the mistake. She asks students if they know what a parrot is. Several students raised their hand. Parla does not raise her hand but demonstrates the size with her hands. 90% of the students are on task. Parla and Rachelle discuss the problem with another student, Tom, who has completed the problem and has come around to assist (by Mrs. D.'s request). A girl from another table also joins in their discussion. Mrs. D. seems comfortable with the fluid movement of the groups.

At 10:33, Mrs. D. calls the end of the problem solving portion of the lesson. She asks students to share how they solved the last problem. Two students offered their solutions. Although the two front tables participate the most, Parla listens but does not volunteer to answer questions. None of the students use paper to perform the computations; all count out the money into various piles. 85% of the students are on task. Mrs. D. asks a student volunteer to hand out paper to each of the students. She then tells students that they now need to develop problems, on their own or in groups, to use in the next Jungle Money lesson. Parla and Rachelle work together as a pair. Parla and Rachelle suspect that Marc is stealing their idea for a problem so they prop up their notebooks in order to hide their work, and they begin to whisper quietly. Other pairs begin to do the same thing, setting up guards against onlookers. 85% of the students are on task. Groups in Mrs. D.'s class, by the way, are not assigned. Students choose to work with whomever they want, which for most students is others at their table.

Students continue working on devising problems, and Mrs. D. circulates to help. She sits at Parla's table for a few minutes. Parla asks her how to spell "tortoise." Parla and Rachelle have made up with a problem in which students have to calculate the replacement cost for several tortoises who have lost their shells. As their teacher comes around to check their work, all the students appear to be on task and have something written on their papers.

At 10:55, Mrs. D. asks the students to get their money together to hand in. Parla continues to finish working on her problem with Rachelle. She then volunteers to collect the envelopes of money, but she is not chosen. Mrs. D. collects the students' problems.

At two minutes to eleven, Mrs. D. calls for the tables to quiet down and clear their desks before the lunch recess. All the students respond and quiet down quickly. She again gives stars to each table and then explains the afternoon activities: "First we have silent reading, and then we'll practice our songs." At 11:00, the students file out of the classroom for lunch recess.

When the lunch recess ends at 11:50, students were to begin their silent reading.

During the student focus group from 12:10 to 12:40, Parla conducts herself in a mature, serious manner. She is one of eight students in the focus group. She answers questions when called upon and does not call out responses as do many of the other students. (See above for a summary of her responses.) Parla's friend, Rachelle, is also part of the focus group. They sit side by side, and answer many of the questions similarly.

At 12:45 when the researcher rejoins her classroom, Mrs. D.'s class goes downstairs to join the other fifth grade class in the Kindergarten room to practice songs for a recital. The kindergarten teacher plays the piano while the children sang "A Whole New World" and "The Rainbow Connection." While only about 70% of the students participate, Parla and her two friends enthusiastically bellow the lyrics.

At 1:10, students line up to go back to their classrooms. Parla and her friends continue to sing on their way back up to class.

The block of time from 1:15 to 1:24 is spent getting the students back to the classroom. Students take their seats. Mrs. D. writes tonight's homework on the board: 1) Explorer report due; 2) 5 sentences (on what they learned about their explorer). Several students moan about the due date on the Explorer report. Their teacher reminds them that they voted as a class to establish this as the due date. She points to a sign on the wall which details what was to be included in the report (introduction, bibliography, etc.), and the list of the explorers (e. g., Columbus, Cortez, Coronado). Mrs. D. asks the students if they have any questions about the homework. All students are attentive, and many had their notebooks open to write down the homework assignment, including Parla.

At 1:30, Mrs. D. announces that they are going to play "Heads-Up 7-Up" in the classroom as their P. E. activity for the day. All students are actively involved with the game. This time is also designated for students to take turns going to the library to return their books and check out new ones. Parla leaves the room with a book to return.

A few minutes later, Parla returns from the library with a book of short stories that appear to be at a 5th-6th grade reading level. She opens the book and begins to read the introduction. After several minutes, she puts the book away and joins in the game with the rest of the students. All the students appear to be enjoying the game. At 1:47, Mrs. D. calls the end of the game. Parla loads up her backpack with her Trapper notebook, spiral notebook, song lyrics, and library book. She then sits up straight with her desk cleared, waiting to be dismissed. At 1:50, class is dismissed.

Parla was attentive throughout the day, almost a model student. She displayed her readiness to learn by writing her homework in her notebook and carefully following directions. Parla said she likes her teacher, Mrs. D., and this was evident in her willingness to please her by working diligently and following classroom rules.

From what Mrs. D. and Dr. B. had described, one might have expected her to be more outgoing in class, volunteering answers more often. Perhaps Parla was not confident in her answers, or possibly she was afraid to make a comment since she knew she was being observed. Parla was an active participant when working in small groups, however. It was evident that other students enjoyed working with her, and in many ways she appeared to be the catalyst to the formation of her work group. This was not necessarily because Parla was the student who knew all the answers, but perhaps because she has high social status among her peers. It was difficult to assess how much of the actual problem solving was being done by Parla herself; it seemed as though her partner, Rachelle, was more active in this regard.

In general, Mrs. D. has good command of the classroom, keeping discipline problems to a minimum and maintaining 80-90% student attentiveness at all times. She appears to enjoy teaching, trying to make learning fun for the students. She employs a variety of teachings strategies including cooperative grouping and activity-based learning in math.

While Mrs. D.'s "Jungle Money" math lesson was interesting, creative, and seemed to hold the students' attention, it did not seem as though all students were adequately challenged. Several students arrived at the solutions quickly. In addition, the skills required (division without remainders) seemed below fifth grade level. During reading, the



ESL students benefited from engaging in an active, thought-provoking discussion about Martin Luther King with Mrs. D. On the other hand, the remaining two-thirds of the class were involved in completing puzzles that did not require a great deal thought or analysis of the material.

#### *A Morning and Afternoon in Fourth Grade*

Mrs. E.'s fourth grade classroom is located on the second floor, two rooms away from the main office. The hall door is usually open, but not much sound spills out into the hallway. Students' desks are clustered into four tables; approximately six students are seated at each table. Two facing walls are covered with chalkboards. Windows cover the back wall. Though the shades are drawn against the bright sunlight, lighting in the classroom is adequate. At the front of the room by the chalkboard there is a rug and a bean bag where students sit during group reading. Mrs. E.'s desk occupies the back corner of the room, adjacent to the computer station. Along one wall there is a coat closet in which students' jackets and the lab coats that students wear when doing science experiments hang. These lab coats were donated by a local medical supply company. Each student has his or her name on the pocket. Some have written their first names; others have written the title of "Dr." before their last name.

The classroom is decorated with student artwork and projects. On one wall, there are student-drawn maps of the school yard. Hanging on the windows are life size renditions of the students that they have made with construction paper. On another wall hang student posters with a title "All the colors of the race." The posters have student-drawn faces (made with little squares of construction paper) along with several sentences in which students describe themselves with ice cream flavors, for example, "I'm rocky road with vanilla on top" and "I have chocolate fudge as hair and vanilla as teeth." A sign that says "BE THE BEST" hangs on top of the door.

The room is well stocked with resources, including three Apple 2e computers, 15 dictionaries, a set of encyclopedias, textbooks, a shelf of books for second language learners, an audio listening center, sink, a table with science lab trays, a writing center, a globe, games, hands-on materials, and student and teacher chalkboards.

There are 28 students in the class. The ethnic breakdown is approximately 40% African-American, 40% Asian-American, 10% Hispanic-American, and 10% European-American.

Mrs. E. appears to be European-American and in her mid-thirties. She is casually dressed in pants and a flannel shirt. She is enthusiastic in her presentation of material, and she acts in a very caring manner towards the students. She laughs with them, and encourages and praises them frequently. Mrs. E. manages the classroom well, and the few disruptions by students. It appears that the class is very familiar with the rules that were mutually agreed upon at the beginning of the year, and Mrs. E. has to do little to keep the class in control. At least 85% of the students are on task at all times.



The principal, Dr. B., described Mrs. E. as the teacher in the school who is most involved with the Child Development Program. She is part of the school's CDP implementation team. Dr. B. noted that Mrs. E. has always been a teacher leader, but that she has grown an incredible amount through her involvement with CDP.

At 10:10, the principal took the researchers into Mrs. E.'s classroom to observe a few minutes of a science lab on erosion. Students were all wearing white lab coats as they worked in groups on an experiment in which they poured water at different rates into trays filled with diatomaceous earth. The students observed what happened when the water hit the earth and recorded their descriptions on small yellow pads. Most of the students were on task, and, although not all were following directions exactly, no students disrupted the lab significantly (a few had their fingers in the sand).

Class begins at 11:52 as students return from lunch. They take their seats and begin their silent reading time in which they read something of their choosing. Books chosen by the students are of varying levels—some are illustrated books with only a few sentences on each page, whereas others are novels of approximately 5th-6th grade reading level. Mrs. E. also reads silently. At various times in the eight minute period, one to three students are not reading but are instead paging through a book or their folder. Mrs. E. notices and tells one student to start reading. On average, 25 of the 28 students are on task. Most students lie or sit on the floor around their teacher as they read.

Eight minutes into the silent reading period, Mrs. E. asks students if they would like to stop early to go back to reading and discussing a book on Martin Luther King, or if they would prefer to continue reading silently and then read "The Bully" together. Students choose to read and discuss the book on Martin Luther King. The most vocal students in favor of reading this book are African-American. Students put away their books and join Mrs. E., sitting on the floor in the front of the classroom. She begins with a discussion of previous topics covered in the book. She asks students, "What did Rosa Parks do?" An African-American student answers that she made it so that blacks could ride the bus. Mrs. E. starts reading from the book and stops to ask questions of students: "Who was the head of the Montgomery Improvement Association?" An African-American student raises their hand, is called upon, and responds with, "Dr. King". Mrs. E. asks, "Segregation. What does that mean?" Several students in unison call out "separate." 85% of the students are on task.

Mrs. E. continues to ask students questions related to Martin Luther King. At about 12:10, 90% of the students are on task. She asks why the boycott was important. An African-American boy answers, "because they were losing money." Mrs. E. says, "Right!" She notes that the protest was non-violent, and that the protesters would not fight back even if they were hit. She asks the class why this can be difficult. With no response, she chooses one student and asks, "Patrick, why is it so hard not to hit back?" Patrick answers, "Because people will think you're a wimp if you don't fight back". Mrs. E. reiterates his answer to the class. Mrs. E. reads a few more sentences, and then says "Dr. King always said non-violence is the way of a strong person" and asks the students why he might have thought this. Students do not raise their hands so Mrs. E. gives the example of her son who is in the 7th grade and is being bullied by another kid but is not fighting back. She asks the

class why he isn't fighting back. An African-American girl answers that by not fighting back, "he shows that he can keep it together." During the question and answer period, all students raise their hands before talking. African-American students raise their hands the most and are thus called upon more frequently. There are very few disruptions and they are dealt with quickly by Mrs. E.. She sends a boy back to his seat when he is bothering another student. He returns to his seat and proceeds to write "ALFRED" in big letters across a worksheet. A girl who is playing with her friend's hair is reminded that "the beauty salon is down the street."

By 12:18, 85% of the students remain on task as the activity continues. A student asks Mrs. E. what "D. A." means. She answers "District Attorney" and explains what the function of this position is. Mrs. E. reads a few sentences about the opposition faced by Martin Luther King and then asks students to place themselves in a similar scenario. She asks them to think about how they would react if she forced them to do something they thought was unfair. Several students raised their hands and offered answers, which included protesting by not doing any work in class. An African-American girl asks who Jim Crow was. Mrs. E. says she cannot remember but will look it up and get back to her with the answer tomorrow. Mrs. E. raises the issues of racism and discrimination, writing both words on the board. She says that people are discriminated against every day because of how they look, what they believe in, or where they come from. She adds that people who experience racism can either react violently or non-violently. (90% of the students are paying attention at this point.) An African-American girl asks if there is segregation in other parts of the world. Mrs. E. brings up South Africa as an example and writes "apartheid" on the board. She tells the students that they will read a story about South Africa. An African-American boy raises his hand and says that his mother went to a segregated school in Buffalo, New York in the early sixties. During this time period, many students are actively involved in discussion and many hands are raised to offer comments.

Mrs. E. stops the activity at 12:30 and tells the students they are now going to go downstairs to read to their "little buddies". Buddy reading is a weekly activity. Mrs. E. believes that it improves the fourth graders' self-esteem as readers. She asks the students how best they can help their little buddies. Several students raise their hands with suggestions, including "make your little buddy do the reading and the writing by themselves," and "be patient."

The students line up at the door in two lines and then walk downstairs to Mrs. J.'s first grade classroom. Upon arriving at the room, they find their assigned little buddies, with whom they have worked previously. Many pairs are mixed by ethnicity and gender. Each pair grabs a book from the shelf, and paper is handed out to each pair by the teachers. The classroom is very noisy as students mill about finding their little buddies, getting their books, and getting settled. There are about 60 students total. At 12:40, about one-third of the students go out to work in the hallway, and Mrs. E. joins them, circulating to check on the pairs. Inside the classroom, Mrs. J. circulates to help students. A para-professional works with one pair in the corner. About 50% of the students are on task at a given time. In several pairs, the fourth graders help the first graders write their names, the date, and the book title on the piece of paper. In others, the first grader reads aloud as the fourth grader follows along. In one pair, the fourth grader draws the outline to a picture and the first

grader colors it in. Some pairs never quite get settled down, as the first grader wanders off to another part of the room or starts coloring instead of reading. When this is the case, a couple of fourth graders complain to the teachers, whereas others take it as an opportunity for some free time to page through a book by themselves. Mrs. E. pulls one first grader aside to tell her that her big buddy likes her very much and really wants to work with her, but she keeps running off. She tells her that if she has a problem with her big buddy she should tell her and they can work it out. Mrs. E. asks the little buddy how she thinks she should behave. The little buddy agrees to give it another try and returns to working with her big buddy.

At 12:48, Mrs. J. and Mrs. E. ask pairs of students who are done with the reading and with writing a sentence about the story to join them in a large group to share what they liked about their stories. Twenty-three students join Mrs. J. on the rug, and twelve students join Mrs. E. in the hall. The para-professional continues to work with one pair, and the remainder of the students continue to work in their pairs. Fourth graders give directions to each other: "You're supposed to take your little buddy over to the floor if you're done." About 60% of the students are on task.

At 12:56, the group sharing with Mrs. J. ends, and the children return to their pairs, this time for the big buddies to read to the little buddies as the little buddies follow along. Mrs. E. continues to do group sharing in the hall with ten students. Again, approximately 50% of the students are on task, though it should be noted that it is difficult to get an accurate count given the large number of students involved and the constant movement in the classroom.

Mrs. J. and Mrs. E. ask the big buddies to escort the little buddies back to their seats and then line up at the door. Mrs. E. leads her class in a cheer and most students enthusiastically join in: "Thank you little buddies for reading me a story." The fourth graders leave to go back to their classroom.

At 1:14, students return to the classroom and take their seats. They listen attentively as Mrs. E. gives instructions about the vocabulary words they need to learn. The words are written on a large piece of paper and pasted to the chalkboard. She conducts a quick review of the definitions with the students. The nine words relate to their science lab on erosion. She asks the students to show with their hands what "meander" means. About half of the students show a meandering motion with their hands. She asks what "delta" means and several students raised their hands with the definition. She tells the students that they will do peer editing on their "Coyote stories" tomorrow in class, and she asks how many had already printed their stories from the computer; only one student raises her hand.

At 1:18, Mrs. E. announces that because it is raining they cannot have P. E. outside today. Instead, they will play the "Corner Game" in the classroom. Students are enthusiastic about Mrs. E.'s choice of a game, and they all quickly become actively involved in the game. In this game, one student sits at their desk with their head down and counts to ten while the others stand in different corners of the room (near the flag, the globe, the drinking fountain, or the computers). At the count of ten, the student calls out a corner and all students who are standing in that corner have to sit down. The game continues until all the students are seated and several more rounds are played; about 1:30, Mrs. E. calls the

end of the corner game. The students quiet down almost immediately and she asks them to come to the rug and "make a morning circle." The students rush to the front and sit down to play the "detective game." All students actively participate, and their teacher plays the game with them. After about ten minutes, she calls the end of the detective game and asks students to return to their seats and quietly clear off their desks. All students follow the directions and attentively await announcements about homework. Mrs. E. suggests that for homework they work on their Coyote stories so that they are ready for peer editing tomorrow. One student asks: "Do we have to?" Mrs. E. replies that she is just giving them suggestions of how to organize their time, not forcing them to do it.

Beginning at 1:48, students are dismissed by table, and Mrs. E. thanks them as they grab their coats and backpacks and line up in two lines at the door. When they are lined up, she asks a student to help her pass out announcements that they must take home to their parents. She explains that the announcement is to invite parents to an assembly in which the school is going to be adopted by a local bank. One student asks what it means to be adopted by a bank, but she does not hear the question. At 1:50, students are dismissed.

The fact that at least 85% of the students are on task at all times is testimony to Mrs. E.'s command of the class. Mrs. E. involves the students in interesting, engaging discussions about Martin Luther King, asking the students thought-provoking questions that require higher order thinking skills. She employs cooperative grouping strategies during the science lab, during which students are involved in a hands-on experiment, recording their observations. It would be interesting to know whether the teaching techniques used by Mrs. E., including the cross-age tutoring, are a result of her intensive involvement in CDP, or whether she has always been using such techniques and CDP simply provided validation for her methods.

#### *Sample Observations from Other Classrooms at School H*

*Regular Kindergarten.* Mrs. W. is a maternal, friendly and enthusiastic teacher. She appears to be European-American and in her mid-to-late 30s. There are three aides in this classroom of about 25 students. Mrs. W.'s classroom is colorfully decorated, spacious, and is complete with many books, art supplies, and a piano. During the observation period (which was towards the end of the morning) students are involved in singing the Alphabet song and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Mrs. W. sings with the students and plays the piano. Students appear to enjoy singing. 90% are actively involved in the activity.

*Chinese Bilingual Kindergarten.* Mrs. O. is serious in her demeanor, showing concern for students' learning. She holds high expectations for her students, and she talks to students as though they were much older. She appears to be Chinese-American and in her mid 30s. Her classroom is spacious, well stocked with resources, and colorfully decorated. During the short observation period, the twenty Chinese-speaking students are quietly working at their desks. 95% are on task. They are doing worksheets in which they have to copy various patterns. Mrs. O. circulates to check on students. She asks them to work alone on this activity. At the end of the activity, Mrs. O. asks students to finish the pattern

worksheet as homework. Mrs. O. spoke only in English to the students. The several student comments that were made, such as "I'm finished, teacher," were also in English. Students raise their hands before speaking.

*First Grade.* Mrs. J. has a very friendly, warm, and caring demeanor. She laughs with the students and gently encourages them. She is a young teacher; she appears to be in her early 30s and to be European-American. Her classroom is well stocked with resources and student work hangs from the walls and from the ceiling.

During the first ten minutes of the observation, students are involved in "silent reading." About one-third of the students are actually reading silently, one-third were paging through a book of some sort (in some cases, the book was upside down), and the remainder of the students were running around the room or involved in another off-task activity. Mrs. J. is attempting to meet the objective of keeping the students silent, even if they were not reading, by telling them that they could not move on to "shared reading" unless they were quiet.

At the end of silent reading, Mrs. J. calls the "Circle Group" to the carpet. This is a group of seven ESL students, who speak a number of different languages. Mrs. J. reads with these students, all of whom are attentive and involved. The remaining twenty students in the class are supposed to be seated at their desks, reading with another student. About one-third of the students are on task; the remaining students are horsing around the classroom or paging through books looking at the pictures. One pair of African-American boys spends the entire time (18 minutes) paging through a picture atlas, pointing to places that they would take their girlfriend. They can not read the names of the places but simply pointed to several locations on each page saying, "I'll take her here, I'll take her here..." and so on. Mrs. J. did very little to get the students on task.

After about twenty minutes, Mrs. J. tells students that they are now moving on to the "Mailboxes" activity. All students have mailboxes (cubby holes) in the back of the classroom. They send mail (questions such as "How many brothers and sisters do you have?") to each other and respond by writing the answers and putting them in each other's boxes. Students seem to enjoy this activity very much, and many are actively engaged in writing responses to their mail with the help of Mrs. J.. Fifteen minutes later, Mrs. J. calls the students to the front rug to read them a couple of short books, *Good for You* and *I'm Bigger than You*. Ninety percent of the students are attentive. In summary, during the reading period, very few students were actually reading or attempting to read. Mrs. J. was unsuccessful at having all students read while she was working with the ESL students. A para-professional in the classroom would have been helpful.

*Second Grade.* Mrs. M. is a young teacher, most probably in her first several years of teaching, who appears to be European-American. She has a serious demeanor in the classroom, and shows concern for the students' well being. Her classroom looks much like the others in terms of resources, however it is not decorated with student art to the same extent as most of the other classrooms.



When the observation begins at 9:47, Mrs. M. is giving the students directions on an activity they are about to begin. In this activity, students are to use golf tees, a pegboard, and rubber bands to learn about the concepts of pitch, tension, and vibration. These words are written on the board. Mrs. M. assigns students to groups of three to four students and designates one group member to be responsible for materials. The assignment is for students to arrange the golf tees and rubber bands in such a way on the peg board so that they could hear five different pitches, depending on the tightness of the rubber band. They are then to diagram their tee and band arrangement on a piece of paper, labeling pitches from one to five.

As the activity begins, Mrs. M. circulates to get students started. A para-professional works with a group of students in the hall. Even though Mrs. M. helps students put the tees and rubber bands onto the board, only 50% of the students are on task. After Mrs. M. leaves their group, several groups begin playing with the materials or using them to poke or snap at each other. Mrs. M. comes around several times to some groups in order to try to get the students on task. Once groups do in fact have their tees and bands set up, only two of the seven groups are able to tell that there are different sounds being produced. None of the groups are able to recognize five different sounds; at most they can recognize two different sounds. While several groups attempt to draw diagrams, most succeed in drawing the peg board only and not the tee and band arrangement.

After thirty minutes, Mrs. M. calls the students to the front rug to ask them what they found out about pitch. None of the students can answer so she asks them how they made different sounds. The group of students who was working with the para-professional was able to sort of explain. Mrs. M. sets up a board with tees and bands herself and asks for student volunteers to pluck from lowest to highest sounds. There are several volunteers, but none are able to recognize five different sounds, only two, the highest and the lowest. Students are asked for their observations and then sent back to their seats to write what they have learned in their journals. Mrs. M. circulates to help; one-third to one-half of the students are on task. In summary, while this was an interesting lesson, it appeared to be too difficult for all of the students. None of the students appeared to meet Mrs. M.'s objectives of learning the concepts of pitch, tension, and vibration.

*Third Grade.* Mrs. R. appears to be a young European-American teacher. She came to School H through the State University teacher education program. She is enthusiastic and friendly. Her classroom looks like most others in terms of resources, art, and so on. Homework is written on the board. She apologizes to the students for being gone the day before to attend a math workshop. She reprimands the students for their bad behavior with the substitute and then asks them to think about ways they can improve their behavior.

Mrs. R. begins a lesson based upon a book called *The Village of Round and Square Houses*. The objectives of the lesson are written on the board, as is the plan for the day's activities. Mrs. R. shows the children the book, briefly explaining that it is about a village in Africa and she brings over the globe to show the children where Africa is. Next, she gives many of the students words on cards that are related to the story, such as the characters' names and the name of the village. At this point, all students are on task.



After the introduction to the lesson, Mrs. R. asks students to come up one by one and paste their words on a board where appropriate (under the title of characters or setting). The students then take turns predicting what will happen in the story. Students are seated in a circle on the floor and pass around a rock to get the turn to speak. (Only when they hold the rock are they allowed to speak). At this point in the lesson, attentiveness starts to fall off, with 70% remaining on task, and Mrs. R. says several times, "I need active listening." She sends four of the students back to their seats for misbehavior. Mrs. R. reads the story aloud in its entirety. Students are then asked to return to their desks to discuss the story among themselves. During this time, at a maximum, 25% of the students are on task. Mrs. R. calls the students back to the front after about 8 minutes. Though observation ended at this point, later in the day the students were going to construct round and square houses and measure their perimeters. In summary, Mrs. R. presented an engaging, well-planned lesson. When students were receiving direct instruction, most were on task. However, the time in which students were left to discuss and think by themselves seemed quite unproductive. This may have been due to the fact that the directions from Mrs. R. were vague; students didn't seem to know what they were supposed to be discussing.

*Fourth Grade.* Mrs. D. looks to be an African-American teacher in her mid-40s. She is friendly with the students, and nonchalant in her teaching style. Her classroom resembles most others in terms of resources, and student art projects cover the walls. The homework is written on the board, as is a list of vocabulary words related to the subject of shoes.

When the observation begins, Mrs. D. is showing the class pictures of shoes that their classmates had drawn for the "A Day in the Life of My Shoe" project. Mrs. D. does not circulate; she stands next to her desk at the front of the classroom. The students are working individually at their desks on an unrelated word search (it was about different types of groups) and would look up as Mrs. D. interrupted them. At most, about half of the students are on task; others are walking around, some are yelling across the room or arguing. There is much disorder in the classroom. Mrs. D. takes little notice. She asks students what kind of shoes one pair resembles. Two students yell out, "Dancing Shoes!" and she replies, "That's right!"

Towards the end of the observation time, before recess, Mrs. D. writes two names on the board, the names of the men who invented the shoemaking machine and the overshoe. She notes that they were African-American. There is no discussion that follows. Ten minutes before morning recess is to begin, Mrs. D. rings a bell to quiet students down. They sit at their desks for two more minutes, and then they line up and wait for five minutes until Mrs. D. dismisses them a few minutes early for recess. In summary, fourth graders in Mrs. D.'s class (as opposed to Mrs. E.'s class) appear to be at a serious disadvantage. There was very little, if any, academic content in Mrs. D.'s class during the observation time and at least half of the students were off task. In addition, while a day in the life of a shoe has the potential to be an interesting project, it did not compare with the more stimulating topics in Mrs. E.'s class that required students to use higher order thinking skills.

### *Concluding Observations*

The following comments should be taken rather tentatively since the observation periods involved were very short except in the cases of Mrs. E.'s and Mrs. D.'s classes. However, instruction seems to vary considerably at School H. Mrs. E.'s fourth grade class and Mrs. D.'s fifth grade class (detailed in the more lengthy observations in the previous sections) were the best examples of teaching and activity-based learning witnessed at the school. Students were on task at least 85% of the time in those classes and lessons were (for the most part) interesting and engaging. Not surprisingly, these teachers were both praised by the principal as being knowledgeable instructors and teacher-leaders in the school.

Overall, there did not seem to be a lot of writing going on in any of the classes, even the best examples. Although all teachers seem caring and concerned, teachers varied considerably in their classroom management skills and delivery of engaging, appropriate lessons. Cooperative grouping and activity-based learning were consistent among a number of classes, although the effectiveness of these strategies varied, depending on how well the activity was planned. In classes where the ESL students spent a significant length of time working in a small group with the teacher, the remaining students seemed to be either off task or involved in unchallenging seat work. Perhaps the aid of a paraprofessional could have alleviated this situation.

Another area of concern is that teachers did not plan lessons that were appropriate for the level of the students. In one case, the lesson was clearly much too difficult for the students. Of greater concern, however, is that teachers do not seem to be holding high enough expectations for the students. It seems that the students at School H could benefit from a more challenging curriculum, and more of an effort could be made in relating activity-based lessons to concrete concepts. In most cases, teachers could offer students greater opportunity for learning by exposing them to more academic content and complex learning tasks. Nevertheless, a sense of community among students is definitely evident in classrooms. Students of all ethnic groups exist harmoniously, and there seems to be a feeling of cooperation rather than competition among students.

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# *School I*

## *Utah*

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### *Site Overview*

#### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

As a transitory population, migrant students often cannot take full advantage of school-year programs for at-risk students. Programs that are geared towards the needs and schedules of these students, especially programs with native language support for limited English proficient students, warrant further analysis. The summer migrant program examined here was identified by the state Chapter 1 director as an exemplary program for migrant and settled-out migrant students. This case study identifies difficulties endemic to program serving migrant populations.

#### *Lessons from School I*

A study of School I suggests several important aspects of programs serving at-risk and especially migrant youth. First, the shifting student population and widely ranging skills levels require a highly individualized program; teachers need to know where their students are starting in order to help students reach high academic goals. Second, competent professional staff and a clear, reliable management structure gave this program a stable base from which staff could adapt to student needs. Third, this program emphasized, as one of its prime objectives, the importance of helping children to have positive experiences in school.

However, though the program aims were good in several respects, other aspects of this program are more troubling. Fourth, it failed to address the interpersonal differences among staff arising from prejudice against non-native English speakers in the U. S., for example, conflicts over whether bilingual education is appropriate. Fifth, and on a related note, although this program targets students who routinely experience discrimination and prejudice, only limited attempts seem to have been made to select or sensitize teachers so

that these students get to work with staff who truly value them, understand their situations, and appreciate their cultures. It is no wonder that students seem to see themselves as banding together based on their skin color, to protect each other and themselves.

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### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

School J is located in the Utah Valley on the west side of the Wasatch mountains. In terms of percentage growth, Utah has been the fastest growing state in the union for at least two decades. This derives both from the large families and the number of in-migrating members of the Mormon Latter Day Saints (LDS) church. The LDS Church dominates Utah in several ways. The Mormon beliefs generate a culture in which community service is expected and community support readily available. The second contextual variable is the very high education level of the community. In addition, Mormons are expected to do a two-year mission in their youth. To do that, most need to become fluent in a second language. Many of the missions are in Central and South America, so there are tens of thousands of Utahans who are fluent in Spanish.

The Provo/Orem area was just declared "the best place to live in America" by a national business magazine. The area, and to a lesser extent, the state, simply hasn't had a recession. High-tech businesses are sprouting up all over. There's a building boom that doesn't seem to be slowing. The population is primarily white and most families are Mormon. High-tech firms (e.g., WordPerfect, Novell, Signetics) have been attracted to the valley, in part, because of its highly educated population; Utah ranks first in the nation in the educational attainment of the adult population. This has both put pressure on school enrollments, and provided increased support for public education, including strong business-school partnerships. The presence of two major universities in the Valley (Brigham Young University and University of Utah) has also contributed to the quality of education by providing a wealth of free resources to the community schools. The per-pupil expenditures in Utah are the lowest in the nation, and Alpine's are the lowest in Utah. Yet this school doesn't feel "poor," perhaps in part because of contributed time and energy from the local "Stakes," or LDS churches. A fair amount of stuff, and a good deal more time, get contributed to the school. Finally, parents generally maintain close ties to their children's school and it is common to see parents working at School I.

The school building is situated on a quiet residential street with a stunning view of the towering Wasatch mountains. The school backs up to a county recreational area so there is extensive space for outdoor activities. The main building is a typical one-story brick school erected in 1964, but is in outstanding condition. The brick exterior of the one story structure is clean, the surrounding grass remains lush green, thanks to an extensive watering system. A soccer field behind the main building looks like one more often found in high schools. Inside, the asphalt tile floors and sound-absorptive tile ceilings look almost new. The halls are well lit.

Rising enrollment led several years ago to the addition of a large satellite building consisting of 12 classrooms. This addition is not, however, connected to the main building, so the children must walk outside for about 20 yards to change buildings. In addition to classrooms, the main building also includes: the main administrative offices; a large supply room that also includes copying and ditto machines; the health room; a well-equipped library and media center; the computer lab; a spacious teacher's lounge; and a large multi-purpose room that serves as the lunch room (with an attached on-site kitchen), gymnasium and auditorium. The teachers' work room is large, comfortable, and carpeted. It has a Macintosh Classic connected to a Laser Printer, an electric typewriter, and an opaque projector.

School I serves an unusually broad clientele. Its catchment area includes several of the remaining fruit tree farms in the county, and therefore many of the relatively poor farm workers, and, in the summer, many migrant farm families. It includes many of the lower-rent apartment complexes in the county, and therefore the schools serve a significant number of blue-collar and unemployed people. Some of them are just moving to Utah, looking for jobs. The school serves a stable set of middle-class families living in owner-occupied houses. Finally, one part of the school's catchment area includes the homes of many doctors, lawyers, and highly successful business people. For example, the children of the owners of the Marriott hotel chain all attended School I, the youngest having moved on to the middle school during the last two years. Also, the children of one of the two co-founders and owners of the WordPerfect Corporation attended School I. The family donated some (though not most) of the hardware and software in the school.

At the time of the site visit, the total enrollment of the school was 780 to 865 during the regular school year. This school and district were notable for several features in addition to the summer migrant program. The district's Chapter 1 program, which has received the U.S. Secretary of Education's "Secretary's Initiative" award as an exemplary use of Chapter 1 funds, featured a peer tutoring component and a very strong student and parent counseling program. All elementary Chapter 1 teachers in the district received Reading Recovery training. Several school programs targeted average and high achievers. School I used Don Delay's Quality Team strategy to better develop under-achievers. The School I Accelerated Teaching (CHAT) program, located in the elementary school, was a magnet for grades five and six. School I provided a Spanish immersion program for grades one through six. Most of the students in the program were from affluent English language families, with the parents simply wanting a broader education for their students. However, a few were from the summer migrant program. School I operated voice mailboxes for each teacher. Finally, School I recently installed a large, well planned computer lab.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

The Summer Migrant Program at School I, started in the summer of 1990, served agricultural workers who are in the Utah valley to pick orchard crops. The program was operated jointly with the Provo school district. Most of the families were here only for the summer-about 20-30% of the families remain in Utah, but only about two to three families remained in the School I school during the regular school year.

A previous program, serving the county from the Provo district, was judged unsuccessful by the state office. The school district was asked if they might be willing to begin a summer program serving the two districts. The Chapter 1 director was contacted, and she immediately began work with the principal on a proposal. The principal's prior experience as a migrant teacher, bilingual capabilities, and familiarity with the Mexican culture (he lived in Mexico with his parents during his childhood), made him want to begin this program. Their proposal was accepted, and thus began this project.

The principal at School I was the key to the creation of the Summer Migrant program. He had the necessary skills—he is fully bilingual and had prior experience as a migrant teacher—and most importantly, wanted to start a migrant program in the school district. He previously taught at a migrant program in Ebo while he was a teacher in the same school district. He was a very capable administrator with excellent interpersonal skills. He had risen fast in the district, moving from teacher to principal in only a few years.

District and state-level staff provided personal attention and support for the summer migrant program. The district's Chapter 1 director helped develop the summer program and visited weekly to offer her assistance at no cost to the program. The Utah Migrant Program Director was politically sophisticated, and intensely loyal to his programs. If he believed a program is doing an unusually good job, he found quiet ways to help the programs find additional funding. He believed that the program was excellent. He helped School I form a consortium with several local Universities (University of Utah, Weber State, and Brigham Young University) to design an improved summer program for their two, three, four, and five year old students.

The program received considerable technical assistance from surrounding universities on developing the preschool and Kindergarten. School I elicited suggestions and support from three universities, noted above, and formed a consortium agreement with the three. The summer program got a lot of practical advice on setting up their program, and a promise to place summer interns at the school. This is the kind of no-cost consortium that Utah education always seems to be turning up. The colleges get a placement site; the school gets tech assistance and (maybe) free labor. But this program had a richly textured "web of support."

#### *Staff and Participants*

*Staff.* A staff of eight teachers, most of whom taught in district schools during the regular school year, and eight aides worked with the migrant children. All of the teachers had at least a bachelor's degree and two had master's degrees. Three of the eight teachers were new to the summer program. At least one instructor in every class was bilingual in English and Spanish. None spoke Kickapoo, but there were no Kickapoo students in the summer of 1994 who did not speak English.

The teachers got along very well. For example, one teacher gave another a c. when the second teacher's car broke down. The quality of teaching was very high, in part because the program paid well (\$22/hour on average to tenured teachers) and so drew many



qualified applicants. Teachers tended to be professional and creative, and able to work constructively with other teachers and with students. Teachers and students also got along well together, both formally (in their educational roles) and informally.

The Summer Migrant Program operated under the overall direction of the district Chapter 1 director. However, day-to-day operations were directed by the principal of the School I (he received a \$1,500 stipend for these additional duties). The principal was very well liked and respected by his staff at School I. He was viewed as an excellent administrator who was willing to try new and innovative approaches. He provided the necessary instructional focus for the school, but at the same time allowed teachers the flexibility to implement various programs in ways best suited to the needs of their students. Finally, he encouraged his staff to continue their professional development (and provided mechanisms for doing it) so that as a team they could "do what is best for the children."

The summer program and regular school year were administered by the principal, a rotating assistant principal/teacher, and one and one-half secretaries. Much of the school's business was managed by the teachers in six committees: communication; better instruction; pride and unity; discipline; communication among school, parents, and community; and parent involvement. Teachers who chaired the committees received an extra \$200. The principal directed issues, such as questions from the parent advisory council, to the relevant committee, and met monthly with the chairs of the committees to check in.

The program employed two recruiters to enroll migrant children and to serve as liaisons between the school and the parents. The recruiters were employed for approximately six months beginning in March. Both were fluent Spanish-speakers. In addition to riding the school buses each day, they made home/field visits during the day to meet with parents and/or secondary school-age students. Remaining staff included: a part-time nurse; food-service personnel; and a custodian.

*Recruitment.* Teachers must reapply for summer school positions every year; the best candidates, not necessarily teachers who had always been with the program, are selected. Because the salaries are above average, there tends to be a large pool of applicants. The principal can be a firm administrator. He did not rehire four of last year's six teachers and one recruiter after the first summer. Some of those let go were apparently personal friends. Two or three positions are turned over every year. The summer migrant program recruits from among district staff and through the Brigham Young University intern program. This arrangement benefits both partners: BYU pays half the salary and benefits for its interns, so School I can afford to hire twice the number of staff through this avenue. The principal values general teaching abilities and self-motivation in hiring teachers and aides. He looks for an ability to care, a tendency to do rather than complain, knowledge of how to teach, and skills in problem solving.

*Training.* There was no regular, formal training during the summer. Specific issues were addressed on a case-by-case basis as they arose or in the biweekly staff meeting. The principal's strategy is that, "if there is a problem, we discuss the individual. That's how I found most change happens." In most cases, training during the regular school year was adequate for the demands of the summer school. In one exceptional case, an early

childhood teacher requested focused training on early childhood curriculum. The principal suggested that she focus on "loving the children." The teacher did potty-train the students, but felt that she would have benefited from more informed guidance on developing activities.

During the school year, the principal conducts an ongoing inservice centered on books such as Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Glasser's *Quality Schools or Discipline with Dignity*. The staff read and discuss these sorts of books weekly throughout the year.

*Student Participants.* The migrants in the area are primarily Mexican/Central American children, with some Kickapoo Indians from Texas and Mexico. They come to the School I area for the fruit crops-cherries, apples, pears, peaches, etc.-from as early as March through the picking season into October or November. Approximately 45 percent of the students are true (Status 1) migrants and 55 percent are "settled out" (Status 2 or 3). Settled-out migrant families do non-agricultural work, rent or have bought their home, and have not moved for work in the last six months. The program can serve families for up to five years after they last qualified as Status 1. Some families renew their eligibility by moving away and returning every few years.

The migrant summer program is open to any student who qualifies as a migrant or settled-out migrant. Latino non-migrant families, who sometimes apply for the program, do not fit the requirements. At the time of the site visit, all of the students had at least one Latino parent except eight Kickapoo Indian children. In some cases, such as the girl who qualified by virtue of a migrant stepfather, the "migrant" status does not entirely capture the child's experience. Approximately half of the children came from one-parent families.

Younger children were overrepresented because older children tend to be needed in the fields; 108 students were between the ages of three and six. Parents and employers supported the program in part because it resolved child care problems for working parents. The other major child care option in the area was a Migrant Headstart program which took children up to age four. One or two of the older children who were unable to leave work for class completed work packets independently.

The program began in 1990 with an enrollment of 150 to 180 students. It has grown every year; in the summer of 1994, approximately 250 students, or 60 to 70 percent of the enrollment, attended on any given day. A total of approximately 420 students registered in that summer. Of the enrolled students, 80 percent attended at some point during the summer. The pool of eligible students fluctuates from year to year. If there is a poor crop, fewer children will be in the area to attend. The program will receive less funding the following year. Recruiters start working in March to get a sense of how many families will be coming into the area.

*Recruitment.* Two recruiters, hired on an hourly basis, were responsible for finding out from area farmers when and how many workers will arrive, contacting parents to encourage enrollment, and acting as liaison between the school and family. Recruiting "active" and "settled out" migrant students can be thought of as two nearly separate tasks. Active migrant families often appear in a district with no advance warning, and leave on

short notice. They may stay in town for a week, or for several months. They find housing wherever it is available. Some live in the often extremely modest housing available on a farm. Others rent in nearby towns and often wind up in very sub-standard housing situations. Active migrants are often unskilled at connecting to the services which in theory are available to them, and they pose the greatest challenge in recruiting for a summer school program.

The Alpine program followed four basic strategies in finding these transient families and their children. First, each spring a recruiter visited all of the farms which hired migrant workers during the previous year. The recruiters explained the program to the farms' owners or managers, and left English/Spanish language leaflets for the farmers to distribute.

Second, the recruiters visited stores which have historically been heavily frequented by migrant families. Again, they talked with the owners, left pamphlets, and often arranged to have leaflets posted in store windows.

Third, the recruiters worked with local churches. Many migrant families were members of the Catholic faith, and Catholic Priests were often excellent contacts in finding migrant families. This being Utah, the LDS church often was able to aid in identifying families which qualify for migrant education services. Recruiters were sure to contact as many local leaders from those and other faiths as possible.

Finally, the recruiters relied on word-of-mouth referrals. These could take two forms. Often migrant families told recruiters about new migrant families, and those referrals were quickly followed up by the recruiters. On occasions, parents told other parents about the services, and through this channel, parents self-referred. The district Chapter 1 coordinator estimated that these four methods led to the eventual identification of at least 90% of the potential migrant student population in the county.

The second half of the client base, smaller in number, fell into the "settled out" category. These families took more-nearly permanent jobs in the county and were not actively moving with the crops that year. Settled-out families could be identified through the above four routes, but most often they were referred to the summer program by their regular schools in the three district service area. Responding to the success of the program, increasing numbers of principals and teachers have called and notified the summer program about prospective summer students.

#### *Project Services*

Services were provided for a total of 40 school days from mid-June to mid-August and cover children from pre-K through grade 12. Breakfast, lunch and a snack were served every day to all of the children. Parent meetings also were held both to involve the parents and to cover various topics of interest. Medical screening was also provided for the children. A previous program serving the Utah county area was operated by the Provo school district. However, this program was unsuccessful and was close to being shut-down for non-compliance with federal regulations.

The key objectives of the Summer Migrant Program were to:

1. Increase mastery of basic skills, primarily English language and math. The intent was to provide the migrant children with a foundation in basic skills to enable them to perform at their proper grade level in whatever school setting they end up in during their migratory pattern.
2. Make school an enjoyable experience so that the children, and their parents, would want to continue to pursue their education.

Administrators agreed that the foci should be on academics and parent involvement. The principal suggested that the preschool and secondary programs needed more support than the primary program, because the primary program was better established than the secondary and preschool programs. Preschool students needed a developmentally appropriate program, and secondary students needed to be coaxed and coddled to attend. The teachers might not agree with this emphasis; according to the principal, "Everyone does not share the big picture-they focus on their little piece." Goals identified by the program were accepted by the district; the district followed a site-based management approach. Overall, the district, compared to the school, placed priority on education and less emphasis on making school enjoyable.

#### *Classroom Instruction*

The instructional program consisted of two parts for all grade levels: mornings were spent on instruction in the core subjects of reading/language arts and math; three afternoons per week were spent in one of a variety of specialty areas including science, social studies, and computers. One afternoon per week was dedicated to swimming skills and Friday afternoons were used for educational field trips.

The children arrived at school by bus typically at 8:20 a.m. They were provided with breakfast at 8:30. Morning meals were all cooked on-site and were quite good. The children then had a short recess before going to their assigned classrooms by 9:00 a.m. Around 11:45, depending on the grade, the kids had a free lunch, and went out to play. After lunch the students had "specials". These included music, art, computers, field trips, and trips to a swim club. Some of the "specials" were "educational" in a fairly narrow sense (e.g., learning computer skills, and writing associated with art), but all seemed "educational" in a broad sense, and fun too. At 2:30 the kids got a free snack and then took the bus home.

Teachers were responsible for diagnosing students' academic strengths and gaps, and developing appropriate lesson plans. Because classes tended to be homogenous by age (students were placed in classes by their grade level the previous school year) rather than by skills, the principal reminded teachers to constantly reevaluate student levels. If a teacher discovered that a child was falling behind, the teacher refocused instruction on a lower level.

The format of the instruction was very traditional. Classroom work was all teacher-directed with only occasional grouping and no cooperative instruction. Activities involved primarily drill and practice on phonics and basic reading comprehension (i.e., knowledge recall following individual reading of simple mimeographed basal reader passages). Instruction for the more fluent students was predominantly in English, although teachers used Spanish when students seem confused. The students tended to speak to the teachers in English and speak alternately in English and Spanish with their peers. The ESL classes, for students with no or minimal English skills, operated more nearly in Spanish.

### *Computer Laboratory*

The computer lab for the school provided an example of how good planning and an eye for detail can facilitate good instruction. The lab had a total of 48 Mac Classics, arranged in eight short rows of six Macs. The computer teacher designed the tables himself, and, together with other teachers in the building, built them. The tables were designed so that the Mac Classics fit down into cut-out spaces. The effect is that they were snugly in place, and that students didn't have to look up from the keyboards/mice to see the screens. It was all right in front of them, set into the tabletops.

Beside one Mac in the second row was a built-in overhead projector. On top of the projector was a LCD panel which was hooked up to the second-row aisle Mac. When the overhead and the panel were turned on, they projected the image which was on the aisle Mac onto a large screen at the front of the class. The effect was that the teacher could be in the middle of the room and model the steps he wanted students to take while the students saw the exact screen and movements they should be making on an overhead projector screen in the front. There was a CD reader at the back of the room, and an image scanner. The scanner was at kid level, and the students frequently scanned material into their various reports.

The 48 Macs were connected to three file servers, the larger of which had an 80 meg hard drive. One of the file servers was also connected to a silver disk reader, which held 700 meg of shareware. The network was connected to six dot matrix printers and three Laser printers. The teacher explained that products take on meaning for students when they're reprinted out. Next there was lighting. The room had some windows, and curtains could be opened or closed. It had the school-standard fluorescent lighting. Combined, these could make the room very bright or dark, but could not provide the muted light necessary for students to read from the overhead screen. The teacher installed a set of directional, incandescent lights off the fluorescent fixtures, so that it was possible to have a rather dim lighting in the room. Given the brightness of 48 computer screens, this was just enough so that the students could read at their desks and also clearly see the overhead projection off the LCD overhead. It was completely home brewed and jerryrigged, it cost under \$100, and it worked.

The teacher wired the entire building into his network, so that computers could be put in any classroom and access the main file server. This summer, 12 Macs were moved to the secondary room, and the patch mostly worked well.



### *Curriculum*

Children entered the summer migrant program with very different entry skills. Some third and fourth grade aged children were just up from Mexico and had never been to school. Occasionally a student arrived who spoke a native language of an indigenous group in Mexico. Such children might not speak English or Spanish, and the Alpine program might be their first experience with schooling of any type, anywhere. Other students, especially "settled out" migrant students, may have lived their entire lives in the U.S., may have attended school throughout their lives, and for them the summer program may simply be a "booster shot" summer school.

Given that breadth of entering skills, each child in the summer migrant program had an individualized math and language arts learning program. These were different from the regular school year curricula of the Alpine school district. The math sequence, in particular, was chosen so that a) the individual skill levels of students could be addressed, and b) if students left early (a frequent occurrence), the students could have a (reasonably inexpensive) "book" to take with them.

The basic academic logic of the summer school curriculum was to identify each child's current functioning level, and to use that information to move him or her as far as possible through the district and state curricula. In the case of math, each child received a workbook geared to their performance level. In the case of language arts, students wrote a lot, but still spent time following a grade-specific district curriculum. This program had potential to regress into endless ditto sheets. Most teachers avoided the worst of that, but the great diversity of entering skill levels presented a daunting challenge for the best of teachers and aides. In the computer teacher's class, computers were asked to do a lot of compensating.

In the first year of the program, language arts instruction focused on reading because staff felt that students were not yet ready for writing. A poster in the principal's office reaffirmed his commitment to reading: "You don't have to read every day, just on the days you eat." After the first year, the curriculum changed to focus on more writing, expressive writing; more reasoning and higher order thinking; more reading, less drill, and fewer dittos. Every week every class was expected to have a different writing unit. Teachers reported using "the writing process." Assignments often started with a question and build outward. Classes also wrote poetry. They made and bound "books" of their work. The point here is that writing is inherently individualized and if done reasonably well, challenges every child to work at exactly the boundaries of their writing skills.

Preschool students needed a developmentally appropriate program. The first year of the preschool program did not provide this and did not operate well; students cried in school and complained to their parents. Staff were trained after that and, in the third year of the preschool program, classes proceeded more smoothly.

In the high school program, the district had already developed a set of "Assisted Study Packets" as part of their more traditionally defined educational mission. (The packets can be used by home-bound, pregnant, or, suspended kids.) These amount to aided correspondence courses for the required high school courses. One teacher and an aide took



as many students as showed up as far as they could on whatever days they appeared. Students also could take the packets home and bring them in as they are completed. Apparently, a few students who had farm jobs outside the county took the packets with them and studied at night; then brought the completed packets in on Fridays for feedback and new assignments. At the end of a packet, the student took a test. If s/he passed, s/he received 1/4 Carnegie unit in that subject. It is possible to complete two full units in a summer. Two high school students graduated in the summer of 1994.

#### *Coordination with Regular Program*

There were two sources of coordination between the students' regular and summer programs. First, the settled out migrants attended regular year school either in the School I or Provo school districts. Both curricula were well articulated, and all teachers came from those two districts as well.

Second, all students were entered into the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS). In theory, though not always in practice, this system provides teachers with up-to-date information on students' mastery of specific competencies. In the case of elementary grade students the principal noted that sometimes the most recent entry was from the School I school district the previous summer. However, in the cases of the secondary students, students were able to complete specific units, which counted as partial course-credits toward high school graduation. The school district was thorough about entering that data back into MSRTS.

#### *Individualization*

The needs of incoming students were assessed by means of: student and parent interviews, teacher observation, and criterion-referenced testing using the locally developed criterion (local curriculum) based test. In addition MSRTS data were obtained for all children, and all children (who were in attendance) received a health screening and examination. Updated educational and health data were submitted to MSRTS data base when a child completed his/her tenure at School I.

#### *Funding*

The summer migrant program was fully funded through a Chapter 1 Migrant Education Basic Formula Grant. Total funding for 1990 was \$81,000 and for 1991, \$89,000. After teacher salaries, which were two-thirds of the budget, the largest expense was transportation. The district Chapter 1 coordinator and state migrant coordinator worked together on inservice training in writing grants. This funding, which was specifically for the summer program, is unlikely to disappear. If it were to be cut, the principal would eliminate the most costly items such as dinners for parent meetings. The expenses were justified—food tends to draw parents to meetings—but not essential.

### *Non-Fiscal Resources*

The sparse fiscal resources were extended by volunteer work and in-kind contributions. The district provided the physical plant and utilities; the principal's time as coordinator; and some time from district office staff estimated to be five-days per year for the district Chapter 1 director and a similar amount of time for her secretary. The district picked up the electric bill for the summer migrant program, but summer migrant paid to install air conditioning in a room almost every year.

Both the district and the school were administratively lean. All of "federal programs" staff for this moderate sized district consisted of 1) the district Chapter 1 coordinator, and 2) her secretary. They got great use out of a relational data base which they developed, and a bunch of spreadsheets, and they wrote grants prolifically. School I was run by one principal, one part-time assistant principal, and two secretaries.

Three local universities donated technical assistance to upgrade the early childhood program. They also split the salaries of any student interns placed at the School I summer program.

All children in the migrant program were provided with free public health, medical, and dental care. These services were provided by the County and the State Health Department staff. Their medical records were checked to make sure each child had received proper inoculations, and their hearing and sight were checked, as were their teeth. Any necessary dental work was provided through the program. Each child received a full check-up, and any medical care indicated by the check-up.

### *Project Outcomes*

Evaluation at School I Migrant took several forms. The one in which the principal reported putting the most stock was his informal interviews with students and parents. He said that he heard good things from those two groups.

### *Students*

The issue of program evaluation has always been a thorny one for summer migrant programs. The basic pre-post design is problematic because the time span of the program precludes accurate results. A six to eight week program is typically a shorter span than was used to test the test-retest reliability of the instrument, and unless the instrument is finely matched to the specific summer curriculum, is unlikely to yield valid results.

The school district used the Alpine Curriculum for Excellence (ACE) during the regular year. This curriculum is geared to the state standards and to additional local standards. Moreover, the district spent a great deal of money developing a large item bank for curriculum-matched criterion-referenced testing.

The summer migrant program used the local curriculum (to some extent, though not in math), and the ACE tests pre and post. Note that many of the kids taking the "pre" were marginally to non-competent in the English language, and were taking a test administered

by someone they did not know. By eight weeks' end, they knew and liked their teachers, were comfortable in their classes and desks, and had been exposed to much more English and writing and math. Not surprisingly, the program shows gains every year.

One year, the school administered the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) to all summer students who were there for the entire summer (roughly a 50% sample). That group showed mean gains on math at all grades, and in English in all but third grade.

The next summer, the school used the district CRT, given in the Spring, as their pretest, and re-administered it to all full-summer students (grades one through six) at the end of the summer. They continued to use the WRAT for secondary students. This is a quick, dirty NRT on which any program would be hard pressed to demonstrate true score gains in one summer. The kids show gains every year.

### *Teachers*

There was no formal evaluation of teachers. On an informal level, the principal observed in classrooms, focusing on the following: 1) how instructional time was used, 2) the pace of instruction, and 3) variety of instructional strategies. The principal felt that a 20 minute observation was adequate; often, five minutes showed the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

### *Program*

The program itself is revised yearly. At the first faculty meeting of the summer, the staff discuss the direction of the program. According to the principal, "Changes they want, we make immediately and run with them-it's very fluid." At the end of each summer, the principal submits a descriptive report to the state education agency. This report examines outcomes against school-developed goals, and generally lists demographics, purposes, and accomplishments of the program (e.g., so many credits accrued, so many students graduated).

### *Parental and Community Support*

*Parents.* Parent involvement consisted of: 1) the creation of a Parent Advisory Committee to help advise the design and implementation of the school program; and 2) a general meeting of all parents with free transportation provided. Parents establish a PAC at the first parent meeting of each summer. At subsequent meetings, community groups talk about available services and school staff discuss school improvement and school goals. Each year there is a parent program, such as a big dinner. Parent involvement has grown over the years. In the first year, there were only 150 students. Word-of-mouth advertising, through the parents, drew in almost twice that number in later years. Parents reported that they got along well, but came from very different cultures. Sometimes one parent or group of parents had a visceral reaction to others. The program did not offer parent education, but the principal anticipated using volunteers, as program funds are tied to kids, to teach parents next summer.

The relationship between parents and the program were positive and supportive. The principal made himself very accessible to parents, and parents tended to call the principal rather than teachers as issues arose.

*Community.* Community relations, especially with the fruit growers and farmers, were strong, because the program provided an important child care service, allowing parents to work more efficiently. Community groups contributed to the program by providing services and opening businesses for student field trips. The school tapped the community for volunteers. Some families sent their 15 to 17 year old children to volunteer. BYU sent 125 15- to 17-year-old international students to volunteer for one day. The summer students took field trips to area businesses such as Alpine Candy Factory, BYU Pathology Department, WordPerfect, Girafics, a trout farm, a dairy, and Geneva Steel. Other field trips included the zoo, Laguna Park, the airport, and the planetarium. In general, the community was very supportive. The location of WIC, at the school, may have increased community involvement with the school.

Every summer there has been one anonymous telephone call to the principal complaining that School I resembled an inner city school. The principal discounted these calls as prejudice, feeling that someone was reacting to the large number of "brown faces."

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### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

As a short-term program serving a fluid population, School I's consistent record of student gains was especially notable. This success relied on valid program premises and reliable program implementation. Research on high reliability organizations (HROs) identifies characteristics of highly reliable implementation. The degree to which School I met these characteristics is explored below.

#### *1. Public and staff perception are that failures within the organization would be disastrous.*

Staff and the community agreed that the summer migrant program provided necessary services, although they did not always agree on the exact nature of those services. If the School I program were to close, this might be seen as a nuisance by the community. Area employers relied on the program as a child-care facility, enabling parents to work. The district would view failure as problematic, as evident from their decision to start the School I program when the Provo program failed. The speed and level of the district response to failure of the program would hinge on reactions from the migrant community. If the program were to fail, the community's response would depend on how that failure was presented. The Provo program closed without any publicity, and there was no community response. If the School I program closed because funding were cut, the community probably would not react strongly. If the program closed because staff were derelict in their duties, the community reaction probably would be very negative. The teachers' perception of the impact of program failure would depend on the cause of

program failure. If kids weren't responding, teachers would look at other district resources. If the teacher were not good, s/he would not be rehired. Program failure would be quite problematic because teachers rely on the income (\$8,000). If the program were to fail, teachers probably would look critically at their own performance.

*2. Program has clear goals, staff have a strong sense of their primary mission.*

The staff developed a series of seven outcomes expected for the program. Program staff concurred on the goals, albeit the two critical goals, making school an enjoyable experience and developing language skills, require thoughtful planning to integrate. The annual hiring process encouraged even returning faculty to review their priorities in light of the program goals. Individual teachers, when interviewed, agreed that their primary emphases are on having the student enjoy learning and honing English skills.

*3. Program extends formal, logical decision analysis, based on standard operating procedures (SOPs).*

The program operated under certain philosophies rather than standard operating procedures. For example, teachers were expected to evaluate their students' levels on an ongoing basis, and adjust the assignments as needed. Yet there was no protocol for when or how such evaluation takes place, or established process for shifting the student's individual curriculum.

*4. Program recruits and trains extensively; at peak times, professional judgment is valued.*

The summer migrant program made a concerted effort to hire highly competent, professional staff. The salary, at \$22 per hour, was above the district average, so the pool of applicants was unusually large. All teachers were hired for one summer, so seniority was less influential than qualifications; a teacher would be rehired only if she competed favorably with the current pool of applicants.

One of the key qualifications the principal evaluated in hiring decisions was the teacher's ability to take initiative and make sound professional decisions on her own. His philosophy was to hire self-motivated teachers, make his expectations clear to them, and encourage them to take responsibility for their classrooms and various aspects of the program.

*5. Program has initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.*

On an informal basis, the staff reviewed what was working and what was not in their biweekly staff meetings. The principal also maintained an open door policy, encouraging teachers to bring issues to his attention. In both meetings and conversations, the principal and teachers discussed strategies. For example, while working out the schedule for a field

trip, the principal mentioned that distribution of responsibility created problems on the trip the previous summer. To avoid repeating that crisis, he asked a teacher to be responsible for logistics.

*6. Program is sensitive to areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required; pay attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the processes of the organization.*

There were no structures within the program to facilitate procedural reviews. The principal did not formally evaluate the program staff or processes. However, it was a small program with a small and intimate staff. As staff wrestled with developing strategies for students and the classroom, they discussed the issues informally over lunch, in the biweekly staff meetings, or in the central office or staff room. The level of communication among teachers about students was evident in student-teacher interactions outside the classroom; teachers were clearly familiar with the personal history and needs of many students from other classes. Constant communication provided the necessary sounding board for developing and refining judgment-based strategies.

*7. Monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

Again, formal monitoring mechanisms were not in place, but teachers and the principal shared constant communication and a receptiveness to change.

*8. Program is alert to surprises or lapses; prevent small failures from cascading into major system failures.*

The principal was immersed in the daily processes of the school. He dropped into classes, attended all special programs, and knew the name and personal history of the students. He tended to be alert to signs of potential problems, and carefully chose the optimal time to intervene. For example, a teacher identified a three year old student who might have learning disabilities. If the child still shows symptoms in first grade, when he is eligible for regular school services, the school will refer him to the resource team. The principal spoke with the parents about the school's concerns.

The school may err on the side of noninvolvement, however. Teachers expressed concern with several older students who only attended school on field trip days. The staff decided to encourage the students to attend regularly, but did not push the issue for fear of alienating the students. When the behavior did not change, the staff decided to take a stronger stance. Unfortunately, this decision was made in the last week of the program, and had no impact. There was no system for identifying potential drop-outs from the summer program. Because of the shifting nature of the migrant student population, program staff accepted turnover and did not try to track non-attenders.

*9. Program is hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, utilizes a second layer of behavior emphasizing collegial decision making regardless of rank;*



*staff assume close interdependence and relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent.*

The summer school program was hierarchical in the sense that the principal hired teachers, developed program priorities, and established expectations for teachers and classes. Large or recurring issues were referred to him. However, teachers were the first line for identifying problems. In crises, the first adult on the scene responded to the immediate situation. Then the teacher or aide called in an administrator. If a crisis involving legal issues, such as child abuse, arose, the principal would contact the district Chapter 1 coordinator. The principal handled most other situations, but discussed the issues and his responses with the coordinator. For student learning problems, teachers consulted with the principal, who may call in district specialists. He seldom used the district specialists for the summer program beyond a two-day teacher preservice. The district recognized the principal as the instructional leader.

Much of the program's success can be attributed to the management structure: the principal hired competent professionals who had a basic understanding of following policy and staying within guidelines, provided materials and support as needed, and then let the teachers teach. He felt that a principal can squash a program or let it grow. His choice was to be supportive and let the teachers have ownership of the program, and noted, "I really depend heavily on competent people." He took the time to discuss his expectations with his staff, then gave them freedom to work, although he sometimes struggled to "let myself let them do it." The principal believed that program staff should feel and act as a team. The greatest challenge to developing this program was, for the principal, maintaining his own energy level. He sometimes felt overextended.

*10. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order; responsibility for checking readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.*

Essential equipment for the program included learning materials appropriate for early childhood classes, air conditioners, televisions, and VCRs. The program paid for the first two items and used the school's video equipment. Custodians were responsible for maintaining the equipment .

*11. Program is valued by supervising organizations.*

The relationship between the district and school reflected some valuation of the program in the context of a site-based management strategy. The district did not interfere with school operations unless there were complaints or the school requested help. Compared to other programs in the district, central administration may have worked less closely with the summer migrant program because that program was smaller than most. However, district staff responded quickly to problems raised by the principal. For example, district staff reviewed the case of a student who wanted to be double-promoted immediately after the school requested support. The principal felt that hiding problems allows them to grow bigger and believed in maintaining open lines of communication. The Chapter 1

coordinator came by weekly. She monitored program funds and supervised health checks. Initially, she went into the classrooms. Later in the summer, she met with the principal and/or parents to address student issues on a case-by-case basis.

According to the principal, school issues were addressed in an efficient and business-like way and not allocated greater or lesser resources. In the event of a budget problem, the program would seek alternate funding sources, such as the Department of Continuing Education or state minority or homeless funds. They could tap the expertise of the district Chapter 1 coordinator, and call upon community support such as volunteer foster grandparents and dentists. However, funding did not seem to be a problem at this point; because of enrollment increases, the funding for the program had increased from \$89,000 in the first year to \$128,000 in the summer of 1994.

*12. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

The summer migrant program was excellent at involving students in education. The number of students participating had grown over the life of the program, and parents' feedback was consistently positive. The principal's long-range vision contributed to this success. He maintained this perspective in the face of pressing short-term concerns. For example, several of the teachers in the first year of the program did not perform up to standards and were not hired the following summer. Although these teachers were personal friends, the principal chose to build the program rather than respond to pressure from these teachers.

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### *Analysis of Community*

#### *Results from a teacher and two student focus groups*

*Overview.* Students in the program generally seemed to get along well together, although there were differences of opinion on this. Teachers commented that students often seem to rally around each other; some observed problems in the way students treat each other—older boys hassling younger children. One student commented, "There's a lot of fighting", but another replied, "That doesn't happen a lot." Positive relations among students appeared to be partially due to (1) the fact that several students had cousins and siblings who were also in the program, and (2) the bond that these students who are mostly Mexican-American and Mexican have formed among themselves in reaction to what they see as the racism and xenophobia of the communities in which they currently reside. As one student put it, 'because we're all brown'.

Relations between students and teachers were similarly reported as mixed. Several teachers reported friendly, mutually-supportive relationships with their students, and others, especially those teachers who were Spanish-English bilingual, described relationships in which students came to the school with a lot of baggage and kept the baggage as some monolingual teachers allowed their lack of Spanish to lead them to misinterpret students' actions. Students themselves seemed to think highly of some of the

teachers, but some teachers were felt by most to not be an asset to the program. Students reported problems that arose due to the language and cultural barriers present at the school.

Teachers generally reported getting along well together, and they appeared to be pleased to be working in this program. The interchange in the focus group, however, revealed deep schisms among members of the teaching staff centering around the issue of bilingualism. Such issues seem particularly likely to arise in a summer program serving the children of migrant workers, but they should be of concern especially in a program which stresses that these children's school experience should be a positive one.

Relations between teachers and parents generally appeared to be positive, as reported by both teachers and students. One teacher felt that some of the parents were too much into what he called "entitlement". As he put it, 'they feel that they're entitled to this and let their children miss school most of the time but show up when there's a field trip'. Most indications, however, were that even parents who didn't ask their children much about the program made sure they showed up at the school, and a fair level of parent attendance was reported at special functions. Students also mentioned that parents sometimes make the students do their homework.

Relations between students and other school staff varied. Most reported feeling that the principal did a good job of trying to understand them—and they agreed that he was far better than the principals at their regular schools. However, their interactions with one member of the support staff were quite different. "He's mean," one high school youth commented. "Goes, 'You're a sick boy. Get the heck out of here.'" Some younger students mentioned trying to say hi to him and getting in response, "Get out!" The stories told by the students and the problems involved concerning this individual were backed up by observation and mentioned by the principal as a problem he is working on. The teachers and the aide who participated in the focus group felt that relations between teachers and support staff were generally positive, and they appreciated the work the principal put into the program.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Although not expressed explicitly as a shared vision, the vision that adults at the school seemed to mention the most was one of a program that would allow older students to make progress toward a degree and younger and older ones to have a positive experience in school. Some commented that the experience of learning more about literature and the ability to earn credits towards graduation is valuable for the students in the program.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* Not much was said about a shared sense of purpose, although one teacher said that the teachers in the program really understood each other, and that the administration was excellent. The discussion, however, suggested that teachers had different aims at times: some wanted to get the kids to assimilate and some to give the kids the survival tools they'll need to survive in a hostile environment. The way in which teachers interacted in the focus group illustrated this division all too well, with one teacher

fairly shouting at another. Some teachers expressed their opinions afterwards to the researchers, perhaps not wanting to contribute to undermining the relations built among teachers from different backgrounds and perspectives.

Some teachers (especially those working with pre-school children) expressed concern over not having a curriculum; they would like to see the children clearly developing their skills. Instead, they were just told to love the students and let them have a good experience at school. Others noted that the flexibility allows them to work with students coming in at all levels.

*Shared Values.* Several teachers stressed the degree to which they tried to treat their summer students like family. They generally seemed to try to be caring towards students. One teacher commented in response to a compliment, 'What [she] doesn't know is that every teacher is like me. [The principal] picks people who love children.' Other teachers echoed the principal's emphasis: 'He said the most important thing is to show children that you love them, and that they should enjoy school.' As noted above, teachers were divided on the subject of bilingualism. Some clearly shared the value that teachers should be able to communicate in students' native language as well as in English, while others clearly felt that to use or to allow students to use Spanish at any time was detrimental to the goals of the program.

*Trust.* Bilingual teachers said they saw students blossom in this program. "They let inhibitions go out the window, and they just want to be themselves. But they protect each other." Her comments and those of other teachers suggested that the program was a place where students had greater opportunities than usual to develop themselves, but that the students' experiences still suggested the need to take care of each other, to protect each other from teachers and other adults who view them in stereotyped ways.

*Caring.* Teachers seemed to feel that the faculty acted warmly toward the students, treating them like family. One noted that 'even when [students are] not family, they [act] like family'. An aide commented, 'My teacher doesn't discipline a child as punishment—she loves them out of bad behavior.' Students were in many cases related, and some of the caring among students seemed to be a result of this. Other teachers noted that some of the caring arose as students tried to protect each other, as they tried "to survive in this culture." Several teachers felt that while students were protective of each other, they did not extend themselves to teachers. Others felt that students supported teachers in certain situations. 'Not protective, but accepting. But, they support the student if the teacher's harshness on a child is unjustified.' "The students stick with me. They tell me if someone says something bad about me." Another said, "I went to the cafeteria and five students in different places said, 'You can sit here.' They were looking out for me." Another commented that even some of the older kids went out of their way to say hi when they saw a teacher at the store.

One aide saw how the small children were quiet during the play the older ones put on and felt this to be a sign that they care for the students in the play, and a reaction to the love they got from their teachers.

Students, in talking about the principal, said, "He's strict about his rules, but when you get in trouble, he understands..." "He's like on your side, or something like that." Others said, "These teachers are real nice...Sometimes we p--- them off..." 'But it makes sense to get upset when we do that.'

*Participation.* One of the problems noted was that, perhaps because of the voluntary nature of the program, some students tried to show up only for field trips, presenting an awkward situation for the faculty who wanted to enforce standards, but who didn't want the year to end on a bad note.

*Communication.* One of the ways in which some teachers felt the program could be improved would be to make sure that all teachers were fluent in both Spanish and English. This comment, however, sparked the heated discussion concerning whether bilingualism was an asset or deficit. Although the discussion that followed may have indicated that teachers felt able to speak their minds, it suggested the need on the part of some teachers for better overall communication skills, for example, working on their ability to really listen to what others are saying, even when they disagree with them.

While students liked some of the teachers very much, they spoke about the tendency of some to yell and to grab hold of them. Regarding one teacher, they said, "If you did something bad, he talks like he's going to kill you." "He does," another added, "He's mean." "He screams a lot." "You're going to the office!" "And you can hear him from the other side [of the door]." (This teacher exhibited a similar communication pattern in the focus group.) Students commented about how the principal of the program was different. "He's understandable...He listens to you."

*Respect and Recognition.* An aide noted that sometimes the children told her the Spanish words for things— "They feel proud to help me understand what others say." The only comment made by teachers concerning respect—or rather disrespect—was the one described in more detail in the next section, that "Disrespect is a group mentality... if you catch them individually, they're decent."

Some students felt that some of the teachers did not show them respect, screaming at them, or physically pushing them around. They also complained about the "bad words" that students sometimes used.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The staff in the group interviewed were primarily European-American, with two teachers being Hispanic-American; all were Mormon. The lower grades were primarily taught by women, with men in the upper grades. Two of the European-Americans present mentioned that they were learning Spanish, and one was married to a Hispanic woman. Another teacher noted that her students were helping her to learn Spanish.

In response to the idea that it would be helpful if all the teachers in the summer program were bilingual, one teacher said, "...Students will meet people all their lives who don't speak their language. They should be prepared for this." Also, "There is a reason why one teacher in each class speaks English only. This is an assimilation program. If students always can speak Spanish, they will never try to learn English." A bilingual teacher (who speaks English in her own home with her children) replied, "if the teachers speak Spanish



and English—both languages—you should be able to understand more, and they understand you better. And, it doesn't mean that you have to speak Spanish—"They will use the crutch." "No, because I am doing the same—" "The studies show that they use the crutch." When the latter teacher was asked to cite what studies he was referring to, there was a brief awkward silence, and then he went off on a tangent, unable to back his comment up with even a vague reference.

The bilingual teacher who participated in the above discussion said, "Children need a lot of nourishing. As soon as a child can't communicate, he feels like an idiot." She told of her own experience with learning English in a firm but supportive atmosphere, one in which her primary language was respected.

The teacher focus group differentiated between the behavior and needs of individual students and those of groups. One teacher pointed out that "Disrespect is a group mentality, a gang mentality. Some students coerce others into their behavior for acceptance. If you catch them individually, they're decent. If you catch them together, it's different. For example, a boy dumped his bowl in the trash. He went back to pick it out because it was his mistake. But, some big kids were sitting nearby, so he didn't do it." Another affirmed that peer pressure was related to a record of gang activity. One teacher pointed out that the group mentality was a response to rejection and discrimination, and stressed the students' need to be accepted as full Americans. She pointed out that students in the summer program responded well to teachers' trust and confidence.

One teacher commented on the need for professional counselors who understood and knew how to deal with people from other countries. "Unfortunately, there is lots of prejudice, although not any one in this room. One teacher said that the students are always cussing. Once we were watching students and he asked why they were always cussing. I told him that the students were talking loud [in Spanish], not cussing..." A second bilingual teacher mentioned a similar comment made by a monolingual teacher watching a group of students. She replied, "They're not cussing; they're not saying anything bad." "Oh, but they sound like they are." And I said, "Yeah, but they're not cussing." "Well, every time I go by, it sounds like they're cussing." "They're not cussing. You just don't understand..." The first teacher later added, "...I think it's important for me to understand and share with a child that life is not always fair. When someone is prejudiced, I don't need to be prejudiced back. It's important to know how to react healthily."

Students in the high school focus group were all Hispanic. The students in the fifth/sixth grade focus group were also Hispanic, except for one student, who appeared to be European-American. One of the students was just learning English; she spoke little, but seemed to understand fairly well. The other students tried to help her speak, and then quietly translated for her as we talked. Interestingly, in spite of the fact that some of the other students seem to have been born in the U.S. and are thus American, the European-American girl and the others as well referred to her as "American", making a distinction between Hispanic and (Anglo-)American.



Students' views of the program suggested that while it had its problems, it was an improvement over the norm in their regular schools. When asked how the summer program compared to the school they went to during the regular school year, several high school students said that staff at various other schools in the area were racists. Students began to describe a typical situation, after first commenting on the summer program:

"Oh, this is much better, man, 'cause the teachers, the principals are racist there...Just because—you know how everybody gets in their own group—like the Chinese people get with the Chinese people, and then the Hippies with the Hippies...and then the—what's the name?—The Hispanics with the Hispanics. And they get kind of racist 'cause they do something; they just go straight to the Hispanics, and... 'What you guys do?' And they haven't proved we did it, but they still accusing...How come they don't go to the other groups? They hang around together too." "That's what they do, 'cause...sometimes the other people [do something to] get in trouble, and then they come to us, 'Oh, you guys are some of the suspects we have.'...And sometimes we prove that we didn't do it, and they're 'Oh, we're sorry.' But every time they come to us."

A second student reiterated, "Say that he gets in trouble. The white boy won't get suspended, but he will." Another said, "They call me stuff. Like 'Mexican, go back to your country!' or something like that." A young woman added, "Mexican Bean." "Then, if you call them names, they get p-d off, and they come after you. And what are you going to do? I go after them, too...You can't take the name calling 'cause, you know, you're proud of your country...How come the other people make fun of it, and then they don't want you make fun of them?"

The fifth and sixth grade students who were interviewed mentioned a prejudice between the Hispanic and Euro-American students. When asked whether all the students in the focus group spoke Spanish, one replied, "Diana doesn't, 'cause she's American," referring to the girl who appeared to be European-American. Diana jumped in the conversation, "See, I told you all of the Spanish boys are prejudiced, besides Manuel, and Salvador ...—Spanish boys is what I said." "She fights with everybody," another noted. When asked whether they get along well with each other in spite of differences in the countries from which they come, one replied, "...We get along better than we get along with Americans." Diana interjected, "...I think everybody here is prejudiced. They're against Americans just 'cause this is a Spanish school." "No. This is not a Spanish school," one student said. Diana: "They call me 'Dumb American'—that's what they call me." When the other students murmured their disagreement with her comment, she added to one girl, "That one kid that we walked past in the hall today, he goes, 'Dumb American'." "Oh, I know that kid," her classmate said, and then another student jumped in, "Well, that's what the Americans do to us." "That's what they do to us." Diana: "I never said that to anybody." "Yes, you did," one replied. One thoughtful young student said, "[my family] watched a show yesterday—it was a show we just turned on the channel...that guy talking, he goes, 'This place is made for Americans, not Mexicans...not Africans...' And everybody was cheering him on." Some students said they try to intervene when someone makes these kinds of comments and stereotypes. Another student added, "Sometimes they make fun of our language." Another said, "My mom doesn't like it when people say, 'Go home, Mexicans'...My mom says that it's good to come here, because she wants me and my

brothers and sister to get along with Mexicans too, not only Americans." One student commented gratefully about one of the teachers in the program, "He understands us better, because he traveled around Mexico. He likes Spanish people. And he thinks they have the right to be here."

*Teamwork.* Teachers felt that the students came to see every adult as a teacher, to bond with all teachers, not just one. The teachers said nothing explicitly about teamwork, however, although students, when asked how they would make the students in the program closer, replied, "Have them do work together...So they'd learn to get along."

*Affirmation.* One teacher commented, "It is ideal for the teachers to have three to four languages per person. It is ideal for a person with low self-esteem, to help them express their ideas." Nothing was mentioned concerning the presence of affirmation in the school, either by teachers or by students.

*Conflict Resolution.* One teacher noted that the children in this program seem to improve their behavior after a couple of months; yet, she also noted her frustration when students act badly toward some teachers, "I hate when some students swear at the teacher. I tell them, 'You have to change your attitude.'" Little was said directly about conflict resolution, although there were plenty of complaints about low level conflict-type situations. One teacher referred to a student who had cut into line, swearing, and refused to go to the back of the line. She also commented on problems with the way the older boys treated women. In general it seemed that conflict resolution programs and, more importantly, cross-cultural training would go a long way to improving the situation in the program.

*Development of New Members.* One teacher made an interesting comment suggesting that she saw students as future adult members of the wider society. "I think [it] is very important to let them know what the government is doing for them. And to allow them to think about it and to ponder it... what would be if they wouldn't have this kind of program..."

*Links Beyond the Community.* The program seems to owe part of its success to the use of recruiters and informal contacts to get students to participate in the program. Some teachers, however, commented that there should perhaps be a cut-off point—that the continual recruiting of students up until the very end each year may be disruptive for the classrooms and studies already in progress. Another proposed a way to keep at least some classes always open to new students while allowing others to go on without new additions near the end of the term. Other suggested that an additional recruiter and increased efforts to engage students at the beginning of the summer would help.

The school seems to have done a good job of getting parents interested in the program, in spite of the difficulties migrant parents are likely to encounter in being involved in the school. The principal's command of Spanish seems to be a primary factor in this. "[The parents] were very warm at the last gathering. We did a program...Many parents are supportive—they check in with us to make sure their kids are allowed to do what they are doing."

The field trips seem to be an important part of the program. Several students mentioned them as one of the best aspects of the program, and one teacher noted that for some of these students, field trips to strange places can be rather scary, but good learning experiences. The older students seemed to be especially appreciative of the college field trip, and generally wished there were more field trips for their own age groups. Perhaps encouraged by that field trip, one young woman mentioned wanting to major in college in computer technology.

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Although nothing was explicitly said about investing in the program, one student suggested that the program itself was an investment in the community. "I just come so I don't get in trouble, 'cause every summer I get in trouble."

#### *Community Resources*

One rather cynical comment made was that money helps to improve relations between teachers and administrators— 'It's easier to have close relations with a principal when he funds your ideas.'

#### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

Teachers felt that the small size of the summer program facilitates increased interaction with students.

The summer migrant program's independent status appeared to have given the principal a freer hand in selecting and possibly rehiring the staff that he felt will work best with the children.

This independence also affected funding issues. As one teacher put it, "You feel more sense of community when the principal agrees to your requests for purchases." A rather cynical comment perhaps, but worth noting.

Many students knew each other from before participating in the program; many students were related to other students.

The students who participated in the program, being from Hispanic/Hispanic-American migrant worker families, had to deal with not only migration and poverty but also with racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments in the mostly white and Mormon communities in which they stayed. Furthermore, they were in many cases exposed daily to such attitudes via the media.

Although the faculty of the summer migrant program included some Hispanic-American teachers, it is clear that issues regarding the teaching of Spanish-speaking migrant or immigrant children had not been resolved among the faculty. Not only were there divisions among the faculty (not necessary by ethnicity) in teaching philosophy, and a lack of understanding regarding the value of bilingual education on the part of the majority of the European-American teachers; these divisions seem to have produced outright antagonism among teachers.

## *Students' Days*

While visiting School I, students were observed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe a day in the life of a student in the program, whom we will call "Kumi".

### *A Day with Kumi*

The observed class has third and fourth grade students. Most students are placed in classes according to age rather than skill level. However, students whose English skills are extremely low attend ESL classes. Twenty-three students attend on the day of observation, about average according to the teacher. It would be difficult to predict who will attend on any particular day. Kumi, who is in the fourth grade, and her sister attend this class regularly. Kumi comes from a migrant family, living in Mexico during the winter and traveling to Utah for the summer. Her English and academic skills are slightly below the class average, perhaps because the time she spends in Mexico slows her English development. She is a tall, slightly awkward girl with long black hair and braces. Although comfortable with her peers and teachers, she seems shy toward strangers.

The day begins with breakfast at 8:30. At 9:00, when class is scheduled to begin, some students and the teacher are still at breakfast. At 9:10, the teacher arrives to unlock the classroom. Students, who have been lined up in front of the door, run into the room. The teacher outlines the schedule: first, students will paint their pottery, which has been made and fired earlier; then they will attend an ESL performance with the rest of the school; and, in the afternoon, they will do a space lab computer simulation if the logistics are arranged on time. This is the next to last day of summer school, and the last academic day; the teacher mentioned privately that this is an atypical day.

After the teacher runs through the schedule, one student asks a question. The teacher good naturedly corrects him, "Thank you for raising your hand, Mr. Freddie." Freddie raises his hand and asks his question again. Throughout the day, the teacher guides and corrects the students in the same low-key, non-judgmental manner, and the students respond by behaving as the teacher suggests. The teacher clearly speaks Spanish. He pronounces students' names effortlessly and gives some instructions in Spanish. Students switch easily between English and Spanish.

The teacher maintains a reasonable pace for the class. He sends the aide to fetch the pottery while the students take a quiz on their reading, so the pottery is there by the time the students are ready. While administering the quiz, he mixes and set out cups of glazes. The quiz is open book, using the reading book *Wind by the Sea*. Throughout, the teacher rephrases questions that have difficult vocabulary words. The following questions are asked:

1. Your name
2. "Down the Mississippi with Mr. Audobon" is about a man. Audobon had to do with birds. What state does this story take place in? Look at the title of the story for clues.

3. What did Mr. Audobon use for transportation? What did he get around in?

4. What is this picture of?

5. Turn to page 504. What is he hunting?

Several students ask the teacher to repeat questions. He responds to the first three or four requests, then says, "I'm not going to repeat any more. If you didn't understand the questions, I'd repeat it. But some of you are not listening."

6. What was John James Audobon's work? What did he do?

All of the students try to answer the quiz questions. Some answer the questions quickly and easily and others struggle. Kumi completes the quiz slightly slower than the average. The quiz seems to be at the right level for most of the class. The teacher collects the papers.

Before students can glaze their pieces, the teacher reviews technique. For example, he asks what color results from mixing lots of colors. Several students call out, "Black." The teacher hands out pottery to the people who made the pieces. Students who don't have pieces (because they were absent the day the pieces were made) get to paint the pots of absent students. The pottery tends to be cowboy hats, bowls, boxes, and statues (especially heart-shaped statues made by girls). There is one airplane and one dolphin. The maker of the dolphin is absent. Most of the students clamor to glaze that piece, as it is particularly well made. The teacher gives it to the one blonde, apparently Caucasian, girl in the class, Diana. Diana qualifies for the program because her mother's third or fourth husband is a migrant laborer. Once the pieces are distributed, the students gather around glaze cups, paint their pieces, and chatted. They speak a mix of Spanish and English. Boys and girls segregate themselves, although one or two boys wander over to the girls' groups. It is 9:30. As the students work, the teacher circulates, making glazing suggestions. He notices one student, Liza, who did not get a piece of pottery, and gets her crayons and paper. She begins to draw a tree.

The teacher hands out blue papers—apparently, report cards—to some students. Then he works one-on-one with students, although there are always several students following him around the room. The aide watches the students and has very little interaction. Approximately 10 minutes into the glazing process, the teacher makes a general pronouncement: "You guys are doing lots better work than the time before."

Kumi finishes her glazing and cleans up her area. She looks at other students' work. As students finish glazing, they clean up, collect water color paint sets, and paint on paper. One or two students finish their quiz. Most of the students work together, and chat as they work. A few, such as Liza and Kumi, work alone. Liza and Diana sit next to each other, but don't talk much. Liza is very quiet. Diana tries to talk with her a few times, but Liza would look at Diana without responding. Kumi gets materials and began to paint. She concentrates intensely on her picture. After she has been working approximately 10 minutes, she crunches up the paper and hands it to the teacher, who tosses it in the trash. Then she begins another picture immediately.



At 9:49, the teacher says, "You have 10 minutes. Then you can go to recess if you want or you can stay in." A few minutes later, he announces, "If you're done, you can go outside." Three students and the aide leave, but the aide returns after a few minutes and begins taking posters off the wall. Kumi stays in the room along with her friend Esperanza and most of the other students. The teacher writes his name on the board with his right and left hand. Four students, including Kumi, gather at the board and start writing their names using right and left hands. The teacher reminds students that it is time for recess and encourages them to go outside. Students seem to enjoy his presence and are reluctant to leave. He perches on his desk and five girls gather to joke around with him. One of the more popular girls (judging by the number of students who clamor for her attention), Allison, works at the glaze cup by Liza's desk. As she glazes her bowls, she starts a conversation with Liza.

Around 10:00, Kumi stops painting and begins to clean her water color set. The set is approximately seven by two inches, but Kumi spends over 10 minutes laboriously cleaning it. It seems that she has unusual powers of concentration or that she is focusing on the watercolors to appear busy. By 10:10, the remaining students and teacher begin cleaning up. The teacher puts away the glazes, then suggests to Kumi that she clean the rest of the class watercolor sets. Esperanza helps out. Allison returns to the chalkboard and writes, "Teacher Good Teacher" and "Aide Good Teacher." The latter appears diplomatic, as the aide has had virtually no interaction with students during the morning.

By 10:20, four students, the teacher, and the aide remain in the room. Two students are painting and two, Kumi and Esperanza, are companionably and quietly cleaning watercolor sets. In the hallway, students from other classes are carrying their chairs to the cafeteria for the ESL performance. The teacher and aide go outside.

At 10:30 the teacher and aide return to the room, followed by the rest of the students. The teacher says, "We need to get to the program, guys. Sit down and I'll tell you what it's about." Then he reads the program to them. Students recognize many of numbers, and sing bits of the songs. Then they line up and file into the cafeteria.

One wall of the cafeteria is taken up with the built-in stage. The students sit in folding chairs and teachers and administrators sit among the children or at table/chair sets which fold down from the walls. When all the children and staff are settled, the principal introduces the master of ceremonies, who is one of the students. The MC introduces each song:

1. Song, "ABC's": students sang along to a record, holding letters of the alphabet. Most sang along at the beginning of the song, but few were singing by the end.
2. Chant: Give me an "a"...
3. Song, "This Old Man": students sang along to a record. Of the 12 students on stage, four girls sang and performed the accompanying motions. The rest mouthed the words or stood there, looking embarrassed.
4. Poem, "Sally speaks English but not very well": One student had memorized and delivered this poem.



5. Song, "Mulberry Bush": students sang along to a record.
6. Poem, "Shh Shh. Baby is sleeping": two students recited the poem.
7. Song, "Hokey Pokey": students sang along to a record.
8. Song, "Two little birds": students sang along to a record.
9. Song, "Animal fair": students sang along to a record.
10. Song, "The five beauties": five girls in costume danced to a song on a record.
11. Song, "Bingo": students sang and acted out the lyrics to a record.
12. Instrumental, "Beauty and the beast": two student aides played the flute and piano.
13. Song, "Farmer in the dell": students acted out the lyrics to the song.
14. Song, "Yellow submarine": five boys dressed up like the Beatles danced with cardboard guitars to the song on the record as a girl held a cardboard yellow submarine aloft.
15. Song, "Yesterday": one boy sang the song along with the record.
16. Song, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star": students sang along to a record twice—first alone, then with audience participation at the behest of the MC.

The performers begin enthusiastically, but soon stop singing along. Often, they just stand on stage looking as though they wish they could disappear. Four girls consistently sing the songs and perform the accompanying motions. Most of the songs are accompanied by motions and set or costume changes. The solo performers (4, 6, 15) do well—they speak clearly and enunciate well. Apparently, the production was designed the day before the performance. ESL students saw other students in a play the week before and asked the principal for an opportunity to perform. The principal suggested the idea to the ESL teachers, who agreed. One ESL teacher says later that they should have vetoed the idea because students didn't have enough time to prepare a high quality production and ended up being rather embarrassed.

During the show, the audience is reasonably attentive. Students sing and clap to "Bingo" and "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." However, their attention drops abruptly for the instrumental piece, which is the only piece not performed by ESL students. Students in the observed class chat a bit throughout the show; several boys are taken aside by the teacher.

The production ends at 11:15, and students return to class. The teacher has students get out their books to return them. He asks a student to hold up one math book (Heath Math) to show the broken spine and tells the students not to shake books because they cost \$40 to replace. Students can keep some of the books, including their notebooks (which, apparently, the school provides). The teacher pauses, selects 10 students for the focus group and sends them down to the teacher's lounge. Students volunteer eagerly, although they do not know what the activity was. After those students leave, the remaining 14 have a reading lesson. In preparation, the teacher asks students if they have ever "echoed." Those who raise their hands are asked when and what they said. Freddie asks the teacher

why the classroom does not produce an echo. The teacher responds, "Good question. Why? I want an intelligent answer." The students offer a few suggestions, then the teacher explains echoes using a wave analogy: "If waves hit the sand, they sink in. The sand is soft. If water hits the side of your bathtub, it bounces off because the bathtub is really hard." He draws a picture on the board. Then the teacher begins to read aloud. He stops once to ask two students to read sentences. One has not been paying attention and is lost. The teacher says, in a quiet, nonjudgmental manner, "That's what I thought. Keep up." He instructs students to read to themselves or in pairs, then goes into the hall to talk with three boys who were disruptive during the assembly.

The attention level drops as soon as the teacher walks out the door. Kumi and a partner (Esperanza was in the focus group) read together, taking turns. While Kumi reads, her partner does not seem to pay attention, but Kumi reads along silently while her partner reads aloud. The other girls talk. The remaining boy refuses to work with a girl, and talks with anyone who will listen. The aide doesn't interact much with the students and doesn't admonish those who are talking. The disruptive students return to the classroom and start reading. The teacher calls another student into the hall. At 11:45, students tell the aide that it is time to leave. The aide tells them to "just keep reading." "Why?" "Just do." Five minutes later, the teacher is bombarded with "Can we stop?" when he walks into the classroom. He directs them to gather their books and line up. The boys collect all the girls' books until the teacher intervenes and has students take their own. As he has all along, he gives students a reason for his directions: "I don't want some people to take too many books, drop them, and disrupt classes."

Students take their books to another building (which lost its roof during a summer storm) and go to lunch. During lunch, the teachers sit at several tables near the students. The students gossip in Spanish and English. After they have eaten, they go to the playground. Kumi and her friends gather at the far end and talk in Spanish. Several younger children trail after, loudly demanding attention. Young girls seem to follow older girls and younger boys, older boys. Kumi and Esperanza play on the monkey bars and swings, and help the younger children climb the monkey bars.

After recess, the students spend the afternoon in the computer laboratory. First, they try to use a space lab simulation programmed during the summer by some older students in the district. The computer crashes. The class spend the rest of the afternoon playing computer games.

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## *School J*

### *Central California*

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#### *Site Overview*

##### *Context and Reasons for Selection*

This site was chosen because Stringfield had visited it on two previous occasions as part of previous studies of exemplary schools serving disadvantaged students (see Helpler et al., 1987). In the mid 1980's, the school had been nominated by the state's Chapter 1 office and by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory as providing superior services.

The school served and continues to serve a multi-cultural community (several groups of first-generation Asian immigrants, a large Hispanic community, both including many Limited English Proficient students, and a significant number of African American students). It does so in fashions that over the last 10 years have produced above-district, above-state, and above-national average academic outcomes on a variety of measures.

In the At Risk study we were interested in studying sites with long-term, stable records of providing exemplary services and producing exemplary effects in diverse communities. School J was one of our first choices.

Further, the school and several surrounding schools had become "year round schools." In these cases, the designation meant that the school facility was being used 48 weeks a year, serving essentially four-thirds the normal number of students by rotating students through complicated block-scheduling schemes involving 12 weeks of schooling followed by 4 weeks of vacation, followed by 12 weeks of schooling, etc. Such scheduling efforts are increasingly common in California and other cash-strapped areas of the country, especially in schools serving large numbers of students placed at risk. The opportunity to visit one such site was attractive.

Two human reasons for visiting School J had been that Stringfield was a great admirer of the former principal, Mr. P., and wanted to continue learning from interactions with Mr. P.:

and that the school had had a superb specialist teacher, Ms. F.. When we contacted the school about visiting, we learned that both had suffered very serious illnesses over the previous three years, and neither was at the school. These are very serious losses to the school and to public education. The fact that the school was continuing to offer exemplary services having lost two fine educational leaders made the visit all the more relevant to the issue of sustainable exemplary services.

### *Lessons from School J*

1. It is possible to sustain high quality services over at least 10 years at a school serving large numbers of students placed at risk, and to have those services continue to result in at risk students scoring at and above local, state, and national averages.
2. It is possible to sustain and, as needed, adapt a program through a completely new administration (program, school, and district administration), so long as the new administration shares the core goals of the school and program.
3. In the face of a potentially bewildering array of problems, the school continued to proclaim itself, "School J: Home of the SUPER KIDS." That attitude pervaded the school's work. Defining the students as the problem was not allowed. As the former principal stated on numerous occasions, "Our parents send us the very best children they've got." This attitude was shared by the highly competent new principal, Ms. N., who had been the vice principal during the former administration.
4. The fact that the school had built a strong community among teachers, support staff, and administrators sustained much of the spirit and as much of the specifics of the program as was possible. Adults continued to work together in the belief that they could make a difference for students.
5. While we visited schools and programs that were "flashier," the fundamental, common-sense working through of practical problems so that ALL children would succeed that had defined the school ten years earlier abided. This practical, shared core is the tap root of high reliability. If one intervention, or one organizing structure didn't work, the administration and faculty simply began looking for another. Once something was found to work, it was spread throughout the school and, in effect, codified. After all, School J is the "Home of the SUPER KIDS."

### *Site Description*

#### *Setting*

School J is located on a several acre lot in what had been a farming area in California. Over time the school had been surrounded with single and multi-family housing. In the 1990s, much of the community is populated with recent Mexican and Asian immigrants. In addition to the original buildings, over the past 20 years over a dozen transportable (effectively permanent but much less substantial) classrooms. The school community has

grown dramatically over the past 30 years, and the district has not found fiscal resources to respond with "permanent" classrooms. None the less, the classrooms are clean and the playgrounds are tidy.

The school had undergone some improvements between Stringfield's 1994 visit and the whole team's 1994 visit. During the first visit, the administration had been out in a mobile home, because the offices were being renovated. By the second visit, attractively renovated administrative quarters were available for meetings and discussions.

Stringfield was reminded that one of the former principal's favorite ways of responding to questions was to smile and begin with, "We're all just a little bit crazy around here..." Invariably, what followed was a common-sense, get-the-job-done-right-and-we'll-worry-about-the-bureaucratic-implications-later attitude toward serving children and running a school. It seemed fitting that when renovations were required, it was the principal who moved into the mobile home.

The unpleasant but related point was that the administration had to move out because the school could not be repaired during a summer break. The school, and many schools on the south side of town [the predominantly immigrant communities] no longer have summer breaks. Rather, the invariably overcrowded schools operate on a complex, "90-30 Year Round Calendar." Practically, this meant that students attended school for 12 weeks, then were out for four weeks, were back for four, and so on. Each student got the regulation 36 weeks of schooling per year, but the building could serve an additional 33% more students without increasing class sizes or paying to build new classrooms and schools.

At first blush, there was a cost-savings attractiveness to this schedule, but it proved to have three considerable drawbacks. First, in general, parents did not like the new schedule and, if they could, preferred to send their children to schools operating on the traditional September-June schedule. In part this was because schools were often unable to accommodate whole families of students within any one scheduling cycle, meaning that none of a family's children might have the same vacation time available, and that working parents were perpetually seeking non-school activities for their forever rotating out of school students. In part it was because not all schools in a feeder pattern were necessarily on the 90/30 system, so that it was often impossible for a family with children in, for example, elementary and middle schools in the same community to share vacation schedules.

Three additional problems created by the schedule were much more harmful to life within the school. Student transfers instantly created challenges. Particularly if the student was transferring in at a time other than mid-August, the probability of having an appropriate level class available for the student, and that the class would be at the legally-required cycle, so that the student would have 180 school days during the year. Some classes quickly began to over-fill, others to empty, and teachers faced ever-wider ranges of student skills in their classes.

The "Super Kids" program had always tested all incoming students, and placed them in a class of students performing at similar skill levels. If a student was accelerating past his peers, he was bumped up. This was possible in part because there were several same-

grade classes in the school. With the new schedule, the number of same-grade classes with similar annual cycles was reduced by 3/4. The school's ability to bump a student up, or to add a student to the appropriate classroom, was reduced by 3/4. Without malice, part of the heart of what had made the program work so well for years was ripped out.

The final considerable problem was that the school's faculty could almost never meet. One quarter of the faculty is always on vacation, the other three quarters are always on different cycles from one another. Planning whole-school staff development, obtaining consensus on almost anything, or planning together, all tasks strongly suggested in almost any discussion of school restructuring or school improvement, are all virtually impossible under this scheme.

What looks harmless on paper, the 90/30 plan, was experienced by families and by the faculty as very destructive of the school's ability to respond to the needs of individual students, or the faculty's ability to meet, discuss, plan, or grow together.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

The "Super Kids" program had evolved over several years at School J. It included diagnostic testing of every child coming into the school, a team discussion, often including parents and the principal, of the best academic fit for each incoming student, a coordinated curriculum among teachers within and among grades, and regular, informal re-testing and re-placement of students perceived by their teachers to be either falling behind or leaping ahead. The school had evolved a sophisticated, teacher-developed system of informal measures in diverse content areas, and had become quite sophisticated at interpreting multiple measures. In all of those regards, the program bore some resemblance to a program developed independently on the other coast, Success for All.

The program also featured extensive staff development. Content might be an externally developed program or one of the school's teachers presenting for discussion one of their successes or frustrations. Over several years the faculty had evolved a remarkable level of professional and personal trust. Importantly, teachers were very actively sharing the portions of their work that were bringing success, and the overall curriculum was bootstrapping toward greater and greater success.

As noted above, the 90/30 plan froze much of this progress. It was no longer possible to consider which class might be best for a child. Practical issues of "which teacher who teaches grade x on y cycle and also has an empty desk in her room" have come to dominate over refined diagnostic issues. Arranging a fully bilingual teacher for a recent immigrant, for example, had become literally four times as hard, and was often impossible.

Still, the faculty and the current principal consistently put forward a "can do" energized response to often serious problems. The program was not dead in 1994, just hobbled.

Mean academic achievement results in this very high poverty school were typically above the 50% nationally, and in almost every area and grade were above the district average. On the Individual Tests of Academic Skills (ITAS), the district's nationally normed



achievement measure, sixth graders scored well above district and national averages. School J's sixth graders, nearly 90% of whom received free lunch, scored above the 70th percentile on mathematics applications, above the 60th percentile on Language Arts, and near the 60th percentile on reading comprehension. The reading and math scores are more than 10 percentage points above the district average. These are remarkable achievements.

### *Staff and Participants*

"Super Kids" is a schoolwide effort, therefore all students and all staff of the school are participants.

The principal stated that the school had three "clienteles": the staff, the community, and the students. If School J is thought of as taking service to all three groups seriously, then the school begins to make more sense.

The school has 34 faculty plus additional aides, janitors, secretaries, and other support staff. As an example of "service" to both teachers and students, the administrators perform the tasks associated with "bus duty" in the morning and evening. Teachers use this time to plan, to met, and to prepare for the day. Years of team-based hiring and quiet counseling of some staff out of the school; combined with thoughtfully focused, coordinated staff development have meant that School J has an unusually tightly-knit faculty. "We all cover [classes, students] for each other." was a sentence heard repeatedly at School J. The principle and the expressed feeling carried over from administration and teachers through janitors and lunchroom workers. Much more so than in most schools, School J was a team that worked for each other and for their students.

### *Costs*

In the 1990's California ranks below the national average in costs per pupil. Fresno unified ranks well below the California state mean. Among the "special" programs provided at School J were the following: Chapter 1, Resource Specialist program, bilingual education, migrant education, drug free schools, school breakfast program, school lunch program, economic impact aid, school improvement program, state preschool, and G.A.T.E. (gifted and talented education) funding.

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## *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

### *1. High Reliability requires*

Shared Clarity regarding Core Goals.

School J had a 10 year tradition of valuing the social and academic success of all students, and of honoring the professional and personal development of all teachers.

**2. A perception, held by the public and all of the employees, that failure by the organization in its core task(s) would be disastrous.**

The principal, the former principal, and the faculty assumed that all students could learn, that somehow or other they could educate them, and they took failure of a student to be failure of the school. Failure received a great deal of attention.

**3. High Reliability Organizations are alert to surprises or lapses.**

(Small failures can cascade into major failures, and hence are monitored carefully.) How?

While School J faculty and administrators used different words, it was clear that the initial testing, the grade and program-specific teaming, the 10 year history of gathering and acting as a group on student-level data at the first sign of students having trouble, all were implemented to avoiding cascading errors.

**4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve it's Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:**

--Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),

--Relevant to Core Goals, available in

--Real Time (e.g., now),

--Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

Initial testing, ongoing data gathering, and re-testing and staffing as needed all made use of a rich, relevant, real time, regularly cross-checked data base. One effect was increased sense of professionalism, and efficacy. Another was the avoidance of student, or teacher, failure.

High Reliability Organizations MUST rely on individual professional judgment, regardless of the person's position or rank. Therefore:

**5. HROs recruit extensively.**

Teams of teachers worked with the principal in hiring. The school served as a site for some types of university placement, thus providing the school with early "looks" as young teachers-in-training. The principals had encouraged aides to work at teacher training, so that on occasion the school knew exactly the skills of a potential employee.

**6. HROs train and retain constantly.**

The school had a long, proud history of coordinated staff development. The 90/30 year-round schooling was creating havoc in this tradition.

**7. HROs take performance evaluation seriously.**

The former principal had quietly moved more than one teacher out of the school. The overall quality of the current staff, top to bottom, meant that while the current principal still attended to staff evaluation, her work could largely be targeted to encouraging teachers to develop new skills in a highly supportive environment.

**8. HROs engage in mutual monitoring (administrators and line staff) without counter-productive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.**

This is a very "open" school, not architecturally (which is traditional), but behaviorally. Teachers know what each other are doing, and what their principal is doing. Teachers pitch in when one or another of their peers is having trouble. The shared awareness enhances teachers' skills, confidence, and school productivity.

Because the flight of time is the enemy of reliability:

**9. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.**

The entire "Super Kids" program was routinized, and well learned by all staff. Several of the modifications required by the year round school were regarded by many staff as (inevitable) losses. The faculty certainly did not blame their principal, and to some extent didn't blame the central administration, but they knew that valuable things had been lost.

**10. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs, honor the flaw-finders, and support the nomination and validation of changes in inadequate procedures.**

This school had a proud tradition of exactly this. Persons who found flaws in the procedures, so long as they were willing to work on finding better ways, were publicly praised and supported.

**11. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize and honor collegial decision making, regardless of rank.**

Yes. Throughout. The school would find ways to begin some form of specialized testing and service provision for a student much faster than the larger system's bureaucracy could respond. The judgment of a regular teacher that a student needed something more was all that was required to initiate further investigation.

Again, this feature was being severely tested in the year round scheduling.

**12. In HROs, key equipment is available and maintained in the highest working order.**

This seemed to be true; though in the larger case of facilities, the year-round use of the building made repairs on virtually anything disruptive of the smooth flow of school life.

*13. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.*

This was a tough call. In some ways School J had always been valued and seen as exemplary by the district and the state. The very fact that the provision of solid services in a high poverty context, while laudable in one sense, is disturbing in another.

The school district implemented a "Program Quality Review" of each school on a rotating basis. This process takes each school's service delivery seriously. Similarly, the district produces the most complete school level annual "School Report Card" Stringfield has seen. Central administration in Fresno appears to provide more useful academic services to schools than average. The Title I director and district coordinator both appeared sincerely interested in helping sustain School J.

However, no one in central administration seemed to be doing anything to justify the fact that schools in the predominantly upper middle class north of the city were not on year round schedules, and schools in the predominantly immigrant south were. We didn't interview members of the school board, but this had been their decision.

*14. In HROs, short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

This had been the history at School J, however, the continuous fiscal pressure from the state's and the district's inability to raise revenue as the student population rose and moved has resulted in (a) 20 year old "temporary" buildings, (b) year-round schooling, and (c) cuts in programming and program support, all of which are clear examples of valuing short term efficiency over reliability.

*Summary*

If all of the nominated-as-exemplary schools in the At Risk study were rank-ordered on reliability, School J would be in the upper half. There's certainly no shame there. However, it was the impression of the observers that a decision made far from the school, based on the financial realities faced by a rapidly growing community and a tax base with a very low ceiling, were causing structural cracks in School J's traditionally very high levels of program reliability. The unity of the staff, the ability of the school to place and move students readily within the "Super Kids" structure, the ability to respond flexibly to a variety of cases (such as a new student, speaking a relatively rare language arriving at the school), all were compromised by the year round schooling. The year-round plan was necessitated, in part, by the district's inability to raise revenue, which in turn was related to the California taxpayer revolt of the previous 20 years. The fact that almost all of the large district's year round schools were located on the less-likely-to-speak-English and poorer south side was hard to describe as a coincidence.

Having observed the above problems, it is important to conclude the School J case by restating that the School J administration, faculty, and community remained a unified team, working together much more skillfully than one might expect under the circumstances. The strong sense of community at School J, and the relatively high

reliability of program implementation and school operation were yielding student academic achievements that were above district and state averages. The school continued to have the feel of a remarkable place.

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### *Analysis of Community*

#### *Overview*

Students at School J seem to generally get along well together and to help each other out, in spite of conflicts that occur outside of school. The school staff have created an environment where students feel safe and know that gang and other rivalries have no place within the school. Students seem supportive of each other regardless of ethnic differences, and to genuinely enjoy being at school. They wish, though, that some students would "change their attitudes" and be nicer to others, whether teachers are around or not. Students themselves, when asked the thing they like best about the school, mentioned the teachers: "They're real nice to you." Teachers mentioned that if a student learns that it is a teacher's birthday, word spreads fast around the school, and students from all grades come during the course of the day to wish the teacher a happy birthday. Students' parents typically don't get involved with the school much, but a notable exception was the massive turnouts mentioned when student performances are scheduled: "Our parents love to see their kids perform...This place is packed twice a year."

Teachers also seem to get along well together and to work as a team, not always by plan; they just want the same things for the children and act together in a way that ensures that the discipline and support they provide students is consistent. "Everybody backs everybody else's play." Several teachers mentioned the importance of consistent treatment of students and of discipline that is enabled by and goes hand in hand with caring for students. Several teachers held the belief that not many schools are as nice to work at as School J, because of the staff's ability to gradually overcome problems, their commitment to students, and the students themselves. Problems between staff (both among teachers and between teachers and other staff members) were mostly felt to be an outcome of the school's year-round, multi-track system forced on it by the district; for example, decisions frequently have to be made with a quarter of the staff on leave, the administration has to try to keep track of and communicate with four different constituencies, and support staff have to go on working throughout the year.

Teachers felt that their ability to work well with the principal was improving, after some early adjusting to different communication styles. While it was her predecessor who had started the program of individualized placement for all students, they felt that its loss had more to do with the district-ordered multi-track system than with the new principal's lack of support for the program. They spoke in glowing terms of the accessibility of the principal ("We always have access to the principal"), and of the vice principal as well. They spoke of the administration's backing them up, both in emergency situations ("call them and they're right there") and in day-to-day needs for certain students to get special attention. They told stories of how the principal has gotten glasses for a student whose

mother out of pride didn't want her daughter to wear glasses, of the principal spotting students in the street and bringing them to school, and of her letting one student do his homework in her office after school every day because his father's return from prison made it difficult for him to work at home. In general, the staff and students both seem happy to be at this school.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* Teachers at School J seem to share the desire to help these students achieve, regardless of the students' backgrounds or lack of support at home. "The reason I'm here is because of the children." They also share a vision that not only does their work with these students affect the students themselves, but that through these students they can reach the parents and also affect the lives of the future children of their current students. Although not said as explicitly, it is clear they share as well the goal of raising students who will not discriminate, who will be kind to others, and who will be able to handle conflicts well throughout their lives. This vision has helped them to overcome occasional divisiveness: "We have to all realize we're here for a common cause."

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* The shared sense of purpose seems most indicated by the way in which the teachers and administrators act in concert for the welfare of students. Frequent communication, working together to solve particular student problems, all trying "to help each other out, whether it's your child or not," time spent working with children rather than bemoaning the difficulties together over coffee, the faculty all seems to be collaborating on a daily basis, occasionally through the use of "sidewalk meetings."

*Shared Values.* As suggested above, teachers and students seem to value contributing to making their school a place where people help each other, respect and benefit from one another's differences, where ethnicity and disabilities don't affect the way people treat each other, and where everyone (teachers and students alike) learns how to deal with their feelings in ways that are constructive and won't contribute to interpersonal conflict. They noted as well that the principal has high standards and high expectations for them, that she provides visible support for these standards, and that the teachers in turn hold high expectations for their students.

*Trust.* Teachers mentioned that students feel safe at the school, a perception shared by parents as well. They also concluded, though, that evening activities are not viable at the school because of the fear of being out at night in this neighborhood—one teacher told of how when she dropped a student off at night in front of the student's house, the student asked if she could stay in the car until some people she didn't know who were standing near her house moved away. Students mentioned problems as well with students who might turn and bully them for no apparent reason, or kids who are "out of control...you have a weird feeling." One mentioned that you tend to trust kids who are in your class, but not necessarily others. One student told of when the principal decided to search everybody's desks and personal belongings for a missing math test. "She checked every single thing ...but she didn't find nothing. Everybody inside our class was nervous, 'cause



they think that somebody in the classroom might go put it in their desk...." The other thing that bothered students was the tendency to punish everyone for the actions of a few students.

*Caring.* Caring among teachers and students seems to be very high at School J. "Our teacher, she's nice because...if you're down about something, she'll try to cheer you up..." The teachers spoke over and over about caring, and the way that talked about students in general evidenced their caring as well. They talked of how appreciated they feel by parents and especially by students. Students seem to be interested in, to be concerned about, and to care for their teachers in a way that other schools might envy. At several points in the discussion, teachers said they felt School J was like a family. They stress being positive with students and with each other, and they told of students who are transferred in from other schools because of their negative attitudes and who end up changing for the better—as one teacher put it, "They come into our classroom and all of a sudden they [realize they] can't find another kid to be negative with."

Another teacher mentioned her efforts to yank kids away from gangs, and several mentioned their fears for these students in the situations they face on a daily basis. They also see that it is a lack of concerted caring (adults distracted by other parts of their lives) that makes it so some students fail: "There was one common denominator for all the students that were successful. It had nothing to do with ethnicity, economic background, religion, social background. It was because they had one adult—just one adult—that cared about what they did at their home."

When asked why they thought School J has been able to create a sense of safety within the school, the first two or three answers were "Caring," and caring was implicit in many of the others. They spoke of caring for sick children in their classrooms or in the office, in cases where they thought the child would not get adequate care if they were sent home, of the role the kitchen plays—it is a place where "you smell the homemade bread being cooked," it "will always feed them." And, with a lot of emphasis they spoke of the importance of caring as the motivation and support for discipline. "...Sometimes not being a nice teacher... [showing] 'tough love'...where you just really get after them hard, and yet you're after school with them one-on-one..." They saw a clear difference between ordinary discipline and discipline that is clearly motivated by concern and caring for students. They argued that students are aware of the difference as well—several teachers told of students who had been on the receiving end going out of their way to show their appreciation for their teachers' (and classmates') support at the end of the day, the year, or several years later.

*Participation.* The teachers feel that they do have a voice in the school, unlike at some schools where the board or administration might prevent it. They feel able to bring ideas to each other and to the principal—ideas of ways to help particular students or to improve the school more generally. Indeed, interactions between teachers showed this to be the case, as there was a fair amount of supportive turn-taking, and during the discussion, several brought up ways in which they could make the school a better place. They wanted to see

more participation on the part of parents, and they discussed what might be the current barriers to participation. They also noted how the multi-track system has been detrimental to full staff participation.

*Communication.* As with participation, teachers seemed to have developed excellent communication skills and to be attentive to the importance of improving communication (especially overcoming language barriers) between teachers and parents. Their school district has 86 languages represented. The school is sophisticated in other ways as well: communication skills are developed through the curricula and the conflict resolution program; one teacher commented that some of her students have been "teaching their parents social skills that they've learned". Signs around the school remind everyone to think before reacting and definitely before speaking or taking action. In talking about previous communication difficulties with the new administration, one teacher remarked that some of the problems arose from teachers failing to follow those rules. Part of what teachers do is to give students "more help with organizing their experience and understanding it than they would ever get at home". They also noted that "there's a lot of communication between people about children during the course of the school day", and the open door policy of the principal no doubt helps as well. Communication is further helped by the administrative staff's knowing almost every child by name and knowing their families as well.

*Respect and Recognition.* One of the students replied that the thing he likes best about the school is that people at the school "are polite and respect other peoples". In general, students had a lot to say on the importance of respect. In bemoaning the actions of bullies, one said, "Why don't they just respect the little kids?" One was worried about some teachers' attitudes, "[They] are real strict and they don't give the kids a chance, so I would just tell them if the kids respect you, respect them, and don't try to be all bossy..." Teachers as well noted the importance of treating each other with respect, but in neither case do these remarks seem motivated by a significant lack of it at the school. Students and teachers seem to demonstrate respect for others in their daily interactions, even in the way they participated in discussions. Teachers realize the strains placed on teaching, administrative, and support staff by the multi-track system, and indicated their admiration for the way support staff remain cheerful in spite of the loss of most of their vacation and for the way the principal has assumed the added burdens of administering and monitoring the system.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The teachers interviewed were Hispanic-American and European-American, and about three-fourths of them were women, one with a physical disability. Some were bilingual, and others were certified as Language Development Specialists, training that involves learning about different cultures and how to reach out to and communicate with students whose native language is different from your own. As one teacher noted, being bilingual per se is not enough given the variety of languages present in the schools. The attitudes of teachers have no doubt helped students' abilities to communicate across cultures differences; students are protective and supportive of each other. They're accepting: "[A new student arrives and the other students all vie to help her.] It doesn't matter what color her skin is, what background she's from, what she's wearing..." Another teacher mentioned that students have said to her, "You mean you're

not Mexican?" "Well, no, I'm not," she replied, "Thanks for thinking I was." Teachers also indicated by their comments their respect for intellectual diversity as well: "We all can have our differences but I think that we have learned to accept that we're each individuals and we treat each other with respect." When asked whether some students were ever mean to others because of ethnic differences or disabilities, the response was, "It's not put up with here at school. If it does happen, it's taken care of."

*Teamwork.* Some teachers mentioned the role soccer and other sports played in getting students to work together across barriers. "Within the game, they learn how to resolve their problems...they forget about their differences". They also felt that students showed their aptitude for teamwork by the fact they had recently started to organize games themselves during recess, sometimes involving nearly a majority of students on recess. A student said about kids at the school, "They join in games, like at recess time...so they can get along better." While the teachers talked mostly about students' teamwork, their words and actions showed that they function on a regular basis as a team, whether consciously or not. As noted above, "Everybody backs everybody else's play."

*Affirmation.* There were several ways in which affirmation was very much in evidence: First, administrators and teachers who had contributed to the school in the past were remembered in the course of the conversation; one former teacher's picture currently hangs in the library. Also, over and over again as a teacher made a good point or came up with a good idea, other teachers interjected with other-affirming comments such as: "Isn't that true!", "Absolutely", "Yeah", "That's a good idea", or general murmurs of approval, often adding points to back up what the other teacher had said. This occurred even when the comment revealed a not-so-nice aspect of the school, but one which it was thought important to be aware of in order to take action. The former successes of the school were remembered as well, such as when the school was awarded exemplary status and teachers were sent to Los Angeles to receive the award. They also talked about the importance of showing appreciation for the work done by support staff. For students, there is the general emphasis on being positive, but there are also two programs that provide affirmation for student effort: for the upper grades a merit list and an honor roll, and, for all ages, the Super Kids program in which students who do all their work are honored.

*Conflict Resolution.* As suggested above, the importance of conflict resolution and communicating in ways that will prevent conflicts is stressed throughout the school. Teachers have gone through what they felt was very good inservice training in conflict resolution. Their approach has reached even the students who probably need it the most, perhaps because it is combined with high expectations for all students. For example, one teacher received a student mid-year who had been expelled from another school for hitting the principal, but his personality changed as he spent time at School J, and "he was the only one in my classroom, the last day of school, when I had them share, [who] stood up and said, 'I want to thank you guys for taking me into your classroom.'" There was some evidence as well that students are able to at least partially apply the conflict resolution techniques in their lives outside school as well.

*Development of the New Members.* Delightfully, there are two broad areas at School J in which effort is made to develop new members. The first is the tendency of both staff and students to welcome new staff. One teacher compared her experience at School J with a number of other schools in which she substituted—in some schools she couldn't figure out who the principal was even after several days. At this school, she found the staff to be very welcoming. Other teachers mentioned that even substitutes at School J have told them how welcomed they felt by the teachers and the students here. Not only are adults brought in as full members of the community, students as well are treated as though it were not only important to teach them subject matter, but also important to develop as them as community members. The effects of this can be seen, in part, in the roll students play in welcoming adults. Also, the teachers and principals have established the norm that when students come to the school, it means a little more than it might elsewhere. One teacher observed, "I find myself, when I get new children, saying, 'Now at School J, we do this... You have two homework papers every night, and you always bring it back the next day.'" And, when the student didn't, within two days the principal stepped in and convinced both the boy and his grandmother that it was their responsibility to see that he did. Teachers also use students to help children like this boy who are having a hard time learning. One of the boys in his new class who is a low-scoring student relative to their other classmates was assigned to do peer tutoring for the new boy. "[He] was just about popping his buttons because he could help him, you know, and try to get him going." One of the students said on the subject, "When a new student's coming to your class, you introduce yourself and all this stuff, and ask them what's their name and show the rules, what we do in class, and outside...that's how we learn to be friends." In visiting the school, we found that students extended the same attention to visitors—welcoming them and helping them to learn the ropes quickly.

*Links Beyond the Community.* Some of the teachers mentioned involvement in outside activities that have supported (or that they hoped would support) the school. One teacher, for instance, got her local church to help out with a special program. Local churches and hospitals were approached for donations of clothing and other items such as shoes that the children badly need. The dedication of the faculty to "our children" would seem to facilitate such kinds of support.

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

While teachers do have lives outside of school, the level of personal investment in the school is quite high. A teacher put it best: "Teachers in this school, they always refer to their classrooms as 'my kids'....I feel that that's generally the way we operate with kids...The thing that I think is really remarkable about this school is that people are willing to go the distance for individual children—the principal, the vice-principal, the resource people will take a child home if they're sick and the parents can't take them to the doctor. They'll do follow-up calls; they'll do home visits; they'll choose children for clothing; they'll take them places. There's just a lot of individual attention given to kids....I imagine that's pretty unusual."

### *Community Resources*

The school seems to operate with relatively scarce resources, but tries as much as possible to get grants to bolster its work. The largest problems encountered by the school, the multi-track system and the exposure of students to danger and to insufficient support outside school, are probably a function of the limited resources of the surrounding community. Teachers observed that other schools where parents were better organized had been able to thwart the move to year-round, multi-track school.

### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

Much of the teaching staff at School J has been together for several years, allowing them to work together well in helping students and to better acclimate to changes in the administration.

The previous principal seems to have done a good job in laying the groundwork for a sustained sense of community at School J.

A factor hindering community is the year-round, multi-track system imposed by the district. This has created a situation in which for several weeks each year some teachers and students are completely absent from the campus. It has also put additional strain on the principals and the support staff.

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### *Students' Days*

While visiting School J, two students were followed by researchers in order to get a sense of the type of interaction that goes on between students and teachers, and amongst students. The sections below describe a typical day in the lives of two students, whom we will call "Margaret" and "Antonio".

#### *A Day with Margaret*

Margaret is a cute, somewhat quiet, but basically very friendly and intelligent first grader. She wears her hair French-braided one day, and the next day with a bandeau. The day she was "shadowed" she wore a green, dressy t-shirt, cute jeans with paisley-flower detailing, black and white shoes. She lives with her mother and father around the corner from School J and sometimes walks to school. Her father cuts meat in a nearby city. Her mother works in the cafeteria; as we came in for lunch, her mother handed us our trays. She has a sister, who is fifteen years old, and three brothers—they are eight, seventeen, and twenty-five years old. Her oldest brother lives in Los Angeles now. Her sister had Mr. O. (another current School J teacher) as a teacher when she was at School J. Margaret has lived here since she was a baby.



Margaret finds her school fun. She thinks both her kindergarten and first grade teachers are very nice. Since she is in the A track, she thinks her next vacation will start September 19. She will go into second grade this month. Her favorite parts of school are the math and the coloring. She enjoys this school a lot, although she thinks that maybe it's not as nice for others as for her. She seems to be Hispanic and a native English speaker.

Margaret is in Mrs. A.'s class. About forty minutes after the start of class, students are working in several groups (e.g., "white group", "blue group")—some in small groups with the teacher and the instructional aide, Mrs. V., and some by themselves. At its largest, the class has thirty-one students, a couple of which quietly come and go to do work elsewhere in special classes. All those in the room spend most of their time on task—at most, one student can occasionally be observed to be drifting away. At 9:00, four students are using phonetics to learn to read sentences with their teacher's help. Two students are using a computer to learn to read. One is coloring by himself. Four are coloring and doing worksheets in math together. Three are doing a math puzzle and using a teaching clock. Four students, two at a table are listening to a tape and reading along. Three are doing their diary, one sentence at a time. Five are working on phonetics with the aide. A student asks her for help. The aide is helping students to learn by reading from books.

At 9:10, a bell is rung and the students all change stations. Those working with the teacher learn to spell words in part by writing them in the air—at other times, on the ground. Occasionally she urges the children to speak louder or to listen more to the way she says a word.

The children at the computer station seem intense. They are working with a student aide who Mrs. A. had as her student previously and who is now in fourth grade. He seems good at working with the younger students, even though he is not feeling well today. Mrs. A. notices that he looks rather pale, and they talk for a moment. Another student takes him out for a few minutes, probably to check in with the school nurse for a moment.

Mrs. A. asks students to look at her when they're trying to do phonetics. It seems to be hard for one student to do this, but he does try. She seems very attentive; the aide does as well, though she seems to be a little tired this Monday morning. Even so, the aide notices when the light from the window bothers a student trying to read. The aide interjects when a student reads a word mistakenly.

When a student wanders away from his work, the teacher calls him back to a station. It seems to be hard for those doing seat work to concentrate because of the sometimes loud voices in the room as their teacher works with others on phonetics. Students seem to change stations fairly often.

Margaret went over to talk to the teacher about using the tapes—the two students who are currently using them say they're not done, and so she goes back to her desk (two desks are joined into a table) and starts to color and read. Occasionally she yawns.



The teacher tells one of Margaret's classmates to go over and make sure that a couple of the students have something to do—they tell her to go away. Margaret is now starting on the math puzzles with a neighbor. When a student has done all the addition in the puzzle correctly, he or she can turn it over to find they have made a nice picture on the opposite side.

The aide comes over to the station at which Margaret had wanted to work and tells one of the students (Aimee) that she ought to be looking at the book while listening to the tape. After the aide goes back to the other group, Aimee stares into space over her shoulder. Margaret is squirming in her seat a bit, but mostly seems to be trying to concentrate.

After a while, the teacher tells her and another student to go with the group over to the computer, since they missed working with it due to a field trip last week. The fourth-grade boy (who himself has been challenged by school, but who is excited to be serving as a tutor) shows the group how to use the computer. The teacher tells him to challenge the students, but one of the students suggests the easiest level, and so as a group they agree to start with it. The program they are working with has a Computer Wizard who gives them a word and then asks them to spell it.

Meanwhile, an advanced group is working on phonetics, part of the school's new reading program. The students take big words, identify their consonants and vowels, and put the letters together. Mrs. A. asks clarifying questions, such as, "Is 'a' a vowel?" She challenges the students—"I bet you can't do that one." A student responds: "I can." (The word is "indispose"! ) She has a very encouraging style. As they work together and separately on a list of words, a boy compliments a girl on being good at the task. The teacher said that this girl was going to leave early, but they wanted to keep her in class, and got the mother to agree. Later this girl, an African-American, volunteers to me that she wants to become a teacher and asks me if that is why I am visiting the school—to learn about teaching.

"The white group is too noisy", Mrs. A. says. I suspect she works hard to keep the children all on task, and, for the most part, she seems extremely successful. One student who has trouble getting an assignment done has to stay in to finish it during the first part of the break.

Outside, some of the students play clapping and singing games. Several want to know why I am here, and since I am taking notes about the school, they want me to take down their names. Walking on the playground, the students say hello to each other and to me. So many seem extremely friendly, even to people they've never met. Some ask whether I am starting to work here. At the end of break when the bell rings, all the students have to freeze (they fill me in on the rules so I won't get in trouble) until a teacher blows a whistle for each class to get into two lines (boys in one, girls in the other) to go back to their classrooms.

Upon entering the classroom, the students go to their designated stations. Two aides, girls this time, come in about 15 minutes after the start of class to work with individual children. The girl at whose desk I am sitting, Melanie, comes over from working with the teacher to quickly get a pencil. As I started to get out of her way, she told me I didn't have to get up.

Aimee, the student who earlier was staring into space while she was supposed to be reading seems to be focusing better. Later, the teacher told me that she is in a special pull-out program (RSP) for the learning disabled. (The school also has an independent day class for special education students, it seems.) She appears to be the only European-American in the class. The class includes African-American students, Hispanic, Filipino, and other Asian students. The teacher let me know that one student who I has spoken with earlier in the day spoke no English 10 months ago. She could pass for a native English speaker now.

Two more student aides came in at about 10:45, making a total of four in the room now. One worked with a student for a while, but these two seem to be doing mostly administrative stuff: updating the math and spelling progress charts on the wall. One of the other student aides is helping a student to count by holding up her fingers for her to count.

The student who stayed in on break is talking to himself and generally not concentrating—this goes on for about a 20-minute period. Mrs. V. is reading aloud together with the four children at her table. She prompts them to speak louder. Then, the students try reading one by one. Mrs. V. asks a student to double-check a word; the student looks at it again.

Margaret is working on the number puzzles next to a boy who is doing the same. Occasionally they help each other. Her teacher says she's conscientious and very helpful. As they work, Margaret talks to the boy from time to time about the puzzle.

The room is filled with picture: Self-portraits that are about 60% life-sized stretch across one wall—they look like cut out dolls of all different colors. The walls are filled with letters, student handprints, a calendar with the students' birthdays, bulletin boards saying "Teddy bear helpers" and "super kids" (complete with pictures), other bulletin boards showing student progress in Art, Music, Spelling, Math. Beautifully caligraphed words fill in the spaces: "Responsibility", "Helping Others", "Loyalty", "Self-Worth", "Integrity", "Justice", "Freedom", "Respect", "Love".

Meanwhile, three students giggle over something that happens. They are somewhat quiet about it and try to suppress their giggles, but are not very successful. About three minutes later, two get time out and sit on the floor by themselves to do work. Mrs. A. tells the third, "I want to get some work out of you—no one is there to distract you now."

Margaret continues to work on the puzzle; she works on it for a total of 45 minutes straight. The boy next to her sees me watching them and shows me how his picture on the back looks when he is done. At 11:12, Margaret picks up the clock—it's a "time tutor". She smiles bashfully when it talks to her, and then she tries to figure out what to do next. The boy looks on occasionally. The girl who was giggling earlier and got left at the table by herself is now talking to another boy behind her. The "time-out" kids work quietly on

the floor. At about 11:16, the groups change again. As Melanie works, a little boy tells her she's not supposed to be cutting out the picture, but she's not so sure, though she does consider what to do. The teacher tells the girl left by herself to take a time out. Mrs. A. acts rather stern with her (but not overly) and notes that she was by herself but still wasn't keeping on task. Meanwhile, the boy next to Melanie tells her to recycle the paper scraps she's making—she was putting it in the garbage can because she's not sure if it's recyclable. Mrs. A. calls her back to her desk.

Mrs. A. addresses the whole class shortly before the start of the lunch period and calls for volunteers for writing coin amounts or clock times on the blackboard. Margaret volunteers to be one of the students writing on the blackboard, to write the numeric time that goes with a clock face the teacher has drawn on the board. When she gets back to her seat, she says to her friend that it was easy. Hearing her, her teacher asks if she thought the time tutor was hard. She replied, "Not really", and the teacher suggested next time putting it to the next level, which is harder. When all the students writing on the board are through, Mrs. A. has all the students review the work on the board to see if it's correct or to help with the right answers. Students excitedly help out and debate for the harder questions what the correct answers are. Then they are released to go wash their hands before lunch.

As Melanie is on the way back from the bathroom, Aimee passes her going the opposite direction and starts to hit her, but she stops mid-way when she notices me. By the time Aimee got back from the bathroom, Mrs. A. had been told and Aimee got in trouble for not being nice to other students.

During the first part of lunch, students talked with each other and with me, with each class sitting at its own table. Then an adult announced quiet eating time. When most of the students were through, they filed out to the playground, one class at a time, each sorting the recyclable milk carton from their garbage on the way out of the cafeteria. (A couple of the students gently nudged me to open my milk carton so it could more easily be recycled.)

On the playground during lunch, each class seems to be supervised by an adult. Mrs. A.'s class is being taught by the principal how to play four square in preparation for 2nd grade. She works with one square at a time, showing them how to serve and how to hit the ball. Margaret's is the last group she visits on her first time around. None of the students in Margaret's foursome seem to know how to play very well, but as they wait for help from the principal, they try to do it, in spite of the hot weather. At 12:10, the bell rings, and they go back into the classroom.

The afternoon part of the day begins by Mrs. A. getting the children into one group, sitting on the floor, for story time. She reads a book to them—"Fang the Dentist". It is about a little boy who worries about going to the dentist for the first time, but finds out that it's actually nice—rather than the nightmare he had feared. As Mrs. A. reads, she encourages participation in the story. Story time is very interactive—she uses lots of smiles and gestures. All the students pay attention—even the usually squirmy ones. As she reads, she stops and asks them questions along the way, helping to keep them engaged, although as her reading style is already excellent, it is not clear that it is really necessary to ask questions to keep their attention.

After the story, students from the group whose day it is to share something with the others get up from the floor and come beside Mrs. A.. Each steps forward to share a story about something that happened recently to them. As they speak, in some cases, Mrs. A. puts her arm around them. When one of the students directs his story primarily to her she encourages him to speak to the others. One student brought a new purse to show and tell the others about, a leather purse her mother brought her from a recent trip to Yosemite.

Next, at 12:32, Mrs. A. has the students return to their seats and gives a small lecture on coins, using an overhead projector and transparent money. Although most follow her, many have trouble keeping their attention on the projected money, looking down at the paper in front of them that goes along with the lesson even when she reminds them to look up. Students work on the assignment at their desks, with the two student aides (who were previously sitting at the edge of the classroom) circulating to see whether the students are following the assignment. Mrs. A. and Mrs. V. circulate as well. A few minutes later, students are told to take out some fake coins from their desks. They are doing addition and subtracti. with carry over—determining how much change they will have. Margaret gets the idea very quickly. The teacher doesn't wait for all to follow as she leads them through the lesson; she occasionally moves fairly fast, but the children seem to be roughly following it all. Occasionally she calls on particular students for answers or to give the class help —especially calling on those students who are having some trouble with the material.

At 1:00, the class goes to the library. They sit down quietly on the floor. (They're supposed to be practicing their "library manners".) The person who is filling in for the regular librarian reads to them the story "Joshua and Bigtooth"; it is about a boy and an alligator who become good friends. As she reads, all seem to be listening, many are squirming a bit, and one or two are looking around the room. The walls are covered with bookshelves, many of them full, and additional bookshelves are arranged in the back third of the room. Stuffed characters from books sit on the tops of shelves—celebrities like Paddington, Madeline, and many other famous names. Margaret listens attentively. Students occasionally whisper comments to each other about the story. The substitute librarian is an expressive reader. She looks at students occasionally, pointing to the text she is reading or to the pictures.

At 1:15, the story is through. Students rise to look for books. When they find one they want to read, they put a wooden marker in its place and then take it to the librarian for check out. Of the first group of students who go to find a book, three students pick a book within in the first one or two minutes, and are soon reading it at one of the tables provided. After four minutes, one student is told that he will have to have a book chosen for him if he can't decide on one. Others from the same group, however, are able to continue looking without comment. Margaret, for instance, looks at a number of books, and finally chooses two about seven minutes later.

As they read, students occasionally share the pictures they like with each other. As they read, they are urged to try to get the honor of "best library manners" of the day, an honor available to all eligible students. One of the boys who had started to read his book found that it needed to be repaired and so brought it to the librarian. By about 10 minutes after

the end of story time, four students are still trying to select books, six are in the checkout line, and the one is watching his book being repaired. About one half to two-thirds of the class are reading, and a few others are distracted by all there is to see. A couple of minutes later, the last few students are told to take the book they currently have in their hands.

Most all of the students are given a "Super Library Manners" slip, but a few get it taken back as their manners slip. Mrs. A. reminds them that this is the last book they will check out as first graders from this library (i.e., they are about to become second graders). Then, books in hand, they walk back to class.

Right after they return to the classroom, Mrs. A. has them start on the math assignment involving coins again. Tonight their homework will be on money. She says, "I can see you need more practice." Their journals are passed back to them as they go to the drinking fountain in the sink one at a time. They are told to look at the papers they completed this morning, which have now been graded. Then, she asks, "How many want to do a listening skill today?" The whole class seems to bubble with excitement. A few are told they may not be listening well enough today to participate. The three remaining fourth-grade aides are dismissed at 1:40. The listening skill involves putting up carrels around their desk space, listening to Mrs. A.'s directions, and coloring in a picture as she dictates. For example. She asks them to color the flag with the triangle blue. At the end of the exercise, she describes to them how they should have done the coloring if they were listening carefully—students may have, for example, colored only the triangle blue instead of the flag.

Someone remembers that the students in charge of certain things in the morning forgot to carry out their duties. Aimee and another girl are in charge of having the students say the pledge and do exercises. Mrs. A. remind them to do a good job so they don't get replaced in their positions by other students. They make up for the lost time, leading the class in saying the pledge of allegiance and in doing calisthenics. They do various types of stretching—"Picking cucumbers", "Picking strawberries", "Picking apples", jumping jacks, and some very complicated ones Mrs. A. helps lead which seem as good for working on memory skills as for coordination. The students participate eagerly. Margaret seems pretty coordinated—at least 'til near the end.

At 1:57, they begin to work on spelling—especially "red" words (words that are hard to spell). And so the day continues.

#### *A Day with Antonio*

Antonio is an outgoing 4th grader who has short hair except for a braid down the back. He lives alternately with his mother and with his father, as they are divorced. His mother lives in a house in the country. It is his father who lives near the school. Antonio has two sisters, 18 and 21 years old, who he says pick on him. He is in the D track at School J, and so his "summer vacation" starts in August. The thing he likes most is soccer (something one could have guessed from both comments he made in class and the way he spent his recess and lunch time).



He likes the school except for the fights. He said they mostly happen when kids are on their way home from school. With the help of a few classmates, he went on in great detail about who jumps other kids a lot, and seemed to take great relish in telling "war stories". One of his classmates brought up the time 'Antonio got another kid in the leg with a knife'. Although Antonio had been gleefully recounting to his interviewer the details of various fights, he looked somewhat abashed when this incident was mentioned (though he afterward continued the earlier discussion in a similar vein as before). According to Antonio, another boy had pulled a knife on him, and so he grabbed the blade and aimed to throw it into the ground. Instead it went into the other boy's shin, which, he noted, got the other boy's mom mad at him. As part of this discussion, Antonio also mentioned that thanks to his mother he is now taking karate, which he likes a lot.

He works around the house to earn money, and also mows lawns for some of his neighbors. Antonio seems to be Hispanic, but seems also to be a native English speaker.

Antonio is in Mr. O.'s class, which has fourth and fifth graders combined. The morning Antonio was observed, the class, which started at 8:20, was working at their adjoining desks with partners on an English assignment in which they construct sentences using direct objects. The teacher, Mr. O., provides examples on the board from time to time as the students work, occasionally explaining in Spanish as well as in English to some students. Mr. O. seems polite to the students, and easy-going, but good at getting students to follow him. Students spent most of their time working on assignments rather than waiting for new activities to get started or playing around.

The classroom has two aides: the primary instructional aide, Mrs. B., and another aide, Ms. R., who is a former student of Mr. O. Ms. R. graduated from high school this year and is currently holding down three jobs (this one, working at Wendy's, and baby-sitting) in order to earn money for college. She will be attending City College this fall and plans to go to UCLA to become a pediatrician. Mr. O. introduced both to the observer shortly after the observer entered the classroom; both were very friendly.

The walls in the classroom are covered with student art and compositions. One bulletin board is colorfully decorated with a World Cup theme—with the names of the countries that participated and the words, "Mr. O. #1—You're the best."

Mr. O. showed the students how if you take a subject, add a verb, and follow it with another noun, you have a sentence with a direct object. After speaking up front, he circulates to answer raised hands and peek over shoulders to give advice. (Mr. O. often uses soccer terms as he speaks (e.g., "Half Time"), but in a way that they are easy for students to understand.) The instructional aide, Mrs. B. also circulates to give help. Ms. R. is preparing materials at the teacher's desk located on one side of the room. The students seem very comfortable calling on the teacher and aides for help.

In class, Antonio comes across as a cute, friendly boy who is nice to others and able to finish before most of the students. When he finished his English paper, he pulled out a book on sports and read it while waiting for others to finish. Mr. O. asked who was finished, and he volunteered. Mr. O. checked his work and said it looked good. As we walked away, Antonio put his hands together quietly over his head and breathed a sigh of



relief. He then continued to read or to chat quietly with his neighbor (a girl); occasionally they look at the book together. He offers his book to a boy on her other side, who said he's not finished with his work yet, but thanks anyway. (In glancing later at Antonio's paper, it seemed that he had the direct objects in the right place, but did have a few problems in using plurals and in subject/verb agreement.)

After a while, Mr. O. announces that those who are finished with their language paper can pick up a graph. Antonio's partner hasn't finished yet. After looking at his own graph sheet, Antonio asks the teacher a question, and his teacher refers him to his partner, saying nicely, "This young lady knows everything".

About five students have gathered by Ms. B.—Mr. O. notices this and reminds them "One at a time". Later, she starts helping two at a time. Mr. O. uses Spanish occasionally—often for words of praise. After several minutes go by, he asks how many are still working on the language paper. Hands go up. "That's good. There's a small number of you." He then has them put away their language papers and get out one on prime numbers.

When there is an outburst of talking, his voice quickly but gradually increases in volume and the talking ceases, at which time he lowers his voice again. He asks for help—asks them to remind him what the lesson was about—what are prime numbers? A student gives a proper definition, and he remarks that being able to do that is quite impressive, but lets them know that the main thing is to understand the concept.

Mr. O. has turned on an overhead projector. He asks them to call out the prime numbers from 1 to 100. Students call out numbers as he asks, and he writes them up on a transparency, and when he asks a more detailed question, a few or many hands go up. He is using primes as a way to reinforce multiplication, it seems. He points out that you can divide numbers by three as a way to check if they're prime, for example, 39. One student gets the answer for 51 and eagerly raises her hand. Voices get quieter only after the exercise goes on for quite a bit. Antonio loses interest and starts arranging things in his desk. Mr. O. point out at one point that there "aren't too many left", and gets renewed interest in the lesson that lasts through to the end.

For the next period, Ms. R.'s group carries chairs out to do math on the lawn outside. After about four minutes of adjustment, the students settle down into groups. Antonio is in Mrs. B.'s group. Mrs. B. speaks quietly to students.

Mr. O. is working with students doing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems. He often uses the word "Please" or a polite but firm tone of voice to quiet down students. He reminds them to change the number when "borrowing". As the students do each problem, they check their answers, and put their answer in crossword puzzles. As students work quietly, Mr. O. notes that the year-round school has really created "fragmentation" among staff, a lessening of camaraderie. "Things come down from the district while one quarter of the staff are on vacation, and when they get back, they are not really interested in what happened while they were on vacation."

Antonio is talking with a girl next to him from time to time about the assignment. Two other students in his group talk back and forth quite a bit—talking more about how fast others are going—“She’s already on number 12!”—than doing the work themselves. The aide softly quiets them a few times, reminding them they can do the work on their own. They don’t seem very interested in complying, however.

Meanwhile, Mr. O. is using the blackboard to explain how to carry digits in a five-digit subtraction problem; he is speaking to a student in Spanish, getting her to say the answers. Other students continue working until it is almost time for recess. Assignments are turned in, but Antonio cheers softly because he was absent the day before and so doesn’t have to turn in a spelling assignment. He raises his hand to go out for soccer. Mr. O. dismisses the girls first, then the boys.

Recess ends, and Antonio and a few of his friends emerge from behind a building, running. The class had to wait in line for them for a few minutes. The students walk back to class, but Mr. O. is somewhat less strict about the formation of the line than some of the other teachers. When Antonio gets back in, he starts to work on his math crossword puzzle.

Mr. O. rings a bell and the class again splits into different groups.

Mr. O. works with a group of ten students on the pronunciation of letters. (The students in the class seem to be primarily a mixture of Asians and Hispanics, with smaller numbers of African-Americans.) Once they have reviewed the pronunciation of particular letters, they practice pronouncing short words.

Two students work on pictures at a table, and two work with flash cards on the floor next to them. Ten are with the two aides doing reading, and two others—Antonio and a girl—look at nicely-arranged picture-books at a table. The books are a mix of normal pictures, very detailed pictures, and optical illusions (including, for example, “Where’s Waldo?”). Two other students read books on a carpet near the aide. Two students work on a computer, which has a game like concentration, in which they match verbs.

At 10:30, Ms. R. leaves for her job at Wendy’s. Mr. O. first has the students he is working with say the words together, then he has them read sentences one at a time from flash cards, occasionally asking them what particular words mean. Occasionally he teaches them “red words”—“red words” break rules, and so he has them beat them out on their arms as they spell them.

The students with Mrs. B. are doing reading comprehension. They read a short text, and then they fill in blank sentences and answer questions. Students are working on different levels, using reading cards in a series. Periodically they ask the aide questions. Some students pull out of a pile their piece of construction paper onto which they have pasted a picture of an animal, and take one of the books on wildlife. They take notes and work on creating text to go with the picture. Students in Mr. O.’s class seem to be fairly self-directed. One student explains to the aide that he’s taking notes from the book, and that he has his own library card, and so he has his own book to work from and doesn’t have to share with someone else. However, a few minutes later he picks up another book to add to

the information he has, and another boy takes it from him, saying, "You put it down yesterday, so I took it." One girl finishes her assignment, and the aide puts it up on the wall. The student turns to reading a book in her seat as the others work on their projects.

At 11:00, the groups switch. Two other students sit on a carpet to play junior trivia; two others go to do coloring; two others play another card game on a carpet, a type of concentration. Eleven go to work with the aide, again doing reading comprehension with what seem to be interesting-looking, colorful materials (each has a story, with a picture, and questions concerning the story. Antonio is now in this group; he seems to be having trouble settling down to the task. One boy is told to sit by himself. He is given a second chance, but again acts up and is sent to an area by himself, his face surly as he takes a new seat. However, once by himself, he settles down to read.

A girl raises her hand for a few minutes before the aide responds. The next time she calls out with her hand up to get attention. The aide finishes with one student before turning to another.

The two students who are now on the computer are playing a game in which they try to make a word using all the letters provided (by a warlock who stirs them in his kettle).

Antonio makes a paper airplane out of his completed reading and flies it into the aide (who acts as though she didn't notice), flips his pen around, and asks what to do next.

The groups change again, and Mr. O. is now working with a new group on pronunciation. He asks them to give examples of parts of speech. Antonio volunteers with the rest to give examples of certain parts of speech. He uses flash cards laid out on the desk to work on pronunciation. He substitutes vowels in one at a time to make different words, which they read, and then calls their attention to the need to have at least one vowel in a word. Favorite words for the students (eliciting laughter, insider smiles, or hisses) include "keg" and "kiss". When the word "Kix" comes up, Mr. O. asks if they know what it means, and then asks each in turn what their favorite cereal is. (Antonio's is cornflakes.) When they do "red words", some of the students have trouble figuring out which is their left arm, the one on which they are supposed to "tap out" the words. Mr. O. reiterates that they are pounding out the words to help learn them. Since these words break rules, it is easy to forget how to spell them when it comes time to write compositions. Next, he has each student pick a grammar rule and say it to the others.

One of the students who is coloring (Billy) asked Mr. O. for permission to get something from behind him (Mr. O.). As he passed behind the teacher, the students were reading the sentence, "The cute mule will give you a fine ride"—and so he provided an appropriate pantomime for the text, rocking like a cowboy on an old horse. He seemed to have been so discrete that Mr. O. failed to notice him, but the other students enjoyed the act. Billy then went on to pass out the students' lunch cards. When the noise level in the classroom increased, Mr. O. said, "It's a little noisy—there's no need for that. Thank you."

Antonio sat with some friends at lunch, one of whom was the boy who had to be seated by himself for a while in class. After a discussion mostly about fights, probably for the interviewer's benefit, he and the other boy tore out to the playground as soon as they were released to play soccer. He succeeded in extracting the desired ball from the ball can, and

they went to play one-on-one together. However, they are soon joined by about 25 other boys and girls. The boys and girls are about evenly mixed, although a few of the girls seem like partial spectators. Antonio seems to be one of the ones that has the ball more often.

When the bell rings on the playground, all the students have to freeze where they are. This time, Antonio gets into his class' line more quickly. When they return to the classroom, Mr. O. reads them a story while some of the students finish their graphs or math. Antonio, although his graph is not done, sits and folds a paper note for a while first. The story is a story by the Pomo Indians from the book *Stories California Indians Told*. It was a story about Hawk and Coyote working together to bring light to the world. They did it with a Tule ball, placed as high in the sky as Hawk could fly. When Mr. O. finished, he said, "True story", and smiled. He noted, however, that 'to them, it's just as true as some stuff is to us.'

After the story, two students were quietly arguing over a pencil—Mr. O. asks each student if it was theirs, and then asked one to put it on his (Mr. O.'s) desk, saying, "We'll settle it later." As the day came to a close, Mr. O.'s wife and 6-year-old son came in and sat at his desk. Several students said hi to them. Mr. O. introduced them to me. They were both friendly. His wife was the president of the PTA last year.

When students are dismissed for the day, Antonio and the others walked toward the pick-up place. The students near him seemed from a distance to be debating or arguing with others about something. Coming closer, one of the kids was apparently trying to start a fight. The two students, Billy and another boy, were acting ready to try to beat each other up; most of the other students, including Antonio, seemed torn between goading one of them on and trying to dissuade them both from fighting. Unfortunately, most of them seemed more tempted to egg them on. One student, however, truly seemed to be trying to stop them, even (although he was practically half the size of either of them) putting himself physically between them. Things cooled down a bit, perhaps both because of that student's efforts and because several students realized that an adult was observing them. Even so, as Billy headed off the school grounds with his little sister protectively in tow, a certain amount of insults and glares continued to be hurled between them, taking at least some of the shine off one or both students' school day.

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## *School K*

### *Philadelphia, PA*

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#### *Site Overview*

Success for All is a schoolwide restructuring program designed to see that students begin with success in the early grades and then maintain success through the elementary years. (Slavin et al., 1992, 1996.) Longitudinal studies, using matched control students in matched schools, consistently indicate that Success for All improves student achievement, especially for students with initial low achievement. The specific program explored here, at School K, was selected by the program developer as a representative example of Success for All.

Evidence from School K suggests that Success for All improves student achievement, and is especially effective in balancing the needs of students with limited English proficiency. The curriculum and instructional methods are based on research on effective education, and were implemented faithfully. The program seemed to benefit from staff working together, in a supportive community, to achieve common goals. Program stability was built upon consistent funding, staffing, and district support.

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#### *Site Description*

##### *Setting*

School K is a neighborhood elementary school serving grades K-5 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Originally a K-8 school, the top three grades were moved in 1988. The school has been adopted by the local fire department.

The community is completing the transition from a blue collar ethnic population, primarily Italian and American-born to a population of immigrants from Cambodia,

Vietnam, and Thailand. There has been some racial tension and even incidents in the community but nothing has occurred within the school. The most important thing in terms of the school is that many community members, particularly the parents of the students, do not speak English and have not become acculturated to the US. A sizable number of the people in the community have come here from refugee camps and many students at School K were born in camps. At the time of the site visit, approximately 57 percent of the 500 students were Asian, 19 percent African American, 19 percent Caucasian, and four percent Hispanic. The 17 1/2 classes (one prekindergarten, two kindergarten, four first, three second, two third, 2 1/2 fourth, and three fifth grades) were supported by 35 staff members.

In addition to Success for All, School K offers an extensive ESOL program, Team Accelerated Instruction in Math and cooperative learning in grades four and five, and promotes computer literacy for all students.

### *Program Development and Implementation*

Success for All is a schoolwide restructuring program designed to see that students begin with success in the early grades and then maintain success through the elementary years. Slavin et al. (1992) declare that it combines many of the effective approaches identified in prior research, including the following:

Research-based preschool;

Whole-day kindergarten;

Beginning reading programs for 90 minutes per day, integrating the phonics and whole language approaches in a set sequence of story, discussion, new vocabulary, oral language production, comprehension, and story structure;

Homogenous reading groups, reassessed and regrouped every eight weeks;

One-to-one tutoring, integrating the regular curriculum, for students experiencing difficulties in reading in grades one through three, with priority given to first grade students;

Cooperative learning approaches to intermediate reading, writing/language arts, and mathematics;

Family support services to increase parent involvement and to remedy home-based problems (i.e., poor attendance) that interfere with learning; and

A part- or full-time project facilitator to coordinate the many program elements and provides training and technical assistance.

The goal of keeping students performing on grade level involves minimizing retention and avoiding dependence on long-term special services such as special education classes. Difficulties in learning are addressed, as much as possible, within the context of the regular classroom. School K has implemented the program for all first through third grade students, but has altered some of the components in implementation (described below).



Success for All was implemented in School K as a schoolwide project in 1988. The impetus for adopting "Success For All" came from the principal—with teachers buying in after they observed the program. The program was instituted at the School K because the principal felt that reducing the teacher-student ratio and concentrating on direct instruction would improve student success in reading. The principal visited a number of programs in search of an appropriate schoolwide Chapter 1 model before selecting Success for All. The program developer then came to the school to talk with staff about the program. The primary objective the staff had for the program was that all students would reach grade three on time (no retention) and on grade level. The staff believed SFA would focus more resources on direct instruction in reading and language arts; its phonetic emphasis made it suitable for the school's large LEP population; and its parent outreach component fit with the staff's desire to find ways to involve the parent population in the community.

The school's improvement plan took a holistic approach to supporting the child and family as well as addressing the children's educational deficits by focusing instructional resources on their needs. Success For All aided in all these areas and was the centerpiece of the school's plan for meeting its goals. The new principal, who joined the school mid-program, said that he was pleased overall with SFA. He thought SFA fit well with his own goals for the school, which included greater parent involvement and elimination of pullout programs.

School K adapted the Success for All model to fit the school's resources, practices, and ideology. At the time the program was implemented, the principal negotiated with Slavin, the program developer, for a more flexible implementation. She argued that no good teacher would ever want to lose autonomy and the freedom to vary instruction as s/he sees fit in order to follow any model, no matter how good it is.

#### *Staff and Participants*

A program Support Teacher, the classroom teachers, four certified teacher tutors, and eight classroom aides participated in the project, in addition to non-instructional staff such as the school-community coordinator, nurse, and counselor. Initially, the project supported aides in the first grade classrooms. By Fall 1992, there were no more aides. Staff retention was extremely strong, with a maximum turnover of two teachers per year. In 1992, there was no turnover.

#### *Support for Program*

The program developer insists that Success for All have the support of a majority of staff before it is implemented in a school. The staff at School K appeared fully supportive. They all spoke the Success for All language and stated the goals of the program in virtually identical words. Teachers who did not like the SFA model when first adopted were given the option of moving to upper grades and then, when grades six, seven, and eight were taken out of the school, these teachers could move with those grades. Two teachers did so. The district was extremely supportive of SFA and encouraged the implementation of the program in additional schools—15 schools started SFA programs in 1992.

### *Training*

Extensive staff development specific to SFA is a component of the program and was done for all teachers at School K. Training is so thorough that the principal once claimed that the teachers had a "glut of SFA training" and didn't need any more. At that time, she was seeking suggestions from teachers about what they would find more useful. Teachers received approximately five hours of staff development per month. There were weekly grade levels meetings for each grade during one of the teachers' six prep periods per week. These meetings with the program facilitator were in part intended for staff development. Each meeting was 45 minutes long. In addition, the district mandated 10 hours of staff development per year and School K used another 10 hours per year available for schoolwide projects.

### *Students*

Students served were primarily speakers of Asian languages; many parents were unschooled or under-schooled because of their refugee background. Many followed the Buddhist religion. Home languages included the major Asian languages as well as dialects that have few speakers.

Success For All spanned kindergarten through third grades, with services focused on first grade students. As it was a schoolwide project in a neighborhood school, students were not recruited specifically for the project. However, the children who received ESOL instruction (approximately 10 students) were not specially served by SFA. While they used to remain in the classroom during SFA and receive ESOL later in the day, at the time of the site visit they were pulled out for ESOL reading instruction during the reading period under the premise that they would not benefit from English reading instruction.

### *Project Services*

The SFA program model advocates full-day kindergarten. School K had two full-day and two half-day kindergartens. Based on the belief that kindergarten was a critical component in the overall SFA model and to meet the needs of the school's population of non-English speakers, the school instituted the transitional first grade after one year in the SFA schoolwide project. This class was for children who 1) had no Kindergarten, 2) were considered by their kindergarten teacher not ready for first grade, or 3) came into the school knowing no English. When the program first was instituted, children in this class were assessed every eight weeks and sent to regular first grade as soon as they were ready. (Also, children who had gone into first grade could be "sent down" to the transitional class if they were assessed as not making progress.) The principal and the program facilitator believed that this was the best single innovation that they had instituted in the program. In the second year of the transitional first grade, there was no plan for moving children in and out of this grade during the year.

### *Scheduling*

A strong component of SFA is the allocation of 90 minutes a day to reading. SFA also allocates that time to oral reading, comprehension, partner reading, silent reading in specific time chunks. Success for All seemed to drive the schedule at School K. SFA reading and language arts occupied the morning, leaving mathematics, social studies, science, music, and health to be fit in between 12:00 and 2:45 PM.

### *Classroom Instruction*

Methods were a strong component of the curriculum, including, for example, cooperative learning, partner reading, reading aloud, and reading 'treasure hunt' reviews. Reading periods followed a standard sequence: story, discussion, new vocabulary, oral language production, comprehension, and story structure.

Periodic (eight week) reassessment and homogenous regrouping are central to the SFA program. School K students were reassessed on reading skills around every eight weeks, but regrouping was not as consistent. Reading groups tended to be heterogeneous.

*First Grade.* There were four heterogeneously grouped first grade classes. There was no movement for reading/language arts but each class received an additional person to reduce class size from 9 to 10:30 AM. Two rooms received ESOL teachers and two received tutor-teachers. Assignment were based roughly on how many ESOL children were in the class. First grade class enrollments averaged about 25 students. First graders participated in and one-on-one tutoring, based on test scores.

*Second Grade.* This grade is somewhat differently scheduled than first or third. There were three second grade classes with the lowest achieving children placed primarily with two teachers, (thus the homerooms were more homogeneous than other grades). The classes moved for reading, which was scheduled from 9 to 11:15 instead of 10:30-i.e. included language arts. Two tutor-teachers took the highest reading groups from the three rooms thus creating semi-homogeneous reading groups. The students who remained in the classrooms as reading groups were the lower, somewhat heterogeneous, readers. Tutoring was provided to the extent that resources were left after serving first graders.

*Third Grade.* Students were regrouped heterogeneously for reading from 9 to 10:30 and in homerooms for language arts. There were a few students unable to function in heterogeneous group-these students (11 in all third grades) went to a special primer group from 9 to 10:30 am. Tutoring was provided to the extent that resources were left after serving first and second graders. There were six tutor-teachers who did all the tutoring for first graders and instructed the second and third grade reading groups. Aides were no longer used, although there were third grade aides at earlier phases of the project.

*Fourth and Fifth Grades.* Cooperative learning groups were conducted for some aspects of reading (using the JHU/NDN "CIRC" program and mathematics (using the JHU/NDN "TGT" program.)

### *Curriculum*

In general, reading materials for Success for All schools were provided by the program developer. The curriculum built upon a sequence of phonically regular first grade readers. The kindergarten used STAR, a story reading program developed within SFA. A problem in the SFA curriculum, according to teachers who were using it, the program support teacher, and the principal, was that it moved too slowly at the beginning reading phase. There were 70 lessons on phonics that teachers and students must go through before they get into reading. As a result, while students reached grade level in reading by the end of third grade, they frequently were not on level at the beginning of second grade. The recognition came about at the same time teachers were getting interested in the whole language movement, taking courses in it, etc. and so some story books (literature) were infused into the reading curriculum for first and second graders. Reportedly this was done with the blessing of JHU and Slavin. Success For All designed Treasure Hunts (enrichment activities that also provide informal assessments) to go with the story books that were being used.

The principal and program support teacher emphasized that even when they used non-SFA reading material, they retained the important elements of the SFA process, which they identified as listening comprehension, the use of partners in reading (peer interactions), periodic assessments of progress, and reading comprehension checks.

### *Individualization*

SFA promotes individualization through one-on-one tutoring, which is in place in the first grade and (to a limited degree) in the higher grades. Ideally, individual tutoring is provided by certified teachers. The program facilitator chose to focus their limited resources on first grade. First graders had two teachers in the room for reading and all first graders received one-on-one tutoring from certified teachers if they fell below grade level, as indicated by the eight week assessment test results. Students in grades two and three received tutoring from aides, if needed, as resources allowed. Theoretically, students were assessed and regrouped every eight weeks. However, School K did not appear to be diligent about this schedule. Homogenous groups that are not reviewed periodically bear a resemblance to tracking, which has been criticized as stigmatizing students unnecessarily. Regrouping can be used to ensure that instruction is at the appropriate level as students' knowledge base changes. Reduced class size for reading is a critical component of SFA and at School K, where no reading group ever had more than 15 students.

### *Assessment*

Reading assessment every eight weeks is a component of SFA and has taken place at School K until recently. This component may be dropped since heterogeneous grouping is locally interpreted as making it redundant to the program. Note: SFA materials call for BOTH heterogeneous grouping AND periodic re-assessment.

### *Instructional Support*

Several components of the SFA program are geared towards supporting instruction:

Teachers instructing only one reading group and that group all reading on the same level;

The phonics emphasis of the program as an aid to teaching English;

The reduced teacher-student ratio;

A full-time program support teacher; and

Six prep periods per week, including a weekly teacher meeting.

School K school moved away from the first two, homogenous reading groups and a phonics emphasis, during implementation. However, the remaining three components were in place.

### *Resources*

For school year 1990-91, the school's operating budget was \$650,558, including the funds from Chapter 1 Schoolwide Project plus foundation support. Exact figures change every year. This supported nine full-time professional staff, 10 full- and part-time paraprofessional staff, and the school-community (outreach) coordinator. King (1994) concluded that the additional staff and resources needed to implement Success for All may cost between \$261,060 and \$646,500 per year, much to all of which can be covered by redirecting Chapter 1 funds.

### *Project Outcomes*

Compared to a matched school with a large Asian population, School K students consistently outperforming the control students, with School K Asian students particularly excelling in contrast to control Asian students. According to a report<sup>4</sup> co-authored by Robert Slavin and Renee Yampolsky, the School K Principal,

"The results for the Asian students on the reading and language proficiency measures conform to an interesting pattern. Success for All Asian student performed significantly better than control students in grades K-2 but the differences diminished over time. By the third grade, Asian students in both schools had very good English skills. However, the quick start in English experienced by Asian students at School K gave them a substantial advantage in reading. By the time control students caught up in English, they were far behind in reading. In an immersion/ESL program, it would seem critical both to build English skills rapidly in kindergarten and to focus ESL instruction on the

4. "Effect of success for all on students with limited English proficiency: A three-year evaluation"

particular English skills needed to help students succeed in reading. The evaluation of Success for All at School K shows the benefits of both early English and integrated instruction."

The principal reported that School K surpassed its control school on all outcome measures available so far. Based on the spring 1991 test results, School K came out of school improvement "with flying colors" in both reading and math. When it comes to the tests administered by the district, School K students were at a disadvantage because some of the questions (according to the program facilitator), were based on the McGraw Hill curriculum. However the most recent district-conducted evaluation (5/94) showed students at School K outperforming the average students in both reading and mathematics in all grades assessed.

### *Parental and Community Support*

The outreach to parents was accomplished primarily through the attendance monitor and the outreach coordinator. They attempted to bring parents into the school and interest parents in their children's education, and they made home visits as indicated. Outreach was hampered by two factors: 1) the language barrier—the attendance coordinator spoke one of the languages but no one else did and 2) the custom of Cambodian culture that home and school are separate—children are "turned over" to the schools for education and parents do not interfere. To address this problem, the school produced, with the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, a videotape called "Meeting With The Teachers." Produced in Cambodian, the videotape deals with parents coming to school for a report card conference. It was meant to help parents understand the importance of attending school and doing well in school as the foundation of success in the USA. Some activities did draw parents. For example, the welcoming tea was attended by fifty to sixty people. Despite these effort, parents were not involved in planning and operation of the program. The school seemed to operate on a kind of Lady Bountiful model in which they gave things to the children and their parents—turkeys, clothes, an alarm clock—but a model missing the type of outreach that brings parents into the school and gets them involved in their children's education. The principal said they wanted a 'community school' but it hadn't reached that level yet. The language and cultural barriers may make the community school goal unattainable. It may also be true that the staff was still trying to get old-fashioned parent involvement (meetings, etc.) in a new-fashioned world.

Although the school had trouble implementing parent activities, both the school principal and the JHU people saw parent involvement as important. The evidence for this was that the school turned to JHU for assistance in increasing parent involvement and JHU responded first by providing materials and second, by providing a parent involvement specialist who came from Baltimore to conduct a half-day workshop for teachers. (The program support teacher did a good job of scheduling the tutors and the part-time aides to cover classrooms so that teachers could do things like this during the day). In keeping with district policy, parents must conference with the teachers to see their children's report cards three times per year. The new principal said that achieving parent involvement was one of his strengths and expected to make changes in that area. On his arrival, he opened



the drapes between his inner office and the outer office to signify his availability to staff and parents. The first parent open house of the year reportedly had many more parents than in previous years.

School K seemed to undertake a strategy for replacing the involvement of parents through providing support services to students at the school. A "Pupil Support Committee" was formed to carry out this work. The principal paid tribute to SFA for giving them the idea for this. It came from the attention that is paid to each individual child during the eight week assessments required by SFA. At that time, in addition to academic regrouping, the teachers and the program support teacher identified children who were "slipping between the cracks." The Pupil Support Committee took a case management approach to students who were identified in this way, or by parents or teachers.

First, they examined a profile of records and anecdotal data to determine the student's needs and then they drew up an educational plan that consisted of some combination of tutoring, mentoring by a teacher, or individual counseling. (An example: a part-time aide may be assigned to do extra reading with the child). In addition, the student probably would be assigned to a "homework club," which met after school once or twice a week. There were six homework clubs with about 10 to 15 students per club. Other clubs were the drama club and the computer club but those were comprised more of volunteers although they may have been included in some children's educational plan. Finally, for some children who had special problems (living in a crack house, for example), there was a support group, which met every other week. Support groups were conducted by medical student volunteers.

Despite these endeavors, school staff were not unmitigatingly supportive of parent involvement. An interesting insight into the attitude of School K toward parents was told by the principal and the program support teacher. The district was pushing site-based decision making and had invented a process for schools to express interest in the idea. This required a staff vote and a form to fill out and submit to the district. Schools that got into site-based decision-making then formed a governance council, which included parents and community people as well as teachers and staff. At School K, the teachers decided that they would not become a site-based school in a formal way but would informally involve teachers in decision-making. They rejected the district's site-based decision-making initiative because they thought that involving parents and community people was "too much of a risk." The program support teacher said that School K teachers/staff didn't want to take the "risks of doing it (site-based decision-making) but will do it informally"—i.e. without parents and community people. She said this was a "very hard school" and that they didn't want to "get at loggerheads" with parents, so better not to have a governance council. The new principal, for all his commitment to parent involvement, nodded in vigorous agreement with everything the program support teacher said.

## *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

**1. The most important characteristic of HROs is a perception, held by the public and the employees, that failures within the organization would be disastrous.**

The most important shift in considering HROs is not in the specific characteristics of the organizations; it is the intellectual shift which precedes the evolution of the characteristics. The teachers who worked with the school selected this program, and continued to put in the effort necessary to make the program successful. They met during vacation times and contributed in areas not strictly their responsibility.

**2. HROs require clarity regarding goals.**

Staff in HROs have a strong sense of their primary mission. The Success For All program is quite specific regarding goals. The first and over-reaching goal is that all students be able to read at grade level by the end of the third grade. Before implementing the program, teachers discussed the SFA mission and its place in their goals for the school. By selecting this model, they reached initial consensus on their primary mission. Over time, teachers continued to clearly reflect on and articulate this mission, and to make instructional decisions based upon the larger vision. To ensure that each child was reading on grade level, for example, one teacher spent extra time on reading when it became clear that a few students were lagging.

**3. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis.**

This analysis is based on standard operating procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows. The SFA program provides recommended curriculum and instructional responses for a range of learning situations. If a student has difficulty mastering a skill, the program suggests alternate teaching approaches.

**4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve its Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:**

- Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions)
- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

The Success For All programs require the building of a rich data base, relevant to the program's goals, regularly cross-checked by teachers (plural) and the program coordinator. Quarterly testing, therefore, serves two functions. One is the assignment of students to reading groups, and the second is to periodically update the professional staff as to students who might be in danger of falling behind. Real-time decisions are made regarding each student's reading assignments based on this data base.

At this school, all students are required to write every day, and do homework every night. These activities build a powerful data base of student productions.

*5. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in Standard Operating Procedures and nominate and validate changes in those that prove inadequate.*

Teachers could and did discuss issues with the program procedures during the weekly grade level meetings. For example, teachers were concerned that the phonics approach, while ultimately effective, moved too slowly in the early phases of reading development. They arranged to integrate some whole language materials with phonics to address gaps they found in the curriculum.

However, not all flaws were identified and redressed. The school's transitional first grade, originally an innovative approach to bringing students up to grade level, because a more permanent remedial placement because there were no procedures for moving students out of this class as their skills improved. Note that SFA advocates are against the creation of "transitional" first grade classes.

*6. HROs are sensitive to the areas in which judgment-based, incremental strategies are required.*

They therefore pay considerable attention to performance, evaluation, and analysis to improve the processes of the organizations.

Teachers constantly collected information on students' skill levels. Every lesson included a performance component in which students demonstrated that they had mastered the skill in question. The teachers held regular meetings to evaluate students' progress. Because three adults—the teacher, the aide, and the tutor—reviewed the students' performance, students' needs and skills were more accurately diagnosed.

*7. In high reliability organizations, monitoring is mutual (administrators and line staff) without counterproductive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

The principal maintained a delicate balance of support and authority in monitoring the teachers. He visited the classrooms, and was familiar with the teachers' capabilities, but did not interfere in teaching decisions. The program support teacher seemed to function as an intermediary between line staff and administration. She worked with the principal to address teachers' concerns about the program. However, her monitoring authority seemed to be limited. Rather than push a confrontation, she seemed to avoid contact with one teacher who was not using SFA.

*8. HROs are alert to surprises or lapses.*

The experience of HROs is that small failures could cascade into major system failures, and hence failures are monitored carefully. Regular, scheduled teacher meetings, which review both program elements and individual student progress, helped identify problems

early. Well established informal communication paths enabled teachers to talk about concerns before they become issues. The program coordinator, who was well known and liked by both teachers and administrators, functioned as a nexus for information.

*9. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize a second layer of behavior which emphasizes collegial decision making regardless of rank.*

This second mode is characterized by cooperation and coordination. At times of peak activity, line staff are expected to exercise considerable discretion. Especially during times of peak performance, staff are able to assume a close interdependence. Relationships are complex, coupled, and sometimes urgent. In the words of one fourth grade teacher who, together with the other fourth and fifth grade teachers, use the top floor of the building, "We OWN this floor!" There was an open, friendly collegiality among teachers in the school. Another fourth grade teacher explained, "Because of what we have built, I don't think twice about walking into another 4-5 classroom and saying [an expression of concern regarding one's own or the other teacher's lesson plan]". Teachers accepted the principal as administrator, but felt free to challenge him on curricular/instructional and organizational issues. As a result, this inner-city school ran remarkably smoothly.

*10. Equipment is maintained in the highest working order.*

Responsibility for checking the readiness of key equipment is shared equally by all who come in contact with it.

*11. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.*

The district's high valuation of School K was evident in its recognition of the school's autonomy while supporting SFA at School K and beyond. For example, the district allowed the school to make decisions such as moving out teachers who did not like the program, and provided extensive financial support for the program. The district encouraged the implementation of SFA in additional schools—15 schools started SFA programs in 1992.

*12. Short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

The program maintained remarkable stability over a number of years of fiscal crises. Although some changes were made for budgetary reasons (i.e., eliminating aides) and some for developmental reasons (i.e., integrating more whole language in the curriculum), all changes were consistent with the overall goals and strategies of the program.

Success for All seemed to work in the School K because it met the school's unique needs, especially English language and cultural needs. School K altered some parts of the program, but maintained the parts most useful for their needs: the K-1 program, including some phonics, materials, and tutoring; the instructional methods; and some non-instructional components.

## *School-Community Analysis*

### *Overview*

Relations among students were reported as quite positive; on the whole, cooperative learning strategies were credited as having built genuine caring and sharing relationships among K-5 youngsters. Fights were reported as infrequent, and this year was believed to be especially free of any disruptions. Student relations with teachers were constructive, with teachers saying they aimed to guide students early on in the year, later giving students increased opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions and performance (i.e., empowering them). One teacher described how a child reacted to a group-mate's improved performance with an unsolicited pat on the back and encouraging words. Another teacher told the story of how, after several indoor lunch days this year due to rain, one child carried a math book outside with her during lunch. When queried why she had a book when it was outdoor play, the child responded that she didn't understand a current math assignment given to her group, and that two of her group-mates had agreed to tutor her over the lunch recess.

Relations among teachers were also reported to be quite positive, with the only hint of "distance" being between teachers in grades that do not plan together on a weekly basis (e.g., fourth and fifth versus third grade teachers). By and large, all the teachers have been together at the school for some time (e.g., seven to 25 years), and all began the Success for All program together. Each week, grade groupings have an extra preparation period to plan together, and over the past seven years (i.e., the time since SFA was instituted), many have worked together on an unpaid basis to develop instructional strategies. Words like "family" were used often to describe the teachers within a grade grouping (e.g., fourth and fifth grades), and hugs and touches characterized the focus group session itself. Caring and trust were frequently expressed, and there was no envy or jealousy evident. These teachers seemed to share a sense of common purpose resulting from active and shared participation in all phases of their instructional planning.

Relations with the principal were characterized as friendly and supportive. This principal is a "late comer" to the program and, according to one teacher, hasn't aimed to change the SFA program in any way. Most felt he was much less directive than his predecessor, who had brought SFA to School K. They liked it that he pretty much left the instructional program to them; they clearly felt it was their "baby".

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* The teachers expressed their shared vision for students: they want students to grow as individuals, and to become more capable of standing on their own and achieving success in the classroom. The teachers spent some time articulating this vision and acknowledging that they got along so well and so cooperatively because they knew that their shared vision for students underlies all their actions.

*Shared Sense of Purpose.* SFA provided this more immediate sense of purpose. Although some teachers found SFA a bit prescriptive at first, all have pitched in and worked hard together on it. Early successes made them feel empowered and created new bonds between teachers who, previously, hadn't really been that close. SFA has given them a shared vocabulary, a shared repertoire of instructional strategies, and a shared frame of reference with respect to the way they regard students and student learning.

*Shared Values.* Teachers have hammered out a set of shared values that is based on their vision and that is articulated with SFA principles and procedures. One teacher put it that students, when seeing one of them (i.e., one member of the fourth-fifth grade team), would act as if they were seeing all of them (i.e., they felt equally able to communicate with all of the teachers and all the teachers treat them the same). Another teacher said she never doubted what her colleague was doing when that colleague interacted with a student; they both had the same sense of what students should be doing and how students should act.

*Trust.* There was a clear sense that teachers didn't question one another's motives. There was no sense of having to "watch their backs" from attacks by others. They felt able to express their ideas without worrying about what others will think—whether others will think they have an ulterior motive. Although fourth and fifth teachers did say that they had trouble interacting effectively with third teachers (see below), there was no indication of a lack of trust. Insofar as the principal was concerned, teachers said they just saw him as a supporter who wouldn't mess things up.

*Caring.* The caring among the first and fourth and fifth grade teacher teams (the only ones interviewed) was obvious. Impromptu hugs and touches during the session merely underscored reports of how they helped and looked after one another. When describing incidents involving colleagues and students, one or another of the teachers actually got a bit teary-eyed. After a number of years together, it was clear that there was strong feeling here, although get-togethers outside of work were not all that frequent. Teachers commented explicitly on the presence of caring teachers at the school, and they noted that the students share a lot with each other as well. One teacher commented, "My assistant's terrific. She makes such a difference. The kids know that she cares about them..."

*Participation.* The teachers noted that the cooperative learning in the classroom had actually stimulated the cooperative spirit outside the classroom as well. SFA practices had gotten them to re-examine in some cases their going-it-alone attitudes. Clearly, the teacher teams had considerable (if not total) responsibility for planning the instructional program. Any major instructional decisions by other building staff likely would be made in concert with these teachers. They were full partners in the SFA program, if not the principal players. They noted that there were three types of staff meetings: the ones where the principal told them things the district needed them to know, the ones where they received training ("for the tenth time on some of the same things"), and the ones where they sat around and brainstormed, self-reviewed, and innovated. Teachers in each grade met once a week, and they shared information about materials they did and did not like.

*Communication.* Among the teacher teams, there was free-flowing communication about instructional and personal matters. They repeatedly mentioned how they talked with each other about new ideas, sought assistance, and registered common concerns. All felt they



could bring up any subject with the principal and receive a fair and friendly hearing. "Whatever he's had to say has always been very positive." They did, however, mention that there was a language problem between them and some of the limited-English-speaking parents, but the district policy requiring parents to pick up report cards and meet with teachers three to four times a year—and the presence of the two full-time translators at these meetings—was thought to be very helpful. The teachers also noted that they "[made] the parents aware of all the services that are available in the community for their children.... [We] show the parents how they can help the children at home, reading stories, and things like that—what kinds of questions to ask..."

*Respect and Recognition.* These teachers had considerable respect for one another; they all "survived" the initial months of SFA implementation through much hard work and thereby earned each others' regard. They underscored particularly noteworthy things each other did during the focus group session: one teacher's fifth grade tutoring program with the Kindergarten students, another's better grasp of probability.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* The staff in the two groups interviewed were all female; teachers were European-American and African-American. They never referred to race or to gender in their dealings with one another. They did note how they understood they brought different things to the instructional program (and to SFA) and that they drew strength from these differences. While the student body was quite diverse, there was no indication that the teachers regarded this as a "problem." In fact, they expressly noted that, since SFA, students' talking in their native languages in groups has come to be regarded as an important and vital part of the program. Whereas in the early days they insisted upon "only English," they began to see what these digressions on the students' parts indicated about their levels of engagement in classroom activities. The teachers showed support for the students. The content of lessons became more multicultural, and teachers seem to feel that the change has benefited them all. In the words of one teacher, "Many of the children are beginning to understand each others' differences. A lot of that has to do with the multicultural aspect of the teaching that we do... We introduce a lot of multicultural stories; we talk a lot about different ethnic groups. When we're working with social studies and science, we bring in different kinds of, maybe ethnic foods, or ethnic music—we blend everything together to give the kids a better understanding of each other so that they're not always pointing the finger at 'this one's different, whereas this one's more the same as I am.' That makes it very nice."

*Teamwork.* As noted earlier and throughout most of the above, the cooperative learning strategy for students has apparently reinforced the team ethic among teachers. If there was any need, it was for expanding the scope of teacher teams—to include broader grade ranges. To accomplish this, teachers suggested meetings and joint planning of K-5 representatives around a theme of "where will the students be in five years." Even so, some teachers felt that teachers were still very supportive of each other across grades: "There's a really good support system in this school, and it filters from the teachers down to the kids... Administrators included..." A teacher commented that the program "made such demands on us, we all just pulled together into teams, and I think it...forced us ...to work together."

*Affirmation.* Teachers noted a lack of patting themselves on the back or applause for their accomplishments. Emphasis was on "where we've not done well" and "why we've fallen short" rather than equal time spent on successes and an analysis of why they'd succeeded. There was consensus that overlooking this kind of affirmation can be demoralizing, causing staff to be overly critical and to feel underappreciated.

*Conflict Resolution.* Although there were occasional printed signs around the school hallways urging conflict resolution, teachers could only recall that the signs had something to do with last year's "program for some upper grade students." In fact, they thought the program might have been targeted at high school students, but that some of the signs had just "found their way" to School K. No formal program or specific emphasis was recalled at School K.

*Development of the Young.* This program and this staff had not yet been much "tested" on their ability to develop new members: Most of the staff had been at School K since the beginning; those who had arrived since the program began were few in number (1 or 2) and easily were brought into the program by their fellow grade group members and the SFA coordinator. Teachers commented that new teachers were helped in a variety of ways, for example, through demonstration lessons and observations.

*Links Beyond the Community.* In spite of specifically inquiring about this, there was no indication that staff involvement outside school (e.g., volunteering in a son's or daughter's school) were noted and affirmed back at their own school. While staff had at one time been active as "models" or "spokespersons" for SFA in their districts, they suggested they were now much less likely to be called upon or to volunteer for these activities. The principal and the coordinator, however, were quite buoyed by a recent invitation to visit New York schools and to talk about SFA. The principal, especially, seemed cognizant that his relatively recent involvement with SFA was making him something of a celebrity and seemed to welcome this attention and the opportunity to be a SFA representative outside the area.

#### *Community Investment Behaviors*

Teachers spoke of how dedicated their assistants were. One teacher commented regarding her assistant, "Anything I've ever asked, she always wants to do more." Another said, "They're willing to come in earlier and work with a kid who's having a problem, if need be, they'll take kids out from the lunchroom...and work with them during lunch time..." ?

#### *Community Resources*

Teachers wished there were space at the school for all the grades to meet or to get together for assemblies, plays, etc.

#### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

Long tenure of the teachers at the school and since SFA introduction

At SFA introduction, teachers who wanted to move out could go

At SFA introduction, the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were "peeled off"—moved to another school

SFA requires cooperative learning in the classroom

SFA implementation required teachers to work hard, to share in the responsibilities for program success, and to be innovative and risk-taking

The principal who brought SFA was a known quantity and was firm in her view that it was the way to go; her successor is letting it roll along, without any interference

The program coordinator and resource person has been at School K for 21 years, had been a reading specialist before SFA was introduced, was personable, self-effacing, and competent

Class sizes were relatively small (about 22-24 kids or less), all teachers had an assistant for one-half day, and grade groupings of teachers had an extra prep period each week to plan together

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### *Students' Days*

Sammy is a first grade student in Ms. G's class. This is his first formal school experience. Last year, he lived in a shelter and did not attend school. According to the program coordinator and to the tutor, he is struggling but keeping pace. He wears thick glasses with a strap to hold them up. Throughout the day, he seems easily distracted, but focuses with surprising intensity quite quickly. For example, his attention wandered during a story for approximately five minutes. Then his eyes fixed on a picture and he stared at that without reacting to activities around him for a few minutes. The teacher and aide tend to touch Sammy's shoulder when they are talking with or listening to him, perhaps to help him focus.

The classroom has two major work areas: a section in the front of the room with desks facing a blackboard, and a small carpeted reading area in the back of the room. The room is large, with ample space for movement. Filled bookshelves line the wall, and a piano sits in the back of the room. The bulletin boards are filled with students' work.

Instruction in this class is fast-paced and challenging. The routine is clearly established and students are highly involved and focused. On the day of observation, there are 19 students in the class. Approximately 10 students are absent.

The schedule incorporates a mix of small group, large group, and seat work. From 9:40 to 10:35, students work in two small groups. In the back of the room, eight students sit with the aide on a blanket having an imaginary picnic. They eat their snack (peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, apple juice) while the aide asks open-ended, thinking questions. The aide points to a picture of a cave and asks what kind of animal might live in the cave. She asks students what clothing they would wear for the outing, and urges them to think using questions such as, "What would you wear on your feet? What would you wear if you

were doing a lot of walking?" She asks what students would need if they slept overnight in the woods and what they would eat. Her questions encourage students to reason through their responses rather than shout out any answers. For example, she tells a student who wants to eat steak on the outing that steak would require pans, which would be heavy to carry. She asks the students to think about foods that are more convenient for cookouts. She accepts all legitimate answers but pushes students to think of more likely responses.

During this activity, Sammy's attention wanders. He fidgets and turns away from the aide, but doesn't interact with the children either. Halfway through the exercise, the aides has Sammy stand beside her. She puts her arm around him and directs a few questions to him. He answers quietly, after a long wait.

In the morning, transitions are marked by a short song on a record. The teacher turns off the lights and plays the record. The students sing along as they change activities, "Snap your fingers and tap your toes..." In a later transition, the students sing the alphabet song. Shortly before transitions, students seem to get a bit more restless. The physical movement involved in this type of transition seems to channel some of that energy.

The two groups switch places at 10:55. Sammy's group moves to the desks at the front of the classroom for a reading lesson with the teacher. The teacher checks "Share Sheets," homework meant to be done by the student and an older relative at home. Unlike most of the students, Sammy didn't do his. The first part of the reading lesson centers on a story, "The Pet Store," which the students read at home. The lesson builds from working in the know to assisted work to independent work. The teacher asks factual questions to review the story, such as, "Who are the two characters? Why do they go to the pet store? What pet did they see first? Did they buy it?" and presses with thinking questions, "Why didn't they buy the dog?" She writes the answers on the board, first only a word, then simple sentences, saying each word aloud as she writes. Most of the students are attentive and eager to respond. The teacher calls on some of the students who are not as involved. After three or four minutes of review, the teacher and students read the sentences on the board aloud. Next, the class reads the story aloud, each student reading a sentence. All of the students can read some, but about half struggle with the words. Sammy has trouble following along, so the teacher helps him put his finger on the words being read. He follows for about a page before he's lost again. Like the other students, Sammy raises his hand to volunteer to read; unlike the others, he does not seem to know where to read. The homework assignment is to practice reading the story and prepare to read it aloud with a partner the next day. One student shouts out, "Yeah!" at the assignment. Students seem as enthusiastic about the homework as they had been about the lesson.

Next, the group works on Share Sheets. The sheets contain 15 sentences in groups of five. Together, the sentences make a short story. The teacher reads a sentence and then the class reads the sentences together. At the end of each group, the teacher reviews the content and facilitates short discussions: "Why can Biff swim?" "Biff is a fish." "Do you know any fish who don't swim?" "Clams." "Clams are mollusks; we'll talk about them later." At the end of the story, students turn over the sheet and take a short quiz, with questions such as the name of the fish and the boy in the story. Many of the students turn the paper over to find the answers in the story. The teacher discourages them from doing so in a low-key

way. Sammy struggles some with the story and quiz. He is able to read only about half of the sentences with the rest of the class. Students are to take the sheets home to review with their parents.

Finally, the students practice penmanship. They work individually on "F, f." The teacher guides individual students. In the last few minutes of the lesson, the teacher directs the students to read the next story to themselves.

In math, students are working on the number line and simple addition and subtraction. The lesson covers the same skills with several different approaches: first, the teacher reads word problems ("stories") and asks students to hold up numbered cubes showing the correct answer. This mechanism quickly shows the teacher whether each student knows the answer independently. After two to three minutes of this, the class switches activities. The teacher holds up a large (18 inch) laminated poster with a number between zero and nine. She asks each student in turn, "What comes next? What comes before?" A few students respond without difficulty, a few struggle, and most seem to be on level. Next, the teacher works with plastic bears in a box top. She puts some bears in the box one at a time and asks the students, "How many bears are in the box?" Then she adds or removes bears and repeats the question. The students count aloud as she moves the bears in and out of the box, and keep tally on their fingers. After a few minutes of this activity, the students complete a lesson in their workbook, using "hidden counters," adding coins under and beside a picture of a book. The class does the first few exercises together and finish the exercise on their own, with the teacher checking each student's work before allowing the students to turn the page. All of the students are excited and actively involved, although some struggle with the activity. The teacher directs students who finish early to help the slower students. The students are eager, to the point of pestering the slower students with offers of help.

At 11:15, students put away their workbooks, collect their jackets, and line up for lunch. Girls and boys form separate lines. The teacher delivers the students to a lunchroom monitor and then leaves to have lunch with other teachers. Boys and girls sit at separate tables. Once all the students are settled, they get up, table by table, to get their lunches and wash their hands. When they sit back down, they eat and talk enthusiastically. The monitors stand near the tables, but don't quiet the students. Lunch time is a good blend of vitality and order—the students are not stifled, nor are they out of control. When they are done eating, they go outside to play for a few minutes.

Reading lesson begins when students return to the classroom. Some students are being tutored. The remaining ten students and the teacher sit in the back of the room, reading a large book. They are familiar with the book and read and answer the teacher's questions easily. The story is about dividing cookies among children. As the class reads the book, the teacher asks them to perform the arithmetic. Sammy helps hold up the book and answers a few questions. The teacher informs the students that the word for the day is "enormous." Throughout the afternoon, she uses the word frequently and with special emphasis.



Making a neat segue from the family in the book, the teacher opens a discussion about families and sharing. This activity apparently continues a theme from the previous week. The teacher wraps up the lesson by promising the students that she would bring in "enormous" cookies the next day, which students could count and divide to share among themselves. Before moving to the front of the room, the teacher outlines the afternoon's activities: handwriting and talking about Columbus (the previous day was Columbus Day). She gives advance notice like this frequently.

For the handwriting lesson, the teacher draws lines on the board and practice writing "S": "curve left, curve right, around and stop." She shows them how to write "8": "curve left, curve right, around, and DON'T stop, keep going." Students practice at their desks as the teacher looks over their shoulders, occasionally giving suggestions. When students are done, they may leave for recess. Sammy will miss recess because he is being tutored.

The tutor, Mrs. D., clearly knows each child's strengths and weaknesses. She moves through activities without consulting a lesson plan, yet the activities focus on related skills and progress in difficulty. For the first five minutes of the tutorial, the tutor gives Sammy a game so she can finish working with another student, Roberto. Sammy seems to know how to play the game, but the tutor interrupts his play to show him. When he sits down again to play, he no longer plays it correctly. He looks at the pictures but not the related words. As Roberto gets up to leave, Sammy hugs him. The tutor looks disturbed and pulls Sammy away from Roberto. Sammy and the tutor sit down to play a game. The tutor shows a card with a picture, and Sammy points to a "yes" or a "no" sign, depending on whether the pictured word starts with a "b." He seems to know the starting sounds, but forgets some words. The tutor guides him, step by step, into saying forgotten words. Next, he underlines "b" words in two sentences. When he gets words correct, the tutor praises him. He looks very pleased with himself, smiling and chewing his finger. The next activity is not as easy for him. The tutor asks Sammy to point to a word as she says it. He is correct half of the time. At the close of the session, Sammy must find his own chart in a stack of charts and he selects a sticker to put on the chart for the day.

When Sammy returns to the classroom, the rest of class is returning from recess. The teacher gives each student a map and asks them to circle words on the map identifying the country Columbus sailed from and the ocean he sailed across. They draw three ships on the ocean. The teacher doesn't seem to notice that Sammy copies from another student's paper. In response to one student's suggestion (to color the Atlantic Ocean white), the teacher pulls down a large roll-up map to show students Antarctica (which should be colored white because "it's all ice"). In one voice, the students say, "Ooooooh." They are very excited about the map. The teacher capitalizes on their interest, showing the students Spain, Antarctica, and Columbus' route on the large map. The students color their maps while the teacher reviews their homework books.

The class moves to the back of the room to read a book about whales. The teacher leads a brief discussion to introduce the book. She asks questions, such as "What do we know about whales?" and writes the answers on an easel pad. The teacher names the author and



illustrator, then begins reading. She stops reading periodically to ask questions. The class spends 15 minutes on this activity. At 2:35, they return to their seats, collect their folders, coats, and schoolbags, and prepare to leave.

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## *School L*

### *Connecticut*

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#### *Site Overview*

James Comer's School Development model, developed at the Yale Child Study Center, provides a blueprint for restructuring schools around the needs of the whole child. The program is curriculum-content-free and, in principle, could be adapted to diverse local curricula. This model is operating in over 150 schools in 14 districts. Research suggests that the School Development Program has a positive effect on students' academic and affective growth. School L was selected as an exemplary Comer school by staff at the Yale Child Study Center.

School L represents an excellent implementation of the Comer model. All the elements were in place and the school had had years to work out any problems. Interestingly, school level staff very rarely mentioned the Comer model. This is not to say the pieces were not in place, they were. Rather, staff had taken ownership and believed the school was effective because of their input. The major elements of success were an extraordinary caring, and dedicated principal; a committed and competent staff; the realization that success is a multi-party game involving many community agencies; an adequate dose of training to implement the components over a multiple year period; and finally, a model which is effective if the above elements are in place. The school boasted outstanding staff morale, shared decision making, and competent teachers.

## *Site Description*

### *Setting*

School L is located within an inner city in Connecticut. Its students are 95% African-American, 70% eligible for Chapter 1 funding, and come from a neighborhood that consists primarily of rentals and substandard quality low-rise housing units. It is down the street from a busy welfare office. City L is a city of contrasts: on the one hand, there is the University and the community that supports it, and on the other hand, empty industrial buildings in large decaying neighborhoods filled with poor minority children.

The city's economy has been spiraling downward in recent years. Staff discussed fears of cutbacks and reduction in materials and services. Unemployment has been growing steadily. Although the problems of families have increased, the overall budget of the school district has decreased. If School L is to meet the needs of the community, it will have to find additional sources of support. Fortunately, the school has become very effective in generating new kinds of support. This is primarily due to two consecutive extraordinary principals and an effective parent lobby.

The school itself is old, although reasonably well kept. A former junior high school, it has abundant space for an elementary school. The interior is somewhat dull, but one sees many successful attempts to improve the physical space through the use of plants, murals, and other artistic displays. Student work is widely displayed.

### *Program Development and Implementation*

This public school district was the first to implement the Comer School Development model (see Comer, 1980). The model evolved out of the work of the Yale University Child Study Center under the leadership of James Comer, a child psychiatrist and administrator within the Yale Medical School. The Comer Model has existed in a variety of forms within the city's schools since the late seventies. Three elementary schools were the initial target schools. During the 1980's, additional sites were added, one of which was School L.

The initial impetus for the model came from Comer, a community oriented psychiatrist with a strong commitment to expand the role of schools in dealing with the needs of children, particularly disadvantaged children in urban settings. Comer and his colleagues held the belief that the effectiveness of schools depended on the ability of schools to meet the mental health and social needs of their children. One major strategy to achieve these goals was for schools to become less isolated from the communities in which they were placed. Community participation, particularly from parents, at all levels of school functioning was critical.

In recent years, the number of schools involved with the Comer model has grown rapidly, partly due to increased dissemination efforts, increased foundation support, and an increasing pressure for schools with histories of poor academic performance to engage in school reform efforts. With expansion, an important question is the degree to which program integrity can be maintained.

The Comer model did not just happen over night at any program site. It was a process of school change that evolved over many years. City L had the advantage of having a strong commitment from the local university and the willingness of the school district to join in the partnership. In many ways, if the model doesn't work here, it will likely have difficulty elsewhere.

School L initiated the Comer process during the 1985-86 school year. The district strongly suggested the program, but the principal was very willing to adopt it. She was clearly the major force for development over the years. Most sources suggest that the key ingredient in the program's development was her style of engagement and willingness to listen and incorporate ideas of parents and staff. When that principal moved into a district position, the new principal also genuinely supported the program, although perhaps not quite as avidly.

Over the years, School L has had time to implement all the core elements of the Comer model. Some elements, such as some areas of training and parent involvement, needed those years of development. School L has benefited further from the example of other schools in the district which had implemented the model for many years. The district now looks to School L as one of the outstanding implementation sites. Numerous visitors from across the country visit the school. The school was profiled on the PBS show "Frontline" as one of America's outstanding examples of how community and parental involvement can make a difference. It also was profiled in the first edition of the School Development Newsletter. The article gave an excellent overview of some of the reasons and some of the people that contributed to the success of the school.

Teachers were instrumental in shaping the Comer model to their school. They proposed a school-within-a-school structure involving a nongraded approach to early elementary education and constructivist teaching methods. One of the third grade teachers, in collaboration with faculty at the university, wrote the grant which supported this change. The grant permitted increased levels of staff development, curriculum materials, and special project support for the development of integrated curriculum units. Two of the three first grade teachers requested and received permission to move with their students to second grade. These are just a few examples of the type of environment that fosters teacher input to create the best learning environment for children.

#### *Staff and Participants*

The school was well staffed with competent teachers, specialists, and a vice-principal and principal. Most of the staff allocations reflected district policy. The parent liaison, Jostens (computer lab) assistant, and the Writing to Read teachers were supported by Chapter 1. The curriculum specialist was the only staff associated specifically with the Comer model. She appeared to act as a master teacher/facilitator and served a number of auxiliary roles. For example, the principal relied on her to set up the site visit. She was responsible for organizing staff development.

### *Support for the Program*

When the Comer model was first introduced to the school, a fair amount of staff turnover occurred. Exactly how friendly the turnover was is unclear. Since that time, teachers come to the school knowing what to expect and only when the principal was assured that they bought into the overall philosophy of the school. In recent years, there has been little turnover. The staff was very supportive of one another. Numerous comments were made about how thankful staff were to be at this school, how much they enjoyed themselves, and how much they were willing to put into the school beyond the call of duty.

### *Training*

Staff generally spend eight to ten days per year in training. Staff development priorities mentioned in the Comprehensive School Plan included fetal drug syndrome, peer coaching and other cooperative learning strategies, and whole language approaches to literature. Additional training was provided as needs arose. For example, more training was given to parents to participate in the School Planning and Management Team and to teachers to adequately conduct the social skills curriculum.

### *Student Participants*

The school had around 550 students in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years. This included around 30 students in a Head Start Center. Class size ranged from 18 to 26 students. The third grade sections in 1992-93 averaged about 20 students per section. The school maintained a relatively constant population over recent years.

Students were not recruited; schools were. The Comer model is a school level change that should effect the lives of all students and staff in the building. At School L, all students (from kindergarten to sixth grade) participated. The district permitted students in the catchment area to attend other schools in the district, but this was a rare occurrence for School L. Some teachers noted examples of students who moved from the area and stayed in the school.

### *Project Services*

The School Development model deals with the whole child: social, affective, and academic. The core element in school change is to create a school management and governance team. This group is frequently led by the school principal, but includes parents, teachers, and other staff and community members. It deals with issues of school climate, staff development, and student development. Consensus and collaboration are critical to the change process in a Comer school. Each School Planning and Management Team develops and helps implement a Comprehensive School Plan.

Since different schools will have different sets of needs, the results of this school governance model will be different from site to site. Whatever the results, one factor should be common to all Comer sites—that staff, students, and parents feel a sense of ownership and personal responsibility for the school program.

At School L, the School Planning and Management Team met twice per month to discuss a wide range of school matters. All major school decisions were funneled through the team. The principal was a regular member, but not the leader; the committee chairperson role was rotated on a regular basis. The Comprehensive School Plan, developed by this team, focused on a wide range of academic, social, and staff development activities. Over the years, these activities have included peer tutoring, more cooperative learning, expansion of the constructivism approach to language arts, and further development of the school and class newsletters. These goals have been addressed through training and school reorganization.

A Mental Health Team, composed of teachers, the principal, special service staff, and parents, focused on broad issues of staff morale, providing a caring school environment, and meeting the mental health and social needs of the school community. The team met biweekly. It has considered topics such as coping with the death of a student, the school uniform policy, strategies for peer helping, developing a homework center, a proposed all-male class, and coping strategies for children in dealing with the rising level of neighborhood crime.

Comer recommends other strategies for school improvement beyond the governance team. Three of the most common elements of Comer schools are high levels of parent involvement, a curriculum that deals with social competence as well as academic competence, and a team approach to dealing with the mental health concerns of the school, including staff, community, and student concerns.

Parent involvement needs to be fostered at a variety of levels. First, parents need to be encouraged and developed to become active members of the school policy and governance groups. Second, parents need to support the school by attending Parent-Teacher Organization meetings, fund raising, and cultural activities within the school. Finally, parents need to get involved in their children's educational life in the classroom and at home.

Although the Comer model could be utilized in any school, its main focus has been directed at low income minority children. Comer believes that school can play the critical role in breaking the bond of poverty in our society.

#### *Classroom Instruction*

Most students were grouped heterogeneously by homeroom. In some cases, problem children were grouped together and placed with particularly effective teachers. Within class grouping for reading occurred regularly, as dictated by district standards.

The "constructivism" approach to language arts, in which students take much more responsibility for their learning and learn in more cooperative ways, was emphasized in the Comprehensive School Plan and subsequently developed. This approach appeared to be some blend of Piagetian oriented approaches, with whole language, integrated units, and greater use of trade books. Two teachers attended workshops on this approach at the local university, using their own money, and used these constructivist techniques frequently during classroom observations. Cooperative learning became increasingly



popular as a classroom strategy. It also was specifically noted in the Comprehensive School Plan as a priority. At the time of the site visit, a number of cooperative structures were in place, including partner reading, peer tutoring, and more formal student assistance teams.

#### *Additional Programs*

A number of special programs addressed the goals of the Comer program without being specifically cited in the Comprehensive School Plan. For example, outstanding after-school programs sponsored by staff and community volunteers offered a wide range of activities, many of which targeted at-risk children. On one day, a student might have available a drama group, cooking, martial arts, or storytelling. In addition, School L and a local college offered a summer academy for at-risk students, and the college sponsored a tutorial program during the school year. Jostens computer assisted instruction program was installed in the school, although staff clearly needed more guidance to take full advantage of the program. The school also offered full day kindergarten and used Writing to Read in kindergarten and first grade. A particularly strong parent lobby process helped convince the school board to permit these extras.

#### *Curriculum*

The Comer model per se has its greatest impact on instructional approaches, and "is silent on curriculum." School L was fortunate in that its district historically had supported a strong, ever evolving curriculum.

#### *Funding*

Chapter 1 supported some parent involvement, two computer aides, and the Jostens computer assisted instructional program in grades two through five. These were district mandated activities that could not be altered at the school level. The school received a variety of other funds, such as state funds for the social skills curriculum, local discretionary funds for the full day kindergarten, and at-risk money for the after-school program and summer program. Increasingly, School L has had to rely on special grants to support new programs.

#### *Non-Fiscal Resources*

School L benefited from attention from the district, the Yale Child Study Center, and the media. Yale utilized the school for site visits during Comer training sessions. The principal of the school often gave workshops at the Comer training meetings on the role of the principal in a Comer sites and on strategies for community involvement with the school. As a model site for the Yale Child Study Center, School L was able to send staff and parents to many training sessions. The school did not pay any fees for this training, nor did it pay the annual fee to the Center.

### *Academic Performance*

Achievement results showed a pattern of improvement, and student achievement at School L was higher than at comparable schools in the district. In a large, national study of "Promising Programs for Disadvantaged Students," School L showed unusually large positive gains in reading and math.

### *Student Attendance and Discipline*

Attendance rates also were above the district average, which was a considerable accomplishment in a high poverty school. Suspensions, referrals to special education, and retention declined during the Comer years, even as the numbers of "at risk" students increased.

### *Parent and Community Support*

The school had a variety of strategies for reaching out to the community. Particularly strong links were formed with public housing and family counseling agencies around issues of substance abuse. School staff were actually involved in group problem solving efforts to decrease the level of substance abuse in the community. This often involved meeting in the projects. In the face of increasing community problems (unemployment, substance abuse, and crime had increased over recent years), the school became a secure, nurturing island.

School L paid increasing attention to linkages with other community agencies. Each year, more agencies had a presence in the school. Agency representatives attended school meetings, delivered services at the school, and worked in collaborative ways with school staff, and so School L became a community center for the neighborhood. School staff pointed to this increasing level of community connections as critical to removing the barriers to learning for their children.

Parent involvement, which had grown over the years, included parent education, involvement in school programs, and parent employment within the school. Parents were clearly involved in school governance through the School Planning and Management Team and were trained by the district to fulfill these roles. For example, parents received training in how to interview prospective teachers to the building. The Parent-Teacher Organization and Chapter 1 parent coordinator were very effective in planning and conducting a wide range of parent education programs and fund raising activities. At least six very well attended (more than 200 parents) events occur each year. Some parents were hired as aides for the Head Start program. Parents took over classrooms for one to two hours each Friday to free up teachers for grade level team meetings. As part of the school within a school project, the parents created a "parent wall," a mural filled with art work from selected parents.

### *Teacher Attitudes and Behaviors*

Staff morale and attitude towards the Comer model and the school were uniformly positive. In a series of interviews and focus groups, all teachers who had been at the school before the Comer program and had remained stated that the changes were hard, but very positive.

### *Systemic Support-High Reliability Organizational Characteristics*

#### *1. High Reliability requires Shared Clarity regarding Core Goals.*

The Comer process encourages teachers and the community to create and focus on goals. The (now former) principal had required a focus on student outcomes, and the current principal had continued that focus.

The Comer philosophy and goals remained fairly consistent over time at School L. The Comprehensive School Plan, developed by the School Planning and Management Team, helped focus staff on their mission. Fortunately, there was little staff turnover, the performance of students remained high, and the district maintained its support for the model. Although many new programs were placed in the school, they had to "fit" into the overall Comer philosophy and goals. The first screen for a new program was always, "How does it fit with the overall mission?"

#### *2. A perception, held by the public and all of the employees, that failure by the organization in its core task(s) would be disastrous.*

The principal who brought the Comer process into the school was a person with a virtual religious fire in her about the important of educating all children. The district had evolved an unusually well articulated curriculum.

A sad fact here was that much of the community had accepted that the school would be disastrous; over time they came to believe that they could pull back from potential disaster, and several community members worked toward that goal.

#### *3. High Reliability Organizations are alert to surprises or lapses. (Small failures can cascade into major failures, and hence are monitored carefully.) How?*

The various Comer teams functioned well as they were designed. Children's needs were addressed by teams, as early as possible.

#### *4. HROs build powerful data bases on dimensions highly relevant to the organization's ability to achieve it's Core Goals. The "4R's" of these data bases:*

--Rich Data (triangulation on key dimensions),

- Relevant to Core Goals, available in
- Real Time (e.g., now),
- Regularly cross-checked by multiple concerned groups.

When and if a child began to fall behind, a group of adults (teachers) staffed the student's case. Often this was done the same week as the problem was brought forward. While this did not ensure rich data at the level of the student's academic progress, the group provided unusually rich sets of triangulating insights regarding students social service needs and the availability of services. Often a previous year's teacher was able to provide intellectual assistance to a student's subsequent years' teachers.

High Reliability Organizations MUST rely on individual professional judgment, regardless of the person's position or rank. Therefore:

*5. HROs recruit extensively.*

Yes. Both the former and current principals detailed aggressive recruitment strategies. The connection to a well known school improvement program helped in recruiting.

*6. HROs train and retrain constantly.*

The school, the Comer team, and the district all engaged the faculty in extensive, long-term staff development.

*7. HROs take performance evaluation seriously.*

Especially during the first years of the program, several teachers were counseled out of the school. The faculty had been stable in more recent year

*8. HROs engage in mutual monitoring (administrators and line staff) without counter-productive loss of overall autonomy and confidence.*

The attentiveness of the administration, combined with the committees and the cooperative mode of solving many problems guaranteed a more public awareness of the strengths and limitations of the over all school and the individual professionals. Yet morale was high.

Because the flight of time is the enemy of reliability:

*9. HROs extend formal, logical decision analysis, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as far as extant knowledge allows.*

The school had developed systems for dealing with a myriad of problems. The procedures had been developed and/or approved by a faculty committee.

*10. HROs have initiatives which identify flaws in SOPs, honor the flaw-finders, and support the nomination and validation of changes in inadequate procedures.*

Again, the combination of aggressive principals and well functioning committees mad an evolutionary method of program change a reality. Mostly, things got better.

*11. HROs are hierarchically structured, but during times of peak loads, HROs emphasize and honor collegial decision making, regardless of rank.*

The committees solved many problems. Professional judgments by teachers were often honored and celebrated.

*12. In HROs, key equipment is available and maintained in the highest working order.*

*13. HROs are invariably valued by their supervising organizations.*

The Comer philosophy and strategies often confront the goals and style of management within schools. Among the main concerns are the shared decision making process and a curriculum that deals with social and affective as well as cognitive objectives. The New Haven school central administration was committed to these guiding principles. This made school level implementation proceed without conflicting messages from above. It was clear from interviews with building staff and central administration that there was strong support for both the basic principles of the School Development model and the way these principles have been operationalized at School L. The school was a point of pride in the community, among the Comer staff, and at the district. The principals were both very skilled at bringing positive attention to their campus.

*14. In HROs, short-term efficiency takes a back seat to very high reliability.*

The school had been able to fend off many threatened cuts. However, as the study was progressing, other threats were on the horizon. Although probably standing on stronger footing than many surrounding schools, the situation at School L was not secure. Impending cuts in Chapter 1 (the district had lost population since the 1980 census), were particularly troubling.

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## *School-Community Analysis*

### *Overview*

There appears to be a strong sense of community at School L. Despite its location in a rather depressed neighborhood, the school has a relaxed, cheerful atmosphere. The principal describes the school climate as "great," and teachers report that the school feels to them "like a family." Students greet teachers, administrators, and other staff members enthusiastically by name when passing them in the hall. (In fact, I was struck by the number of students who acknowledged me, a complete stranger.) A certain conscious

attention to maintaining a sense of community is reflected in signs displayed about the school, including one in the gymnasium made of woven strips of construction paper that encourages all to "keep the school woven together." Teachers with longer tenures in the school reported that the sense of community within the school has improved over the last ten years.

Teachers described their relations with students as "intense" and not always easy or harmonious. Much of the intensity of these relations was attributed to the fact that, given their environment, the students have so much going on in their lives. Teachers report that they cope with the special needs of these students by attempting to make students feel valued and by devoting classroom time to allowing students to express their feelings. One teacher observed that "the most exciting thing about being in this school has been the relationships I have been able to forge with kids and parents in this community." Teachers indicated that relations with parents are largely cooperative and supportive. They have worked to encourage parents to see the school as a welcoming place. They noted how important it is for students to see their parents and other people they know from their neighborhoods in the school. Some teachers have become comfortable enough with parents to have given out their home telephone numbers.

### *Community Dimensions*

*Shared Vision.* When asked what she liked best about the school, one teacher reported, "I like feeling like I'm part of a school that has a vision, that has a long-term plan. Not only am I working in my classroom for my particular children, but I'm also working for something greater with other teachers in the building." Teachers also commented on the importance of a strong and supportive leader in forging relationships and building commitment to the school's vision; the Comer process, they agreed, would not have succeeded at the school without an effective leader.

*Shared Values.* The central values that guide the school are those of the Comer process. The principal reports that 99% of teachers have now bought into the Comer process and that teachers are now selected based on their fit with the values, vision, and purposes of the school. Teachers noted, however, that to be holding to the same values and working toward the same goal, all do not need to be doing the same things. Teachers enjoy the freedom they feel at the school to take unique and different approaches to education.

*Shared Purpose.* The total development of children provides a common purpose for all at the school. Teachers noted feeling like they are surrogate "mothers" to students and that, on occasion, parents have described them as such to their children. Teachers report that in the school everything is focussed on students. Requests they make for help or materials, if based on the needs of the students, are almost always granted by school administrators.

*Caring.* Teachers report feeling part of a warm, caring group at the school. They indicated that when it is needed, help is always available from other teachers and from administrators. In one teacher's words, "there is a special connection we have with each other as educators and with the children. I feel that the children here are treated like people too, and it's a very caring group of people towards kids and each other."



*Trust.* Teachers noted that they work hard to make sure that kids feel comfortable and trusting, that the classroom feels like a risk-free environment. Teachers feel that they do the same for each other as well. Students suggested that they value their ability to trust that the things they say in class to their teachers and to other students will not be repeated outside the classroom.

*Teamwork.* Teachers commented on the extent to which staff members, students, and parents pull together in times of crisis. One teacher recalled, for example, that when one of her students had died suddenly, other teachers willingly took over her class responsibilities so that she could attend the memorial services. Similarly, faced with a shooting incident near the campus, parents quickly mobilized to call for increased police patrols.

*Communication.* One teacher reported that she felt that the introduction of the Comer program into the school has helped teachers to communicate better both with each other and with parents. In the school environment, teachers report that it's alright to disagree, and people can speak their minds. Because communication is open, teachers are able to learn from new approaches to classroom instruction being taken by their colleagues. Students indicated that they value the opportunity they are given in class to express themselves (e.g., during "rap time"). Teachers encourage students to share their experiences and feelings and to counsel each other.

*Participation.* Students often help develop classroom rules for conduct. Students also seem often to be given regular leadership roles in the classroom (e.g., turning out the lights to calm their classmates down before lunch). The School Planning and Management Team, with its rotating officer positions, helps to ensure widespread participation in the governance of the school.

*Incorporation of Diversity.* Neither teachers nor students reported divisions on the campus on the basis of personal characteristics. Much attention seems to be given to allowing students to express themselves in the classroom, both informally and in their schoolwork. One teacher observed, however, that introducing uniforms into the school has reduced tensions over differences in dress.

*Respect and Recognition.* Products of student work are displayed prominently, and teachers appear to offer praise generously. Students seem to be actively encouraged to respect themselves and others; a sign in the hallway reads, "We are all special."

*Links Beyond the Community.* Reflecting the Comer philosophy, the school makes a great effort to involve parents in school activities and seems to be successful in doing so (although the principal did note that relations with parents "could be better.") Parents participate in the School Planning and Management Team, and the school aims to have a parent in each classroom each day. Initially, the principal suggested, some teachers resisted the introduction of parents into the classroom as an intrusion. Now, however, most are supportive of the need to "change the whole community." In the focus group, one teacher suggested the impossibility of experiencing a sense of connection within the school without also feeling a connection to the surrounding community; others commented on the value they place on the support they receive from parents. Some

parents who began as volunteers are now employed by the school, and teachers reported that it is not unheard of for parents to continue volunteering at the school long after their children have graduated.

The school functions as a community center. Through a variety of programs running from the end of the school day until 8:30 p.m. each night, parents and community members are brought into the school after school hours for a variety of educational and recreational activities. The school seems to have been successful in finding support for its activities from the surrounding community (e.g., a PTSO partnership with the Veterans' Hospital, a Saturday writing program in collaboration with a local private school, support from the University). Teachers reported, however, that there was once a greater connection between local agencies and the school, a connection they are working to reestablish.

*Development of the Young.* One teacher reported being given great assistance in a time of need early in her tenure at the school as evidence of the speed with which new faculty members are brought into the school "family." Older students seem to be frequently used in supervising younger students (e.g., older students are given responsibility for leading younger students to the lunchroom), and there appear to be many school activities that involve students at different grade levels.

*Conflict Resolution.* Through "Project Charlie," a social development program for students in grades one through three, and "Second Step," a similar program for fourth and fifth graders, students are introduced to decision-making and problem-solving techniques and encouraged to avoid violence and drugs. Signs advising students on strategies for solving problems and for dealing with anger are found in many classrooms and in hallways. Some classrooms also display lists of rules for appropriate conduct (e.g., "Keep your hands to yourself") that were developed with the participation of students. Teachers indicated that students are reminded of these rules when their behavior conflicts with them—a proactive strategy for reducing conflicts between students and between students and teachers. Teachers reported a general ability to address conflicts between teachers and between teachers and administrators.

*Affirmation.* Special efforts seem to be made in school activities to develop students' self-esteem. In correcting misbehaving students, teachers seemed quick to hold up other students as models of appropriate behavior, affirming the other students in the process. Students, teachers, or classrooms that have accomplished something noteworthy are recognized in announcements preceding the final school bell.

#### *Contextual Factors That Influenced Community*

Very little staff turnover.

A rather new principal who replaced a charismatic predecessor.

Attention to the whole child, shared decision making, links to the surrounding community, and active parent involvement in the school are explicit components of the Comer process.

## *Students' Days*

### *A Day with Kevin*

Kevin is a seven year old African American student in Mrs. L.'s third grade class. Her classroom is rather dark and seems isolated on the third floor of the school. The hallways are not filled with chattering children or creative mosaics from art class. The older grades are on the third floor and silence is deemed golden. You can hear the heavy slam of a door down the hall close with the weight of a dungeon gateway sealing the children in for a full day of relentless instruction. The classroom lacks colorful pictures and "funhouse" dramatics found in other classrooms. Mrs. L.'s room is traditional in decoration, an alphabet line borders the wall, computers are lined up in the back of the room, board work in math, two language assignments, and spelling are already up. There is nothing particularly special about the room, but the darkness is enhanced by the cloudy day outside. Mrs. L. is a petite African-American, middle-aged woman with long gray hair and gray eyes who seems to blend into the background of the room if you don't pay close attention.

Kevin is sitting at his chair steadily talking to the little girl next to him. His hair is in need of a haircut. The jagged edges of his hair make him look comical against his fair complexion and big eyes. His uniform of blue pants, blue sweater, and white sweater are clean and orderly as usual, which only draws more attention to his unruly hair. Kevin is less than average height and weight; he is definitely the smallest in the class. He cannot be any taller than 3'4". He is thin and wiry, but by no means meek and mild. It is evident after watching Kevin's light brown eyes wander all day that Mrs. L.'s class is not the ideal classroom situation for him. In class he is restless and ignores virtually all of Mrs. L.'s directions. He follows his own voice and treats her classroom as if he is in a Montessori school. Essentially, he does what he wants when he wants and how he wants. His homework is almost never brought in on time nor completed. Mrs. L. understands that Kevin's mom raises her two children by herself and works as a night nurse. Therefore, she cannot be there to supervise his homework, but nonetheless something has to be done to troubleshoot this soon because it is a problem. Kevin is also having a problem with following directions. If Mrs. L. tells the class to work in their math books, if Kevin does not feel like it, he'll write in his journal. Mrs. L. mentioned that it is becoming increasingly frustrating to give Kevin the attention he is accustomed to and yet teach the rest of the class.

Mrs. L. readily admits that Kevin is extremely bright and is more than capable of completing the work assigned, however Kevin's greatest difficulty is adjusting to the format of her classroom. It is her firm belief that if the school is to support the Constructivist Theory of teaching employed by many teachers at School L, then those children who have been exposed to it, as Kevin has, should stay in it for the duration of their elementary education. She further contends that the change from a constructivist to traditional methods of teaching are confusing for the child as well as the teacher who has to meet the needs of all her students who comprise of different educational backgrounds. Mrs. L. has the children do a lot of seatwork with dittoes and workbooks as opposed to the

constant interaction with teacher and peers Kevin is used to in his second grade class. I spoke with Mrs. C, the school principal, about the situation with Kevin. She acknowledged the problem and told me of the plans to move Kevin to another classroom taught by a more interactionary teacher as a medium ground between the two extremes of his second grade teacher and Mrs. L..

Socially, Kevin appears to hold his own. Except for talking to the children sitting next to him during class, he pretty much stays to himself. During Mrs. L.'s class he seems to be in his own world, shutting everyone else out. There are no free hugs given out in this classroom. Mrs. L. is not aware of any particular "girlfriends" that Kevin might have. It may not be evident to Mrs. L. for various reasons, she is concerned about the whole, not the individuals; Kevin does not entrust his feelings, secrets, etc. to her.

Kevin's mother is aware that Kevin is not doing his homework and/or handing it in incomplete. She said they have had several discussions about this at home and when the talking seemed unpersuasive, consequences were invoked. She said she hates to spank Kevin, but he has to understand that he has to do his homework, it is not an option. Kevin is in a Talented and Gifted program (TAG) for the third year. The program is not the traditional structured class within schools. The instructor is a traveling teacher who goes from school to school. Only a few exceptional children are allowed to participate because of the limited resources. Although Kenny is not at the top of his class academically, his creative abilities warrant a place in TAG. Kevin's mother was instrumental in Kenny's acceptance because she lobbied tirelessly to have him admitted. At home, Kevin draws, builds, plays with toys, put things together. Even as a baby he was very artistic and able to manipulate shapes and sizes. His mother would love to put Kevin in a private school where there is a more nurturing environment, but right now she cannot do it all by herself financially. Mrs. C. has promised her information on acquiring grants for talented children.

At 10:00, language is in session. Mrs. L. follows the teacher's manual verbatim in explaining that the words in dark print at the top of a dictionary are guide words. In order to use guide words, she explains, you have to look at the two words at the top of the dictionary page and see where the word you're looking for falls between the guide words. These are the first and last words on a dictionary page. These directions are on the board with directions for the students. However, at 10:05, Kevin is restless, notices me and waves. The math answer sheets are passed out and each child is called to come up to sharpen their pencil. Kevin is extremely friendly with the girl sitting next to him and begins to show off by being silly. When she ignores him and starts to do her assignment, he begins to do his math right away. Kevin is distracted easily, but gets back on task. The room is unusually quiet as if this is merely routine for the students. The children must write their answer to the math word problem given to them in their workbooks. Kevin's attention wanders with the slightest noise, but gets back on task. He is very adamant of keeping his page clean. After erasing a mark a couple of times, he throws the paper away and starts again. He begins talking and laughing with the boy sitting behind him.

At 10:20, the little girl next to Kevin tells him that he's not supposed to write out the word problem given them, only his answer to the question. Kevin sucks his teeth and says he can if he wants to. This is a prime example of Kevin not following directions. It is taking him three times longer to finish the assignment than the rest of the children because he wants to write out the word problem instead of giving just the answer. The girl behind Kevin says she's on number nine, the last problem. Kevin looks amazed because he's only on Number 3. The girl tells him he's doing it wrong. His face becomes distorted and he immediately becomes defensive. A few minutes later, the girl behind him teases him about being on the last problem, Kevin looks back at her, seemingly curious as to how she could complete the assignment so fast.

Next, the students do boardwork. They are to arrange given sets of words in alphabetical order. For example, a student is to put the following words in alphabetical order: rake, rabbit, rancher, and roaster. Just minutes later, the girl behind him starts to chant that she's done, but Kevin continues to write out the word problem trying to ignore her and remain in his sheltered world where he does exactly what he wants to do. While Kevin works on number five, he appears to be in absolutely no rush to finish and takes his time. He asks the little girl next to him, which problem she is on and she responds with "number nine". Kevin's eyes grow large and animated as he rushes back to finish his work. Eventually, Mrs. L. checks Kevin's work to make sure he actually answered the questions.

At 10:38, the students line up for gym. The new gym teacher named Mr. C. has excellent control of the class. He writes the directions on the chalkboard and the children have to read the directions out loud. He never talks, but seems to command the classroom with his silence. Kevin is busily acting silly, but pays attention. The children have respect for Mr. C. and it is evident by the way they follow directions. Kevin is quiet and intrigued. Mr. C. is very articulate and talks to the children in a mature fashion.

Mr. C. discusses the various skills involved in bowling. Kevin does not follow directions and immediately throws ball up in the air. Everyone else does it correctly, so Kevin follows. He starts to throw his ball up in the air again, then follows directions.

How many times can you do a figure 8.

Roll ball around some body part not your hand. Kevin uses his hand to bat the ball-not following directions again.

Roll ball keeping it close to you

Questions-name sport that you roll a ball in.

At 11:15, the students line up to go back to class. Kevin is running around the gym still playing with his ball and not lining up like he was directed to do. They return to seatwork. Kevin returned to his math problem number six. The rest of the class is completing the guide words assignment. After about 10 minutes, he seems to be stumped on number seven. He starts acting silly. When he sees me watching him, he blocks his paper with his book. He looks at the other girl's paper to copy it so he can finish the assignment.



He is still distracted by others talking in the class. He seems to jump into any conversation anywhere in the room. Singing to himself and wasting time, he never raises his hand and asks for help from Mrs. L.. The little girl next to him tells him he's doing his math assignment wrong again. Kevin gets frustrated and says he needs her help on number seven. He starts flirting with the little girl despite not being finished with his work. Little girl behind him tells him he better hurry up, because there is spelling to do. He starts talking to girl behind him despite the fact the teacher told him math should be done before going to lunch. Kevin lies to the little girl behind him and says he's on number 10. There is no number 10, there are only nine problems. He says his stomach is cramping up and that's why he can't work. Then he makes a hand cast out of paper and says he has to go to the hospital after school. When the teacher writes a math problem on the board, he points out that she forgot a comma. He starts his language arts even though he hasn't finished his math—so it won't seem as though he's behind.

At lunch time, Kevin gets up to get in line without being asked. Mrs. L. makes him sit back down. He then remembers his lunch ticket and gets back in line. After lunch, Kevin goes straight to the TAG program. Mr. D. has prepared a videotape on Mystic Island to review what they learned on their last field trip to mystic. The tour guide on the video discusses how whales were caught on the island 80 years ago in 1914. In the video, Lakeisha, a classmate, points to a woman and makes it clear that she is a "white" woman Kevin said it wasn't nice to make fun of people's color. It may be that Kevin is very sensitive about his own light complexion. Kevin is silly and talkative, constantly vying for Mr. D.'s attention. During the lesson, Kevin walks out of the room to get water without asking permission. Mr. D. asked Kevin to wait for a minute and asks the rest of the class if they would like to get a glass of water as well.

When the video is over, the children start incessant chatter of what their favorite parts of the trip were. Kevin seems to get along with the rest of the children well and doesn't seem to mind that he is not receiving 100% of Mr. D.'s attention. After a few minutes, Mr. D. initiates a conversation about whales and how their blubber was used for oil and discusses the procedure for stripping the whales of their blubber. Kevin starts drawing his picture of his whale and is very detailed in his drawing. Lakeisha starts talking about her whale is pregnant and asks Mr. D. how whales have babies. Kevin looks at Mr. D. as if waiting for an answer knowing full well that it is an inappropriate question. Mr. D. is able to evade the question by saying that is a topic for another time because today they are discussing blubber.

Kevin starts looking at one of Mr. D.'s books on whales and draws the attention of all the other children. They ask Mr. D. to read the book to them and Mr. D. suggests that each child read a page of the book and read it to him instead. Kevin reads very well and is very proud of himself for reading the passage. This was evident by his beaming face.

When the book is over, all the children start to clean up their spaces and gather trash. Kevin notices cookies in Mr. D.'s book bag and asks if they can have some cookies. Mr. D. said yes, but only one. The children are dismissed to go to their classrooms. Kevin hangs around to talk to Mr. D., when Mrs. V., his first and second grade teacher, walks in. Kevin



immediately runs toward her and begs for a hug. She gives him a long hug and Kevin just stands around talking to Mr. D. and Mrs. V. as perhaps he was an adult instead of an eight year old.

On the way back to the classroom, Kevin goes to the bathroom. Then, he climbs the stairs and tells me how much he likes to build things with his hands and that Mr. D. is his friend.

Back in Mrs. London's class, he races to his seat. The other children are gathering their papers and workbooks for homework. Mrs. L. reminds Kevin that he has to do all of his unfinished classwork for homework tonight. Kevin pays her absolutely no mind at all. He starts packing his book bag and purposely forgets his classwork. I asked him if he remembered to put it in his bag and he lied and said he had it. Chairs go up on the desks. Kevin stands in line fidgeting. Class is dismissed.

### *Lakeisha*

Lakeisha is an eight year old African-American girl of average height and slender build. Her dark brown complexion is framed by a tiny oval face with a mass of straight black hair pulled tightly into a small bun. The bun portrays an image of an elderly school marm which is further illustrated by her bossy nature. Lakeisha's stature is small and her frame is petite. Her slight body is caricatured by her thin, spindly legs. At times when she is trying to be comical, her animated moves always leave her audience in laughter. However, when Lakeisha is angry or is commanding attention, her smallness is transformed into an illusion of her being a giant. When she is angry for any reason, most of the time because she is being ignored or her demands (not requests) are not being met, her abusive mouth tends to let you forget she is only eight years old. Lakeisha is one of two children involved in this study who had the same teacher in the first and second grade.

Mrs. F. is Lakeisha's third grade teacher. She is a young woman in her mid to late twenties, short in stature, but not in energy. Her youth has proven to be just the antidote for Lakeisha's classroom antics. I was told that Mrs. F. at this time has no children of her own, so she is able to devote the large majority of her time to her class. Lakeisha is not able to "wear down" Mrs. F. with her constant demand for attention and approval. Mrs. F. tries to encourage Lakeisha that she is special in her own right, but so are all the other children in the classroom. Lakeisha cannot outshine the rest of the students in this class, because Mrs. F. has made it a personal goal to let everyone have their moment to shine. For example, during the day, Lakeisha was trying to capture Mrs. F.'s attention to the distraction of the daily instruction. Mrs. F. calmly let Lakeisha know that she cannot have all of her attention right now, there were other things to accomplish at the moment. Lakeisha seemed to accept this because Mrs. F. has steadily weaned Lakeisha from having her undivided attention. Mrs. F. is relentless in her dedication to this and realizes the necessity of establishing and maintaining expectations of Lakeisha. She is affectionate and sensitive to the needs of the children, but also understands that Lakeisha is demanding. Mrs. F. is steadfast in not allowing Lakeisha to undermine the academic and social goals she has for the rest of the class.

Lakeisha is willing to accept this as a result of her time with her teacher from the previous two years, Mrs. S., who began the process by which Lakeisha could be taken off the behavior modification program. Her method to calm Lakeisha was to have her write in her journal. With Mrs. F., Lakeisha continues to excel in her school work and is still an aspiring writer. However, Mrs. F. has not allowed Lakeisha the privilege of writing in her journal at her whim as remedy for her behavioral problems. Lakeisha must stay on task with the rest of the class. Journal writing is not a privilege reserved for Lakeisha. During my observation, this did not seem to be a problem with Lakeisha as she never requested special permission to write in her journal in exchange for doing some other task.

On the bulletin boards, Mrs. F. displays recognition charts for attendance, honors, etc. Lakeisha is an honors student which means she received all B's in every subject, and she received recognition for her journal. Again, Lakeisha is performing at grade level, but her social skills need improvement. She is very much a leader and seeks the position more through force than by reverence from her peers. Her small frame and height reminds me of a female Napoleon. She is the first to start gossip, the first to start conversations about sexual activity; in essence she is an instigator. Ironically, she is an instigator who does not like to be scolded for her actions. She is very sensitive to being yelled at or reprimanded. It seems that Lakeisha is devoid of the ability to discriminate that she is a child and in this world she must respect and at the very least recognize authority.

Like Kevin, Lakeisha is in the Talented and Gifted program. Mr. D. raved about her creativity and her academic abilities and yet had the same concerns as I about her "maturity." Often Lakeisha will raise questions regarding sexual conduct, i.e. babies and where they come from, at inappropriate times. Fortunately, Mr. D. does not feel as though her behavior is rubbing off or influencing any of the other children in the group due to their exceptional intelligence and autonomy. When I asked Lakeisha's mother about how she came to be involved in TAG, she said that Mrs. S. initiated the process and based on Lakeisha's scores, she qualified for enrollment. At home, Lakeisha is constantly writing stories faster than her mother can read them. Lakeisha has adjusted well to her adoption, which was completed during first grade, and gets along well with her new situation. Her mother points out that Lakeisha takes particular pride in the fact that her new mother's grandchildren call her Aunt Lakeisha. Home life for Lakeisha is stable and nurturing which is obviously something very much needed because she was without it for so long. Lakeisha's mother anticipates her enrollment in an urban youth program this summer to occupy Lakeisha's time effectively and in a structured environment.

Mrs. F.'s room is decorated vibrantly and objects catch your eye from every corner of the room. Famous Blacks with their biographies / social studies journal assignments, class calendar, class goals, and the mystery number— "I have 16 ones and 3 tens, what am I?"

At 8:50, breakfast is over. Lakeisha starts talking to a classmate, a little boy. A few boys give Mrs. F. the money they brought to school for the bake sale. Lakeisha asks Mrs. F. to hold her money too. Mrs. F. said she wasn't getting her attention today. Mrs. F. asks her to check the computers to see if they're on yet. Lakeisha parades to the computer station to show her classmates that Mrs. F. chose her to turn on the computers. By 8:55, Mrs. F. starts the class with journal writing.

While Mrs. F. is talking Lakeisha gets up and Mrs. F. tells her to sit down. Lakeisha whines that she just wanted to give the teacher a nickel she owed to her from yesterday. Mrs. F. says thank you and tells Lakeisha to return to her seat. Mrs. F. announces that there will not be any journal sharing today because it's a half day.

The next lesson is Math Congress. The rules are posted:

Large Group Congress Rules-Math

Share ideas

Raise hand to speak

Listen to speaker

Argue respectfully

No put downs

Help others understand

The class begins to discuss mystery number 2 on the board— "I have 16 tens and 3 ones , what am I?" Lakeisha's lip is poked out and looks mean as she raises her hand. Mrs. F. organizes the class into groups to solve the mystery number. Lakeisha insults a little girl because she is not able to add  $16 + 3$  in her head like Lakeisha. Lakeisha goes up to the board to explain the problem to the little girl. Mrs. F. asks her if she's supposed to be at the board. Lakeisha says no and sits down.

At 9:12, when announcements begin, the class is told to stop everything. Lakeisha starts to write and Mrs. F. tells her to stop everything . During the announcements Lakeisha starts writing notes to others and is reprimanded by Mrs. F., who tells the other students to ignore Lakeisha. Several minutes later, announcements end and Lakeisha goes back to being the leader of the group. A classmate shows her the stickers he received on his homework—Lakeisha says she doesn't care. She then tells him to kiss her. Another little boy says he did well also; Lakeisha responds, "So?" Minutes later, when the class has begun studying mathematics, Lakeisha is paying attention to the board as the class reviews tens and ones. The class as a whole either argues or supports another group's solution to the mystery number. One student is secretary so Mrs. F. can put it in the math book which will be created by the students from the Math Congress Sessions. Five minutes later Lakeisha is off task, talking, being restless, and writing instead of doing math. She was writing the solutions down until she became bored. Mrs. F. asks who has the charts written, and a little boy says Lakeisha does. When asked, Lakeisha has a blank face. Mrs. F. says to erase the board since there's no answer from Lakeisha. She gets up to look at what's on the board.

At 9:45 the students are discussing a particular problem. A female students explains:

$$\begin{array}{r} 30 \\ +16 \\ \hline 46 \end{array}$$

$$344$$

One girl doesn't understand the problem solving process so Lakeisha says, "Why don't you do it?" The teacher asks the girl to go up to the board and try it her way. Lakeisha raises her hand because she wants to do it. She starts to look for more paper to write the solutions down. Lakeisha goes up to the board to show the girl how to do it and why mystery number one is different from mystery number 2. Mrs. F. asks her to sit down. Several minutes later Lakeisha offers the solution of writing down how you count by tens to get to 30. She needs more paper to record the solutions—three boys get up to get it for her.

At 9:58, math is over and the students line up for gym—the class will put closure on the Math Congress when they return. Mr. C. is the gym teacher. He silently writes his directions on the board so Lakeisha's steady talking is all the more obvious. He finally tells Lakeisha to go be part of the class. She begins stretching. The entire class jogs around the gym. At the second whistle they stop and stretch. At the third whistle they sit on a black line on the floor. Lakeisha is still talking. Mr. C. writes his directions on the board to see if the students can follow. Lakeisha interrupts any other child that gives or tries to recite directions. She gets up and starts jumping up and down to give her answer on rolling skills. She has to be reminded not to call out or Mr. C. won't call on her at all—she knows the rules. Mr. C. has coupons for those who follow directions. Lakeisha begins crying because she wasn't in the first group of children to choose a ball. The drill: roll the ball around the feet, roll it around the body, then make a figure 8 around the feet. Lakeisha shouts, "Oh God" and starts first without waiting for the signal, talking and not following directions the entire time. The directions are to push the ball with any body part that's not your hand; it can be your butt, nose, head. Lakeisha starts yelling at the back of a little boy's head and starts grinning at him and fights with another little girl about whose ball it is after they bowl. Lakeisha names a sport in which the ball rolls—soccer. She demonstrates for the class. She kicks her ball and it is taken away by Mr. Christy. She stomps away and stands in the corner until the class is dismissed.

Back in class with Mrs. F., she is told to take her hands off another child in the class. She is reprimanded for being snobby and starting rumors about another classmate's mother. Lakeisha says she is sorry, but without remorse. Mrs. F. explains to her that telling secrets is not nice and gossip is none of her business and consequently, the class cannot stop at the water fountain. It is discovered that a little boy is missing money from his book bag. Mrs. F. asks the class if anyone has seen it or taken it by accident. No one confesses so Mrs. F. asks Mrs. C. if the FBI agent who frequented the public schools could come to her room to find the money. Lakeisha asks if the FBI agent was going to give them beatings. Mrs. F. does not answer her question and writes the Journal (Math) assignment on the board:

- 1) What is mystery number 1? How do you know?
- 2) What is mystery number 2? How do you know?
- 3) Did you change your mind at all in the last two days?
- 4) Which "way" did you think was interesting besides yours?
- 5) What is this mystery number? I have 14 hundreds, 5 tens, and 32 ones. What am I?

Lakeisha starts picking up people's book bags, etc. looking for the missing money.

At 10:55 another problem emerges. Lakeisha borrowed a pencil from a classmate, but the boy wants it back because he needs a pencil. Lakeisha wines to Mrs. F. who tells her to please get one off her desk. Lakeisha throws the boy's pencil on his desk and sharpens her new pencil. Five minutes later she gets up and puts her paper in the recycling bin to start her assignment over because the first one was messy. Soon after she gets up to ask a question. She tells Mrs. F. that she subtracts to check her addition solution. She then asks Mrs. F. if she wants her to check her book bag for Charles' money. Mrs. F. says no. By 11:10 she is off task-reading the bulletin board.

Minutes later she asks if another little girl needs help sharpening her pencil. She starts sharpening her own pencil again and asks Charles to help her. She empties pencil dust and gives it to me. She is jumping around while looking at my pad of paper. When Mrs. F. notices her antics, Lakeisha is told to leave the sharpener alone and sit down. Five minutes later she is still working on her journal, yet goes to work on the computer even though she's not finished with her journal. She works on the computer for 20 minutes before going to the bake sale downstairs.

Ten minutes later she returns, supposedly to work on her journal, and asks to finish on the computer. Mrs. F. tells her to finish her science assignment or work on her spelling. She chooses spelling. A little later the noise level is too high, so Mrs. F. tells everyone to put their hands on the desk. The people at the computer are running around talking. Lakeisha continues talking.

At 12:00 visitors escorted by Mrs. C. come to the class and the class recites the purpose and procedure of their Math Congress. Five minutes later they begin Clean-Up so that they can have lunch. Mrs. F. asks them to please clean up well since parent meetings will be this afternoon. Lunch is in the classroom today due to the half day schedule. Lakeisha bought her lunch at the bake sale. Mrs. F. asks the class to please be quiet and talk quietly while they're eating. Lakeisha offers others her food. She talks about her favorite kinds of candy. Five minutes later she is still doing well being quiet. Mrs. F. threatens to take gym away from some of the other students if they do not quiet down. She points out that she wouldn't take gym away from Lakeisha, because she is being good. Lakeisha sits  
MOTIONLESS.

Ten minutes later Lakeisha puts her head down and continues to behave. Mrs. F. asks her if she wants a piece of her grapefruit. Lakeisha wants to know what it tastes like. Mrs. F. tells her to try it. Clean up after lunch begins. Lakeisha is being silly and laughing. She hits her head and starts spitting in the trash bag. She starts a chorus of singing "Oh Baby, You Got What I Need" and "Jump, Jump" as she erases the board. Others are cleaning their desks. She asks if she can erase the words—Mrs. F. said no. Mrs. F. tells the class that they should not be out of their seats. Lakeisha still does not sit. She starts talking and erasing other places on the board. She's singing to herself and starts to make Mychal feel better by telling him that her mother forgot about her lunch too and not to feel bad. She moves away from the board and makes a mess near teacher's desk and steps over it instead

of cleaning it up. Three minutes later she is sitting on a table to organize math cubes. At 12:55, she gathers her coat and book bag to line up, talking throughout the entire process. At 1:00, the students are dismissed by Mrs. F.



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## *School AA*

### *Pennsylvania*

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#### *Case Study Description*

##### *Setting and Program Development*

Although comprehensive high schools in the U. S. may have been originally created to better serve the needs of students in less affluent communities, through pooling resources to provide a wide array of programs, comprehensive high schools in many areas have contributed to the problems of at-risk youth. These high schools are often impersonal and inefficient, in that they allow students to move from teacher to teacher and course to course without any coherence to their programs or continuity in the faculty that serve them, ultimately leading to increased dropout rates.

Charters (schools created within these larger comprehensive high schools) have been proposed as solutions to these problems. In charters, a cohort of teachers works with a cohort of students throughout their high school years in a coherent program with a particular focus. Michelle Fine (1997) writes that charters such as these provide students with emotional stability and intellectual engagement. Fine also states that these charters change the context from that of placing students at-risk to that of "educational communities of resilience."

In 1988, the Philadelphia Public Schools began the implementation of charters in their 22 comprehensive high schools. Since Philadelphia also has a system of magnet schools that historically has attracted the better students from the system, the comprehensive high schools in this district serve students most at-risk. Therefore, the Philadelphia Charters provide a potential context in which to study the effects of school-community dynamics as well as other environmental support systems that likely influence the institutionalization of a program that seeks to address many of the problems related to large, urban high schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged youth.

### *Setting*

School AA is a lovely, old building on Philadelphia's south side—an Irish and Italian Catholic neighborhood. And, although 84% of the families live below the poverty level and are not high school graduates, the neighborhood provides a safe environment in which to raise a family. According to School AA principal, Mr. B., "It becomes the job of the school to expose its students to possibilities."

Although the neighborhood is not particularly appealing, the building has no graffiti and the front doors are unlocked and unguarded. The hallways are quiet during class, and the constant murmur and crackle of walkie-talkies present in many urban high schools in the city are not present here.

When asked how the building escapes graffiti, Principal B., explains that you have to paint over it as soon as it appears. He appears to be enthusiastic about his school and the charter programs there.

### *Program Development and Implementation*

One of the 22 comprehensive high schools in Philadelphia to be "chartered," the program at School AA began in 1989. With the help of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative under the leadership of Dr. Michelle Fine of the CUNY Graduate Center, the charter concept in the Philadelphia Public Schools was initially implemented in 1989.

School AA has three charters and one academy. The charters at School AA serve approximately 400 of its 1200 students while the Law Academy serves approximately 200. The charters are Humanities, Multi-Cultural, and Venturing Into Professions (VIP). All three have the same curriculum but a different focus and different electives. Students are not allowed to easily move from charter to charter because the faculty would like them to invest in one charter rather than to shop around.

Principal B. believes that implementation of school reform is a slow process and that he must be patient and willing to "get his hands dirty and work" at it. He says that it took one year of planning, one year to set up the charter program and work out the kinks, one year to assess and move on. He says it takes "a minimum of three years to see something begin to develop" it must be "tooled and retooled."

Mr. B. says that the best thing about School AA is the "stability" it provides for its students through communication and closeness with them. He also believes that this is true for the teachers at the school. He finds that the discussions about kids are different from those in traditional, comprehensive high schools.

Mr. B. says that the worst thing about the program at School AA is it requires "lots of effort and work...democracy's a dirty business."

### *Staff*

As is typical of many high schools, School AA is headed by a principal. Mr. B. is a native of Philadelphia who taught at School F before coming to School AA five years ago. He is quite proud of his school and what he and his faculty have accomplished here. They have built a safe environment which meets the needs of the students of the neighborhood.

There is one vice-principal at School AA. The "School Profile" for 1994 reports a faculty numbering 55 classroom teachers, 19 Special Education teachers, 2 guidance counselors, 1 librarian, and 8 teacher aides. There were also 5 clerical/secretarial workers, 5 custodians/service workers, 4 non-teaching assistants, 6 food service workers, and 6 "other." The staff totals 108 with 41.7% being male and 58.3% female. 31.1% of the staff are African-American, 3.8% are Asian, and 65.1% are white.

Each of the charters and the academy at School AA has a coordinator who oversees the activities of the program. The teachers in the Multi-Cultural Charter are described by the program coordinator, Ms. N. as "ooh-aahh!" She says they convince the kids that they want to be there and willingly sponsor trips abroad for them. To travel, students must have at least C's and no more than 5 absences.

Because of the student population and the number of ESOL classes offered, and the classes co-taught by a content specialist and an ESOL teacher. Although most of the content specialists are trained to work with the ESOL teachers to provide quality instruction to linguistically limited students, this year the American history teacher did not receive the training.

During the first year of the implementation of the charter concept there was \$21,500 available for staff development. After that no more than half of the \$13,500 provided for each charter could be used for staff development.

Mr. B. believes that the charter concept makes teachers more accountable to their colleagues. He "cleans-up" by pairing "dynamo" teachers with those who "can't or won't or aren't having conversations with consultants and others."

Temple University and Bryn Mawr have both worked with School AA teachers on curriculum development.

Special education teachers at School AA work with regular classroom teachers to reduce class size rather than working in self-contained classrooms.

### *Participants*

The students at School AA, like those at most of the city's Charter Schools, come from the immediate neighborhood and its surrounding area. There are approximately 1200 students at School AA. The "School Profile" for 1994 reports that there were 1127 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Of those, .2% were Native American; 32.8% were African-American; 25% were Asian; 6.7% were Latino; and 35.2% were White. 83% of the students come from low income families. There were 282 students enrolled in Special Education Programs, and 192 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. 1,022 students were enrolled in charters.

Part of the program at School AA is "tech prep," and many of the graduates of School AA go on to two-year colleges, beauty school, technical school, community college, or some form of employment. The school has a College Access Center that holds work fairs, health fairs, and college fairs for students. Additionally, in an effort to acclimate its students to the idea of going to college, the faculty at School AA obtained 165 fee waivers to enable all of the juniors to take the PSAT for free in 1994.

Those who drop out before graduation often become part of their families' businesses.

Parent participation at the school is not as good as Mr. B. and his staff wish. Mr. B. reports that there are "lots of Law Academy parents" involved in the school. He reports that there are some parents who volunteer their time at the school. Finally, he says that "Asian parents typically won't come to school out of respect" for the professionalism of the teachers and administrators.

### *Project Services*

According to Ms. N., coordinator for the Multi-Cultural Charter, "It's all about relationships." The goal of each of the charters at School AA is to "make kids employable."

The Multi-Cultural Charter is a beginning place for LEP students who may later choose another charter once they have acclimated and learned enough English to function successfully in another program. It was formed as an outcome of a lawsuit against the City AA's schools for their failure to provide an appropriate program for Southeast Asian immigrant farm children who knew no English, had no other academic skills, and were suffering from the stresses brought about by the war they had suffered in their homeland.

Since total immersion in American classrooms was unsuccessful for these children, School AA's program is designed to provide four levels of ESOL. The first level of the program gives the children two periods of ESOL per day. They also have one period of "tutorial" during which they receive help with homework and extra skill-building and one period of "orientation to mathematics" in which the ESOL teacher and the math teacher work together with the children. During one period of "orientation to American culture," the children learn life skills such as buying bus tokens, how to "fight the system," the "Star Spangled Banner," and about the African-American and Euro-American experiences. Finally, they have one elective course where many enroll in home economics, gym, and crafts while some take an additional math course or learn test taking skills.

The second level of the Multi-Cultural Charter provides 1 period of ESOL, 1 period of tutorial and 1 period of mathematics. This year students take 1 period of "principles of technology" which is a physical science course co-taught by a science teacher and an ESOL teacher. The class focuses on pre-chemistry, the atom, and technology such as how a camera works. The students also have 1 period for global studies which takes them continent to continent of those represented in the student body of School AA. This is co-taught by a history teacher and an ESOL teacher. Students may stay in level 2 of the Multi-Cultural Charter for 1, 1 1/2, or 2 years depending on their mastery of the content. 86% of the students successfully complete the courses which was not true previously. The

third level of the Multi-Cultural Charter includes 1 period of ESOL and 1 period for tutorial which the students can opt out of, a "sheltered" chemistry class which means that it is linguistically leveled and co-taught by the chemistry teacher and the ESOL teacher. Students at this level also have a "sheltered" American history or social science as well. An appropriate mathematics class is also part of the third level.

Following this, during the fourth level, the students become part of the regular Multi-Cultural Charter which means they can "go anywhere in the building." They still maintain one period of ESOL.

The Law Academy is privately funded and has its own board and greater autonomy than the other charters. This academy has more rigorous admission standards than the three charters and it has gained public attention for the school. It serves as the benchmark for the rest of the school and is housed on a hall of the school which is more nicely painted than the rest. The hallways and classrooms are painted a cream color and sport a border of a purple band interspersed with the scales of justice. A particular point of pride within this wing of the school is the courtroom which was built for the academy by the physical plant staff of the school district.

Each of the charters has also contributed part of their funding to the After School Credit Accumulation Program. This program is designed to provide an additional two hours of instruction per day in the four academic subjects--science, social science, English, and math so that those who have failed "major subjects last year can make up the credits." Each content area meets for two hours on a different day of the week. Bergin predicted that approximately 60 students would take advantage of this opportunity. The program runs October 17, 1994-May 30, 1995.

#### *Project Outcomes*

The Academic Performance for grades 9-12 was reported in 1994 as percent receiving course credit and the mean scores on SAT during the 1992 and 1993 school years. As indicated on the attached "Profile", ninth graders improved on receiving course credit in everything except social studies; tenth graders improved in only math while declining in English, science, and social studies; eleventh graders improved in English and math and declined in science and social studies; and twelfth graders improved slightly in English rather well in science, and declined slightly in social studies and more so in math.

Of the 41 students who took the SAT in 1993 (no one took it in 1992), the mean scores on the Verbal portion were 275 while they were 375 in math. This is in comparison with a state mean score of 418 on the Verbal portion and 460 on the Math portion. The national mean on the Verbal portion was 424 and on the Math portion it was 478.

The promotion rate for School AA was 70.1% for 1991-1992 and 71.2% for 1992-1993.

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## *School BB*

### *California*

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#### *Case Study Description*

##### *Setting*

School BB is located in a coastal city of California. Set alone on a hill, the school overlooks the Pacific Ocean. The relatively modern building was constructed with noticeably small windows, presumably in an attempt to keep students' attention from being diverted by their scenic surroundings. (Recently, however, the school has begun to consider enlarging these windows). The design of the school building also includes a central courtyard, an architectural feature that functions to decrease the distance between classrooms and facilitate student-student, staff-student, and staff-staff interaction.

##### *Program Development and Implementation*

School BB has been a Coalition of Essential Schools member school since January of 1992. Prior to becoming involved with the Coalition, the school suffered from a poor image in the surrounding community and faced declining enrollments. The attendance of the Coalition's Ted Sizer at a district-wide meeting enthused the then-superintendent of the district about the Coalition. Together with School BB's principal (the current superintendent) and vice-principal (Ms. J., the current principal) at the time, a decision was reached to close the school after the 1990-1991 school year and reopen the school the following year as a Coalition site.

With Coalition help in preparing a proposal, School BB received a planning grant under California's 1274 school restructuring legislation to fund staff release time to begin planning the implementation of the Coalition's Nine Common Principles. Initially involving only a portion of the school, the Coalition effort was later broadened to include the whole school.



At the time, School BB enrolled approximately 300 students, and the expectation of staff members at School BB was that the school would remain small. But as the school's reputation for having a rigorous and innovative academic program grew, it soon replaced another school in the open-enrollment district as the premier site for college-bound students. With increased interest in the school, pressure to increase enrollment grew. At first, School BB resisted this pressure by placing a cap on school size. However, as the district's financial situation increased pressure on the school to make full use of the capacity of its facility, enrollment increased dramatically to over 500 students. Recently, with the closure of another school in the district, the school's size has increased even further.

### *Staff and Participants*

School BB is staffed by 2 administrators, 33 teachers, and 20 support staff members. The school serves an academically, economically, and ethnically diverse student population. Of the 765 in grades nine through twelve, 44.8% are Anglo, 17.9% are Latino, 15.9% are Filipino, 10.5% are Asian, 8.8% are African-American, 1.3% are Pacific Islanders, and 0.65% are Native American.

### *Project Services*

The School BB vision for students suggests that graduates from the school should be: (1) "proficient in basic skills of communication, mathematics, and physical fitness," (2) "skilled in solving problems (including finding resources, using technology, learning new skills, etc.," (3) "adept at creative, reflective, and critical thinking," (4) "able to work both independently and with others cooperatively," and (5) "respectful of themselves, other people and cultures, the community, democratic values, and the environment." School BB's structure and processes are designed to make these goals for students a reality. Teachers meet regularly to discuss student work and consider potential improvements in teaching methods. Students are allowed more unbroken time in particular subject areas through a block schedule, consisting of 95-minute classes that meet every other day. Development of the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills of students is further fostered through interdisciplinary humanities courses (combining english, social studies, and fine arts) for all students for all four years, projects that integrate work in different subject areas, and an "interim week" between the fall and spring terms that allows students to explore particular topics in depth. Notably, all students are also required to perform 100 hours of community service prior to graduation.

### *Funding*

The Coalition provides very little direct funding to School CC. Assistance from, and involvement with, the Coalition has, however, been helpful in enabling the school to access funds associated with California's 1274 school restructuring legislation and to secure foundation grants. In addition, the Coalition provides technical expertise to the school in implementing various Coalition reforms. About one-third of School CC staff members have, for example, participated in the Coalition's "national faculty" training,

consisting of a three- to six-week summer workshop and a series of follow-up sessions. The expectation of the Coalition is that skills developed by staff members through these experiences will be taken back to the school and imparted to others. School CC staff members also receive training through various "curriculum institutes" and other programs offered by the Coalition of Essential Schools.

### *Project Outcomes*

Before the school joined the Coalition, roughly 75% of students went on to institutions of higher education after leaving School CC; today, 99% do so. Though the majority of students bound for higher education enroll in a two-year community college program, entrance into four-year colleges also rose by 8% between 1990-1991 and 1993-1994. Between 1991 and 1994, student SAT scores have improved 33 points on the verbal portion of the test and 25 points on the math portion. Though problems of graffiti and discipline have increased somewhat with increasing school size, measures of student engagement remain the best in the District. Dropout rates have fallen from 4.9% to 0.74% between 1991 and 1994 and attendance rates have risen from 96% to 98% over that period.

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## *School CC California*

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### *Case Study Description*

#### *Setting*

School CC, located in a quiet, middle-class, residential area of California, currently serves grades 8-12. The convent, church, rectory, gymnasium, playground, and affiliated elementary school are all located on the same block and within a short walk of each other. This graffiti-free one-story school building houses 17 classrooms, administrative offices, and library.

#### *Program Development and Implementation*

Student enrollment as well as teacher morale and school pride has been low until the current principal arrived in 1990 with his 27 years of experience in public schools. Prior to his arrival 232 students were enrolled; currently there are 360 students with a waiting list due to an active recruitment effort by the faculty.

Prior to Principal M.'s arrival, the school received a 3-year limited accreditation instead of the 6-year maximum accreditation, due to the lack of Catholicism and no endowment; although they did receive accolades for their approach to at-risk students. However, after securing the monetary support of the city's professional football team and the black community, during the next accreditation the school received the maximum 6-year accreditation.

### *Staff*

Following a 1989 natural disaster, the pastor wanted to close the school. Principal M. and the faculty resisted this decision and eventually the school was kept open. Six classes, instead of the usual 5 classes, were taught by the faculty to cut costs and keep the school operating. Presently, teachers are hired on a yearly contract to instruct five periods five days a week.

The staff of 26 instructors, three of who are nuns, seem to be a close-knit, friendly, and helpful group of teachers. Since there is very little turnover, recruitment is never necessary. Rather, in order to fill a teacher vacancy, a network of contacts is consulted and potential candidate names are drawn from this pool. Personal references of these candidates seem to make a difference in selection.

### *Student Participants*

With tuition costing \$4,500 per year, about \$1,000 less than at other Catholic schools in the area, School CC attracts a diverse group of students. Students are diverse in the area of race as well as academic ability. Principal M. wanted to attract students other than those in high academic standing, thus providing an opportunity to be able to educate those students less fortunate. And the majority of these students do not belong to the parish as only 15-20% of the students are members. Approximately 1 out of 2 students are practicing Catholics and out of the total student population, only 60-75% consider themselves Catholic.

The small classroom sizes make for an intimate discussions and attentive instruction. Students are encouraged to voice their concerns about the school and the staff. The requisite Religion class makes an excellent forum to discuss the policies and question the implementation of certain procedures affecting them.

### *Project Services*

Concilium is a period-long class where students are sent to settle down or to complete unfinished homework. A set of textbooks are kept in this separate classroom and an attendance log is kept. Teachers take turns being in charge of Concilium. No conversation between students is allowed and there seem to be no more than five students in there at a time. Two teachers are in charge of the class every semester.

Study Hall, peer tutors, as well as English and math labs are available before and after school to obtain assistance in classwork.

Opportunity class is a continuation school where a student will be admitted under two conditions: that s/he functions well in school and that their past remains confidential. If a student enrolled in the regular curriculum receives two "F"s in one semester, s/he will be sent to opportunity class. In the 1993-1994 school year, 10 students were enrolled and four "saves" were made. On average, after 1-2 semesters, they are mainstreamed back to the regular school.

*Funding*

Although not a wealthy parish, money is generated at the high school as the parents are dependent on the school for funds. Tuition at School CC costs \$4500 per year which is \$1000 less than another Catholic school in the same area. However less than 50% of School CC students could function at the other Catholic school but 20% of the student body would be able to do well at the other Catholic schools.

Scholarships are available for those students whose families are unable to meet the tuition.

*Project Outcomes*

The philosophy here is to make the average student better and the below average student average without compromising college prep courses. The goal is to make peer pressure work in a positive way.

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## *School DD*

### *Texas*

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#### *Case Study Description*

A third grader came up to the visitor and asked, "Do you know how many kinds of galaxies there are in the universe?"

"Uhm," I stalled, searching my Ph.D.'ed brain to determine whether I knew that there are kinds of galaxies, "No."

"Would you like to know?" the nine year old persisted.

"Uhm," I was in embarrassed wonder that so small a child had even asked such questions, and that I, with over 30 hours of hard-science college courses, didn't have a clue on the entire topic, "Sure."

"Five. Would you like to know what they are?"

We went into his classroom, and he proceeded to describe the characteristics of five different kinds of galaxies in the universe. If the facts themselves weren't clearly connected to larger intellectual constructs in this nine year old's mind, perhaps I wouldn't have been so impressed. But my new friend not only knew five kinds of galaxies, he knew the name and key characteristics of our galaxy, the Milky Way. He knew our location in the Milky Way. He had a reasonable grasp of the relationship between the moon, the earth, the sun, the Milky Way, and the universe of other galaxies. He was building a large, firm core of science knowledge. Then he wanted to talk about American History...

If the rough equivalents of this experience had not happened for three days at the At Risk study's primary Core Knowledge site, perhaps I wouldn't have been so impressed. But they had happened in two schools in less than one week. The logic of the replication sites was being repaid, and Stringfield was amazed.



School DD serves a Kindergarten through fifth grade population in Texas. The school has adopted the Core Knowledge curriculum as a major supplement to the district's regular reading and mathematics curriculum. While the program has been in place for less than two years, and therefore it is too early in the implementation cycle to accurately judge effects, the halls and classrooms of School DD are covered with strikingly advanced student work. Artifacts from an extended first grade unit of Japanese culture were as striking as the third grade astronomy lesson. My impression was that, as at School D, there were very few places one could go in School DD and not see stunning student work.

Like School D, School DD is connected to Core Knowledge through their association with Trinity University's "Smart Schools Network." The principal, program coordinator, and many (though not all) of the teachers have been actively pursuing the program for just under two years. The results to date are attention-grabbing and delightful, just as they are at School D.

Significantly, the school, in a moderately more affluent district, and in a new physical plant, is achieving implementation and early results without Chapter 1 schoolwide project status, and without large private foundation grants.

Fundamentally, the faculty work together as a strong community, although not all faculty had actively "bought in" to Core Knowledge during its first three semesters.

It would not yet be accurate to state that all faculty believe that the failure of the Core Knowledge program at this school would be disastrous. However, Core is creating a rich, relevant, real time data base in participating classes, is generating a great deal of schoolwide training and professional discussion, and producing mutual monitoring without counter-productive loss of confidence. Core is standardizing significant parts of the curriculum, producing discussion as to what procedures and content should become standardized, and, by bringing extra attention to the school from within and without the district, is increasing the value placed on the school by several groups. Many parents seem particularly pleased with the changes. Clearly, the school is obtaining some types of reliability enhancement from their association with Core, and with Trinity University.

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## *School EE*

### *Southeastern United States*

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#### *Case Study Description*

The school serves a racially mixed student body. School EE was the first school in the region to adopt the Paideia model of school restructuring, and in the last year has become a Paideia magnet school. The school has had many Paideia successes including some evidence of achievement gains and evaluator-observed increases in students asking higher order questions; however, full implementation remains a not-yet-achieved goal.

The Paideia Program is designed for learners of all ages. Developed by Mortimer Adler in his *Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (1982), Dr. Adler set forth his design for educating all children in a democratic society. Adler espouses the idea that all children are entitled to the same education both in terms of content and in terms of instructional methodology. All children should be given "cream" rather than some given "cream" while others receive "skim milk." That is, the program is meant for students regardless of their abilities or socio-economic background. A fully implemented Paideia Program includes as its goals: (1) "acquisition of knowledge," (2) "development of intellectual skills," and (3) "enlarged understanding of ideas and values" (Adler, 1984).

The Paideia program uses three methods of instruction: didactic, coaching, and Socratic seminar. Didactic instruction focuses on students acquiring information and concepts through lectures, movies, or other direct instructional methods. Coaching is described as one-on-one instruction where the coach/teacher works with students to improve skills. Adler sees this program as a strategy to improve intellectual skills. Socratic seminars are discussions among students and teachers based on divergent questions so that a true exploration of ideas can ensue. This instructional model enlarges understanding of ideas and values (p.8). Unique to Paideia are the coaching and seminar elements. This program changes teacher behaviors for coaching and seminars. Coaching involves diagnostic skill needs and individualization to improve learning skills. For the seminars, the teacher becomes a facilitator to lead children through seminars to seek understanding. The

program, as implemented in a number of sites, has reached students in elementary, middle grades, and high school. The school in this study is a K-6 elementary school that participated in a previous study concerned with innovative instructional strategies for at-risk children.

School EE is a 450-student K-6 school with a large exceptional education component drawn from many parts of the city. The school sits amid a lower middle-class neighborhood made up of small brick and frame houses. A four-lane main street runs in front of the school. The current school population includes both families on public assistance and moderate income families. Changes initiated recently may alter this population to include more proactive parent groups and more local involvement. The initial program focused on a weekly seminar followed by a coaching activity. Now in the seventh year of the program, the school has become a "three-column" school by stressing more interactive learning. The school has integrated Paideia into the language arts program in every classroom.

Recent changes in the Paideia Program at School EE represent significant increases in commitments on the parts of the central administration and the local school board. Five years ago, early in the continuing fight for visibility and resources, School EE was met by a central administration indifferent to the development of the program or the training of teachers. Viability of the program was continuously undermined by decisions made by the central administration to reduce funding for the Paideia coordinator and to refuse assignment of magnet status to the School EE Paideia Program. During the past year, a dramatic reversal of the school's fortunes was observed, through the school district's recognition and validation of the school's efforts to implement its program.

Several "victories" have sustained and expanded the Paideia program first developed at School EE to other schools in the district. The first and perhaps most important victory was the school system's identification of School EE as a magnet school for the district and its inclusion in the magnet school student selection process. Magnet school identification permits the school to compete for students and families who have strong interests in education and a particular interest in the values espoused by the Paideia Program. More remarkable, the school embarks on this expanded mission at a time of turmoil in the school system. The superintendent resigned in the Fall of 1995 after less than five years on the job, and elections for school board membership changed from a countywide elected board to representation by districts. In spite of these changes, the potential for success for the Paideia Academy at School EE appears to be on the upswing.

The new school board identified a middle school in the district to provide a continuation of the Paideia program for students graduating from the School EE. From the perspective of School EE parents, this systemic change ensures their children a stable and coherent instructional program from Kindergarten through eighth grade. This is a major victory in a school system where a continuous student reassignment based on racial proportions influence busing patterns and school assignments every year. For children in the local schools, these reassignments can change a student's school assignment three or four times prior to the student reaching high school. The continuation of a Paideia Program through the eighth grade at two schools gives a convincing argument to the Paideia Academy's

staff in their discussions with prospective parents. The school staff can now state that the program is on solid footing, uses an articulated curriculum, and provides similar methods of instruction over an eight-year period.

From the principal's perspective, this change in status for the school could not have come at a better time. Fierce competition has broken out among the magnet schools and between neighborhood schools and magnet programs in the city to attract able students and committed parents to their specialized programs. With the change in status, School EE can meet racial proportions and increase academic standards for the students. One outcome of the change in recruitment may be improved results in testing. If testing improves, the school believes they will improve their recruitment of families who follow the test score performance of schools carefully. At School EE, where the performance of students has been below the district's averages in reading and mathematics, the "selling" of the program was a difficult task. The recent changes provide the school with a number of advantages in the battle to attract families.

Other challenges face School EE as it enters the systemwide magnet program. One challenge is transportation. In a sprawling city, transportation to and from School EE remains a difficult problem for both the school and parents. Bus rides of two hours each way are not unheard of, creating hardships for young children, burdens for parents, and decisions by the family not to attend based on issues other than education. In the principal's words, "Transportation is killing us."

Given the many external changes that have come to School EE, the curriculum and instruction remain stable. One change the principal and assistant principal report is the enhancement of the coaching aspect of the Paideia Program. They view the coaching as improved dramatically over previous years and as the key strategy for the long term success of the school. They believe the accomplishments of their Title I children will rest with the teachers' success with coaching. "We haven't met our academic goals yet, stated the principal, but we have reached our school system's goals. That's a start. Coaching should help us get to our [higher] goals."

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## *School FF*

### *Northeastern United States*

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#### *Case Study Description*

School FF serves a kindergarten through fifth grade population in the northeastern United States. The community being served is 100% African American, and over 90% of the students at School FF receive free lunch. The school has completed one full year of a four year effort to implement the Calvert curricular and instructional program. Following the Calvert scale up design, the school completed one year of K-1 implementation in 1994-1995, and began 2nd grade implementation in the fall of 1995.

The principal, parents, three of four first year teachers, and several of the specialist staff were very enthusiastic about the project in year one. The fourth faculty member became much more enthusiastic about the project by year's end, as she saw clear evidence of unusually rapid progress among her students. Second year implementation is going well in grades K-2. Teachers in K-1 who are beginning their second year with the program report a much greater level of comfort with the curriculum.

As with School DD (Core Knowledge), the school is early in the implementation cycle. However, first year achievement data in first grade indicate 15-20 NCE gains over previous cohorts at the school. The strongest implementing first grade class had mean scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills Total Reading section above the 70th percentile. These are remarkable gains in one year at an inner-city school.

As at School BB, the Calvert program has enhanced several HRO features of the school. It produces shared clarity regarding core academic goals, it puts greatly enhanced pressure on all adults to see that all students learn to read, write, and compute; and by doing so, avoids the "cascading" problem of illiterate children moving into higher grade. The program increases teachers levels of alertness as to lapses. The student folders, perpetually being updated at the back of each class, provide stunningly rich, relevant data in real time. They are regularly cross-checked by teachers, the coordinator, the principal,

parents, and the students themselves. The new program has provided detailed training and constant staff development. The principal reports that the program makes flaws in her program and her teacher's styles in specific areas much clearer, and has facilitated developmentally-focused performance evaluations. Calvert assumes mutual monitoring in a productive, high confidence environment. Many aspects of the program are standardized, and improvements and locally appropriate upgrades are encouraged. Equipment and materials are available, working, when needed. The school is greatly valued by the Calvert School, and is beginning to receive regional attention. Parents are very pleased with the improvements they have seen. Calvert has zero tolerance for "corner cutting" in the name of short term efficiencies. The school and program make allowances for dealing with any emergency, so that a problem can not "cascade." Teachers come to have a great deal of confidence that the basic materials required for them to implement Calvert will arrive, on time. Corners do not get cut in the name of short-term efficiency in Calvert-replicating schools.



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## *Appendix A*

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### *Overview of Programs and Budgets for School F*

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

Program	Estimated No. of of Stud.	FBRS Code	BUDGET AMOUNT	
			FY '93-'94	Projected '94-'95
Operating Budget	1100	01-04-001	4,154,400	4,311,580
Chapter I SWP	1100	11-04-655	554,301	478,669
Special Education	192	03-05-183	728,040	750,580
Education for Employment	165	01-06-230	64,960	63,730
Operating Budget ESOL	105	01-33-024	319,300	328,520
Charter	658		27,000	27,000
Extra Curricular Activities				
*Athletics		01-04-120	80,440	44,800
*Music		01-04-151	3,190	1,590
*Drama		01-04-151	9,580	8,090
*Debate		01-04-151	3,190	3,180
*Other Position Trade Off Study Hall		01-04-152 01-04-155	24,610	57,800 24,480
<b>OTHER FUNDS</b>	<b>Target</b>			
<b>Name of Funding Source</b>	<b>Population</b>			
ESOL/LEP			20,400	14,320
Career Development	CTS	01-06-230	5,960	5,930
Special Education	Special Education	03-05	7,840	7,380
		<b>TOTAL SCHOOL BUDGET</b>		<b>5,540,225</b>

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*Appendix B*

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*Percentage of Students Passing "Major" Subjects at School F*

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA  
OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT  
REPORT PERIOD 2 - FEBRUARY 1994

STUDENTS PASSING MAJOR SUBJECTS									
GRADE	NUM. STDS.	ENGLISH		SOC. STUDIES		MATH		SCIENCE	
		NUM. CRS.	PCT. PASSING	NUM. CRS.	PCT. PASSING	NUM. CRS.	PCT. PASSING	NUM. CRS.	PCT. PASSING
9	305	364	47.3	481	41.2	509	42.2	417	43.4
10	299	279	48.0	289	52.2	282	48.9	241	58.5
11	193	186	61.8	168	66.7	186	66.7	167	79.0
12	91	86	73.3	101	70.3	67	74.6	75	84.0
TOTAL	1088	1115	51.9	1039	51.2	1044	50.5	900	57.4

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION					
	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12	TOTAL
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	305	299	193	91	1088
AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	63.2	71.0	80.3	84.9	70.3
PERCENT OF STUDENTS: ABS 0-10 PCT	14.5	19.4	37.8	53.8	23.3
ABS 11-25 PCT.	26.1	35.1	33.7	27.5	30.1
ABS 26-50 PCT	29.3	28.4	21.8	12.1	26.3
ABS 51-75 PCT	21.6	12.7	5.7	5.5	15.0
ABS 76-100 PCT	8.5	4.3	1.0	1.1	5.4
REFEATER					
NUMBER	198	84	27	13	322
PCT.	39.2	28.1	14.0	14.3	29.6
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS					
NUMBER	97	42	36	8	183
PCT.	19.2	14.0	18.7	8.8	16.8
SUSPENSIONS					
TOTAL NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS	197	81	29	11	318
DAYS IN-HOUSE	0	0	0	0	0
DAYS OUT OF SCHOOL	615	251	82	32	980
TOTAL STUDENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE SUSP. (OUT OF SCH)	137	61	23	11	232
PERCENT OF STUDENTS WITH AT LEAST ONE SUSPENSION	27.1	20.4	11.9	12.1	21.3
RACE (PERCENTS)					
WHITE	29.3	27.4	34.7	27.5	29.6
BLACK	16.2	21.1	20.7	20.9	18.8
HISPANIC	50.9	43.8	32.6	26.4	43.7
AM IND	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.2
ASIAN	3.4	7.7	11.4	25.3	7.8

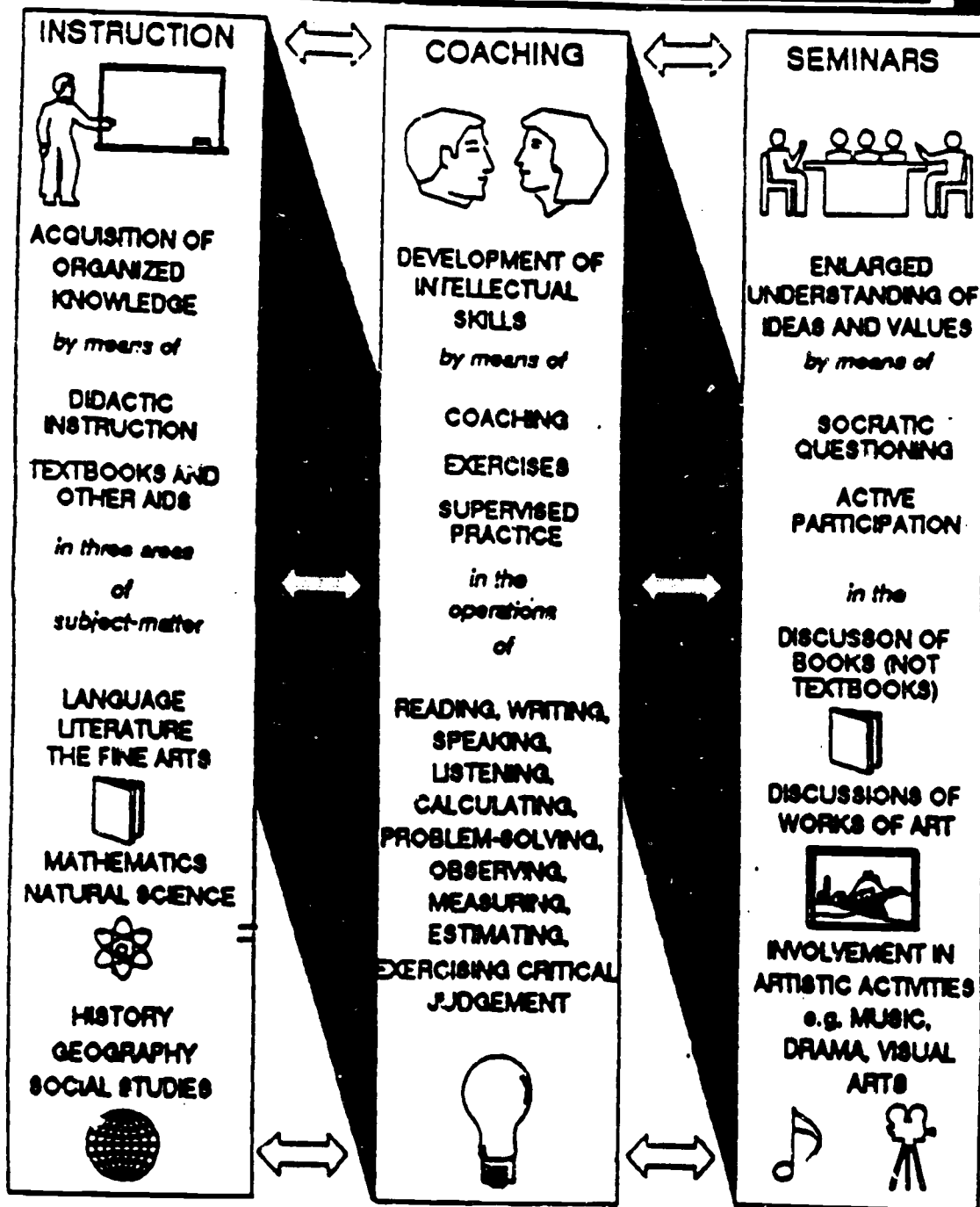
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*Appendix C*

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*"Three-Column" Paideia School Illustration*

# THREE-COLUMN DIAGRAM



Shared inquiry

NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE PALDIA PROGRAM  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
CB# 8049  
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599



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*Appendix D*

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*1993 School Report Card for School G*

# 1993 School Report Card

The Better Schools Accountability Law (Illinois School Code, par. 10-17a) requires all public school districts to report on the performance of their schools and students through school report cards.

This report card includes information about the students, the instructional setting, the finances and student performance in your school and/or district. Some financial information is from 1991-92, which is the most recent available. Also displayed are statewide averages, and for some information, averages by district type and size. State averages are based on information from regular public schools only.

Generally, elementary districts have grades prekindergarten through eight; high school districts have grades nine through twelve; and unit districts have grades prekindergarten through twelve.

- Your child's school is in a Unit district.
- The grades in your child's school are Pk K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.
- The parents/guardians of 77.4% of the students in your school, 90.5% of the students in your subdistrict, 89.5% of the students in your district, and 91.8% of the students in the state, made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the 1992-93 school year.

Note. The layout of this report card was prepared with the cooperation of the R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company.

## About the Students

### Racial/Ethnic Background and Total Enrollment

White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American (American Indian/Alaskan Native) are the major racial-ethnic groups in Illinois public schools. Enrollments were reported as of September 30, 1992.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American	Total Enrollment
School	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	788
Subdistrict	1.9%	93.9%	4.1%	0.4%	0.0%	25,197
District	11.6%	66.0%	20.2%	3.0%	0.2%	401,445
State	65.6%	20.8%	10.7%	2.8%	0.1%	1,835,740

### Low-Income and Limited-English-Proficient Students

Low-Income students are pupils aged 3-17, from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Limited-English Proficient students are those who have been found to be eligible for bilingual education.

	Low-Income	Limited-English-Proficient
School	93.9%	0.0%
Subdistrict	79.1%	1.3%
District	68.1%	13.7%
State	30.3%	5.0%

### Attendance, Mobility and Chronic Truancy

A perfect attendance rate (100%) means that all students attended school every day.

The student mobility rate is based on the number of times students enroll or leave a school during the school year. Students may be counted more than once.

Chronic truants are students who were absent from school without valid cause for 10% or more of the last 180 school days.

	Attendance	Student Mobility	Chronic Truancy	Number of Chronic Truants
School	96.2%	33.5%	2.0%	18
Subdistrict	90.5%	37.4%	3.1%	785
District	89.1%	33.5%	4.7%	18,916
State	83.4%	30.0%	2.5%	28,899

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375

## About the Instructional Setting

### Average Class Size

Average class size is the total enrollment for a grade divided by the number of classes for that grade reported for the first school day in May.

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
School	34.0	30.8	31.3	28.3	38.5
Subdistrict	34.5	22.9	22.2	22.0	26.7
District	34.6	34.2	34.3	25.6	27.2
State	22.4	22.8	23.5	24.1	23.5

### Time Devoted to the Teaching of Core Subjects (Minutes per Day)

Time devoted to the teaching of core subjects is the average number of minutes of instruction per 5-day school week in each subject area divided by 5. English includes all language arts courses.

Grade	Mathematics			Science			English			Social Sciences		
	3	6	8	3	6	8	3	6	8	3	6	8
School	48	53	53	24	40	40	144	103	103	28	40	40
Subdistrict	47	52	51	25	39	40	144	109	104	29	40	41
District	48	52	52	26	40	41	143	107	105	29	40	41
State	51	50	47	28	41	44	148	110	90	28	42	44

### Teachers by Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender

Teacher and administrator information is based on full-time equivalents. Teachers include school personnel whose primary responsibilities are listed as classroom teachers on the State Teacher Service Record File.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P Islander	Native American	Male	Female	Total Number
District	44.6%	46.1%	7.4%	1.7%	0.1%	28.5%	71.5%	23,466
State	53.9%	13.3%	2.3%	0.6%	0.1%	27.1%	72.9%	106,970

### Teacher/Administrator Characteristics

Averages are also provided for district type (elementary, high school and unit) and for district size based on enrollment.

	Small	Medium	Large
Elem	Under 243	243-1546	Over 1546
H.S.	Under 496	496-2467	Over 2467
Unit	Under 524	524-1691	Over 1691

	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers with Bachelor's Degree	Teachers with Master's & Above	Pupil-Teacher Ratio Elem	Pupil-Admin. Ratio
District	16.8 Yrs.	86.4 %	42.9 %	20.3:1	430:1:1
Type*	16.2 Yrs.	85.8 %	43.9 %	20.1:1	386.0:1
Size**	16.4 Yrs.	81.9 %	47.7 %	20.4:1	320.9:1
State	16.0 Yrs.	83.4 %	46.5 %	19.7:1	280.2:1

\* Average for all Unit Districts

\*\* Average for all Large Unit Districts

## About the School District's Finances

### Average Financial Indicators

The average teacher and administrator salaries are based on full-time equivalents. Effective 1991-92, salaries include various monetary benefits and compensation such as tax-sheltered annuities, retirement benefits, bonus and extracurricular duty payments which were previously excluded. Therefore, it is not appropriate to compare this year's salaries with those for years prior to 1991-92.

Note that the operating expenditure per pupil and expenditure by fund are for 1991-92, the most recent year available.

See the section on Teacher Characteristics for the classification of the districts by type and size.

	Teacher Salary 1992-93	Administrator Salary 1992-93	Operating Expenditure Per Pupil 1991-92
District	\$43,086	\$63,590	\$6,031
Type*	\$37,256	\$86,712	\$4,967
Size**	\$39,557	\$59,410	\$4,263
State	\$38,809	\$61,123	\$5,327

\* Average for all Unit Districts

\*\* Average for all Large Unit Districts

### Expenditure by Fund, 1991-92

	Education	Oper. & Maintenance	Transportation	Fund & Interest	Rent	Municipal Retirement	Capital Improvement	Site & Construction	Total
District	\$2,045,501,934	\$229,627,963	\$0	\$20,346,188	\$36,366,843	\$0	\$0	\$10,378,795	\$2,342,221,723
District	87.3%	9.8%	0.0%	0.9%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	
State	75.6%	9.4%	3.5%	5.4%	0.4%	1.7%	0.0%	4.0%	

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377

About the Academic Performance of Students

Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP)

IGAP Average Scores

Average IGAP scores in reading, mathematics, science, and social science are reported on a 0-500 scale. Average scores for writing are reported on a 6-32 scale. Score bands can be used to compare two averages. For example, you could compare the school averages to the state average in reading. For any school year, if the average score for the state falls within the score band for the school, then there is no significant difference between the school average and the state average. However, if the state average falls outside the score band for the school, then there is a significant difference between the school average and the state average. Similar comparisons can be made between the school and district, the district and the state, and from year to year within a subject area. State score bands are not shown because they are very narrow.

Grade 3: Third grade enrollment when test was administered: 88

	Reading				Mathematics				Writing			
	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested
School	144	134	110-166	98.9	180	177	189-196	98.9	18.0	16.8	15.8-17.4	98.9
Subdistrict	180	119	115-123	90.6	141	168	164-172	90.6	14.8	15.3	15.1-15.5	93.4
District	170	184	152-166	77.2	167	197	185-199	77.8	18.6	16.2	16.2-16.2	72.5
State	247	248		83.6	261	298		83.9	17.7	17.7		83.5

Grade 4: Fourth grade enrollment when test was administered: 77

	Science				Social Science			
	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested		
School	130	114-146	98.7	140	123-156	100.0		
Subdistrict	138	134-142	89.9	136	131-139	90.4		
District	166	163-167	81.9	163	160-164	82.3		
State	230		88.4	230		88.5		

Grade 6: Sixth grade enrollment when test was administered: 88

	Reading				Mathematics				Writing			
	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	1992-93 Score	1992-93 Band	%Tested
School	161	180	128-174	93.9	163	181	123-169	94.3	19.1	18.5	17.7-19.3	93.2
Subdistrict	185	186	161-189	89.8	163	168	164-172	89.4	19.0	19.0	18.9-19.2	85.5
District	179	184	182-189	83.7	186	192	190-194	83.5	20.1	19.6	19.6-19.6	80.9
State	244	259		87.4	261	267		87.4	22.3	21.4		84.3

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376



Grade 7: Seventh grade enrollment when test was administered: 84

	Science			Social Science		
	Score	Band	%Tested	Score	Band	%Tested
School	152	140-164	94.0	160	146-174	94.0
Subdistrict	147	145-149	90.6	150	146-164	90.9
District	178	176-180	85.3	167	180-184	85.5
State	250		87.7	250		87.8

Grade 8: Eighth grade enrollment when test was administered: 67

	Reading				Mathematics				Writing			
	1991-92 Score	Score	Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	Score	Band	%Tested	1991-92 Score	Score	Band	%Tested
School	187	189	163-215	97.0	186	189	163-186	97.0	22.3	22.5	21.7-23.3	92.5
Subdistrict	177	175	171-179	88.7	160	179	175-183	88.1	21.2	21.0	20.2-21.2	86.1
District	200	206	204-208	82.4	167	204	202-208	82.2	22.2	21.9	21.9-21.9	60.3
State	248	258		86.6	250	266		87.5	24.4	23.7		86.8

**IGAP State Performance Standards**

For 1992-93, the State Board of Education established performance standards for reading, mathematics, writing, science and social science. Based on their IGAP scores, students are placed in one of three levels: Level 1 (do not meet state goals for learning); Level 2 (meet state goals); and Level 3 (exceed state goals). The cut-off scores for these levels were established with the help of Illinois elementary and secondary educators. The distribution of students at each level is shown in the following tables.

Grade 3

	Reading			Mathematics			Writing		
	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
School	60	37	3	45	53	3	27	63	10
Subdistrict	67	30	3	48	48	4	26	66	7
District	55	39	6	41	52	7	29	69	12
State	25	64	21	15	61	24	18	63	20

Grade 4

	Science			Social Science		
	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
School	64	43	3	66	34	0
Subdistrict	50	46	6	64	33	3
District	37	53	10	52	41	7
State	13	60	28	19	37	20

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## Grade 6

	Reading			Mathematics			Writing		
	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
School	64	31	5	68	33	0	44	44	12
Subdistrict	61	34	5	55	42	3	27	67	6
District	51	39	9	43	52	5	21	70	10
State	24	48	27	16	68	17	10	65	25

## Grade 7

	Science			Social Science		
	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
School	57	42	1	37	62	1
Subdistrict	65	32	3	43	54	3
District	49	42	10	30	60	10
State	22	46	34	13	56	31

## Grade 8

	Reading			Mathematics			Writing		
	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals	%Do not meet goals	%Meet goals	%Exceed goals
School	43	55	2	51	49	0	32	50	16
Subdistrict	51	43	6	54	44	2	46	49	5
District	40	49	11	42	53	7	34	57	9
State	21	55	24	19	62	19	18	61	22

## Areas for Planned Improvement for the School and District

Areas for planned improvement are provided below and/or on a separate sheet by your school and district.

In order to improve our academic program for the 1993-94 school year, Goldblatt has formed a partnership with DePaul University under the leadership of Dr. Barbara Sizemore.

The program consists of ten routines found in high achieving predominantly minority schools which are: 1) assessment, 2) placement, 3) pacing, 4) measuring, 5) monitoring, 6) discipline, 7) instruction, 8) evaluation, 9) staff development and 10) decision making.

The staff development component provides training in the areas of direct instruction with an integrative approach in reading, math, science, social studies and fine arts.

Our existing Paideia program will be shared with the Schiller School as part of the CANAL Network Schools Project.

With the continued use of computer math and writing labs, we anticipate marked improvement in student performance.

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## *Appendix E*

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*Example of Monthly "Outlays" Completed by School G Teachers*

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*Education Reforms and Students At Risk*

**INSTRUCTIONAL OUTLAY**

Month of \_\_\_\_\_

OUTCOME	OUTCOME	OUTCOME	Teacher _____ Grade _____ Room _____	
LANGUAGE ARTS	WRITING	SEMINAR	INTEGRATIVE RESOURCES	HOME
303				

KEY: Objective = Obj. Materials = M Introduction = Intro. Teacher Demonstration = TD Student Der  
 Guided Practice = GP Independent Practice = IP Feedback = Fbk Reinforcement/Review = RR R