

Funders

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Road Map to

Successful Chicago

Schools

written by Diana Lauber



CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN
For Urban School Reform

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Introduction

gave principals new authority to select staff; shifted millions of dollars of state funds to the schools; created dozens of new schools out of large branches; and gave voice to thousands of teachers, parents, principals, students and community members to create their schools' programs and shape their budgets to support innovation and change. Chicago's Local School Councils (LSCs) have more decision-making authority and responsibility for school improvement than councils in any other large urban district¹.

One of the most radical reform experiments on school-based management in the country is right here in Chicago. The 1988 Chicago School Reform Act

School Council Authority

City	Councils in All Schools	Parent Majority On Council	Improvement Planning	Budget Authority	Principal Selection
Chicago	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boston	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Denver	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Los Angeles	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Milwaukee	Yes	Yes	Advisory	Advisory	No
New York	To be created in 1999				
Philadelphia	Yes	No	Advisory	Advisory	No
Pittsburgh	Yes	No	Advisory	Advisory	No
*Seattle	No	No	Advisory	Advisory	No

* Many principals share decision making with parents and community members.

¹ Each Local School Council is made up of six parents, two teachers, two community members, the principal and one student at the high school.

Before the reform law, there were good schools in Chicago but they were few in number and many of them had selective enrollment. The 1988 Reform Law changed all that. Through the hard work of thousands of people like you, there are schools in every neighborhood in the city that are improving. The 1997 study *Chicago Elementary Schools with a Seven-Year Trend of Improved Reading Achievement*, by Designs for Change, shows that nearly half of Chicago's elementary schools have made significant improvements in test scores and/or maintained test scores above the national average from 1990 to 1997. This trend continues in 1998.

The 1995 Reform Law increased the mayor's role in the public schools and gave the central administration the impetus to intervene in low-performing schools. Chicago's schools are now nationally recognized for improving student achievement, for grassroots authority and for a strong central administration. There is still a lot to be done, but real headway is being made in schools in every part of the city.

Why This Guide?

Chicago has many wonderful public schools in which whole school change is happening, where there's terrific parent participation, where schools have brought in thousands of dollars worth of help through partnerships with community organizations and universities, where test scores are going up and where unsafe buildings are being replaced by new schools.

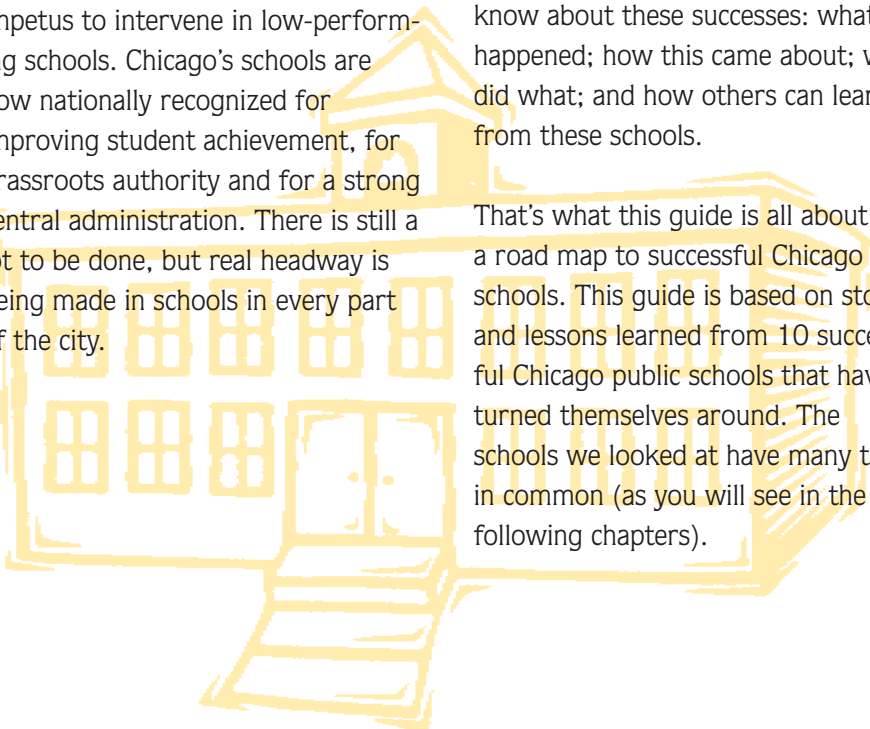
Isolated stories get brief media attention but, for the most part, people in schools don't hear about or learn from the successes of their neighbors. The real experts on how to change schools are the people at the school level: principals, teachers and other staff, students, LSCs, parents and community members. The challenge is to let people who are committed to turning their schools around know about these successes: what happened; how this came about; who did what; and how others can learn from these schools.

That's what this guide is all about. It's a road map to successful Chicago schools. This guide is based on stories and lessons learned from 10 successful Chicago public schools that have turned themselves around. The schools we looked at have many traits in common (as you will see in the following chapters).

Common traits among these schools

- They have high numbers of children from low-income families.
- They have very active and supportive LSCs.
- They are neighborhood schools or magnet schools with no selection criteria.
- Student achievement—as measured by standardized tests and through assessments developed at the schools that more accurately reflect what children know and can do—has gone up since 1991.

Because there are numerous Chicago public schools that share these traits, we had a hard time picking a reasonable number to write about. The schools in this guide are representative of schools from all over the city in which whole school change is taking place.



What Makes a School Successful?

Almost every school in this guide has made substantial improvement in standardized test scores since 1991. While most have test scores that are still below the national average, great strides are being made. Test scores are only one measure by which schools are judged; these schools demonstrate other important evidence of success. What is critical to note about these schools are the changes in practices that have led to improved student learning. What do the schools have in common? What can we learn from them?

There is more than thirty years of research that identifies certain practices that take place in low-income urban schools with high or improving student achievement. Researchers in Chicago, notably from the Consortium on Chicago School Research and Designs for Change, have identified distinctive practices in Chicago schools that reflect the national research. The researchers have organized these practices into five areas — the five key supports for student learning.

Five Key Supports for Student Learning

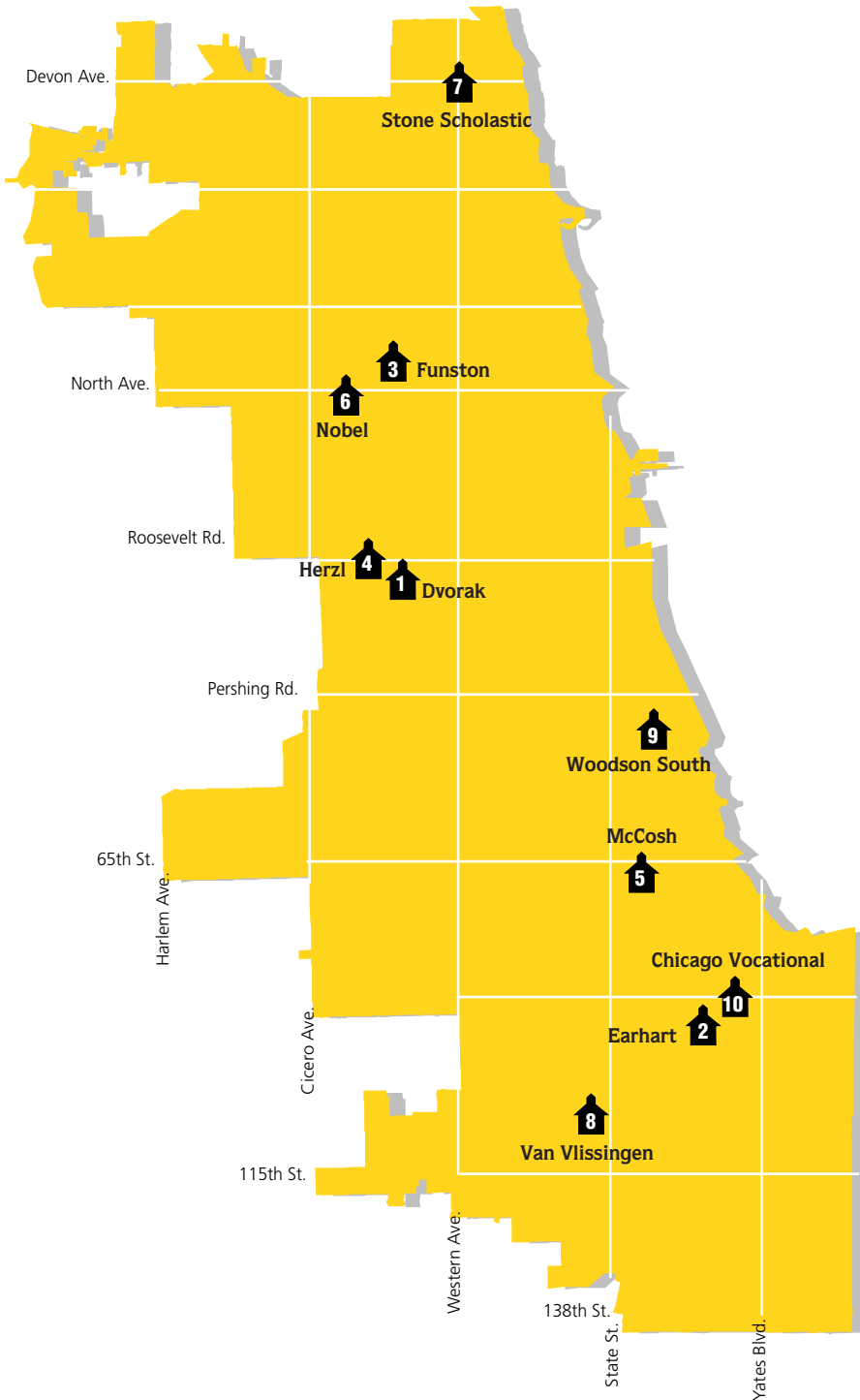
- 1 Instructional Program**
The overriding focus of the school is improved student learning.
- 2 School Leadership**
There is strong, democratic participation among principals, LSC members and teachers.
- 3 Staff Development and Collaboration**
Staff members continue to learn and share their knowledge with each other as they work together to support schoolwide improvements.
- 4 Family-Community Partnerships**
Parents and members of the community are regarded as true school partners in educating students and in improving the community.
- 5 School Culture/Environment**
The school building is clean and safe. Students and staff are treated with respect. There are clear and understood guidelines on student behavior and rules are enforced.

The *Road Map to Successful Chicago Schools* is organized into chapters around each of these five key supports. Although the guide describes a number of schools as examples for each key support, other schools in this guide share some or all of these characteristics. The *Road Map to*

Successful Chicago Schools is meant to be a guide to stimulate your thinking and to let you know what people in schools just like yours have done to improve teaching and learning, to upgrade the school environment and to connect the school with its community.

SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

- 1 Anton Dvorak Specialty Academy**
3615 W. 16th Street
- 2 Amelia Earhart Options for Knowledge School**
1710 E. 93rd Street
- 3 Frederick Funston School**
2010 N. Central Park Avenue
- 4 Theodore Herzl School**
3711 W. Douglas Boulevard
- 5 James McCosh School**
6543 S. Champlain Avenue
- 6 Alfred Nobel School**
4127 W. Hirsch Street
- 7 Stone Scholastic Academy**
6239 N. Leavitt Street
- 8 Peter Van Vlissingen School**
137 W. 108th Place
- 9 Carter G. Woodson South**
4444 S. Evans Avenue
- 10 Chicago Vocational Academy High School**
2100 E. 87th Street



1 Instructional Program

students to be able to compete with students from the best magnet and suburban schools anywhere. Earhart's students have shown dramatic improvement in achievement — with 80 percent of the students reading at or above national averages in 1998 compared to 28 percent in 1991.

In successful schools, there is a strong focus on student learning. Instruction is at the core of what goes on in the classroom, what is talked about at staff meetings, what the focus is at LSC meetings and what the school is all about. Staff members have very high expectations for students and for themselves.

We've been keeping records of what's been successful so we can perfect the program and write the curriculum.

—Earhart Teacher

We're in the process of developing over-achievers.

—Earhart Principal

The focus at Amelia Earhart Elementary School is instruction. Located on the far south side, Earhart was a branch of a larger elementary school until the 1988 reform law when it became a separate school. (Before reform, there were forty-plus schools paired with another school, sometimes in the same building, sometimes miles away. The two schools had the same principal. The law de-coupled the branches and made them full-fledged schools with their own principals and LSCs.) One of the first responsibilities for the newly elected LSC was to choose a principal. First, the LSC members decided on the type of school they wanted and then they hired a principal who could develop this vision into a plan. As part of their vision, the LSC members wanted the

One of Helen DeBerry's first actions when she became principal was to work with the teachers to revise the curriculum, one subject area at a time. The LSC agreed with the direction because a good argument was made to support this priority. The sequence of curriculum rewriting was very deliberate. They started with language arts and reading as the basic foundation for learning. Then they focused on math, which students need as a building block to science, and after that, they redesigned the science and social studies curricula.

Some other early changes:

- ✓ No more basal readers (regular reading textbooks)
- ✓ No more over reliance on skill and drill textbooks
- ✓ Adoption of whole language approach to reading (reading from literature before examining the sounds of individual letters)
- ✓ Children reading in kindergarten
- ✓ A library in every classroom
- ✓ Junior Great Books training for staff (teaches kids to analyze literature)
- ✓ Language arts and reading for all students 1 1/2 hours each morning
- ✓ Time for staff to meet and develop these changes

7 Common Practices in Successful Schools

- 1** Curriculum to fit students
- 2** High expectations
- 3** Good communications
- 4** Students well known
- 5** Integrated curriculum
- 6** Monitoring performance
- 7** Creative use of time

1. Curriculum to Fit Students' Learning Needs

There is no one curriculum, instructional strategy or set of textbooks to fit every high school or elementary school, but there are common strategies successful schools use to create curricula that work for their kids.

2. High Expectations for All Students

There's a whole body of research that states the obvious — kids live up to or down to the expectations we have for them. The staff and parents in successful schools have high expectations for their children and high expectations of themselves. Believing all children can reach these goals or

Earhart teachers have a process for developing curricula that utilizes staff development as well as their own classroom experiences. For example, during the 1997-98 school year, staff members used various activities and assignments in their classrooms to integrate humanities in the curriculum. They kept good notes on what worked and what didn't. Then, during the summer of 1998, a group of teachers used these notes as they created the new humanities curriculum.

Improving the instructional program is fundamental to turning schools around. There are several key practices that schools in this guide have in common.

Curricular Strategies Used In Successful Schools

- ☒ The staff is knowledgeable about research-based programs that have shown success, and they do their homework before decisions are made.
- ☒ The staff reaches out to universities, networks, reform organizations, and they read educational journals and they visit other schools.
- ☒ Decisions about adopting certain curricula or using specific books are shared with teachers and LSC members.
- ☒ No one is complacent. Teachers continue to evaluate what is taught and how it is taught and continue to improve what they do.



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standards requires significant changes in what students are taught and how they are taught. It also requires a large investment in staff development.

A core group of 15 teachers from Alfred Nobel Elementary School go through an intensive summer program and meet monthly with faculty from DePaul University. In this program, the core teachers (called Connectors) develop a Learning Agenda (learning goals) for each grade level and subject area. This is a process of taking the district's and state's standards and aligning them with the school's curricula and textbooks. The Connectors meet with classroom teachers in grade-level teams who then flesh out the learning agendas. The teachers create agendas for 10 weeks of work, monthly work, weekly work and then daily activities. The Learning Agendas are posted in each classroom so that students and their parents can see what's expected of them.

You need two things for all children to reach high standards: 1) Expert instruction and you get that through strong professional development; and 2) Additional time for kids who need more time to achieve the standards.

—Anthony J. Alvarado, former district superintendent, New York City Public Schools

Before being appointed principal at Anton Dvorak Specialty Academy, Leonard Moore had been an assistant principal in a school that used the Paideia method. He had seen first-

hand how students could become critical readers and reflective thinkers through discussions of books, art and music. The Paideia Socratic Seminar method is a rigorous program that emphasizes high-level skills — problem solving, critical thinking, analysis, inquiry and strong written and oral expression.

Every Thursday, students participate in a Paideia seminar up to 90 minutes in length. The length of time varies by grade level (30 minute seminars for preschoolers, 45 minutes for first graders, and so on). Twice a month the seminars are based on selections from the “great books” that include children's classics, folk tales and fairy tales, poetry and modern short stories from cultures around the world. During the other two times a month the classroom teachers select the subjects for the seminars from literature, art, music or drama.

Teachers do not lecture students about what was read during the Paideia seminars. Instead, teachers lead discussions on books or works of art by asking probing questions and by encouraging students to think for themselves. Rather than just learning facts distilled from textbooks, Dvorak students are equipped for discussion and debate as they learn to appreciate their own ideas and the ideas of others. Students also lead the discussions.

3. Strong Communication Within and Across Grade Levels

Walk into a school that focuses on instruction and it looks and feels different. Teachers don't stay in their classrooms all day, isolated from each other. Principals are out of their offices. Sixth-grade teachers know what the seventh-grade teachers expect the kids to know when they come into their classes.



The teachers at James McCosh School cite the hiring of full-time language arts and math/science coordinators as contributing to their increases in student achievement. The coordinators work with the primary and middle-school teachers (6th, 7th and 8th grades) to provide continuity in what is taught and learned.

For example, through work with Roosevelt University, teachers saw that middle-school students had a weakness in math (on place values). They found out that the first-grade teachers didn't teach this concept. Now, the preschool teachers start working on place values and this continues in every grade. The math/science coordinator keeps the continu-

Before everyone was in their own classrooms; they closed the doors. We really didn't communicate. There would be a lot of congeniality (what did you do last weekend) but not collegiality.

—Stone Teacher

ity going because she sees the whole picture. "This across-the-grade articulation eliminates a lot of stress for teachers and helps kids. Instead of kids having to make great leaps in learning because they missed something the prior year, teachers working together make it possible for kids to climb small steps." (McCosh teacher)

4. Students Are Well Known

Long before Betty Despenza-Green became principal at Chicago Vocational Career Academy (CVCA), she realized that a school with 2,700 students was too big and could get out of control too easily. The school needed to be broken up into smaller, more manageable units. CVCA is now broken into nine mini-schools centered around vocational areas (Business and Finance, Communications, Construction, Cosmetology, Health, Hospitality/Food, Horticulture, Manufacturing and Transportation).

During their sophomore year, students select their school of study and take core academic subjects (English, math, etc.) and vocational courses in their mini-schools. Teachers are assigned to interdisciplinary teams that concentrate on no more than 50 students in any given day. Students get more personalized instruction, teachers know their students and teachers with the same group of students have common planning time.

Since students don't select their focus until their sophomore year, six freshmen academies have been created. An interdisciplinary team of teachers concentrates on the needs of no more than 50 freshmen during any given semester, again providing more personalized learning and greater attention to students. These freshmen academies have already made a difference. There is increased attendance, improved achievement and a large decrease in suspensions.



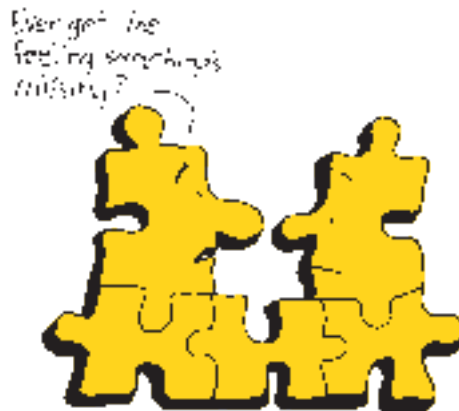
There is a growing body of research that confirms the positive effects of small schools. Breaking down big, anonymous buildings into small schools allows teachers to get to know their students and each other. “On every possible front, hard data solidly support the notion that small schools more effectively address the needs of urban students than their large-scale counterparts.” (Chicago Public Schools Request for Proposals, 1996)

Simply breaking up big schools into smaller schools isn’t enough to support improved student learning. Along with a commitment to in-depth staff development, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurial ventures and partnerships with business and community organizations, CVCA has redesigned the curriculum to truly integrate academic and vocational programs. In 1997, CVCA was selected by the United States Secretary of Education as one of five New Urban High Schools and is used as a model of restructuring for the rest of the country.

5. Integrated Curriculum

Instead of learning about math each day from 9:00 until 9:45 and then studying science every day from 9:50 until 11:35, an integrated curriculum combines selected content and resources from different but related disciplines (math, science, English, social studies, etc.) Students make

connections between disciplines and what they learn stays with them. Many times, this curriculum is organized around real world problems or themes.



In McCosh’s middle school, all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students read the same novel, and for two weeks their science, math, reading, language arts and social studies are based on the novel. When the students read *Of Mice and Men*, the science classes looked at developmental disabilities; social studies students researched famous people with disabilities and how this affected their lives; and during math the students graphed genetic traits.

Teachers from Carter G. Woodson South use broad theme-based units that change every 10 weeks (each marking period). They use trade books (books found in book stores) rather than basal readers. Instead of reading a textbook with an excerpt from *Jesse Owens: Olympic Star*, for

example, the students read the actual book. All grades and all classes work on the same theme. When the theme was *Inventions*, every grade studied inventions at the same time. This was part of their study in science and math and was linked to the literature they read on great African-American inventors.

6. Monitoring Performance

Staff in successful schools continuously work to improve instruction. To do this, they frequently monitor students by using teacher-created assessments and careful observations, and they regularly communicate the results to students and parents. Teachers assess work along the way to know what to teach next and what to teach differently — which skills have been successfully taught and which ones will need more time or a different approach. This is very different from testing students to see if they understand certain concepts or facts and then simply moving on to teach a new concept.



Staff from Carter G. Woodson South created standards for what kids should know and be able to do for each subject and grade level, and they assess whether students are meeting these standards using three categories — emerging, developing and succeeding. Because of the restructured school day, Woodson teachers have time to discuss what has been taught, learned or not learned and to make changes in their instruction.

Student knowledge and ability can also be measured through performance evaluations. Before graduating from CVCA, all seniors have to demonstrate their mastery of the core academic subjects and their specific vocational area through a final exhibition. The students present their work and demonstrate their knowledge and skills to a panel of outside judges who rate their presentations.

7. Creative Use of Time

Many schools in this guide have carved out time to concentrate on reading and language arts. Both Herzl and Earhart schools set aside large blocks of time each day (from 1½ to 2 hours) for uninterrupted reading and language arts in every grade. Dvorak blocks out an hour and 20 minutes for reading each day as well as an hour for math. Herzl has what it calls, “*Drop What You’re Doing and Read.*” Each day everyone — adults and students — picks up a book and reads for 20 minutes.



Woodson South has had an extended school day for reading since 1993 — as do many other schools. Some schools start early — Funston starts school a half-hour early each day. Van Vlissingen uses grant money to run the regular school day from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

How Some Schools Monitor Student Progress

- ☒ Grade reports and school-developed assessments sent home every five weeks
- ☒ Teacher/student-created assignment books go home weekly
- ☒ Folders of kindergarten work sent home weekly
- ☒ Students display knowledge through demonstrations and exhibitions of their work
- ☒ Every student's progress computerized and tracked through each grade and course
- ☒ Item analysis of standardized tests results studied to see individual student, classroom and grade-level strengths and weaknesses

2 School Leadership

There's a Chinese symbol that means "danger" and also means "exploration and discovery." Without taking a risk, you can't really have discovery. We have a great administrator who allows us to take risks because she respects us.

—Stone Teacher

School leadership in Chicago means more than a strong principal who comes in with a vision of a good school. In successful schools, leadership is everyone's work: teachers, principals, local school councils, students, other staff and parents.

Teachers As Leaders

The air crackles with excitement when Stone Academy teachers and LSC members talk about what makes their school special. This is a school where shared leadership is the norm. Collaboration, respect, affection and responsibility underlie the way things work at Stone. "I respect that each teacher is a specialist in his or her own

field. So, the assistant principal and I give them the go-ahead to do things—there aren't many No's." (Denise Winter, Stone principal) Ms. Winter and her staff are very clear about what's expected of students academically. With this freedom comes responsibility. Teachers are responsible for their actions and for helping all students reach high standards. Their test scores continue to increase.

The staff believes in teamwork, in collaboration and taking chances with new ideas. The first graders and their teachers worked on an exciting sixteen-week interdisciplinary art project. The students created a permanent mobile that hangs down from the third floor to the first floor in the entrance stairwell. Under the direction of the art teacher, the students were involved with science, history, writing, visual arts and dance as they learned about motion, movement and balance.

We want to work on a new idea!



Teachers at Stone, as well as the other schools in this guide, take responsibility for writing grants for school programs and for supporting their staff development. Last year the staff brought in \$50,000, with about half of the teachers applying for grants. For example, the English and science teachers pursued a grant to team teach. The students read a novel about a boy who moves from China to San Francisco called *Dragon Wings*. They learned about the history of kites and how they fly, which led to learning about resistance, thrust and gravity. They decorated kites with Chinese calligraphy. “One of the things that is really important is that schools have to take risks in order to do a good job.” (Stone teacher)

Principal Leadership

You don’t see great schools without great leaders. Principals are central to school improvement; they are catalysts for change. The principals in the schools in this guide set a vision that is shared and refined by the LSC and staff. They not only involve their staff and the LSC in important decisions, they make sure that everyone has good information before these decisions are made.

Theodore Herzl’s principal, Betty Green, gets strong buy-in for new ideas. She believes in joint inservices for staff, LSC members and other parents. During a recent summer, Ms. Green held a four-week workshop for 20 parents and 20 teachers. Everyone went to each of three workshops:

Teacher Selection

Principals in successful schools take full advantage of the 1988 reform law that gave them the right to select staff for new and vacant positions. Teachers in these schools participate in hiring decisions as well.

- ✘ Stone’s principal looks for people with lots of energy and lots of charisma. She always asks what they do after school so they can bring their interests into the classroom. They don’t all have to be education majors, but rather have a major in a specific subject area and be certified.
- ✘ All new teachers at Nobel start out as substitutes. Principal Mirna Diaz-Ortiz supports parents becoming teacher aides and teacher aides becoming teachers. She looks for people willing to go back to school, wanting professional development.
- ✘ Leonard Moore, Dvorak’s principal, looks beyond a good resume. He looks for teachers with commitment and a love of children.
- ✘ Earhart’s principal, Helen De Berry, had an instructional team in mind as she looked for people who bought into the school vision, were hard working and highly professional. She wanted people who were interested in more than just raising standardized test scores, but who wanted to develop the whole child.
- ✘ John Frank Hawkins, principal at Carter G. Woodson South, looks for creative, innovative teachers—people who respect children.

writing from the Illinois Writing Project; hands-on math and science training from the Teachers Academy for Math and Science; and integrating African-American history into the curriculum from Northwestern University.

A few years ago, Herzl's staff saw a need for a change in the reading program — teachers were working hard but what they were doing wasn't working. The staff researched many reading programs and became interested in Direct Instruction — a phonics-focused and strongly scripted technique that uses repetition and drill to teach reading. Using grant money, some staff and LSC members visited two school districts in other parts of the country where Direct Instruction was in place. After the trips and much discussion, the LSC and staff voted unanimously to adopt it for kindergarten through third grade reading.

To succeed as a principal, you need to have a strong personality, be goal oriented, be able to focus despite a lot of distractions, be able to inspire others to the same goals, have been a great teacher and have a strong sense of organization and business.

—Earhart Principal

From fourth grade on, the children read from literature and their classrooms have well-stocked libraries. Under the leadership of Ms. Green, the staff and parents at Herzl were able to implement a successful reading program.

There has always been a middle school at McCosh but it was simply a building with children of middle-school age. When Barbara Eason-Watkins became principal, she had middle-school teachers take key courses on middle-school philosophy and adolescent psychology. These courses and the principal's leadership made a huge difference. The teachers started to understand adolescent behavior and felt a renewed sense of responsibility for the students' academic improvement. "After I took the classes, I had a better understanding of adolescents — it was like they had a war within themselves. We can do a lot with our kids between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m." (McCosh middle-school teacher)

Principal Selection:

Selecting principals is the most important responsibility of LSCs. Nine of the 10 principals in this guide are first-time principals. They and all Chicago principals need the same skills that principals from other districts need — strong instructional leadership, ability to create a vision, organizational expertise and good communication skills. However, to be successful in a decentralized system in an urban area takes a whole other set of abilities and talents.





- ☒ Promote and believe in collaborative decision-making
- ☒ Actively encourage teacher initiative
- ☒ Build and develop a strong staff
- ☒ Are master teachers
- ☒ Create trust
- ☒ Respect and value students, parents and community
- ☒ Are entrepreneurs
- ☒ Take risks
- ☒ Have great tenacity
- ☒ Use funds and time creatively
- ☒ Set high standards
- ☒ Monitor for results
- ☒ Mobilize people
- ☒ Never stop learning

LSC Leadership

"None of us is here only for our own kids. We're here for everyone's kids."

"You don't become an LSC member to take over the school."

These are common statements from LSC members. LSCs in successful schools are actively involved in school improvement efforts and have played a big role in turning their schools around. In turn, the school faculties have high praise for their LSCs and the support they provide.

LSC members spend considerable time volunteering at the school beyond their LSC duties. They also keep in touch with parents — some through newsletters, others through surveys. "I think one of the key lessons I learned is that you have to communicate in as many ways as possible before you make decisions." (Stone LSC member)

LSC members take their responsibilities seriously. And while they work well with their school administrators, they are not rubber stamps. "Everyone on our LSC has a strong personality. By the time we get through arguing and deciding what should be prioritized, we come to a consensus and we work on it. But everyone is heard. We work as a team." (Van Vlissingen LSC member)

Since LSCs were first elected in 1989, they have been scrutinized by local and national media, education scholars, legislators, nay-sayers and supporters. What kind of people serve on these councils? How effective are LSCs? How do they spend their time? Let's test your Local School Council IQ:

Local School Council IQ Quiz

- Which of the following groups has the highest education level?
 - LSC parent and community members _____
 - Adults in Chicago _____
 - Adults in the U.S. _____
- A majority of LSC parent and community members spend at least five hours a month on LSC duties.
True _____ False _____
- Almost half the parent and community LSC members spend more than ten hours a month in the school beyond their LSC duties.
True _____ False _____
- LSCs have high parent- and community-member turnover.
True _____ False _____
- Match the percentage of LSCs that

___ Perform their duties well	A. 10 to 15%
___ Perform well but need support	B. 25 to 33%
___ Have serious problems	C. 50 to 60%
- What percentage of LSCs regularly provide translation to non-English speakers if needed?

A. 25% _____	B. 39% _____	C. 43% _____
--------------	--------------	--------------
- During the principal selection process, 40% of LSCs interviewed multiple candidates and checked references of the finalists.
True _____ False _____
- What percentage of LSCs were actively involved in the school improvement planning process?

A. More than half _____	B. Less than half _____
-------------------------	-------------------------
- Less than half of the LSCs regularly review expenditures.
True _____ False _____
- BONUS QUESTION**
Rank from 1 to 4 the most frequently cited contributions made by LSCs (1 being most frequently cited).
 - Improving attendance and discipline _____
 - Improving the school's physical environment _____
 - Increasing parental involvement _____
 - Improving the core academic programs _____

Advice from Earhart's LSC

- Have a shared vision for increased achievement.
- Hire a principal who shares that vision.
- Get out of her way so she can do her job.
- Monitor and look for evidence to ensure the vision is being implemented.

The information for this quiz came from, *Charting Reform: LSCs — Local Leadership at Work*, a December 1997 report by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. The report analyzed surveys of LSC members conducted between May 1995 and February 1996. The study also utilized information from the Consortium's 1994 survey of 8,800 Chicago teachers.

The researchers posed two important questions: 1) were LSC parent and community members knowledgeable and qualified people — people who could govern schools and 2) were LSCs viable governance institutions? They found the answer to both questions is, "YES." The researchers found that council members are better educated than the average Chicagoan. They spend countless hours in their schools on both LSC and non-LSC duties and they have strong ties to the community. "According to the principals and teachers as well as parent and community members, LSCs — in a majority of schools — are a significant resource supporting the work of school staff and expanding the capacity for improvement," reports the Consortium.

We view the findings presented here as largely validating the wisdom of the 1988 Reform Act. By devolving significant resources and authority to local school communities and by expanding opportunities for local participation by parents, community members and staff, this reform has enlarged the capabilities of school communities to solve local problems.

—Consortium on Chicago School Research, December 1997

ANSWERS

1. A. 63% of parent and community LSC members have at least some college education compared to 41% of Chicagoans and 48% of Americans.
2. True. Half spend from 5-10 hours a month; another 33% spend even more time on LSC duties.
3. True. 48% spend at least 10 hours a month.
4. False. 43% have served more than one term.
5. Perform their duties well: 50 - 60%; Perform well but need support: 25 - 30% ; Have serious problems: 10 - 15%
6. B. 39%
7. False, more than 80% interviewed multiple candidates and checked references.
8. A. More than half
9. False. 83% regularly review expenditure reports.
10. A. 3, B. 2, C. 4 , D. 1

Successful Local School Council Members:

- ☒ Take advantage of professional development opportunities
- ☒ Know their job is to ensure that all students in their care are getting the best education possible
- ☒ See and take action in areas that inhibit the success of the local council
- ☒ Are connected to the communities they serve and are accountable to parents and the general community
- ☒ Are not afraid to hold their principals accountable
- ☒ Participate in identifying the goals of the School Improvement Plan and competently monitor its implementation
- ☒ Are not stagnant but enjoy the injection of new ideas as well as new LSC members and leaders
- ☒ Are not afraid to challenge policies and actions that they believe negatively impact the children, school or their own ability to direct change
- ☒ Believe that local communities, those people closest to the children, are best equipped to make decisions for them

This list was adapted from *Characteristics of Successful Local School Councils* created by the Chicago Association of Local School Councils (CALSC).

3 Staff Development and Collaboration

Staff development isn't some place you go to get it. It's what teachers work on every day.

students should know and be able to do. They also know that for children to reach high standards there needs to be ongoing support for teachers to improve their work.

The journey for Woodson South began when it was part of the CANAL program (Creating a New Approach to Learning) in the late 1980s. Using federal desegregation funds, schools were able to bring the entire staff together for intensive professional development. Through strategic use of funds and a restructured school day, Woodson continues to emphasize professional development and staff collaboration.

Woodson South's staff members credit the gains in student performance to teacher planning and collaboration, ongoing assessment of their own work and creating theme-

Successful schools invest in people. They invest their funds in staff development. They invest in time for people to meet and work on strategies to improve their instructional programs. Staff members see themselves as professionals, where collaboration among staff is high and teacher isolation is low.

Carter G. Woodson South is such a school. The principal, staff and LSC have high standards for what the

Staff Development Opportunities

- 1** Investigation: Teachers/principal visit other classrooms, schools and districts
- 2** Teachers as Leaders: Teachers take classes, make visits and conduct staff development activities
- 3** Daily work: Conversations with colleagues about teaching and learning are ongoing
- 4** Curriculum Coordinators: Coordinators lead planning sessions and consult with staff
- 5** Modeling: Teachers and/or the principal teach students lessons while colleagues observe

based curricula. The summer program for staff is key. During the summer, teachers and teacher aides from each grade meet for one week (four hours in the morning and one hour of homework each night) to analyze what worked in their classrooms during the year, what didn't and to plan for the upcoming school year. Parents and outside resource people also attend. At the end of the summer there is a one-day workshop for everyone.

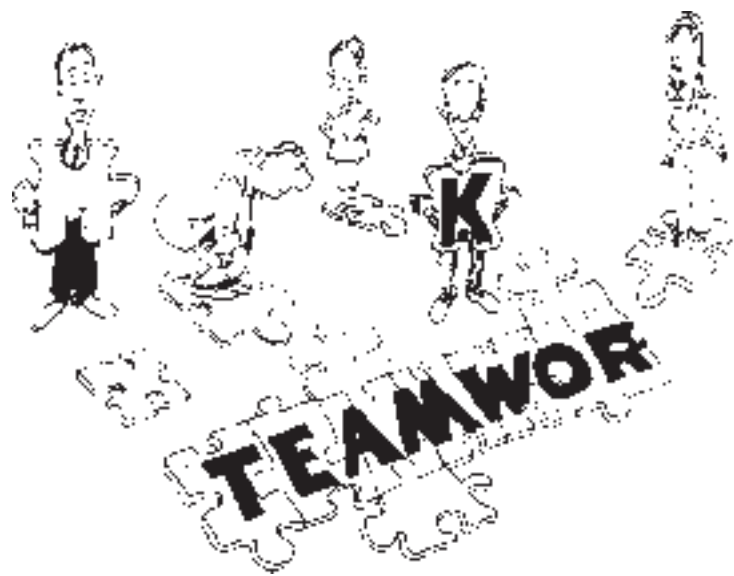
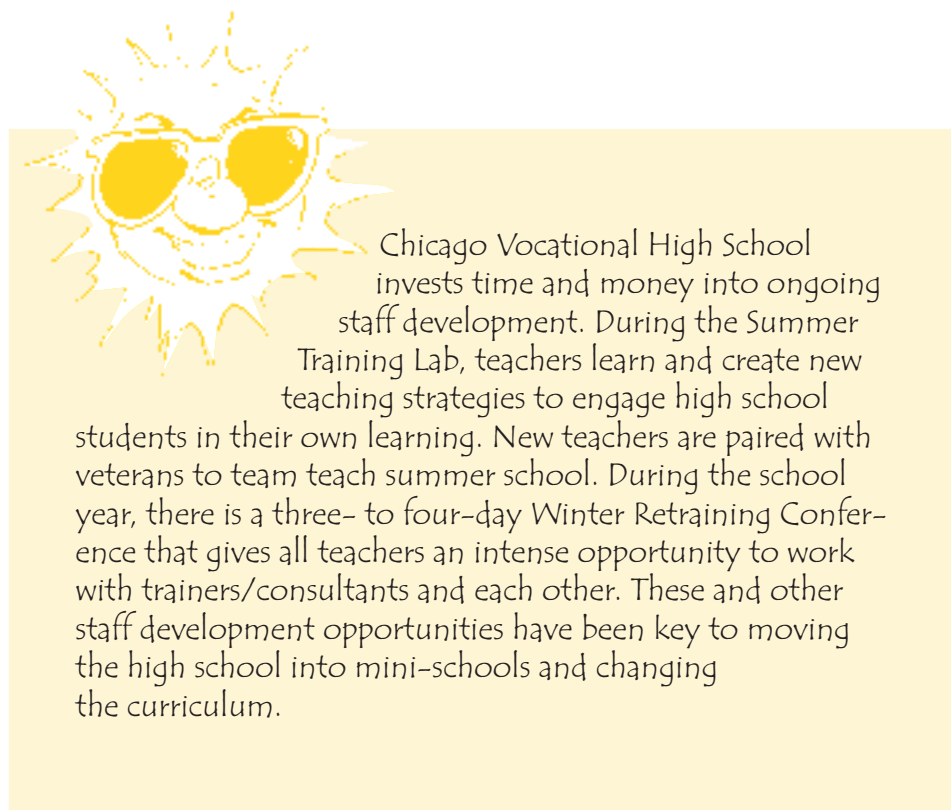
We are our own best resource.

—Carter G. Woodson
South Principal

During the school year, teachers and teacher aides meet with Woodson South's full-time instructional coordinator at weekly grade-level meetings. The school day is arranged so that staff from the same grades have common preparation periods and they voluntarily give up one period a week for these meetings. They might use this time to discuss a new book they are using and to develop creative activities from it. Or they might develop strategies to strengthen problem areas identified in the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or from their own quarterly assessments.

To gain extra time for staff development, students come ten minutes early each day. This time is "banked" so that twice a month students leave early and the staff has a half-day for planning, discussion or professional development workshops, many of which are led by Woodson South

staff. For example, one of the third-grade teachers who is particularly good with phonics led three workshops last year. Teachers can be videotaped in their classrooms if they want while they try out new instructional methods and get feedback from other staff.

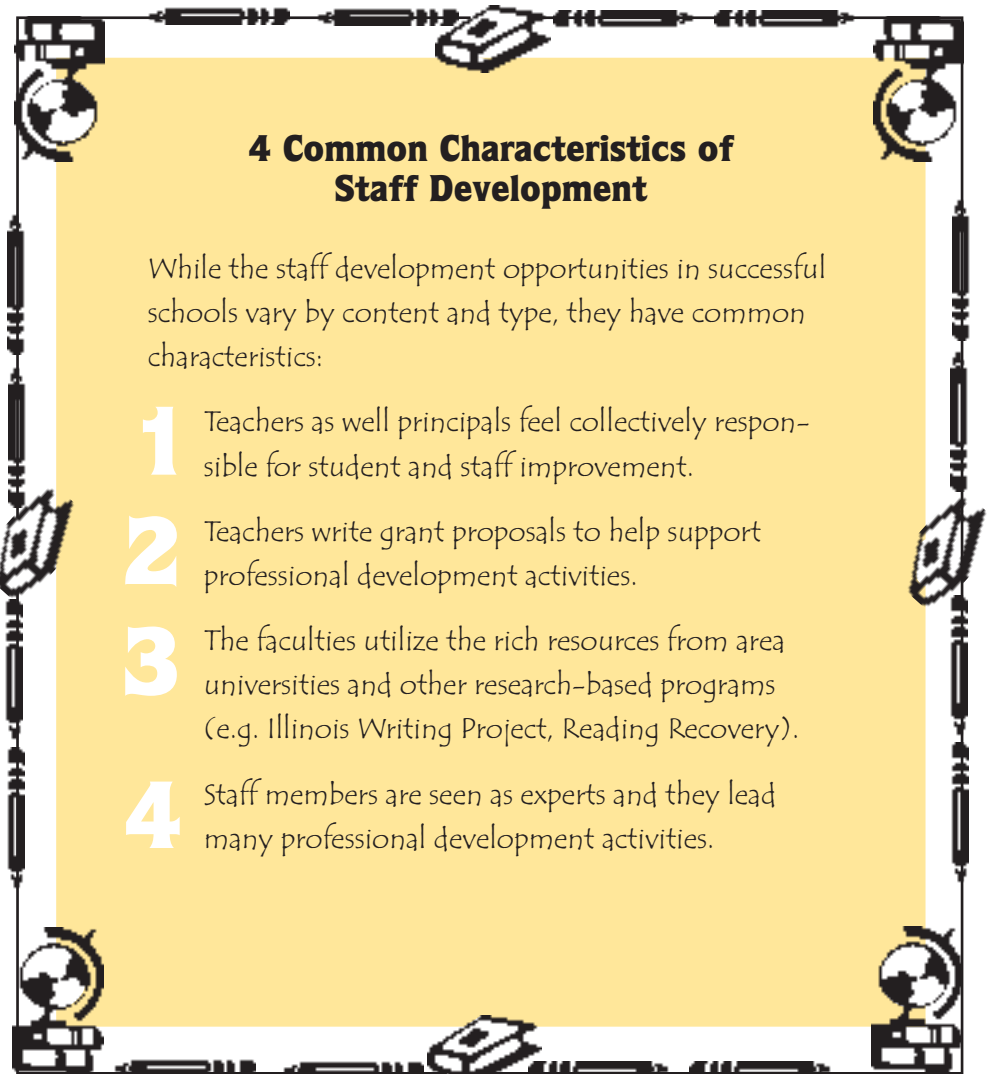


More goes on during the school day than what goes on necessarily during the meetings. It just seems like there's this whole sort of "air" when you get here. The air is charged.

—Stone Teacher

Schools that emphasize professional development and growth create a culture of learning that doesn't stop when a staff development session ends. Professional development takes the form of ongoing, daily conversations among colleagues. It saturates the work day. Staff members voluntarily use their preparation periods (times when they don't have students) to meet with their colleagues.

McCosh has a monthly breakfast club where teachers voluntarily come an hour early to have breakfast and discuss research articles. They read the articles prior to the breakfast and have in-depth discus-



4 Common Characteristics of Staff Development

While the staff development opportunities in successful schools vary by content and type, they have common characteristics:

- 1 Teachers as well principals feel collectively responsible for student and staff improvement.
- 2 Teachers write grant proposals to help support professional development activities.
- 3 The faculties utilize the rich resources from area universities and other research-based programs (e.g. Illinois Writing Project, Reading Recovery).
- 4 Staff members are seen as experts and they lead many professional development activities.

sions about what they've read. Once a month teachers lead a half-day staff development activity, alone or in teams, and every teacher does this during the year.



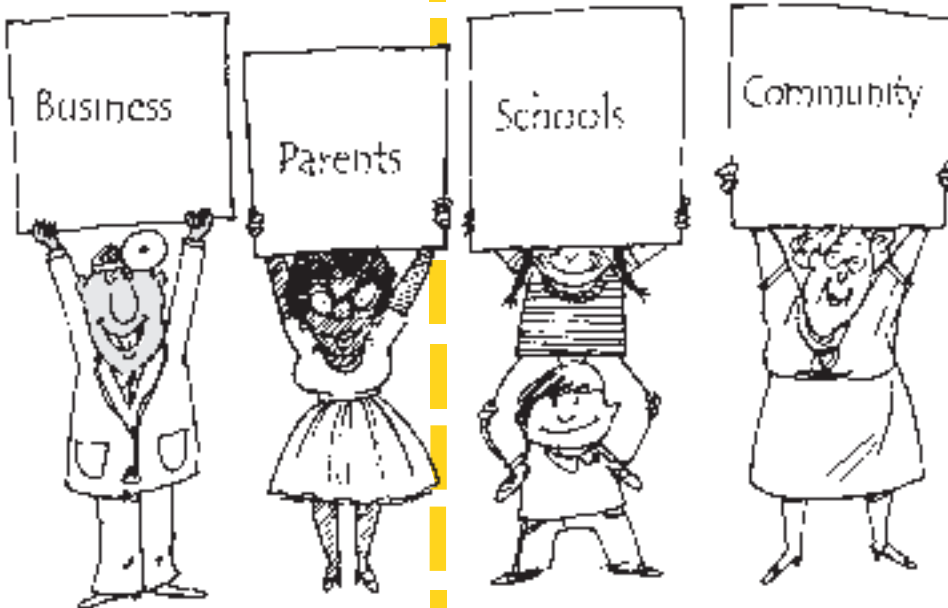
6 Ways to Create Time for Planning and Professional Development

- 1** Weekly team meetings by grade during common preparation periods
- 2** Monthly meetings of cycles (grades k-3, 4-6, 7-8) or mini-school staff
- 3** Restructured school day through banking time—students come 10 minutes early every day and get a half-day off twice a month while teachers meet for staff development activities
- 4** Summertime workshops
- 5** Paying for substitutes if longer meetings are needed or for teachers to visit other classes
- 6** Providing funds for staff to come to early-morning curriculum meetings on weekly basis

4 Family-Community Partnerships

Successful schools welcome parents who fill many roles — from safety patrol members, to field trip escorts, to paid tutors and, most importantly, to equal partners in change. Parents feel welcome at these schools and communicate with their children’s teachers on a regular basis. Families participate in school events and their culture and traditions are valued. Dvorak’s school motto says it best: **Education Is a Family Affair.**

Many successful schools have formed partnerships with community organizations, churches, universities, the police department, the park district and neighborhood businesses to strengthen not only their schools but also their neighborhoods. Nobel Elementary School has shown how schools and communities can join together to solve problems. Nobel’s principal, Mirna Diaz-Ortiz, and the LSC, working with the Nobel Neighbors Community Organization, launched a campaign to rid the neighborhood of drug houses located in three abandoned buildings across the street from the school. They worked with the parents, police, churches, the Guardian Angels and others in the community. They held parades, called the FBI when they saw drug buys, held anti-gang candlelight vigils and they did their homework.



They found out that a large bank owned the buildings. In 1990 they invited the bank’s senior vice president to a meeting and demanded that the bank do something about the property. When he simply offered to board up the buildings, the group said no, it wanted the buildings sold and rehabbed. If the bank wouldn’t cooperate, busloads of people would go to the bank’s corporate headquarters with pictures of the buildings. They would get the bank’s Community Reinvestment Portfolio. They even had the chairman of the board’s home telephone number. The campaign paid

off. The buildings were sold to Habitat for Humanity, which rehabbed them. In 1995 the former drug houses were turned into low-interest condominiums for low- and moderate-income people.

Through the hard work and courage of LSC members, parents, the principal and staff, students, and community organizers, and because of the stubborn refusal of the principal to take “no” for an answer, Nobel has become a beacon for the whole community as well as a successful learning institution.



Frederick Funston Elementary School has been central in the revitalization of its surrounding neighborhood. Through a very strong partnership with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) and Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), Funston and its partners developed a plan for improving both the school and the community. After several years of organizing for new space to relieve overcrowding, an annex was built in 1995. With that victory in hand, the LSC, parents, principal and staff members, working with their community partners, developed a vision for an after-hours community center housed in the annex and run by parents.

The LSC won a state planning grant in 1995 to assess the community's needs and develop an action plan to meet them. Money from the grant paid parents a stipend to be trained and to lead the planning process. (See Parent Leadership Development below.) The parents went out and knocked on over 700 doors and interviewed more than 350 families. They interviewed students, business owners, church leaders and school staff. They went into bars, laundromats and homes asking, “If we opened up the school in the evening, what programs would you like to have for you and your family?”

We get 50 GEDs each year out of the center; that has to help the kids in the long run. If parents go to Alcoholics Anonymous and stay off drugs and alcohol, that helps the kids. We have Boy Scouts, the Street Intervention Unit that does sports, that helps the kids. If the parents come and learn English and can go out and get a job, that helps the kids.

—Funston Principal

In 1996 the Funston Parent-to-Parent Community Center — a parent initiated, designed and run community center — was opened. Almost every room in the annex is used daily from after school until 8:00 p.m. The Center provides English GED, Spanish GED, Adult Literacy classes, English as a Second Language, sports activities for children, Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous and free child care. The parents negotiated with the City Colleges to provide free services for the adult education programs. Staff from the community center report to the LSC each month to keep it abreast of what's going on.

Parent Leadership Development

Many parents feel unwelcome at their children's schools or have bad memories from their own school experiences. Other schools welcome parents but only as free help for projects as determined by the school. Successful schools see parents as important allies, as partners in the process of educating children and as community leaders.

When I first started in the classroom, I was scared. I stood outside the classroom for about five minutes and said a prayer. But the teacher let me get my own self started to where I felt comfortable.

—Funston Parent

Results of Funston's Parent Training Program

- ☒ Children of participating parents have increased achievement
- ☒ Many parents have gotten jobs or gone back to school
- ☒ Students have fewer discipline problems and absences
- ☒ Teachers get added help
- ☒ Teachers have new attitudes towards parents

Funston's Parent/Teacher Mentoring Program, with training provided by several organizations through grant money, not only trains parents to work with children in the school, it helps parents develop personal goals and leadership skills. The parents on the planning team that created the community center are graduates of this training program. Each semester, 20 parents go through five days of

intensive training. They then work 100 hours in the classroom under the supervision of a teacher. For this, they earn \$600. A graduate of the program now works for one of the community organizations and coordinates the program in the school. Funston's principal, Sally Acker, has hired several graduates to work as aides.



McCosh's principal realized that many students were being raised by grandparents and that the grandparents didn't participate in parent meetings. The grandparents felt they had little in common with the young parents. So the principal set up a grandparents' support group that meets monthly. At first the members focused on understanding the children and understanding what the grandparents were going through. It's now become a social network. The grandparents no longer feel isolated. They also volunteer for the Listen Post where kids can come and talk to them one-on-one about personal problems.

Dvorak's parent coordinator holds seminars on literature with parents and LSC members using the Paideia Socratic method. These discussions not only help parents understand how their children are being taught, they enlarge the parents' own abilities for critical reading and thinking.

As part of its focus on the arts, Nobel has a band, a chorus and a dramatic arts program. Each year, Nobel puts on a musical that is a true family affair. Students, parents, staff, former students and the principal are performers and play in the orchestra. The custodians build the props; the parents and staff make costumes. "The musicals are about community building and building student self-esteem." (Nobel Principal)

One of the first actions Ms. Green worked on when she became Herzl's principal was to create a sense of community so that parents would feel comfortable and come to school. She knew they wanted to help, they just didn't know what to do. By inviting parents to participate in staff development right along with the teachers, Herzl has a well informed group of parents who can knowledgeably participate in important decisions, who can share their experience and talents and who can assist students in the classroom. "I've learned so much. I have to thank the school for the education it gave me as well as my daughter. I feel like I'll be receiving a diploma right along with her." (Herzl LSC Member)

5 School Culture/ Environment

Schools that support improved student achievement provide an environment where children feel safe and valued and where teachers feel a strong commitment to their schools. Principals, staff members, LSCs and parents work to create a secure environment by pushing for funds to repair and clean up their schools and playgrounds and by creating new discipline and attendance programs.

The LSC, principal, staff and parents at Peter Van Vlissingen School have waged a long and hard battle to provide a safe environment for their students. Van Vlissingen's dangerous building problems have been ignored by previous administrations and school boards. The school district has been in housing court countless times over the building's safety violations. With a strong and united LSC, a courageous new principal and a dedicated staff and community, things started to change in the fall of 1996 soon after Milicent Russell became principal.

At that time, Van Vlissingen had two buildings: the main building and a "temporary" modular building that had been there for 25 years. In the

fall of 1996, there was a fire in the modular. This brought out the city fire inspector who found the building to be structurally unsound. The building was compressing — it was caving in on itself. When he went to the main building, he found serious fire hazards. The main building was in terrible shape. "Our facilities were literally impeding the deliverance of student instruction in a profound way. So many times with no lights, no heat, no ventilation, rotten food being served. No toilet facilities. An adult might be able to go through the day like that, but we have children in here from three to 15 years old." (Van Vlissingen LSC member)

For the next year and a half, LSC members went to court. They realized that the board's attorney was misrepresenting the seriousness of their

If this had been a shoe factory, OSHA would have shut it down.

—Van Vlissingen LSC member

problems before the judge. When the LSC started to come to court and disagree with the rosy picture painted by the board's attorney (who had never been to the school), the attorney started to verbally attack them in the courtroom. However, the LSC and principal brought documentation of the conditions. They also had the backing of the fire inspector.

DIG IN!



We told the teachers that we could not let what was going on in any way defeat us or stop us from doing what we knew we had to do. We just kept trudging along. We had to perform.

—Van Vlissingen Principal

Because of the LSC's strong advocacy, the judge came out to the school in November 1996 and found the modular to be unsafe and condemned it. With one week to vacate the modular, 21 classrooms of furniture and materials were packed and moved into the main building a week before Christmas vacation.

Although the main building was very overcrowded, the students and staff were adjusting to the changes. In February 1997, the district's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Paul Vallas, came out and saw the terrible conditions in the main building and promised them a new school. Because of serious overcrowding, the principal was told that some of the students had to move to another building. A week before the Illinois Goals and Assessment Program test (IGAP) in March, they packed up eight classrooms and moved them to Parkman School, 50 blocks away.

From March until the end of the year, these students walked to Van Vlissingen and then were bused back and forth to Parkman. Their teachers, as a show of unity and support, drove to Van Vlissingen and then took the bus with their students.

When the 1997 school year ended, the CEO provided money so the main building could be made safe until a new school was built. However, the work that was to start when school ended didn't begin until the middle of August. Tradespeople were all over the building. Furniture was stacked from floor to ceiling on the first floor. (When Van Vlissingen's furniture was sent back from Parkman, every other piece of furniture stored at Parkman was sent over.) At the same time, the modular was finally torn down but the demolition people broke through a large water main causing horrific flooding in the playground. Through sheer determination and hard work, with the custodians, principal, LSC members and other staff putting in 16 hour days of unpacking, arranging furniture and cleaning up, the main building opened in the fall of 1997.

By February 1998, the repairs were finished and finally, after the LSC went to court for a year and a half, Van Vlissingen met all code requirements. The workers broke ground for a new school in the spring of 1998. Despite all the hardships the children and staff endured, the percentage of students at or above national norms in reading doubled since 1991.

Ms. Russell, the LSC and staff have big plans for their new building including "wrap-around" community services through partnerships with Northwestern University, mental health clinics, medical clinics, churches and human services agencies. With determination like theirs, who can doubt their success?

A safe and clean school, clear and agreed upon discipline standards, programs to combat absenteeism and mutual respect between students and staff members are basic to building a strong learning climate.

Safe Environment:

The first order of business for many LSCs and principals in the early days of reform was to provide a safe, clean and orderly place for their students and staff.



Many schools have volunteer parent safety patrols. "The parent patrol is the school's eyes and ears. They're one of the reasons we don't have gang problems." (Dvorak principal)

Nobel's principal found a filthy building when she first came to the school. Although there was \$1.5 million set aside for rehabilitation, the money was untouched by the former school administration. One of the first actions she took was to get all new windows, buy new desks and to clean the place from top to bottom. Her staff and parents knew right away that they had a principal who could get the job done.

Staff Morale

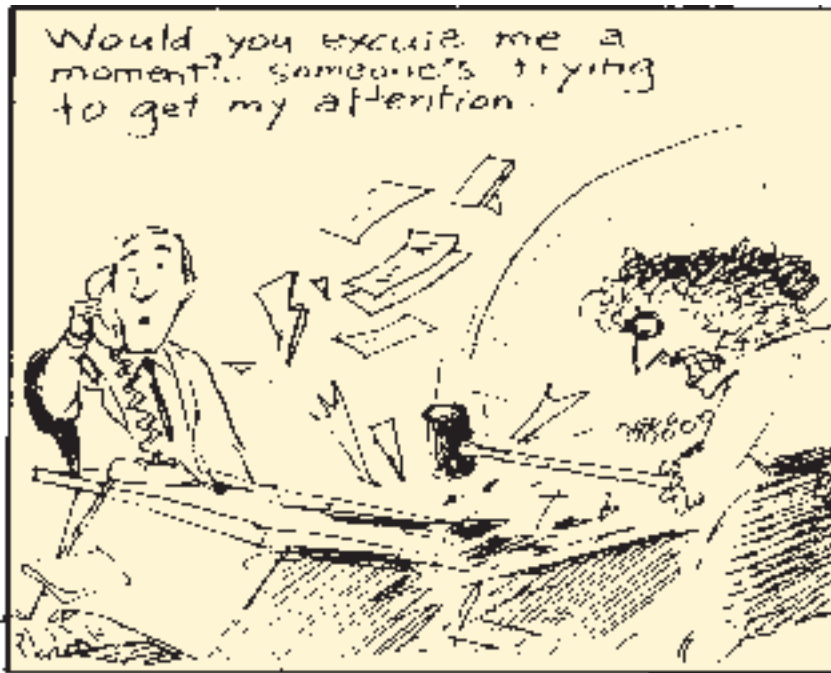
Schools face another school climate issue, that of staff morale. Paying

attention to the needs of a large staff can be challenging to a new principal. When McCosh's principal was hired she found that her first order of business was to deal with the split between the teachers in the K-5 building and those in the middle-school building. The primary teachers felt like they were step-children and the upper-grade teachers thought the primary school was a country club. Ms. Watkins began a "Bridging the Gap" program. She invited teachers from both buildings to periodically have a coffee klatch with her. This was purely a social gathering. At first things were very tense but soon people began to break down the barriers. Now they consider themselves one faculty.

Discipline and Respect

Rather than having a typical detention room, Woodson South has a Ma'at room staffed by parent volunteers. Ma'at is an Egyptian deity that symbolizes compassion and justice. Children who get in trouble go there to reflect on their behavior and how it affects others.

Herzl has introduced the *Boys Town Education* model. The program allows teachers to use their own management skills while the program teaches children social skills. Teachers work with a consultant who talks with them about how to speak respectfully to students and how to help students be respectful to them and others. There is a parent component called *Common Sense Parenting*. Twenty parents go through a five-week session and get certificates upon graduation.



Research points to the importance of combining caring with rigorous academic work. There are many ways that staff in successful schools make students feel valued. Breaking large buildings into small schools, as CVCA has done, makes it possible for teachers to get to know students and each other. McCosh's middle-school students have advisories before school twice a week — a time when they can talk with their advisory teachers about issues or problems. CVCA has 30-minute advisories for all freshmen and sophomores at which time the students can get individual attention or be part of a group discussion.

These activities and others — from Van Vlissingen's principal reading and making comments on every student's report card to Stone's principal having book chats with seventh and eighth grade students — create an atmosphere of respect. "I think that when we respect the children, they respect us in turn. That's really important, and that's why we have such a great school." (Stone teacher)

Truancy:

You can't teach kids who aren't there. Several years ago Woodson South had Parent Ambassadors who went to truant children's homes to get them to come to school. Before they became ambassadors, the parents received training that included conflict resolution. Prior to this program, Woodson's truancy rate was in the double digits. Now its attendance is up to 96 percent.

Conclusion

December 1998 marks the 10th anniversary of the Chicago School Reform Law. In the past ten years, the Chicago Public Schools have gone from being declared the worst school system in the country to a model for the rest of the nation.

Ever since the 1988 reform law was passed, there have been people who have questioned the ability of Local School Councils to make important decisions about multimillion dollar school budgets, the evaluation and retention of principals and school plans for improving student achievement. Thousands of LSC members — students, teachers, parents, principals, and community members — have been making these far-reaching decisions, and the vast majority have done a terrific job.

The 1988 reform law did more than create a new governance structure. The reform law:

- ☒ Shifted hundreds of millions of dollars of discretionary funds to the schools — funds that have been critical to supporting school change
- ☒ Created more than 40 new schools out of branches
- ☒ Allowed principals to select and build their staffs
- ☒ Gave teachers a voice in and responsibility for instructional change
- ☒ Reduced central administration staff and shifted these savings to the schools

A second law in 1995 gave the central office increased authority to intervene in schools that were performing poorly. Since then, the administration has focused considerable resources, energy and commitment to supporting improvement in these schools.

The bottom-line question, however, remains. What difference have any of these changes made in the classroom? Whether measured by assessments that demonstrate what students know and can do or by standardized tests, student achievement is improving in Chicago. The central office reports

higher test scores at both the elementary and high school levels. Two recent research reports, a 1998 study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (*Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools*) and the 1997 study by Designs for Change referred to in the introduction, show a long-term improvement trend in elementary schools since the 1988 Chicago reform law was enacted.

The 10 successful schools in this guide are just a sample of improving Chicago public schools. No two schools are alike, but there are some common and distinctive practices that take place in these schools that lead to improved student achievement.

Researchers have organized these practices into the five broad areas of support that you see in this guide. These five key supports are dependent on each other. Having a safe and clean building doesn't mean much if students aren't learning. Conversely, sitting in a cold classroom with your coat on and eating rotten food does not create a conducive learning environment. A rigorous instructional program; strong, democratic leadership from teachers, principals, and LSC members; ongoing staff development and collaboration; school-

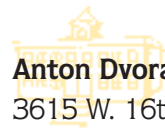
community partnerships that enhance the school as well as the health of the community; and a safe and orderly building where students and staff are respected are critical to school change.

This guide offers a glimpse of some Chicago public schools and at what people did to turn their schools around. The 10 schools are listed in the Appendix so you can contact the principal and LSC chairperson or visit them if you wish.

Public schools in Chicago still have a long way to go, but real progress is being made. Thanks to you and thousands of people like you who have dedicated countless hours to their schools, Chicago's radical reform experiment is working.

No two schools are alike,
but there are some common
and distinctive practices that
take place in these schools
that lead to improved stu-
dent achievement.

Appendix



Anton Dvorak Specialty Academy

3615 W. 16th Street
773/534-1690

Principal: Leonard B. Moore
LSC Chair: Robert Jones
Grades PreK - 8, enrollment 689,
100% African American
1991 Reading 12.7%, Math 16.1%,
Low-Income 91%
1998 Reading 33.3%, Math 35.6%,
Low-Income 100%



Amelia Earhart Options for Knowledge School

1710 E. 93rd Street
773/535-6416

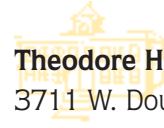
Principal (Interim): Patricia Walsh
LSC Chair: Carlton James
Grades PreK - 6, enrollment 249,
100% African American,
1991 Reading 28.4%, Math 38.9%,
Low-Income 76%
1998 Reading 80.4%, Math 85.0 %,
Low-Income 73%



Frederick Funston School

2010 N. Central Park Avenue
773/534-4125

Principal: Sally Acker
LSC Chair: Ada Ayala
Grades PreK - 8, enrollment 999,
83% Latino, 15% African American,
2.0% White
1991 Reading 14.1%, Math 19.8%,
Low-Income 92%
1998 Reading 22.6%, Math 27.2 %,
Low-Income 97%



Theodore Herzl School

3711 W. Douglas Boulevard
773/534-1480

Principal: Betty A. Green
LSC Chair: Helen McGhee
Grades PreK - 8, enrollment 957,
100% African American
1991 Reading 11.5%, Math 13.1%,
Low-Income 96%
1998 Reading 43.6%, Math 25.1 %,
Low-Income 95%



James McCosh School

6543 S. Champlain Avenue
773/535-0560

Principal: Barbara Eason-Watkins
LSC Chair: Gertrude Mohammed
Grades PreK - 8, enrollment 1,054,
100% African American
1991 Reading 16.1%, Math 22.8%,
Low-Income 90%
1998 Reading 31.1%, Math 38.5 %,
Low-Income 93%

**Alfred Nobel School**

4127 W. Hirsch Street

773/534-4365

Principal: Mirna Diaz-Ortiz

LSC Chair: Mercedes Rivera

Grades PreK - 8, enrollment 1,020,
80% Latino, 18% African American,
2.0% White

1991 Reading 14.8%, Math 22.1%,

Low-Income 95%

1998 Reading 27.4%, Math 35.8%,

Low-Income 100%

**Stone Scholastic Academy**

6239 N. Leavitt Street

773/534-2045

Principal: Denise Winter

LSC Chair: Charles Killman

Grades K - 8, enrollment 609,
28% African American, 27% White,
24% Asian, 22% Latino,

1.0% Native American

1991 Reading 31.8%, Math 45.5%,

Low-Income 58%

1998 Reading 61.5%, Math 63.4%,

Low-Income 72%

**Peter Van Vlissingen School**

137 W. 108th Place

773/535-5300

Principal: Milicent Russell

LSC Chair: Valerie Smith

Grades PreK- 8, enrollment 749
students, 100% African American
1991 Reading 11.3%, Math 15.8%,

Low-Income 100%

1998 Reading 22.4%, Math 26.4%,

Low-Income 100%

**Carter G. Woodson South School**

4444 S. Evans Avenue

773/535-1280

Principal: John F. Hawkins

LSC Chair: Marva Baker

Grades prek - 4, enrollment 502
students, 100% African American
1991 Reading 16.2%, Math 27.7%,
Low-Income 95%

1998 Reading 31.4%, Math 50.8%,

Low-Income 100%

**Chicago Vocational Career Academy**

2100 E. 87th Street

773/535-6100

Principal: Betty Despenza Green

LSC Chair: Otha Miller

Grades 9 -12, enrollment 2,341
students, 100% African American
1991 Reading 21.6%, Math 13.8%,

Low-Income 32%

1998 Reading 18.9%, Math 16.2%,

Low-Income 57%

These reading and math scores reflect percent of students at or above national averages.

Reading and math test scores from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Reading and Math, 1991-1998, from the Department of Research, Assessment and Quality Reviews, Office of Accountability, Chicago Public Schools, August 1998.

1991 low-income percentages from *Plan for the Improvement of Instruction for Disadvantaged Students in the Chicago Public Schools*, December 1991, Chicago Public Schools. 1998 enrollment and low-income percentages from *Plan for the Improvement of Instruction for Disadvantaged Students in the Chicago Public Schools*, December 1997, Chicago Public Schools.

Demographic information from *Racial/Ethnic Survey of Students*, as of September 30, 1997, Chicago Public Schools.

About the Cross City Campaign

School reform leaders from Chicago, Denver, New York, Seattle, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, all deeply engaged in systemic reforms, created the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform. Our collective mission is the dramatic improvement of public education so that all urban youth—especially Black, Latino, Asian, Native American students and students from low-income communities—are well prepared for post-secondary education, work and citizenship.

The Cross City Campaign supports the work of leaders within and across large cities to create high-quality schools that ensure educational success for young people. The Cross City Campaign advocates for policies and practices that support a radical transformation of schools that move authority, resources and accountability to the school level, that reconnect schools with their communities and that completely rethink the role of school districts. We believe that urban public schools, thus reformed, can be restored to the public trust.

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform

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