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## ABSTRACT

The Hearing before the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families of the Committee on Education and the Workforce was held on June 23, 1998. Statements are presented by various educators in public education and in charter schools, U.S. Representatives, the assistant secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education, and members of his staff, who discuss the Department's implementation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program. Appendices contain written statements by the speakers at the hearing. (DFR)

# COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM

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ED 443 184

HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EARLY CHILDHOOD, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 23, 1998.

**Serial No. 105-122**

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\*\*\* Articles submitted by the Honorable David R. Obey are on file in the Majority Office of the Committee on Education & the Workforce, and may be obtained by calling 5-4527.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:08 p.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Frank Riggs [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Riggs, Castle, Goodling, Peterson, Souder, Martinez, Roemer, Scott, Owens, and Tierney.

Staff present: Susan Firth, Professional Staff Member; Melanie Merola, Legislative Assistant; Kent Talbert, Professional Staff Member; Sally Lovejoy, Education Policy Advisor; Jay Diskey, Communications Director; Alex Nock, Professional Staff; Marci Phillips, Professional Staff; June Harris, Education Coordinator; and Roxane Foleser, Staff Assistant.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK RIGGS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Chairman Riggs. [presiding] Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I call to order this hearing of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth, and Families, a subcommittee of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

And the purpose of today's hearing is to conduct a fact-finding inquiry on a newly funded initiative, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program. The Comprehensive School Reform program was funded for the first time in the current fiscal year, the Federal Fiscal Year 1998, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill. The purpose of the program is ostensibly to provide incentives for schools to develop reform programs based on reliable research and effective practices with an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement.

The appropriations bill provided \$150 million for this program divided as follows: \$120 million going to States based on the title I formula for school reform programs in title I schools, \$25 million to States based on the school-age population, ages 5 through 17, in each State for school reform programs in any school, \$5 million for the regional educational laboratories, and \$1 million for the United States Department of Education to identify research-based approaches and to disseminate that information to States, school districts, and schools.

The Appropriations Conference Report stressed that school are not restricted to using only those approaches identified by the Department, but are free also to develop their own reform programs based on rigorous research and meeting certain criteria, including using proven methods for teaching and learning and providing high-quality teacher and staff training.

As one of the Members of Congress who was involved in preparing this language, and in the 11th-hour negotiations regarding this particular appropriation, I want to make clear that it is my intent that this program should be a resource for schools to implement a research-based design that meets the unique needs of their student bodies. Schools should not be required to adopt a one-size-fits-all model of reform. They should be free instead to adopt the curriculum portions of one model, the governance portions of another, or something developed entirely at the local level, as long as it fits with the

criteria outlined in the statute.

We will hear from two panels this afternoon. One, the first panel, we will hear from the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Dr. Gerry Tirozzi. Assistant Secretary Tirozzi is a very familiar visitor to our committee, and we have enjoyed working with him over the past two years. On the second panel, we will hear from researchers and practitioners familiar with comprehensive school reform.

And I think I'm joined by my colleagues in saying we very much look forward to their testimony. And we'll just note for the record that our fact-finding hearing today apparently coincides with the subcommittee markup by the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee for Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations. So it would be my hope that perhaps we could confer with the appropriators regarding any decision that they intend to take with respect to this particular program in Fiscal Year 1990 based on the testimony and the advice and recommendations we receive from our witnesses today.

I now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, my good friend Congressman Martinez.

**Mr. Martinez.** Thank you. Mr Chairman, let me commend you for convening this hearing.

The most often discussed and debated issue here in Congress is school reform: how to achieve it, how to accomplish it, where it should be driven from, the local or federal level. Here is a program that is Federally instigated, but locally driven. I can't think of a better way to foster school reform.

Mr. Chairman, I applaud you for convening this hearing on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, which was authored by Congressman Obey and Porter in the Fiscal Year 1998 Appropriations Act. And I understand from your statement that you had a little to do with the final language on that, so I commend you also for that.

The program provides Federal seed money to schools to help them initiate, in cooperation with parents and teachers, comprehensive school reform. Schools may utilize existing reform models and tailor them to meet unique needs of their communities, or they may design their own approaches. Whatever their origins may be, these comprehensive reform efforts will be based on reliable research and effective practices.

We're honored that Assistant Secretary Tirozzi has joined us to speak about this national effort to support locally-designed and locally-driven school reform. We'll also hear about several of the school reform models currently in existence from the individuals who had a hand in designing them, as well as from those who have implemented at the local level. Ms. Jacqueline Austin, the Director of Curriculum and Assessments with the Jefferson County Public Schools, will provide us with her perspective as a former principal of a school that adopted a comprehensive reform strategy.

I look forward to the testimony of these witnesses and thank them for helping us understand the possibilities for success through this Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Congressman Martinez.

Chairman Goodling, do you have any opening statement you'd like to make?

**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM GOODLING, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. Goodling. I just want to welcome the Assistant Secretary, and particularly Mary Jean sitting behind him. She and I have been at this business for a long, long time trying to bring about improvements.

One of the questions they had here on a list I noticed was: how is the Department identifying research-based approaches for school reform? And I just would add to that question, proven reliable, as we've been down this path of one-size-fits-all and silver bullets and you name it. It's gotten us into an awful lot of trouble. It reminds me of a little Dr. Spock, who 30-some years ago said, "If you allow your children to do their own thing, they'll all grow up to be well-adjusted, mature adults." And 30-some years later he said, "Boy, was that a mistake." Yes, that was three generations later of mistakes, and we've been doing that in education. I hope with this amount of money and with these efforts, we'll find out what really works, and see whether we can't improve education for all children.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Any other members seek recognition for the purposes of making an opening statement?

[No response.]

Hearing none, then we'll go right to Dr. Tirozzi.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, I feel that Dr. Tirozzi really doesn't need an introduction before this committee. And I know all of my colleagues have had a chance to work with him. As I mentioned, he is the Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education at the United States Department of Education. He's joined today by Mr. William Kincaid who is the Project Manager for the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration, and Pierce Hammond, the Director of Office Reform Assistance and Dissemination. I'm told that they are available to respond to questions but will not be making any statement.



Dr. Tirozzi will be discussing the Department's implementation of the school reform program and the role of OERI in reviewing locally-designed reform initiatives.

So again, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. Please proceed with your testimony.

Mr. Goodling. Mr. Kincaid came up during those Dr. Spock years, I believe, taking a look at him.

We'll have to see how we can judge him with his performance today.

Mr. Kincaid. But I think I've got you beat on the gray hair.

Chairman Riggs. I think that explains a lot.

**STATEMENT OF GERALD TIROZZI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; ACCOMPANIED BY WILLIAM KINCAID,  
PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM  
DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION, AND PIERCE HAMMOND, DIRECTOR OF OFFICE REFORM  
ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

Mr. Tirozzi. Thank you, Mr. Riggs. Mr. Riggs, and, members of the committee, it's a pleasure to be here this afternoon, and I applaud you for calling this hearing. We're very excited about this program, and we welcome this opportunity to have this discussion with you.

Late last fall, as you know, Congress did in fact enact this legislation. And I guess I would suggest first, and by the way, you have a copy of my formal statement for the record. I'm just sort of going to talk directly to you. Last Fall, this program was enacted by Congress, and we feel it does represent a powerful, new opportunity for local communities to really make a difference in terms of addressing the issue we all want them to address: student achievement.

I think the key difference in this effort and a number of other things we've done at the Federal level, this does in fact call upon local school districts to utilize comprehensive research-based programs, not the program of the day or "program de jure," as I like to say. And as Mr. Goodling and others have said, it's not, you know, one program or one-size-fits-all. The key is, I'm going to repeat this, comprehensive research-based programs. And the legislation does an excellent job of identifying nine criteria which help us to characterize what we mean by comprehensive and reform-based.

I should also note the legislation identifies 17 models which to varying degrees do in fact address the 9 criteria. And this very important point: the legislation also encourages local school districts to utilize locally developed programs. But, again, the significant difference is, while we support the local development, they, too, must ensure they have some type of research-based, some evidence of effectiveness before moving forward. They also must really point out the extent to which they address the nine elements which are identified in the legislation.

As Mr. Riggs said, the budget is \$150 million. About 80 percent of that money goes to title I schools. Next year if our requested increases were funded, that would allow us to serve additional title I schools. The grant is structured in such a way that States apply to the Department. And we're interested in the model they're going to use, how they're going, the selection process, how they're going to evaluate their program, et cetera. I'm pleased to tell you that we've had a good reaction to the States, and I want to return to that in just a moment. The present appropriation, we feel, will allow the Department to provide funds to serve about 2,900 schools in the model this year. And if the increase we're recommending for next year, \$30 million, is in fact appropriated, we can serve an additional 600 title I eligible schools, which I think is a significant move in one short year.

We have provided, I would suggest, very extensive guidance to States. It is non-regulatory, but it is broad guidance that in fact does give very good direction to States and districts as they move forward. We're really calling upon the State education agencies to provide technical assistance to districts. The regional laboratories play a major role. They are funded to do this, and also they have the capacity to provide technical assistance to States and districts. And our own comprehensive centers are involved, as well. So we think we have a model in place that will provide the assistance.

Also, I want to reference the Catalog of School Reform Models which OERI bore the responsibility for and which was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in cooperation with ECS, the Educational Commission for the States.

I think it's very clear, to spend a minute on that, and Pierce may want to add to this in a few moments, but this really put together in one document, a catalog, if you will, of comprehensive research-based models. There are 44 different models identified in that catalog. But the point to make clear is that if you read the catalog carefully, it looks at the nine elements, and then it really gives you a sense of how each of the programs does in fact address each of the elements. And you will see this with several of the programs, there are voids as you look across. This is not a Department of Education or an OERI recommendation for approved models. I want to make that clear. This is a case where we're trying to the extent possible to identify models that are on the playing field in terms of what these nine elements are. Some are much more powerful than others in terms of meeting the criteria. It is our goal in working with OERI and the regional lab. In the fall, it is my understanding, there will be another copy of the catalog or an addendum to the catalog which will identify other programs which come forward and which in turn feel they do meet the criteria.

I also represent to you, very quickly, that interest has been very intense across the country regarding this program. There have been State and regional conferences conducted. The model developers are rapidly moving forward to build their capacity. And I think you know, New American Schools is also being funded to develop capacity.

Eighteen States have already submitted applications. And this is very, very good when you consider we only sent the initial application out, I guess it was in the early spring, and we've already reviewed about 11 of these. And today, as a matter of fact, just coincidentally, we're announcing the first seven grants to States. We have a high level of optimism that all of the States will be coming in by the early Fall.

We have a very formal evaluation plan in place that will look at student achievement over time, over the three years. And I should have mentioned earlier, each grant is worth three years and a minimum grant of \$50,000 per school, which I think is important.

July 1 and 2, next week, we're having a national conference here in Washington, a national summit. About 200 to 300 will be here representing each of the 50 States, again, tremendous interest in coming to Washington to discuss this.

I guess I want to just conclude on a particular point. I know you have a number of questions. I think this is the type of a program, if I may use the word, it's like an incubator program. We start it; we look at it. It's a demonstration project. But I think it does have the potential to point the way for more effective use of our Federal dollars, then in particular may have some real potential in looking at title I, the reauthorization. It has some real potential in title I for how school-wide dollars are spent.

And please keep in mind that we have 25,000 eligible high-poverty schools in America. And in one year, we've gone from approximately 10,000 school-wide programs to 15,000 school-wide programs. So this is becoming the huge initiative across the country, in the extent to which we can use research-based comprehensive programs we feel will make a difference.

So, I do want to commend the Congress for passing this legislation. It's very early in the game, but we think with the interest that has been stimulated and the cooperation we're having, of course, with OERI, and the labs, and others to promote this, we have every expectation that we have hit a real powerful nerve here that would improve student achievement across this country.

I think I'll stop at that point and see if you have any questions.

**Mr. Hansen.** Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I'm sure we do.

The first one that comes to mind is, since it's taken a while to get this money which we authorized and appropriated last fall, and I guess which actually became available to the Department at the beginning of the current Federal Fiscal Year, October 1, into the pipeline, and it's going to take even longer to get the money to the field, why do you think an additional \$30 million dollar increase is warranted in the next appropriations budget cycle?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, I think the interest level has been so intense on the part of the States and on the part of the districts. And in talking to several of the developers, I mean phones in some cases ringing off the hook with people wanting to ask more questions

about the various models and initiatives. The fact that we see it has, I think it has great potential for the school-wides, as I said earlier. And so many districts across America are moving towards school-wides that, you know, just moving the paradigm, if you will, from 2,900 schools to 3,500 schools, we just think, you know, could make sense.

And I'd rather be in the position where we're asking for the dollars, we know the interest is there, rather than let a year go by and say no to "X" number of schools that were ready to go because we didn't have the wherewithal. And arguably, I mean \$30 million is a lot of money in the context of we spend \$8 billion in title I alone. We just think it's a wise investment. It's still a form of venture capital, if I may borrow from the business "financula."

**Chairman Riggs.** How many of the title I schools that meet the school-wide poverty criteria have applied for this funding? Do you have any way of knowing that?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Actually, we couldn't really answer that question now because we're just approving seven States today. Now, the States in turn will compete these dollars at the local level. But keep in mind 80 percent of the schools served will be title I schools. It would be my personal opinion that probably a very high percentage of that 80 percent will be title I school-wide programs, probably 90 percent.

**Chairman Riggs.** And if that's the case, the school-wide programs have even more flexibility under Federal law to, if you will, sort of commingle their money to leverage?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** Do you think that we should look at perhaps expanding that? Allowing more title I schools that same sort of flexibility as afforded schools that currently qualify as school-wide?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I think the present formula we're using this year, it's the final year, we're at the 50 percent poverty level to be eligible to be a title I school. I think once you go much lower than the 50 percent, you're getting down to 43, I mean ultimately, I guess if you carry it out to the "nth," you could say all title I schools could be school-wides. But if you end up with schools that are serving 10, 15, 20, 25 percent of the students in title I, to make it a school-wide, I think you have to understand that a significant percentage of your money is then going to really go to non-title I eligible kids, whereas at 50 percent and above, you really are ensuring that you're targeting the dollars to where we know we have the major problems.

**Chairman Riggs.** Mr. Secretary, do you see any way that these monies can be used to leverage other reforms in public education that you, the Department, and the Clinton administration are promoting such as charter school reforms? And I believe you've submitted an ed-flex proposal to Congress seeking more regulatory flexibility and more

regulatory waivers for local schools from Federal rules and regulations?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I mean, specifically, the charter schools-my answer will be, yes, I think it does allow us to move in other areas. It is my understanding that charter schools are looking seriously at submitting their own proposals under this law. They should be implementing research-based comprehensive programs based around the circumstances for which they, in turn, were created. So I think the movement toward flexibility\_ this administration\_ I think you know this: With the waiver board we now have, 12 States have ed-flex status. We have a proposal before you to look at all States having ed-flex status, again, trying to give States flexibility. I think it's interesting when you give flexibility at the same time as you've got a model coming along that calls for research-based comprehensive programs, I think you have a greater potential for accountability down the road.

**Chairman Riggs.** I'm going to ask you two other questions. One is: what is the Department doing to encourage local school districts to develop their own models or school-wide reform, based on their local needs?

I'm thinking that perhaps Mr. Kincaid or Mr. Hammond can respond to one or both of these questions.

And the second is to elaborate on the role of OERI and the regional labs in implementing this particular program.

**Mr. Kincaid.** On your first question, one of the most important things that we've done is to emphasize in our program guidance that locally-developed approaches are acceptable within the context of the program as long as they address the nine criteria, including those for having a strong research basis. And we have, in fact, provided an example of the way that that could come about, because we do think that's important. And in our interactions with States and local school districts, we've continued to emphasize that. Also, in the review process, as we look at State education agency applications for the program, that's one thing that we look at to make sure that they are providing room for truly comprehensive research-based approaches that may be locally developed.

**Mr. Hansen.** Okay.

**Mr. Hammond.** The regional labs have consulted, as they always do, with the State departments of education and others in their regions about their applications to the Department. They've held a series of meetings to try to understand the needs of the States and to explicate what the program is about to make sure that they're understood, that to provide technical assistance in putting the applications together. They produced a catalog; I brought five copies with me; if you'd like them, you're welcome to have them.

**Chairman Riggs.** Absolutely.

**Mr. Hammond.** This is the catalog that Dr. Tirozzi referred to that discusses, presents, information about 44 programs including the 17, but in addition some others. I might say this is also available through the World Wide Web.

They have developed hotlines that are available so that people from State departments and then ultimately people from school districts can be in touch with them.

They have produced video tapes that can be made available more broadly for people who aren't able to get to meetings that they've held in their regions and their States, so they can investigate the models that are available. They aren't available for all models yet, but they are developing them so that eventually all 17 will be covered.

**Chairman Riggs.** Mr. Tirozzi, let me also ask you, while we're on the subject of budget proposals and budget requests, how much has the administration requested for Federal charter school grants?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** This year, I believe it's \$120 million. Is that correct? \$120 million.

**Chairman Riggs.** Does that represent an increase over the current?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Twenty million.

**Chairman Riggs.** Twenty million increase?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** It's a \$20 million dollar increase.

**Chairman Riggs.** Because the current fiscal year appropriation is \$100 million?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. Well, I'll defer my other question until hopefully the opportunity to go to a second round.

Congressman Martinez.

**Mr. Martinez.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Here again, the funding that we're providing for school reform is targeted at title I

schools, and there are a lot more schools in the United States than just the title I school.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Absolutely.

**Mr. Martinez.** And you know, so we don't get confused, that we're providing the panacea for all school reform out there. I would like to point out that there are other school districts that have, prior to that law that we passed, provided for school reform. There is one in Memphis that started school reform in, I believe, 1995-96, before this law was passed. And they seem to have gotten results back already that show that the whole-school reform program has actually improved the students' scores and that they're doing a lot better. And where a lot of that evidence was anecdotal before, they now have studies that show the results. From knowing that, with the Federal monies only reaching a percentage of title I schools, don't you feel that the programs, as they become more successful on a local level\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Martinez.** \_are going to be encouraging others to develop the same programs?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes. As I guess I tried to say earlier, my point of view would be that if this effort is successful, and I firmly believe it is going to be, I think it is going to cause States and local school districts to look at all of their own dollars as well as the Federal dollars. I mean, candidly, if you find certain schools moving ahead very well because they are involved in research-based comprehensive programs and other schools continue to lag behind, I think some very serious questions are going to be asked about why States and districts aren't moving in the same direction, you know. And I think one of the stimuli, if you will, for this program is if you look at the success of some of the New American Schools models over the last several years, yet you wonder why more school district aren't jumping on board. And I think what we're trying to say in the legislation and what we're trying to do and implement it, is to really put forth the kinds of models that hopefully can make a difference with the understanding that local school districts make the decision, not the Federal Government. But there's accountability built into the system.

**Mr. Martinez.** And that's why I like this program. It's Federally instigated, but it's locally driven.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Martinez.** And as it is more successful, it will drive others in the local area to develop the same kinds of programs.

As we look towards the reauthorization of this program, can you sum up kind of

what the lessons are that we learned from this comprehensive school reform program that will give us the kind of impetus we need to put as we move towards that reauthorization of the Elementary and the Secondary Education Act?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, one of the problems will be, we are, as you probably know, beginning the process right now of reauthorization. And believe it or not, next January or February, we will have a bill up here on the reauthorization of the Comprehensive School Reform Design Model will only have been in place from September through January. I think the interest that has been stimulated, the kind of research that's being done, the evaluation, the designs that are developing, all of that can influence our thinking. But I really can't stand before you and say the evaluation of this program, in and of itself, I mean, can drive that engine. It just would be too early, But I think we'll learn a lot of very valuable lessons.

**Mr. Martinez.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Congressman Martinez.

**Chairman Goodling,** do you have any questions?

**Mr. Goodling.** Secretary, I just want to indicate you don't know how much it warms my heart when I hear the word flexibility.

For 20 years, I would say, you know, if we gave the local districts an opportunity to be creative and innovative, they might even make some of our poorly thought-out programs work. So I'm happy to hear that word. I even hear it in the Congress occasionally now, when we're on the Floor of the House. Things are improving.

Thank you.

**Chairman Riggs.** Mr. Chairman, if you would yield to me, while you're here, I want to ask Secretary Tirozzi one very blunt question. And that is whether the Department is going to show any preference in reviewing the grant applications from States, or for that matter local school districts, that have indicated their support for the administration's proposed, quote, unquote, "voluntary national tests?"

**Mr. Tirozzi.** No.

There's no reference whatsoever, no.



No.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, I'm only being a little bit facetious because I see that one of the criteria is having measurable student performance goals. How does the Department determine whether a State working with local school districts has measurable student performance goals?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Bill, you want to talk about what you're reviewing?

**Mr. Kincaid.** One thing to keep in mind is that what we're really reviewing in these applications is what the State plans to do in terms of its competition, how it's going to operate its competition, what it plans to do in terms of technical assistance and dissemination, and what it plans to do in terms of evaluation. So we're really reviewing that in terms of how it's going to ensure quality in those areas. We're not reviewing the States' standards and assessments system or what kind of testing regime that they have. We do encourage States to link this effort with what they're doing more broadly in their standards and accountability effort because we think that that's important. But what the focus is on is what the State is doing in terms of its standards and testing and how this program is being used to help further reform, given that.

**Mr. Goodling.** Will the gentleman yield back from my time?

**Chairman Riggs.** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr. Goodling.** I just want to make sure we get the message \_

**Chairman Riggs.** The chairman reclaims his time.

**Mr. Goodling.** \_taken back down downtown. There isn't going to be one test, a national test?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** That's why, if the chairman will allow me to use his time here for just a moment, I was curious, because it seems to me that the Department has really embraced this program, is proposing additional appropriations for this program, is acknowledging that one of the criteria must be measurable student performance goals, but is at the same time stressing that those goals be developed in a bottom-up type of fashion, and in such a

fashion as to provide maximum flexibility for States and local school districts in setting those goals. That's correct?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. All right. Thank you.

Congressman Roemer is recognized.

**Mr. Roemer.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I, too, want to welcome in the chorus of your high qualifications and high marks for working with me and with other Members of Congress, Dr. Tirozzi. -It's nice to have you back before the committee. And we look forward to continuing the good working relationship that we've established on other issues.

Let me ask you a couple of quick questions. In terms of the regulatory relief bill for other schools, when do you intend to come up with that, or introduce that, or work with Congress on that?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** You are speaking to ed-flex?

**Mr. Roemer.** Yes.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes. And Mr. Riggs mentioned this earlier, and I correct myself. We have not officially sent up a bill yet to Congress. We are working on a bill. I know the Republican Congress has a bill of its own. I can't give you an exact answer because that's really the Secretary's call. But I know one of the strong debates we're having on it, we promote ed-flex. We think it's great; we have it in 12 States. If we go to 50 States, the strongest question I would give to Congress in whatever version is enacted if it is enacted, is somehow someway while we all should applaud flexibility, and I do, we really have to figure out a way to have accountability at the same time. It can't just be a giveaway kind of a program. You know, you give dollars, but you have to get something back in return. And that something really is accountability, and ideally, for student achievement. If Mr. Goodling could, I thought he was rather blunt and direct on his point on national testing.

I want to make the point. I mean that's a concern I have, and I know this is not the forum for it. But you know, when you look at block grants, I mean there really is very little if any accountability I can find, you know, for block granting dollars. So I would hope that we can work in a very cooperative way if we're going to move toward more flexibility for States and districts to, yes, promote it. The Department is promoting it; Congress wants it, but I think we need to figure out how we can make it accountable at the same time, because otherwise I can't stand before you in a year and tell you what it did.

**Mr. Roemer.** Well, Dr. Tirozzi, I think you and I probably would agree on the goals that we would like to achieve with the Secretary and the President on accountability and flexibility. The Republican bill may differ significantly from what you want to achieve, but if the Democrats have no alternative, if there is not an ed-flex bill for us to work on, then we have to work off the Republican bill in a bipartisan fashion. And if it is not bipartisan, then oppose that. But certainly the goals that you and I might share on an issue like this, could very well correspond to some of the things we've done together on charters schools and other types of issues\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Roemer.** \_in education. So I would strongly encourage you to continue to work on an ed-flex bill that you can send up and have some Democrats take the lead on, and work in a bipartisan way with Republicans.

My second question would be with respect to, the implications of this whole school reform on schools in the title I program?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, I think it's a very good question. We've been talking about it internally, as I tried to say earlier. I think it's premature, I mean to really talk specifically about the impact. But my own sense is, if you look at the design of this program and the fact that it is looking at research-based comprehensive models, and we're trying to impact on school-wide efforts. It would definitely seem to me, as we move out into a new reauthorization phase or next wave, if you will, of title I, somehow I believe firmly that this legislation is going to impact on title I. But I can't be as specific as I would want to at this point until we see how this one plays out for awhile.

**Mr. Roemer.** I'd be very anxious to see what your internal discussions are at this point, since 80 percent of the grants, I believe, are targeted\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Roemer.** \_title I schools.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Roemer.** We certainly want to see what impact this does have, measure that, and have the accountability, but also have some goals that we want to achieve as well, too, with the accountability and flexibility.

Finally, in terms of the statistics you've cited on awards and grants. You said that 18 States have applied?

Mr. Tirozzi. Yes.

Mr. Roemer. And you've announced, as of today, seven?

Mr. Tirozzi. Eighteen have applied; eleven have been formally reviewed. The process of review takes approximately 45 days; that's from the day the application is received, reviewed. Then we put together a peer review committee, bring people in from across the country. They review the application. We're on a very fast time line with the States, and I think they're really appreciative of what we've done, and Bill's worked very hard at this. Today, we're announcing seven grants. I think over the next month or so, we'll be announcing a number of others. In the other States, in fairness, they have to get their own act together and submit the applications. But we're moving them very quickly.

Mr. Roemer. Do you expect to announce more based upon more applications coming in and not reviewing the remaining? You've awarded 7, so you still these 11 that did not get grants will not\_

Mr. Tirozzi. No. No, I'm sorry. I didn't explain that correctly. We've received 18.

Mr. Roemer. Right.

Mr. Tirozzi. We've reviewed 11; 7 will be announced today. The other four are in what I would call final consideration.

Mr. Roemer. So they have not been excluded?

Mr. Tirozzi. No; absolutely not.

Mr. Roemer. Have the 7 from 18 going down to the 11 been excluded?

Mr. Tirozzi. No.

Bill, you want to explain?

Mr. Kincaid. Maybe I should clarify just what the review process is. We have a process where we bring together a group of experts in education reform, typically from other

State Education agencies, local principals, superintendents, and others who are knowledgeable about school reform, and bring them together to review the State education agency's application for how it plans to operate the program. And both, to make a recommendation to the Department on whether the legislative criteria have been met, but also to provide constructive feedback to the State to help it operate its programs in the most effective way possible. And this is something that I think the States have found to be useful. So, where things stand is that we have received officially 18 applications; 11 of those have been through that formal review process; another 5 are scheduled to go through that process later this week. Of that number that has been through that peer review, the seven are the ones that are to the point where they can be approved.

And so at this point, generally speaking, it's not a matter of if it can't be approved or not, it would be maybe there's some more information that's needed or something like that. So, that's the way it's been working.

Mr. Roemer. Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Congressman Roemer.

Congressman Castle is recognized.

Mr. Castle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I missed the beginning of this, so I'm sort of picking it up. But I mentioned something, Dr. Tirozzi, that you've not mentioned here. And I suspect that maybe it's not a subject of any of the applications which you have. But it is part of the Comprehensive School Reform program, and it's mentioned in your testimony a little bit. And that's the whole concept of teaching. You know, you stated in here you recognize the potential for the wider use of comprehensive research-based models for school reform to help strengthen teaching. And then it says, "provides high-quality continuous teacher and staff professional development and training." All that's well and good. That's taking the teaching staff that we have. Is anyone coming to you with any different concepts or approaches of how to bring teachers into their particular schools? Are any of the school districts basing any of their applications on that? Or are you looking for that at all?

Mr. Tirozzi. Well first, we don't really see the individual school applications.

Mr. Castle. Right. Well, you're right.

Mr. Tirozzi. Those are the applications the States review.

Mr. Castle. I understand.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** But when you look at the nine elements carefully\_

**Mr. Castle.** I've mis-spoken that\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** When you look at the nine elements or the nine criteria, one does talk about you do need a faculty buy-in, if you will, to the model, whichever model is selected. And having been involved myself at a school district level and working through some different models or magnet schools, if you will, you know if there are teachers who really don't want to try a particular model, and you know, the rest of the faculty does, it almost has its own sorting out process, it's been my experience. But it takes a period of time.

The other thing it calls for in one of the elements of comprehensive research-based is on-going, sustained professional development of faculty. As I look at some of these models, and as I look at the success of certain of them, and you know without naming a number, success for all would be an example. With the schools where that model's in place, it is proving that it does transform a faculty and how they think about teaching learning, and how the model interacts with their own teaching styles. So I think there are a number of lessons we are learning and will continue to learn.

And if I may, I don't know if Pierce, do you have anything you'd like to add from the OER research perspective?

**Mr. Hammond.** I think you've covered it well. Thank you.

**Mr. Castle.** I appreciate your answer, and I think that's very important. And I think it's a very important thing to focus on. I've always been a believer that ultimately gets down to the classroom and the teachers\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Castle.** \_the teacher and the teacher aid. But my question is really more of the selection of teachers and the whole comprehensive teacher process, not the reform of what we do once they are teachers with the training. All that's needed\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Castle.** \_don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to give that short trip. But I just think, I mean the more I'm reading, the more I'm looking at this, I just think we're on the borderline of a crisis with respect to teachers, in terms of retirements coming up. We have teachers that don't look like the people that are teaching anymore in terms of gender, and color, and various other aspects. We know we have the problems with those that didn't major in the various subjects which are there. We're not doing much to attract anyone who didn't go through teaching universities and colleges. And it just seems to me.

that we've really got to wrestle with this. And I was just wondering if, in this program, anybody is looking at that at all? I suspect the answer is no. And if the answer is no, if you have any thoughts on that, I'd love to hear those as well. I just think it's becoming a major problem in education.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I think there's a "yes" in the answer with this, but I'm guessing it's going to take some time to play out. I think what it's going to do is, as schools develop these models and put them in place with a strong teacher buy-in and a commitment to do things differently, it's going to change teaching styles. It's going to change curriculum; it's going to change program. That, in and of itself, may be a significant catalyst throughout a district, I mean, to do some things very differently. And candidly, if I were a superintendent right now, and you're trying some of these models and they're making a difference, I mean, over time. You know, I use a metaphor that, you know, we celebrate all of our little victory gardens and we never get to amber waves of grain. That's my metaphor. But the metaphor is; a good superintendent is going to look at why it's working in two or three schools and ask the serious question, "Why can't I do this in all my schools?" I mean, develop these kind of models, which part of that is going to be the quality of the teachers.

I think you're asking a broader question which I

**Mr. Castle.** I am.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I really understand and support. You know, we're going to need 2 million teachers over the next ten years. And in this country, whenever we've had potential teacher shortages, we tend to lower standards, not raise standards. That's a real concern I have. But a major onus there is on the States, because the States approve teacher preparation programs; the States really decide whether or not they want to provide additional dollars for salaries. They raise standards for the profession. And I know a number of States that have done that extremely well. They've raised standards, they've raised salaries. I came from one, Connecticut. And I think if States get involved, and I'm not going to suggest taking this more seriously, because they do take it seriously. But I think legislatures, governors, and chief State school officers really have to shape a lot of leadership in terms of how we're going to shape what's happening in teacher ed in States.

**Mr. Castle.** Well, I'll close by just saying I don't totally disagree with you, but I don't think that the States have shown a lot of imagination in how to approach the profession of teaching. And I am not sure, I mean it's funny that we would argue, or maybe the Department of Education would argue, we need national testing. And I don't feel as strongly about that as the chairman, but don't tell him that.

Maybe it's not an all bad program. But you know, to say that we want national testing but, "Gee, it's the States responsibility and teachers." I mean I think it is a national question; I think it's a national responsibility. I mean I think the greatest function of the Department of Education is to use the bully pulpit to really shape education out there. And I just think we need to be a lot more articulate and to be a lot

more expressive about teachers. I mean my own judgment is that good teachers should be paid more; poor teachers should be dismissed more rapidly. There should be legal protections with respect to that. We ought to make it a profession which will attract more people than we have today. Not because we have bad teachers, I'm not trying to suggest that. But we're going to lose a lot of teachers, and we need to replace them with good teachers, and if possible, even better teachers.

So I just hope all of us could address teaching. So that's sort of where I'm coming from.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** And there are a number of initiatives embedded in the reauthorization of higher education which can have an impact on improving teaching, but even having said that, and those are very good proposals, ultimately when you look at the magnitude of the issue I agree with you. I mean there has to be a national priority, but I think States have to get their arms around this.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Congressman Castle.

Congressman Scott is recognized.

**Mr. Scott.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Secretary,** all States are eligible to apply; is that right?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Scott.** And only 18 have applied so far?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Scott.** Are you expecting applications from most of the others?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I would say all 50.

**Mr. Scott.** Even Virginia?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.



Yes.

Mr. Scott. That slipped out.

Mr. Tirozzi. It's already been received.

Mr. Scott. The applications that you are reviewing, does the application include the program for each school, or just the State's proposal on how they're going to administer the funds?

Mr. Tirozzi. Bill?

Mr. Kincaid. The application outlines how the State is going to run its sub-grant competition, the criteria that it intends to use, how it's going to ensure that any particular local proposal that's funded meets the nine criteria in the legislation and has the strong research basis.

It is really about how you run the competition and then beyond that, how to provide technical assistance and disseminate information about available school reform approaches, and then finally how the State is going to evaluate the effectiveness of this program and at the local projects. So we don't get information about particular schools; all we receive is information about the State, when it makes the awards, it will provide information to the Department about the particular school selected and what kinds of approaches they're going to pursue. But that's after awards have been made.

Mr. Scott. And you don't expect to second guess those decisions?

Mr. Tirozzi. Okay. No, sir.

Mr. Scott. The \$50,000 a year minimum, is that \$50,000 a year or \$50,000 divided over three years?

Mr. Tirozzi. Per year.

Mr. Scott. What is the average amount? Do you have any idea what the average amount of the grant will be?

Mr. Kincaid. At this\_

Mr. Scott. What a typical grant might be?

Mr. Kincaid. At this point, it has ranged. Some States in their applications, and of course it's early, have indicated that they expect to provide, to stick with the \$50,000 minimum for any school. Some States intend to go with the range, maybe \$50,000 to \$75,000 or \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year. So it varies, and I don't think we could have an average yet. That is per year for up to three years if this school is making substantial progress in its reform effort.

Mr. Scott. Is that up to three years?

Mr. Kincaid. That's right, the total.

Mr. Scott. It may be too early to know this, but many of the kind of things you can think of on your opening statement, you have nine things that the program has to do, many of those can be done without money. I mean it is supported by school, faculty, administrators, and staff, includes a plan and things like that. What do you expect them to do with the money?

Mr. Tirozzi. Well, essentially, some of the models that would be adopted, there would be a need for technical assistance with the staff. I mean a lot of professional development would have to go on. In some cases, it would involve new and different materials that would have to be used. In fairness, if you're going to bring in some of the external models in particular, I mean those folks really, you know, have to come in and work with your faculty. Quite a bit of the money would go there for technical assistance, training, professional development, those are the keys, curriculum.

Mr. Scott. Computers?

Mr. Tirozzi. Computers, sure.

Mr. Scott. You've emphasized, and I congratulate you on emphasizing the importance that whatever you're doing is research-based. A lot of the programs sound good, but don't have any basis in reality. Are you requiring anything specific in terms of what researched-based means?

Mr. Tirozzi. Pierce, you want to talk a little bit?

**Mr. Hammond.** The booklet has several categories that are looked at for research-based, and particularly how it affects student achievement.

**Mr. Scott.** I mean is there a finite amount of research which may limit you in terms of what your options are? I mean is there\_

**Mr. Hammond.** They have to show that it's been effective in more than one place so that this is something that has the possibility of being spread to a variety of schools.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Has it worked in other places? Can it be replicated in other places? I mean those are the kinds of questions that are being asked in terms of\_

**Mr. Scott.** Does it have to be peer reviewed, for example?

**Mr. Hammond.** Does the research have to be peer reviewed?

**Mr. Scott.** Right. Is there any requirement that research-based\_

**Mr. Hammond.** External research, that is correct.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Bill, wants to add to this. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Kincaid.** The way that we have addressed this in terms of the program is that in our non-regulatory guidance that we have shared with the States, we have included a suggested framework that States, and districts, and schools may wish to use in evaluating particular programs in terms of their evidence of effectiveness. It encourages questions about the research basis for the program. What kinds of evidence exist for improvements in student achievement based on evaluation? What does it take to implement a particular program in a school? And has that approach been replicated in other schools?

The approach that we encourage is to ask questions that indicate how rigorous the evidence is in those four areas. So the more, for example, in terms of evidence of student achievement, if you have an approach that has had sustained gains for a lengthy period of time, then that approach would be stronger in terms of its research basis than an approach that only has been implemented and shown gains for a couple of schools for a short period of time.

Those are the kinds of questions that we have encouraged. And that's the kind of approach that we've encouraged is to ask for any particular approach that's proposed, how does it stack up in those areas? That's the way to encourage rigor.

**Mr. Scott.** Is peer review part of that process? That research that has been peer reviewed?

**Mr. Kincaid.** Our guidance doesn't address whether the research itself has been peer reviewed. The process that States have for considering applications, that process is a peer review process where they consider local applications and how they stack up in these areas. In our guidance, we do focus on the more rigorous the background for the research. But we don't get into that exact type of question. It's more, have gains been shown?

**Mr. Scott.** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The questions was really, do they have any guidance on evaluating the\_

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Scott.** \_strength of the research, and apparently they do.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Mr. Kincaid.** Most definitely.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Congressman Scott.

Congressman Peterson is recognized.

**Mr. Peterson.** Thank you.

I had an interesting meeting a couple of weeks ago, and I was a little taken back. I met with about 15 retired teachers who had just recently retired, many of whom I had worked with in State government over the years. They were mostly union leaders, stewards, been active in the union, and we'd had meetings for years. But this was the first time I'd met with them as retired teachers. And they had a message that kind of took me back. And they said, "You know, there's problems with education that need to be dealt with." And he said, "Forget testing. We know where we're at. Forget new concepts, gimmicks, new systems." It said, "Until teachers have the right to take control of the classroom, we can't teach effectively." It said, "Students' rights, State and Federal mandates have taken away the control of the classroom for teachers. And unless they have control, and have discipline, and respect, they can't effectively teach." And they said, "Americans education will continue to decline until the teacher once again has control of the classroom, and can discipline, and demand respect of students." Now that was their message to me. They said it was pretty simple. Forget all this other stuff. It won't work until we have control of the classroom. And I'd just be interested in your

comments.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, again going back to research, there's a wide body of research that tells us it is important to have a safe and orderly school and in an environment that is conducive to learning. And they mean part of that environment, of course, is a well-disciplined environment. And of course, I mean that's something we absolutely want in our schools. I think what has happened though over the last whatever, 20, 25 years, I think in fairness we've had a breakdown in a number of societal values. The American family has changed dramatically, and I think we have to respect the reality that schools are a microcosm of society. I mean, those problems don't stay outside; they come in. And I think in fairness to teachers, they've had to confront all types of different issues and problems.

And I think we also went through a period of time when, for a variety of reasons, we fell into a trap, because we were trying to excuse away student achievement because of all these external variables. We continue to lower the bar for learning, which exacerbated the situation.

So on the one hand, I'm saying we raise standards, we talk about accountability, we look at success from them; I think that's all part of the answer. I think we make teaching a profession that, as was talked about earlier. But at the same time, this Nation has to get its arms around what some of the problems are that are in society and community. Problems of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, all of this generate problems for kids when they come to school. And I think most of us know, I mean the climate has changed dramatically over the last 15 or 20 years.

**Mr. Peterson.** How do we, I mean they just begged for the ability to discipline. They claim they can't discipline today. The system is gone; the students' rights have overtaken teachers' and educators' rights to control the classroom. And I think we can all agree, if kids are going to run the classroom, there is going to be chaos there. I mean that's kids nature. We were kids; we created chaos every time we got a chance and could get away with it. But somehow, somebody\_ and I reminded them. And I said to them, "You know, I feel a little bit, as Member of Congress now, where we are far less controlled than when I was in State government for 19 years." I said, "In the 19 years we worked together, you never asked me about discipline. I brought it up sometimes, but you never asked me. Now suddenly as you've left and you've had a chance." I think part of it, they had a chance to reflect for a year or two of what they walked away from when they quit teaching, and what had changed. And they were united in one message, "We've lost control of the classroom." And they said, "Do nothing else until you give teachers the right to control the classroom." And so, I think we're still talking about all the fringes use, and I haven't heard any meaningful discussion of, how do teachers get the right to control the classroom and not have other outside groups giving students more rights than the teachers and administrators have to control that classroom.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Part of the answer I would give, and I do not know any of these 15 teachers, of course. And I'm going to make the assumption they're all very good teachers. Personally, it's been my experience that even though arguably, I mean, students may have a few rights that some people have questioned, at the same time, I mean I think we have

to respect the fact they have rights. But also it's been my experience that when a teacher really knows his or her subject well, is a good teacher, and is fair with students, and they respect that teacher for being fair. And I've been in some of the most difficult schools in America and seen this, where you could have chaos in one hallway and wonderful education going on at the other end of the hall.

I think it deals with the background of that teacher. I think it deals with his or her professionalism, ability to teach the subject. So, I guess I'm trying to make the point that if we really have, I mean, the type of professional staff we want in all of our schools, we can do exactly what you're suggesting. At the same time, there are some issues that society has to look at.

To carry this, I mean even a step further than you may want to carry it, I mean these violent incidents we've had in schools of late. I mean, schools don't hand out weapons. I mean if parents are leaving weapons unattended as Secretary Riley will say, "guns and unsupervised youngsters don't go together." It doesn't work. I mean we have to address that. We have kids growing up as latch-key kids with no meaningful conversation with their parents taking place. That, again, is not an issue schools alone can address.

So we need to get our arms of the Nation around some of these problems and really be aggressive about it.

**Mr. Peterson.** But it seems like with the type of student that the schools have to deal with today, the discipline that used to be there, needs to be more there, not less. We've walked away from discipline. They claim we have tied their hands and as they reflect back, they realize the last five or six years that they taught, that their hands were tied. They couldn't control the classroom any longer. And they had to put up with so many things that they would have never stood for in their first 10 years of teaching or 15 years of teaching because the system said it was okay. And so they were blaming the system. And I critiqued them; I said, "You never came to me as a State Senator and said, 'Help us get discipline back in the classroom.' Now, as you're reflecting back." But I think they had a good message. I mean I think they gave me a message several weeks ago that we better think about. And I don't have an answer. I guess I'm looking at you professionals, because their theory is all the studies in the world and all the new concepts in the world will not work if you don't have order in the classroom.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** And I think at some point it would be great if we could get some examples of what they mean. I'd be happy to look at them personally. But I'm just trying to make the point, I think if you're a competent teacher, you know your subject material, you treat children fairly, discipline can improve dramatically. And I'm not suggesting any of your 15 fall in that category. I'm simply saying if you don't know your subject matter, you're not a good teacher, it's very easy to lose control because everyone is, quote, unquote "bored" if you will and people are going to act out. So I think without having some very concrete examples it's very hard, I mean, to specifically address your question.

Mr. Peterson. Well, I'll share some specifics with you.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Congressman Peterson.

Congressman Owens is recognized.

Mr. Owens. Mr. Chairman, I won't take my full five minutes because I'm familiar with the program. And I want to congratulate the Secretary and the staff at OERI for speedy and effective implementation of the program. And I say that although I was a critic of the program when it was first initiated by the Appropriations Committee, I didn't care for the fact that the Appropriations Committee was writing education legislation. But I have to concede and apologize to the Appropriations Committee; they have a winner here, and I think you've implemented and started it very well. And we look for a successful outcome in the long range.

I want to take a little bit of my time, Mr. Chairman, to welcome Mr. Irwin Kurz who is one of your panel members. You have a rather large panel coming up, and I'll be in and out, but I hope to be here to hear Mr. Kurz, who is the principal of Public School 161 in Brooklyn, in my district. And a lot of laudatory things have been said and written about Public 161, and I want you to know that none of them are exaggerations. It is a great school; it's a public school. It operates on a considerable amount of adversity in that it was built I think for about 500 children, and its twice that many in it almost. They have to start eating lunch very early in the morning in order to go through all the cycles in the cafeteria. And they have a coal-burning furnace.

I had some visitors from the school in my office recently, and I told them that they're number one despite it all. No matter what happens, they're determined to overcome, and they are overcoming all the adversity.

But I would like for us, as Members of Congress, and as adults, and as citizens of the United States with a surplus coming up to think about these wonderful children who are learning so well, having problems later on in life because they're in a school with a coal-burning furnace. And a coal-burning furnace is inevitably going to leave some problems. I owned a house once with a coal-burning furnace, and I know that, no matter how you try to attend to the filters, et cetera, a lot of coal dust gets through. If a child sits in a school for six years, eight years, that has a coal-burning furnace, they're going to pick up some of that coal dust in their lungs.

So, it's just one example of how, despite the failure of the public policy making which leaves them with coal-burning furnaces, and we have about 300 schools out of 1,100 in New York City that have coal-burning furnaces, and leaves them with schools that are overcrowded to the point where they have to have lunch too early and too late. Despite all this, here's a public school which excels.

The children in the school also qualify for the school lunches, I think more than 90 percent, so it's poor children in a poor neighborhood, and they excel. And it's an example of what you can do if you have faith in public schools and apply certain kinds of things. And I'm sure that more of that will come out when Mr. Kurz testifies. And I will

be back for that testimony.

Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you.

Mr. Martinez. Will the gentleman yield the balance of his time to me, please?

Mr. Owens. Yes, I'd be happy to.

Mr. Martinez. I do that, because I want to ask you a question first and then make a statement. Are the teachers in that school in control of the classroom?

Mr. Owens. They are engaged. The minute you step in the school, it's a marvelous experience because you feel that they are engaged in learning. The students are engaged from kindergarten up to the very top, every classroom. They're engaged in the way where the problem of discipline, you don't even think about, you know. I've been to a lot of schools, and I've visited a lot schools, and I know the problems of discipline are obvious in most of them.

Mr. Martinez. Yes.

Mr. Owens. But here, they are so engaged; you go into the library which is a beautiful little room, but it's too small, and the kids are crowded in there. But they are all engaged. And there is no problem even though they're sitting right around each other, and they've found room to put 10 computers in the library, also. It's a marvelous experience to watch a school that's well-run, excellent leadership, and most of all, the students are engaged in learning to the point where a lot of other problems don't exist.

Mr. Martinez. Well, the reason I asked that question is that I want to tell a little story to prove my point that the discipline of the school depends on the administrators and the teachers, and if they're not in control, it's their own fault.

There was a situation in which my child was in kindergarten with 24 other children, and the teacher had no control over these 5 year-olds. The parents were called to the school, and we discovered that the problem was that the teacher wanted those children to sit in one spot for the entire class and listen to her read stories. Now, are you going to get a five-year old to sit for four hours in one spot and listen to stories? I got news for you, that should have been the first clue to the administrators in that school that that teacher really wasn't qualified to be teaching that class.

So the kids would get bored after a little while and then start throwing things at each other. And then pretty soon, they'd end up running around the classroom, yelling



and screaming at each other, getting out their frustration over sitting there in that spot all the time.

Well, this teacher flunked all 24 kids; flunked them. How do you flunk a kindergartner?

And the school administrator let it stand. Now that was really dumb. The lack of discipline in that class had nothing to do with the children, because those children were perfect angels at home because the parents controlled them.

My son eventually went on to finish high school in three years to make up for being held behind in kindergarten. So, if he did four years of high school in three years, he must have been a pretty good student.

So, was he wrong, or was he at fault? Or was the teacher? I say it was the teacher.

Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you.

Congressman Tierney is recognized.

Mr. Tierney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that courtesy.

And knowing the father of that child, I'd guess he would be rambunctious and probably a little out of control from time to time.

It's nice to see that he straightened out and flew straight in the long run.

I want to thank you gentlemen for being on this. I happen to be a tremendous fan of this program, and was excited when Mr. Porter and Mr. Obey brought it forward, and I tried to work with them in that regard.

One of the aspects of it I'd like to explore is that as I understand it, there are two sets of funding. One pool goes to the title I eligible schools are based on the title I enrollment. And the other basically is a little broader than that. It might reach outside that group.

Mr. Tirozzi. Yes.

Mr. Tierney. Which in my district, I think would be very important for those communities that may not have a high percentage of title I people but are on the verge of being there and are not necessarily wealthy or well-off and need some help in these kinds

of capital improvements, almost, that you're talking about making here.

Have you received a lot of applications that fall in that category?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, again, we receive the State applications. But it all depends on which districts apply within a State. In my conversations with Bill and he can speak to this: I think States are interested. A number of States are, or will be, interested in looking at schools other than title I schools. I think we're going to see that.

**Mr. Tierney.** And tell me if you would, besides universities and colleges, what other institutions do you see working with the schools and school districts?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Bill?

**Mr. Tierney.** You're nodding, so I guess you must have.

**Mr. Kincaid.** There will be a variety of organizations working with districts in addition to universities. Some of the model developers now have developed technical assistance capacity. You have more localized folks with expertise in school reform who have a solid knowledge of research-based approaches. So I think you're going to see a mix. Certainly a lot of districts will be working with model developers, including some of those listed in the legislation as well as others.

**Mr. Tierney.** Are you being fairly open-minded about that, then? And broad-minded on that basis?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes; very much so.

**Mr. Tierney.** Good. You know, I just think that there's a great opportunity here. I've had some discussions with the chairman here about charter schools back and forth at different times. I mean, to me this is a charter school in place. Do you think I'm wrong in that? I mean many of the things that people seem to be trying to accomplish with charter schools seems to me to be able to done in the context of the public school by using these resources to address those needs.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, I mean it's interesting you phrase it that way. I mean I wouldn't quite call it a charter school, per se. But, you know, it's interesting in the discussion we have over charter schools, one of the things that's written into our legislation is that charter schools be accountable. And it's one thing to remove rules and regulations, but I mean you just can't give the star away. You really have to be accountable. And I think the schools that will develop the comprehensive research-based models I mean in a sense, if they're successful, I mean candidly, I'm not going to be concerned by a whole lot of rules

and regulations. We want to see them be successful and youngsters are learning. And if they're learning in the context of a particular model they're using, that's wonderful. And I think that can push others.

And I think, also, we're going to see the potential here for charter schools, themselves, to come on the playing field and adopt different models and move in this direction. I think you may actually see some charter schools in the future developed around certain of the new models that they're looking at.

Mr. Tierney. One of the observations I've made going around is that it may be one of the more important features of this, is the principal \_

Mr. Tirozzi. Yes.

Mr. Tierney. \_ of a given school on that. Do you share that observation?

Mr. Tirozzi. Yes, as a matter of fact. I'm sorry Mr. Peterson left, and I didn't want to get into a long debate on that question. But something Mr. Martinez said. You know, again, we look at Ron Edmond's work in terms of what he talked about for instruction in an effective school. In addition to climate, he talked about good, solid leadership. Go around the country and you see good schools. Almost immediately, when you go into a good school, you find a good principal, a person who is in charge, a person who is fair with the youngsters, fair with the teachers, who knows curriculum, who knows instruction. That's the kind of person that can make a difference. That's why somewhere in this whole paradigm of looking at school reform, or this discussion I should say, we need to figure out ways to get more involved in developing school principals, because they've largely been left off the playing field of school reform. You know how we develop them, in-service them? And I couldn't agree with you more. I think the principal is probably one of the key roles in any school district, probably more important than the superintendent, it's the principal in a school.

Mr. Tierney. Absolutely.

Mr. Tirozzi. That's where the service is delivered, in the school, not in the central office.

Mr. Tierney. Again, I want to thank you for the good work you're doing. And for the courtesy that you've given me, Mr. Chairman, allowing me to speak even though I'm not on the subcommittee. Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. Well, we're happy to have you join us, Mr. Tierney.

And before we excuse the Secretary, I'd like to ask just a few more follow-up questions. One is, Mr. Secretary, or, Mr. Kincaid, how many FTE's does the Department

use to administer this particular program?

Mr. Tirozzi. Here he is, no.

It feels that way. Bill, what do we have now for staff? It's a very small staff.

Mr. Kincaid. We will have on board five directly, very shortly. We also work closely with the staff of the title I program and the Goals 2000 program, as well as folks from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and school improvement programs. But there are five directly.

Chairman Riggs. I understand that, but I want to make sure that I understand that as a result of the Congress appropriating money for this program for the first time, the Department has had to add five additional full-time staff people, is what you're testifying today?

Mr. Tirozzi. It hasn't necessarily been added; no. We've moved some priorities around; some positions are not filled that were filled in the past, vacancies. This has to be a priority. I don't have the I can get it for you. It's two or three new positions were probably added.

Chairman Riggs. Okay.

Mr. Tirozzi. Not five.

Chairman Riggs. And those would here in Washington at the Department of Education?

Mr. Tirozzi. Right. In other words, Bill came over to run the program. Bill is just a transfer back to the Department.

Chairman Riggs. Okay. Now, Mr. Secretary, you keep mentioning how charter schools may be eligible for some of this funding, and they may be implementing some of the reforms that are recommended or are suggested as held up as models for school-wide reform under the legislation. Would a charter school, though, still have to apply for this funding through the State, through the SEA?

Mr. Tirozzi. Yes, this is trick one. Bill, handle this one for me.

**Mr. Kincaid.** Charter schools would apply. It would depend on whether the charter, itself, is an LEA or not. That's the issue about whether they are a part of the school district or whether they're independent as an LEA. If the charter school is considered an LEA under State law, then it would apply directly to the State. If it's within a school district, then it would be a part of a district's application to the State.

**Chairman Riggs.** I see. And would a local charter school that received Federal taxpayer funding, that part of the seed money grants that are made for charter schools, would it receive a preference over another charter school that did not receive Federal taxpayer funding in the form of a start-up grant?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** No.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** No.

**Mr. Kincaid.** There's no provision for that.

**Chairman Riggs.** All right. Well, I just am interested in this whole issue, obviously, because it came along with very little consultation with, we, the authorizers, the policy making committee. It was really largely an initiative of the appropriators, and as I understand it, Mr. Obey, as the ranking member of both the subcommittee and the full committee late in the budget process last year. So we're still sort of trying to get our arms around this.

Having said that, Mr. Secretary, I'm interested in why the program is tailored for or directed to title I schools. How does something like school-wide reform or this school reform program, how does that fit in with the traditional Federal taxpayer role in providing compensatory education to title I schools?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, I mean the way the formula is structured, of course, one of the goals we have is to try to provide assistance to the schools that have the greatest need. I mean that's the way the program has been funded; that's the commitment the Federal Government has had. And you know, we continue down that road. I think if you look realistically, when I mentioned earlier about 15,000 schools are now school-wide models in title I, that means all of those 15,000 have at least 50 percent poverty to be eligible to be title I. If we step back and analysis any set of test scores, retention rates, attendance rates, those are generally the schools that have the most difficulty in terms of student achievement. And it would seem a program like this, it fits very nicely with the whole direction we've been. I guess another way to answer that, Mr. Riggs, I believe that Mary Jean Latan is right behind me. I believe 7 percent of the school districts received something like 60 or 70 percent of the title I funds. So it is very targeted, and that's where the action is. I mean, that's where the need is, and I think as a Nation, we should

be putting our resources where we know we have the greatest needs, because we have a limited amount of dollars.

I think where this legislation is interesting, it allows that 20 percent of the funds to be used for all other schools. So hopefully that, in and of itself, I mean can send a message that, you know, we want to see what happens in other than title I schools.

**Chairman Riggs.** But that's a relatively small amount, some would say a pittance. And do you, to the extent that you foresee, this program continuing in subsequent years, the so-called out years? They'll use the budget and the appropriations lingo. Would you want to maintain that 80/20 split?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** I would say yes. Candidly, I think we should always be open, but I do think the commitment we have is to target funds where we have the greatest need; that's a major equity principle. I mean when we go before Congress, and we testify before you, and we ask the very serious questions, and you shared about student achievement, how kids are doing. It's not in suburban America that we really have the problems. We really have the significant problems in poor rural, poor urban communities. That's where we really need to figure out how we're going to address those problems. And I think this type of a grant, it's very small, I mean to see this as just spreading it across the country, I think would be a terrible mistake. I think it should be a targeted kind of a proposal. I don't think 80 is magical. I mean you could move that a bit, but I do think the majority of the funds should stay in title I eligible schools.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, it seems to me, Mr. Secretary, that if we're really concerned about promotion of school reform, the money ought to go to any school that is doing exciting, innovative things. And we get back, again, to the traditional role of the Federal Government and Federal taxpayers in compensatory education. And you're talking about taking the, if you will, the precious, hard-earned tax dollars of that suburban resident who may send his or her children to a local school in that community, and basically redirecting that money to title I schools in other communities.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** But the very way the title I grant is structured, I mean it is designed to drive dollars. It's a Federal commitment, it's a national commitment to drive dollars where you have the greatest need. I mean that's the way the formula works.

And this grant, once it flows to a State, is predicated on that same formula distribution. And it would just seem to make, you know, consummate sense that in turn you want to drive the dollars there.

Also, I think it's a great use of Federal dollars because we are spending \$8 billion on title I. In the reauthorization of 1994, it made a huge commitment to school-wide projects. And school-wide, what we're hoping to do with this, I would like to think in the future is really leverage dollars, I mean so that we could see other school-wide models improve. That's where we really have to make the case.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, Mr. Secretary, it seems to me that perhaps we just have a fundamental difference of opinion on this particular subject. Because tomorrow, in this very room, in fact in less than 24 hours, we intend to mark up the Block Grant Dollars to the Classroom bill that would consolidate a host of categorical aid programs where the applicants, some would say the supplicants, have to come back here to Washington with grant application in hand seeking Federal taxpayer funding for any number of particular programs. You indicated, or I think Mr. Kincaid indicated, that ultimately you anticipate all 50 States will apply.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** For at least some small share of this particular funding. What we would prefer to do is put all these programs, including this particular program, the Comprehensive School Reform program into a block grant, drive it down locally, and ensure that 90 cents of every dollar or more gets into the classroom. Ideally, to address the concerns of Mr. Castle and Mr. Peterson, to pay someone who knows that child's name.

I wonder how you would react. You expressed some concerns earlier I think, in response to Congressman Roemer's questions and comments about the lack of accountability. I wonder how you and the Department would feel if, for example, we proceeded with the block grant legislation, but we stipulated that the money into the block grant had to be used for the nine criteria under this school reform program?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, you could make that stipulation, but my first argument would be that you really have to make certain the money goes where you have the greatest need. I personally think, and this is where we may disagree, that is what the Federal role should be all about. You don't have enough money. Only 7 percent of our funding goes to elementary and secondary education. The other 93 percent comes from State and local. That's a very small percentage of the pot. And I think the extent to which we target that money makes a difference. We have schools out there that have tremendous needs, and title I in particular has been a great catalyst for a lot of these schools.

I also think even if you build in the nine elements, I don't think you've built in any kind of an accountability system. And the history of block grant, they have no constituency. Over time, the money goes down; it never really goes up. And I do think you're going to hear this from a lot of school districts and parents across this country who really don't want to go in that direction.

**Chairman Riggs.** So, what are you doing then to ensure accountability? You're saying that the programs funded must meet the criteria? And then you're going to review how the States distribute this money? And how local school districts use it to meet or exceed these particular criteria? Is that your goal?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, it's interesting. In a discretionary grant program, I mean at the Federal level we could have much more accountability than you can generally have in a

formula-driven program. I think in this particular case, yes; we are going to monitor. We have a formal evaluation. After three years, we do expect to see student achievement move up. We are going to develop case studies where we're going to look at what works. And you know, there's not a long history in the Federal Government, no matter who is in charge of withholding funds, I think you know that. But I'm not suggesting that here today we're going to withhold funds. But I mean there's a greater potential if State's are abusing the dollars or districts are not really, you know, addressing the models, that you could see some attempt on our part to be more forceful on that particular point.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, I hope so, Mr. Secretary. I don't know that I'll be around to see it. But my gut instinct tells me that with all 50 States applying, all 50 States will get some share, some small part of this money. And it will be viewed like the rest of their title I money, which is an annual operating subsidy. And that's my gut sense. And philosophically, our party, the majority party in the Congress, disagrees with this approach of everything being topped down. All the applications coming back to Washington, as opposed to a block grant which drives it locally, because we frankly share the concerns about accountability. But, we feel that the best way to get that accountability is to drive more money locally where the local decision makers can be held accountable by concerned parents such as the example that Congressman Martinez cited.

I just want to ask one other question and that is, because I know Congresswoman Northup has a real concern in this regard; we've discussed it at some length and we'd like to get your thoughts on clarifying the congressional intent in the guidance, which is to allow schools the most choice in determining which type of research-based reforms best meet the needs of their school. In other words, and I think this is the acid test, will this really be a bottom-up process where a local school district and a State can use the money for some sort of other reform initiative, assuming that that initiative is based on reliable, replicable research? And are you open to clarifying in the guidance that you issue that local schools and States are encouraged to seek or to recommend to the Department other types of reform initiatives other than the ones that the Department holds out as a model itself?

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Well, the LEA, itself, the local educational agency is the applicant to the State.

**Chairman Riggs.** Right; I understand that.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** So the local school district has to, in a sense, approve the model that a school wants to use. I think we should absolutely support that concept, because ultimately you're not going to have any potential for systemic reform if every individual school is off doing its own thing. The guidance, I think, is very clear, that while we have identified 44 models, they'll be an addendum in the Fall. We encourage locally developed models, and that's where I mean I can't imagine, personally, a local school superintendent, he or she wants to be successful, if schools are coming forward with models that address the elements whether it's an already recognized program or a newly



developing program, that they're going to say "no" to it.

On the other hand, if a school district or a State wants to make a determination that, you know, they want deal with those 44 models rather than take on the universe. That's a right they have, too. I mean the legislation does allow that.

Chairman Riggs. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

And I think with that, we will excuse you\_

Mr. Tirozzi. Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. \_and your two associates. We appreciate you taking time from your schedule to join us today.

We call forward our second panel of witnesses.

Mr. Tirozzi. Thank you.

Mr. Scott. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Riggs. Congressman Scott?

Mr. Scott. As they're coming forward, the chairman made comments on the Federal role. I think there are a couple of areas, as the Secretary mentioned, some very worthwhile projects have either no constituency or very minuscule constituency. And there are other things we can do that we can take advantage of the economies of scale like research and things like that. But if it were not for the Federal role, there would be no IDEA, there would be no Title I, because these are the kinds of things that don't have strong constituencies.

Chairman Riggs. Yes. I appreciate that Congressman Scott. And as you may recall, let's get our witnesses coming forward here and we can have an informal colloquy, I did make a commitment some time ago to our colleague, Congressman Fattah, of Pennsylvania. We had originally planned to have a hearing last Friday on this whole concern that he and other of our colleagues have voiced about funding, equity, and funding parity issues, especially with respect to urban schools. And the Federal role, the Federal taxpayer role in providing the compensatory education benefits to socially and economically disadvantaged young people, students. And that's a discussion I look forward to having and want to continue to have. And again, I will just assure you, as Congressman Fattah and anyone else with an interest or concern in this area, that we will be having that hearing soon. I anticipate that it will be some time between our return from the July 4th congressional district work period and the beginning of the traditional congressional

summer recess.

All right, so we have our witnesses settled in. I know that two members, Congresswoman Northup and Congressman Ford want to introduce members of this panel. We will notify their offices, and upon their arrival, recognize them for the purpose of making those introductions. So, what I will do is, rather than introduce everybody at once, proceed with our witnesses one by one, beginning with Dr. Hirsch, who is a very frequent visitor to Capitol Hill and a very expert witness on many of the subjects that we have addressed over the last two years. He is also president of the Core Knowledge Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia, as well as a nationally-known researcher at the University of Virginia. Dr. Hirsch, as I just mentioned, has served as an expert witness on our committee before, most recently I believe in the hearing that we had on the reauthorization of the Head Start program. Did you testify on the Head Start?

**STATEMENT OF E. D. HIRSCH, RESEARCHER, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,  
PRESIDENT, CORE KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION, CHARLOTTESVILLE,  
VIRGINIA**

Mr. Hirsch. Correct.

Chairman Riggs. I believe, Dr. Hirsch. And today, he's going to be focusing on research he's done on comprehensive school reform.

So, Dr. Hirsch, thank you for being here again. We're glad you could come up, and please proceed with your testimony.

Mr. Hirsch. Mr. Chairman, thank you. It's a great honor to be here. And I'm grateful to you and members of the committee for inviting me.

And I'm also grateful to be made aware of the Porter-Obey legislation on school reform. I am a frequent visitor, but I travel here only when summoned. And so I've been unaware of the generous amounts of money that are being allocated to school reform by this Congress. And I've also been largely unaware of the praiseworthy Obey-Porter bill, which has tremendous potential for improving public education if its stipulations are refined and if its highly laudable intent is carried out in actual practice.

As you know, I'm deeply concerned with public school reform, particularly grassroots K through 6 reform called Core Knowledge, which has attracted over 700 public schools in 44 States. Core Knowledge neglected what was going on in Congress. And I now see that Congress has neglected to place Core Knowledge on the Obey-Porter list of exemplary reforms. Some districts, for example, the State of New Jersey has taken the absence of our name as grounds for declining to allow schools to use Core Knowledge under this legislation. I'm assured by your staff that this sort of exclusion was not intended, and certainly, though, the exclusionary effect exists.

And I also think we mustn't assume that disadvantaged students to whom this is primarily targeted, as we saw in the last testimony, cannot do demanding work. I hope the next version of the bill will name well-proven and excellent programs that do require demanding work. I'm thinking of the AP program, the International Baccalaureate, and of course, Core Knowledge.

I've attached to my testimony some independent evaluations, quite independent, which show significant improvements in quality, above all in equity from using a demanding curriculum like Core Knowledge.

But my main reason for being here isn't to plead our case but to wear my scholar's hat and to recommend specifically some ways to make the language of the next appropriations bill still more effective than the current language in encouraging more public schools to become better, faster.

My first suggestion is that the next appropriation bill should amplify what is meant by reforms based on reliable research. This refers to what Congressman Scott was questioning about. The idea is excellent, but in context, the words are open to misconstruction because all education reforms claim to be based on reliable research. There doesn't exist an educational program or practice that isn't supported by data by some educational researcher. The term "reliable research" should be further defined as research that is accepted by the consensus of scientific opinion. For instance, the programs that are currently on the exemplary list of Obey-Porter on page 97 have diverse, sometimes inverse relations to the findings of mainstream science. The critical scientific fields in education are cognitive and developmental psychology. The most esteemed scientists in those fields are bemused and distressed by the sorts of research claims that are often made in education reforms. I suggest adding to the phrase, quote, "reforms based on reliable research" the further phrase, "practices based on consensus science."

Here's my reasoning: As soon as you stipulate consensus science, the administrators of this bill will need to consult the best-respected psychological researchers, and this will tend to filter out some of the shaky claims to reliability that are made by some of these model programs. The Department of Education should impanel an advisory board of distinguished psychologists who have been approved by the American Psychological Association and the National Academy of Sciences. If we're talking about reliability, we should put in place, what Congressman Scott called peer review. The consensus of the best-respected researchers is the closest connection we fallible humans have with reality, and no lesser standard should be applied when experimenting with our children.

Let me also suggest you introduced the term "effective practice" for the term "reform." That will help the bill encourage best practice whether it happens to be an innovation or not. And there is nothing inherent in an innovation that automatically makes it an improvement. Congress and the public it seems to me want to encourage effective practices that get results, whether they're innovations or not. And some of the off-the-shelf reforms named in the Obey-Porter list do produce better than average results, but others do not, despite what is said by the regional labs. The focus on this legislation should be on getting schools to follow effective principles and practices however they are packaged, whatever their provenance.

And that suggests another language improvement. I think it would be wise to avoid absolute limitation to programs that call themselves comprehensive reforms. The public is interested in results, not in structures. And the listing of particular structures on page 97 and 98 of the legislation is far too restrictive. It doesn't always correspond with the findings of research. For example, the stipulation G which requires assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity seems mainly a convenience for perpetuating a bureaucratic entity. The late James Coleman, a great scientist, author of the Coleman Report, properly warned against legislation that concerns itself with inputs and structures rather than results. I hope we heed late Professor Coleman.

The bill's limitation to comprehensive inputs seems like a good way to gain results. It implies no aspect of schooling will be neglected. But as recent reports on some of these comprehensive schools indicate, the claim to comprehensiveness has not always been achieved, even when lots of money has been spent.

On the other hand, when members of a school community agree on specific aims, goals, outcomes, whether or not they're part of a comprehensive program, they often attain comprehensive results quite effectively, even more effectively. And that's because when you share aims that include administrators, students, parents, teachers, everybody is on board. You get comprehensive results.

Well, to summarize, the bureaucratic structures for improvement should be permitted to vary in this legislation. It's the results that you count. It seemed to me, there was a general sentiment in that direction.

Also, it would be very informative to discover from the data that generated by this program, whether a non-comprehensive approach might be quite cheap and would yield more comprehensive results than these more elaborate and expensive programs. It's unscientific to prejudge that issue, and I don't think the legislation should do so.

My last, main point about the language is, the bill stipulates a set-aside for purposes of evaluating results, a laudable idea, essential. But, I think that the States who receive the grants, and also the schools who receive the data, should be required to produce data and send it back.

But I've become wary of funding experimental programs and their evaluations out of the same grant of money. Any deep student of human nature gradually comes to see that under that structure, if the money for the program is cut off, then so is the money for the evaluation. So, there's always a tendency to prolong the evaluation. We have to wait, leave disagreeable subjects untouched, to be too understanding of failure. It's a hazardous enterprise at best. There are so many variables in educational evaluation. It's better to make a completely separate evaluation grant to an entity sponsored by the GAO or something like that to separate the continuance of the program from the continuance of the evaluator. That is, I think, a critical structural element and a potential improvement. To paraphrase Jefferson, we need to have a wall of separation between the interests of those who run one of these educational programs and the interests of those who evaluate it.

Finally, I'll take 30 seconds, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, to name not nine of bureaucratic structures but five basic principles of K through 12 education that are

accepted by consensus science.

First, learning is slow and cumulative. Knowledge builds on knowledge.

Second, children's readiness to learn is not mainly a natural growth, but a product of what they have learned previously at previous grade levels.

Almost all children can be brought to this readiness through adequate learning at the prior grades.

Four, adequate student learning is highly correlated with adequate curriculum and teacher quality, a point made by members of the panel.

Finally, teacher quality is highly correlated with teachers' subject-matter knowledge and general knowledge.

And I don't know of a single research psychologist who dissents from those five principles. And so it seems to me you want to make sure, even if the structures are not lock-step, that those basic principles are being met. They're not merely optional elements of effective school reform. They're essential to quality and to equity in all programs. Now some of the programs that are listed do meet some of those criteria and principles, but we should strive that all of our schools should meet those fundamentally agreed on principles if we're to achieve major improvements in K-12.

I'm prepared to amplify these remarks, Mr. Chairman, later on should that prove useful, either in questioning or in writing, and I thank you again for inviting me.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Dr. Hirsch, for your testimony. I think it's an excellent way to, if you will, segue to our other witnesses.

Congresswomen Northup was here but she just left a moment ago. But I believe she is in a markup and so we're going to, upon her return, recognize her for the purposes of introducing her constituent, Ms. Austin. And Congressman Harold Ford is here and would like to be recognized for the purposes of introducing, I believe, Dr. Ross, one of our other witnesses, who I assume is also a constituent.

So, Congressman Ford, you're recognized for that purpose of introducing Dr. Ross.

**Mr. Ford.** Thank you, Chairman Riggs, and, Chairman Martinez, thank you, sir, and thank my colleagues on the committee. I serve on the full committee but this is not my subcommittee, so I'm appreciative to come before and just say a few words.

Welcome to all the panelists, but particularly to the one from the great ninth district in Tennessee who has been a leader. Chairman Riggs got his Ph.D. from Penn State University in 1974. I was four-years old, but I'm a Penn graduate, so I won't hold that against you, Dr. Ross, that you're a Penn State man.

He has done tremendous work back home in the field of school reform, Chairman Riggs. He's sort of cut out of the same cloth that you are in terms of wanting to ensure that all of our kids are afforded an opportunity to learn to prosper and flourish in tomorrow's highly-competitive, some would even say fiercely-competitive, marketplace. Of the 20 to 25 schools in which he has directly played a role back home in helping to redraw and to reconfigure curricula, we've seen vast improvements in many areas. He is subscriber to the whole school reform which many of us in this Congress are.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the director of the Center for Research and Educational Policy at the University of Memphis, an outstanding scholar, one who is widely respected in education circles, not only throughout the mid-south but certainly throughout the Nation, my friend Dr. Steven Ross.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Congressman Ford. And you're very welcome to stay with us if your schedule permits.

And Dr Ross, thank you for being here.

Now we're going to jump back to Mr. Anderson and continue down in that process, again, with the caveat that we're going to recognize Congresswoman Northup for the purposes of introducing Ms. Austin, if she returns. And I also understand you have a bit of a time constraint, Ms. Austin, so we'll make sure that we work in your testimony.

Our next witness is Mr. John Anderson. He's president of the New American Schools Development Corporation in Arlington, Virginia. I certainly have heard of the New American Schools Development Corporation. I haven't had a chance to meet Mr. Anderson, but I'm told they're doing extensive work in the area of school reform. He's joining us today to discuss that work and what Congress can learn from it as we implement the Comprehensive School Reform program.

So thank you for being here, Mr. Anderson. Now please proceed with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN ANDERSON, PRESIDENT, NEW AMERICAN SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

Mr. Anderson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. We at New American Schools are very appreciative of the opportunity to meet with you and your committee today.

You know when you think back when Sputnik I orbited the earth, American scientists that were running in the space race couldn't turn to their competitors in the Soviet Union to ask for help or advice. They couldn't review the plans for Russian rocket motors nor study the satellite's schematics. The Americans' work would have been much more effective and efficient had they been able to consult with the best thinking of the

time.

Traditionally, educators who have tried to raise student achievement in their schools have been like those early American scientists. They've set out alone using their own knowledge, and experience, and commonsense to find ways to improve student achievement. They perhaps found a program or two directed at addressing specific obstacles or, if they were lucky they found an expert to provide one-time training. What they did not get, however, was a complete package—the education equivalent of the launch pad and the rocket, the radar system, and the satellite, along with the skills to use them. In too many cases, their reforms never really got off the ground.

Educators no longer are bound by the limits of their schools, or even their own school districts, as you have provided last November when you voted to give thousands of schools access to experts and practitioners who can guide them through comprehensive school reform.

Well, this movement toward comprehensive school reform gives schools a chance to adopt, and adapt, a proven framework for school-wide improvement. It's strict enough to guide educators through those tough issues that are inevitable in school change, but they're flexible enough to let them resolve those issues in unique ways that consider the conditions in their schools and in their communities.

For the past seven years, New American Schools, a business-led, private, non-profit organization, has worked to create a group of eight organizations, we call them design teams, that provide high-quality, research-based tools and assistance to schools in need of improvement. We currently are working in over 1,000 schools across 40 States and we represent a powerful public, private partnership for school reform.

We do believe that schools need choices; we do believe that one-size-does-not-fit-all. We also think it's essential to have criteria about what a comprehensive reform is, and we do believe that the nine criteria listed in the guidance and in the legislation do define what a comprehensive school design is and should become the standard for providers of comprehensive school reform.

Now there's ample evidence to document that these designs can work for students. In many schools that have successfully implemented one of the designs, students produce higher quality work, achieve at higher levels, and show improvement on standardized test and other performance indicators.

Discipline problems are down; one of the solutions to discipline problems in schools is to create an engaged learning environment for all students. Student and teacher engagement are up, and parent and community involvement both rise.

Now in a written submission, we comment on the Rand Corporation's review of New American School Designs and their foremost reason for the fact that they work, and work sooner than normally would be expected, is that each design is comprehensive and covers virtually all aspects of schooling which is a departure from the traditional fragmented approach to reform.

It's possible to transform not only individual schools, but also to effect broad-based improvements across entire school districts. For example, San Antonio, Texas, a

district with 70 percent of its schools that are committed to implementing a comprehensive design. The number of low-performing schools on the State TASS exam has dropped from 42 to no more than 3. The dropout rate is down 44 percent. And math, reading, and writing scores have all improved double digits.

You're going to hear about Memphis from Dr. Ross today. And a recent study of comprehensive school redesign there, indicates that significant measurable gains can be realized across all grades and all subjects within two years.

Finally, some recommendations; we believe that comprehensive school reform represents the last, best hope for fixing what ails American public schools. We believe that the disconnect between education practitioners and researcher must be corrected, and that strategic partnerships between the private and public sectors can provide a critical link. We submit the following four recommendations for your consideration.

Number one, the program should be extended, expanded, on 1999.

Second, we urge you to pay additional attention to support district-level efforts to help schools select, implement, and sustain effective comprehensive designs.

Third, we ask you to consider to commit resources to develop a larger supply of quality school assistance providers, both from those existing assistance organizations as well as supporting a national competition to select and develop new providers.

And last, we ask that you ensure that the evaluation of the program continues. We cannot say enough about effective evaluation. and the Rand Corporation and others have learned a lot about how you evaluate comprehensive school reform, and it involves both looking at how well the model is implemented as well as what are the results and improvements in student achievement.

Finally, simply stated, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration initiative should continue because based on our experience, it works for children, it works at scale, and it demonstrates the appropriate and effective use of Federal education funds, and that is to support local choices for improving public schools.

Thank you.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

We now turn to Dr. Glen Harvey. She is the chief executive office at WestEd, the regional education laboratory that serves my home State of California as well as Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. Dr. Harvey has conducted extensive research on school reform at WestEd, and joins us today to discuss those research findings as they relate to the Comprehensive School Reform program.

Now, Dr. Harvey, please proceed with your testimony.



**STATEMENT OF GLEN HARVEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WESTED,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

Ms. **Harvey**. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman **Riggs**. Do you want to pull that microphone?

Ms. **Harvey**. I'm sorry.

Chairman **Riggs**. There you go.

Ms. **Harvey**. Better?

Thank you very much. I very much appreciate the opportunity to comment on this very important school reform initiative. I particularly welcome the opportunity to speak with this committee because I assume this is the committee that will be looking at the effectiveness of this program, and applying what you hear and learn to reauthorization of title I in the future.

I can't comment yet on the evaluation of this reform effort since it is just starting to roll out in our States and our region. However, what I can do is look at the educational research and development and share some lessons learned from that about the design of this program.

WestEd has a 35-year history of applying the best of R and D to educational improvement efforts. And we've learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't.

What I'd like to do today is highlight five elements of the program that researchers suggest are essential to its success.

The program is comprehensive in its focus. It's based on research. It's adaptable to locally-driven needs. It includes a strong evaluation component, and it provides ongoing assistance to all of the schools that participate.

Let me begin with its defining characteristic: comprehensiveness. Much of the reform in the past has been fragmented; it's been piecemeal. We know from looking at research efforts that reform takes basically four approaches: fix the parts and pieces, fix the people, fix the school, or fix the system. Comprehensive school reform focuses on the system and takes the best of the other three approaches and holds the most promise for success.

We know to make a difference for all children in this country, we need to be comprehensive; we need to look at all the pieces: curriculum, instruction, assessment,

professional development, community and parent involvement. All of these pieces need to be addressed and in place if schools are going to serve all our children well.

The second essential element is that its research-based. There has been a large investment, in R&D, in educational research over the last decades, and it really has paid off. We know a lot about what it takes for schools to work with children. And to have all children learn, we need to apply it. This program is very positive and strong around urging schools to begin where it matters, with what works.

The third essential element of this program that I see as its strength is that it's adaptable to locally-driven needs. We know that children and adults learn in very different ways. We know that one school is very different from another. You cannot take a program that's effective in rural New Hampshire and necessarily expect it to have the same results in innercity Los Angeles. We know that one-size-does-not-fit-all; reform occurs school-by-school, community-by-community.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, in California many of our poorest innercity schools have been required to hire a number of teachers who are on emergency certificates. These are teachers who are asked to teach the hardest to reach students, under the worst conditions, with the least preparation. In these schools, many of the teachers are not prepared to develop their own comprehensive models. They may do better to adopt a model that is prescriptive and that focuses on the needs of their specific children, like Reading Recovery, Success For All, or Accelerated Learning.

In other schools, however, in equally poor innercity schools where the faculty is experienced and there is strong parent involvement and community support, it may be much more preferable for a more flexible model to be adopted or even such as the Coalition of Essential Schools, or for that school to develop its own model based on their rigorous standards set forth in the program.

The fourth strong component of this program is its inclusion of evaluation. And here I think Dr. Hirsch and I slightly disagree. I think that including evaluation in this program is essential to build capacity of educators to be able to learn from their successes and what does and doesn't work so they can continue to apply it. If we intend for this program to be brought to scale and warrants more schools to be involved, we really need to learn from what we're doing, from our successes and our failures. We also need to shift to a stronger accountability model so that all the schools involved are held accountable for the results. And all those who are involved, such as laboratories, for providing assistance are equally accountable for results.

And finally, a final strength that I haven't heard mentioned very much today is the emphasis put on ongoing support to the schools participating. If there is anything we know from research, we know that the best program in the world designed as well as possible and implemented with the best intentions can fall apart without ongoing support for teachers, and administrators, and parents as they grapple with implementing these programs.

So these are the five elements of the program that I believe research suggests are successful, comprehensive, and focused, research-based, adaptable to local needs, strong evaluation, and ongoing assistance. I strongly encourage you to preserve those components in this program and to continue those programs in any reauthorization

considerations you might have.

Finally, I just simply would like to thank you and the Congress for not only giving me the opportunity to testify, but for your strong support for comprehensive school reform. I encourage you to give this program the resources and the time necessary for it to make a difference for each and every child in our country.

Thank you very much.

Chairman Riggs. Thank you, Dr. Harvey, and thank you for coming all the way out from San Francisco. I know what that cross-country travel is like.

I'd like to go to Ms. Austin at this point in time, because I don't know if Congresswoman Northup is going to be able to return. It is my understanding she is in the middle of a markup session in that Appropriations Subcommittee, sort of, if you will, the counterpart to this particular committee. We're the authorizers and they're the appropriators that makes some of the line item budgetary decisions on how Federal taxpayers dollars are spent. And they are marking up, as I understand, at the present, as we meet the subcommittee for Fiscal Year 1999. But I know she wanted very much to be here to introduce you, Ms. Austin.

And I'm also told that, again, you have apparently a return flight, so I want to, with the indulgence of our other witnesses, skip to you at this point in time and introduce you. You are the director of Curriculum and Assessment at the Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville Kentucky. And I don't know if anybody told you, but I born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and I am a product of the Jefferson County Public Schools.

She is here today to discuss with us the Jefferson County experience with comprehensive school reform. And I take it that this was one reason why Congresswomen Northup is so interested in this particular subject, why she worked hard in helping to fashion a bipartisan compromise on the language that accompanied the actual budgetary appropriation for this program last year.

Ms. Austin, thank you for being here. Please proceed with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE AUSTIN, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT, JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

Ms. Austin. Thank you, Chairman Riggs, members of this committee, fellow educators, and other concerned citizens. I, too, am very grateful to have this opportunity to participate in this hearing regarding comprehensive school reform today. I am a practitioner. I'll be speaking basically about my experiences as principal of John F. Kennedy Montessori Elementary School in Louisville. I was principal there for the past

10 years, so I'm newly appointed as director of Curriculum and Assessment.

I was a very sad day for me 10 years ago when our test scores revealed that our students were at rock bottom in every subject area. Our students were performing at a very low academic level. Our test scores in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, were the lowest in the district. Our daily attendance rate was the lowest in the district. And our parental involvement and participation was very minimal.

Our school could be found at the bottom of most lists that described student performance in Jefferson County Public Schools. I was devastated; I was used to being associated with the top of the list, the top performers. This was devastating to me as a new principal. So when 32 percent of our kindergarten class failed, and 23 percent of our first graders failed and were unable to progress to the next level, it became very clear to me that we needed to look for other ways to address problems facing our school.

The good news, though, for me as a new principal was we didn't have anywhere to go but up. We took bold steps to address our problems and found effective ways to meet needs of the students attending Kennedy.

In 1993, we began working with the National Alliance for Restruction of Education which is currently known as America's Choice for School Design. Our faculty and staff was interested in the comprehensive, research-based school improvement model, primarily because of the focus on student results and student-based education. The conviction that virtually all students can and must achieve at high levels along with their promise to provide professional development and technical assistance to implement this comprehensive program, made it most appealing to my staff.

As principal, I was visible in the classroom. I was checking the lesson plans and observing classroom instruction on a daily basis. However, student progress remained very slow. We were implementing a variety of programs. That, in retrospect, I realize now, they were probably fragmented and piecemeal approaches to the changes we were trying to make. The strong focus of the National Alliance on results using assessment, curriculum planning, and high-performance management techniques to achieve those results helped me, as the school leader, understand that all of our time and energy had to be focused on student achievement.

Of course, marshalling all energy and resources towards student achievement presented a challenge. It involved what we called selective abandonment, letting go of efforts and programs that did not help students achieve at high levels. We eliminated the add-ons and those programs that were just continued out of tradition. The selective abandonment process caused anxiety separation for teachers. They didn't want to let go of activities they had participated in four years.

But by 1994, Kennedy was beginning to reap the fruits of our labor. Performance in reading and math tripled; performance in writing quadrupled, and scores in science and social studies were twice what they had been two years earlier. Our school far surpassed its performance target and earned cash rewards from the State. The Louisville Courier Journal had something very powerful to say about Kennedy students. "Kennedy Montessori frugals: Teachers scale the educational mountains." That's what the headline read.

Without a doubt, though, we had not reached our peak in student performance. In fact, in 1996, results from the State assessment showed a dip in our previous level of performance. Nonetheless, we had moved considerably to get our students to standard.

How did Kennedy accomplish this feat? Mostly the school's gains came about through wise planning to improve student performance. Of course most schools develop plans on a regular basis, but too often those plans are not carried out. And there is not always a clear link between school objectives, getting students to standard, and the strategies they choose to implement those standards. My experience at Kennedy shows that setting clear targets for student performance and linking strategies to the targets can reap impressive results.

If we expect all students to learn at high levels, we need to define specifically what our expectations are. And those expectations must be clear to students, parents, school professionals, and community members. Given a clear set of standards for performance, students have a visible target to aim towards.

Our experience at Kennedy generally mirrored a process that was developed by the National Center to help schools improve student performance, and those include: agreeing on the purpose, analyzing the situation, setting performance targets, selecting strategies, developing implementation plans, and then implementing the plan. And of course, last, but not least, monitoring that implementation plan and evaluating the results.

Although the process does not have to be followed in that order, and we certainly did not follow it that way at Kennedy, each one of these steps are crucial to achieving your school improvement goal.

I see the red light is on, I'll try to skip down through some of this.

Monitoring implementation and evaluation results means making sure that those strategies are implemented as intended, and looking at results to see if the strategies are actually working for the students in your school.

The school leadership team at Kennedy took a long hard look at our approaches after the first year of implementation. We found that the school team program showed some success, but in others we were not doing well. So it's constantly evaluating, adjusting your teaching, going back to your original goal of what you set out to do.

This successful implementation of America's Choice for Design at Kennedy has been a great benefit to the students there. Since my move to Central Office, the staff continues to work with American School Design.

The school is no longer at the bottom of the list of the student performance in school achievement. Our student attendance now exceeds the district. Our parental involvement is at an all-time high. The most recent State test results indicate that the students at Kennedy are continuing to improve in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The school leadership team is committed to the America's Choice for School Design reform model.

Although Kennedy still has a long way to go, the school is committed to research-based comprehensive school reform and offers its framework as a systemic, results

driven. And insistent leadership will help make the difference for the students there. The school's approach to planning will continue to be instrumental in helping them reach their performance target. Planning for results will help improve student performance, not for one student, but for every student in the school.

And I thank you for the opportunity to share my experience with you today.

Mr. Souder. [presiding] Thank you very much for coming.

Dr. Ross, you already received an eloquent introduction from Congressman Ford, so I'll just let you go ahead with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF STEVE ROSS, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGY AND RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS, MEMPHIS,  
TENNESSEE**

Mr. Ross. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the opportunity to tell the committee the Memphis story in the hope that its success will continue for Memphis and also be reflected in other districts across the Nation.

I'm going to describe some research that was conducted, research that I think was very reliable research and perhaps important research. It was conducted collaboratively by the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Johns Hopkins University. The purpose was to examine the effects on student achievement of school reform designs that were implemented in Memphis city schools.

The district-wide restructuring formally began in Memphis city schools in 1995. In the Spring of that year, 34 schools selected 1 of 8 whole-school restructuring designs. Six of the designs: ATLAS, Audrey Cohen College, Co-NECT, Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound, Modern Red Schoolhouse, and Roots and Wings were sponsored by New American Schools. Two designs, Accelerated Schools and Paideia, were developed by independent design teams.

In the fall of 1995, the schools began implementing their selected designs with assistance from New American Schools, the design developers, and the school district. In 1996, 14 new restructuring schools were established. In 1997, 19 more were added. This coming Fall, all Memphis city schools will be restructured schools.

But as the initial 34 schools, back in 1995, began their implementations, we conducted evaluation research, initially to assess processes implementations. One major finding, and this is important in light of what we heard today, was that most schools selected appropriate designs that were matched to their goals, educational philosophies, and student populations. Not all did, but most did.

Second, the formal restructuring process generally provided organization and new energy to existing district initiatives for schools to implement site-based management and associated educational reforms.

Third, in nearly all schools and we observed this over and over, movement toward greater use of student-centered learning activities such as projects, exhibitions, and demonstrations were evidences. Classroom became busier and more active places. Planning time for teachers increased. The design implementations in most Memphis schools were rated positively both in our research and in studies by the Rand Corporation.

And now for the study I've told you about, it examined performance on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment program, which is the State mandated standardized achievement test. Using the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment system, comparisons of year-to-year gains were made on 5 subjects: reading, language, math, science, and social studies, between 25 elementary schools that started restructuring in 1995 to 1996 and matched control schools, all other elementary schools in the district, and national norm gains.

The literature on school reform as you know, and it's been brought out today, suggests that successful implementation of whole-school restructuring generally takes five to six years. We were, therefore, surprised by what our results showed. In 1995, before the designs were actually implemented, students in the 25 redesigned schools were making significantly less improvement from year to year, across all grades and subjects, than students in the comparison schools in Memphis. Thus, the restructuring schools actually started out as lower performers.

By 1997, however, students in the redesigned schools were making significantly greater gains than other students. Specifically, their average overall learning gain of 107.5 percent indicated that students across all grades and subjects were improving at a faster rate than the national average, which is 100 percent, and notably faster than students either in the control schools or are at 93 percent and all other Memphis schools which were at roughly about 97 percent. This trend was highly statistically significant and was reflected in all five subjects.

Given the relatively short duration of the reform effort, two years, these results need to be viewed cautiously. Nonetheless, they are highly suggestive about potential restructuring effects. The study also provides the first broad-scale objective evidence of learning gains in schools that have adopted New American Schools Designs and related designs. Formerly, evidence of the success of these designs has been largely anecdotal.

These results have several implications. First, from a measurement and evaluation standpoint, the findings demonstrate the data from traditional standardized tests can measure progressive change in student performance when analyzed longitudinally using a value-added system like the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment system. Specifically, value-added gain score data provided control over variables such as student ability and socioeconomic status, therefore, yielding a much more sensitive test of restructuring program effects than is normally achieved and can be achieved conventionally.

Second, results of the study, or the time of the study, has been too short for the designs to have been fully implemented at all schools. But it still appears likely that the more active teaching and learning observed were having a positive impact that was bridging the initial performance gap.

Third, the fact that the Memphis design implementations have been rated as strong, compared to other districts involved in similar restructuring, is suggestive of the benefits of ensuring that design principles and procedures are correctly and fully represented in the individual school programs. Quality implementation is important.

To wrap up, further studies, which we're conducting now, will reveal whether these trends remain consistent in year three and will also relate outcomes to the quality of implementation. These investigations should provide useful information for improving designs, judging their impact on performance, and determining which designs work best in different school contexts.

Mr. Souder. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Our next witness whom I'm pleased to welcome is Ms. Joey Merrill. She is the assistant head of schools at the Community Day Charter School in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Community Day Charter School using the Modern Red Schoolhouse Design of comprehensive school reform. And Ms. Merrill joins us today to discuss their experience with this design model.

**STATEMENT OF JOEY MERRILL, ASSISTANT HEAD, SCHOOL FOR THE COMMUNITY DAY CHARTER SCHOOL, LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS**

Ms. Merrill. Thank you, Congressman. I wish to submit my testimony for the record, and thank you for inviting me to testify today. I'm honored to be on the panel of so many distinguished researchers and leaders in school reform.

I'll be sharing some information about our Charter School of Youth of school reform research today. Community Day Charter School is a small elementary school. It's located in Lawrence, Massachusetts, which is about 30 minutes North of Boston. This small, mill town is largely comprised of Latino population and working class population.

The school was started in 1995 by a non-profit organization, Community Day Care Center of Lawrence. The mission of the 30-year day care center is to service the working families of Lawrence, and one such need was to have more choices in schooling. Our school's charter is a contract with the State and articulates our school reform goals. Some of our values include teaching a strong work ethic and responsibility, creating a solid citizenry for Lawrence, supporting the community of Lawrence by creating a virtual community at our school, and meeting students where they are and pushing them toward



a set of world-class academic standards which are the Modern Red Schoolhouse standard.

The main goal for our school, and for the families, is to make certain that our students are able to utilize the opportunities this country will offer them as they get older. We believe this can only be done when our students have mastery over English, history, science, math, geography, Spanish, and uses of technology. In other words, our students must be able to compete effectively.

Some of the program elements of our school included a longer school day, 8 to 4. We have before and after day care, after school day care. We also believe in English emersion for language minority students, who are about half our students, and full inclusion of students with special needs. We have a dress code, mixed aged groupings of grades, a strict discipline code, and a teacher and an assistant teacher in every room of 22 students.

Each child has an individualized learning plan to support each child's unique strengths and weaknesses. And we also have a common curriculum that we've developed, based on interdisciplinary phymatic units which were written to teach the Modern Red Schoolhouse's academic standards. Our units are also informed by Edie Hirsch's Core Knowledge rich content.

Schools can certainly implement school reform models with technical support from research organizations. Most public schools, however, do not have a particular time frame in which to achieve the desired results. Charter schools do have a very specific time frame to demonstrate the results, namely, the length of a charter and demonstrating progress every year. I believe it is this attention to academic progress for students in real time that gives charters the advantage to implementing school reform.

Charter schools are created to fulfill specific educational purposes and are usually able to select a staff that shares that vision. Charter schools do not have to change the course of the ship and possibly the crew in the middle of the voyage. We are able to start the voyage together with a clean slate.

Finally, a charter school is ultimately accountably to its customers who choose the school, that is, the students and their families. If they are not satisfied with our service or educational product, they will choose another school, and our school will no longer exist.

All of these factors certainly help a staff to organize itself around results. But it is also the internal autonomy that charter schools have that help us to implement school reform quickly. For example, if my school is trying a particular educational strategy with a particular child and it's not working, we change it, and we change it but fast. We are able to make these kinds of quick decision to suit the needs of individual children, and we're able to flex our budget to do the same.

Having been a researcher at the Hudson Institute which developed the Modern Red Schoolhouse Design, and now a practitioner creating a curriculum based on Modern Red's academic standard, I can tell you that implementing research conclusions into a school is not easy work.

It is not easy because many schools do not have the kind of autonomy and accountability as your charter schools. It is also not easy because of the way time is used

in the school day. Unlike many industries, the education business is organized so that management is usually dealing with operations, crises, or filling out paperwork all day. Even at a charter school, principals or other technical support providers who can come to the school, researchers can only meet with the staffs when they're not teaching. The opportunity to strategically plan and to organize is scarce. Therefore, I believe that staff time is the most valuable asset of schools implementing reforms.

Our school receives a per-pupil allotment from the State, and it is from those funds that we create our budget. We have done a large amount of private fund raising to pay for our facilities, any capital expenses, and for some program necessities such as providing educational programs in the Summer for students and paying teachers to work on curriculum and to perfect their craft over the Summer. Because teachers deliver the service, they are not mere token representatives to our policy making.

For our staff, that is meant creating our common curriculum of standards-based units in one Summer. Over the last school year and over this Summer, we'll be refining our work and continuing to individualize teaching methods for different kinds of learners.

If it were not for New American Schools Development Corporation Designs, and in particular, the Modern Red Schoolhouse Design, we could not have progressed as quickly as we have in terms of our implementation, and results are already being seen. The designs were ready for us to use and flexible enough for our charter to tailor the design that we chose to our particular needs and our time frame.

The Modern Red Schoolhouse Design and Core Knowledge, in particular, gave us the academic standards in the content we needed upon which to base our curriculum. Reform models bring research to the school, and if the school is equipped to implement the suggested reform, the results are powerful and clear to any visitor.

The Government can help schools improve their service to children by continuing to support school reform models that do research and are proactive, in particular, in offering needed technical assistance to schools. School reform designs can also support schools by linking school practitioners to other school practitioners who have actually accomplished those particular reforms.

It is also my hope that these designs can be supported financially so that they can continue to do more research to fulfill the varying needs of schools attempting to implement reform. I, at the school, no longer have time to do my own research or to find out what the best practices are. I need to be able to call somebody to tell me what the current research says. And that's what other school principals need as well.

The Government can invest in school reform by also supporting charter schools. Charter schools are some of the best pilots of school reform models. Further, charter schools are public schools and deserve equal funding. As a public school, we accept any child who gains entrance to our school through a lottery. The lack of facilities and capital funds offered to charter schools means that fund raising is an ongoing burden, that many expert groups may not be able to afford the opening of a charter school such as groups of teachers because of.

Without the initial financial backing and infrastructure of the day care organization in Lawrence, my school would not exist. Currently, we have over 400

students on our wait list. Our school is only 196 students, and our students' families would like for us to start a high school. Our only extrusion has been three families who left the city. We know that many more families are staying in the city because of the school.

The demand for replication of school reform designs and charter schools is enormous. Investing in the creation of new charter schools offers many families more choices for their children immediately, offers the traditional public school system more models to replicate, and will yield quicker results in a complicated endeavor.

I thank you for allowing me to share the good news about a school that has utilized school research reform and to offer more options for its community. And I hope if you're in Massachusetts, you'll visit us. And I'm going to submit our annual report with actual school result data as part of the record.

Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. Souder. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Our last witness is Mr. Irwin Kurz. He's the principal of Public School No. 161, in Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Kurz comes to us with his own success story. P.S. 161 in Brooklyn has used the Open Court Reading curriculum that has shown tremendous academic gains among high-poverty and minority youth. He joins us today to discuss his experience with its implementation and the factors that have helped lead P.S. 161 to success.

Mr. Kurz.

**STATEMENT OF IRWIN KURZ, PRINCIPAL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 161,  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK**

Mr. Kurz. Thank you.

I've been a teacher and supervisor in the New York City Public School system for 30 years. For the past 12 years, I have been the principal of P.S. 161. Public School 161 is located in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, New York. Nearly all of our 1,350 students are African-American, and approximately 95 percent are eligible for free lunch.

Recently, we received the results of the April 1998 city-wide testing program in reading and mathematics. On the city-wide reading test, 80.9 percent of our students scored at or above grade level. On the city-wide mathematics test, 86.1 percent of our

students scored at or above grade level. Our scores on state-wide tests are even higher. As compared with schools having similar student populations, the disparity between our test results and test results in these other schools is rather dramatic.

Unfortunately, many people are surprised to learn that minority students can achieve at such a high level. Educators who feel that poverty or the color of one's skin are predictors of academic failure have little chance of succeeding. It is the responsibility of schools to educate students rather than to make excuses that justify failure.

During the past 12 years, we have instituted the following practices which have contributed to the success of our students.

**Uniform reading program.** We use the Open Court Reading program throughout the school. This reading series combines a strong phonics component with real literature.

**Supplementary reading program.** It is important for students to want to read. Reading should be a pleasurable experience. We have purchased hundreds of class sets of different novels. Teachers and students select a novel that they would like to read. Students read the book for the homework and answer several comprehension questions. After the class completes the novel, usually in two or three weeks, they select another book.

**Principal's Reading Club.** Students in kindergarten and grade 1 who can read a book are sent to the principal's office to read the book for the principal.

Students in grades 2 through 5 must write 5 book reports to become members of the club. Members of the club receive a certificate and a Principal's Reading Club button.

**Book store.** Every Wednesday before school, 7:45 a.m. until 8:15 a.m., we set up a book store where students and parents may purchase books at a reduced price of \$1.00. We sell between 200 and 300 books every Wednesday in a half hour.

**Weekly writing exercise.** Every Wednesday, students in grades 1 through 5 write a composition that is graded and is returned to them.

**School uniforms.** Students wear uniforms in our school.

**Technology.** We have two computer labs. Every student visits the lab at least once a week working on literacy and math skills. Some of our classes have computers and printers in their rooms.

**Parental involvement.** It is important for parents to understand that schools cannot do it alone. We put the parents on notice as soon as they register their children for kindergarten that they are their children's first teacher. In New York City, at the end of April, parents register their children who will be starting kindergarten in September. In June, I conduct an orientation meeting for parents of incoming kindergarten students. At this meeting, the parents are given a copy of a test that will be administered to their children during the first week of school. Parents are encouraged to work with their children during the summer recess to help prepare them to do well on this test. After the first week of school, parents are called back to meet with their children's teachers to evaluate the results of the test. This has helped create a feeling of shared responsibility

between the home and the school, and it lets parents know that they, too, are responsible for their children's education.

Time is set aside each day where teachers can meet with parents. Literacy and mathematical specialists conduct workshops for parents, and parents run an after-school program for students who need adult supervision from 3:00 until 6:00 p.m. These programs, along with strong leadership, an excellent staff, and a no-excuses attitude have helped our students achieve.

On a Federal level, it will be useful for this committee to consider using title I funds for staff development, reduced class size, and increased opportunities for preschool educational programs.

Many parents work and their children need early access to programs which will help them to enrich their lives both socially and educationally. When children are three years of age, their parents should have the opportunity to enroll them in quality educational programs. Federal dollars should be spent to assist local communities in setting up these programs. Although good schools can compensate for some of the deficiencies which students may have at the age of five, it would be better if all students arrive at school with the basic skills necessary to ensure their academic success.

Reduction of class size is another matter that needs to be addressed on the Federal level. If I had the space in my school, I would use most of my title I money to reduce class size. Unfortunately, I have 1,350 students in a school built for 975. We have 30 to 35 students in every class. If I had additional classroom space, I would place students whose reading scores range between the 25th and 50th percentile in classes of no more than 15 students. Those students who are functioning below the 25th percentile would be placed in classes of no more than 10 students. This would allow teachers more time to teach to the specific needs of these students, individually, and in small groups. Reducing class size is important, but for some students reducing the size of the class and changing the mode of instruction is not enough. There are children who are emotionally handicapped and whose handicapping condition prevents them from functioning in a mainstream setting. These students should be removed from the school and placed in an alternative setting. Considerable Federal and local funding would be needed to make reduced class size a reality. Funds will be needed for staff and for building of new schools.

Staff development is another area that could be addressed on a Federal level. All the Title I money spent on remediation programs will be wasted unless students have excellent classroom teachers. You can extend the school day or extend the school year. You can institute Success for All or Reading Recovery programs. You can have any number of pull-out or push-in programs, but these programs will not work unless the child has a good classroom teacher. Title I funds should be used for in-house staff development activities where master teachers can train staff both during and after school hours.

I know that that this committee is considering comprehensive school reform. Please remember that there are schools that are succeeding using a variety of approaches. Every few years we tend to drop everything that is good in education to embrace some new formula for success only to be disappointed with the results. This time let's have the

foresight to keep what works and change what needs to be changed.

Again, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

Congressman Owens, I'm happy to say that the coal-burning furnace is being replaced as we speak in our school.

**Chairman Riggs.** [presiding] Mr. Kurz, thank you, and I must apologize to you and the other witnesses that I had to step out for a few minutes to conduct another meeting. Those kind of scheduling conflicts are unavoidable around this place, as I'm sure you all know. But I do apologize very much and look forward to a little interaction with you.

When we wrestled with the language last year, recognizing that it was thrust on the full House during these very rushed deliberations of the annual spending bill through the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education, which is the second largest spending bill after the National Defense bill, we got involved in those negotiations. Our side of the aisle, representing the majority party in the Congress, was adamant that local schools not be restricted to using only those approaches identified by the Department. Do any of you witnesses know of local schools that have successfully developed any approaches other than the ones recommended by the Department in their booklet, next to where Dr. Hirsch is seated, entitled School Reform Models? Do you know of any school reform models that have truly been developed in a bottom-up locally-driven process, which I think were Dr. Harvey's terms?

And, Mr. Anderson, you're nodding emphatically, and I guess that's what New American Schools are all about, so would you respond first.

**Mr. Anderson.** Well, there are numerous schools that are using a comprehensive approach in districts all over the country. One that comes to mind would be the Alliance. It's called the Alliance, and they're in Broward County, Florida. They're locally-developed comprehensive for whole-school approach.

What is the approach in one school though, must be augmented with the assistance to help other schools adopt that approach. That's the missing link; just having a good comprehensive model won't get it. It is having the model available and then having the school that chooses to use that model get the help they need. Now that assistance can either be provided by the model developer themselves, as we do, or it can be provided by the district, as Broward County does for the schools in Broward County using the Alliance.

But however it's done, the key that is different today, is that most schools need help to implement them all.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, what is the model in that particular example? The illustration you cite in Florida, what is that model and how does it differ from the models recommended or identified by the Department of Education working with their outside

experts?

**Mr. Anderson.** It is similar. It is similar. It has an intensive reading effort based on the work of direct instruction, which is one of the models that was listed in the legislation. That's the Reading Component. But then they combine the other academic subjects around that to have a whole school. When I say model, I mean a whole school - all students, all classes, all grades, all subjects, all the time.

The district has then provided a group of experts to help other schools in that district implement the Alliance. When we look for new models, and we should, one of my recommendations is that you actually invest in finding new models and helping them create the capacity to help other schools. Finding them is not the problem; they're out there. The problem is helping them, then, proliferate that model with other schools.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. Well, Dr. Harvey, you said that this program is adaptive to locally-driven needs. I'm trying to understand this, because I don't see how it is. And it seems to me that any program that is so top-down in the sense that it ultimately involves the Department of Education awarding it, what are at least at this point in time, competitive grants. I guess ultimately if we get around to grants to all 50 States, it will largely become again like so much of the rest of Federal taxpayer funding for education, and that is, you know, just typically an operating subsidy, large S, if you will, from Federal taxpayers. But how is the program adaptive to locally-driven needs? And does the design of the program competitive awards to the States who in turn make competitive awards to districts; is that really conducive to locally-driven comprehensive or whole-school reform?

**Ms. Harvey.** Well, in California, as you know, we don't know that yet because it has not rolled out in California. However, my understanding is that in Arizona, they have made, they're planning to roll this out on the first year, and three awards in 1998. And they received 51 or 50, just around 50 applications from local schools in Arizona, and they've picked 12 to fund. And I believe they announced them yesterday actually. So, I have not seen them yet since I was on an airplane, but my understanding is that in Arizona, in fact, they were very, very open to locally-developed programs.

And that some of the proposals took aspects of different programs to be able to say what they needed in their school. So I believe in Arizona, at least, which is a State you would expect that to happen, I believe, given the support of local control, that most of those models that they are proposing are pulling from the research and saying, "Here's what I need in my school. Here are the gaps; here's what the research tells me will work." Just exactly what you were saying, that you're looking at the research and you pick and choose, so you do not have to take one of those models.

And I think the guidance is fairly clear about that. Certainly at this point, I talked with a State board member in California and a member of the Department of Education who has responsibility for this last week, and she said certainly in California they, too, will be supportive of locally-grown initiatives as long as they reflect the guidance, the rigorous components, but it does not mean you have to put them together in exactly the

same way.

And if I could just go on for a second, it's like I have a young son and he is suddenly very interested in doing puzzles. What's very important to him is to see the picture of the puzzle. But the strategy he uses on the puzzle is very different. Sometimes he does the corners; sometimes he picks the dinosaur, because that's what he cares about. Sometimes he picks a color. HE can use different strategies to put the picture together. It doesn't mean he has to use the same approach each time.

And I think what we're seeing in comprehensive school reform is that this program allows you to put the picture together for student improvement in many, many ways. It happens that the Department has identified some models, but I don't believe they're saying that's the only way to get there. And I think you'll see in your region that many, many schools will opt to put the pieces together differently.

**Chairman Riggs.** It just seems to me that the sub grantees wanted to, if not ensure, really increase their chances of being funded, that they probably would select one of the models being promoted by the Department of Education. That's why I say that this program inherently has sort of a top-down philosophy.

But before I assume that, I want to ask Ms. Merrill and Mr. Kurz how they became aware of the Federally taxpayer-funded Comprehensive School Reform program. How did you learn about this program? What interested you in it? And what made you decide to apply to your States?

**Mr. Kurz.** Well, I didn't apply, and as, on a very local level, a principal of a school, I am reluctant to give anything over to the Federal Government, even my superintendent.

I'd rather run the school the way I'd like to run the school. If I fail, I should be out, or stop the funding. But I'd rather have the leeway to do what I feel is best. And most of the people probably sitting here on the committee, and even in the gallery, probably went to a school that didn't have any comprehensive school reform, and they did quite well. And they had one teacher, and 30 students, and the kids did well. Their parents expected them to do well; the teachers expected them to do well, and they did. And I have that attitude towards the students in my school, and the teachers have that attitude. And the students buy into it; the parents buy into it, and they do well.

**Mr. Tirozzi.** Mr. Kurz, let me interrupt for just a second to ask you then to make sure I understand what you're telling us. Are you telling us that you have no intention as the principal of P.S. 161 of applying to the New York State Educational Agency for any of this funding?

**Mr. Kurz.** Well, I had the opportunity to apply for school-wide projects. And I chose not to do it just to go through the paperwork when I couldn't accomplish what I wanted. What I wanted to do with the school-wide project was to reduce class size. I didn't have additional classroom space to do it, so I didn't bother. So I have title I funds, almost a



million dollars in my school. And I use them where I have three reading specialists; I have two math specialists. I have early-children paraprofessionals; I use them in that manner. And I'm not interested in taking success for all Reading Recovery, any of the program. I think the school is running very nicely, and I want to continue that way.

I feel that the school is doing so well because of the stability. I've been there for 12 years; the programs have been in place for 12 years; the teachers have been there for a long time. The staff is stable. The student population has less mobility now because the parents want to keep them in the school, and that's why it works. And I have no intention of changing.

**Chairman Riggs.** Ms. Merrill, how did you learn about this program? And how does it fit into your particular plans? Your long-range thinking and planning, your vision if you will, for the Community Day Charter School?

**Ms. Merrill.** Well, it's actually mainstream to what we do. I actually didn't know there was money for it until today.

I'm glad to hear it. We will certainly be applying. As a charter school, we take any money we can get from anywhere, practically. I mean we, basically, are hustling private sector and any public sector funds that are out there. We do this; we took pieces of Modern Red Schoolhouse, which is a NAS design and basically the content from Edie Hirsch's work, and combined it because we believe in it. That's why we did it.

And with our small budget, I have wring a dollar about a hundred ways to be able to pay for it. And it's not that the design, itself, is so expensive, it's that time to pay, you know, for teachers to work on things in the Summer. I have to go raise that money privately for them to work this Summer. They want to; we all believe in it, but we need, you know, the money to do it. And what I would just encourage this committee and the full Congress is to make sure that those set-asides are as small as humanly possible, because we need the money in the field.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, God bless you and Mr. Kurz both for the work that you're doing. I join all my other colleagues in saying that what goes on at that individual site and in that classroom is all important. I've said many, many times during my tenure as the chairman of this committee that I believe teaching, the role of an educator, is as in the words of Speaker Gingrich, "a missionary occupation." And a teacher can affect eternity for this. They really never know where their influence might end.

**Ms. Merrill.** Congressman, can I just add one thing?

**Chairman Riggs.** Yes.

**Ms. Merrill.** \_that I should have added before?

Chairman Riggs. Of course.

Ms. Merrill. I would hope at some point in some legislation that comes along there would be some stipulations about actual results. There's a lot of grants that I can go get and just fill out some paperwork, and nobody ever asks me what actually happened. And I just think that's really kind of disgusting that my taxpayer dollars are used that way.

Chairman Riggs. I'm glad you're saying that, because Dr. Hirsch\_

Ms. Merrill. What I would suggest is\_

Chairman Riggs. \_has been trying to drum that into our thick skulls for some time. I think that points to a large feeling of the Federal Government of getting really at this level of Government in the subcommittee and that is our failure to perform the very legitimate oversight responsibilities as the legislative branch of Government.

But I'm glad that you have the courage to emphatically state your views for the record.

Let me ask one other question of this round before I go to my colleagues, and this is for Dr. Ross and for Dr. Hirsch. The language that we hammered out last year, again, involves a national evaluation of the programs' results after three years. (a) Do you think that's a long enough time period? (b) And I think you both have alluded to this or spoken to this in your testimony but I want to give you the opportunity to elaborate. What should the methodology of that evaluation be? And three, do you think we have any business increasing additional funding spending precious, scarce Federal taxpayer resources on this program until that evaluation is completed?

Dr. Ross?

Mr. Ross. I was hoping you'd ask Dr. Hirsch first.

In terms of evaluation, I think, it's absolutely essential to do that. Whether or not you can get results in three years, with the method study what we found is that we did get results after two years. I think a lot depends upon how you do the evaluation, and I'm not familiar. I've talked to Bill Kincaid a little bit about plans for that. But if the evaluation is such that you're getting data that local districts provide and it's a mix and match thing. It's not something that has control schools and it's not, quote "good research," I don't know if you'll get anything. I think what you might get in that case is a lot of noise that results in good efforts not being shown up.

One of the reasons that the Memphis study did show good success is that we were using a very carefully controlled design. We were using a value-added system that was

showing how much students gained from year to year.

So I would suggest that with the national evaluation, less is more. Rather than collecting data that may not be good from many, many, many districts, although you should do that anyway just to see what comes up, running some quality studies with match-control groups where you know what you're getting and what you're doing would be invaluable.

There are other parts to your question, but I don't know\_

**Chairman Riggs.** No, I think you covered it well. I guess the other part of the question was whether we should consider any funding increases for this program until the evaluation has been completed and the results are available to the Congress.

**Mr. Ross.** Yes, that sounds more like a political question. I think that one of the things that was brought up by Dr. Hirsch way back about an hour ago was, is it valuable to have evaluation by the LEA's, because part of their grants are to do evaluation? And, I think absolutely, yes.

Now these aren't necessarily evaluations that will show the designs are working, but what was done in Memphis and is also done in some other districts is that formative evaluation is done that really shows whether the schools are implementing the designs, whether they're reaching implementation benchmarks. When you go to the schools, do you really see a different kind of learning taking place or do you see the same old thing? If you don't do that, you can spend a lot of Federal dollars on models that end up essentially being a banner in front of the school where there isn't that kind of process accountability.

So there's really two kinds of evaluations; one is process accountability, and the other is results accountability. It's going to take you awhile to get results accountability in the same precise way we did in Memphis because that, again, used a value-added system, state-of-the-art statistics. I would hope that you would be open to getting reliable and sound process evaluation that is showing that good things are happening in the schools. And if that appears, good things not necessarily results right away, but good things in terms of teaching and learning being changed, we found that in Memphis. And I think that that is a basis to say, "Yes, this program seems to be working. Schools are operating differently. Let's put more funding in."

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. Dr. \_

**Mr. Ross.** But I wouldn't make it just a yes or no thing based on results.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Dr. Ross.

Dr. Hirsch?

**Mr. Hirsch.** A number of things. I agree actually with the speakers who say evaluation should be part of the program. I see that in the same way as an internal financial officer of a business keeping watch over the books. I mean that's a terrifically important component. But it's also very important to have external auditors for a business, because they no particular interest. And it would be better if the internal auditors, rather the external auditors, had no stake whatever in the continuation of the program. And that's the basic structural point I want to emphasize. Internal evaluation, evaluation that's part of the ongoing procedures is of tremendous importance. But this body, the Congress, it seems to me has the right to demand some totally independent evaluation that doesn't depend on the continuation of the program, which fits into your other question.

Should we continue it if it's not working? That question, it seems to me, connects very strongly with Mr. Kurz's testimony about his school which pretty much reflects in very concrete terms the kind of point I was making about the flexibility of the program. He is not applying for any of these. He's running a first-rate school. If he could get some of that money, because there's a finite amount of money even in our rich economy, and if that money can be spent in a more cost-effective way to reach more children instead of a good, real big hunk of that money going to the entities that are overseeing these programs, to my mind, that's all to the good. And Mr. Kurz would be using all of that money for his kids. It's a program that's known to be effective.

And frankly, a lot of the programs that are listed in the Obey-Porter legislation, are not particularly effective. In fact, there is evidence that shows that they are not effective. I can't understand why they continue to be listed.

So, I'm very skeptical. I'm a Democrat; I'm not a Republican. But I must say, I begin to have Republican sentiments on when money is not going to the kids and not helping the kids with this Federal legislation. I would be very cautious. And I guess my most concrete advice in that regard is to make sure that you really are getting evidence both from the start from good disinterested scientists that this is likely to work. And secondly, on the other end, that it really did work by people who don't have any stake whatever in the continuation of the program.

Those are really my two main points. And I hope that addresses your question.

**Chairman Riggs.** It does, Dr. Hirsch, and in fact, you articulate very well the concerns that many of us have regarding how we somehow seem to grow these programs over time at the Federal level. And I was really stunned by Mr. Kurz's testimony just a moment ago that he hasn't applied to the New York State SEA and for the funding, in part because of his concern about the regulatory red tape involved.

And, Mr. Kurz, I assume, but I need to ask this anyway for the record, but I'm assuming that the majority of your students are eligible for title I services? What percentage?

**Mr. Kurz.** Ninety-six, a little over ninety-six percent.

**Chairman Riggs.** Yes, so obviously you would qualify\_

**Mr. Kurz.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** \_for these funds and any funding for comprehensive school reform?

**Mr. Kurz.** Sometimes it's not only money that makes schools work. And if my school is working, I don't need all this other money to put in programs that I'm not certain, as Dr. Hirsch mentioned, will work. If mine is working, why do I need the money? It's, you know, leave it alone.

**Mr. Hirsch.** Actually, the Open Court Reading program is the best researched reading program available. The top reading researchers in the country created it.

**Mr. Kurz.** I'm not talking about Open Court being a model for other schools. I'm saying it works in my school, and it is a successful program, and I do recommend it to other schools. But I would not be bold enough to say, "Well, it worked in my school. Let it work in another school." And I think something that Dr. Ross touched upon also; when I came into my school 12 years ago and it wasn't doing all that well, they told me it was an Open Court school. And when I went around from classroom to classroom, the teachers weren't wherewithal using it. It was in the closet. It was called Open Court but, you know, it could have had a banner in front of the school as you mentioned, but they weren't using it. So, it's what you do with the program that makes it work. And it's really the people inside the school that make these programs work regardless of whether it comes from the Federal Government, or the local government, or from the school itself.

**Chairman Riggs.** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Kurz.

I know Mr. Anderson wants to add a word. I need to go to my colleagues, though, but I want to just note for the record you and Dr. Hirsch are making a very effective argument for our block grant approach, whether you know it or not. Try to get money down locally, down to the local level by letting the decisionmakers at that level decide how best to use the money to meet the needs of those kids and that community.

**Mr. Anderson.**

**Mr. Anderson.** If every school in innercity New York was as good as Mr. Kurz's school, we wouldn't have this issue. We wouldn't even need to have this discussion. The fact, though, in this country is that good schools are the exception and not the norm. And what Mr. Kurz has done in his school with his leadership is what we need to enable other

schools to do that don't have that leadership and that don't have that expertise. And they supplement what they are able to produce on their own with outside assistance. And whether that decision is made in a district or at the local school, we believe it ought to be made at the local school level, that once that decision is made, the funding from somewhere to engage that assistance. Effective use of title I money, most schools don't use it effectively today. But the effective use of title I money could accomplish this. So it is to take what Mr. Kurz does so well and to try to make that more pervasive across the country, in our experience is that most schools don't have the wherewithal to do that on their own.

**Chairman Riggs.** Well, we can continue this debate. I think you could probably condense what you just said down to saying that most schools don't have a Mr. Kurz has principal.

**Mr. Anderson.** Absolutely.

**Chairman Riggs.** And you wouldn't get any argument here, but you'd certainly get an argument whether this particular program and this hundreds of million of dollars in Federal taxpayer funding will help more schools get more Mr. Kurz-like principals.

**Mr. Scott.**

**Mr. Scott.** Mr. Chairman, when did the lights start working?

**Chairman Riggs.** A moment ago when I was slipped a note saying there are two votes in 20 minutes.

And, Mr. Scott, I will remind you who is chairman of the subcommittee as well.

With that admonition, I'll be as generous as possible with the time for you and Mr. Owens. And if we have roughly 20 minutes, we'll try to evenly divide it between you two gentlemen.

**Mr. Scott.** Mr. Chairman, I was just joking. I was just joking.

**Dr. Hirsch,** is there a consensus on what consensus research is?

**Mr. Hirsch.** I wouldn't say so; no, because that's a very abstract question. To find out what consensus research is, you have to take a individual question. Now, if you want to

find out what's the consensus on reading, I believe this panel and others have gone into that kind of issue. And you find out that even though there are some strong holdouts on the subject of reading research, there is strong agreement that you need to start children with phonemic awareness. You need to build on phonemic awareness and go onto the next stage, and so on. There are some strong holdouts, but there's a distinct consensus on that question.

There are some questions on which there isn't a great deal of consensus. For example, the right balance between early memorization of the multiplication table and an understanding of the procedures. Most people take, I think, I would say, "Yes, there is consensus that a balanced approach to that question is the right approach, and not take an extreme or doctrinaire view." So if you go on that particular question, there's less agreement than on reading, but there's still a solid core of agreement there. You have to take it question by question. And then you have to say, "Well, who are the best respected researchers?" And it seemed to me that you asked the critical question when you said, "Is this refereed research?" Because refereed or peer reviewed research is the kind of research that gets into the most prestigious, the best journals, and they filter out a lot of second-rate science. And that is what, by and large, I would say, "Yes, okay. That's a rough and ready definition of what consensus science is." That is what gets accepted by the most respected scientific journals.

**Mr. Scott.** And Dr. Hirsch, you indicated the need for independent evaluation. How expensive is that?

**Mr. Hirsch.** I don't think it's very expensive at all in the scheme of things. I should think you could do a darn good evaluation for a million dollars. Then, if you want a really good evaluation, you could probably do it for \$2 million. I mean it's chicken feed\_

**Mr. Scott.** You're talking about national, you're not talking about in each school?

**Mr. Hirsch.** The point is that you don't. Evaluation is a sampling device. You don't evaluate every student. There are various techniques of evaluation. There are control schools, that method, that's very important to use. But there's also looking at individual student achievement which is, seems to me, the bottom line of evaluation. And particularly the equity effects of various programs; that's very easily discernible. It isn't all that hard and all that expensive. The important thing is to ask really hard questions. The really embarrassing questions that usually do not get asked when the program is also funding its own evaluation.

**Mr. Scott.** Well\_

**Mr. Hirsch.** It's a little bit touchy to talk about that issue. But it's like my example of the external auditors; it's extremely important and I\_

**Mr. Scott.** Well let me ask Mr. Kurz a difficult question. How can you have such a successful school in New York City and most of the schools in New York City don't do as well?

**Mr. Kurz.** I think we're focused in our school. We have stability. We know what we're doing, and we don't make excuses. Everyone takes responsibility if, I believe it was Mr. Martinez who mentioned something about his kindergarten child and everyone in that class failed. In our school, if a child fails, I fail, the teacher fails, and then we worry about the child.

**Mr. Scott.** Well, how can that be? Can that be replicated?

**Mr. Kurz.** It can be replicated, but it has to start from someone who believes in it and not just says it. Because you hear a lot of people saying, "Oh, all children can learn," all this and all that, but I don't know if they really believe it.

**Mr. Scott.** Well, when you see these turnaround situations, usually the first thing you find is a principal. They changed principals, and then things started to work, like a CEO of a corporation. Can that be replicated? I mean do you have to kick out the principal and start with somebody new? And then how do you pick somebody?

**Mr. Kurz.** Well, quite frankly, sometimes you do. Sometimes if it's not working from the top, you have to remove the top. And other times you have to give them the tools to create success, and that can be replicated.

Some of the programs, I've listed about 10 or 12, and I even cut it down as I saw the lights flickering. But I have programs that we work and that we use in our school that are effective.

And something like the Principal's Reading Club where I heard someone just, you know, they laughed a little bit because they think it's a cute idea. But I was out in California talking to some principals and superintendents out there, and I asked a question of the principals, and it was rhetorical because I didn't want to embarrass anyone. I asked, "How many students in your kindergarten classes know how to read?" And quite frankly, very few principals would know that unless they have the kids come into their office to read. I know we have 150 students who came into kindergarten this year; 136 of them have come into my office to read already this year. So\_

**Mr. Scott.** How many students do you have in your school?

**Mr. Kurz.** One thousand, three hundred and fifty.



**Mr. Scott.** How many of their names do you know?

**Mr. Kurz.** How many of their names?

**Mr. Scott.** Correct.

**Mr. Kurz.** Quite a few. I don't know every single name, but I know a lot of students because they come in my office, and I'm in the classroom.

**Mr. Scott.** Mr. Chairman, I'll defer to Mr. Owens at this point.

**Chairman Riggs.** Thank you, Congressman Scott.

**Mr. Owens** is recognized.

**Mr. Owens.** He asked the hard questions already. Let me give you a political preamble here. We're talking about \$145 million for the School Reform program here. A very tiny amount when you consider the billions of dollars that are spent on elementary and secondary education. We're talking about school expenditures, you know, in most big city schools between \$5,000 and \$7,000 per child. When Americans really want to educate somebody as they do West Point cadets, they spend \$120,000 per cadet. Well, you might say, "Well, that's not elementary or secondary. That's higher education." Well, Harvard and Yale only spend between \$30,00 and \$40,000 per student. And we really want to educate people. The taxpayers of this Nation spend \$120,000 for the academic education of cadets, not the military maneuvers. If you add that to it, it goes up to \$200,000. Recently, I checked these facts with the CRS.

So, we're talking about an atmosphere created in the Nation where we don't have appropriate funding. Before you make evaluations, you can make some assumptions about standards. And we dealt with opportunities to learn standards around here for awhile, and then they were tossed out completely because they were too dangerous. Opportunity to learn standards means simple questions like, "Do you have an adequate place for kids to learn, to study? Is it safe?" You shouldn't have coal-burning schools. Children can achieve despite that, but you shouldn't subject them to that. You shouldn't subject them to crowded classrooms and more students in a room that a teacher can deal with; 30 is not bad, you say, but there's some with 40.

We shouldn't do that if we really are serious about education youngsters.

When you have a situation that is working well, you don't need reform. We don't think reform is highly desirable. We're not here to try to sell reform. If it's not broken, don't fix it. P.S. 161 is not broken; it doesn't need to be fixed. But across the Nation, most of the schools are broken. We do need reform; certainly, in our big city schools.

Why are they broken? Why do we need reform? Because people like Mr. Kurz are not out there in large numbers. So what does the system need to do in order to get more people like Mr. Kurz? If the key to it is leadership, leadership and administration of the school via the principal, and leadership among the teachers, then that's where we should focus. We talk about staff development as if it's one of the things we'll consider; maybe that ought to be the primary focus.

**Mr. Kurz,** can you replicate yourself even at your own school? If you left tomorrow to become vice chancellor of New York City Schools for School Improvement, which if they had any sense, they would have tried to recruit you a long time ago. But if you left to go to a position where you could apply your 30 years of experience in the system, and 12 years as a principal, and help other principals to learn because there's a problem. If they have visited your school, the superintendent for your district came over, district 17, and she said she had 16 new principals coming in in September, new, brand new people. Out of the, what do you have 26 schools? Those new principals coming in don't have your experience. You know\_

\_and as a system as a whole, they don't have experience as principals. How do we have a system which can quickly bring these people up to a level of somewhere near half of what you have to offer now in terms of experience? A leadership which attracts good people to stay in the school as teachers. A leadership which knows the importance of working with parents. A leadership which makes due with what you have in terms of resources. So you got computers; you didn't wait for somebody else to get them. You have them in your school. You didn't wait for the appropriation to come through somewhere else; you got them somehow. On and on it goes. How do we replicate you? How would you recommend that we guarantee a good flow of just top-notch principals in the system?

**Mr. Kurz.** Well, just yesterday I had the occasion, they want to start, I think you saw our middle school component at 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. They'd like to start another one similar to what we've accomplished in 161. And the principal came over to my school; I met with her yesterday, and we went over certain things.

There are certain basic things that people who are new to the job probably don't know. Believe me, I know a lot more now, after 12 years, than I did when I first started. There are certain simple, basic things in good pedagogy and good principalships that can be taught to other people. But the other people have to have the dedication and the commitment. If the person has the dedication and commitment, then it can work. But if they just have the talk, and they have nothing behind it, then it's just going to be talk. But they're are plenty of people out there\_

**Mr. Owens.** Well, you're our hero, so I don't want to put on the spot\_

\_but how many teachers started out when you started out 30 years ago who are dedicated, they went on and became principals or administrators? How many left the system?

**Mr. Kurz.** You know, a lot of people left the system\_

**Mr. Owens.** What percentage?

**Mr. Kurz.** A lot of people left the system for many reasons. Money was a reason; they weren't happy with their job. They weren't successful. But there are, I have a few friends who have been very successful, and they stayed in the system. But unfortunately, I don't know what the life expectancy of a principal in an urban school is, but I imagine it's rather low. And that's part of the problem of urban education because they don't stay there long enough.

**Mr. Owens.** How can we change the system so that we keep the good people in? The system in your school keeps good teachers. You introduced me to a few; one who drives in from the suburbs where she could get a job in the suburbs, paying more money, and not have to drive in. She drives in because she likes the system you have at the school. We have 1,100 schools in New York City. How do we get half of them up to the point where the teachers enjoy coming to school and teaching. And they have stability there, because the turnover is tremendous. And somebody mentioned before that you have emergency teacher certificates. We have 32 school districts in New York City, and we have 1, school district 23, where 60 percent of the teachers are emergency teachers; 60 percent. How do you establish standards? And what difference does it make whether the State requires you to take a test? They didn't take a test; they're warm bodies that we beg to come because the shortage is so great.

So, what I'm trying to do is to turn the focus back to the system. This is a little piece of reform designed to deal with the system problem and to try to get us back to the point where systems can do what used to be done sort of, not naturally, not the economics were such that most of the college graduates who came out of school when you came, a large percentage of the top people went into teaching. When I came out, it was beginning to dwindle away. You can get jobs somewhere else. So the top students didn't all go into teaching. And that trend has continued right down to the point where you have the students who scored lowest in college are the ones that go into teaching. And some top students who decide to go into teaching, don't stay there because they have other options and they run into conditions where the principal does not encourage teamwork. And all kinds of things happen, so they quickly get out.

So, I just want to put in a word for the system. This is a step forward in terms of \$145 million that will give us some opportunities to look at what does work, whole schools can come to grips with some problems in terms of maybe keeping teachers, maybe developing leadership among principals. But we need a whole lot of other models like this and experiments like this in order to get the system working.

Most of all, we need more support from our Government at every level. We are not supporting our schools enough. It is not enough to put the schools and the principals and the teachers on the spot and not give them first-rate school buildings, where kids can study in safe conditions, the right amount of equipment, books. All of that is what we, as public policy makers, ought to deal with first, standards, standards which would make it

possible for every kid to have an opportunity to learn. Then, after that, I think these kinds of reforms, how they operate within that context become very important.

But let's not, you know, spend too much time evaluating too harshly this small effort because\_

\_it is not the beginning of the solution even. It is just a tiny effort we made, just totally inadequate.

Mr. Scott. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Riggs. Mr. Owens, thank you.

Yes, Congressman Scott?

Mr. Scott. Could I ask Ms. Merrill a question?

Chairman Riggs. Of course, we've been summoned to the Floor for a vote and obviously I want to adjourn the hearing shortly, but "Yes."

Mr. Scott. Ms. Merrill, you indicated that each student has an individual education plan. Does that include a social background to determine, I know in Judiciary Committee, we have found that if a young person doesn't have a responsible adult person, individual adult in their life, kind of as a guide, that's usually a high risk for juvenile delinquency. Do you determine whether or not there's an uncle or parents are doing their job, or a coach, or something like that; as part of their IEP evaluation?

Ms. Merrill. Actually, we don't determine whether the parents are doing their job. What we do is, we try to help to facilitate the families to do a better job with their children if they need such help. Each plan is for all children; it is to take the place of the IEP. I know Mr. Kurz is not foolish on accepting this kind of money. We don't accept Federal special ed money because it comes with too many ties for us. It's much simpler to\_

Mr. Scott. How do get\_

Ms. Merrill. \_an IEP for all children.

Mr. Scott. If you don't accept Federal special education money, what\_

**Ms. Merrill.** How do we pay for it?

**Mr. Scott.** Well\_

**Ms. Merrill.** Again, I have to wring a dollar about a hundred different ways.

**Mr. Scott.** How do you comply with IDEA, or do you not bother?

**Ms. Merrill.** We comply because each family who comes into our school accepts sort of the terms of what the school will be like which is a full inclusion school. Which there are many great models in New York City, actually which are full inclusion schools.

**Mr. Scott.** So, if a person cannot participate in a full exclusion activity, then they are not accepted?

**Ms. Merrill.** No, there's no full exclusion. That's not really a possibility\_

**Mr. Scott.** Or an inclusion?

**Ms. Merrill.** What we do is we push in the services that the students may need. We definitely do offer varying kinds of services that deals with students' needs.

**Mr. Scott.** Are you required to accept people regardless of handicap?

**Ms. Merrill.** Yes. Yes; and we currently do have students with severe emotional disabilities and situations, autism, et cetera. And we have a full inclusion model.

**Chairman Riggs.** Congressman Scott, thank you.

And I want to ask one final question to Ms. Merrill. And that is, Ms. Merrill, it's my impression that the comprehensive school, based largely on today's hearing and the testimony we've received from our witnesses, that the Comprehensive School Reform program is Federally driven in sort of a top-down manner. It's also my impression that charter school, the whole charter school reform movement is much more of a grassroots bottom-up, locally-driven movement. Is that your impression being someone who is directly involved in helping to found and operate a local charter school?

**Ms. Merrill.** I believe it's true that the charter school movement is a grassroots movement, one that is so small sometimes at least internally to our own little school that we definitely need the help of researchers, of sort of the best of the best to be able to call on them to get different ideas at different times. Time is our biggest problem, actually. So, the ability to call on research teams to sort of send in the SWAT team to give us advice, and help, ideas, that's what we need. And cash also helps to be able to facilitate, but that ability to use this kind of system for charter schools, I think, is especially helpful. And our independence, our autonomy helps to push our time frame along.

**Chairman Riggs.** I think that independence and autonomy are pretty good ingredients for real reform\_

**Ms. Merrill.** Yes.

**Chairman Riggs.** \_and innovation.

And final question, Mr. Anderson, how many are your clients are charter school operators?

**Mr. Anderson.** We have several dozen, and we are expanding that effort now.

**Chairman Riggs.** You are extending your outreach to charter schools.

**Mr. Anderson.** Yes, we have a grant from Foundation to actually expand our work with charter schools. It doesn't matter whether a school is a charter school or how it's funded, a private school, they still need to create a good environment for children, and that's what research-based models can help all schools do.

**Chairman Riggs.** Absolutely. Do you work with private schools?

**Mr. Anderson.** No, sir, not yet.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. Well, I want thank you, did you say not yet, by the way?

**Mr. Anderson.** Not yet.

**Chairman Riggs.** Okay. I want to thank you very much. And I want to thank all the other witnesses for their testimony here today. We appreciate it; it's going to be very helpful to us in our deliberations regarding the subsequent funding for this program in the next Federal Fiscal Year and beyond as the next Congress takes up the reauthorization of

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Chairman Riggs. So, thank you, again. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:25 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.]

**APPENDIX A – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK  
RIGGS**



**Statement of the Honorable Frank Riggs  
Hearing on the Comprehensive School Reform  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
June 23, 1998**

Good afternoon. This afternoon the Committee will conduct a fact finding hearing on a newly-funded initiative, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program.

The Comprehensive School Reform program was funded for the first time in the Fiscal Year 1998 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. The purpose of the program is to provide incentives for schools to develop reform programs based on reliable research and effective practices with an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement.

The Appropriations bill provided \$150 million for this program divided as follows: \$120 million is to go to States based on the Title I formula and for school reform programs in Title I schools; \$25 million is to go to States

based on the 5 – 17 year old population in each State for school reform programs in any school; \$5 million is for the regional education laboratories and \$1 million is for the Department to identify research-based approaches and disseminate that information to States, school districts and schools.

The Appropriations Conference Report stressed that schools are not restricted to using only those approaches identified by the Department, but are free to develop their own reform programs based on rigorous research and meeting certain criteria, including using proven methods for teaching and learning and providing high-quality teacher and staff training.

As one of the negotiators who was involved in preparing this language, I want to make clear my intent that this program should be a resource for schools to implement a research-based design that meets the unique needs of their student bodies. Schools should not be

required to adopt “one-size-fits-all” models of reform. They should be free to adopt the curriculum portions of one model, the governance portions of another, or something developed entirely at the local level, as long as it fits with the criteria outlined in the statute.

We will hear from two panels this afternoon. On the first panel, we will hear from the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Dr. Gerry Tirozzi. On the second panel, we will hear from researchers and practitioners familiar with comprehensive school reform. I look forward to their testimony. At this time I yield to the Ranking Member for an opening statement.

**APPENDIX B – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
GERALD N. TIROZZI**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement by  
Gerald N. Tirozzi  
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

before the  
House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
Tuesday, June 23, 1998

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me here today. I welcome this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Department's implementation of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, an important new resource for school improvement developed by the Congress with the support of the President.

The purpose of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, which received an initial appropriation in fiscal year 1998, is to help schools improve student achievement by developing or adopting effective approaches to strengthening the entire school based on reliable research and proven practices, and with an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement. The program focuses particularly on schools that need to substantially improve student achievement, especially Title I schools, and is designed to increase the quality and quantity of schoolwide reform efforts across the Nation. The program can be a particularly powerful engine for improvement when integrated into a State's comprehensive strategy to raise standards for all students and establish strong systems of accountability.

In establishing the program, the Congress recognized the potential for the wider use of comprehensive, research-based models for school reform to help strengthen teaching, learning, and

student achievement. The program's design builds on what we know about successful school reform—for example, that high expectations are critical; that improvements hinge on the implementation of a combination of measures; that effective schools must take into account local conditions, resources, and needs; and that piecemeal, fragmented approaches are seldom effective. Comprehensive school reform can help make high standards real in many more of our nation's schools.

#### Key Program Features

The Congress specifically defined a comprehensive school reform program as one that integrates, in a coherent manner, nine specific components. A program:

(1) Employs innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics.

(2) Has a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management, that aligns the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development into a schoolwide reform plan designed to enable all students to meet challenging State content and performance standards.

(3) Provides high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training.

(4) Has measurable goals for student performance tied to the State's challenging content and student performance standards.

(5) Is supported by school faculty, administrators, and staff.

(6) Provides for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities.

(7) Utilizes high-quality external support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity (which may be a university) with experience or expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement.

(8) Includes a plan for the evaluation of the implementation of school reforms and the student results achieved.

(9) Identifies how other resources available to the school will be utilized to coordinate services to support and sustain the school reform.

Recognizing the substantial amount of research and development work that has taken place over the last decade, a noteworthy feature of the program is that it encourages schools to examine successful, externally developed models for inclusion in their comprehensive school reform efforts. Such models should incorporate well-researched and well-documented designs for schoolwide change that have been replicated with proven results. Congress listed 17 externally developed school reform models as possible examples of approaches that could be supported through CSRD funds. However, the Congress also made clear that other externally developed approaches and locally developed

programs with research-based evidence of effectiveness and a coherent design for integrating the nine components are also eligible for CSRD support, and this point has been emphasized in our program guidance.

### **Funding**

Most of the program funding is targeted to schools eligible for Title I. For fiscal year 1998, Congress appropriated \$120 million to support comprehensive reforms in schools eligible for Title I funds. An additional \$25 million from the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) is available to all public schools, including those eligible for Title I. The program calls for participating schools to receive grants of at least \$50,000 a year, renewable for up to three years.

The 1998 appropriation also includes an additional \$5 million for technical assistance from the Department's 10 Regional Educational Laboratories and for other Department activities to help schools select and evaluate comprehensive school reform models and implement reform programs.

### **How the Program Operates**

Under the program, State educational agencies (SEAs) apply to the Department for formula grants. Then SEAs use their formula grants to make competitive grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) on behalf of individual schools that wish to adopt specific reform strategies. LEA applications to States must: identify the participating Title I-eligible schools and their requested levels of funding; describe the reforms to be implemented and how the district will provide technical assistance; and indicate how the LEA will evaluate reform implementation and results.

In planning State competitions, SEAs have the flexibility to set priorities that, for example, give competitive preference to districts proposing to, for example, use funds in Title I schools in need of improvement, in schools with high dropout rates, or in schools choosing to implement externally developed models as all or part of their comprehensive school reform programs. SEAs may also give



priority to LEAs in different parts of a State, including urban and rural communities, and to schools at different grade levels. The 1998 appropriation will enable States to provide grants to as many as 2,900 schools; the President's 1999 budget request would provide a \$30 million increase in the program and enable up to an additional 600 Title I-eligible schools to participate.

#### Initial Guidance and Technical Assistance

In mid-March, we sent applications to States and distributed non-regulatory guidance to SEAs, LEAs, schools, and technical assistance providers. SEAs, along with the Department's regional educational laboratories and comprehensive assistance centers, are responsible for assisting LEAs and schools in developing their comprehensive school reform plans. Since November of 1997, SEAs and the regional educational laboratories, often working in conjunction with the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers, have held over 25 events across the nation showcasing the reform models mentioned in the legislation as well as over 100 technical assistance workshops focused on comprehensive school reform.

One product available to help schools, districts, and States identify or explore comprehensive, research-based school reform approaches and design local reform programs is a Catalog of School Reform Models, developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in collaboration with the Education Commission of the States, with funding from the Department. This listing is neither a set of recommended models nor a set of models "approved" for CSRD funding, but rather a valuable resource for initial exploration by districts and schools. SEAs and the regional educational laboratories have disseminated over 15,000 print copies and the document is available on the worldwide web. We are encouraging LEAs and schools to seek additional information directly from model developers and to take advantage of events sponsored by States and the regional educational laboratories that bring developers of reform models together with school and district personnel.

### State and Local Progress in Implementing the Program

So far, interest in the program has been intense. Some State and regional conferences showcasing research-based school reform models have drawn far more participants than they could accommodate, and some SEAs, model developers, and regional educational laboratories report that they have rapidly expanded their efforts to accommodate requests for assistance. Most States and school districts are still in the initial planning stages, and they are preparing for the program in different ways. Even so, we have already received applications from 18 States. Nearly half of those applications have been reviewed and funds for several will soon be transferred to the States. I anticipate more applications to be approved very shortly.

States are taking a range of creative, diverse approaches to integrating the CSRSD program with other school reform resources and efforts. For example, Ohio is capitalizing on past experience with its "Venture Capital Schools" program, actively assisting local schools to thoughtfully assess critical needs and develop strategies to improve the entire school. Delaware is encouraging schools to use Title I and Goals 2000 funds to plan comprehensive reforms that can be implemented with the assistance of CSRSD funds, or with other resources available to the school. Illinois will provide districts with Goals 2000 grants to help raise the capacity of low-performing schools to apply for CSRSD funds.

Other States plan to integrate CSRSD with their standards-based accountability systems and provide technical assistance to low-performing schools. For example, Kentucky plans to target CSRSD funds to schools identified as "in decline" and train highly skilled educators to help those schools identify research-based models that fit schools' needs and help them prepare strong CSRSD applications. In Maryland, the State's School Support Network, which includes a team of specialists and distinguished educators, will help low-performing schools analyze their needs and select

appropriate reform programs; moreover, to help ensure the quality of proposed comprehensive programs, teams of Maryland officials will visit finalists for CSRD funds as part of the State's application process.

#### Building State and Local Capacity to Benefit from the Comprehensive School Reform

Expanding technical assistance at all levels of education will be a key element in helping States, districts, and schools get the maximum benefit from the CSRD program. Next week, approximately 300 State officials and other technical assistance providers will attend a Department-sponsored Summer Institute on comprehensive school reform and schoolwide programs. In addition to the activities of the 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the Department, we also are providing modest funding to the 15 Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers so that they can coordinate with SEAs and the laboratories in helping districts and schools use Federal program resources to support and sustain comprehensive reform efforts. Finally, we are coordinating with other key organizations—including the New American Schools, the Education Commission of the States, the Council of Chief State School Officers, as well as the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association—that are devoting considerable attention and resources to this effort.

#### Importance of the Program

The CSRD program is an important part of the Department's effort to increase the quality and accelerate the pace of schoolwide reforms in schools that need to substantially improve student achievement, especially high-poverty schools that are not educating their children to high standards. We believe the program provides strong incentives for under-achieving schools to take a hard look at their own problems and get outside assistance to improve. After years of trying piecemeal reforms, many of these schools will want to take advantage of this program's more comprehensive

approach. Many will also be attracted by the opportunity to implement school reform models that are already well-researched and tested, and that are supported by technical assistance and training from the model developers and other experts.

To track school progress in implementing comprehensive research-based reforms, the Congress directed the Department to assess the first-year program implementation and the results in Title I schools in the third year of the program. We are currently developing a plan for evaluation, beginning with a need to gather baseline information quickly this fall, while setting a foundation for longitudinal work.

Among the challenges of school reform are to bring about broad, effective school improvement in significant numbers of schools and to discover how to get educational strategies that prove effective in one setting to produce comparable results in other settings. The CSRD program is among the most significant Federal efforts ever to capitalize on research-based knowledge about school reforms that work, and to help bring about widespread, effective school improvement in the schools that have the furthest to go to help their students achieve to high standards. The program has the potential to point the way toward more effective use of Federal funds for "schoolwide programs" in the more than 25,000 high-poverty schools that are eligible to select the schoolwide option for using Federal funds, including Title I funds. Besides strengthening the capacity of participating schools and districts to sustain comprehensive reforms, the program will have a wider impact on schools by increasing the knowledge base about the implementation of research-based designs and models in schools and the effects of the CSRD demonstrations on school practice and student achievement.

I would now be happy to take your questions.

### DR. GERALD N. TIROZZI

Dr. Gerald N. Tirozzi is the Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. President Clinton appointed him to this position on January 19, 1996. As Assistant Secretary, Dr. Tirozzi oversees the administration of 42 federal education programs which represent an \$11 billion budget.

A native of Connecticut, Dr. Tirozzi is a nationally recognized leader in education reform. He has dedicated the last 37 years to improving teaching and learning for all students by promoting high academic standards and initiating major teaching reforms. From 1993-1995, Dr. Tirozzi was a tenured professor at the University of Connecticut's Department of Education Leadership, where his concentration was on urban education issues, educational policy, and the preparation of school superintendents. From 1991-93, he served as the President of Wheelock College in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Tirozzi served as Commissioner of Education in Connecticut, from 1983-1991, where he played a major leadership role in developing and implementing the Connecticut Mastery Test, which received national recognition as an assessment model to promote high academic standards and expectations. In addition, he initiated major teaching reforms, promoting both higher salaries and standards, which were a model for the nation and were at the core of an unprecedented \$300 million Educational Improvement Act from the Connecticut General Assembly in 1986.

From 1977-1983, Dr. Tirozzi served as Superintendent in the New Haven, Connecticut, Public Schools, where he had previously worked as principal, guidance counselor, and teacher. Dr. Tirozzi began his education career in 1959 as a science teacher at Notre Dame High School in West Haven, Connecticut.

Dr. Tirozzi has served on a number of boards and professional organizations, including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Education Commission of States, Jobs for the Future, and the Educational Testing Service. He is an honorary lifetime member of the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA). Dr. Tirozzi has written numerous articles on educational topics which have been published in educational and scholarly journals.

Dr. Tirozzi's public service and leadership has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, Michigan State University (the Distinguished Alumni Award), and the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents. He has won numerous awards from his homestate which include recognition from the Connecticut Legislature, the Connecticut chapter of the NAACP, the Southwestern Connecticut Urban League, and the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. In 1997, Dr. Tirozzi was awarded an honorary Doctor of Pedagogy from Nova Southeastern University (Florida). In 1996, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Quinnipiac College (Connecticut).

Dr. Tirozzi holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Higher Education from Michigan State University. He earned an M.A. in Guidance and Counseling and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Southern Connecticut State University. He also holds a Sixth-Year Certificate in Educational Administration from Fairfield University in Connecticut.



**APPENDIX C – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. E.D. HIRCSH, JR.**

Recommendations for Improving the Effectiveness  
of the Next Appropriations Bill

By E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

Mr. Chairman, thanks for inviting me here again. And thanks for making me aware of the Porter-Obey legislation on school reform. I travel here to the Hill only when summoned, and so I have been unaware of the generous amounts of money that are being allotted to school reform by this Congress, and have been largely unaware of the praiseworthy Obey-Porter bill. This bill has tremendous potential for improving public education, if its stipulations are refined and if its highly laudable intent is carried out in actual practice.

As you know, I am deeply concerned with public school reform, particularly the grassroots K-6 reform called "Core Knowledge," which has attracted over 700 public schools in 44 states. Core Knowledge has neglected what is happening in Congress, and I now see that Congress has returned the compliment by neglecting to place Core Knowledge on the Obey-Porter list of exemplary school reforms. Some jurisdictions, for instance the state of New Jersey, have taken the absence of our name as grounds for declining to allow schools to use Core Knowledge under this legislation. I am assured by your staff that this sort of exclusion was not intended, but certainly the exclusionary effect currently exists. We must not assume that disadvantaged students cannot do demanding work. I hope the next version of the bill will name such well-proved and excellent programs as AP Courses, the International Baccalaureate program, and Core Knowledge. I



have attached to my testimony data from several independent evaluations showing significant improvements in quality and equity among disadvantaged students from using the Core Knowledge curriculum.

My main reason for being here is not to plead our case but to wear my scholar's hat, and recommend ways to make the language of the next appropriation bill still more effective than the current one is in encouraging more of our public schools to become better faster.

My first suggestion is that the next appropriation bill should amplify what is meant by "reforms based on reliable research." The idea is excellent, but in context, these words could be open to misconstruction because all educational reforms claim to be based on reliable research. There isn't an educational program or practice that isn't supported with data by some educational researcher. Therefore the term "reliable research" should be further defined as "research that is accepted by the consensus of scientific opinion." For instance, the programs that are currently on the exemplary list of Obey-Porter on page 97 have diverse and sometimes inverse connections with the findings of mainstream science. The critical scientific fields in education are cognitive and developmental psychology. The most esteemed scientists in those fields are bemused and distressed by the sorts of research claims that are often made in education reforms. Hence I suggest adding to the phrase "reforms based on reliable research" the further phrase "practices based on consensus science."

Here's my reasoning. As soon as you stipulate "consensus science" the administrators of the bill will need to consult the best-respected psychological researchers, and this will tend to filter out some of the shaky claims to reliability that are made by some of these model programs. The Department of Education should impanel an advisory board of distinguished psychologists who have been approved by the American Psychological Association and the National Academy of Sciences. The consensus of the best-respected researchers is the closest connection we fallible humans have with reality, and no lesser standard should be applied when experimenting on our children.

Let me also suggest that you substitute the term "effective practice" for the word "reform." That will help the bill encourage best practice whether it happens to be an innovation or not. There is nothing inherent in an innovation that automatically makes it an improvement. Congress and the public want to encourage effective practices that get results, whether or not they involve innovation. Some of the off-the-shelf reforms named on the Obey-Porter list do in fact produce better-than-average results. Others do not. The focus of this sort of legislation should be on getting schools to follow effective principles and practices however they are packaged and whatever their provenance.

That suggests another language improvement in the next appropriations bill. Avoid the current absolute limitation to programs which promise "comprehensive school reform." The public

is interested in results, not in structures. The listing of particular structures of reform on pages 97 and 98 is far too restrictive, and does not always coincide with the findings of reliable research. For instance, stipulation "g" which requires assistance from a comprehensive school-reform entity seems mainly a convenience for perpetuating such a bureaucratic entity. The late James Coleman, a great scientist, and author of the Coleman Report, quite properly warned against legislation that concerns itself with inputs rather than outcomes.

This bill's absolute limitation to "comprehensive" inputs seems on the surface to be a good way to insure school improvement, since "comprehensiveness" implies that no aspect of schooling will be neglected -- not parents, nor teachers, nor the community, nor evaluation, nor administration, nor pedagogy. But as the recent Rand report on New American Schools indicates, this claim to comprehensiveness has not always been achieved in reality, even when lots of money has been spent. And surely we can't spend even more money per school on all our schools than is being spent on these model designs. On the other hand, when members of a school community reach agreement on definite learning goals, whether or not these are part of a packaged program, the aims of comprehensiveness may be attained indirectly even better than with a self-styled "comprehensive" approach. That's because highly specific, common learning goals weld the students, the parents, the teachers, and administrators into a community that has clearly shared and coordinated purposes. The bureaucratic structures for improvement should be permitted to vary; it's the results that should count. It would be very

informative, for example to discover from the data generated from this bill whether a non-comprehensive approach yields more comprehensive results and at a lower cost than do these expensive programs. It is unscientific to prejudge that issue. The bill would only be strengthened by stipulating a very broad and tolerant meaning for the term "comprehensive."

Mr. Chairman, the present bill stipulates a set-aside for purposes of evaluating results. This is again a laudable idea and goal, since evaluation and accountability are essential to educational improvement, and the the grant of funds to a school or district should require a prior agreement to generate and make available a rich body of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. But the evaluation of this data should be entirely independent. I have learned to become wary of simultaneously funding experimental educational programs and their evaluations out of the same grant of money. Any deep student of human nature must gradually come to see that, under this structure, if the money for the program is cut off, so is the money for its evaluation. Hence there is always a tendency to prolong the evaluation, to leave disagreeable subjects untouched, and to be overly understanding of failure. Evaluation of educational programs is at best a hazardous enterprise, beset by complexities and uncontrolled variables. Much better to make a completely separate evaluation grant to an entity like the GAO in order to separate the continuance of the program from the continuance of the evaluator. To paraphrase Jefferson, we need to have a wall of separation between the interests of those who run a program

and the interests of those who evaluate it.

Finally, since I have advised you to interpret "reliable research" as research that is consistent with the consensus of the scientific community, it may be useful for me to list a few basic principles of K-12 education that are accepted by consensus science.

1. Learning is slow and cumulative. Knowledge builds on knowledge.
2. Children's readiness to learn in school is not mainly a natural growth, but a product of previously acquired knowledge which enables them to assimilate new knowledge at the next grade level.
3. Almost all children can be brought to grade-level readiness through adequate learning at the previous grade levels.
4. Adequate student learning is highly correlated with adequate curriculum and adequate teacher quality.
5. Teacher-quality is highly correlated with teachers' subject-matter knowledge and their general knowledge.

I do not know any well-respected research psychologist who dissents from these five principles. From these principles, it follows that optimal improvement in K-12 education will require school policies and practices that bring all children to readiness for each grade level by requiring all of them to meet definite grade-by-grade learning standards. Optimal improvement will also require policies that offer teachers continuous,

scheduled opportunities to upgrade their own knowledge. In short, a good education requires a good, solid curriculum and a good teacher -- a conclusion which will not surprise common sense. These principles and policies are not merely optional elements of effective school reform. They are essential to quality and equity in any and all programs. Some of the programs listed on page 97 of the legislation fulfill some of these consensus-science principles and practices. All programs must do so if we are to achieve major improvements in our public schools.

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to amplify these brief remarks later in this hearing and in subsequent written testimony should that prove useful to the committee. Thank you for inviting me.

## Results at Core Knowledge Schools: Improving Performance and Narrowing the Equity Gap

A report prepared by the Core Knowledge Foundation (May 1998)  
801 East High Street  
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### I. Introduction: Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence

In late 1998, researchers under the direction of Professor Mark Applebaum (a distinguished scientist at the University of California, San Diego) will undertake a large-scale evaluation of Core Knowledge, funded by the Abell Foundation (Maryland) and the Maddox Foundation (New Mexico). This study, over which the Core Knowledge Foundation will exercise no control, will be designed, through careful pairing of experimental and control students, to gather longitudinal data on the effect of Core Knowledge on students' academic competence, as compared with similar students in non-Core-Knowledge schools.

The Core Knowledge Foundation is confident that the results of this study will bear out the slowly but steadily accumulating data from Core Knowledge schools to date, which strongly suggest that *Core Knowledge has a positive effect both on overall student performance and on narrowing the equity gap.*

Since Three Oaks Elementary in Ft. Myers, Florida, piloted the first Core Knowledge program in the Fall of 1990, letters from parents, reports from teachers, and articles in a variety of publications (including *Life*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *U. S. News & World Report*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Teacher Magazine*, *Educational Leadership*, *The American School Board Journal*, and *Phi Delta Kappan*) have provided plentiful *qualitative* evidence of how schools improve when they implement Core Knowledge. Consistently these reports emphasize strong parental support; the children's enthusiasm for learning "grown-up" knowledge; and the teachers' new sense of community as they cooperate to teach challenging lessons, as well as their rekindled love of learning as they revisit or learn anew a variety of topics.

As part of an independent multi-year study of a national sample of Core Knowledge schools selected for geographic and demographic diversity, researchers at the Johns Hopkins University have issued an interim first-year Qualitative Report, which—based on school and

classroom observations, focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires--affirms positive effects of Core Knowledge, including:

- "Children gain self-confidence."
- "Students connect to material learned previously."
- "Core Knowledge appears to lessen the need for reteaching concepts at the beginning of the school year."
- "Students are more interested in learning (and reading)."
- "[Core Knowledge] increases interaction among teachers [and] makes teachers' work lives more interesting."
- "Unlike some reforms where teacher enthusiasm wanes after the first two years, our data suggest that teacher support for Core Knowledge increases over time as teachers attain mastery of the curriculum."

In addition to these qualitative reports, there is increasing quantitative evidence of improvement in Core Knowledge schools. The remainder of this report summarizes quantitative evidence from independent studies of Core Knowledge schools in Maryland, Texas, and Virginia, as well as results provided by a number of Core Knowledge schools.

## II. Independent Evaluations

### A. Maryland Core Knowledge Schools

An independent study by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools focuses on the progress of five diverse Maryland schools implementing Core Knowledge programs, as well as five demographically matched control schools. The study, funded by the Abell Foundation in Baltimore, uses two tests to measure student achievement outcomes: the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, Fourth Edition (CTBS/4), and the Maryland School

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<sup>1</sup> *First-Year Evaluation of the Implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence: Qualitative Report*, Sam Stringfield, Amanda Datnow et al, Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University (1996). Copies available from the Core Knowledge Foundation or at [www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org). The final report is due for release in late 1998.



Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), a performance-based assessment requiring extensive writing, problem solving, and occasional teamwork among students.

In the third-year report (released February 1998),<sup>2</sup> Sam Stringfield, principal research scientist, and Barbara McHugh note that while "the relationship between the tests and the Core Knowledge curriculum is not tight, . . . the majority of Core Knowledge schools posted three-year academic achievement gains in reading comprehension relative to their matched control peers as measured on the CTBS/4. In addition, during the three-year period of this study, third-grade students in Core schools showed greater gains in MSPAP than did their matched control schools or the mean of schools state-wide."

While the study began with six pairs of schools, the number was reduced to five when one of the control schools decided to adopt Core Knowledge. In the tabulation of results from the remaining five paired schools, results were further complicated when one of the Core Knowledge pilot schools encountered numerous difficulties and was threatened with takeover by the state. In response to state and district recommendations, the school focused its efforts on restructuring educational delivery, and in effect stopped implementing Core Knowledge.

• **CTBS/4 Results:** Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Concepts and Applications were given in the fall and spring of the 1994-95 school year in grades one and three in both Core Knowledge and control schools. The fall administration provided a pre-test score and the spring a year-one measure. The CTBS/4 was again given to these same children in the spring of 1996 when they were in second and fourth grade, and in the spring of 1997 when they were third and fifth graders. The data reported here are based on the gains made by students from the fall 1994 test to the spring 1997 test.

On the Reading Comprehension test given to third graders, Core Knowledge schools showed mean school change of +4.7 NCEs (Normal Curve Equivalents, a unit similar to percentiles). The control school showed a gain of 7.0 NCEs, even though the Core Knowledge schools produced greater gains than their matched control schools in four out of five cases. But

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<sup>2</sup>*Implementation and Effects of the Maryland Core Knowledge Project: Third-Year Evaluation Report*, Sam Stringfield and Barbara McHugh, Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University (1998). For a copy of the complete report, contact CSOS at 3003 N. Charles St., Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 516-8834.

if results from the low-implementing pilot site threatened with state takeover and its control school are factored out, then the mean school change for the Core Knowledge schools increases to a gain of 8.0 NCEs, while the mean for the remaining pilot sites drops to a gain of 4.8 NCEs.

On the third-grade Mathematics Concepts and Applications test, the Core Knowledge schools produced a net mean gain of 1.1 NCEs. On average, Core Knowledge schools experienced less gain than control schools (+1.1 NCEs vs. +5.6 NCEs). Again, if results from the low-implementing pilot site and its control school are factored out, then the mean school change for the Core Knowledge schools increases to a gain of 6.4 NCEs, while the mean for the remaining pilot sites increases to a gain of 6.2 NCEs.

At grade five, Core Knowledge schools produced somewhat higher gains in reading than control schools (+0.4 NCEs vs. -2.2 NCEs). In math, scores rose about evenly for both pilot and control schools, averaging +4.0 and +4.2 NCEs respectively.

• **MSPAP Results:** The Maryland School Performance Assessment Program reports school-level results, not those of individual students. For this study, MSPAP scores from 1994-- before the implementation of Core Knowledge--provided a baseline from which to measure progress in 1997. The researchers report that, on average, in all six areas of the MSPAP, "the general Core Knowledge trend was one of gains that clearly exceeded those of the state and of the demographically and geographically matched control schools."

The largest gains relative to all state schools were in writing (+10.5 percentages), reading (+8.6), and language (+7.4). When all subtest areas are averaged together, Core Knowledge schools outperformed the control schools by +5.6 percentages and all Maryland schools by +7.1 percentages. The evaluators note that if the pilot school threatened with takeover and its matched control school (identified as Pair E in the table below) are dropped from the calculations, then the Core schools show even greater gains: +8.5 percentage over control schools and +12.1 over the average Maryland school.

Mean Change from 1994 to 1997 in Percentages of Third-Grade Students Obtaining Scores of "Satisfactory" or Higher on the Six Subtests of MSPAP: Five Core Knowledge Schools and Five Control Schools versus Maryland State Averages

Subtest	Change from 1994 to 1997			Change Difference in Schools in Study and All Maryland Schools		
	All Maryland Schools	5 Control Schools	5 Core Schools	Control Gain Relative to All Maryland	Core Gain Relative to All Maryland	Core Gain Relative to Control
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Reading	+6.2	+9.2	+14.8	+3.0	+8.6	+3.6
Math	+7.3	+8.6	+13.4	+1.1	+5.9	+4.8
Social Studies	+3.4	+3.3	+8.6	-0.1	+5.2	+5.3
Science	+3.4	+7.6	+8.5	+4.2	+5.1	+9
Writing	+4.8	+7.8	+15.3	+3.0	+10.5	+7.3
Language	+15.3	+13.5	+22.7	-1.8	+7.4	+9.2
6 Subtest Mean	+6.8	+8.3	+13.9	+1.6	+7.1	+5.6
6 Subtest Mean without Pair E		+10.5	+18.9	+3.7	+12.1	+8.4

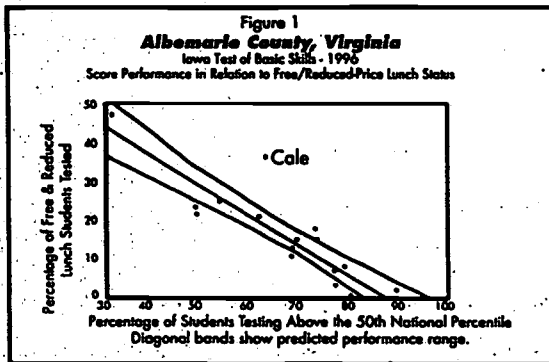
The MSPAP results for fifth graders show that Core Knowledge schools surpassed the gains of the average state school in three out of the six areas. When the gains in all areas are averaged, there is no real difference between the Core schools and schools statewide. But if pair E is excluded, the Core Knowledge schools' gain exceeds that of both the control schools and the state average, as follows:

Mean Change from 1994 to 1997 in Percentages of Fifth-Grade Students Obtaining Scores of "Satisfactory" or Higher on the Six Subtests of MSPAP: Five Core Knowledge Schools and Five Control Schools versus Maryland State Averages

Subtest	Change from 1994 to 1997			Change Difference in Schools in Study and All Maryland Schools		
	All Maryland Schools	5 Control Schools	5 Core Schools	Control Gain Relative to All Maryland	Core Gain Relative to All Maryland	Core Gain Relative to Control
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Reading	+5.4	-3.6	+4.2	-9.0	-1.2	+7.8
Math	+6.1	0.0	+9.9	-6.1	+3.8	+9.9
Social Studies	+11.0	+1.0	+13.7	-10.0	+2.7	+12.7
Science	+7.6	+4.6	+8.9	-3.0	+1.3	+4.3
Writing	+6.1	+5.2	+3.8	-0.9	-2.3	-1.4
Language	+11.8	+1.9	+7.6	-9.9	-4.2	+9.5
6 Subtest Mean	+8.0	+1.5	+8.0	-6.5	0.0	+7.1
6 Subtest Mean without Pair E		+2.6	+12.1	-5.4	+4.1	+9.5

### B. Albemarle County Schools (Virginia)

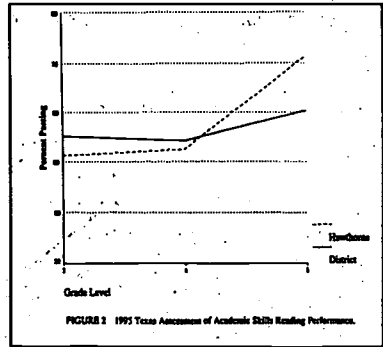
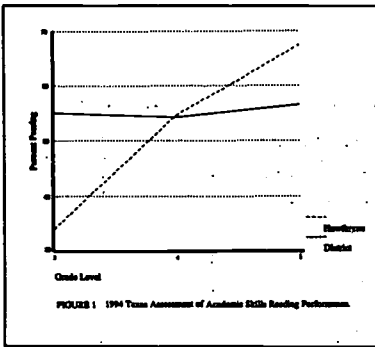
A statistical analysis commissioned by the Albemarle County Schools reported results that support the Core Knowledge idea that a strong core curriculum can help narrow the performance gap between students of low socioeconomic status and others. At Cale Elementary, the only Core Knowledge school in the Albemarle County district, about 35% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch. In the graph below, the diagonal lines represent the best prediction of the percentage of low-income students who would score above the 50<sup>th</sup> national percentile on standardized tests (in this case, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills). As the dots on the graph indicate, most of the district's elementary schools performed within their predicted range. Only one school—Cale Elementary—performed significantly above what would be predicted by the socioeconomic composition of its students.



### C. Hawthorne Elementary, San Antonio, Texas

A study published in the *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*<sup>34</sup> examined how students at Hawthorne Elementary compared to students in the other 65 elementary schools in the San Antonio Independent School District on the Reading Performance section of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Hawthorne is an urban school with a predominantly Hispanic student population; 96% of the approximately 500 students receive free or reduced-price lunches, while 28% are designated as limited-English proficient. Hawthorne began implementing Core Knowledge in 1992.

The *JESPAR* study includes the following graphs:



According to the evaluator, "Figure.1 illustrates that although district reading performance is generally consistent across grade levels with a student pass rate of about 55%, Hawthorne's results show a steep increase in the reading pass rate at consecutive grade levels. At Grade 3, Hawthorne's pass rate of 34% is well below that of the district. By Grade 5, however, Hawthorne's 67% pass rate far exceeds the district's 56% pass rate. The TAAS

<sup>34</sup>"Hawthorne Elementary School: The Evaluator's Perspective," Gail Owen Schubnell, *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1996.

reading results illustrated in Figure 2 show that Hawthorne's third graders achieved a much higher pass rate of 51% in 1995. . . . The performance of Hawthorne's fifth graders exceeded the district's pass rate in reading by about 11% in 1994 and 1995. . . . Although Hawthorne students tend to be more at risk of failing academically than are students in the district as a whole, because of larger percentages of economically disadvantaged and LEP students, snapshots indicate that the school has succeeded in raising achievement levels beyond the aggregate performance of all other elementary schools in the district." The evaluator goes on to conclude:

A central assumption of Hirsch's Core Knowledge theory is that a sequenced curriculum will lead to steady increases in achievement, grade level by grade level. These findings do support that claim because at least with respect to reading performance, the successive grade-level increases for Hawthorne in general show stronger upward trends than are evident in SAISD elementary schools in the aggregate.

The findings in this article are suggestive of a curriculum-sequencing effect—that is, that achievement builds upon itself at successive grade levels. If "schooling over time" at Hawthorne Elementary is viewed as a constant, then the data reported in this article appear to indicate that despite the early deprivation that makes itself apparent to the teachers of children who enter school far below the academic standing of more advantaged peers, potential failure to thrive over time can be ameliorated for children of teachers committed to the principle put simply by Hirsch that knowledge does, in fact, build on knowledge in rather dramatic ways.

### III. Results at Core Knowledge Schools: Brief Profiles

The best kind of evidence by which to evaluate the effectiveness of a school reform initiative is long-term data based on a large and diverse sampling of schools and students. To gather such data will be the goal of the researchers who, in late 1998, will begin a large-scale independent study of Core Knowledge schools. While long-term, large-scale results are the most

reliable, one- or two-year "snapshots" of a school's performance can also provide helpful indications of the effectiveness of Core Knowledge.

On the following pages, we present brief profiles of Core Knowledge schools, based on results sent to us by the schools.

## Calvert County School District Maryland

**Results:** As in all Maryland public schools, students in Calvert County participate in the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), a performance-based assessment requiring extensive writing, problem solving, and occasional teamwork among students. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 take the test. The Calvert County elementary schools began a gradually phased-in implementation of Core Knowledge in 1995. From 1994 to 1997, Calvert County moved from 12<sup>th</sup> place in the state to 3<sup>rd</sup> in the rankings of MSPAP scores. District officials credit this rise to a mixture of factors, including not only the implementation of Core Knowledge but also the district's strong emphasis on professional development and effective teaching methods.

Calvert County, with a population of 65,000, has twenty public schools, including eleven elementary schools.

1993 is the year in which baseline data was established for the MSPAP. Results on the MSPAP are reported as the percentile of students achieving "Excellent" or "Satisfactory."

Maryland School Performance Assessment Program		1993** Percent at				1996 Percent at				1997 Percent at			
		Excellent		Satisfactory		Excellent		Satisfactory		Excellent		Satisfactory	
Grade	Subject	MD	Calvert	MD	Calvert	MD	Calvert	MD	Calvert	MD	Calvert	MD	Calvert
3	Reading	--	--	--	--	4.3	5.1	33.3	40.0	6.0	8.1	36.8	49.6
3	Writing	9.2	8.4	35.1	38.1	11.8	13.5	40.9	45.9	13.2	17.2	40.0	50.1
3	Language Usage	9.0	9.2	29.4	30.9	13.4	16.2	45.2	50.9	20.8	28.8	48.5	63.4
3	Mathematics	2.1	0.9	28.0	27.7	6.0	5.3	38.7	41.5	6.6	6.9	41.4	47.5
3	Science	2.3	2.9	31.1	34.7	5.3	7.8	35.0	43.3	6.7	10.9	38.2	48.1
3	Social Studies	1.1	0.7	31.9	36.9	2.0	2.7	29.1	34.7	3.6	4.1	35.6	45.3
5	Reading	2.3	2.3	24.7	26.3	3.7	7.2	33.7	47.0	6.0	7.7	35.6	45.3
5	Writing	11.7	12.8	36.8	35.6	19.1	25.3	42.3	52.1	18.4	23.6	39.3	50.0
5	Language Usage	10.4	10.3	26.8	26.4	22.4	28.1	45.3	53.8	24.1	29.8	46.8	64.4
5	Mathematics	6.8	4.5	39.5	40.5	9.6	10.5	47.8	55.1	11.9	14.3	48.2	56.1
5	Science	4.0	2.6	33.3	35.7	6.1	12.9	44.8	58.3	8.3	13.3	46.3	57.0
5	Social Studies	3.0	2.7	31.3	31.5	10.0	18.2	42.8	54.1	11.8	16.7	43.7	52.5

\*\* Indicates baseline year data.



## Jefferson Academy Broomfield, CO

**Results:** After three years of operation, Jefferson Academy, a charter school and a Core Knowledge school, showed consistent improvements in its scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and moved up to third out of 95 schools in the district rankings of ITBS scores. In 1996-97, Jefferson Academy's fifth-grade ITBS scores tied for first in the district. The following tables present ITBS NCE Mean scores (NCE: Normal Curve Equivalent, a unit of measure similar to percentiles).

Grades served: K - 6  
 Student population: 280  
 Free / reduced price lunch: 6.5%  
 Limited English Proficiency: N/A  
 Implemented Core Knowledge: 1994

NCE Means	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
	Fall 94	Spring 95	Spring 96	Spring 97
Vocab.	33	77	70	70
Reading	NA	59	66	71
Language	58	53	80	82
Work Study	NA	NA	73	69
Math	78	84	71	79
Composite	NA	71	76	77

**After three years, Jefferson Academy showed consistent improvements in scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.**

NCE Means	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
	Fall 94	Spring 95	Spring 96	Spring 97
Vocab.	31	67	71	71
Reading	25	59	64	73
Language	53	54	83	81
Work Study	37	NA	76	76
Math	37	76	77	85
Composite	31	70	77	79

*(continued on next page)*

## Jefferson Academy Broomfield, CO

<u>NCE Means</u>	Grade 3 <u>Fall 94</u>	Grade 3 <u>Spring 95</u>	Grade 4 <u>Spring 96</u>	Grade 5 <u>Spring 97</u>
Vocab.	38	60	71	72
Reading	51	63	71	80
Language	42	77	79	79
Work Study	38	71	69	73
Math	35	76	83	84
Composite	37	57	71	81

<u>NCE Means</u>	Grade 4 <u>Fall 94</u>	Grade 4 <u>Spring 95</u>	Grade 5 <u>Spring 96</u>	Grade 6 <u>Spring 97</u>
Vocab.	51	70	73	77
Reading	35	59	70	76
Language	41	70	74	75
Work Study	39	62	69	64
Math	47	63	78	77
Composite	40	70	74	76

<u>NCE Means</u>	Grade 1 <u>Spring 96</u>	Grade 2 <u>Spring 97</u>	Grade 3 <u>Spring 98</u>	Grade 4 <u>Spring 99</u>
Vocab.	84	83		
Reading	80	83		
Language	64	89		
Work Study	85	89		
Math	88	91		
Composite	88	87		

## Ridge View Elementary Kennewick, WA



**Results:** Ridge View Elementary scored better than all schools in its district on the new state performance test, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The test, administered to fourth graders, has four sections: Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Listening. It tests subject matter knowledge, application of knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills. A score of 400 or higher on each section of the test is required to meet what the state considers a "standard" of proficiency. Note especially Ridge View's high score in Listening. Listening skills in early grades are the best predictor of later reading and learning skills, owing to variations in the quality of early reading and writing instruction. The high score in listening skills indicates that increasing knowledge and vocabulary are giving Ridge View students a strong foundation for later learning.

Grades served: K-5  
 Student population: 511  
 Percent minority: 21 %  
 Free / reduced price lunch: 23%  
 Limited English Proficiency: 17%  
 Implemented Core Knowledge: 1993

**Ridge View  
 Elementary  
 scored better  
 than all schools in  
 its district on the  
 Washington  
 Assessment of  
 Student  
 Learning.**

Subject	State Mean	School Mean	State % meeting standard	School % meeting standard
Math	374.4	402.1	22	52.7
Reading	400.5	416.0	48	74.2
Writing	381.2	410.6	42	65.6
Listening	409.8	453.9	62	86

*"The Washington State performance test requires students to apply knowledge to a problem and then explain their process for reasoning through it. It's really a tough test. Because our students have the Core Knowledge background, they don't have to learn the knowledge they need as they read the problem. They already know it and they go right to solving the problem. The way we teach Core Knowledge means our kids are doing the things every day that the test is testing for. They are not intimidated by the test. The atmosphere of a Core Knowledge school is one in which kids learn to write, and in performance testing you live and die on how well you can write."*

Ted Mansfield, Principal

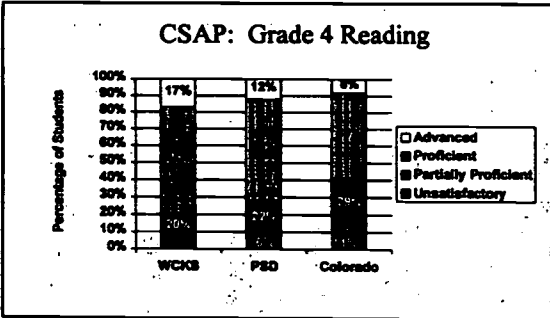


**Washington Core Knowledge School  
Ft. Collins, CO**

**Results:** Washington Core Knowledge School (WCKS) is a public school-of-choice in the Poudre School District (PSD). The school's Assessment Committee—composed of parents and faculty—compiled a detailed 1996-97 Academic Progress Report, which shows that WCKS students perform very well on both state and national assessments relative to their peers in the district and state. The following data is from the school's Academic Progress Report.

Grades served: K-6  
 Student population: 480  
 Percent minority: 11%  
 Free / reduced price lunch: 8%  
 Implemented Core Knowledge: 1993

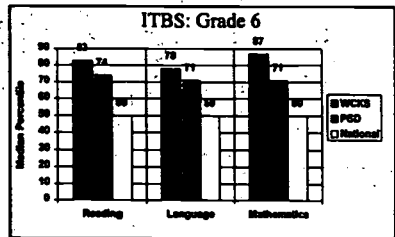
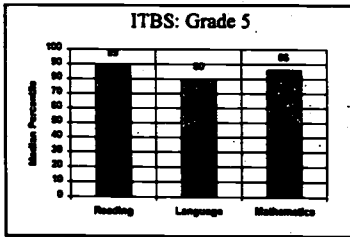
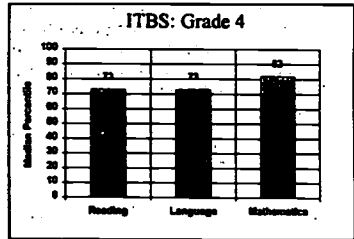
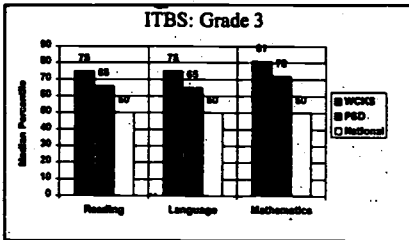
• CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program): 79% of the WCKS fourth grade students scored Proficient or Advanced on the CSAP Reading test, compared with 70% for PSD and 57% statewide. Only 1 WCKS student (1%) scored Unsatisfactory, compared with 12% for PSD and 22% statewide.



*(continued on next page)*

## Washington Core Knowledge School Ft. Collins, CO

• ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills): WCKS students in grades three through six score well above national averages in Reading, Language, and Mathematics.



## Washington Elementary School Rochester, MN



**Results:** In the 1996-97 school year, the number of students reading at or above grade level increased significantly in grades 2-5 at Washington School, as measured by scores on the Gates MacGintie Reading Test, administered in the fall and spring of the school year. The school achieved its goal of increasing the number of students reading at or above grade level, as well as increasing the average NCE (normal curve equivalent) score for each grade. Reading progress is determined by comparing the number of students scoring at each stanine (1-9) in total reading. Students who score at or above the fifth stanine are considered at or above grade level.

Grades served: 1-6  
 Student population: 365  
 Percent minority: 24%  
 Free / reduced price lunch: 37%  
 Limited English Proficiency: 19%  
 Implemented Core Knowledge: 1996

**In the 1996-97 school year, the number of students reading at or above grade level increased significantly in grades 2-5 at Washington School.**

### Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level in Reading (Fall and Spring)

	Fall	Spring
Grade 1	74%	
Grade 2	46%	73%
Grade 3	54%	69%
Grade 4	38%	64%
Grade 5	51%	74%
Overall School	47%	70%

*"We use the Open Court series to teach reading and math and Core Knowledge for half our curriculum. Core Knowledge definitely is part of the reason for our good scores because Core Knowledge content means students spend a lot more time reading. But we can't say how much of the improvement in reading scores is due to Core Knowledge and how much is attributable to good teaching. We also have a policy of required homework and a character education component that are factors in our success."*

Linda Stockwell, Principal

## Morse Elementary Cambridge, MA



**Results:** The tables below present NPRs (National Percentile Ranks) in the Total Reading Score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, administered to third graders in the Cambridge city schools. The first table shows that the NPR tends to decrease as the proportion of students receiving free or reduced price lunch increases. The notable exception to these trends, however, is the only Core Knowledge school in the Cambridge system, Morse Elementary.

Grades served: K - 8  
 Student population: 304  
 Free / reduced price lunch: 49.8%  
 Limited English Proficiency: 27.3 %  
 Implemented Core Knowledge: 1993

Cambridge Elementary School	Iowa National Percentile Rank based on the Total Reading Score of students tested under routine conditions	% Free/Reduced Price Lunch enrolled at each school
King Open	84 (n=26)	23%
<b>MORSE</b>	72 (n=23)	47%
Cambridgeport	71 (n=33)	23%
Agassiz	70 (n=39)	26%
Peabody	69 (n=37)	26%
Tobin	69 (n=37)	31%
Graham&Parks	62 (n=35)	42%
Fitzgerald	59 (n=28)	52%
Haggerty	50 (n=30)	32%
Longfellow	49 (n=49)	48%
Maynard	49 (n=82)	62%
Fletcher	41 (n=27)	62%
King	41 (n=17)	56%
Harrington	32 (n=71)	62%

(continued on next page)

**In the Cambridge elementary schools, the Total Reading Scores and proficiency levels tend to decrease as the proportion of students receiving free or reduced price lunch increases. The notable exception to this trend, however, is Morse School.**

## Morse Elementary Cambridge, MA

Cambridge Elementary School	Iowa National Percentile Rank based on the <i>Total Reading Score</i> of students tested under routine conditions	% Advanced Readers	% Proficient Readers	% Basic	% Pre-Readers
King Open	84 (n=26)	37	58	4	0
MORSE	72 (n=23)	35	48	17	0
Cambridgeport	71 (n=33)	35	47	9	6
Agassiz	70 (n=39)	33	41	23	3
Peabody	69 (n=37)	39	47	3	5
Tobin	69 (n=37)	32	36	26	7
Graham&Parke	62 (n=35)	31	34	23	11
Fitzgerald	59 (n=28)	17	47	17	10
Haggerty	50 (n=30)	6	56	28	6
Longfellow	49 (n=49)	23	43	29	3
Maynard	49 (n=82)	21	38	33	9
Fletcher	41 (n=27)	0	45	45	7
King	41 (n=17)	0	33	50	11
Harrington	32 (n=71)	3	39	40	13
<b>TOTAL DISTRICT</b>	<b>58 (n=564)</b>	<b>22%</b> n=125	<b>42%</b> n=238	<b>26%</b> n=146	<b>7%</b> n=37

In the table above, the National Percentile Rank is based on the TOTAL READING Score but the Proficiency Levels are based on the READING COMPREHENSION score. The number of students that completed all sections that make up the Total Reading score may differ slightly from the number of students that completed the Reading Comprehension sub-test.



**Vista Elementary  
Eastgate Elementary  
Washington Elementary  
Ridge View Elementary  
Kennewick, WA**

Results: Four Core Knowledge schools reported improvements in scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills from the 1995 to the 1996 school years, as follows.

Kennewick, Washington Core Knowledge Schools					
CTBS Scores					
Year	Reading		Language		Math
	95	96	95	96	95 96
Vista	47	67	47	64	47 58
Eastgate	31	48	31	40	35 41
Washington	45	49	35	56	38 51
Ridge View	74	78	72	73	77 84
Year	Battery		Free and Reduced Lunch %	Minority %	
	95	96			
Vista	45	66	47%	15.4%	
Eastgate	31	46	67%	36.3%	
Washington	40	54	49%	15.1%	
Ridge View	76	81	26%	20.2%	

**Four Core Knowledge schools reported improvements in scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills from the 1995 to the 1996 school years.**

*"In our district, in the last couple of years, the Core schools' scores have gone up. There is no way that I could ever believe that a school implementing Core Knowledge would lower its test scores. Core lends itself to good teaching. The teachers get enthusiastic and the kids get enthusiastic. That positive creates more positive."*

Charles Watson, Principal, Vista Elementary

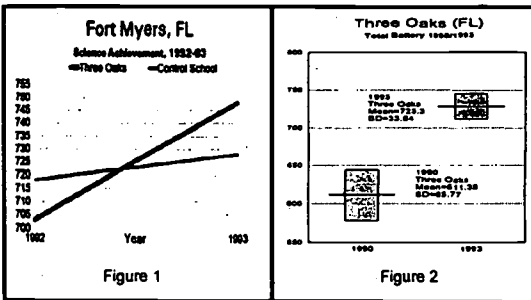
## Three Oaks Elementary Ft. Myers, FL



**Results:** A doctoral dissertation study reported the results of a statistical analysis of test score performance of Three Oaks in comparison with a matched control school in the district on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). The first graph (Figure 1) shows that Three Oaks gained in science achievement, and surpassed the control school. The second graph (Figure 2) compares two things: both the rise in test scores and the decrease in standard deviation. The scores represent the progress of the same two groups of Three Oaks students from 1990 to 1993 as measured by the Total Battery score of the CTBS. From 1990 to 1993, Three Oaks's mean "total battery" CTBS scores improved 117 points (from 611 to 728), while the standard deviation—a measure of the spread of scores, from the lowest to highest—narrowed by 32 points. When a school both improves its average scores and narrows its standard deviation, it is a sign of increasing fairness, indicating that low achievers have been lifted toward the mean.

Grades served:	PreK - 5
Student population:	930
Free / reduced price lunch:	26%
Limited English Proficiency:	N/A
Implemented Core Knowledge:	1990

**From 1990 to 1993, Three Oaks's mean "total battery" CTBS scores improved 117 points (from 611 to 728), while the standard deviation — a measure of the spread of scores, from the lowest to highest — narrowed by 32 points.**



*"It's important to realize that improvement in test scores is not necessarily dramatic, but with Core Knowledge we have seen a steady rise over the years. Our state writing assessment scores have gone up steadily, too, and those are dramatic. We combined Core Knowledge with writing so the kids found, even on the state tests, that they had the background knowledge that enabled them to perform well. The beauty of Core Knowledge is how well it allows you to combine skills and content."*

Vivian Posey, Principal

**APPENDIX D - WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN L. ANDERSON**



## **New American Schools**

1000 Wilson Boulevard • Suite 2710 • Arlington, VA 22209  
 (703) 908-9500 • FAX (703) 908-0622  
 E-mail: info@hq.nasdc.org

**Testimony of John L. Anderson  
 President, New American Schools  
 June 23, 1998**

**The Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth, and Families  
 Committee on Education and the Workforce**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting New American Schools to testify today about this unprecedented and potentially powerful federal initiative—the Obey-Porter Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSR).

When Sputnik I flew into orbit 40 years ago, the American scientists running in the "space race" could not turn to their competitors in the Soviet Union to ask for advice. They could not review the plans for Russian rocket motors nor study the satellite's schematics. The Americans' work would have been more effective and efficient had they been able to consult the best thinking at the time.

Traditionally, educators who have tried to raise student achievement in their schools have been like those American scientists. They have set out alone using their own knowledge, experience, and common sense to find ways to improve. They perhaps found a program or two directed at addressing specific obstacles. If they were lucky, they found an expert to provide one-time training. What they did not get was a complete package—the education equivalent of the launch pad, booster, guidance system, radar tracking, and satellite, along with the skills to use them. In too many cases, their reforms never really got off the ground.

But educators no longer are bound by the limits of their schools, or even their own school districts, when it comes to benefiting from the best thinking on improving students' results. As you know, this past November you voted to give thousands of schools access to experts and practitioners who can guide them through comprehensive school reform.

The movement toward comprehensive school reform gives schools a chance to adopt (and adapt) a proven framework for schoolwide improvement—strict enough to guide educators through tough issues inevitable in school change, but flexible enough to let them resolve those issues in unique ways that consider the conditions in their schools and communities.

For the past seven years, New American Schools (NAS)—a business-led, private, non-profit organization—has worked to create a group of eight organizations (we call them *Design Teams*) that provide high-quality, research-based tools and assistance to schools in need of improvement. NAS currently is helping over 1000 schools across 40 states raise achievement for large numbers of students. The work of NAS represents a powerful public-private partnership model for school reform.

The variety of designs represented by NAS and other organizations ensures that schools have a real choice, because we know that one size does not fit all. However, we believe it is essential to have criteria for comprehensive school models. These criteria ensure that dedicated CSRD program dollars are not wasted on "more-of-the-same" ineffective, piecemeal programs. The legislative report language and subsequent guidance from the U.S. Department of Education highlight nine elements of a comprehensive, schoolwide approach. These elements should become standard for CSRD providers.

### Results

Ample evidence exists to document that comprehensive school designs can work for students. In many schools that have successfully implemented one of the designs, students produce higher quality work, achieve at higher levels, and show improvement on standardized tests and other performance indicators; discipline problems are down; student and teacher engagement are up; and parent and community involvement both rise (for more details see attached document titled *Working Towards Excellence*).

According to RAND, schools working with NAS Design Teams make more rapid progress with initiation and implementation of a comprehensive reform effort than might be expected. RAND attributes this success to several important factors:

- each design is comprehensive and covers virtually all aspects of schooling—a departure from the traditional fragmented approach to reform;
- the designs unite faculties and school improvement efforts around a common vision for transformation; teachers and principals in New American Schools have specific goals and clear direction before they begin;
- each Design Team places a high priority on intensive, ongoing professional development for teachers; and
- ambitious time lines force schools and Design Teams to stick to aggressive schedules, accelerating the pace of reform.

It is possible to transform not only individual schools but also to effect broad-based improvements across entire school districts. While challenges have been documented, highlighting key impediments to effective implementation (see RAND report—Lessons from New American Schools' Scale-Up Phase), this report also presents the case that it is possible to create the conditions where high-performance schools proliferate.

For example, in San Antonio, TX—a district with 70% of its schools committed to implementing a comprehensive design—the number of low-performing schools (on the statewide TASS test) has dropped from 42 to no more than 3 schools. The dropout rate is down 44% to 2.9%, and math, reading, and writing scores have all improved—30%, 15%, and 14% respectively.

In Memphis, TN, a recent study on comprehensive school redesign indicates that significant, measurable gains can be realized—across all grades and subjects—within two years. Twenty-five redesign schools in this study outperformed control schools, all other district schools, and national norms. Dr. Steven Ross, a professor at the University of Memphis, will provide a detailed briefing on these findings today.

**Recommendations**

We believe comprehensive school reform represents the last, best hope for fixing what ails America's public schools. We believe that the disconnect between education practitioners and researchers must be corrected and that strategic partnerships between the private and public sectors can provide a critical link. NAS submits the following recommendations to Congress to strengthen and enhance the national roll-out of CSRD:

- (1) Continue to support the CSRD initiative. Provide expanded funding in FY99 and beyond.
- (2) Pay additional attention to supporting district-level efforts to help schools select, implement, and sustain effective, comprehensive models.
- (3) Commit resources to develop a larger supply of quality school assistance providers. Support the expansion of existing school assistance organizations, and support a national competition to develop new, high-performance assistance organizations.
- (4) Ensure that the evaluation of this program looks at both the level of design implementation—even the best programs will fail if not implemented—as well as student achievement results.

A strategy which focuses on both private-sector supply and public-sector demand will get results and will improve opportunities for our nation's children. Simply stated, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration initiative should continue because, based on our experience:

- It works for children.
- It works at scale.
- It demonstrates the appropriate and effective use of federal education funds: to support local, research-tested choices for improving public schools.

[NOTE: Attached is testimony from Robert E. Salvin, the Co-Director for the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, and Co-Developer of Success For All/Roots & Wings comprehensive school designs.]

**APPENDIX E – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR. GLEN H. HARVEY**



Testimony

*before the*

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**Committee on  
Education and the Workforce**

**Subcommittee on  
Early Childhood, Youth and Families**

23 June 1998

*by*

**Glen H. Harvey, Ph.D.**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
**WestEd**  
**San Francisco, California**

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I am Glen Harvey, Chief Executive Officer of WestEd, the regional educational laboratory serving California, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada.

Thank you for asking me to comment on this very important initiative: the new Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRSD) Program. I especially welcome the opportunity to appear before this Committee, Mr. Chairman, because, as time for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act approaches, it will be here that a careful examination of the implementation of CSRSD will be conducted. The effectiveness of CSRSD will — and should — influence this Committee's decisions regarding the future directions of ESEA Title I.

I cannot yet offer an evaluator's perspective on a program so recently inaugurated. I am able, however, to offer some perspectives from the educational research, development, and school improvement community on the integrity of the CSRSD program as it was shaped within the appropriations process last year.

WestEd has a 35 year history applying the best of research and development for the improvement of schools. Test scores for normally low-achieving schools in Southern California have gone up significantly as a result of collaborative work between staff at our laboratory and the Johns Hopkins University-based developers of a prominent comprehensive school reform model demonstration program. Parent participation in school-community dialogue about standards and accountability recently jumped over 1,200 percent at an East Bay school where WestEd staff have recently inaugurated our own, new comprehensive school assessment program.

There are many such success stories from our years of experience, combined with that of the other nine regional education laboratories. Together we have learned a great deal about what it takes for students to succeed.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program includes five major components consistent with what we have learned it takes to improve schools and, in turn, substantially increase student performance. These are:

1. The program is comprehensive in its focus.
2. CSRD requires that schools build their programs around research-based methods and strategies.
3. It is designed to be adaptable to the realities of individual schools.
4. It emphasizes the critical nature of evaluation.
5. CSRD provides for support assistance to each of the schools undertaking reform initiatives.

### 1. Comprehensive Focus

Let me begin with the defining characteristic of the program: its **comprehensiveness**.

Many previous efforts to reform schools have been fragmented; they have focused on "fixing" particular problems or making changes in singular aspects of complex systems. We know that if we want to have a lasting difference improving student performance, and if we have as our goal that all students can — and should — reach high standards, we need to improve the education system.

Looking across the research on reform, we typically see four basic approaches to school change. The first focuses on altering components of the education system, while the second centers on retraining the system's personnel. The third approach is to modify the school itself; the fourth is to transform the entire system. The most likely path to success, albeit a challenging one, is the last: changing the system. It is an approach that combines elements of the other three approaches. And it is this strategy that will be pursued as the new Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program is enacted.

If we want to increase the likelihood of making a lasting difference in our schools, as measured by significantly increased student performance, we need to think and act comprehensively. If we do not attend to all the pieces of the school improvement puzzle — instruction, curriculum, assessment, parent and community involvement, professional development, management — we are unlikely to succeed.

## 2. Uses Research-based Methods and Strategies

A second, important strength of the new CSRD program is that it requires schools to build their programs around research-based methods and strategies. Over the last thirty years, there has been a substantial public investment in educational research and development, and it is an investment that has paid significant dividends.

We know what it takes for students to learn. We know what effective teaching looks like and we know what it takes for teachers to increase their effectiveness. We know the conditions of successful learning. We know largely what it takes for a school to improve. We know how to implement changes in schools — to fix the parts and retrain the people.

We are now able to use new research on brain development to inform the child care we provide infants and toddlers to increase the chances that they will do well in school. We have focused some of our work at WestEd on such early childhood issues precisely because it is during these first years that the stage is set for later learning.

The fruits of the best of R&D are available for adoption by schools. CSRD wisely urges schools to utilize those models and strategies that have a track record of success. Building on a sound research base, years of development, and extensive experience of service delivery, CSRD starts with what we know works.

## 3. Adaptable to Locally-Determined Needs

A third strength of the program is that it is designed to be adaptable. We know that children and adults learn in different ways. We also know that schools differ one from another. We can't take what works in a rural New Hampshire school and necessarily expect it to be equally effective in inner-city Los Angeles. One size does not fit all, and the CSRD program recognizes the reality that context is a major factor in school reform.

Reform occurs school by school. External influences make a difference, but their effect is mediated by the way they are interpreted and applied at each school site. As a result, even in what seem to be similar circumstances, one school may make great strides while another

remains mediocre. Reform also looks very different in different communities. Sometimes already developed models and programs are the answer. Sometimes they are not.

In California, for example, many of our most urban, poorest districts have had to hire teachers holding emergency teaching certificates. These novice teachers are often handed responsibility to teach the hardest to reach students, under the worst conditions, with the least preparation. These schools and teachers and administrators are not always prepared to develop their own comprehensive improvement models. A more directive program, one especially targeted to the needs of students like theirs, is often what is needed. These schools might be ideal adopters of programs such as Success for All, Reading Recovery, H.O.T.S. or Accelerated Learning.

However, in other sites, in equally poor communities but with a more experienced faculty and an involved parent community, more effective strategies might be the school adopting a flexible reform model (such as the Coalition of Effective Schools) or creating its own.

A major strength of the CSRD is its recognition that we can achieve success in many ways — through models or through locally developed programs that reflect the rigor required of comprehensive reform. Context is critical to success.

#### **4. Emphasizes Evaluation**

A fourth strength of CSRD — and one that is absolutely essential — is its emphasis on **evaluation**. If we are going to increase the numbers of schools benefiting from CSRD, and if we are going to ensure that more of the nation's students are performing at high levels, we have to carefully examine what happens with this program as it is "rolled-out." We need to learn not only what goes well but what does not. And we need to make sure our understanding is applied to future efforts.

The emphasis on evaluation ensures that other schools — and the public — benefit from this investment in reform, and it equally ensures that everyone involved in the effort is accountable for its results. If we are to maintain the public's confidence in this new initiative,

and if we are to incrementally increase the numbers of schools participating, we must be vigilant in learning from this early work.

##### 5. Recognizes Need for Outside Support

Finally, the program recognizes that teachers and administrators in schools undergoing reform, especially *comprehensive* reform, need **support and assistance**. Under CSRD, such help will come from several directions — from State Departments of Education, from regional education laboratories such as WestEd, from ESEA Comprehensive Centers, and from the developers of the exemplary models being adopted. We know from research and much experience that without such assistance schools undergoing change often stumble and too frequently fail.

Anyone starting to use a new computer understands the value of technical support. And changing a whole school is a lot more complex than setting up a PC. This CSRD program element, providing supportive services, is a critical one.

The five key elements of CSRD — starting with a comprehensive focus, using research-based strategies, preserving adaptability, assuring evaluation, and providing technical assistance — are essential ingredients for success. I compliment Congress on including them all in its Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program design last year, and I encourage this Committee to support them in its future authorization considerations. Backed by solid research and extensive school change experience, these program characteristics should provide this Committee assurance that the new CSRD initiative will be a wise investment, one likely to yield positive results and make a difference for our students.

I congratulate Congress on its commitment to comprehensive reform of American schools. And I encourage you to give this initiative the necessary time and resources it requires so that our schools have a greater chance of making a substantial difference for all children.

##

WestEd  
FEDERAL CONTRACTS & GRANTS

TITLE	PI	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE	TOTAL AWARD
<b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</b>			
Regional Technology Center with SERVE	J. Phlegar	10/01/96-09/30/98	373,016
Patterns and Correlates of Substance Use	M. Wong	08/01/97-07/31/98	66,868
The Distance Learning Resource Network	K. Barfield	10/01/97-09/30/98	500,000
Comprehensive Centers with EDC	J. Phlegar	10/01/96-09/30/98	291,536
Comprehensive Center Region XV with PREL	G. Estes	04/15/96-09/30/98	124,900
Comprehensive Center Region IX Center with New Mexico Highlands	G. Estes/ M. Haddad	10/01/95-09/30/98	1,259,587
Regional Educational Laboratory	G. Estes	12/1/95-12/10/00	23,843,759
State of Utah Resource WEB	K. Barfield	10/01/95-12/31/99	217,053
Eisenhower Regional Consortium	A. Sussman	10/01/95-09/30/98	4,445,007
Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center	G. Estes/Farr	10/01/95-09/30/98	4,965,492
Desegregation Assistance Center	A. Sancho	09/01/96-07/31/98	1,343,332
Comprehensive School Linked Services - subcontract with SERVE	P. Mangione	12/01/95-08/31/96	153,363
Star Schools Program: Distance Education Project	C. Lane	10/01/94-12/31/96	803,646
Researcher Training Project	H. Doss Willis	10/01/94-09/30/96	698,567
<b>TOTAL U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION</b>			<b>39,086,126</b>
<b>NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION</b>			
NSF Task Orders 3 with Abt Associates	N. Tushnet	10/01/97-09/30/98	300,078
Looking at Public Reaction to Math Reform	S. Raizen	10/01/97-09/30/98	49,150
National Alliance for Secondary Science	S. Schneider	09/15/97-02/28/98	49,466
SPAN-Science Partnership for Articulation and Networking	K. DiRanna	05/01/97-04/30/01	4,952,471
Science Cases for Teacher Enhancement	S. Schneider	05/01/97-04/30/98	49,969
National Academy for Science Educ Leadership	S. Loucks- Horsley	09/01/97-08/31/01	1,280,397
Science for Linguistic Inclusion	J. Shaw	05/01/97-04/30/98	50,000
Phoenix Urban Systemic Initiative	S. Loucks- Horsley	03/15/97-08/31/98	134,996
Math Renaissance K-12 w/ SDSU Foundation	S. Loucks- Horsley	09/01/96-05/31/98	140,001
The CA Systemic Initiatives Assessment Collaborative	K. Cornfort	10/01/96-09/30/98	999,895
Assessing and Certifying the Practice of Highly Accomplished Teachers sub with NBPTS	S. Schneider	09/15/96-09/15/99	1,660,995
Deepening Mathematical Understanding Through Case Discussion - NSF	C. Barnett	10/01/95-09/30/00	1,550,075
Coordinated Science in California	S. Schneider	07/15/94-12/31/97	2,202,856
NSF Task Orders - Module A with Abt Assoc.	N. Tushnet	07/01/95-09/30/98	515,764
NSF Task Orders - Module C with Abt Assoc.	N. Tushnet	05/20/96-07/31/99	361,297

**WestEd**  
**FEDERAL CONTRACTS & GRANTS**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PI</u>	<u>PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE</u>	<u>TOTAL AWARD</u>
Scientific Concepts Alive	B. Becker	10/01/94-09/30/98	1,189,563
Enhancing Math & Science Instruction - NSF	L. Carlos	01/01/96-08/31/96	293,900
NSF Vanguard Project with BBN Systems & Technologies	J. Cradler	10/01/95-09/30/96	13,250
<b>TOTAL NSF</b>			<b><u>15,794,123</u></b>
<b><u>DEPT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES</u></b>			
Early Head Start Center with Zero to Three	R. Lally	09/30/95-06/28/98	1,595,820
Adolescent AOD Use/Asian	G. Austin	09/30/94-02/28/98	869,891
Special Kinships	M. Jackson	09/30/95-09/29/98	925,458
<b>TOTAL DHHS</b>			<b><u>3,391,169</u></b>
<b><u>OTHER FEDERAL CONTRACTS/GRANTS</u></b>			
US Dept of Interior - National Park Service	J. McRobbie	07/22/96-07/22/98	110,466
North American Assoc for Environmental Ed.	A. Sussman	01/01/96-09/30/98	212,612
National Skills Standards Assessment - DOL	S. Ananda	06/03/96-06/02/97	260,880
Drug Elimination Prevention Services - SFHA	R. Baker	02/08/96-07/31/96	69,000
Tech Assistance in the Ed Energy Compact Development - Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory	T. Madfes	01/15/96-01/31/97	31,000
Computer Aided Education and Training Initiative - sub with ISX - Dept of Defense	J. Cradler	07/21/95-06/24/97	250,683
<b>TOTAL OTHER</b>			<b><u>934,641</u></b>
<b>TOTAL FEDERAL CONTRACTS/GRANTS</b>			<b><u>59,306,059</u></b>



**APPENDIX F – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MS. JACQUELINE AUSTIN**

JCPS GREENS ACADEMY

4425 Preston Highway  
Louisville, Kentucky 40213  
(502) 485-3494



**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD,  
YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE**

**U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Regarding  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM**

**Testimony Presented by**

**Jacqueline Austin**

**Director, Curriculum and Assessment  
Jefferson County Public Schools  
Louisville, Kentucky**

**June 23, 1998**

Chairman Biggs, members of the subcommittee, fellow educators and concerned citizens, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this Congressional Hearing regarding Comprehensive School Reform. My name is Jacqueline Austin and I am Director of Curriculum and Assessment for Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville Kentucky. As former principal of John F. Kennedy Montessori Elementary School, I welcome the opportunity to share some of my experiences during the ten years I was principal and how the faculty and staff worked to effectively implement the National Alliance for Restructuring Education School Reform model.

It was a very sad day for me ten years ago when our test results revealed that our students were at rock bottom on everything. Our students were performing at very low academic levels. Our test scores in Reading, Language Arts, Math and Science were the lowest in the district. Our daily attendance rate was the lowest in the district and our parental involvement and participation was very minimum. Our school could be found at the bottom of most lists describing student performance in Jefferson County Public Schools. When 32% of our Kindergarten class failed and 23% of our first graders failed, and were unable to progress to the next level, it became very clear that we needed to look at ways to address the problems facing our school. The good news was we didn't have anywhere to go but up!

We took bold steps to address our problems and found effective ways to meet the needs of the students attending Kennedy School. In 1983 we began working with the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, currently known as America's Choice for School Design. Our faculty and staff was interested in this comprehensive, research-based school improvement model primarily because of the focus on student results and standards-based education. The conviction that virtually all students can and must achieve at high standards along with the promise to provide professional development and technical assistance to implement this comprehensive program, made it most appealing to us.

As principal, I was visible in the classrooms, I was checking the lesson plans and observing classroom instruction. However, student

progress remained very slow. We were implementing a variety of programs, that in retrospect, I realize were a fragmented and piecemeal approach to the changes we were trying to make. The strong focus of the National Alliance on results, using assessments, curriculum, planning and high performance management techniques to achieve those results helped me as the school leader, understand that all of our time and energy had to be focused on student achievement. Of course, marshaling all energy and resources toward student achievement presented a challenge. It involved what we called "selective abandonment," letting go of efforts and programs that did not help students achieve at high levels. We eliminated the add-ons and those programs we were continuing out of tradition.

The selective abandonment process caused some separation anxiety. Teachers didn't want to let go of activities they had participated in for years. However, it was my job as principal to help the faculty and staff members focus on the big picture. I did not operate as a task master, criticizing and judging the activities they wanted to hand out, rather, I encouraged teachers to let go of those programs, events and activities that required our energy but lacked an academic focus and was not standards driven. Gradually, through conversation, selective abandonment began to happen.

By 1994, Kennedy was beginning to reap the fruits of our labor. Performance in reading and math tripled. Performance in writing quadrupled, and scores in science and social studies were twice what they had been two years earlier. Our school far surpassed it's performance target and earned a cash reward from the state. The Louisville Courier Journal had something very powerful to say: "Kennedy Montessori pupils, teachers scale educational mountain," read the headline.

Without a doubt, we had not reached our peak in student performance; in fact, our 1996 results from the state assessment system showed a dip from the previous level. Nonetheless, we had moved considerably to get students to standards.

How did Kennedy accomplish this feat? Mostly, the school's gains came about through wise planning to improve student performance. Of course, most schools developed plans on a regular basis. Too often, though their plans are not carried out and there is not always a clear

link between schools' objectives—getting students to standards—and the strategies they choose to implement. My experience at Kennedy shows that setting clear targets for student performance and linking strategies to the targets can reap impressive results.

If we expect all students to learn at high levels, we need to define specifically what those expectations are. Those expectations need to be clear to students, to parents, to school professionals and community members. Given a clear set of standards for performance, students have a visible target to aim toward. They are aware of what they are expected to know and be able to do, and they have a vivid image of what quality work looks like. This enables them to measure their own performance against expectations and continue to work until they achieve the standard.

Our experience at Kennedy generally mirrors the process developed by the National Center to help schools improve student performance. The seven steps of this school improvement process include:

1. Agree on purposes
2. Analyze the situation
3. Set performance targets
4. Select strategies
5. Develop implementation plans
6. Implement the plans
7. Monitor implementation and evaluate results

Although the process does not have to be followed in linear order, nor was it implemented in this sequence at Kennedy, all the steps are critical to achieving the school improvement goal.

Unfortunately, when we started our school reform effort at Kennedy, we did not have an agreement on our school improvement goal. Many of the veteran teachers at Kennedy did not think our students could achieve at high levels. They thought the barriers students faced in their home lives were so overwhelming there was little the school could do to overcome them. I refused to accept the students' background as an excuse for poor performance. The school could not wait until "good" students showed up. I explained to the staff that parents were sending us the best children they had. They were not keeping their good children at home. When the state legislature approved the Kentucky Education Reform

Act, which had at its center a goal that all students would attain high standards for performance, I felt empowered to say to my staff at Kennedy "we will get these test scores up."

In Step 2, Analyzing the Situation, I examined all data. I was especially interested in data on our school retention rates, since this information had been publicized in the local newspaper as the highest in the district. After further examination of data, it was concluded that the problems at Kennedy were deep and pervasive. It would demand a response that was just as massive. I realized the reform effort needed would require transforming the entire school.

I had to admit as principal, in Step 3, Setting Performance Targets, I did not know enough to set a target at the beginning. I did know however, that the school was at "rock bottom" and there was nowhere to go but up. The annual performance targets provided by the Kentucky Education Reform Act specifying the levels schools needed to reach if all students were to meet the performance standards helped me focus on the targets for our school. We knew if student performance is to be sustained, the school must select comprehensive strategies that will help meet the targets. Our initial plan at Kennedy included two major strategies. First, we agreed to try multi-age grouping and team teaching. We formed a team of four teachers, each of whom specialized in a content area to reach a group of first and second graders in a kind of departmentalized structure. Second, we agreed to adopt the Montessori method, initially in preschool and then school-wide. After conducting research and discussions with educators, I concluded that Montessori's emphasis on meeting children where they are and leading them through a structured curriculum at their own pace seemed highly appropriate for Kennedy. Montessori, however, would not necessarily be the right strategy for all schools. Every principal trying to restructure their program has to be able to look at their school and determine which direction to go. In subsequent years, Kennedy school selected additional strategies based on further analysis and new performance targets. Some of these strategies included adding a writing lab for fourth graders after seeing the low initial results on the state test, and adding a science lab after results in that subject were low.

The implementation plan was twofold. The first component was a parent-education program. We didn't feel parents would support what we were doing if it was foreign to them. We know it was important for

parents to see kids working on the floor in the classroom and understand that it was not a chaotic situation, rather students being actively involved in their class activities. The second component was teacher training. The Montessori training was extensive and expensive. Using grants from the district, we were able to offer training to Kennedy faculty. When nearly all the teachers declined the offer, I was forced to make tough decisions. Opportunity for training was extended district-wide to teachers who were interested in being trained in the Montessori Method of Instruction. Bringing new teachers on board meant asking long time Kennedy veterans to seek employment elsewhere in the district. This task, as difficult as it was, was essential if the school was going to transform itself and achieve it's goal of significantly improving student performance.

Step 6, Implementing the Plan may seem obvious but a plan that isn't carried out is useless. Far too often schools write plans to comply with district mandates and do not implement them. It was important for the Kennedy faculty to write the school plan collaboratively and commit fully to its implementation.

Monitoring Implementation and Evaluating Results means making sure strategies are implemented as intended and looking at results to see if the strategies are working. The school leadership team took a hard look at our approaches after the first year of implementation. We found that team teaching program showed some success (the school's social studies test scores exceeded the district average), but proved unpractical in practice (the young students found it disconcerting to move from class to class throughout the day). After considering the pros and cons, we decided to discontinue the team teaching approach.

In just a few short years, Kennedy students showed significant improvement and the school began to rise from among the lowest-scoring schools to the top ten percent. Kennedy School was designated a Kentucky Pacesetter School for consistent academic achievement, and was named a Kentucky Blue Ribbon School.

The successful implementation of the America's Choice for School Design has been a great benefit to the staff and students of Kennedy. Since my move to Central Office, the staff has continued their work with the America's Choice for School Design. The school is no longer at the bottom of the lists of student performance and school achievement.

**Student attendance now exceeds the district average, and parental involvement is at an all time high.**

**The most recent state test results indicate that the students at Kennedy are continuing to improve in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The school leadership team is committed to the America's Choice for School Design Reform Model. Although Kennedy still has a long way to go, the school's commitment to a research based comprehensive school reform model that offers a framework that is systemic, results driven with insistent school leadership will help maintain the significant gains the school has achieved.**

**The school's approach to planning will continue to be instrumental in helping them reach their performance targets. Planning for results will help improve student performance for not one, but every student in the school.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to share my positive comprehensive school reform experience.**

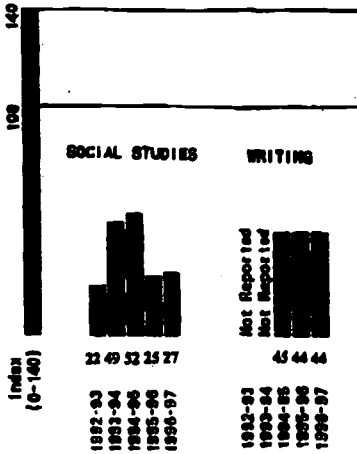
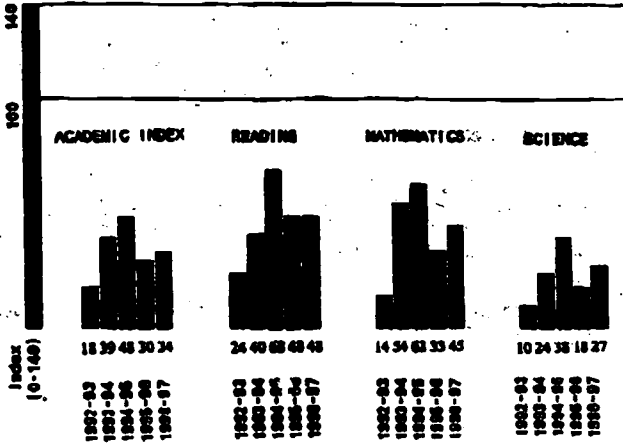




**KIRIS 1996-97  
KIRIS PERFORMANCE REPORT  
ACADEMIC TREND DATA**

District: JEFFERSON CO  
School: JOHN F. KENNEDY EL  
Code: 279720  
Grade: 04/05

**SCHOOL LEVEL CONTENT AREA INDICES BY YEAR**



# Alliance

A publication of the National Center on Education and the Economy

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1997

## Getting Students to Standards: Planning to Improve Student Performance

The Alliance  
is helping  
educators plan  
for results —

and help

**J**acqueline Austin had not been on the job as principal for two months when a newspaper article and a call from the superintendent joined her from her honeymoon. Remarkably, these events launched her on a path to dramatically transform her school to send student performance skyrocketing.

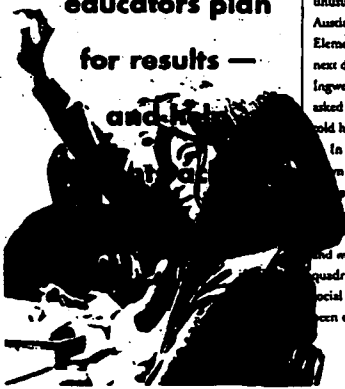
On Oct. 27, 1987, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* carried a story noting unusually high kindergarten failure rates at Austin's new school, the John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Louisville, Ky. The next day, Superintendent Donald Ingwersen summoned Austin to his office, asked about the school's retention rate and told her to do something about it.

In response, Austin started her school on a reform road. By 1994, the fourth year of the reform effort, Kennedy began to show the fruits of their labor. And what sweet fruits they were: performance in reading had nearly tripled, performance in writing had quadrupled, and scores in science and social studies were twice what they had been two years earlier. The school far sur-

passed its performance target and earned a cash reward from the state worth \$2,300 per teacher. The *Courier-Journal* now had something different to say: "Kennedy Montessori pupils, teachers scale educational mountain," read the headline. And Austin, who in 1987 was summoned to see the superintendent, in 1996 received a visit from the state commissioner of education — he came to present her with a prestigious Milken Foundation award.

To be sure, Kennedy has not reached its peak in student performance: in fact, the 1996 results from the state assessment system showed a dip from the previous level. But the school has moved considerably to get students to standards.

How has Kennedy accomplished this feat? In large part, the school's gains came about through wise planning to improve student performance. Of course, most schools develop plans regularly. Too often, though, their plans are not carried out, and there is not always a clear link between schools' objectives — getting students to standards — and the approaches they





## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Dear Reader:*

*As any educator knows, getting students to standards does not just happen. It takes a great deal of work and careful effort to ensure that curriculum and instructional programs, appropriate for students, organizations of the school, professional development and school resources are dedicated to improving student performance.*

*Coordinating all these efforts requires planning. Schools are no strangers to plans, but often, plans are written to comply with state or regulatory requirements and then not implemented. Or plans include a number of worthwhile activities not connected to one another or to the goal of meeting performance targets.*

*In this issue we focus on an approach to planning explicitly aimed at helping schools of students to succeed. We examine one school that can serve as a model for other schools, and we look at a workshop NCEE is developing to help schools through the planning process. We intend to offer similar assistance in other states, including 17 schools in Chicago, where we have launched an intensive effort to help raise student performance. We hope other jurisdictions can benefit from these experiences. As always, we invite your participation in this conversation. Please write, call or e-mail us with any ideas or experiences you wish to share.*

*Sincerely,  
The Editors*

**NATIONAL  
ALLIANCE  
FOR RESTRUCTURING  
EDUCATION**

choose to implement. Kennedy's experience shows that setting clear targets for student performance and linking strategies to the targets can reap impressive results.

For the past year, the National Center on Education and the Economy has been developing a workshop and related tools to help schools with the planning process. Although Kennedy's efforts predate the Center's work in this area, the school's experience generally mirrors the principles

### 1. AGREE ON PURPOSES

The first step in the approach to planning is agreeing on the broad purposes the school is trying to achieve and placing high levels of student achievement at the center.

Unfortunately, Kennedy at first did not have an agreement on this goal. Many of the school's veteran teachers did not think Kennedy's students could achieve at high levels. They thought the barriers the students faced in their home lives were so

*Kennedy Elementary School's experience shows that setting clear targets for student performance and linking strategies to the targets can reap impressive results.*

that underlie the Center's approach. It provides a model for other schools that want to plan to improve student performance.

The process developed by the National Center has seven steps:

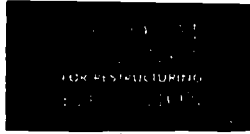
1. Agree on purposes
2. Analyze the situation
3. Set performance targets
4. Select strategies
5. Develop implementation plans
6. Do it (implement the plans)
7. Monitor implementation and evaluate results.

Although the process does not have to be followed in linear order, all the steps are critical to achieving the goal.

overwhelming there was little the school could do to overcome them. Austin refused to accept the children's backgrounds as an excuse for poor performance. The school could not wait until "good" students showed up, she pointed out. "The parents are sending us the best children they have," she said. "They're not keeping the good ones home."

Austin's efforts to put high student performance at the center of the school's purpose received a substantial boost in 1991. That year, the state legislature approved the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), which had as its centerpiece a goal that all students would attain high standards for performance.

"It's the same message I was saying for a



long time, but now it was the law," Austin says. "It empowered me [to say] 'We will get those test scores up.'"

**2. ANALYZE THE SITUATION**

Before setting targets and determining an appropriate course of action, schools should conduct a careful analysis of the current state of performance. In Kennedy's case, the analysis began with the *Courier-Journal's* data on retention rates. After her meeting with the superintendent, Austin also examined other data to see if the retention data were aberrations.

Unfortunately, they were not. In virtually every subject area, Kennedy's performance was at or near the bottom of the district's rankings. The school was equally

low on other indicators such as attendance and PTA membership. Based on all the available data, Austin concluded that the problem at her school was deep and pervasive. It demanded a response that was just as deep. It would not do to change a kindergarten curriculum or institute a new reading program. It would take transforming the entire school.

Before developing a strategy, Austin first conducted an analysis of the school's program. Analyzing performance data was not enough; she also had to look at the school's structures and practices to see what was working and what needed to be improved or restructured. She examined the teachers' lesson plans and concluded that they were

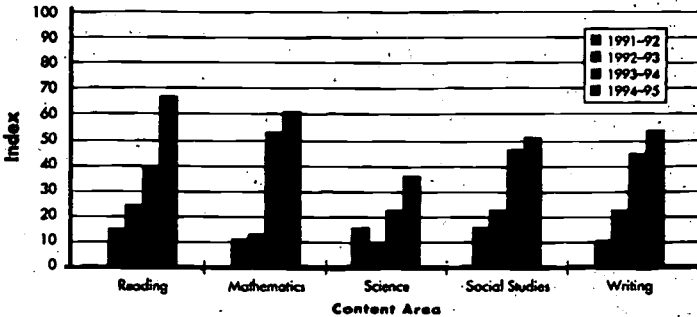
excellent; teachers had well-developed courses of study. How could students keep going through a well-formed curriculum, yet fail when they were tested?

Asking teachers that question, she got a revealing answer. The teachers said that many students came to class lacking basic knowledge and skills. Although they could follow the lessons, many students could not apply them because of their learning gaps. And teachers rarely re-taught the material that students failed in their class because they had to move through the curriculum.

**3. SET PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

Schools often are reluctant to set a definite, quantifiable target for performance.

**J. F. Kennedy Elementary School Accountability Index**



*(Under the Kennedy Education Reform Act, Kennedy Elementary, like all schools in the state, each year receives an "accountability index" that indicates student achievement on performance assessments. The index is calculated as that of every student teacher the "proficient" level of achievement - the state goal - the index would equal 100.)*

*Source: Jefferson County (Ky.) Public Schools Research Department*



Perhaps they fear they may not meet it and do not want to come up short. As a result, many schools say simply that they want performance to "improve."

The trouble is, students will not get to standards any time soon if schools simply "improve" each year. Setting a quantifiable target raises the bar. It also puts people on the line for meeting it and inspires them to do all they can to reach the target. The target should be an "achievable stretch" — a stretch because schools will want high performance, but not so far that it won't be reachable.

At Kennedy, Austin admits that she did not know enough to set a target at the beginning, although, she says, with the school at "rock bottom," there was nowhere to go but up. Once KERA was in place the law provided annual performance targets based on two criteria: initial performance levels and the level schools needed to reach if all students met performance standards.

#### 4. SELECT STRATEGIES

Once schools analyze their situations and set targets, they then develop strategies to meet the targets. Many schools begin their planning here, but unless they have gone through steps one, two and three, the strategies they adopt may be inappropriate.

Even with analysis and target-setting, strategies must be selected with care. Not just any strategy will do. One of the most effective ways of selecting strategies is benchmarking. First, find the best performers. Then, determine what makes them the best and figure out how to do

what they do, in your setting, better than they do it.

If student performance is to be sustained, strategies should be comprehensive and embrace all five of the National Alliance's design tasks. At Kennedy, Austin began the process of developing strategies

strategy for all schools, Austin points out. "Every principal trying to restructure their program has to be able to look at their school and see what direction they want to go," she says.

In subsequent years, the school selected additional strategies based on further

*"The parents are sending us the best children they have. They're not keeping the good ones home."*

— Jacqueline Austin, principal, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Louisville, Ky., explaining that students' backgrounds are no excuse for poor performance.

by discussing with every staff member — teachers, custodians, food service employees and others — what each one of them could do to reach performance targets.

Kennedy's initial plan included two major strategies. First, school leaders agreed to try multi-age grouping and team teaching. They formed a team of four teachers, each of whom specialized in a content area, to teach a group of first- and second-graders in a kind of departmentalized structure. The team included one fourth-grade teacher who agreed to teach younger pupils.

Second, they agreed to adopt the Montessori method, initially in preschool and then schoolwide. After conducting research and discussions with educators, Austin concluded that Montessori's emphasis on meeting children where they are and leading them through a structured curriculum at their own pace seemed appropriate for Kennedy. It would not be the right

analysis and new targets. For example, the school agreed to beef up its writing program, including adding a writing lab for fourth-graders, after seeing the low initial results on the state tests. The next year, the school agreed to add a science lab after results in that subject were low.

#### 5. DEVELOP IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The implementation plan is the meat of the planning process. This plan details the steps the school will take to carry out its strategies, including the funds that will be allocated for the task, the people responsible for implementing it and the time it will take. Schools should examine the tradeoffs involved in choosing certain strategies. Some entail high costs, both in dollars and in morale.

Perhaps the best way to analyze the potential tradeoffs is by using the four

"lenses" described by Terry Deal: the structural lens, the organizational set-up of the school; the human resources lens, the relationships among students and staff members; the political lens, the power relationships among people at the school; and the symbolic lens, the traditions and rituals of the school. By examining changes through the four lenses, school leaders can determine the true costs of a strategy.

In Kennedy's case, the cost of implementing the strategies turned out to be quite high, but the school elected to pay it to achieve their goals. The implementation plan was two-fold. The first component was a parent-education program. "We didn't feel parents would support what we were doing if it was foreign to them," Austin says. "They would see kids going home pouring water from one container to another. Or they would come into school and see kids on the floor. We wanted them to understand this was not chaotic."

The second component was teacher training. Montessori training is extensive and expensive. But when grants from the district enabled Austin to offer the training to the Kennedy faculty, nearly all the teachers declined the offer. Their response forced Austin to make some tough decisions. With the program moving into the primary grades, the principal needed teachers who were qualified in the Montessori approach to teach in those grades, and this meant she had to ask long-time Kennedy veterans to seek employment elsewhere in the district. From Austin's perspective, this task was difficult, but it was essential if the school were going to transform itself and achieve

in goal of significantly improving student performance.

#### 6. DO IT

This step may seem obvious, but a plan that is not carried out is nothing more than papers on a shelf. It does no one any good, least of all the students. Too often schools write plans to comply with legal mandates, and do not implement them.

#### 7. MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATE RESULTS

The essence of accountability is determining if you have met your goals. In schools, this step means making sure strategies are implemented as intended and looking at results to see if the strategies were working. Armed with that information, schools can adjust their courses or, if necessary, identify ways to meet their goals.

At Kennedy, Austin and the school team took a hard look at their approaches at the end of the first year of implementation. They found, for example, that the team-teaching program showed some success (the school's social-studies test scores exceeded the district average), but proved unwieldy in practice (the young students found it disconcerting to move from class to class throughout the day). After considering the pros and cons, the school decided to scrap that approach.

In other cases, however, they found their strategies successful. Although Kennedy still has a long way to go, the school's approach to planning can do a great deal to get them there. They will get students to standards by planning to improve student performance. ♦

### National Conference Sessions on Planning

The National Alliance's 1997 National Conference, "Producing High Student Performance," features three sessions on Getting Students to Standards: Planning to Improve Student Performance.

One session, led by Tom Jones, the National Center on Education and the Economy's director of field services, focuses on the principal's role in planning to improve student performance. Another is led by Jacqueline Austin, principal of John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Louisville, Ky., whose improvement process serves as a model of the planning approach (see last article). A third session focuses on the school and district role and examines the experience in the Everett (Wash.) School District. That session is led by Sue Dudrick, principal of Monroe Elementary School; Linda Fisher, principal of Jackson Elementary School; and Gail Robbins, coordinator of organizational development for the Everett (Wash.) School District.

The conference will be held Jan. 11-13, 1997 in Haines City, Fla. It includes major presentations on the education systems of Taiwan and Australia, the education programs of the U.S. Navy and national programs that redesign curriculum and instruction to produce high levels of student performance.

For more information about the conference, or to obtain a proceedings book that includes papers on the major presentations, contact the National Alliance.

THE COURIER-JOURNAL • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1985

**KERA: WHERE OUR SCHOOLS STAND**

# Kennedy soars from near bottom to near top

By BEVERLY BARTLETT  
Staff Writer

Four years ago when Kentucky children were first tested against the new standards of the Kentucky Education Reform Act, students at Kentucky Elementary School in Louisville were struggling more than most.

Kennedy students often offered a sentence — or less — to questions that demanded well-thought-out answers. They scored, as a school, in the bottom 10 percent of the elementary schools in Jefferson County Public Schools.

But in the scores released yesterday, Kennedy had risen to the top 10 percent of Jefferson County elementary schools — raising its score from 27.8 to 81.8. And it has become one of 40 schools in the county to improve enough to become eligible for financial rewards.

The philosophy of Kentucky's education reform law discourages comparing schools, arguing that schools aren't supposed to be competing. But Kennedy's dramatic rise is a marker of how much has changed there — including morale.

Fourth-grade teacher Carol Loh appeared to be only partly exaggerating her smugness when she said, "We're good."

Five years ago, when lawmakers

## Reforms started before KERA

were developing the education reform act, they were focusing mostly on the plight of the rural poor. But the changes they adopted closely mirrored changes that Kennedy — very much a school for the urban poor — was already making.

Kennedy, whose student body is 47 percent African-American, is at 3500 Gibson Lane in the shadow of Sussman Expressway and a housing project. More than 90 percent of its students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

More than five years ago many of the students were living in long-term public housing. Parents had little. But Austin's concerns about the failure rate led to a decision to make Kennedy a Montessori school in January 1980. A few months later, the General Assembly would adopt the Kentucky Education Reform Act, which included similar philosophies.

Both approaches stress the importance of writing hand-on learning and grouping children of different ages so they can teach one another.

But Kennedy had a head start on other schools in dramatically changing pupils' daily work. At Kennedy, students now write more than they

did before, and teachers run more flexible classrooms, realizing that reworking one child's essay will become a lesson in grammar while another's will prompt a lesson in spelling.

Austin says it is very different from the days when a teacher would come a lesson in grammar while another's will prompt a lesson in spelling.

Austin said there also has been a change in the school's expectations of students. No longer is there the common assumption that some children cannot succeed.

That is evident in the goal the pupils have set for themselves for the coming periods: they're working on a goal that is not in the pupils' portfolios — notes.

On Monday, fourth-graders were scattered throughout the building busily typing this year's portfolios. Linda Williams was working on a fictional play that was partly romance, partly mystery, partly drunkard-driving morality tale (Lash, she Frazier was working on an opinion piece about the school cafeteria's food. She thinks it's bad, and wrote:

"The chicken is greasy. The beans are dry and the bottom of the pizza is burned."

But the school as whole? She gave it higher marks.

### KERA SCORES: NEARING THE GOAL

A chart shows how much the KERA scores have risen since the start of the first two years of the assessment system. The base line, established in the 1981-82 school year, is a score for 1982-84. The goal for 1984-85 is shown at the top of the chart.



STAFF CHART BY STELLA DUBER

## Interlude: The School Nobody Wanted

Jacqueline Austin, Kennedy Elementary School

I was in Louisville, Kentucky, in June 1987 and had just been made a principal. I was pretty excited. Everyone had told me that I would never make principal on the first try, that it typically took three or four tries. Especially since I was not a central office person but a third-grade teacher. Even so, I had done it on my first time out, and I was beaming with pride. And now Superintendent Ferguson was asking me what school I wanted.

"OK," I said, "you can set me up in a parking lot. I don't care which school you give me." It was only later that I learned that the other new principals cared a lot and, unlike me, they all knew enough to know that they did not want Kennedy. That was how I got it.

The John F. Kennedy Elementary School sits squarely between two public housing projects, publicly supported breeding grounds for poverty, drugs, and student crime. In August, like new principals everywhere, I went. I did what I thought I needed to do to get my school ready to open and to get my faculty up for the students who would shortly be crossing the streets from the projects into the school.

I was much too busy to pay any attention to the school board hearings that fall when a civil rights activist launched an attack on the board by reading data he had gotten from the districts' records using the public disclosure law. The data revealed appalling school performance for schools serving low-income students. To make his points, the attacker drew special attention to the performance of the Kennedy School. He demanded

to know why Kennedy was failing its kids. How can you fail kindergarten he wanted to know. But the records in fact showed large numbers of students in my school failing kindergarten and first grade, and the data got worse from there. The Kennedy School data were featured the next day on the front page of the Louisville Courier. Imagine how I felt when I opened my morning paper!

Later that day, I got the inevitable call to the superintendent's office. He was friendly but firm: he would do whatever he could to help, but the situation must improve. For the first time, yours truly, who had been wholly absorbed in getting my school opened successfully, started to look at the school's performance data, and I was truly appalled. The retention rates were only the tip of the iceberg. On indicator after indicator, I found that Kennedy came up the worst in the district. I was used to being first among equals, not last.

When I walked out of the superintendent's office, I thought, Well, I suppose I could just start crying and feeling sorry for myself because I got a bad school—or I can do something about it. People who know me know that I am not going to cry about it, so I might just as well do something about it.

But I didn't know what to do. Many people in the central office offered to help, but I didn't know what to ask for. Everything needed my attention at once, so I just ended up spending my time putting out fires.

Two months later, the superintendent called again, this time to ask if I wanted my school to be included in an application for a federal designation grant to create magnet schools in Louisville. I leaped at the chance.

I had been attracted to the Montessori idea for a long time, even before I discovered that Maria Montessori had originally developed her plan for low-income inner-city students. Montessori's program was aimed mainly at creating an environment that would provide the structures needed to help young people develop the social skills and basic cognitive skills that they would need for a lifetime of relating to others in constructive ways. I had noticed that the youngsters coming to school at ages five and six had the social skills normally expected of three-year-olds.



Ordinarily, even inner-city kids would have picked up some of these skills in a Head Start program, but very few of these kids had been in such a program. They did not know their colors, could not count, did not know their alphabet, and had no one reading to them outside of school. I thought the Montessori program would address all these problems head on.

No less important, I knew that Kennedy needed an overall vision and structure that could provide the foundation for building the confidence of the staff and hope for the future. I had my fingers crossed that the Montessori program could provide that vision and structure.

And very important to me, I knew that the American Montessori Program comes with a first-rate training program. It is possible to get Montessori training without getting certified, but we opted for setting up a school in which all the classroom teachers had to be certified. Certification requires two years of training, including a one-year internship. It is so demanding that successful completion of the program earns the participant a master's degree in education. Many of Kennedy's teachers, I discovered, did not have a master's degree.

So we used most of the magnet school funds we got to train twenty-five district teachers in the Montessori method. Most teachers at Kennedy just laughed at me when I offered them the training. Most were convinced that nothing good would ever happen in this school in the projects and so the training would be a waste of time. Only three Kennedy teachers were willing to sign up. So Superintendent Ingerson offered the training to other district teachers. He got enough takers.

To my dismay, I found out that there is no authorized provider of Montessori training in all of Kentucky. So we persuaded the faculty of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, to come to Louisville to train our teachers and provide two days a week of internship supervision. When this was done, I went to my kindergarten teachers and told them that we were about to implement the Montessori program grade by grade at Kennedy. I told them that I was very sure that they had not elected to participate, but I asked them well in whatever school they chose to transfer to. They were outraged, claiming that they had not decided to leave Kennedy and had no intention of transferring to another school.

But I had done my homework. Superintendent Ingerson was behind me 100 percent, and the personnel director of the district had met with the union presidents, who agreed that if the program of the school was Montessori and Montessori required that the teachers be Montessori-certified, the teachers in that school had to be Montessori-certified. Both the superintendent and the union agreed that the teachers who had turned down the training had "unintended" in transfer to another school. And they were transferred to those schools.

So year by year, the implementation of the program progressed grade by grade. Many of the Montessori-trained teachers in the district came in Kennedy. Some did not. So we began to recruit Montessori-certified teachers from all over the country. The original teachers who were not certified for the program were transferred to other schools as certified teachers came in. The teachers who had not been certified for Montessori were very jealous of the new teachers, mainly because I used most of my materials budget to purchase beautiful Montessori materials, while the other teachers mainly had to make do with what they had. But every now and then, I would buy some new materials that all the teachers in the school could use.

I felt all the way through that I was managing two schools, an old one that was being phased out, along with the teachers who inhabited that school, and the new one being added to grade by grade, year by year. It was, of course, especially hard on the teachers who had to leave a school in which they had been teaching many years. The reality was that they never talk about in education school is that doing right by the students sometimes requires doing things that hurt the faculty. In most cases, as we all know, it is usually the faculty's interests that prevail when that conflict comes into play. But not at Kennedy.

Gradually, as we hired more and more Montessori teachers, the whole culture of the school changed, and the tension subsided.

Getting the parents on board was very important. One of the strategies we used was to offer a Montessori preschool program free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis—with a hitch. The hitch was that the parents had to come to school for two hours a week to help out. In this

hibit to the county agencies that work with them and their families to make sure that all of us are doing everything we can to enable these children to come to school ready to learn. These centers have become indispensable.

The second crucial contribution of KERA, apart from the way it focuses the attention of the staff on results, is the Extended School Services provision of the act. This program provides funds that make it possible for the school to offer extra services to very low achieving students from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. twice a week during the school year and all day from June 9 to June 20 every year.

But the biggest contribution of KERA, as I said earlier, is the focus on results. For me, the key to real leadership of an elementary school right now comes down to developing a strong shared vision among the staff and a relentless focus on results—being clear about the results we value, consistently measuring our progress toward them, and then being very hands-on about doing what it takes to get our students to where they have to be.

We have come a long way. In the first few years, though we were working very hard, progress was terribly slow, but we stayed the course. By the fourth year, we began to see what we were looking for. Performance had tripled in reading and math, quadrupled in writing, and doubled in science and social studies from two years earlier. We had far exceeded our KERA performance targets, and our teachers were earning a performance bonus from the state of \$2,300 each. Nine years after Superintendent Ingersoll summoned me to his office because of the appalling performance at Kennedy, the state commissioner came to our school to present me with the national Milken Foundation Award, given to outstanding elementary and secondary school principals.

But progress is not enough. I am constantly analyzing the results, and that analysis is now telling me that we have topped out. Our scores have leveled off. Our objective is for all of our students to hit the proficient mark on the state assessment. Now we have to develop a new strategy that will enable us to take the next step, so we can reach our goal. We won't rest until we get there.

vey, we got parents who were typically somewhat afraid of the school staff to come to the school and find out that we are OK people who really care about their children and are willing to listen respectfully to what they have to say. That worked pretty well. We basically scavenged the money to do this, but it was more than worthwhile.

Year by year, we implemented the program, and things improved. But I had known from the beginning that we would need much more than Montessori. The early mathematics curriculum in Montessori is very strong, but the reading program is primarily phonics-based, and the students were not understanding what they were reading well enough in the lower grades. So we ended up enacting our Title I program with its specialist teachers and pull-out design and using the fixed-up Title I funds to instead instead a Reading Recovery program, which focuses on reading for understanding. But Reading Recovery is very expensive, and budgets cut in the district have forced us to cut it back.

I should mention that the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) has made a big difference to Kennedy. It got everyone focused on results, and in particular on results as measured by Kentucky's new statewide assessment. The incentives in it have made a big impression on our staff.

Sometimes, I think, people look at us and see only Montessori. But the reality is very different. We actually live in the environment that KERA created: if there is a conflict between doing what Montessori would have us do and getting results, we go for the results. Most often, of course, it is not a question of conflict so much as what Montessori leaves out and what results require. In this connection, two features of KERA are particularly important to us:

First is the Family Resource Center. I cannot begin to convey how key it has been to have the center staff right here, working directly with the students and their parents. Whenever we have a problem with absentee, a center staff member will hop in a car and go to that student's home to get that student here. The city is covering the housing projects down now, at least, but that is scattering our students all over. The Family Resource Center staff are tracking them down for us and arranging transportation for them back to the school. And center staff are consistently referring our

**■ Close-up on Reaching High Standards:  
John F. Kennedy Elementary School,  
Louisville, Kentucky**

It was a bleak day at the Kennedy School five years ago when results from the annual statewide exam arrived.

"We were at rock bottom on everything," recalls Principal Jacqueline Austin. "The good news was we didn't have anywhere to go but up." Three years ago the school began working with the National Alliance design to focus on student achievement, and student performance at the elementary school began to rise.

Fast forward to 1996 when the scores from the state's mid-point exams arrived: "We were just ecstatic! We were 11 points ahead of our goal," Austin says. "In addition, three of our students were designated Kentucky Scholars." This means they were among the top 2 percent of the 140,000 fourth-graders who took the test. In just a few years, the school rose from among the lowest-scoring schools to the top 10 percent, according to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.

"I attribute our results to our training at the National Alliance. Now, student achievement is at the center of all our thoughts. When we plan anything, the first question is, 'How is this going to help student achievement?'" Austin says.

**Letting go**

Of course, marshaling all energy and resources toward student achievement has its price. It involves what Austin calls "selective abandonment," letting go of efforts or programs that don't advance core goals.

"We eliminated the add-ons, and it does cause separation anxiety," she says. "But my job as principal is to help people focus on the big picture. We had to let go of something. I didn't go about this as a taskmaster, telling teachers, 'This is going, that is going.' It happened together and through conversation."

Soon, she recalls, "I could see us getting stronger and stronger. We began to focus on quality work for our students. Our students have many challenges on a personal

level—families in distress, families where children are displaced, in homeless shelters. Some teachers were taking on too much to be there for the child at the expense of academic performance. I had to step in and help everyone focus, letting the family resource coordinator do her job and letting teachers teach. I said, 'I don't want you excusing people because Dad's in prison.' We can be sympathetic, but we've got to keep academic expectations high. We can give these children extra hugs and love and let them know we care. But when it comes to academic performance, there can be no excuses."

In the end, all successes at Kennedy relate in one way or another to standards. "We talk to children about our expectations. We show them the rubric (scoring guide). We say, 'If you want an A, then this is what's required.'" And meeting standards is rewarded.

"We do a lot of celebrating here. Every time we get our test results, we put posters around the building. We really talk it up. When children are getting ready to take the state exam, we roll out the red carpet for them. We have a pep rally. Cheerleaders come in from the local high school. We use our student-run post office, and every fourth-grader who's going to take the test receives a letter of encouragement from other students. We embrace the philosophy that everybody can excel at high levels," Austin says.

**Tracking Success At John F. Kennedy  
Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky.  
Consistent Progress from 1992 to 1995**

**Reading**

████████████████████ 43%

**Math**

████████████████████ 45%

*Percentage increase of scores on the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), the Kentucky statewide assessment, as reported by John F. Kennedy Elementary School.*

**Note.** Excerpted from New American Schools Annual Report 1995-96, *Getting Stranger and Stronger*. Permission to reprint has been requested.

**Committee on Education and the Workforce**  
**Witness Disclosure Requirement - "Truth in Testimony"**  
 Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

Your Name: <b>JACQUELINE AUSTIN</b>		
1. Are you testifying on behalf of a Federal, State, or Local Governmental entity?	Yes	No ✓
2. Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government entity?	Yes	No ✓
3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 1994:		
4. Other than yourself, please list what entity or entities you are representing:  <b>JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>		
5. If your answer to question number 2 is yes, please list any offices or elected positions held or briefly describe your representational capacity with the entities disclosed in question number 4:  <b>DIRECTOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT</b>		
6. If your answer to question number 2 is yes, do any of the entities disclosed in question number 4 have parent organizations, subsidiaries, or partnerships to the entities for whom you are not representing?	Yes	No ✓
7. If the answer to question number 2 is yes, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which were received by the entities listed under question 4 since October 1, 1994, including the source and amount of each grant or contract:		

Signature: *Jacqueline Austin*

JUNE 22, 2008

Please attach this sheet to your written testimony.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Please provide the committee with a copy of your resume (or a curriculum vitae) or just answer the following questions:

a. Please list any employment, occupation, or work related experiences, and education or training which relate to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing:

**Employed by Jefferson County Public Schools for 24 years.  
Variety of teaching and administrative experiences  
K - grade 12.**

**Effectively implemented the National Alliance for Restructuring  
Education Design at John F. Kennedy Elementary School from  
1993- 1997.**

b. Please provide any other information you wish to convey to the Committee which might aid the members of the Committee to understand better the content of your testimony:

**Currently providing guidance and assistance to schools, in the  
Jefferson County Public School System, as Director of  
Curriculum and Assessment.**

**Leading the district in the development of Performance  
Standards for students grades K - 12.**

Please attach to your written testimony.

**APPENDIX G – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. STEVEN M. ROSS**

TESTIMONY, JUNE 23, 1998, THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY  
CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND THE WORK FORCE

Steven M. Ross  
The University of Memphis

The research to be described was conducted collaboratively by The University of Memphis, The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Johns Hopkins University. Its purpose was to examine the effects on student achievement of school reform designs implemented in Memphis, Tennessee. The district-wide restructuring formally began in Memphis City Schools in 1995. In the spring of that year, 34 schools selected one of eight whole-school restructuring designs. Six of the designs-- ATLAS, Audrey Cohen College, Co-NECT, Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound, Modern Red Schoolhouse, and Roots & Wings were sponsored by the New American Schools Development Corporation, now called New American Schools (NAS); two designs-- Accelerated Schools and Paideia--were developed by independent design teams. In the fall, 1995, the schools began implementing their selected designs with assistance from NAS, the design developers, and the school district. In 1996, 14 new restructuring schools were established, and in 1997, 19 more were added. This fall (1998), all Memphis schools will be implementing a whole-school restructuring design.

As the initial 34 schools began their implementations, evaluation research by The University of Memphis, Johns Hopkins University, and Rand Corporation was conducted to document and assess processes and outcomes. One major finding was that most schools selected appropriate designs matched to their goals, educational philosophies, and student populations. Second, the formal restructuring process generally provided organization and new energy to existing district initiatives for schools to implement site-based management and associated educational reforms. Third, in nearly all schools, movement toward greater use of student-centered learning activities, such as projects, exhibitions, and demonstrations, was evidenced. Classrooms became busier and more active places. Planning time for teachers increased. The design implementations at most Memphis schools were rated positively both in our research and in the Rand studies.

The present study examined the question of whether the designs were increasing student performance on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), the state-mandated standardized achievement test. Using the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, comparisons of year-to-year gains were made on 5 subjects (reading, language, math, science, and social studies) between 25 elementary schools that started restructuring in 1995-1996 and matched control schools, all other elementary schools in this district, and national norm gains.

The literature on school reform suggests that successful implementation of a whole-school restructuring design takes at least five to six years. We were therefore surprised by what our results showed. In 1995, before the design models were adopted, students in the 25 redesigned schools were making significantly less improvement from year to year, across all grades and subjects, than students in the comparison schools in Memphis.

By 1997, students in the redesigned schools were making significantly greater gains than other students. Specifically, their average overall learning gain of 107.5 percent indicates that students across all grades and subjects were improving at a faster rate than the national average--100%--and notably faster than students in either the control schools (93%) and all other Memphis schools (96.4%). This trend was highly statistically significant, and was reflected in all five subjects.

Given the relatively short duration of the reform effort (only two years), these results need to be viewed cautiously. Nonetheless, they are highly suggestive about potential restructuring effects. The study also provides the first broad-scale objective evidence of learning gains in schools that have adopted New American Schools and related independent designs. Formerly, evidence of the success of these designs has been largely anecdotal.

These results have several implications. First, from a measurement standpoint, the findings demonstrate that data from traditional standardized tests can measure progressive change in student performance when analyzed longitudinally using the TVAAS system. Specifically, the value-added gain score data used provided control over variables such as student ability and socioeconomic status, therefore yielding a much more sensitive test of restructuring program effects than could have been achieved through conventional analyses. Second, although the period



of the study has been too short for the designs to have been fully implemented in all schools, it appears likely that the more active teaching and learning observed were having a positive impact that was bridging the initial performance gap. Third, the fact that the Memphis design implementations have been rated as strong compared to other districts involved in similar restructuring efforts is suggestive of the benefits of ensuring that design principles and procedures are correctly and fully represented in the individual school programs.

Further study will reveal whether these trends remain consistent in Year 3 and will also relate outcomes to quality of implementation. These investigations should provide useful information for improving designs, judging their impact on performance, and determining which designs work best in different school contexts.

**APPENDIX H – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. JOEY MERRILL**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

**HEARING ON THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM  
JUNE 23, 1998**

**TESTIMONY OF JOEY MERRILL,  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL, COMMUNITY DAY CHARTER SCHOOL,  
LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS**

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Congressman Riggs and Committee Members, I wish to submit my testimony for the record and thank you for inviting me to testify. I am honored to be on this panel with so many distinguished researchers and leaders in school reform. Unlike many of the researchers here today, I will not be presenting you with statistical findings indicating the value of school reform. I will be sharing information about my charter school's use of school reform research.

Community Day Charter School is located in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Lawrence has a population of approximately 63,000 and is one of the poorest, most densely populated cities in the country. In fact, Lawrence is the 14<sup>th</sup> poorest city in the U.S. for families. The per capita income in Lawrence is the second lowest in Massachusetts and is 44.9% below the national average. Over the past 15 years, the city has experienced an influx of immigrants from the Caribbean, Central and South America. Currently, approximately 70% of the city's residents are Latino. The immigrant population has placed additional demands on the city's infrastructure and on the job base, which has dwindled as the manufacturing mills have slowly closed down.

My school was started in 1995 by a non-profit organization, Community Day Care Center of Lawrence. The mission of the thirty year-old day care center is to service the working families of Lawrence. One such need was to have more choices in schooling. We envisioned a small school - knowing that small schools are more able to meet the needs of students, especially those from inner cities. Our enrollment is currently 196 students, Kindergarten - Grade 6. For the past three years, we have been adding a grade a year in order to grow slowly. In two years, we will have a K-8 school with an enrollment of 225. The school's demographics are similar to the city's (70% Latino, 54% Language

Minority, and 69% free/reduced lunch). Most of our families work, often several jobs including factory shift work. The experiences of our families help us to reinforce the students' sincere desire for learning and educational achievement.

Our school's charter is a contract with the state and articulates our school reform goals. Some of our values include teaching a strong work ethic and responsibility, creating a solid citizenry for Lawrence, supporting the community of Lawrence by creating a "virtual" community at our school, and meeting students where they are and pushing them toward a set of world class academic standards. The main goal for the school and for the families is to make certain that our students are able to utilize the opportunities this country will offer them as they get older. We believe this can only be done when our students have mastery over English, History, Science, Math, Geography, Spanish, and Technology. In other words, our student must be able to compete effectively. Particular overall school goals are:

- Students should make at least one year's progress each year.
- Students should gain mastery over the academic areas listed above through a standards-based curriculum.
- Parents should be satisfied with our service and product. Customers should stay with us.
- Every adult in our school maintains and enforces high expectations for behavior.
- The school's desired outcomes should remain cohesive, understood, and common.
- The school should support families to help students excel academically.
- The school should be fiscally stable and resources should go into the classroom.
- The staff should become increasingly expert and teaching techniques should continue to be refined.

Our school offers an 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. school day, before and after-school day care (opening at 6:45 a.m. and closing at 5:30 p.m.). We also believe in English immersion for Language Minority students and full inclusion of students with special needs. We have a dress code, mixed-aged groupings of grades, a strict discipline code, and a teacher and assistant teacher in each room of 22 students. Each child has an individualized learning plan to support each child's unique strengths and weaknesses. We have also created a common curriculum, based on interdisciplinary thematic units which were written to teach to the Modern Red Schoolhouse Comprehensive School Reform Design's academic standards. Our units are also informed by E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge rich content.

Schools can certainly implement school reform models with technical support from research organizations. Most public schools, however, do not have a particular time frame in which to achieve the desired results. Charter schools do have a very specific time frame to demonstrate results (namely, the length of the charter and demonstrating progress annually). I believe it is this attention to academic progress for students in *real time* that gives charters an advantage to implementing school reform. Charter schools are created to fulfill specific educational purposes and are usually able to select a staff that shares that vision. Charter schools do not have to change the course of the ship and possibly the crew in the middle of a voyage, we start on the voyage together with a clean slate. Finally, a charter school is ultimately accountable to its customers who choose the school (i.e., the students and their families). If they are not satisfied with the service and product, they will choose another school and our school will no longer exist.

All of these factors certainly help to organize a staff around results, but it is also the internal autonomy that allows charter schools to implement school reform quickly. For example, if my school is trying a particular educational strategy with a child and it is not working – we change it and we change it quickly. We are able to make quick decisions to suit the needs of the individual child and we are able to flex our budget to do the same.

Having been a researcher at the Hudson Institute (which developed the Modern Red Schoolhouse Comprehensive School Reform Design) and now being a practitioner creating a curriculum based on its academic standards, I can tell you that implementing research conclusions into a school is not easy work. It is not easy because many schools do not have the kind of autonomy and accountability as do charter schools. It is also not easy because of the way time is used during the day at a school. Unlike many industries, the education business is organized so that management is usually dealing with operations, crisis, or filling out paper work all day. Even at a charter school, principals or other technical support providers can only meet with their staffs when they are not teaching. The

opportunity to strategically plan and organize is scarce. Therefore, I believe that staff time is the most valuable asset of a school implementing reforms.

Our school receives a per pupil allotment from the state and it is from those funds that we create our budget. We have done a large amount of private fundraising to pay for our facilities, any capital expenses, and for some program necessities such as providing educational programs in the summer for students and paying teachers to work on curriculum and perfect their craft over the summer. Because teachers deliver the service, they are not mere token representatives to our policy-making. Our small staff does not have the time or become embroiled in minutia because we must pull together to implement our goals or we perish.

For our staff, that has meant creating our common curriculum of standards-based units in one summer. Over this last school year, and over this summer, we will be refining our work and continuing to individualize teaching methods for different kinds of learners. If it were not for the New American Schools Development Corporation's designs and in particular, the Modern Red Schoolhouse Comprehensive School Reform Design, we could not have progressed as quickly as we have in terms of implementation. The designs were ready for us to begin to use and flexible enough for us to tailor our design to our needs and time frame.

The Modern Red Schoolhouse also suggested an information technology management system for us to purchase to help us to monitor individual student progress on each academic standard. We believe that schools should be more able to make changes based on student assessment data. For us, this includes standardized tests but also incorporates the everyday assessment data that teachers track. All of this data help us to compile a picture of the whole child – especially when combined with the observations of staff, parents, counselors, and the child themselves. We believe that this information management system will continue to change the way we do business by giving us more data about the performance of students given various teaching methodologies.

The Modern Red Schoolhouse Comprehensive School Reform Design and Core Knowledge gave us the academic standards and content we needed upon which to base our common curriculum. Reform models bring research to the school and if a school is equipped to implement the suggested reforms, the results are powerful and clear to any visitor. The government can help schools improve their service to children by continuing to support school reform models that do research and are proactive in offering needed technical support at schools. School reform designs can also support schools by linking school practitioners to others who have accomplished certain reforms. It is also my hope that these designs can be supported financially so they can continue to do more research to fulfill the varying needs of schools attempting to implement reforms.

The government can invest in school reform by supporting charter schools as well. Charter schools are some of the best pilots of school reform models. Further, charter schools are public schools and deserve equal funding. As a public school, we accept any child who gains entrance to our school through a lottery. The lack of facilities or capital funds offered to charter schools means that fundraising is an on-going burden and that many expert groups may not be able to afford the opening of a charter school (for example, groups of teachers). Without the initial financial backing and infrastructure of the day care organization, my school would not exist.

Currently, we have over 400 students on our wait-list and our students' families would like for us to start a high school. Our only attrition has been three families who left the city; we know that many more families are staying in the city only for the school. The demand for replication of school reform designs and charter schools is enormous. Investing in the creation of new charter schools offers many families more choices for their children immediately, offers the traditional public school system more models to replicate, and will yield quicker results in a complicated endeavor. Thank you for allowing me to share this good news about a school that has utilized school reform research to offer a community real results for its children. I also hope that you will please visit our school if you are in Massachusetts.

## Joey E. Merrill

2 Smith Street  
Newburyport, Massachusetts 01950  
(978) 465-5870  
joeymerrill@hotmail.com

Community Day Charter School  
73 Prospect Street  
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01841  
(978) 681-9910

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### Education:

Boston University, School of Management, Second-year MBA student (part-time).

Georgetown University, College of Arts and Sciences, B.A., 1991.

Double Major: Government and Philosophy

### Professional:

*Assistant Head of School, Community Day Charter School, November 1996 – present.*

Lawrence, Massachusetts. Duties include: curriculum design & staff training, managing standardized assessments, operational management including purchasing, inventory systems, food & transportation program management, strategic planning, fund-raising, grant management, governmental reporting, public relations (local and national), staff hiring & evaluation, parental relations, student discipline.

*Education Coordination, Mayor's Office of New York City, March 1994 – November 1996.*

New York City, New York. Assistance in the formulation and implementation of Mayor Giuliani's educational policy (grades K-12, public and private schools of New York City); policy support for Deputy Mayor Segarra as the Mayor's liaison with the New York City Board of Education and the New York State Department of Education; work also entailed speech writing, testimony & report writing, federal legislation impact analysis, advance work, review of proposals for funding, constituency work, and representing the Mayor at education events.

*Research Analyst, Hudson Institute, September 1992 – March 1994. Indianapolis, Indiana.*

Worked with diverse schools and school districts to implement a national standards-based "break the mold" school reform design model for public education, the Modern Red Schoolhouse; responsible for on-going research of design components and research regarding education reform trends.

*Issues Analyst, National Republican Party, September 1991 – September 1992. Washington, D.C.*  
Opposition research in the primaries and general presidential election.

*Staff Assistant, Office of Congressional Relations at the Office of National Drug Control Policy,*

*White House. October 1990 – September 1991 (intern since 1989). Washington, D.C. Covered Capitol Hill for the President's illicit drug policy and legislation. (Named "Schedule C" – Political Appointee of President Bush).*

### Activities:

Member, Junior League, 1992 – present.

Co-founder, Third Millennium, non-profit organization focusing on generational public policy issues for the post baby-boom population, 1993 – present.



**APPENDIX I – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAVID R. OBEY \*\*\***

**HONORABLE DAVID R. OBEY (D-WISCONSIN)**

**STATEMENT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM**

**Before The**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, YOUTH AND  
FAMILIES**

**JUNE 23, 1998**

GOOD AFTERNOON, CHAIRMAN RIGGS AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I AM PLEASED TO TESTIFY TODAY ON THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM - A BIPARTISAN INITIATIVE SPONSORED BY MYSELF AND CONGRESSMAN JOHN PORTER IN THE FY1998 LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL.

THE \$150 MILLION INCLUDED IN THE FY1998 EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE FUNDS THE FIRST MAJOR FEDERAL EFFORT TO EXPAND THE USE OF RESEARCH-TESTED, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM MODELS IN UP TO 3,000 SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE. THIS INITIATIVE WILL ALLOW SCHOOLS TO USE AN INCENTIVE GRANT OF AT LEAST \$50,000 TO EXPERIMENT WITH A VARIETY OF EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO REVITALIZING VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF SCHOOLING - CURRICULUM, TEACHING, ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

A CENTRAL GOAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE IS TO EMPOWER PARENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO UNITE BEHIND A SHARED VISION AND AN EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN THEIR SCHOOLS. THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE DOES THIS BY PROVIDING JUST ENOUGH "VENTURE CAPITAL" THAT SCHOOLS CAN USE TO ADOPT SUCCESSFUL, EXTERNALLY DEVELOPED REFORM MODELS THAT REFLECT THE BEST THINKING OF LEADING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS ON HOW TO IMPROVE CLASSROOMS AND RE-ENERGIZE SCHOOLS. THE IDEA IS THAT SCHOOLS SHOULD BASE THEIR EFFORTS ON HARD-HEADED RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS, NOT SOMEBODY'S IDEOLOGICAL IDEAS, BE THEY RIGHT OR LEFT, ABOUT WHAT MIGHT WORK.

FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM HAS BEEN CHAMPIONED BY A GROUP OF PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN THROUGH THE NEW AMERICAN SCHOOLS ORGANIZATION - A RESULTS-ORIENTED, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

THAT HAS DEVELOPED AND TESTED EIGHT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING MODELS IN OVER 500 SCHOOLS WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS. IN ADDITION, LEADING RESEARCHERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE DEVELOPED OTHER SUCCESSFUL COMPREHENSIVE REFORM DESIGNS.

IN 1994, CONGRESS FIRST RECOGNIZED THE POTENTIAL FOR SCHOOLWIDE REFORM IN THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE TITLE 1 PROGRAM, BY ALLOWING HIGH-POVERTY TITLE 1 SCHOOLS TO USE TITLE 1 FUNDS FOR SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAMS. THE 1994 REAUTHORIZATION RECOGNIZED THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TITLE 1 CHILDREN CAN BE STRENGTHENED AND SUSTAINED IF THE FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN TAKES PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE SCHOOLS WHERE TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, STAFF AND PARENTS ARE WORKING TOGETHER ON COMMON GOALS.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM INCORPORATES A REQUIREMENT THAT EFFECTIVE, RESEARCH-TESTED PRACTICES FORM THE BASIS OF SCHOOLWIDE REFORM AND ENCOURAGES ALL SCHOOLS – NOT JUST HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS – TO USE A SCHOOLWIDE APPROACH TO REFORM.

THE DESIGN OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE FOCUSES NOT ON ADDING ISOLATED, PIECEMEAL PROGRAMS, BUT INTEGRATING NINE KEY INGREDIENTS THAT WE KNOW ARE CRITICAL FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL REFORM. THESE ARE:

- *EFFECTIVE, RESEARCH-BASED METHODS AND STRATEGIES,*
- *A COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN,*
- *EXTENSIVE AND ON-GOING TEACHER TRAINING,*
- *MEASURABLE GOALS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT,*
- *SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF,*
- *PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT,*
- *EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT,*
- *AN EVALUATION PLAN, AND*
- *COORDINATION OF RESOURCES TO SUSTAIN THE EFFORT.*

EVEN WITH ITS STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS, THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE HAS GENERATED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF EXCITEMENT AND INTEREST IN RURAL, SUBURBAN AND INNER CITY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS ARE EAGER TO LEARN ABOUT EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES THAT WORK AND HOW TO APPLY THEM TO THEIR OWN SCHOOLS. TO DATE, OVER 6,000 PEOPLE HAVE ATTENDED 25 WORKSHOPS AND OVER 100 AWARENESS SESSIONS HELD BY THE STATES AND REGIONAL LABORATORIES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THEY CAN PARTICIPATE.

AT A SHOWCASE OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM MODELS HELD IN MY OWN STATE OF WISCONSIN IN FEBRUARY, SEVERAL HUNDRED EDUCATORS PARTICIPATED IN DAY-LONG WORKSHOPS IN MILWAUKEE AND IN MY HOME TOWN, WAUSAU. OVER 100 EDUCATORS HAD TO BE TURNED AWAY. MANY TRAVELED HUNDREDS OF MILES TO ATTEND - MOTIVATED NOT BY THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING A \$50,000 GRANT, BUT MERELY BY THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES.

ALREADY, THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE IS BECOMING A CATALYST FOR REFORM IN THOUSANDS OF SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE NATION. THEY ARE CONDUCTING THEIR OWN NEEDS ASSESSMENTS, EXAMINING RESEARCH-BASED, EFFECTIVE PRACTICES, AND ASKING HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES THAT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL ELSEWHERE WILL INDEED WORK IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM SUPPORTS LOCAL CHOICE BY EXPANDING THE ARRAY OF RESEARCH-TESTED, EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES THAT SCHOOLS MIGHT INCLUDE IN THEIR REFORM EFFORTS. IT IS CRITICAL THAT SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS MAKE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT WHAT MIGHT WORK BEST IN THEIR PARTICULAR SCHOOLS. THAT IS WHY THIS INITIATIVE REQUIRES THE TEN REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES, WORKING WITH THE STATES AND DISTRICTS, ENSURE THAT SCHOOLS HAVE PLENTY OF INFORMATION TO HELP THEM EVALUATE, SELECT OR DESIGN THEIR OWN COMPREHENSIVE REFORM APPROACHES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE HAS ALSO CAUGHT THE ATTENTION AND IMAGINATION OF STATE EDUCATION LEADERS WHO SEE ITS POTENTIAL FAR BEYOND THE SMALL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS THAT WILL RECEIVE GRANTS. THEY ARE LOOKING TO THIS INITIATIVE AS A MEANS BY WHICH SCHOOLS CAN MEET MORE RIGOROUS STATE STANDARDS, A WAY TO LEVERAGE GREATER ACADEMIC GAINS IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS, AND AN OPPORTUNITY REFOCUS OTHER FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES ON EFFECTIVE PRACTICES.

FOR EXAMPLE, DELAWARE AND ILLINOIS WILL USE GOALS 2000 FUNDS TO AWARD PLANNING GRANTS TO SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN APPLYING FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM GRANTS. OTHER STATES, LIKE TEXAS, ARE CONSIDERING ADDING THEIR OWN RESOURCES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ENGAGING IN SCHOOLWIDE REFORM.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DESPITE THIS INTENSE INTEREST IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM OUTSIDE OF THE BELTWAY - IN STATES, DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS - SOME PEOPLE INSIDE THE BELTWAY HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE INITIATIVE AS A FEDERALLY-DRIVEN, BUREAUCRATIC PROGRAM. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME ADDITIONAL POINTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM.

**NOT A FEDERAL MANDATE.** I BELIEVE THAT THE STRONG LOCAL INTEREST IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM REFLECTS THE FACT THAT THIS INITIATIVE IS NOT FEDERALLY-DRIVEN, BUT RATHER FACILITATES AND SUPPORTS STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING. IN APPLYING FOR COMPETITIVE GRANTS, EACH SCHOOL DECIDES ITS OWN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, AND EVALUTES WHICH STRATEGY IS BEST FOR THAT SCHOOL. STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES - NOT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - DECIDE WHICH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM APPROACHES ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL, BASED ON PEER REVIEW OF THE QUALITY OF A SCHOOL'S APPLICATION AND EVIDENCE THAT THE SPECIFIC APPROACHES SELECTED BY A SCHOOL ARE BASED ON SOLID RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES.

**GIVES SCHOOLS FLEXIBILITY.** THE LEGISLATION CITES A NUMBER EXEMPLARY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM MODELS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED, TESTED AND PILOTTED BY OUR COUNTRY'S LEADING EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONERS AND RESEARCHERS. HOWEVER, THE LEGISLATION - AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S NONREGULATORY GUIDANCE - ALSO MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT THERE ARE OTHER RESEARCH-TESTED MODELS NOT CITED THAT SCHOOLS MAY INCLUDE IN THEIR REFORM PROGRAMS AS WELL. THERE IS NO "APPROVED" LIST OF MODELS.

BECAUSE ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL, SCHOOLS HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO ADAPT AN EXTERNALLY-DEVELOPED MODEL TO THEIR OWN SITUATION, OR TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN APPROACH TO SCHOOLWIDE REFORM AS LONG AS IT'S COMPONENTS ARE RESEARCH-BASED.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONCERNS RAISED THAT SOME STATES MAY UNDULY RESTRICT LOCAL SCHOOL CHOICE BY GRANTING A COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE TO SCHOOLS USING ONE PARTICULAR MODEL OR ANOTHER. I BELIEVE THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE TO THE STATES STRIKES THE RIGHT BALANCE - IT INDICATES THAT

STATES MAY ESTABLISH COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES FOR CERTAIN COMPREHENSIVE REFORM MODELS IF WARRANTED BY THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE, BUT STATES MUST ALSO GIVE SCHOOLS A LEGITIMATE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN APPROACHES THAT MEET THE LEGISLATIVE CRITERIA.

NOR ARE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO ADOPT ANY PARTICULAR "BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE". SCHOOLS HAVE THE FREEDOM TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE REFORMS IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ARE MOST COMFORTABLE - THE BOTTOM LINE IS STUDENT RESULTS.

**BASED ON EFFECTIVE, BEST PRACTICES.** WE KNOW THAT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM WORKS, WHEN AN ENTIRE SCHOOL IS TRANSFORMED USING EFFECTIVE, BEST PRACTICES THAT ARE CAREFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY IMPLEMENTED. ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF THE POWERFUL EFFECT OF SCHOOLWIDE TRANSFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN MEMPHIS, WHERE SCHOOLS WERE GIVEN SMALL INCENTIVE GRANTS TO ADOPT ONE OF THE NEW AMERICAN SCHOOL DESIGNS OR ANOTHER, PROVEN MODEL AND CHARGED WITH MAKING THAT DESIGN THE CENTERPIECE OF THEIR REFORM EFFORT. A RECENT, INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REDESIGN EXPERIENCE IN MEMPHIS SHOWED, IN JUST TWO YEARS, STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OCCURRED ACROSS ALL GRADE LEVELS AND SUBJECTS IN THE COMPREHENSIVE REFORM SCHOOLS COMPARED TO ALL OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE CITY.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE IS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH NATIONALLY WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN MEMPHIS. IN COMPETING FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM GRANTS, EACH SCHOOL WILL SELECT AND INCORPORATE AN EFFECTIVE, EXTERNALLY-DEVELOPED COMPREHENSIVE REFORM MODEL INTO A SCHOOLWIDE REFORM PROGRAM, OR DESIGN THEIR OWN SUCH PROGRAM. EACH SCHOOL'S APPLICATION MUST ADDRESS NINE ELEMENTS THAT RESEARCH SUGGESTS MUST BE PRESENT TO CREATE HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS. SCHOOLS UTILIZING EXTERNALLY-DEVELOPED MODELS THAT DO NOT ADDRESS ALL NINE ELEMENTS MUST SHOW HOW THEY WILL ADDRESS THE MISSING COMPONENTS.

**BUILDS IN EVALUATION.** THE LEGISLATION BUILDS IN EVALUATION ON SEVERAL LEVELS TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS, AND ALSO SO THAT WE LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT SCHOOLWIDE REFORM ON A NATIONAL SCALE. PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS KNOW ON THE FRONT END THAT THEIR EFFORTS WILL BE ASSESSED AT THE DISTRICT, STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS. THE LEGISLATION PROVIDES FOR AN INDEPENDENT, NATIONAL ASSESSMENT THAT WILL ANALYZE THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AFTER THEY HAVE HAD THREE YEARS OF FUNDING. THIS NATIONAL EVALUATION SHOULD YIELD IMPORTANT, NEW INFORMATION ON HOW TO SCALE UP COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND HELP US UNDERSTAND WHAT CONDITIONS MUST BE PRESENT FOR SUCCESS. IN THE INTERIM, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WILL COLLECT BASELINE INFORMATION, AND STATES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL EVALUATE THEIR PROGRESS IN REACHING THE BENCHMARKS THEY SET FOR A BETTER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE CAN AND MUST DO MORE TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT EVERY SCHOOL CREATES A SOLID EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN EVERY CLASSROOM, AND EVERY CHILD HAS MASTERED THE READING, SCIENCE, MATH AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS NECESSARY TO SUCCEED IN TODAY'S GLOBAL ECONOMY. THAT IS WHY NEARLY EVERY NATIONAL EDUCATION GROUP SUPPORTS THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM INCLUDING:

- THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
- NATIONAL PTA, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
- AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE TITLE 1 DIRECTORS
- COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS
- THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
- THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR BUSINESS

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM IS NOT A SILVER BULLET, NOR WILL IT SOLVE ALL OF OUR EDUCATION PROBLEMS. AS INDICATED IN A RECENT RAND REPORT EVALUATING THE NEW AMERICAN SCHOOLS EFFORT AFTER SIX YEARS, WE KNOW THAT IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE, SCHOOLWIDE REFORM CAN BE A DIFFICULT PROCESS – A PROCESS THAT MUST BE FACILITATED BY RESOURCES, DEDICATED TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS, HIGH-QUALITY, EXTERNAL PARTNERS, AND STABLE AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL.

NEVERTHELESS, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM OFFERS A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT. MY GOAL IS TO HELP LOCAL SCHOOLS DEVELOP THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT HOW BEST TO EDUCATE THEIR KIDS - BASED ON THE BEST THINKING OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS ON HOW TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS. IN DOING SO, WE HAVE THE CHANCE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND TO ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS ON A BROAD SCALE IN THIS COUNTRY.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY. I ASK THAT THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS BE MADE A PART OF THE HEARING RECORD FOLLOWING MY STATEMENT:

- "COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM WILL NEED COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT", BY JOHN ANDERSON, EDUCATION WEEK
- "COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM CAN DEBUNK MYTHS ABOUT CHANGE", BY MARGARET WANG, EDUCATION WEEK
- "MEMPHIS RESTRUCTURING INITIATIVE: ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR YEARS 1 AND 2 ON THE TENNESSEE VALUE-ADDED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (TVAAS)", A SPECIAL REPORT PREPARED FOR THE MEMPHIS CITY SCHOOLS
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION APPLICATION AND GUIDANCE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM



**APPENDIX J – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. JON SCHROEDER**

# CHARTER FRIENDS NATIONAL NETWORK

connecting and supporting state-level charter school initiatives

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED  
BY JON SCHROEDER, DIRECTOR  
CHARTER FRIENDS NATIONAL NETWORK  
TO A HEARING ON THE  
"COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM  
DEMONSTRATION GRANT PROGRAM"  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
JUNE 23, 1998

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony for the record of the Committee's June 23rd hearing on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Grant Program.

By way of introduction, Charter Friends National Network is a project of the non-profit Center for Policy Studies in cooperation with Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Established in early 1997, the project's mission is to connect and support state-level charter school initiatives, including non-profit charter school resource centers and state associations of charter school operators.

These so-called "Charter Friends" organizations assist charters with a variety of issues and needs, including school planning, governance, financing, curriculum, assessment and accountability, facilities and other ingredients in starting and running high quality schools. They attract fiscal and administrative support from foundations, businesses, think tanks, academic institutions and individuals. Because of the unique nature of each state's charter law, they are most often organized on a state level, but sometimes have a more narrow geographic focus within a state.

The Friends Network's efforts to help link charters with comprehensive school design organizations began in January of 1997 when it organized a delegation of approximately 30 charter school operators and "Friends Group" leaders to attend the annual "World of World Class Schools Conference" held in Memphis, Tennessee.

These discussions continued informally through the balance of 1997, culminating in a half-day workshop at the U.S. Department of Education's first National Charter Schools Conference last November in Washington, D.C. That workshop was co-convened by the Friends Network, the U.S. Department of Education and New American Schools.

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A project of the Center for Policy Studies in cooperation with Hamline University

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Following the November workshop, the Friends Network commissioned the attached policy paper, "Making Matches that Make Sense," which identifies both the opportunities and challenges of linking charters and comprehensive school design organizations; and a companion resource guide, "If the Shoe Fits," for charter school operators considering partnerships with such organizations.

The Network is now using broad dissemination of both documents to continue the education process on the opportunities and barriers to linking charters and design groups through mailings, on-line distribution of its reports, workshops at charter conferences and other means.

### **Charters offer attractive market for school reform programs**

Based on its work in this area over the past 18 months, the Friends Network has concluded that both charters and school design organizations have an unprecedented opportunity to work together -- bolstering the ability of both movements to significantly change and improve public education.

While certainly not for all charter schools, a significant subset of charters can gain from tapping the expertise and assistance provided by comprehensive school design organizations -- creating a significant potential new market. For individual schools, the potential benefits can include helping to clarify their mission, freeing up the time and talents of school leaders, providing access to research-based curriculum and other expertise and, in some cases, attracting new sources of design and start-up funding.

Dozens of charters are already seeing the advantages of partnering with a variety of school design organizations including Core Knowledge, Montessori, Modern Red Schoolhouse and Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound.

These and other school designs are, in turn, attracted to charters by the commitment of their leaders to fundamental change, their flexibility and the chance to be part of developing a new school "from scratch." Charter founders do not have to be "sold" on the importance of change and improvement in schooling. Rather than laboring to change the culture of an existing school, design groups can participate actively in the recruitment of staff and students, the professional development of faculty and the making of critical school design decisions.

### **Needed strategies: early identification, geographic targeting, up-front funding**

While identifying numerous positive opportunities, the Friends Network has also found a number of obstacles to linking comprehensive reform groups with charters. They include the difficulty of identifying charter founders early enough to influence their schools' design and the higher unit cost of working with individual, smaller school sites.

Based on dozens of interviews with representatives of school design groups, charter school leaders and charter support organizations, the recent Friends Network report recommends a series of strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Most relevant to this Committee's interests, the report urges both public and private funders to pro-

vide up-front assistance to charter planners to help finance the training and other costs of buying-in comprehensive school reform programs. One funding source the Friends Network is actively promoting is the "Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Grant Program" approved by Congress last year.

In its non-regulatory guidance to states on this program, the U.S. Department of Education has made it clear that charters are eligible to receive comprehensive school reform demonstration grants. But, to fully realize the potential charters offer as demonstration sites for these comprehensive designs, the Friends Network has been urging states and districts to set aside a specified percentage of the grant funds they administer under this program for charters.

To seize this opportunity, states and districts need to make sure that charter operators are aware of this program and encouraged to apply for grants -- if they are considering working with a comprehensive school reform organization. And, we would urge the Committee to ask the Department to monitor closely the extent to which charters are informed by states that they may apply for these funds and the extent charters actually receive grants.

### **Other strategies: Identify charters earlier; target efforts geographically**

In addition to securing up-front funding, the Friends Network's recent report urges charter organizations, chartering authorities and funders to intensify their efforts to identify and assist charter founders *earlier in the design phase of their schools*. Providing information on comprehensive school reform models should be an important part of these early contacts -- through workshops, printed information and individual referrals.

Finally, to achieve better economies of scale, the report urged design groups and charter supporters to identify promising geographic areas within which they focus their efforts to promote collaboration. Such areas include states or smaller geographic areas with strong charter laws and a large number of charter schools opening in the next few years; and states with existing clusters of district public schools that are already using one or more comprehensive school designs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although they face significant challenges in forging successful links, the Friends Network has found that design organizations and charter schools have already demonstrated that collaborations can work. Working with charter schools can overcome some of the intractable problems that have plagued design groups in their relationships with district schools. And, for a significant subset of charters, working with design groups can help overcome many of the significant challenges charter founders face in planning and opening new schools.

None of the strategies proposed by the Friends Network -- including tapping into the new federal grant program -- will overcome all of the barriers to the use of designs by charter schools. But, together, they can help raise the prospects for collaboration and, ultimately, successful implementation of the designs in ways that benefit charter schools and their students.

## **Making Matches that Make Sense**

*Opportunities and Strategies for Linking Charter Schools  
and Comprehensive School Design Organizations*

**CHARTER FRIENDS  
NATIONAL NETWORK**

connecting and supporting state-level charter school initiatives

*May 1998*

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## ***About this Policy Paper...***

The origins of this policy paper lie in the growing interest in collaboration among both charter school supporters and leaders in a variety of comprehensive school design organizations. Discussions about collaboration between these two elements of school reform began in January of 1997 when a delegation of approximately 30 charter school operators and Friends Group leaders attended the annual "World of World Class Schools Conference" held in Memphis, Tennessee.

These discussions continued informally through much of the past year, culminating in a half-day workshop at the U.S. Department of Education's first National Charter Schools Conference in November of 1997 in Washington, D.C. That workshop was co-convened by the Department, Charter Friends National Network and New American Schools.

Following the November workshop, the Friends Network commissioned this paper and a companion document, "If the Shoe Fits," a practical guide for charter school operators considering possible partnerships with comprehensive school design organizations. The Friends Network intends to use broad dissemination of both documents to continue the education process about both the opportunities and challenges involved in collaboration between charters and school design groups – through mailings, on-line distribution, workshops at charter school conferences and other means. Comments and suggestions on these documents and their use are welcome and should be directed to the Charter Friends National Network (see the inside back cover for the Network's addresses and phone numbers).

## ***About the authors...***

Research and writing for both this policy paper and its parallel guide for charter schools were done by **Bryan and Emily Hassel**, co-founders of Public Impact, a North Carolina-based education policy firm. Both Bryan and Emily have been involved in efforts to create a supportive environment for charter schools for the past three years. Bryan helped launch the North Carolina Charter School Resource Center. And both Bryan and Emily are part of a team at SERVE, the Southeastern Federal regional educational lab, that's now designing a leadership institute for charter and other innovative public schools.

In addition to this policy paper – and the companion guide, "If the Shoe Fits" – Bryan and Emily previously co-authored the Network's 500-page "Sourcebook for Charter School Planning Workshops." Prior to founding Public Impact, Bryan worked for the Center for Community Self-Help in Durham, North Carolina, one of the nation's largest community development organizations. Emily previously worked for the Hay Group, consulting with organizations across the United States. Bryan holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from Harvard University. A Rhodes Scholar, he also received an M.Phil. in Politics from Oxford University. Emily holds a JD/MBA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## **Introduction and Executive Summary**

Among the numerous forces reshaping American education today, two that stand out are the burgeoning charter school movement and the development and dissemination of a variety of comprehensive school designs.

Following passage of the nation's first charter law in Minnesota in 1991, charter school legislation has spread to more than 30 states. Some 800 of these autonomous but accountable public schools now educate more than 150,000 children in all types of communities. Several hundred more charters will be in operation by next fall and President Clinton has called for creation of more than 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

At the same time, we've seen growing interest in using comprehensive school designs to transform schools into high-performing organizations. From time-honored movements such as the Montessori and Paideia methods to more contemporary approaches such as the New American Schools models and Accelerated Schools, school design organizations have launched ambitious initiatives to help schools across the country put their designs to work. Nearly 10,000 schools nationwide now use one of the 26 comprehensive school designs profiled in the Northwest Regional Educational Lab's new *Catalog of School Reform Models*.

*The premise of this policy paper is that these two movements have an unprecedented opportunity to work together -- bolstering the ability of both movements to significantly change and improve American Public Education.*

A significant subset of charter schools can gain from tapping the expertise and assistance provided by comprehensive school design organizations. And school design organizations can benefit from the flexibility granted charters and the deep commitment exhibited by charter school parents, students, teachers and communities. These opportunities are already being realized in the dozens of charter schools across the country that are now using a variety of comprehensive school designs.

Based on dozens of interviews with representatives of school design groups, charter school leaders, and charter school resource centers and other state-level "Charter Friends" organizations, this policy paper analyzes the challenges in forging more links between charter schools and school design organizations and suggests a number of specific strategies for tackling those challenges.

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### ***Forging Links between Charter Schools and Comprehensive School Designs***

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*Charter schools and school design organizations have an unprecedented opportunity to work together on behalf of the nation's children.*

The challenges identified in this paper are primarily those facing *comprehensive school design organizations*. The challenges encountered by charter schools working with design groups are discussed in greater depth in a companion publication, "*If the Shoe Fits: A Guide for Charter Schools Thinking About Adopting a Comprehensive School Design*," which is also available from Charter Friends National Network.

*Design organizations say they are attracted to charter schools by the commitment of their leaders, their flexibility and the chance to be part of developing a new school from scratch.*

### **Challenges**

Partnerships between charter schools and comprehensive school design groups offer advantages to both aspects of education reform. However, efforts to establish those partnerships will meet several significant challenges including:

- ***The marketing challenge:*** Charter school organizers are often not aware of promising school designs until they are well down the road planning their schools.
- ***The start-up challenge:*** School design organizations may be reluctant to work with a start-up charter school because of uncertainty about the school's prospects for success and because of the school's limited fiscal resources.
- ***The scale challenge:*** Because charter schools tend to be small and come in units of one, the costs of providing them with on-site training and other assistance can be prohibitively high.

### **Overarching strategies**

- ***Overarching Strategy 1 – Early Contact:*** Charter Friends Groups, chartering entities, and funders should continue and intensify their general efforts to reach charter schools early in the application-writing process.
- ***Overarching Strategy 2 – Lead Markets:*** Design organizations and Friends Groups should identify the most promising geographic "markets" for charter-design linkages: those with strong charter school laws (allowing large numbers of independent charter schools to form) and existing or planned concentrations of design-based schools.
- ***Overarching Strategy 3 – Design Organization - Friends Group Partnerships:*** Charter Friends Groups and design organizations should explore a variety of partnerships to capitalize on their respective strengths.



### **Strategies to address the marketing challenge**

- ***Marketing Strategy 1 – Outreach Partnerships:*** Friends Groups and design organizations should explore partnerships to expose charter applicants and charter schools to designs early in the development process, through planning workshops, “school design fairs” and other means.
- ***Marketing Strategy 2 – Charter-friendly Marketing:*** The Friends Network, Friends Groups, and design organizations should develop charter-oriented materials to inform school organizers about designs and the process of working with design organizations.

### **Strategies to address the start-up challenge**

- ***Start-up Strategy 1 – Diagnostic and Buy-in Tools:*** Design groups should develop or “charter-ize” low-cost tools that help their staffs identify promising candidates for collaboration.
- ***Start-up Strategy 2 – Creative Funding Options:*** All parties should explore ways to fund design-based assistance for charter schools prior to opening, including use of available federal and state grants, privately funded planning grants to individual schools and revolving loans made available to schools, with a promise that the loans will be repaid.

### **Strategies to address the scale challenge**

- ***Scale Strategy 1 – Clustering:*** Design organizations and Friends Groups should explore ways to hold down costs by encouraging charter schools to form or join existing geographic “clusters” of schools using particular designs.
- ***Scale Strategy 2 – Shifting the Balance of Assistance:*** Design groups should consider offering lower-intensity but still high-quality versions of their assistance tailored specifically for charter schools, especially in their pre-approval stage.
- ***Scale Strategy 3 – Strategic Subsidies:*** Design organizations should explore subsidizing assistance to some charter schools in exchange for the schools’ agreement to serve as “lighthouses” or “laboratories” for the designs.

## **Opportunities and Mutual Benefits**

As the experience of many existing charter schools attests, both charter schools and school design organizations stand to benefit from forging partnerships. ***For individual charter schools***, the potential benefits include:

- ***Clarity***: The clarity of vision that comes with adopting a well-thought-out school design.
- ***Leadership attention***: Freeing up the time and talents of school leaders that would otherwise be devoted to school design.
- ***Resources***: Access to the resources of school design organizations. This includes the design group's expertise and, in some case, funding from either the design group or other sources.

Not all charter school organizers find these benefits appealing. One of the great strengths of the charter movement is the opportunity it provides schools to be truly pioneering, "to go where no school has gone before."

Of course, many charter organizers are intent upon charting such a course *themselves* and would not be interested in adopting – or even adapting – designs developed by *others*. But a significant subset of charter organizers – though they have compelling ideas of their own – may welcome the chance to stand on the shoulders of like-minded organizations. It is this subset for whom this kind of collaboration represents an opportunity.

***For the charter movement as a whole***, school design organizations can provide a critical piece of the "infrastructure" needed for the movement to grow. As more charter schools emerge, a variety of organizations are stepping forward to provide them with the services they need to succeed. School design organizations have the expertise to fill a particularly important service niche: the provision of high-quality, research-based curricular and instructional designs and the know-how to use them well at the school level.

***For school design organizations***, charter schools offer potentially fertile soil for a range of reasons. Design groups face a number of well-documented challenges as they work within conventional school districts (see box on page 6). Charter schools can help overcome some of these challenges by providing:

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- ***Commitment:*** Charter schools are schools of choice for both the teachers and others who work there and for the families whose children enroll. They all come to the school with a commitment to its mission and goals. As school design organizations have learned through years of implementation, commitment to the design by members of a school community is a critical factor in the design's success at the school level. Charter schools maximize the chance for success by already having that kind of commitment in place.
- ***Flexibility:*** Because of their typically small size and autonomy from state and district constraints, charter schools are more flexible and less bureaucratic than conventional public schools and their districts. As a result, they offer a real opportunity to reallocate budgets, alter schedules, redeploy staff, refocus professional development time, and make use of new technology in accordance with a comprehensive school design.
- ***Ground-floor access:*** Charter school organizers come to the table ready to chart a new course. They do not need to be "sold" on the importance of change and improvement in schooling. By working with start-up charters, school design organizations have the opportunity to become involved in schools on the ground floor and ensure alignment of the school's education and management practices. Rather than laboring to change the culture of an existing school, they can participate actively in recruitment of staff and families, the professional development of faculty, and making critical school design decisions.

Charter schools and school design organizations are already reaping these mutual benefits in a number of communities across the country. Comprehensive designs currently in use by charter schools include Accelerated Schools, Advantage, Coalition for Essential Schools, Community Learning Centers, Core Knowledge, Edison, Modern Red Schoolhouse, Montessori, Outward Bound Expeditionary Learning, Paideia, SABIS, and Waldorf. However, these schools represent only a fraction of the charter movement – in part, because of a number of obstacles and other challenges described below.

### **Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them**

Research undertaken by Charter Friends National Network has identified three critical challenges confronting design organizations interested in working with more charter schools:

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### ***RAND Study Finds District Schools Present Challenges for Design Teams***

Tailoring their products and services to meet the unique needs of smaller, independent charters isn't the only challenge facing comprehensive school design programs. In fact, a recent RAND Corporation study found a number of challenges facing design groups in partnering with *district schools*, offering both lessons and opportunities in connecting those design groups with charters.

The study – conducted by a team of RAND researchers – examined the progress of 40 schools that have adopted one of the New American Schools designs. The team concluded that only half of the schools had successfully implemented the designs so far. Among the problems cited by the RAND researchers:

***Poor matches:*** Implementation lagged in schools where staff felt they were forced to adopt a design or did not fully understand the design at the outset.

***School-level turmoil:*** Leadership turnover and internal strife within the schools hindered efforts to put designs in place.

***Lack of autonomy:*** Some districts have not provided schools with sufficient flexibility to implement designs fully.

***District-level politics:*** Political turmoil and leadership issues at the district level have often interfered with smooth deployment.

***See the references section at the end of this report for information on how to obtain the RAND study.***

- ***The marketing challenge:*** Charter school organizers are often not aware of promising school designs until they are well down the road to planning or even opening their schools.
- ***The start-up challenge:*** School design organizations may be reluctant to work with a start-up charter school because of uncertainty about the school's prospects for success and because of the school's limited financial resources.
- ***The scale challenge:*** Because charter schools tend to be small and come in units of one, the cost of providing them with assistance can be higher than the unit cost of working with clusters of larger district schools.

In the following sections, these challenges are described in more detail. And a series of strategies is offered for addressing each of those challenges. Some strategies can be pursued directly by *design organizations* if

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they are interested in working with more charter schools. Other strategies might be undertaken by *Charter Friends Groups* to help more charter schools in their states link up with design organizations. Still others are courses of action that require *collaborative efforts* by design organizations, Friends Groups, and others like the Friends Network and funders.

### Overarching strategies

As noted above, the challenges facing efforts to link charters and school design groups fall under three main headings. However, before tackling each challenge, the Friends Network's research identified three overarching strategies that can help address all three challenges at once.

***Overarching Strategy 1 – Early Contact:*** Friends Groups, chartering entities, and funders should continue and intensify their *general* efforts to reach charter schools early in the application-writing process.

In many states, Friends Groups and chartering entities have launched efforts to reach charter applicants early in their development processes, offering planning workshops, charter school “handbooks” and other tools. As encouragement to expand those efforts, the Friends Network recently published a 500-page “Sourcebook for School Planning Workshops” collecting advice and materials from six leading charter school resource centers.

Several prominent national foundations and some state departments of education have also begun providing planning grants for charter organizers in the earliest stages of their work. These *general* efforts at early contact can help facilitate links between charter schools and design organizations in the following ways:

- Introducing organizers to school designs early addresses the *marketing challenge*.
- Exposing applicants to well-designed workshops and training materials puts them on sounder footing, raising the confidence of school design organizations in their capabilities and thereby addressing the *start-up challenge*.
- Providing planning grants helps organizers pay for at least some of the up-front costs of school designs, addressing the *scale challenge*.

***Overarching Strategy 2 – Lead Markets:*** Design organizations and Friends Groups should identify the most promising geographic “markets”

*The Colorado League of Charter Schools has organized information sessions to link design groups with charter organizers in the very earliest stages of development.*

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for charter-design linkages: those with strong charter school laws and existing or planned concentrations of design-based schools.

At this stage in the development of charter schools and design organizations, some areas of the country are better suited to forging these linkages than others. The most promising markets are at the intersection of two conditions:

- The presence of "strong" charter school laws.
- The presence (or planned presence) of "clusters" of district and/or charter schools using a particular school design.

These conditions can be enhanced even further when early contacts are being made with charter founders and when strong resource centers and other Friends Groups are actively facilitating these partnerships.

Each state charter law is unique, of course, but experience is now demonstrating that strong charter laws have several common characteristics:

- ***Openness to entry:*** Empowering a wide range of individuals and groups to start schools.
- ***Scale:*** Allowing an unlimited or very large number of charter schools to open.
- ***Alternative chartering authorities:*** Giving multiple entities the authority to grant charters, including entities other than local school boards.
- ***School autonomy and flexibility:*** Granting schools legal and fiscal independence and providing for broad, automatic waivers of laws and regulations.
- ***Full funding:*** Providing per-pupil funding for charter schools on an equal par with district schools – ideally including funding for start-up and facilities.

(For more detail on these and other provisions in state charter laws, see the Center for Education Reform's *Charter School Workbook*. Information on how to order the *CER Workbook* is included at the end of this report).

Strong charter school laws provide fertile ground for design organizations by making marketing more cost-effective, by creating the possibility that a

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significant number of charter schools in an area might use a design, and by ensuring that charter schools have the flexibility to implement their chosen designs fully.

At the same time, it's also important to look for places where school design organizations are already working with or are planning to work with significant numbers of schools. In these areas, the possibilities for achieving economies of scale by including charter schools in "clusters" with district schools and/or other charters are greatest. For more on how this clustering could work, see the section on strategies for achieving economies of scale, below.

**Overarching Strategy 3 – Design Organization - Friends Group Partnerships:** Friends Groups and design organizations should explore a variety of partnerships to capitalize on their respective strengths.

As will be discussed below, the marketing challenge has two sides to it: lack of knowledge on the part of charter organizers about school designs, and lack of understanding among school designs about the nuances of state charter laws and practices.

Since Charter Friends Groups are "local experts" about how charter schools function in their states – and are the organizations most likely to be in contact with charter school organizers – they appear to be the ideal entities to bridge these knowledge gaps. Friends Groups are also ideally positioned to help address the start-up and scale challenges in ways that will be described in the relevant sections below.

### **Challenge #1 – Marketing**

While each charter school's path is different, most follow a generic set of steps. A group of teachers, parents or others defines an unmet need and begins discussing the idea of creating a charter school – or converting an existing school to charter status – to help meet that need. The group conducts research or engages in discussions to refine its vision and plans. This process culminates in an application to a "chartering entity" – a body empowered to grant charters to worthy applicants.

Upon approval, the group then carries the process through a start-up period, during which it firms up its design, hires and trains staff, recruits students, and handles the myriad of tasks required to start or convert a school. Finally, the school opens its doors to students. Altogether, this process might take as little as a year, or as long as several years.

CONCEIVE → RESEARCH / REFINE → APPLY → START-UP → OPEN

At what point in this process would it make sense for a charter school to link up with a school design organization? According to school design officials consulted in this research, the ideal point of contact is the "research" phase -- when charter organizers have some initial ideas but are still deciding *how* to solidify their general goals into a concrete plan. Getting involved early allows both the charter school and the school design organization to reap the full benefits of collaboration.

But in this early phase, it's often very difficult for a prospective charter school and a design group to make their connection. Charter organizers are just starting to investigate their options, and may be unaware of the range of designs they might consider. The design group, of course, is unaware of an unofficial group of people just beginning to conceive of a new charter school.

By the time charter organizers and a design group encounter one another, it may be too late for this early, high-impact collaboration to take place. Charter organizers may have firmed up their ideas to a point where their own designs and those offered by the design organization are in conflict. If the conflict is over fundamental elements of school design, then the failure to connect does not pose a problem. But if the differences are less fundamental, the school and the design group could have worked through them over time, to the benefit of both.

Of course, it's never "too late" for a school to adopt a school design. After all, hundreds of district public schools are in the process of putting designs into practice after years or even decades of doing things in other ways. And some charter schools have adopted designs *after* opening their doors.

But with most charter schools, there is an important difference: by the time a charter school opens, the level of commitment to the charter's design is likely to be very deep -- much deeper than the faculty of a typical district school. Unless the charter school's home-grown design happens to accord nicely with an existing school design, the prospects for a post-opening adoption are much less likely.

A further complication in marketing to charters is the fact that design organizations are generally unfamiliar with the charter school terrain in various states. Several design organizations interviewed for this report said a lack of understanding of the nuances of different charter laws and practices makes it difficult for design groups to select target markets and devise effective strategies for developing links with charter schools. Just

*Design groups report a lack of understanding of the opportunities and constraints faced by charter schools in various states.*

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as charter organizers are often ignorant of the various design options, design organizations often lack knowledge of the constraints and opportunities their potential charter partners face in what are now more than 30 charter school states.

On the other hand, it's important to point out that the marketing challenge has a significant "flip side." *In working with charter schools, design organizations do not have to market the importance of change.* Charter organizers come to the table committed to doing things differently. In this respect, the marketing challenge is less severe with charter schools than it is with conventional public schools.

In addition, since charter schools are autonomous, design organizations can market directly to them rather than through what can be complex and bureaucratic district administrative structures. This opportunity for "direct marketing" helps minimize a phenomenon observed in the RAND study of New American Schools when school staff feel a design has been foisted on them "from above."

These considerations compensate somewhat for the marketing challenge, but there is still a need for proactive strategies to help charter schools and design options make early connections. Here are two sets of strategies that could make a critical difference:

***Marketing Strategy 1 – Outreach Partnerships:*** Friends Groups and design organizations should explore a variety of partnerships to introduce charter applicants and charter schools to a number of different designs. Possible partnerships include:

- ***Rolodex exchange:*** Simply ensuring that Friends Groups and design organizations are generally aware of one another is an important first step. When Friends Groups encounter charter organizers interested in "shopping" for a design, they will know where to point them. And design organizations will know where to turn for state-specific intelligence on charter laws, practices and contacts.
- ***Marketing conduits:*** Some Friends Groups are already sponsoring events for and distributing materials to charter organizers. In several states, design organizations have made use of their annual conferences to inform prospective charter schools about some of the design options available to them.
- ***More ambitious partnerships:*** Friends Groups and design organizations might also explore more structured partnerships in which both

*Design organizations say marketing to charter schools is easier in one respect: charter schools don't have to be convinced of the need for change.*

*The California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC) included a five-workshop strand on forging links with comprehensive school design groups at its 1998 annual conference.*

*Workshop on forging this link have also been part of recent statewide charter conferences in Wisconsin and Texas.*

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commit to a concerted effort to recruit charter organizers to adopt one or more designs. Of course, many Friends Groups may be reluctant to pursue such partnerships since they may not want to appear to be agents for a particular school design and because such focused outreach may distract them from the general work they must carry out. But if appropriately structured to ensure Friends Groups' impartiality (e.g. by making it clear that Friends Groups are free to enter into similar partnerships with other designs) and, if properly funded, such partnerships could be the most effective way to introduce designs to a state.

*One design organization is seeking outside funding specifically for marketing efforts aimed at charter schools in a small number of states.*

***Marketing Strategy 2 – Charter-friendly Marketing:*** The Friends Network, Friends Groups, and design organizations should develop charter-oriented materials to inform organizers about designs and the process of working with design organizations. This strategy entails both global and design-specific tactics:

- ***Global:*** The Friends Network and Friends Groups should widely disseminate this document's companion ("If the Shoe Fits: A Guide for Charter Schools Thinking About Adopting a Pre-existing School Design"), the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's *Catalog of School Reform Models*, and other resources to prospective charter operators. At a minimum, all Friends Groups and chartering entities should have copies of these publications to distribute to interested charter organizers.
- ***Design-specific:*** Design organizations should work with Friends Groups to ensure that materials and other marketing devices are available and to answer the charter audience's questions. For insights from charter leaders about what these questions are, see the Charter Friends National Network's companion publication, "If the Shoe Fits."

### **Challenge #2 – Start-up**

Even if a charter school organizing group and a school design organization manage to connect early in the process, they still face significant challenges to collaboration. One set of challenges arises particularly when a charter school is a start-up school, as some 60 percent of the nation's charter schools are. Start-up schools present two difficulties for school design groups: *uncertainty* and *scarce fiscal resources*.

- ***Uncertainty.*** When a school design organization decides to work with a new school, it is taking a risk. If the school implements the design faith-fully and effectively, the school design organization "wins" –

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another example of the design's promise is in place. But if the school implements the design poorly, the school design organization "loses." At best, it has invested its scarce resources in an effort that led nowhere. At worst, its reputation may be set back locally or even beyond.

In two respects, this risk may be different in the case of a start-up charter school.

First, the school organizers may not be able to show the design organization a track record of running a school in the past. The design group has to make a more complex judgment about the organizers' capabilities based on what they have accomplished in other domains -- as teachers within a school, as business people, or as active parents or community leaders.

Second, the school's approval by the chartering authority is uncertain. Even if the design organization has confidence in the school's leadership, the school may never see the light of day because of political opposition, fiscal constraints, inability to find a suitable facility, legal restrictions, or any of the many other reasons charter applicants are rejected. And even ultimately successful schools could take months or even years to navigate this process.

- **Scarce fiscal resources.** A second challenge associated with a start-up charter school is that it may not have sufficient funds to pay for a design organization's services during its start-up phase. Once chartered, the school will receive a flow of per-pupil dollars out of which it could pay for design services, perhaps including repayment for services rendered during the start-up period. And charter schools in some states receive federal start-up funds prior to opening. But many charter organizing groups lack adequate funding to plan their schools, especially at the time in their development when they need to begin working with design organizations.

Of course, delaying payment until the school is open presents risks for design organizations. In light of the uncertainty described above, design organizations cannot count on future payments to offset current expenses. And some design organizations may lack the up-front cash to provide intensive services to start-up schools even if they were certain these schools would ultimately repay their debts. The severity of this problem depends on the up-front cost of a given design, which varies greatly for reasons described in more detail below.

*Some design groups express a hesitance to become involved with charter organizers who have not yet received formal approval.*

*According to interviews with design groups and recent research, uncertainty about a school's capabilities and commitment to designs is not unique to charter schools. Design teams encounter the same issues with district schools.*

Like the marketing challenge, the start-up challenge also has a more positive "flip side." *In working with charter schools, design organizations have the opportunity to become involved with schools on the ground-floor.* Rather than laboring to change existing practices, routines, and cultures, design teams can focus their energies on building schools from scratch that embody the designs' elements.

Design organizations can even participate in the selection of the school's leadership and key staff, helping to ensure a strong commitment to the designs from the outset. From this perspective, the start-up challenge is in some ways *less* severe with charter schools than with district schools. Nonetheless, several explicit strategies are needed to overcome the problems that arise in linking new charters with comprehensive school designs. Again, these strategies fall into two broad categories:

***Start-up Strategy 1 – Diagnostic and Buy-in Tools:*** Design groups should develop or "charter-ize" low-cost tools that help their staffs identify promising candidates for collaboration.

Many design groups already have mechanisms to determine whether a given school is a good candidate for working with the design. These include both "diagnostic" tools (which help design group staff determine whether a school has the leadership and other characteristics necessary for the design) and "buy-in" tools (which require would-be users of the design to clear a number of hurdles to ensure their commitment to the design). If well-structured, such tools enable design organizations to select promising candidates with a minimum of up-front investment of staff-time.

In many cases, however, these tools would need to be modified to work with a start-up charter school. For example, since there is no existing school to assess, the tools would need to focus on the capabilities, backgrounds, and degree of commitment of key charter organizers.

Could Friends Groups play a role in the diagnostic and buy-in process? In theory, yes. Currently, school districts help play this role, assisting design groups with selection and screening of candidates. To serve such a function, however, Friends Groups would need to be willing to "certify" particular charter organizers, a practice many may be reluctant to undertake.

***Start-up Strategy 2 – Creative Funding Options:*** All parties should explore ways to fund design-based assistance for charter schools prior to opening. Two models in particular appear most promising: school-based and pooled finance.

*The Modern Red design group produces "So You're Interested in Becoming a Modern Red Schoolhouse," a document that guides schools through a careful process of determining whether the design is a good match.*

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- **School-based finance:** Perhaps the most obvious way to fund design-based assistance is for the Friends Network and individual Friends Groups to continue to raise funds or encourage funders to provide planning grants for charter organizers. These grants could be used to pay for design-based assistance.

In addition to private funds raised directly or through charter organizations, Congress passed legislation in late 1997 that could provide charters – and other schools – a new source of financing for up front costs of buying-in comprehensive school designs. The "Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Grant Program" will be administered by states and will offer individual schools grants of at least \$50,000 to buy-in designs that meet certain criteria. Charters may apply for these grants either directly – in states where they are autonomous – or through their districts.

To fully realize the potential that charters offer as demonstration sites for these designs, states or districts might be encouraged to set-aside a certain percentage of the grants they administer under this program *specifically for charters.*

- **Pooled models:** Another approach to funding is to create loan pools dedicated to financing assistance to help plan and start charter schools. Rather than grants, these pools would provide loans or investments to charter organizers to cover pre-operational costs, to be paid back from per-pupil funding received once the schools are operational. Loan funds would then be available for subsequent rounds of school planners. Such pools could be organized either as design-specific pools or what might be called "global pools:"
  - **Design-specific:** A particular design organization could raise a pool of funds to finance its own work with start-up charter schools. These funds would provide cash flow for the design organization during the pre-operational period. This method is, in effect, what many of the for-profit school management companies are already using to address this challenge.

For example, firms like Edison and Advantage have raised substantial amounts of venture capital to finance the development of new schools. The firms (and ultimately their investors) recoup the funds once schools are open and able to repay via management fees, leases on equipment and facilities, sale of curriculum materials, etc. There is no

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reason nonprofit design organizations couldn't pursue a similar strategy. While they cannot raise venture capital per se, charitable grants and "program-related investments" can serve the same purposes.

- **Global:** Alternately, Friends Groups themselves could raise pools of capital to finance pre-operational costs for start-up schools, including (but not limited to) assistance from design organizations. Some funders may find loan pools more attractive than grants because the funds would recycle, ultimately serving many more schools.

One issue that such loan pools would have to address is risk. Some of the schools that received funds or assistance may fail to open and thus be unable to repay their obligations. To accommodate this possibility, operators of the funds would need to investigate well-developed techniques used by conventional and community development lenders for managing risk, such as requiring recipients to make "downpayments" or raise matching funds (which, pooled together, would cover defaults) and raising dedicated funds to serve as loan-loss reserves for the program.

### **Challenge #3 – Economies of Scale**

When a school design organization works with multiple schools in a school district or even a state, it can realize economies of scale in numerous ways. Most notably, it can spread whatever fixed costs it has over larger numbers of schools and students, lowering the per-school and per-student cost of the assistance it provides. In addition, school districts and state departments of education are large enough to dedicate some of their own staff people to design implementation, creating a cadre of local assistance providers at little cost to the design organization.

Design groups have difficulty realizing these economies when working with individual charter schools. Many charter schools come in units of one, unaffiliated with other charter schools or with school districts. There are certainly exceptions: multi-campus charters are relatively common in Arizona, and some charter schools (by choice or by law) are linked to their school districts. But in many cases, design groups may be asked to work with a single charter school in a given geographic area.

In addition, most charter schools are quite small, at least relative to district schools. The U.S. Department of Education's National Charter Schools Study reported that – as of 1995-96 – 62 percent of charter schools had

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fewer than 200 students, compared to only 16 percent of district schools in that same enrollment range.

It's important to note that the severity of this challenge varies immensely with the types of assistance provided by the design organization. Design groups differ in the types of services they provide to schools, but several generic modes are most common:

1. ***On-site assistance.*** Design organization staff or consultants come to a school or school district and deliver:
  - Formal training and professional development to prepare staff to use the design and to hone its use over time.
  - One-on-one technical assistance to individual schools, following up the more formal training with help geared toward specific issues that have arisen over time.
2. ***Off-site assistance,*** including:
  - Formal training and professional development, in which school staff travel to design organization offices or other sites to receive assistance.
  - Remote one-on-one assistance to individual schools via 800 numbers, electronic mail, or other connections.
3. ***Networking:*** Provision of opportunities for schools using a design to network with one another, via school-to-school visits, electronic communication, conferences, and other media, and referrals of schools to independent consultants trained in the design.
4. ***Materials/tools:*** Distribution (via hard copy or electronically) of materials and other tools to help schools implement the design.

Activities at the top of this list are those for which having many schools adopting the design in a geographic area ("clustering") creates significant economies of scale.

Design groups can realize the greatest savings by conducting on-site formal trainings and professional development for a number of schools at the same time. Geographical clustering reduces the costs of one-on-one technical assistance less dramatically, since, by definition, this sort of help must be provided school-by-school. But to the extent that design

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organizations can train many schools sequentially (via "circuit-riding" from one school to another on the same trip), they can achieve economies in travel and staff costs.

Of course, when it comes to off-site assistance, design groups realize little benefit of having multiple schools in a single location, though far-away schools have to pay more in travel costs and time to participate. Networking activities also offer minimal economies associated with clustering, except in the case of school-to-school visits and frequent meetings involving multiple schools. Materials and tools are close to pure variable costs, and thus should be as economical to provide for stand-alone charter schools as they are for clustered district schools.

Though virtually all design groups offer at least some of each of these kinds of assistance, the balance varies from organization to organization. For some design groups, intensive on-site assistance is absolutely central to their dissemination strategies. Representatives of these groups argue that their designs simply cannot be transferred without higher-intensity versions of assistance. Others *offer* high-intensity assistance but are less insistent upon it.

These differences arise primarily because some designs lend themselves more easily to dissemination via materials, networking, and other low-intensity activities than do others. For example, designs that stress the content of the curriculum – rather than a particular instructional method – can get by with less direct assistance than designs that emphasize pedagogy.

The scale challenge also has important "flip sides." For example, it should be simpler and less expensive to implement a design in a smaller school – with fewer teachers, less bureaucracy, and more buy-in. Since all charter schools choose their own designs, design organizations will also find a higher degree of commitment to their designs when they work with charter schools.

If this commitment means design organizations need to spend less time building support for their designs, it can translate into cost savings. And charter schools have much greater flexibility than do district schools in their use of resources. With fewer restrictions, charter schools can more easily deploy funds needed to implement the design, wasting less money on non-critical expenses. Even with these advantages, however, charter schools still present a set of challenges that might be addressed by the following strategies:

*Some design groups say charter schools may be able to implement designs less expensively than conventional schools because of the flexibility they have in allocating resources.*

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### ***Forging Links Between Charter Schools and Comprehensive School Designs 18***

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**Scale Strategy 1 -- Clustering:** Design organizations and Friends Groups should explore ways to hold down costs by encouraging charter schools to form or join existing geographic "clusters" of district or other charter schools using the same designs. There are several possibilities here, including:

- **Direct charter participation in clusters:** In some cases, charter schools may be able to take part in planned clusters of district schools. This strategy is particularly promising in cases where charter schools are conversions of existing district schools, where charter schools are legally part of school districts, or where independent charter schools have good relationships with neighboring districts.
- **Charter add-ons to clusters:** In cases where a charter school does not have a good relationship with a district, opportunities for direct participation may be less likely. But design organizations might consider adding charter schools to existing clusters, without including them directly, in one of two ways:
  - **Circuit-riding:** Charter schools could receive training and consulting immediately before or after visits to nearby district schools, allowing the design organization to economize on travel and some staff costs, or
  - **Using downtime:** If design organizations experience "downtime" during certain periods of the year but continue to employ technical assistance staff, charter school trainings and visits could be timed to take advantage of these off-peak periods. Design organizations might benefit financially from such arrangements, much in the same way airlines, hotels, and utilities benefit by managing the peaks and troughs in their demand cycles.
- **Charter clusters:** Even where there are no existing district clusters, design organizations might be able to create charter-only clusters, charter-private clusters, or other mixes. These possibilities would be especially promising in jurisdictions with strong charter laws and in high-population areas likely to host enough charter schools interested in a design to make clustering feasible.
- **Broader geographic clusters:** If clustering within a district is not feasible, design organizations could pursue broader geographic

*The Accelerated Schools Project assists a charter school out of its Los Angeles satellite office, taking advantage of an existing "cluster" of design-based district schools.*

### Forging Links Between Charter Schools and Comprehensive School Designs 19

clusters (e.g. at the state level). School staff from across the state could travel to a central location for formal training; on-site consultation would be more expensive than in a district-centered cluster, but still reasonable.

- **Using technology to "cluster":** An even larger-scale version of the previous tactic involves using distance-learning technologies to "cluster" schools without regard to geography. Using teleconferencing and Internet-based media, charter and other isolated schools could simultaneously receive assistance, minimizing live site visits. As the software and hardware (including rentable distance learning sites now available in major urban markets) become more effective and affordable, prospects for these forms of clustering will also become more promising.

What roles could Friends Groups play in clustering? At a minimum, Friends Groups could play a role in *convening* clusters -- connecting multiple charter schools with interest in a given design to create a charter cluster, helping negotiate with clustered districts, etc.

More ambitiously, Friends Groups in states where many charter schools have an interest in a certain design could consider adding *design-specific technical assistance capability through staffing or use of consultants*. In this role, Friends Groups would mimic current practice in certain school districts where district staff become trained in a design that many district schools are implementing. Whatever their level of involvement, however, Friends Groups would need to negotiate sufficient compensation with the design organizations in order to justify their time and out-of-pocket expenses.

Finally, design groups can make clustering more feasible and more economical by finding ways to set up regional service centers (like Accelerated Schools does) or by creating networks of consultants trained in a design (like the National Paideia Center plans to do).

***Scale Strategy 2 – Shifting the Balance of Assistance:*** Design groups should consider offering lower-intensity but still high-quality versions of their assistance explicitly for charter schools, especially in the pre-approval stage.

As noted in the discussion of the *scale challenge*, most design groups offer a mix of services to participating schools, some more intensive (and thus more expensive) than others.

*The National Paideia Center is building a national network of consultants to provide more intensive assistance to schools than the national center itself can offer.*

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### ***Forging Links Between Charter Schools and Comprehensive School Designs 20***

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To make their designs economical to charter schools, some design organizations have created lower-intensity mixes of services, especially for the pre-approval and pre-operational phases of a school's design. This strategy requires doing more with materials and networking and less with formal training and customized one-on-one assistance.

Of course, this approach may also entail price-quality tradeoffs that are unacceptable to many design organizations. But within quality constraints, design organizations could help forge these links by exploring options that are more financially feasible for the individual charter schools.

***Scale Strategy 3 – Strategic Subsidies:*** In their own self-interest design organizations should explore subsidizing assistance to some charter schools in exchange for strategic advantages.

One strategy some design organizations are pursuing is the creation of a limited number of "lighthouse schools": schools that are implementing their designs in a particularly "pure" form. These schools serve as a showcase of the design that can be used for public relations and marketing and a place where new adopters of the design can see the design in action.

Another strategy is the creation of "laboratory schools," places where adjustments to the design can be deliberately piloted and evaluated. Because of their flexibility and high degree of commitment, charter schools may be ideal venues for the lighthouse and laboratory functions. In return for the higher degree of design-organization involvement and other activities (like hosting visitors), charter schools that agree to play these roles could receive design assistance for free or for a reduced price.

## **Conclusion**

Though they face significant challenges in forging successful links, design organizations and charter schools have already shown that collaborations can work. Importantly, working with charter schools can overcome some of the intractable problems that plague design groups' in their relationships with district schools.

None of the strategies outlined in this document will overcome all of the barriers to the use of designs by charter schools. But together, they can help raise the prospects for collaboration and, ultimately, successful implementation of the designs in ways that benefit charter schools and their students. And as design organizations, Friends Groups, and charter schools themselves put these ideas into action, their experiences will generate even more strategies for forging these links and making them work.

*The Core Knowledge Foundation offers schools a variety of options at a range of prices – from the purchase of basic materials to extensive hands-on technical assistance.*

## **Forging Links Between Charter Schools and Comprehensive School Designs 21**

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## *About the growing role of “Charter Friends...”*

Charter schools are borne out of the passion and commitment of their founders and the educational needs of the students and communities they serve. But even the best charter founders and operators cannot succeed entirely in isolation. They require an infrastructure of technical and informational support to help design quality schools, obtain charters, and launch and successfully sustain their school operations.

In response to these needs, a number of state and sub-state resource centers and other charter support organizations are emerging throughout the country. Some of these organizations were initially established to help build public awareness and legislative support for state charter school laws. Once laws are passed, their attention tends to focus on recruiting and assisting charter applicants and providing charter operators ongoing technical assistance and other forms of support.

These “Charter Friends” organizations assist charters with a variety of issues and needs including school planning, governance, financing, curriculum, assessment and accountability, facilities, and other ingredients in starting and running high quality schools. Most are privately funded non-profit organizations, but they sometimes charge fees to help cover the cost of their operations. They attract fiscal and administrative support from foundations, businesses, think tanks, academic institutions, and individuals. They are most often organized on a state-level, but sometimes have a more narrow geographic focus within a state.

## *About the Charter Friends National Network...*

Just as no charter school can succeed in total isolation, state and sub-state “Charter Friends” organizations have found value in the relationships and support they gain from each other. With charter schools now authorized in 32 states and the District of Columbia, both the number of these organizations and the potential for mutual shared support have grown rapidly.

In response to these needs and opportunities, Charter Friends National Network was established in early 1997 as a project of the St. Paul-based Center for Policy Studies in cooperation with Hamline University.

The Network’s mission is to promote the charter opportunity by helping start and strengthen resource centers and other state-level charter support organizations. The Network pursues its mission through publications, conferences, on-line communications, a grant program, and multi-state initiatives on high priority issues. In 1998, these initiatives include charter school accountability, facilities financing, governance, and special education.

Charter Friends National Network began as an expansion of the work of Ted Kolderie, senior associate at the Center for Policy Studies and a leader in the national charter movement from its beginning. Its director is Jon Schroeder, a veteran Minnesota policy analyst and journalist who played a major role in the design and passage of the federal charter grant program while policy director for former U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger. Leading the Network’s outreach initiative is Eric Premack, who heads the Charter Schools Development Center at California State University and is one of the nation’s top experts on both charter school policy and operations.

For more information on the Network and its activities, or to obtain additional copies of this guide, contact: Charter Friends National Network, 1355 Pierce Butler Route, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN 55104; 612-644-5236 (voice); 612-645-0240 (fax); [info@charterfriends.org](mailto:info@charterfriends.org) (e-mail); or [www.charterfriends.org](http://www.charterfriends.org) (web site).

**CHARTER FRIENDS  
NATIONAL NETWORK**

connecting and supporting state-level charter school initiatives

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**APPENDIX K – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT E. SLAVIN**

**Statement of Robert E. Slavin, Co-Director  
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**Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives**

**Hearings on Comprehensive School Reform  
June 24, 1998**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am very pleased to provide written testimony to you on a very important topic: how dissemination of proven, comprehensive programs among America's elementary and secondary schools can impact the practice of education and the success of America's children in meeting today's challenging academic standards.

First, I should introduce myself. I am the Co-Director of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), the largest research center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Our center, which is primarily a collaboration between Johns Hopkins and Howard Universities, does research on elementary and secondary schools serving many children placed at risk. These are children who come from families that are in poverty, are members of minority groups, or are speakers of languages other than English. I have been engaged in federally-funded research for almost a quarter-century.

I am also the director and co-creator of programs called Success for All and Roots and Wings, which are comprehensive reform models for elementary schools. This fall, these programs will be used in more than 1,100 schools in 44 states in the U.S., plus schools in five foreign countries. They provide research-based curriculum and professional development to all children, backed up by one-to-one tutoring for first graders who are failing in reading and by extensive family support and parent involvement approaches. Success for All focuses on reading, writing, and language arts, while Roots and Wings adds to this programs in mathematics, science, and social studies. Both programs have been extensively researched and found to be very effective and replicable across a wide variety of circumstances.

### Comprehensive School Reform

You won't be surprised to learn that I am a fervent advocate of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) legislation introduced last year by Congressmen John Porter and David Obey. Our own programs may serve the largest number of schools receiving CSRD funds; during 1999 we expect to add about 600 additional schools to our network, and expect that a large proportion of them will be CSRD recipients. We are a not-for-profit organization, of course, so we have no financial interest in this, but we greatly value the opportunity to show what we and other programs can accomplish working on a much broader scale.

Although it is only a tiny proportion of the federal education budget, CSRD may have a substantial impact on educational innovation and on the success of America's children. It provides schools with just enough funds to pay for the start-up costs of adopting proven, comprehensive models. These funds serve as an incentive for schools to devote their much larger resources, especially Title I, to reform rather than to typically ineffective remedial approaches. In other words, CSRD funds leverage much larger federal, state, and local resources to focus them on effective practices. Even this early in the grants process, it is clear that schools throughout the country are excited about CSRD and are willing to meet its exacting requirements in terms of integrating all of the school's resources and energies around the reform process. CSRD will leverage other resources and energies in other ways as well. For example, some states (such as Texas) are adding their own resources to the CSRD process to increase the number of schools that can be served. Also, the entire awareness process set in motion by CSRD is certain to make educators far more aware of the existence and potential effectiveness of a broad range of innovative models, and this will mean that even schools that failed to qualify for CSRD funding (or even failed to apply) will nevertheless use their own resources to adopt proven models.

CSRD could also have a galvanizing impact on research. The process leading up to implementation of the legislation made it abundantly clear that we need much more development, research, and evaluation on comprehensive programs at all levels, but especially for secondary

schools, and on specific programs (such as reading programs, science programs, or school-to-work programs) that could become components of comprehensive designs in the future. The possibility that proven programs could be widely disseminated could move researchers away from more esoteric investigations toward practical model-building that could have direct and immediate impact on educational practice. It could, and should, give policy-makers more confidence that investment in R&D will pay off in the relatively near term, and might therefore motivate substantial increases in funding for product-focused R&D, which is currently almost non-existent.

Is CSRSD working? Obviously, it is too soon to tell, but there are several very encouraging indications that it could have a profound impact on the practice and outcomes of education. First, I would point to the recent findings of an independent evaluation of the Memphis restructuring plan. Under the leadership of Superintendent Gerry House, Memphis has introduced a variety of New American Schools designs, plus two others, into a large number of schools. In fact, of the 17 programs mentioned in the CSRSD legislation, eight are involved in the Memphis project. A University of Tennessee study found that children in the first 25 elementary schools that implemented comprehensive designs are now achieving significantly better than a matched control group, better than the city as a whole, and gaining on the state average, on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). What Memphis did locally is what CSRSD will do nationally; it provided small incentive grants to schools to adopt any of several proven programs, on the condition that the schools had to come forward with their own resources to make whichever design they chose the center of their reform plan. Memphis is one of the most impoverished districts in the nation. If Memphis can succeed by investing in proven programs, there is no district in the nation that could not do the same.

Memphis is not unique. Several other districts have been working with New American Schools over the past few years to implement and support a variety of reform designs, and hundreds of districts not affiliated with New American Schools have done so as well. Our own program is in use in more than 400 different districts, including 35 of the 50 largest urban districts.

These districts implemented comprehensive reforms without CSRD funds, of course. Imagine how many more schools will now be willing and able to do so. The initial excitement we have seen in states, districts, and schools around the CSRD process demonstrates the enormous hunger among educators for programs that work. It is not the money alone that causes this excitement; it is the access CSRD provides to popular and effective innovations.

Perhaps the greatest potential impact of CSRD could be in providing a model for the reauthorization of Title I, coming up in 1999. At \$8 billion, Title I is by far the federal government's largest investment in elementary and secondary education, yet the impact of Title I on student achievement has been less than stellar. The problem is that Title I funds have traditionally been used to pay for remedial pullout programs, classroom aides, and (in schoolwide programs) small reductions in class size. None of these investments are known to have much of an impact on student achievement.

Title I must be maintained and expanded, if only because it provides some degree of funding equalization for chronically underfunded high-poverty schools. However, the Title I program must, over time, move toward support for adoption of proven programs and practices. It is reasonable, in fact essential, for Congress and the public to demand that Title I dollars produce a measurable impact on the children it serves, but the federal government also has a responsibility to lead in this area. It needs to provide the wherewithal for reform, the incentives for schools to adopt proven programs, and the R&D necessary to create and disseminate programs that work. No other level of government is likely to do any of these things without federal leadership.

#### Achieving the Potential of CSRD

While recognizing the enormous potential of CSRD to transform America's elementary and secondary schools, it is also important to acknowledge the problems with the approach and to discuss solutions to these problems. The main problems are as follows.

1. *Limited capacity of existing designs to serve large numbers of schools.* CSRD could potentially serve as many as 2,500 schools in its first funding year. Yet many of the existing reform models are currently operating at a very small scale. Among the 17 programs listed in the legislation, perhaps six are currently working in more than 100 schools. The current annual capacity of these programs to add schools is collectively no more than 1,500 schools, of which 600 would be our own Success for All and Roots and Wings programs. Of course, there are additional programs beyond these 17, and schools have the option of assembling their own approaches, but the total national capacity to serve schools in adopting comprehensive designs is limited. The danger is that schools and states will be frustrated by the unavailability of national designs, or that the reform organizations will be so pressured to work at a larger scale that they will lose the quality and integrity that made them effective in the first place.

Of course, the existing CSRD legislation makes available a great deal of money that will ultimately flow to these reform organizations, but this money will arrive too late. The reform organizations need funding right away to recruit and train additional trainers, to print additional materials, and to build effective organizations. Almost all of these organizations, like ours, are not-for-profit entities, and therefore they lack access to the capital or loans that any business would readily obtain in a situation like this.

Some degree of pump-priming is essential. This could take the form of grants or loans to school reform organizations that are likely to qualify for CSRD funding. These grants or loans might be administered by an experienced intermediary, such as New American Schools (working on behalf of all programs, not just its own), or other agencies capable of moving quickly and intelligently to support the scale-up process with funds, advice, and technical assistance.

2. *The current funding structure will create a flood followed by a drought.* As noted above, the funding currently approved for CSRD, \$150 million, would fund as many as 2,500

schools, if most schools are funded near the minimum of \$50,000 per year. I have noted the difficulty reform organizations will have in serving this number of schools. However, there is a danger that the number of additional schools after the first funding year will drop precipitously. For example, if CSRD funding remained at \$150 million through FY 99, no additional schools could be funded (because the funding is for three years). The administration has proposed an increase of \$30 million. This would be welcome, of course, but it would fund a maximum of 600 schools, a substantial drop from 1998-99. Either way, there is a possibility that just as the reform organizations are building up their capacity, just as the states and districts are learning how to make, administer, and support CSRD grants, and just as the schools are seeing success and publicizing their success locally, the opportunity for additional CSRD funds will be curtailed or eliminated.

The obvious solution to this problem is to greatly increase CSRD funding. It would take a doubling, to \$300 million, just to keep the number of new grants the same. However, if this is not politically feasible, relatively minor changes in Title I regulations could provide significant incentives for Title I schools, especially schoolwide projects, to use Title I dollars to adopt proven programs. For example, a small portion of Title I funds could be set aside as competitive grants to help schoolwide projects adopt proven programs along the same lines as CSRD.

3. *The research base of many existing programs is limited, and there are too few programs.* Many observers have noted that the research behind existing programs is less solid than it should be. All programs can show anecdotal information of some kind indicating that in at least one school implementing a given model, test scores went up or other indicators improved. However, this is not the same as a rigorous evaluation, which would typically specify a group of schools in advance and assess their growth in comparison to matched control groups. This problem cannot be solved

overnight, but there is a need for resources for evaluation of existing and new reform models, preferably by third party evaluators.

Similarly, there is a need to foster the creation of additional programs that could enrich the offerings available to schools. In the near term the fastest way to create such approaches might be to help reform organizations assemble comprehensive designs using specific curricula or other elements with evidence of effectiveness. For example, researchers might create school organization and management methods built around existing reading, math, and science programs. A longer-term need is to develop and evaluate completely new whole-school as well as curricular approaches capable of widespread replication if they are successful. Again, it may be a good idea to fund an intermediary agency, such as New American Schools, to manage this process, as it would require a speed, flexibility, and ability to stay with promising programs and abandon others that are not typical of government-run R&D.

### Conclusion

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration provides a rare example of government at its best, using relatively small amounts of money to leverage enormous funding and energies already in the schools but often devoted to unproven, ineffective activities. There is much to be done to ensure the success of this initiative, but CSRD is on the right track toward fundamental and lasting reform of our nation's schools.

**APPENDIX L -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. IRWIN KURZ**



**Written Statement**  
**Presented to the Subcommittee**  
**on Early Childhood, Youth and Families**  
**of the Committee on Education**  
**and the Workforce**

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**June 23, 1998**

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**PRESENTATION TO THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY EDUCATION,  
YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE**

**JUNE 23, 1998**

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**Oral Presentation**

**Presented to the Subcommittee**

**on Early Childhood, Youth and Families**

**of the Committee on Education**

**and the Workforce**

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**June 23, 1998**

**Irwin Kurz, Presenter**

I would like to thank the Chairman and the Committee for inviting me to testify this afternoon.

I have been a teacher and supervisor in the New York City Public School system for thirty (30) years. For the past twelve (12) years, I have been the Principal of P.S. 161. Public School 161 is located in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, New York. Nearly all of our 1350 students are African-American and approximately 95% are eligible for free lunch.

Recently, we received the results of the April 1998 citywide testing program in reading and mathematics. On the citywide reading test (CTB), 80.9 percent of our students scored at or above grade. On the citywide mathematics test (CAT), 85.4 percent of our students scored at or above grade level. Our scores on Statewide tests are even higher. As compared with schools having similar student populations, the disparity between our test results and test results in these other schools is rather dramatic.

Unfortunately, many people are surprised to learn that minority students can achieve at such a high level. Educators who feel that poverty or the color of one's skin are predictors of academic failure have little chance of succeeding. It is the responsibility of schools to educate students rather than to make excuses that justify failure.

During the past twelve years, we have instituted several practices in P.S. 161 that have contributed to the success of our

students. The following is a list of some of those practices:

1. Uniform Reading Program

We use the Open Court Reading Program throughout the school. This reading series combines a strong phonics component with real literature.

2. Supplementary Reading Program

We have hundreds of class sets of different novels. Teachers and students select a novel that they would like to read. Students read the book for homework and answer several comprehension questions. After the class completes the novel (usually in two or three weeks), they select another book.

3. Principal's Reading Club

Students in kindergarten and grade 1 who can read a book are sent to the principal's office to read the book for the principal. Students in grades 2 through five must write five book reports to become members of the club. Members of the club receive a certificate and a Principal's Reading Club button.

4. Book Store

Every Wednesday, before school (7:45 AM - 8:15 AM), students or parents may purchase books at a reduced price of \$1.00.

5. Weekly Writing Exercise

Every Wednesday, students in grades 1-5 write a composition that is graded and returned to them.

6. Mock Testing Program in Reading and Mathematics

We administer three mock tests in reading and three mock tests in mathematics. Students are tutored by

our paraprofessionals based on the results of these mock tests.

7. School Uniforms

Students wear uniforms to school.

8. Technology

We have two computer labs. Every student visits the lab at least once a week working on literacy and math skills. Some of our classes have computers and printers in their rooms.

9. Peer Evaluation

Teachers evaluate their colleagues.

10. Parental Involvement

- a. Parents of incoming kindergarten students receive a test in June which they are asked to administer to their children prior to the first day of school. During the first week of school, teachers administer the same test to these same students and evaluate the results with the students' parents.
- b. Time is set aside each day when teachers can meet with parents.
- c. Parents receive phone calls notifying them of their children's lateness or absence.
- d. Parents must pick up their children's report cards during the Fall and Spring parent-teacher conferences.
- e. Our literacy and mathematics specialists conduct workshops for parents.
- f. Parents run an after-school program for students who need adult supervision from 3:00 P.M. until

6:00 P.M.

These programs, along with strong leadership, an excellent staff and a "no excuses" attitude have helped our students achieve.

On a Federal level, it would be useful for this committee to consider using Title I funds for staff development, reduced class size and increased opportunities for pre-school educational programs.

Many parents work and their children need early access to programs which will help them to enrich their lives both socially and educationally. When children are three years of age, their parents should have the opportunity to enroll them in quality educational programs. Federal dollars should be spent to assist local communities in setting up these programs. Although good schools can compensate for some of the deficiencies which students may have at the age of five, it would be better if all students arrive at school with the basic skills necessary to ensure their academic success.

Reduction of class size is another matter that needs to be addressed on the Federal level. If I had the space in my school, I would use most of my Title I money to reduce class size. Unfortunately, I have 1350 students in a school built for 975. We have 30 to 35 students in every class. If I had additional classroom space available, I would place students whose reading scores range between the 25th and 50th percentile in classes of no more than fifteen students. Those students who are functioning below the 25th percentile would be placed in classes of no more

than ten students. This would allow teachers more time to teach to the specific needs of these students, individually and in small groups. Reducing class size is important, but for some students reducing the size of the class and changing the mode of instruction is not enough. There are children who are emotionally handicapped and whose handicapping condition prevents them from functioning in a mainstream setting. These students should be removed from the school and placed in an alternative setting. Considerable Federal and local funding would be needed to make reduced class size a reality. Funds will be needed for staff and for the building of new schools.

Staff development is another area that could be addressed on a Federal level. All the Title I money spent on remediation programs will be wasted unless students have excellent classroom teachers. You can extend the school day or extend the school year. You can institute Success for All or Reading Recovery programs. You can have any number of pull-out or push-in programs, but these programs will not work unless the child has a good classroom teacher. Title I funds should be used for in-house staff development activities where master teachers can train staff both during and after school hours.

I hope that some of the practices that we have found effective at P.S. 161 can be replicated in other schools. I would also respectfully ask the committee to consider using Title I as a funding source for early intervention programs, staff development and the reduction of class size.



I know that this committee is considering comprehensive school reform. Please remember that there are schools that are succeeding using a variety of approaches. Every few years we tend to drop everything that is good in education to embrace some new formula for success only to be disappointed with the results. This time let's have the foresight to keep what works and change what needs to be changed.

Again, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

## P.S. 161 SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

### 1. OPEN COURT READING PROGRAM

- a. balance between phonics and real literature

### 2. SUPPLEMENTARY READING PROGRAM

- a. we have hundreds of sets of trade books (novels) on every grade level
- b. students and teachers select which books they would like to read as a class
- c. every two or three weeks, the class selects a new title
- d. classroom libraries are correlated with the reading, social studies and other curriculum areas

### 3. PRINCIPAL'S READING CLUB

- a. students in grades K & 1 who can read a book are sent to Mr. Kurz to read
- b. students in grades 2-5 who write five book reports become members of the Principal's Reading club
- c. members of the Club receive certificates and buttons

### 4. BOOK STORE

- a. every Wednesday from 7:45 AM until 8:15 AM the school bookstore is open
- b. every book (except Goosebumps books) costs \$1.00
- c. every week we sell between two and three hundred books
- d. students work as book reviewers, salespersons and security guards
- e. monthly book review newspaper (By-Lines) is published

**5. WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

- a. every Wednesday all students write compositions
- b. compositions are graded and returned
- c. teachers are paired with other teachers on their grades to review weekly writing samples

**6. MOCK TESTS**

- a. three mock tests in reading and mathematics (December, January, March)
- b. immediate results
- c. tutoring based on the results of the tests

**7. LIBRARY**

- a. students have free access to the library
- b. library media center - students use the computers to conduct research and write reports
- c. students view and discuss videos

**8. TECHNOLOGY**

- a. every student attends one computer lab each week
- b. students are taught word processing skills
- c. use of interactive books to stimulate literacy acquisition
- d. children write original stories with graphics on the computers

**9. PEER EVALUATION**

- a. teachers observe other teachers

**10. MONTHLY SUPERVISORY REPORT**

- a. teachers complete monthly reports on classroom activities

**11. PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

- a. parents receive word lists to review with their children

- b. at an orientation meeting in June parents of incoming kindergarten students receive a copy of a test that their children will take in September
- c. parents receive a schedule of times that the teachers have available for parent-teacher conferences each day
- d. parent workshops on literacy
- e. family worker who tutors students and their parents
- f. parents work in school as reading tutors

## **12. READING OLYMPICS**

- a. children are encouraged to read during the summer
- b. certificates are given to all students who enter
- c. "Olympic medals" are given to the winners
- d. pictures of winners are displayed on bulletin boards

## **13. SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

- a. all students wear uniforms

## **14. ARTS & LITERACY**

- a. while listening to music, children write poems or stories which describe dramatic, sad or happy incidents in their lives
- b. students write reviews and evaluate all aspects of the performance they saw at the Metropolitan Opera
- c. children who participate in the School-Before-School Art Club write about their works of art
- d. students read their poems, stories, etc. to the class

## **15. OTHER LITERACY INITIATIVES**

- a. Junior Great Books
- b. author studies
- c. literature circles
- d. library card drive
- e. newspapers as a teaching tool

**TITLE I ALLOCATION**

- 1. THREE (3) READING SPECIALISTS**
  - A. Small group instruction**
  - B. Supplementary Reading Program**
  - C. Mock Tests**
  - D. Tutoring Program**
  - E. Book Store**
  - F. Demonstration Lessons**
  - G. Prepare & Distribute Test Sophistication Materials**
  - H. Library Card Drive**
  - I. Parent Workshops**
  
- 2. TWO (2) MATHEMATICS SPECIALISTS AND ONE (1) MATHEMATICS PARAPROFESSIONAL**
  - A. Small group instruction**
  - B. Mock Tests**
  - C. Tutoring Program**
  - D. Demonstration Lessons**
  - E. Prepare and Distribute Test Sophistication Materials**
  - F. Daily Warm-Ups & Problems of the Day**
  - G. Parent Workshops**
  
- 3. TWO (2) TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS AND TWO (2) TECHNOLOGY PARAPROFESSIONALS**
  - A. Every class visits the lab at least one period per week (Reading, Mathematics, Research, Writing, Internet)**
  - B. Staff Development**
  - C. Maintain computers in the labs and classrooms**

**TITLE I ALLOCATION (CONT'D)**

- 4. ONE (1) E.S.L. TEACHER**
  - A. Daily Instruction to LEP Students**
  - B. Staff Development for Monolingual Teachers**
  - C. LAB Testing**
  - D. Monitoring of Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) Forms**
  
- 5. NINE (9) EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONALS**
  - A. Assist in the classroom**
  - B. Combine with tax-levy paraprofessional allotment**
  
- 6. FUNDS TO PURCHASE SUPPLIES & MATERIALS FOR THE TITLE I PROGRAMS**

## NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.S. 161 & CROWN SCHOOL FOR LAW AND JOURNALISM  
330 Crown Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225 (718) 756-3100 \* FAX # (718) 953-3605

Mr. I. Kurz, Principal

Ms. D. Barrett, A.P.

Mr. A. Solomon, A.P.

Mr. S. Golub, A.A.

### PRINCIPAL'S READING CLUB

Dear Parents:

Several years ago, I began the Principal's Reading Club for the children in P.S. 161. The Principal's Reading Club has proven to be a tremendous success! Hundreds of students have become members of the Club. We hope that every student will become a member of the Principal's Reading Club this year.

To become a member of the Club, a student in kindergarten or first grade must be able to read one book. After completing the book, the child should notify his teacher. The teacher will ascertain that the child can actually read the book and thereupon the student will be sent to the principal's office. There, he will read several passages to Mr. Kurz.

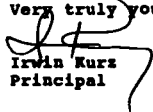
Students in grades 2-5 must write five book reports to become members of the Principal's Reading Club. Each book report must be submitted to the child's classroom teacher. The teacher will check these book reports for spelling and grammatical errors. If there are any errors, the student will have to make the necessary corrections. After the five book reports are ready for publication, the teacher will notify me and I will come to the classroom to present the certificates and huttons.

Each Principal's Reading Club member will receive two certificates. One will be sent home with the child and the other will be displayed in the classroom. We will also give a beautiful hutton to each child who becomes a member of the Club. The children should proudly wear their Reading Club huttons in school each day. This should help motivate other students to become members of the Club. There will also be a bulletin board outside the general office where all the names of the Principal's Reading Club members will be displayed.

I am asking that you help your children select appropriate books and assist them in their assignments. It is extremely important that our children find this a pleasurable and rewarding experience. Be patient, but persistent. The love of reading that this venture will develop in the children should remain with them throughout their lives.

There is no better way to strengthen the bond between you and your child than by your helping him learn how to read and write. Your child's success in school and in life generally depends on his ability to read and write. Recent research has convincingly demonstrated that parent involvement can dramatically affect the total reading development of each child. I am certain that this Reading Club Program will help develop a successful partnership between the school and the home.

Very truly yours,

  
Irwin Kurz  
Principal

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Mr. S. Golub, A.A.

### WEEKLY WRITING EXERCISE

To: All Staff  
From: I. Kurz, Principal  
Re: The Importance of Writing  
Date: October 6, 1997

A 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress Report indicated that as teachers replaced multiple-choice questions with written paragraphs to be used in assessing reading ability, there was a concurrent and significant rise in students' scores on standardized reading tests. Research also indicated that "lower-ability students" were not receiving the same challenging, integrative tasks as part of their instruction as students who were deemed "high-achievers." This situation helped contribute to the poor achievement level of "lower-ability" students. We cannot let this happen to our students.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist, or countless more studies to understand the importance of this report. Students must be taught to think critically and they must be able to express themselves in writing. Common sense tells us that we should construct tests that demand more from our students. Many times, however, we just don't do it. There are many reasons that we use multiple-choice tests rather than an essay type test. It takes more time to mark an essay. Teachers need more expertise to grade and correct an essay. Sometimes, teachers are not confident about their own writing abilities. I am asking that at least one test a month in reading, social studies and science should contain several essay type questions. In grades one and two, tests can be constructed to range from simple fill-in-the-blank questions to questions that require a written response of a sentence or two. These types of questions may be used as part of the testing program in the upper grades too.

I am asking also that teachers should meet once-a-month to exchange their children's writing folders with colleagues on the grade. These writing folders should contain the student's graded and corrected weekly writing exercises for that month. All Wednesday writing papers should be graded on a 1-4 scoring rubric. Corrections should be indicated on the papers and placed into the children's writing folders. It would be good if the children rewrote their essays using your corrections as a guide. For administrative purposes, the first exponent teachers will exchange folders with the second exponent teachers, the third with the fourth, etc. In grades 4 and 5, the 4-7 teacher will exchange papers with the 5-7 teacher. This would serve not only to ascertain that the work is being done, but more importantly, this will enable you to work collegially in devising and implementing better ways to teach writing. Mr. Golub will be giving out a schedule for these meetings in a few days. The meetings should last no more than thirty minutes. We will cover your classes while you attend these meetings.

CONG:98



P.S. 161  
Mr. I. Kurz, Principal

Ms. D. Barrett,  
Mr. A. Solomon,

A.P.  
A.P.

MEMORANDUM

To: All Teachers  
From: I. Kurz, Principal  
Re: Teacher Performance Options  
Elements of a Basic Lesson  
Date: September 12, 1997

A meaningful supervisory program consists of a planned series of activities which results in instructional improvement. The improvement of instruction should be the responsibility of the entire staff. Teachers must play a major role in this search for excellence. The best kind of evaluation is a teacher's own informal evaluation. Teachers should ask themselves "What do my pupils need to learn?"; "Have they benefitted from my instruction?"; "What changes must I make in my teaching methods to be of more help to them?" The hallmark of any profession is self-improvement. Self-evaluation, however, is not likely to occur unless there is an analysis of work quality, and guideposts for future action are established. Because most people need an "outside" view to assess such matters, peer evaluation can be most effective in helping teachers to become more objective about their skills and abilities.

Formal observations by an assistant principal or principal, in many instances, do not give a true picture of what goes on in a classroom. Teachers generally feel that the purpose of an observation is not for improvement of instruction, but rather for rating the teacher either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. When a supervisor informs a teacher in advance that he will be visiting the class, the teacher usually plans a better lesson than she would normally. Of course, if the teacher has very few skills, even with advance warning, the lesson will probably not be successful.

In our school, we have many veteran teachers who possess the necessary skills to be excellent mentors for their colleagues. Teachers helping each other to improve instruction will not only benefit the students, but will also help to raise the collective sense of professionalism amongst our staff. To this end, we will continue with the peer evaluation program that we started last year.

We will continue to modify the plan as we get your feedback during the year. As we did last year, we will divide each grade into two groups. One group will consist of the teachers of the 1, 3, 5 & 7 exponents on a particular grade. The other group, will consist of the teachers of the 2, 4 & 6 classes. Clusters and Title I teachers will also be divided into groups of four. Each teacher will observe the other members of the group during the course of the school year. There will be no rating, nor will these observations go into any teacher's file. The sole purpose of these observations is for the improvement of instruction. Teachers must keep their own portfolios of staff-development activities. Teachers should include in their portfolios: observations that they made, demonstration lessons (seen or done), workshops attended, self-evaluation checklists, records of intervisitation or any other staff development activity. Supervisors will review your portfolios with you and offer any help that is needed.

You may use the Instructional Guide For Observations form to document your observations, or you may use a narrative format. There should be follow-up discussions between the teacher observing and the teacher being observed. Supervisors will look at these forms to ascertain whether the observations have actually taken place. Each teacher is required to do a minimum of three observations a year.

At the end of each month, please indicate whom you have observed, and who observed you, on the Monthly Supervisory Report. You continue to do an outstanding job. I am extremely proud of what you have accomplished. I am certain that we will set the standard for peer evaluation for the entire city.

## ELEMENTS OF A BASIC LESSON

The following list of basic elements of a lesson is expected to be found in every lesson taught. When observing your colleagues, please look for these key elements:

### ELEMENTS OF A BASIC LESSON

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE** - What do I expect students to learn?

- ..should be specific: "Students will be able to..."
- ..should be stated in behavioral terms
- ...should be discussed with class and written on chalkboard
- ...children should be directed to copy the objective into their notebooks

**MATERIALS** - What will I need? What materials will students use?

- ..should be suitable for different learning modalities and instructional levels
- ..should be accessible, clearly visible and appropriate
- ...are distributed at point in lesson when needed

**MOTIVATION** - How can I stimulate interest?

- How can I make each student aware of lesson's value?
- ..is relevant to students' experiences, needs and abilities
- ..may be affected by the use of pictures, objects, statements or questions

**PRESENTATION CONTENT** -

- ..The teacher models/demonstrates the skill to be learned.
- ..The teacher provides and monitors practice of sequential learning activities and gives specific, positive, corrective feedback to students. This is an informal check to see if students understand the content, directions or task of the lesson. The teacher elicits behavior which demonstrates learning of the material (Checking for Understanding/Guided Practice).
- ..involves sequential steps to be followed in order to achieve the learning objective
- ..uses varied methods to sustain interest and permit wide participation
- ...is comprised of activities based on previous learnings

**SUMMARY** - Elicits the medial and final summaries of the lesson from the students in order to highlight what has been presented

**EVALUATION** - Did I accomplish what I set out to do?

- If not, why not?
- Did I lose the interest of certain students during the lesson?
- If so, when and why?
- How can I teach the subject matter so that it is learned the next time?
- ..can be accomplished by a written test, verbal quiz or demonstration
- ..should be noted by recording results in planbook for future planning

**FOLLOW-UP** - What follow-up activities can I prepare to reinforce the skills and concepts taught?

- How can I help students transfer acquired skills and knowledge to other situations?
- ..are outgrowths of content of lesson
- ..can be done in the classroom, out of school or at home
- ...must be clearly understood and able to be completed without help

P.S. 161

IRWIN KURZ, PRINCIPAL

**INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE FOR OBSERVATIONS**

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC OR ACTIVITY \_\_\_\_\_

LEARNING OBJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_

**AREAS****COMMENTS****LESSON DELIVERY****PREPARES STUDENTS FOR INSTRUCTION**

ESTABLISHES A CLIMATE FOR LEARNING  
 GAINS STUDENTS' ATTENTION  
 ELICITS THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE  
 THE OBJECTIVE IS CLEAR AND SPECIFIC  
 THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN ON THE CHALKBOARD

**STUDENT MOTIVATION**

ESTABLISHES WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO LEARN THIS  
 RELATES NEW INFORMATION TO PRIOR STUDENT EXPERIENCES  
 RELATES NEW INFORMATION TO PRIOR STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

**DELIVERY SEQUENCE**

REVIEWS NECESSARY BASIC SKILLS  
 PRESENTS CONCRETE BEFORE ABSTRACT MATERIALS  
 DEVELOPS THE LESSON FROM EASY TO HARD

**SUMMARY**

MEDIA TO INDICATE WHERE WE HAVE COME SO FAR  
 FINAL TO CONFIRM WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED  
 DELIVERED BY STUDENTS, IF POSSIBLE, OR TEACHER

**REVIEW AND REINFORCEMENT**

IMMEDIATE AS GUIDED GROUP WORK  
 IMMEDIATE AS INDEPENDENT SEAT WORK  
 DELAYED AS HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

**PUPIL EFFECTIVENESS****STUDENT'S INVOLVEMENT**

STUDENTS RESPOND AND CONTRIBUTE FREELY  
 TEACHER DOES NOT DOMINATE LESSON

**LESSON APPROPRIATENESS**

CONTAINS SKILLS NEW TO THE STUDENT  
 CONTAINS SKILLS NOT MASTERED BY THE STUDENTS  
 SKILLS COVERED IN THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

**LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENTS**

ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK IN COMPLETE SENTENCES  
 ENCOURAGED TO USE CORRECT ENGLISH

**BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS**

LISTEN TO THE COMMENTS OF PEERS  
 HELP EACH OTHER  
 WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND

AREAS	COMMENTS
<b>TEACHER PERFORMANCE</b>  <b>QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE</b> FEW YES/NO QUESTIONS MAINLY THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS TOO FEW QUESTIONS TOO MANY QUESTIONS QUESTIONS ARE VARIED AND APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS ASKED OF NON-VOLUNTEERS ALLOWS TIME FOR STUDENTS TO PONDER THEIR REPLIES	
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS</b> CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LESSON OF MULTI-MODAL NATURE	
<b>ROUTINES</b> CLEARLY ESTABLISHED MATERIALS EASILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS COLLECTED AND DISTRIBUTED EFFICIENTLY LESSON STARTS PROMPTLY	
<b>OUTCOMES</b> OBJECTIVE REALIZED CONCOMITANT LEARNING	
<b>OTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS</b>	

INSTRUCT: 95

## NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.S. 161 & CROWN SCHOOL FOR LAW AND JOURNALISM  
330 Crown Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225 (718) 756-3100 • FAX # (718) 953-3605

Mr. I. Kurz, Principal

Ms. D. Barrett, A.P.  
Mr. A. Solomon, A.P.

### SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Dear Parents:

Since September 1989, we have asked our students to wear school uniforms each day. This program has been very successful. More than 95% of our students come to school each day wearing their uniforms. We are trying very hard to make P.S. 161 a very special school. We have seen a steady rise in all academic areas for the past several years. Discipline and attendance have been very good, as well. We should be happy with what we have accomplished. We must, however, continue to strive to do even better. In our attempt to make this school special, we are asking you to purchase a school uniform for your child.

The uniform has several advantages. Not only will it help the children to develop a sense of pride in the school, but it will help you to save money. Children need only two or three uniforms for the entire year. Older brothers and sisters can pass their uniforms to their younger siblings. This is rather a unique venture on the part of a Public School, but if we all cooperate, we can make it work.

We have made arrangements with IDEAL DEPARTMENT STORE and COOKIE'S DEPARTMENT STORE to supply our school with the uniforms. IDEAL DEPARTMENT STORE is located at 1814-16 Flatbush Avenue (near Ave. K). COOKIE'S DEPARTMENT STORE is located at 982 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. Please try to purchase your uniform before August 15th. After August 15th, uniforms will be in short supply and there will be long lines at both stores. We are hoping that all of our children appear on the first day of school wearing their uniforms.

\*\*\*\*\* OUR SCHOOL UNIFORM WILL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING \*\*\*\*\*

#### BOYS

Navy Trousers  
Yellow Shirt  
Plaid Tie  
Navy Cardigan Sweater  
Shoes (not sneakers)

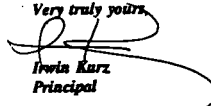
#### GIRLS (KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3)

Blue and Gold Plaid Jumper  
Yellow Blouse, Peter Pan Collar  
Plaid Criss-Cross Tie  
Navy Cardigan Sweater  
Shoes (not sneakers)

#### GIRLS (GRADES 4 - 5)

Blue and Gold Plaid Skirt  
Yellow Blouse, Pointed Collar  
Navy Cardigan Sweater  
Shoes (not sneakers)

Very truly yours,



Irwin Kurz  
Principal

## MONTHLY SUPERVISORY REPORT TEACHER'S CHECKLIST

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO YOUR IMMEDIATE  
SUPERVISOR BY THE THIRD DAY OF THE MONTH.**

TEACHERS'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH \_\_\_\_\_

1. I have a minimum of 90 minutes of language arts instruction every day. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
(\*Golden Hour- 45 minutes-Open Court Basal + 45 minutes-language arts)
2. Please list the names of the supplementary readers that your class used this month.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please indicate the page number of the last story completed in your Open Court reader. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have administered, graded and corrected the weekly writing tests Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
this month.
5. I have administered and graded at least two social studies tests this Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
month.
6. I have included short answer and essay questions on at least one Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
reading and one social studies examination this month.
7. I have a minimum of 45 minutes of mathematics every day. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
8. I complete the daily mathematics warm-ups every day. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
9. I write the learning objective on the chalkboard at the beginning Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
of every lesson.
10. My bulletin boards reflect the current classroom work of the students. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
11. I assign homework in mathematics, reading and one other curriculum Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
area every night (including weekends and holidays).
12. My lesson plans are cumulative and up-to-date. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
13. I have given three days of substitute plans to my immediate Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
supervisor and have replaced any plans that were used.
14. I have observed and I have given written copies of these observations Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
to the following teachers this school year (minimum of three per year):  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I have been observed and I have received written copies of the lesson observations Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
from the following teachers during this school year (minimum of three per year):  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I keep accurate and up-to-date daily attendance records using the Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
monthly attendance worksheet that I receive from Mr. Simon as a  
back-up to the ATE attendance system.
17. I have used and I have displayed graphic organizer charts in my room. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
18. I have submitted this month's professional development log to Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Mr. Golub.
19. Please indicate the number of students in your class who have been \_\_\_\_\_  
admitted to the Principal's Reading Club this school year.
20. Please indicate the number of students in your class who have read \_\_\_\_\_  
twenty-five books during this school year.

**PLEASE USE THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM TO  
EXPLAIN ANY "NO" ANSWERS.**

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Mr. I. Kurz, Principal

Ms. D. Barrett, A.P.  
Mr. A. Solomon, A.P.  
Mr. S. Golub, A.P.

Dear Parents:

Research has indicated that children whose parents take an active role in their education tend to do better in school than children whose parents take a passive role. We have heard and read recently about the importance of parents reading, listening, talking, and working with their children from birth through age 4. There is no doubt that you play an important role in your children's future success in school.

Not all children entering kindergarten can answer all of the following questions. It would be wonderful if all of our entering kindergarten students could get a score of 25 or higher. Certainly, not all can, but it would be nice if it were so. Please administer this quiz to your child. There is no passing, or failing score.

Give yourself 1 point for each answer.

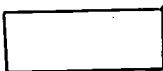
1. Does your child know his address?
2. Does your child know his phone number?
3. Does your child know his last name?
4. Can your child recognize his name in print?
5. Can your child write his first name?
6. Can your child write his last name?
7. Can your child name this shape?



8. Can your child name this shape?



9. Can your child name this shape?



10. Can your child point to a red object?
11. Can your child point to a yellow object?
12. Can your child name this letter? M
13. Can your child name this letter? S
14. Can your child name this letter? H
15. Can your child count to 10?
16. Can your child count to 20?
17. Does your child know what comes after 8?
18. Does your child know that comes before 12?
19. Does your child know what sound the letter B makes?
20. Does your child know what sound the letter F makes?
21. Does your child know what sound the letter R makes?
22. Does your child know what sound the letter T makes?
23. Can he read "red"?
24. Can he read "blue"?
25. Can he read "green"?
26. Can he read the word "boy"?
27. Can he read the word "girl"?
28. Can he read the word "school"?
29. Can he read the word "go"?
30. Can he read the word "walk"?

Can your child read this passage? 5 points

He can read the book.  
 The book is blue.  
 Can you read it?  
 Reading is fun.

SCORE \_\_\_\_\_ (MAXIMUM SCORE 34)

CONG:98



**NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Rudolph F. Crew, Ed. D., Chancellor**  
**1996-97 ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT**

District 17

CROWN SCHOOL

P.S. 161

MR. IRWIN KURZ, Principal

330 CROWN STREET  
BROOKLYN, NY 11225

Tel. (718) 756-3100

1996-97 Grade Levels KG through 07    Number of Students, October 31, 1996: 1,392    Number of Students, May 1, 1997: 1,339

**Principal's Statement:**

P.S.161 is unique in its attitude, accomplishments, and ability to develop new programs. We are proud of the spirit of cooperation among parents, teachers and children. Our reading and math scores demonstrate our success in teaching the basic skills children need to succeed in school and in life. Further enhancing the educational world of P.S. 161, our computer room offers high-tech opportunities. Because we recognize the importance of the arts in a child's education, we offer a band program and a choir. Encouraging children to wear uniforms to school has turned out to be a significant element for successful school-wide discipline. Finally, we are proud of our Crown School for Law and Journalism, which adds a selective middle school onto our K-5.

**School Features**
**Special  
Academic  
Programs**

P.S. 161 has special gifted and talented classes for K-5. It also has a middle school, The Crown School for Law and Journalism, for academically gifted children in grades 6, 7, and 8


**Extracurricular  
Activities**

P.S. 161 offers conflict resolution, after-school and before-school programs in art, choir, ballet, and piano.


**Parental Support  
for School**

Parents provide assistance in the school library, volunteer in the classrooms, and run an after-school program.


**School Support for  
Parents**

The school provides a variety of parent workshops, including mathematical, reading, and ESL, led by skilled members of the school's teaching team.


**Community  
Support**

We had partnerships with Parents and support from the Library Power program.

The Division of Assessment and Accountability compiled this report primarily from central databases and information provided by this school's principal. Community support has been provided by the Collaborative Site Report. Throughout the report, N/A indicates that information was not available or did not apply to this school. The 1996-97 Annual School Report is being issued in cooperation with the New York State Education Department and includes the New York State School Report Card for New York City Schools.

**Staff Information**

Teachers*	64
Other Professionals (including principal)	4
Para Professionals*	20

\* Includes all full-time and all part-time staff

**Teachers****Experience and Background**

	This School		City Schools*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fully Licensed and Permanently Assigned to This School	96.3		83.2	
Less than 2 Years in the School	9.4		17.9	
More than 5 Years Teaching	92.2		68.6	
Percent Masters Degree or Higher	91.8		89.5	
Teachers' Average Days Absent	5.9		6.8	

\* Throughout this report City Schools refers to all elementary schools in New York City.

**Students**

	This School		City Schools	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Arrivals to U.S. in Last 3 Years	81	5.8	9.0	
Initial Referrals to Special Education				
School year 1996-97	33	2.4	5.4	
Students in This School for the Entire Year	1,308	98.1	91.5	

Students enrolled as of Oct. 31, 1996 who immigrated into the U.S. within the last three years.

The full year data correspond to the administrative school. The data are not disaggregated by program.

**Expenditures - 1995-96**

	Total Expenditure per Pupil Unit	Approved Operating Expenditures
City	\$8,213	\$5,320
State	\$9,256	\$8,096

**Total Expenditure per Pupil Unit**

This is a New York State Education Department calculation that includes district level operations, administrative expenses, and pupil attendance.

**Approved Operating Expenditures (AOE) per Total Admable Pupil Unit (TAPU) for Expense**

This is a New York State Education Department calculation of day-to-day school operating expenditures per pupil-service year.

**Students - Continued****Ethnicity and Gender**

	This School		City Schools	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	0.6		18.1	
Black	90.4		34.9	
Hispanic	8.2		38.7	
Asian and Others*	0.9		10.2	
Male	49.5		51.2	
Female	50.5		48.8	

\* Others include Pacific Islanders, Alaskan Natives and Native Americans.

**Enrollment - October****General Education+**

Grade	94-95	95-96	96-97
Kindergarten	150	149	144
Grade 1	264	218	201
Grade 2	229	260	213
Grade 3	247	232	254
Grade 4	263	248	230
Grade 5	235	260	238
Grade 6	0	59	59
Grade 7	0	0	55

**Special Education**

Special Education	16	10	3
Resource Room*	34	15	25
Limited English Proficient**	95	44	35

\* These students are also included in the general education group. This breakout results in a duplicate count.

\*\* Includes general education students receiving resource room, consultant teacher, and/or related services.

\*\*\* Pre-Kindergarten students are not included in the number of students on page 1.

**Other Student Information****Attendance**

Percent of Days Students Attended	95	96	97
School	92.9	91.9	93.5
Community School District	89.9	88.7	89.4
Similar Schools	88.7	87.4	89.2
City	90.5	89.0	90.2
State	90.9	91.4	N/A

State data for attendance are for elementary, middle and high school combined.

**Suspensions**

Percent of Students	95	96	97
School	0.1	0.3	0.3
Community School District	0.8	1.8	1.7
Similar Schools	1.7	2.1	2.3
City	1.7	1.7	1.8
State	1.2	1.2	N/A

The suspensions may have occurred at any time during the school year.  
State data for suspensions are for elementary schools

**Incidents**

Percent of Students	95	96	97
School	0.2	0.4	0.1
Community School District	0.8	0.8	0.8
Similar Schools	1.1	1.0	1.2
City	1.1	0.8	0.9

The incidents may have occurred at any time during the school year.

Throughout this report, similar schools are defined as those with a similar percent of students eligible for the Free Lunch Program and a similar percent of limited English proficient students.

Note: All state totals throughout the report are preliminary

**Special Populations****Students Receiving Resource Room / Consultant Teacher / Related Services \***

Percent of Students	95+	96+	97
School	2.4	1.1	2.4
Community School District	2.0	1.8	2.5
Similar Schools	3.5	3.6	5.7
City	3.3	3.9	5.9

\* In 1995 and 1996 only students receiving resource room services were included in this subset of the entire student population.

**Special Education Students \***

Percent of Students	95	96	97
School	1.3	0.7	0.2
Community School District	3.7	4.3	4.7
Similar Schools	8.8	6.2	6.9
City	4.5	5.9	5.8

\* Students in self-contained special education classes, calculated on the basis of active students on the Automate The Schools October 31 Biographical file.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students \***

Percent of Students	95	96	97
School	8.8	3.1	2.5
Community School District	12.3	11.3	9.8
Similar Schools	18.7	18.5	18.2
City	19.0	20.7	18.3
State	7.8	7.9	7.9

\* Calculated on the basis of active students on the Automate The Schools October 31 Biographical file.

State data for LEP students are for elementary, middle and high school combined.

**Students Receiving Free Lunch**

Percent of Students	95	96	97
School	96.8	96.6	96.6
Community School District	88.3	90.0	90.0
Similar Schools	93.8	94.0	93.1
City	78.0	78.3	72.5
State	N/A	N/A	37.0

The 1995 and 1996 percent are based on school level reporting. The 1997 percent is based on individual student reports.

State data for free lunch are for elementary, middle and high school combined.

### New York State Tests - General Education

All calculations are based on the May 1 register. Data for all three years exclude students in resource rooms. Data for 1996-97 also exclude students receiving consultant teacher and/or related services. To allow for appropriate comparison of scores across all three years, scores for the CITY in 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 have been adjusted to take into account the change in State policy for exempting limited English proficient students in 1996-1997. The scores for the STATE have also been adjusted. State data reported on this page are for all school levels combined.

#### THIRD GRADE READING

	Percentage A/Above State Minimum Level				Number of Students in This School		
	94-95	95-96	96-97		94-95	95-96	96-97
This School	81.8	82.5	81.0	Number Enrolled	247	224	236
Community School District	60.5	57.4	62.8	Pupils Tested	234	217	228
Similar Schools	55.7	52.0	61.1	Pupils A/Above Min.	191	179	183
City	66.6	64.1	69.4	Exempted LEP	10	7	9
State	81.9	81.3	85.6	Exempted LEP Progressing Appropriately	0	0	8

	Percentage of Students, 96-97			
	Performing with Distinction	Performing Well	Typical Performance	Above Minimum
This School	31.9	40.3	58.2	81.0
Community School District	17.5	22.2	32.4	62.7
Similar Schools	12.2	16.7	26.3	60.9
City	19.2	24.9	36.5	69.3
State	36.5	N/A	N/A	85.6

#### THIRD GRADE ARITHMETICS

	Percentage A/Above State Minimum Level				Number of Students in This School		
	94-95	95-96	96-97		94-95	95-96	96-97
This School	99.6	96.8	96.9	Pupils Tested	235	217	225
Community School District	87.1	86.0	89.2	Pupils A/Above Min.	234	210	218
Similar Schools	87.4	86.4	88.9	Exempted LEP	11	7	9
City	91.1	91.0	92.2				
State	96.5	96.5	87.0				

#### FOURTH GRADE SCIENCE

	Objective Tests		Manipulative Skills Test	Number Enrolled	96-97
	Content Test	Skills Test			
	Average Raw Score (out of 25)	Average Raw Score (out of 16)			
This School	20.0	10.5	29.1	Pupils Tested	217
Community School District	17.4	9.2	26.9	Exempted LEP	0
Similar Schools	17.1	9.4	26.2		
City	18.6	10.2	28.2		
State	N/A	N/A	N/A		

#### FIFTH GRADE WRITING

	Percentage A/Above State Minimum Level				94-95	95-96	96-97
	94-95	95-96	96-97				
This School	83.2	83.7	88.2	Number Enrolled	233	240	224
Community School District	74.1	76.2	82.3	Pupils Tested	226	239	220
Similar Schools	78.4	78.4	83.4	Pupils A/Above Min.	186	224	216
City	82.1	84.2	87.0	Exempted LEP	6	1	3
State	91.2	92.2	94.0				

## New York State Tests (continued)

## SIXTH GRADE READING

	Percentage At/Above State Minimum Level			Number Enrolled	94-95 95-96 96-97		
	94-95	95-96	96-97		94-95	95-96	96-97
This School	N/A	100.0	100.0		N/A	58	56
Community School District	89.3	70.9	75.2	Pupils Tested	N/A	58	56
Similar Schools	65.8	59.4	67.4	Pupils At/Above Min.	N/A	58	56
City	73.7	69.3	70.7	Exempted LEP	0	0	0
State	84.7	83.1	86.0	Exempted LEP Progressing	N/A	N/A	N/A

How Well Can Sixth Graders Read?	Percentage of Students, 1998-1997			
	Performing with Distinction	Performing Well	Typical Performance	Above Minimum
This School	92.9	98.3	100.1	100.1
Community School District	31.6	49.7	64.3	75.2
Similar Schools	23.9	40.3	55.3	67.4
City	30.3	45.7	59.4	70.7
State	53.2	N/A	N/A	66.0

## SIXTH GRADE MATHEMATICS

	Percentage At/Above State Minimum Level			Reg.Ed Pupils Tested	94-95 95-96 96-97		
	94-95	95-96	96-97		94-95	95-96	96-97
This School	N/A	100.0	100.0		N/A	58	56
Community School District	95.7	88.3	92.1	Reg.Ed Pupils At/Above Min.	N/A	58	56
Similar Schools	78.1	64.4	67.6	Exempted LEP	0	0	0
City	84.5	88.0	89.6				
State	92.3	94.0	94.7				

## SIXTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

	Multiple Choice			Essay		Combined		Pupils Tested
	Average Raw Score (out of 50)	Average Raw Score (out of 10)	Average Raw Score (out of 60)	Average Raw Score (out of 10)	Average Raw Score (out of 60)	Average Raw Score (out of 60)		
This School	41.9	6.1	50.0				56	
Community School District	31.9	5.5	37.3				0	
Similar Schools	30.5	5.2	35.6					
City	31.8	5.7	37.5					
State	N/A	N/A	N/A					

## New York State Tests (continued)

## Special Education (1996 - 1997)

	THIRD GRADE READING		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School	9	66.7		
Community School District	76	38.2		
Similar Schools	1,052	25.9		
City	5,844	30.5		

	THIRD GRADE MATH		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School	10	60.0		
Community School District	79	73.4		
Similar Schools	1,221	70.0		
City	6,166	76.5		

	FIFTH GRADE READING		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School	4	N/A		
Community School District	94	66.0		
Similar Schools	970	56.3		
City	5,679	66.8		

	SIXTH GRADE READING		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School				
Community School District				
Similar Schools				
City				

	SEVENTH GRADE READING		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School				
Community School District				
Similar Schools				
City				

	EIGHTH GRADE READING		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	RR/CT/RS*		SPECIAL EDUCATION**	
	Tested	% Above Minimum	Tested	% Above Minimum
This School				
Community School District				
Similar Schools				
City				

\* RR/CT/RS - These are students in general education classes who receive resource room, consultant teacher, and/or related services.

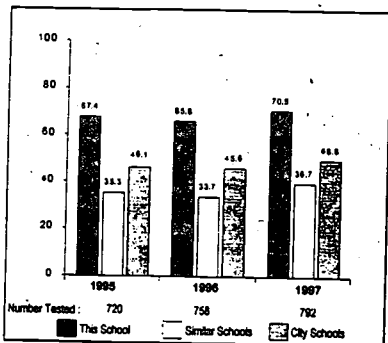
\*\* SPECIAL EDUCATION - These are students in self-contained special education classes who may also receive consultant teacher and/or related services.

**New York City Tests**

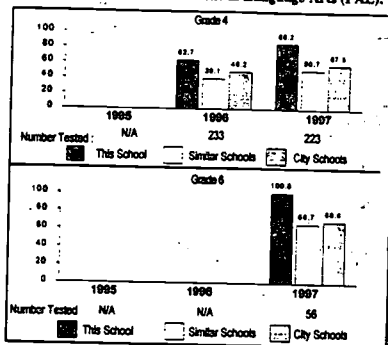
**Reading**

Included are general education students as well as those receiving resource room, consultant teacher, or related services in grades 3 through 8. Limited English Proficient Students who have shown an ability to read in English or were in the school system more than 5 years are included. Data for 1995 and 1996 CTB have been adjusted to allow for comparison of scores across all three years.

**Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level on the Citywide (CTB) Test.**



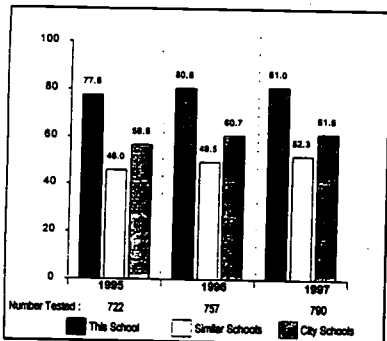
**Percent of Students in grades 4 and 6 Scoring Medium or High on Performance Assessment in Language Arts (PAL).**



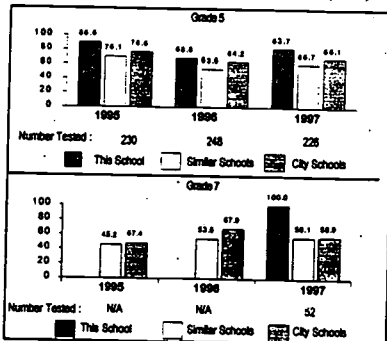
**Mathematics**

Included are general education students as well as those receiving resource room, consultant teacher, or related services in grades 3 through 8. Limited English Proficient Students who have shown an ability to read in English or were in the school system more than 5 years are included. Data for 1995 and 1996 CATS have been adjusted to allow for comparison of scores across all three years.

**Percent of Students At or Above Grade Level on the Citywide (CATS) Test.**



**Percent of Students in grade 5 and 7 Scoring Medium or High on Performance Assessment in Mathematics (PAM).**



\*Similar schools are defined as those with a similar percent of students eligible for the Free Lunch Program and a similar percent of Limited English Proficient Students.

Other Indicators of Progress

Special Education

Student Progress Toward General Education

	This School Percent	City Schools Percent
Students spending portions of school days in integrated settings (includes receiving resource room, consultant teacher, and related services):		
Less Than 20% of Time	0.0	42.2
20% To 60%	0.0	0.3
Greater than 60%	0.0	57.5
Movement from		
Special Education to General Education Only	0.0	0.6
Special Education to Resource Room, Consultant Teacher and Related Services	100.0	3.3
Resource Room, Consultant Teacher and Related Services to General Education Only	0.0	3.1

Student Achievement

Percent students in self-contained special education classes At or Above the National Average on the New York City Reading and Mathematics Tests

	1996			1997		
	Number Tested	This School	City Schools	Number Tested	This School	City Schools
Reading	N/A	N/A	2.4	N/A	N/A	2.5
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	6.6	N/A	N/A	6.7

Exemptions from Testing on Individual Educational Plans (I.E.P.)

This School Number	This School Percent	City Schools Percent
0	0.0	N/A

School Admissions

Schools Which Admitted this School's 1997 Graduates

Schools	Boro	District	School Graduates	Percent of Graduates
ATWELL GLADSTONE	Bk	17	061	37.8
MAGGIE WALKER	Bk	17	390	14.4
PHILIPPA SCHUYLER	Bk	32	387	9.1

Bilingual English as a Second Language

Student Progress Toward English Proficiency

	1996		1997	
	This School	City Schools	This School	City Schools
Percent of LEP Students Attaining Proficiency in English	12.2	23.1	12.9	24.1
Percent of LEP Students Showing Mandated Gains in English-Language Acquisition	31.7	56.7	35.5	59.8

Data are for general education and resource room students.

Student Achievement

Percent of LEP Students Performing At or Above Grade Level in Reading and Mathematics

	1996		1997	
	This School	City Schools	This School	City Schools
English Reading	18.2	9.3	6.7	12.6
Spanish Reading *	0.0	58.7	0.0	59.2
Mathematics **	45.5	23.6	26.7	25.6

\* The ELE (E Examen de Lectura en Español) is the reading test for students in bilingual programs who receive language arts instruction in Spanish.

\*\* Includes both English and translated versions of the CAT-5.



# Success in Brooklyn, but not in D.C.

BY DIANE RAVITCH



Diane Ravitch is a historian and a Fellow at the Manhattan Institute in New York City.

Title I, a \$7.2 billion federal education program, was created in 1965 to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their better-off peers. A major new study, commissioned by Congress, finds that Title I doesn't work. The achievement gap between poor and nonpoor persists, and poor kids in schools that get Title I money don't do any better than poor kids in schools that do not get this extra federal money.

This saddest news is that Congress doesn't care that this Great Society program doesn't work. Congress long ago decided to ignore results and treat Title I money as a subsidy, parceled out by formula to most of the nation's school districts. Almost every congressman was able to keep money flowing to his district, even though the money wasn't doing what it was supposed to do.

This cynical response is a tragedy for poor children, who make up a disproportionate number of students who do not learn to read, write or compute. Their failure in the early grades is compounded in later years, virtually excluding them from college and good jobs.

It doesn't have to be this way. If anyone wants proof that poor children can meet the same standards as their peers, visit P.S. 161 in Brooklyn, N.Y. This is a terrific elementary school that gets Title I funds. It demonstrates conclusively that good instruction can overcome social and economic disadvantage.

P.S. 161 is in Crown Heights, one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York City. Among the nearly 1,500 children in this school, nearly all are African-American, and 95% are eligible for free lunch (compared with 37% statewide), which is the standard measure of poverty.

Although the school has a demographic profile that is supposed to spell failure, it has

**Almost every congressman was able to keep Title I money flowing to his district, even though the money wasn't doing what it was supposed to do.**

been singled out by the state and city educational leadership for its students' excellent performance. Consider this: In schools with a similar student body, only 47% of the third-graders met the state's minimum standard for reading; at P.S. 161, 80% did. Fully 38% of the third-graders at P.S. 161 achieved a sixth-grade reading level, which was significantly higher than the 28% statewide figure.

In third-grade mathematics, 96% of the children in P.S. 161 reached the state minimum, which was identical to the statewide figure for all schools. The story was the same for fifth-grade writing, in which 93% of the children in the school met the state's minimum standard, compared with 76% in similar schools in the state.

What is P.S. 161's secret? No secret. Just solid basics. At P.S. 161 the teaching staff uses the same time-tested instructional methods in reading, writing and mathematics. No pedagogical fads. No inventive spelling, no whole-language reading, no guessing at words in context. Every teacher teaches intensive phonics, using the Open Court readers. Most children are reading in kindergarten. In every classroom children sound out syllables and words, and their joy in learning is apparent.

The children wear uniforms: the girls, yellow blouses and plaid jumpers; the boys, yellow shirts and navy slacks. In every classroom, the students are attentive, interested and hard at work and they actively participate in class activities.

It is fashionable among many teachers to claim that they are "facilitators," not teachers. At P.S. 161, the teachers teach the whole class (some of which have as many as 35 children!), making sure that every child understands the lesson for the day. The principal, Irwin Kurz, has been at P.S. 161 for ten years; his quiet leadership proves that poor kids can learn as well as their advantaged peers if the grown-ups know what they are doing.

Even one school like P.S. 161 demonstrates that it is not poverty but bad education that is responsible for the failure of many disadvantaged youngsters. The tragedy of Title I is not that it costs a lot of money but that it was turned into a pork barrel program. The shame is that no one seems to care.

## Failure And Success

**O**ur failure to educate the impoverished children in America's urban school districts is one of the great scandals of the 20th century. Generations of them—millions of children—have been leaving school, often by dropping out, without learning even the basic academic skills they need to survive in a complex and changing world. The cost to the society in lost productivity, social support programs, and crime amounts to billions of dollars each year; the cost to the individuals in unfulfilled lives is incalculable.

Educators more often than not throw up their hands and blame the larger society. They point to the awful problems that so many of these children bring to the classroom—social, physical, and emotional problems that make them seem virtually uneducable. And so they don't expect much, and those low expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies. The schools' primary function then becomes custodial: Keep the kids off the street during the day, and keep them under control until they are old enough to leave.

This abdication of responsibility is clearly exposed by schools like P.S. 161 in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn. Like many schools in distressed urban districts, P.S. 161 is largely poor and black. It sits in a neighborhood with a history of violence, where people are either unemployed and on welfare or working menial jobs.

The story of P.S. 161 [see page 24] is aptly titled "The Jewel In The Crown." This once-failing school is now a model of success and a source of community pride. Student achievement as measured by test scores has steadily improved and now tops the state average. Indeed, P.S. 161 students now score well above their peers in reading, writing, and mathematics. Equally impressive, the children are enthusiastic about learning.

Some explain P.S. 161's success by pointing to its concentration on the basics or the requirement that pupils wear uniforms or the unusually wise blending of whole language and phonics in the teaching of reading. But principal Irwin Kurz correctly insists, "It's the whole picture."

There are no silver bullets. Other failing schools in urban districts cannot replicate P.S. 161's success by adopting one or another program. They must do what Kurz and his teachers did: Change the culture of the school.

The ingredients for success at P.S. 161 are clear and simple: High expectations and the belief that all students can learn; teachers committed to continuous learning for their students and themselves; parent involvement; a clear sense of mission widely shared; and, finally, discipline and order. Leadership obviously has been key to P.S. 161's success. Kurz works 12 hours a day, inspires and respects both his staff and his students, and refuses to take the easy way followed by too many of his peers around the country. "It is really a question of intentions," he says. "If you intend something to happen, you can make it happen. If you want to quit the job done, you can do it." And the teachers at P.S. 161 respond in kind.

Kurz and his teachers want their students to succeed and will do whatever is necessary for that to happen. Unfortunately, student achievement is not the highest priority in many urban schools.

The evidence is abundant that teachers commonly assume that because they are teaching, students are learning. If students aren't learning, it's their problem, their fault. Good teaching is hard work, and constantly learning ways to do it better is a demanding exercise. For most teachers, there is little or no payoff in making the effort and doing better. Good teaching is rarely rewarded; bad teaching is rarely penalized. As long as that situation prevails, little will change.

Diane Ravitch, a former U.S. assistant secretary of education, believes that P.S. 161's success can be replicated. "Nothing that they are doing is beyond the reach of any school in other low-income communities," she says. She is right. But the educators in other schools must want to succeed. Then they must expect success and work for it. The highest priority for every school—those in the rich suburbs as well as those in the poor inner cities—must be student learning. That is the single most important responsibility of educators.

—Ronald A. Volk

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OCTOBER 1997



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Cover photograph of students and staff at Brooklyn's P.S. 161 by Donal Holway.

See Teacher Magazine on the World Wide Web at <http://www.teachermagazine.org>.

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# The Crown

**Once a school on the slide, P.S. 161 in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood has taken wing with hard work, fresh thinking, and a reading program that marries phonics and whole language.**

**It's** the third week of June in New York City, and as the temperature rises many schools begin coasting toward summer. Classes and homework give way to desultory test preparation, loosely justified field trips, and vaguely "academic" games. Teachers plan vacations or lock in summer jobs, and students' thoughts converge on Jones Beach, basketball, and snow cones.

But not at P.S. 161 in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn. Here, they are even getting a jump on next year. At 9 a.m., more than 80 parents and their children fill seats in the front of the school's auditorium, their minds very much on the first day of kindergarten, still three months away. Principal Irwin Kurz welcomes them. A trim figure with dark hair, an oval face, and hooded eyes, his speech is neither a sermon nor a harangue. It's more a declaration of shared purpose.

"What parents do is extremely important," he says, looking into the faces of those gathered. "Not every child enters kindergarten knowing how to read. Not every child leaves kindergarten knowing how to read. But every child's perception of himself as a student starts in kindergarten."

The parents—mostly mothers, but there are fathers and grandparents, as well—receive a manila envelope of materials that includes articles on encouraging creativity and reading for understanding, a quiz to test their children's skills, and a schedule for September. Each packet has a sticker with the name of the child's teacher and his or her classroom assignment in September. There is also a book for parents to read with their children during the summer. Some of the kids are already curled up with it.

Jean Hagans is here with her daughter, Zaruhi. She, like many of the other parents, made sure to register her child early. She knew P.S. 161's reputation—the school has the highest test scores in its community school districts—and she liked the fact that the students wear uniforms. Hagans' son is a 3rd grader at another district school, which she describes as "a zoo." The difference between the two places is palpable, she says. "You can tell something good is going on here."

It won't be long before P.S. 161's reputation is well-known outside Crown Heights, too. Despite its largely poor and black enrollment, the school's reading and math scores tower over city averages—a fact that's drawn education scholars and reporters seeking answers for urban reform. Like most pundits, these visitors to P.S. 161 have pointed to one or two key—or secret—ingredients of its success: Maybe it's the school's

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By Jessica Siegel

The test scores of kids at P.S. 161 tower over the averages for New York City—a fact that has some parents studying the school to find its secret to success.

## The Jewel In The Crown

uniforms or its focus on basic skills. Or maybe it's the fact that the school's teachers long ago declared a truce in the bitter war over phonics and whole language and now have great success blending the best features of each approach.

Of course, the attention pleases Kurz, who has spent 10 years at the helm of the school, taking its test scores from the bottom quarter of the district to the top. But he doesn't attribute the school's triumphs to any one or two factors. Sure, he'll be interviewed on how the school teaches

Such grim statistics usually suggest that kids will not fare well academically. But P.S. 161 has refused to fit that mold. In 1996, 80 percent of its 3rd graders scored above the minimum level on the state reading test, compared with 47 percent in schools with a similar student population and 79 percent in all schools in the state. Perhaps even more impressive, 38 percent of P.S. 161's 3rd graders tested at the mastery level, compared with 28 percent of 3rd graders statewide. On the state writing test that year, 93 percent of the school's 5th graders scored above the minimum standard, compared with 76 percent in similar schools and 92 percent in all state schools.

On the math exam, an amazing 96 percent of 3rd graders at P.S. 161 scored above the state minimum, compared with 83 percent in similar schools and 95 percent in all schools statewide.

Such figures would be a matter of pride at any school, and they obviously are at P.S. 161. But a number of Kurz's fellow principals find them hard to accept. They seem to subscribe to an economic determinism that says poor minority youngsters do not—and cannot—achieve at such high levels. When Kurz runs into such naysayers, they dismiss the school's test results with comments like: "You've got a special population." "Your neighborhood is better than mine," and "You've creamed off the best kids."

None of these accusations—some tinged with more than a bit of racism—is true, according to Kurz. P.S. 161 is a zoned school, enrolling all comers from the neighborhood. As for 161's success, Kurz keeps coming back to high expectations. "It sounds so phony," he says. "All children can learn." "It takes a village," but it's really true. It's expectations. Expectations—and a lot of hard work.

"I hate it when people write about the school and say that these kids do well considering the neighborhood they come from," Kurz says. "These kids can do well—period."

Education historian Diane Ravitch agrees. In a recent *Forbes* magazine column, she writes, "If anyone wants proof that poor children can meet the same standards as their peers, visit P.S. 161." Ravitch, a senior research scholar at New York University and a former U.S. assistant secretary of education, believes that 161's success can be replicated in schools in other low-income communities. "Nothing that they are doing is beyond the reach of any school," she says in a telephone interview. Even the school's balanced approach to reading instruction—intensive phonics linked to literature—is a simple common sense, she says. "It is accessible to anybody."



Principal Irwin Kurz speaks with parents enrolling children in P.S. 161's kindergarten. "It's important for all of us to take responsibility, and you're the first teacher," he tells them.

spelling. And he's glad Tom Brokaw included P.S. 161 in an NBC news segment on school uniforms. But talk to Kurz for any length of time, and he keeps returning to the same thing: "It's the whole picture," he says over and over again.

**Crown** Heights is a neighborhood that reflects the vitality of its Caribbean immigrant residents. Along Nostrand Avenue, one block from P.S. 161, grocery stores post ads for telephone calling cards "with the best rates to the West Indies." There are the restaurants specializing in curried duck and peanut punch, the ubiquitous beauty salons, the Apostolic Church of Christ, and the produce shops offering yucca, batata, and greens and yellow plantains.

In 1991, the neighborhood was the site of the Crown Heights riot. Tensions between blacks and Hasidic Jews over services and housing, among other things, erupted into violence that resulted in two deaths. Today, it is a neighborhood of struggling families. Affordable housing is hard to find, and if residents aren't on welfare, they're generally working in low-paying jobs, many as data-entry clerks or home health-care aides.

P.S. 161, known as the Crown School for its Crown Street address, is a 1,370-student K-8 school very much of the neighborhood. Ninety percent of its students are black, 8 percent Latino, and 1 percent each Asian and white. In the shorthand educators use to identify economic need, 97 percent of the children are eligible for free lunch.

*Jessica Siegel is a New York City-based freelance writer specializing in education and the arts.*

**Irwin** Kurz began teaching in the New York City public schools in 1968. Although he was not sure if he wanted to teach or go to law school, something clicked. He taught elementary school for 14 years, was assistant principal for five, and has been principal at P.S. 161 for 10—all in the same community school district.

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m., but Kurz arrives each morning at 6 o'clock and puts in a good 12 hours. There's neither martyrdom nor braggadocio in his voice when he imparts this information. It comes with a little pragmatic shrug, the same shrug you see when he mentions expectations. "It's really a question of intention," he says. "If you intend something to happen, you can make it happen. If you want to get the job done, you can do it."

Kurz's commitment is not lost on his teachers. "He gives 100 percent," says Janet Jackelow, one of the three reading specialists at P.S. 161. Adds Diane Yules, one of Jackelow's colleagues. "If he only gives 99 percent, you feel like something is wrong."

The teachers who come to P.S. 161 tend to stay. A number refer to themselves—half joking—as "seasoned." They have been working here for eight years, 10 years, 19 years, 25 years. "We're a stable teaching staff," says 1st grade teacher Sheila Katz. "Mr. Kurz's attitude is, 'You're doing well, but you can always do better.' You strive to do better if someone sets the tone."

When Kurz was appointed principal, the school had been on a slide. The previous principal, although well liked, had been distracted from his duties by an illness in his family. Kurz came in and set a different tone. Teachers say he has set goals, written guidelines, and streamlined routine procedures, even down to printing out labels with relevant student data so teachers don't have to copy the information by hand in their record books. They also say he has assembled a good faculty. A veteran administrator, he has maneuvered around union contract provisions, recruiting teachers he wants and dissuading others with talk of what he demands from the staff.

By most accounts, he demands a lot, but he also promotes a professionalism that the teachers appreciate. He encourages the reading specialists to go to conferences and then share what they've learned with the teachers. The staff, working in grade-level groups, has spent the second half of the year rewriting the school curriculum after extensive discussions of the ideas of cultural-literary guru E.D. Hirsch. Although the teachers have not accepted Hirsch's core curriculum whole-hog, it got them thinking about what children in each grade should know. They will implement the revised curriculum this fall.

Every morning, the principal is out on the street greeting students as they arrive at school. Most are accompanied by a parent or older sibling, but some need shoeing from the local candy store. There's no yelling and no bullhorn—Kurz speaks to the youngsters in the same calm voice he uses with teachers, parents, and reporters. Students eventually line up, by class, on the playground behind the school and walk into the building behind their teachers. Kurz's goal is to create an atmosphere redolent of a private school, right down to the uniforms—plaid skirts with yellow blouses for the girls and yellow shirts with navy pants and ties for the boys.

Of course, academic achievement doesn't rise from children merely putting on uniforms; it comes from what goes on in the intimate confines of the classroom. Ten years ago, when Kurz arrived at P.S. 161, he saw little consistency in how reading was taught from class to class, grade to grade. Some teachers relied solely on phonics instruction, others used a whole-language approach. Students moved from one teacher to another with little carry-over. This had to change.

First, Kurz introduced a basal reading program called Open Court, published by McGraw-Hill. A phonics-based series with a literature component, Open Court provided a schoolwide foundation but was by no means the whole story. The school has also poured thousands of dollars into supplementary reading materials. Now, each grade level from kindergarten up is stocked with classroom sets of popular storybooks, more than 100 titles in all—everything from *More Spaghetti* / *I Soy and Noley Nore* to *Charlotte's Web* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Much of the money for these books has come from PTA fund raising; the activist group brings in as much as \$25,000 a year. Teachers have made these books an integral part of the curriculum. They assign readings as homework, and students discuss them in class the next day.

Children of all grades compete to become members of the Principal's Reading Club. To join, kindergartners and 1st graders must go to Kurz's office and read a book aloud to him; older students must read five books and write and revise reports on each. Club members receive a certificate, a button, and a place of honor on the school's central bulletin board.



Then there is the bookstore. Wednesday mornings from 7:45 to 8:15, a few tables lined up in the gym become a children's literature bazaar. The three reading specialists display and sell books suitable for all grade levels. The store is also open during parent-conference days and at events like today's kindergarten fair. Over the past year, the school has sold more than 6,000 books—at a loss. The school buys them for 99 cents each and sells them for \$1, which doesn't cover shipping.

Excitement about the Wednesday bookstore begins to build early each week, according to reading specialist Jackelow. "Children start asking me on Monday afternoon, 'Have the books come in yet? Have the books come in yet?'"

To encourage reading, P.S. 161 sells books to children and their parents at cut rates in the widely anticipated Wednesday morning bookstore. Says one teacher, "Children start asking me on Monday afternoon, 'Have the books come in yet? Have the books come in yet?'"

**Barbara** Adler has been teaching for 20 years, 15 of them at P.S. 161. She has the soft-spoken, exuberant manner of someone who knows her way around kindergartners. Sitting on a small chair with her 30 students seated around her on desks and the floor, she leads phonics exercises on the letter B.

## The Jewel In The Crown



As part of Authors' Celebration Day, Anastacia Conal reads a story that she's written. Composing the story, she says, "I started to understand how you describe characters by their actions. You have to show actions, not just say it."

"I'm thinking of a word that starts with a B that you wear on your arm," she says. Hands go up, with a bunch of "ooohhs." "A bracelet," says Jeremiah, who now comes up and, to much applause, pulls a bracelet from what Adler has christened the B Box, a cardboard container she has filled with objects starting with the letter they are studying.

Jeremiah looks in the box and spots an object. "I'm thinking of a word that starts with B that lots of pirates used to go out on." More hands and "ooohhs." "A boat," someone says, and the activity continues. Later, Adler writes a B on the board and directs her students to make the shape of the letter in the air, on a friend's back, on the floor. These are exercises Adler has developed and used throughout the year to introduce each letter of the alphabet. By this time of the year, her students know the drill.

Sensing the need to switch gears, Adler pulls out a book titled *Me* and asks who would like to read. Nicola's hand goes straight up. She reads with ease. "Look at my little cat. I like my cat." She pauses at the end of each page to show the class the picture. "Look, little cat. A big dog! Run, little cat, run." The others applaud when she finishes.

Adler points to *Me* as an example of how she "revs up" the Open Court phonics program. "This is a book I found a few years ago to help them develop sight words," she says. "It's good when children are reading some words. They can take it home and read it to their parents."

Now, Adler moves on to another B-word activity, pulling out a book on butterflies, *I'm A Caterpillar*. She asks Brittany, a girl with hair beautifully coiffed into four

braids, to read. Brittany has been sitting quietly with a sad look on her face, but as she begins to read—"I turn into a pupa. Then I turn into a chrysalis. . . ."—the sadness seems to melt away.

At P.S. 161, there is no trace of the battle over whole language and phonics that has divided many schools around the country. That fight was resolved a while ago with the adoption of the Open Court phonics program. Yet listening to several teachers talk together about their approach to reading instruction, it becomes clear that they each have their own take on the matter.

"You can't just teach phonics," explains Jacqueline Stravata, a kindergarten teacher. "If there's no reason to read, they won't want to."

"Even with Open Court, we've always pulled in sight words," notes 1st grade teacher Sheila Katz.

"You need the whole piece to read," says Karen Billot, who teaches 5th grade. Billot gives her students a reading assignment from their supplementary readers every night. Reading is a top priority in her own life, and she lets her students know that. "I tell my class that if I'm reading a book, I do it first, and then I balance my checkbook."

Billot believes students need a strong grasp of phonics. "You need word attack skills," she says. "The 26 letters, and 40 sounds they make, allow you to figure the puzzle out. You need the tools to figure it out."

According to Marilyn Norfleet, a 4th grade teacher, basic skills are crucial, but they are just a starting place. "I like to integrate artwork along with everything we do to give children a way of expressing themselves," she says. "It isn't porridge and no extras. It's not just meat and potatoes—we put a lot of other things on the plate."

**It's** Authors' Celebration Day for Alice Cherry's 4th grade class. Her students are reading picture books they have written and drawn to a 3rd grade class. Cherry, a tall woman with smooth blond hair, stands with an arm around the shoulder of one of her students, Keegen Phillip. She introduces him to the 3rd graders by reading the "About the Author" note from his book, *José Bernardo's Big Problem*: "Keegen Phillip is a Trinidadian boy who lives to write stories. He is an immigrant to the United States. He has written many books such as *José Bernardo's Adventure*, *Diogenes's Graduation*, *Impact*, and many more. He is inspired by H.L. Stine and C.S. Lewis. He lives in an apartment in New York City and has many friends."

Keegen stands very straight and reads the story dramatically to his audience, stopping to show the illustrations as he goes along. José's problem, Keegen explains, is that a bully, Richard, has been shaking him down for his lunch money. "How can I get rid of this bully?" José wonders. With the support of his brother, José decides to stand up to Richard. The bully—quite surprised by this turn of events—asks to become José's friend.

"How many people enjoyed Keegen's book?" asks Cherry, who already knows the answer from the intent looks on the 3rd graders' faces. Hands rise, followed by applause.

After Keegen, Anastacia Cenci reads her story, *The Special Gift*, about a girl who doesn't have enough money for a Mother's Day present. Then Jessica Eliason reads about a girl who has lost her parents to gunfire and is adjusting to living with relatives.

Later, Anastacia explains how she and the others prepared their books. "We picked a character and chose people we wanted to be in the story," she says. "And then we wrote and edited and illustrated it." Cherry showed her how to improve her writing. "I started to understand how you describe characters by their actions. You have to show actions, not just say it. The character traits come out by how they act against people."

Cherry came to P.S. 161 four years ago with 10 years of experience. "I had heard that P.S. 161 was a well-managed school—a nice place to work, not so easy a place to work," she says with a laugh. She calls herself "a middle-of-the-road kind of teacher." She explains, "There are lots of teachers here who are very traditional and others who are very creative."

Kurz gives teachers guidelines on how to pace their classes' work in the Open Court readers and in the math curriculum through the year. Teachers are also expected to spend several days preparing their students for the state and city math and reading tests that all New York City students take. "We don't teach to the test, but we teach a lot of test sophistication," Cherry says, liking how to take a test within a time period and how to work with an answer sheet.

Cherry uses the phonics-oriented Open Court reader, but for only about 20 minutes a day. She likes to have her students do as many independent projects as possible. Still, she doesn't bristle at having to use the reader or take time to prepare her students for the tests. "Even the most creative teachers take the time to do it," she says. "Children get the basics."

She started the book-writing project with her class in September and built on it throughout the year. The students analyzed characters in the 10 novels they read as a class. They examined how authors use description. They worked with a graphic organizer that helped them develop plot, setting, and characters.

"I know that they're children," Cherry says, "but I really want them to understand how writers get readers to understand things." She often sits with them individually as they write, revise, and edit their stories. Cherry says she has learned a lot over the course of the year and intends to change some aspects of the writing project in the fall. "I'm still not 100 percent satisfied with the results," she says.

This kind of striving, thinking, and refining is typical of the teachers at P.S. 161. Perhaps it comes from the fact that so many of them are "seasoned." Perhaps it has something to do with the way they are treated like professionals at a. Or perhaps it's an outgrowth of those high expectations



Kindergarten teacher Barbara Adler runs a phonics program, but she mixes in her lesson books that excite kids while helping them develop sight words.

The 13-hour-a-day work ethic of principal Kurz sets the tone for the school's staff. "If you intend something to happen," he says, "you can make it happen."

Kurz talks so much about—expectations for himself, the teachers, and their students. At P.S. 161, people do not make excuses. "No one says it's another person's job," says reading specialist Diane Yule.

That's what Kurz communicates to the parents attending this morning's kindergarten fair. "I'm never going to tell a teacher that this kid doesn't have a father, doesn't have a mother, or is hungry," Kurz says. "It's important for all of us to take responsibility, and you're the first teacher."

His words aren't lost on the parents. After the meeting breaks up, they line up three and four abreast, many with their kids at their sides, to buy books at the makeshift bookstore. Yes, summer is on the way, but at P.S. 161, it's time to gear up for the fall. ■

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