Building a Campaign for Reading Reform in Miami

Annenberg Institute for School Reform
AT BROWN U

Building a Campaign for Reading Reform in Miami

PEOPLE ACTING FOR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Kavitha Mediratta

Sara McAlister

Seema Shah

Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University
September 2009

Acknowledgments

We are deeply indebted to the organizers and leaders of our study sites for generously sharing their time and work with us. We are also grateful to the district officials, principals, and teachers in each site for sharing their insights with us.

Contributions to the analyses described in this series of cases studies were made by: Edwina Branch-Smith, Mary Ann Flaherty, Norm Fruchter, Barbara Gross, Janice Hirota, Dana Lockwood, Yolanda McBride, Christina Mokhtar, Deinya Phenix, Beth Rosenthal, Tom Saunders, and Meryle Weinstein. Additional research assistance was provided by Tara Bahl, Evelyn Brosi, Allison Cohen, Angelica Crane, Nadine Dechausay, Lamson Lam, Jim Laukhardt, Hannah Miller, Natalie Price, Anna Reeve, Kat Stergiopolous, Cate Swinburn, and Kelly Whitaker. Michelle Renée prepared the Overview.

In addition, Mary Arkins Decasse, Carol Ascher, Margaret Balch-Gonzalez, Susan Fisher, Anne Henderson, Haewon Kim, Jason Masten, and Fran Ostendorf each provided invaluable assistance in editing, designing, and distributing this case study series.

We extend a special thank-you to Robert Tobias, director of the National Center for Research on Teaching and Learning at New York University, for his guidance on the administrative data analyses in our study. Thanks also to Jeannie Oakes, Charles Payne, and Terry Peterson for their ongoing support of and enthusiasm for this research.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge Christine Doby of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for her vision and leadership in this effort. Cris Doby and the Mott Foundation's unwavering commitment to community organizing and to asking prescient questions about the impact of community organizing made this research possible.

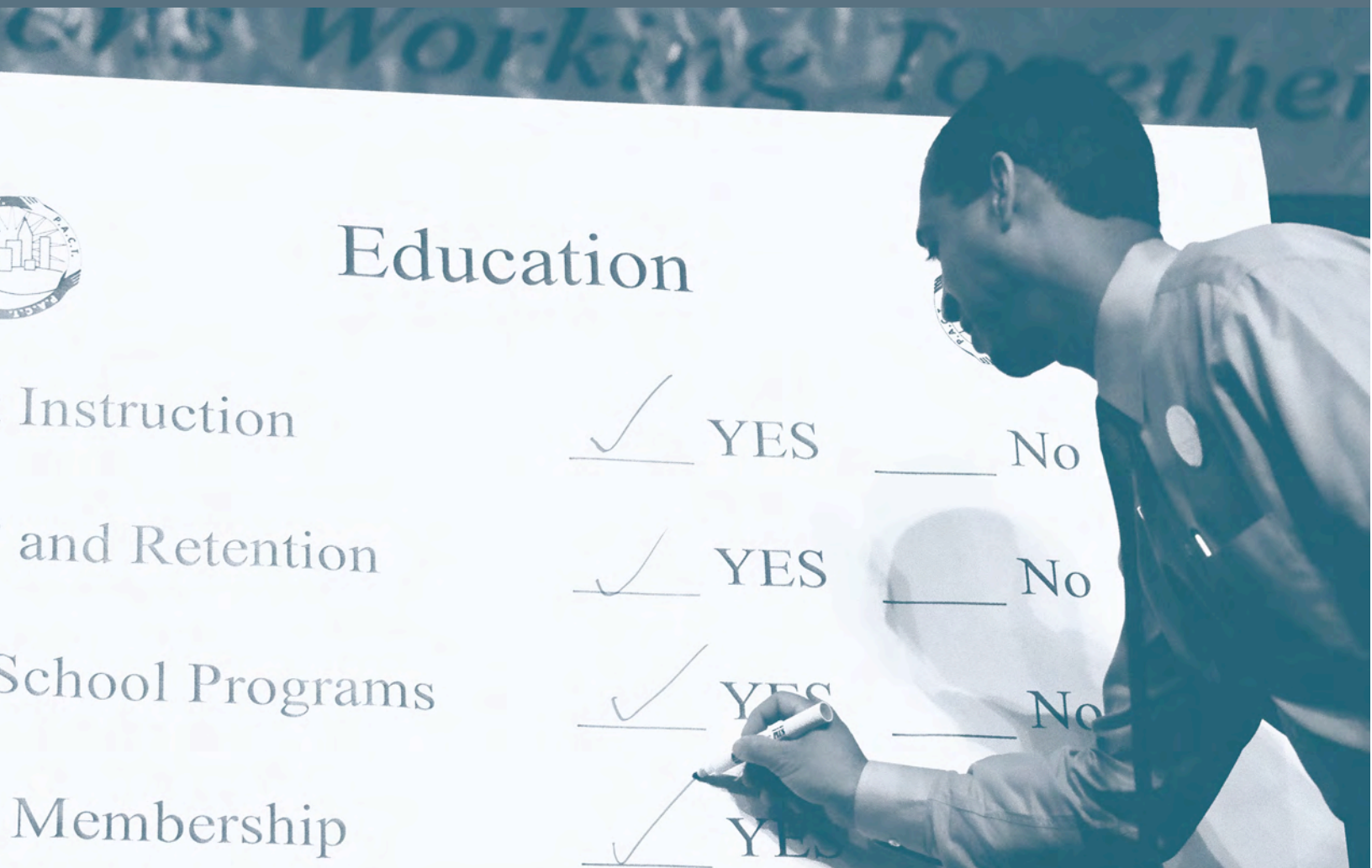
Kavitha Mediratta is a principal associate in research on community organizing for school reform and principal investigator for this project, *Sara McAlister* is a research associate, and *Seema Shah* is a principal associate and study director for this project, all at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

All photos: Eileen Escarda

Contents

List of Figures

PEOPLE ACTING FOR COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Overview: People Acting for Community Together

Seven years ago, if we had two children in every classroom reading on grade level, it was a lot. Now probably 75 percent or 80 percent of the children in my school are reading on or above grade level.

— A Miami-Dade principal, elementary school involved with PACT

People Acting for Community Together (PACT) led a successful organizing campaign to win the implementation of a new literacy program in low-performing schools serving the poorest neighborhoods in Miami, Florida, and acted as the program's champion for ten years. In response to immigrant parents' alarm that their children could not read, PACT organized parents, community members, clergy, teachers, and principals to implement a literacy curriculum called Direct Instruction and build intensive community engagement in twenty-seven Miami-Dade County district elementary schools. PACT's efforts not only enhanced the implementation of Direct Instruction, but also developed stronger school–community relationships. Data show that reading achievement in PACT schools rose at a faster rate than in matched comparison schools and across the district as a whole.

In the end, however, a new superintendent discontinued the program in an effort to establish greater uniformity in literacy instruction across the district. This story is as much about the role community groups can play in identifying reforms as about the difficulties community constituencies face in responding to a changing context of district leadership.

To capture the impact of PACT's organizing, the study team followed PACT's reading reform campaign. Drawing on a wide range of data collected over the six-year period of the study, including interviews with district and school leaders, teachers, parents, and community members, as well as teacher surveys and publicly available school data, we examined the impact of PACT's education organizing to answer three key questions.

In what ways did PACT's organizing influence district priorities?

- Educators at all levels of the system credit PACT with directing resources to improve reading instruction for low-performing students. Not only did PACT persuade the school board to adopt Direct Instruction, but it also secured nearly $3 million in new funds to implement the program in twenty-seven of Miami's poorest elementary schools.
- PACT's ongoing involvement of community members in schools and accountability sessions with district leaders provided support for schools' improvement efforts. PACT's efforts to increase district accountability also provided a mechanism for problem solving in district schools.

How did PACT influence the capacity of schools to educate students successfully?

- In PACT schools, teachers and staff consistently reported improvements in school climate and professional culture. For example, teachers reported a stronger culture of staff collaboration, teacher commitment, and collegiality in PACT schools than comparison schools.
- Teachers also credited PACT with having high levels of influence on their schools' instructional core, as measured by their ratings of teacher expectations for student achievement, classroom resources, quality of curriculum and instruction, and teaching effectiveness.

Did PACT's organizing to reform the district's literacy instruction produce measurable gains in student outcomes?

- ✦ District data showed that the PACT schools made steady improvement in third- and fourth-grade performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test between 2001 and 2005 (the years for which consistent data were available). Gains made in PACT schools during this period exceeded those in matched comparison schools as well as in the district as a whole. Academic progress was substantially greater for students initially scoring at the lowest performance level on the test in PACT schools.

Despite the ultimate fate of Direct Instruction in Miami, PACT's organizing demonstrated the potential of community engagement strategies to create shared, focused conversations on student learning, to identify new and effective programs, and to support and strengthen the work of teachers and principals. In doing so, PACT's organizing presented a highly cost-effective intervention. Operating with an average organizational budget of less than $300,000 a year (in which education was only one part of the organization's activities), PACT leveraged substantial gains for the district's lowest-performing students.

Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: An Introduction to the Case Study Series

Because good intentions are not enough, when not fortified with political will and political power.

— U.S. President Barack Obama

The opening quote, a reflection from Barack Obama on the lessons he learned during his post-college stint as a community organizer, cuts to the core of why organizing matters. Even the most well-intentioned of policies (and politicians) are often insufficient to bring about desired outcomes. Political will and political power are necessary forces to carry those good intentions forward and to hold political actors accountable when those intentions go unrealized.

In low-income neighborhoods like the ones on the South Side of Chicago where Obama organized, political power is not attained through wealth or status. Rather, power comes from numbers – from bringing together ordinary people to identify critical community concerns and to act collectively and strategically for improvements to their communities, neighborhoods, and schools.

This research follows the organizing efforts undertaken by residents of low- to moderate-income communities throughout the country, specifically in the arena of public school reform. In addition to documenting their campaigns, we aim to get underneath the organizing process to assess the tangible impacts of organizing on students and their schools. In other words, does the political will generated by organizing – in the arena of education reform – ultimately enhance the capacity of schools to improve student learning?

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Neither community organizing nor public education activism is new in the United States. But increasingly in the last fifteen years, community organizations have used organizing as a focused and deliberate strategy for school improvement, particularly within low- and moderate-income communities.

Instead of relying on more traditional forms of parent and community involvement (getting involved in school activities or serving on district-sponsored committees, for instance), organizing groups mobilize parents, youth, and community members for local school improvement and districtwide reform, often applying pressure from the outside to generate the political will necessary to adopt and implement reforms. In the process, these organizing efforts aim to equalize power dynamics between school and district administrators and low-income parents and

Community Organizing for School Reform . . .

- Brings together public school parents, youth and community residents, and/or institutions to engage in collective dialogue and action for change
- Builds grassroots leadership by training parents and youth in the skills of organizing and civic engagement
- Builds political power by mobilizing large numbers of people around a unified vision and purpose
- Focuses on demands for accountability, equity, and quality for all students, rather than on gains for individual students
- Aims to disrupt long-standing power relationships that produce failing schools in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and communities of color
- Uses the tactics of direct action and mobilization to put pressure on decision-makers when necessary

community members, who may otherwise feel marginalized or powerless to challenge educational inequities.

Nationally, it is estimated that more than 200 community groups are engaged in organizing for better schooling (Mediratta & Fruchter 2001; Gold, Simon & Brown 2002). These organizing groups have responded to a variety of parental and youth concerns, including unsafe environmental and facilities conditions, overcrowded schools, dangerous school crossings, inadequate school funding, unresponsive administrators, and inexperienced teachers.

Many researchers have noted the failure of traditional approaches to education reform to bring about deep and lasting school improvement. Jeannie Oakes and Martin Lipton, for example, attribute the "sorry and familiar story of school reform gone awry" to educators' singular focus on changing the internal "technical aspects" of schooling, without adequately attending to the political, social, and cultural dimensions of schooling. Oakes and Lipton argue,

> The logic and strategies employed in social and political movements – in contrast to those found in organizational change models – are more likely to expose, challenge, and if successful, disrupt the prevailing norms and politics of schooling inequality. . . . Without attention to these dynamics, such reforms are abandoned entirely or implemented in ways that actually replicate (perhaps in a different guise) the stratified status quo. (Oakes & Lipton 2002, p. 383)

Oakes and Lipton's analysis reflects an increased interest from both practitioners and researchers in understanding the potential role of community organizing in contributing to sustainable improvements in education.

ABOUT THE STUDY

To date, research on community organizing for school reform has been mostly qualitative and includes numerous reports (Gold, Simon & Brown 2002; HoSang 2005; Zachary & olatoye 2001), as well as excellent and detailed book-length analyses of organizing efforts (Oakes, Rogers & Lipton 2006; Warren 2001; Shirley 1997). But comparatively few research studies examine the effect of these groups' work on local schools and communities. How have organizing efforts influenced district policies and practices? In what ways does the culture of schools change because of involvement in organizing? And most important, are educational outcomes better for students when organizing is in the picture? This study, initiated in 2002 with funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, sought to address these critical questions.

The six-year, mixed-methods study – the first of its kind – followed the school reform campaigns of seven organizing groups nationally.[1] The study examined the impact of organizing on the leadership development of those involved and also assessed the impact of organizing on three critical indictors of education reform: district-level policy, school-level capacity, and student outcomes.

Organized Communities, Stronger Schools, the report of preliminary findings released in March 2008, measured and linked the impacts of community organizing to specific performance indicators (Mediratta, Shah & McAlister 2008). We found that sophisticated organizing at the grassroots level can indeed make major contributions to improving student achievement. Across multiple data sources, we observed strong and consistent evidence that effective community organizing:

- ✦ stimulates important changes in educational policy, practices, and resource distribution at the system level;
- ✦ strengthens school–community relationships, parent involvement and engagement, and trust in schools; and
- ✦ contributes to higher student educational outcomes, including higher attendance, test score performance, high school completion, and college-going aspirations.

[1] An eighth group, Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope, was involved at the onset of the study. Because they did not participate in the study across the whole six years, we have not produced a case study of their organization.

[2] The work described in this study was carried out by Chicago ACORN until January 2008, when the director, staff, and board left ACORN to start a new group called Action Now, which is continuing the education and other organizing campaigns initiated while they were affiliated with ACORN.

THE CASE STUDY SERIES

Following up on *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools,* we offer a case study series that presents an in-depth look at each of the organizing groups in our study. The study sites are:

- Austin Interfaith (Austin, Texas), affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)
- Chicago ACORN (Chicago, Illinois), affiliated with the national network Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now[2]
- Community Coalition and its youth organizing arm, South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (Los Angeles, California)
- Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project and its youth organizing affiliate, Youth United for Change (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); EPOP was affiliated with the PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing) national network until 2009
- Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and its youth organizing arm, Sistas and Brothas United (Bronx, New York)
- Oakland Community Organizations (Oakland, California), affiliated with PICO
- People Acting for Community Together (Miami, Florida), affiliated with the Direct Action and Research Training (DART) Center

Each case study traces the group's education organizing campaigns and considers the impact of this work on promoting resource equity and district accountability for improved educational outcomes. In three districts – Austin, Miami, and Oakland – where the education reform strategy was in place at least five years, we also examine trends in school capacity and student educational outcomes. Though educators predicted gains in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia resulting from the organizing conducted by groups in our study, the reforms are either too new and/or do not integrate enough intensive school-based organizing for us to assess their school capacity and student outcome impacts through administrative or survey data. In these cases, we focus on documenting the group's organizing efforts and examining preliminary indicators of impact.

The case studies in this series will be made available for download, as they are published, at <www.annenberginstitute.org/WeDo/Mott.php>.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our analysis of impacts both across sites and within sites is guided by a conceptual framework – or logic model – for how organizing leads to change in schools. The framework, presented in the 2004 publication *Constituents of Change* (see Mediratta 2004; Figure 1), provides a guiding theory of change for how community organizing stimulates improvements in both community capacity and district and school

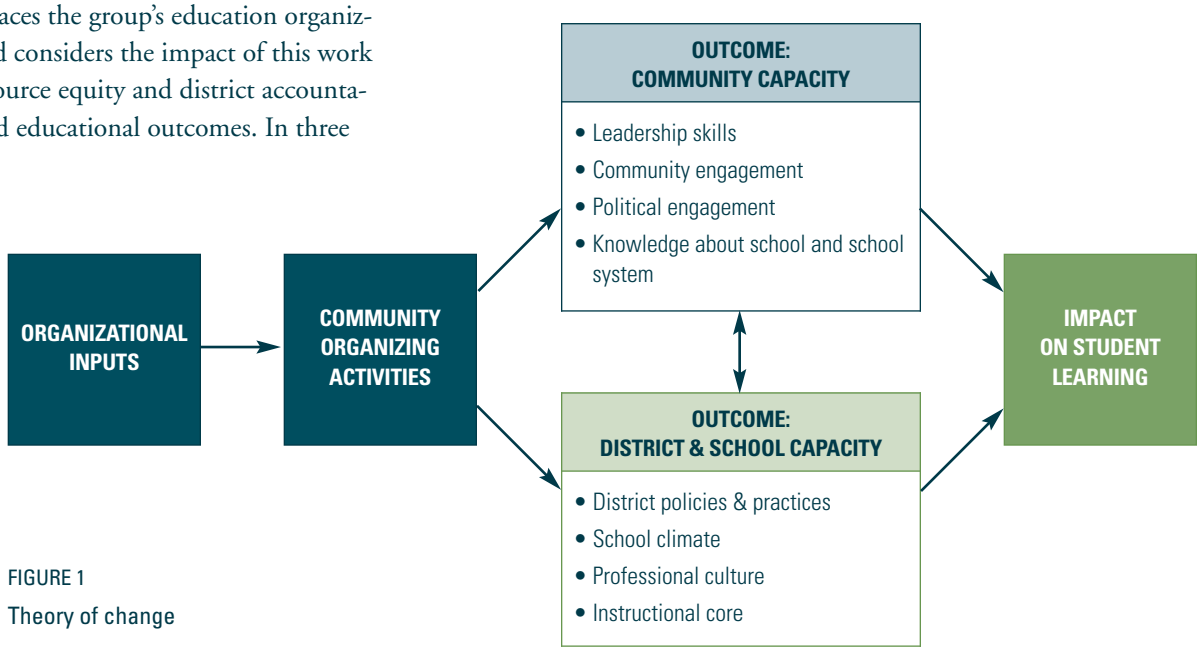


FIGURE 1
Theory of change

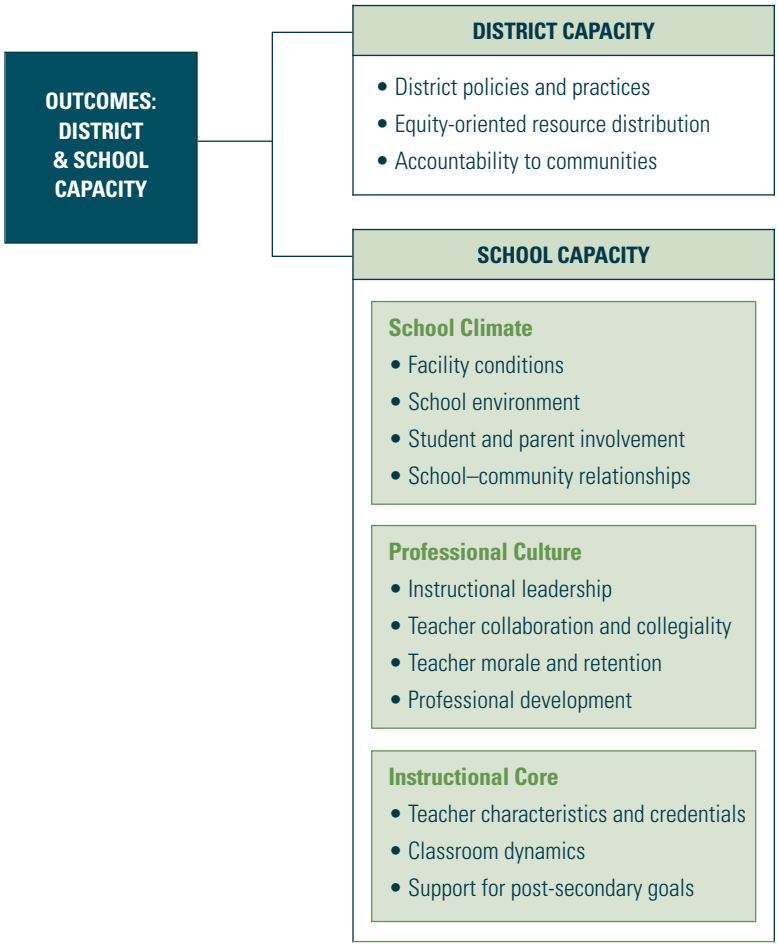
capacity. In the current series of case studies, we focus on how organizing influences district and school capacity and student learning.

We ground our assessment of district and school capacity outcomes in the existing educational change literature. We draw primarily from the seminal research on essential supports conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, which outlines five broad dimensions of school capacity (leadership, parent–community ties, professional capacity, student-centered learning climate, ambitious instruction) that are associated with better student outcomes (Sebring et al. 2006). We also pull from Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider's work on trust in schools (2002), Richard Elmore's writings on teaching practice (1996; 2002; 2004), the National Center for Education Statistics' articulation of school quality indicators (Mayer et al. 2000), and research on indicators of education organizing conducted by Eva Gold and Elaine Simon at Research for Action and Chris Brown at the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform (2002).

Based on the above conceptual framework, we would expect improvements on intermediate indicators of district and school capacity to produce a higher-quality learning experience. In turn, we would expect this stronger learning environment to result in improved student outcomes. Though changes in school and district capacity are important outcomes in their own right, they take on added significance because of their links to student achievement. Critical dimensions of district and school capacity are outlined in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Dimensions of district and school capacity that lead to improved student outcomes



DATA SOURCES

Our study uses a rigorous mixed-methods design to understand the impacts of organizing on district and school capacity and student outcomes. We collected 321 stakeholder interviews; 75 observations of organizing strategy sessions, campaign activities, and actions; 509 teacher surveys; and school demographic and outcome data for each of the seven school districts.

We used interviews and observational data with community organizers and adult and youth members to clarify the theories of action and resultant educational change strategies guiding organizing groups' work, and to assess members' knowledge about education policy and their sense of efficacy in generating change within their schools and communities. Publicly available school-level administrative data, interviews with district and school leaders, and teacher surveys were used to analyze district-, school-, and student-level outcomes. Impacts of community organizing were thus assessed in three ways:

- **District and school leaders' attributions.** We examined district and school leaders' perceptions of the impact of organizing groups on district and

school decision making, capacities, and relationships with parent, youth, and community constituencies.

- **Teachers' attributions.** We assessed teachers' perceptions of a variety of school context indicators, and whether they believed that changes in school climate, professional culture, and instructional indicators had been influenced by the groups' actions.
- **Student outcomes.** We reviewed administrative data on student attendance, standardized test performance, graduation and dropout rates, and college aspirations in the schools targeted by groups in our study.

We also analyzed our data to understand how groups achieve their impact – that is, we identified the critical organizing processes and strategic choices that enabled organizing groups to effectively challenge the status quo and help improve schooling conditions and educational outcomes in their communities.

A detailed description of the data sources and methods of collection can be found in Appendix A.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Community organizing for school reform does not occur in isolation from the messy realities of communities, politics, and schools. Linking organizing strategies to change – either in the community at large or in complex institutions such as schools – poses critical challenges for research. Given the intricacies of schools, communities, and the dynamic contexts in which they are situated, it is neither feasible nor desirable to create an experimental research design from which causal inferences might be drawn between the activities of organizing groups and the schooling outcomes they hope to stimulate.

For example, because organizing groups make decisions based on the priorities of community members and the urgency of problems in their local schools, random assignment of schools as "treatment" and "non-treatment" is not a reasonable or appropriate strategy. Even if such a design were possible, it would be difficult to pinpoint organizing as the "cause" of these changes, given the high turnover among superintendents, principals, teachers, and students that characterizes large urban districts, the presence of other reforms at the school, as well as the ebbs and flows of organizing itself that occur over time (Connell, Kubisch, Schorr & Weiss 1995; Berliner 2002).

To assess the schooling impacts of organizing groups, then, we employed a complex, mixed-methods design that assumes that community change efforts are multi-dimensional interventions that are evolving in response to constant changes in context. By using multiple data sources and carefully examining points of convergence and divergence within the data, we can contextualize and explain conclusions the data suggest about impact. Our ability to draw inferences in support of our research hypotheses is based on the consistency of evidence across these multiple data sources and forms of analysis.

In carrying out this research, we engaged in a collaborative research process with our sites, sharing preliminary findings at each stage of our analysis, so that their intimate knowledge of the school, district, and community contexts informed our interpretation and understanding of the data.

Early on a Saturday morning in March 2003, parents and their children stream into the convention center. Accompanied by grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles, the parents have come to celebrate their children's reading achievement at the annual meeting of People Acting for Community Together, known as PACT. The meeting opens with a prayer in English, Creole, and Spanish, thanking the families and congregation members who've come out on this day to share in the work of God, the work of justice – for basic rights and for what people deserve.

The chief of management services for transportation speaks, thanking the audience for their support in winning new funding to double the fleet so that the wait time at bus stops is less than thirty minutes. Then the chief education officer speaks. She applauds twenty-seven schools working with PACT for their achievements in reading, as awards are distributed to students in those schools who have made exemplary progress. She explains that Miami-Dade County Public Schools can't do it alone. The district welcomes PACT's involvement and wants PACT to hold it accountable for performance. Everyone should be held accountable, she says. She asks for PACT's support to make sure all children value education and come to school prepared and ready to learn.

People Acting for Community Together

In the mid-1990s, immigrant parents in Miami were concerned that the city's public schools were not teaching their children to read. People Acting for Community Together (PACT), an institutionally based community organizing group just beginning to focus on education, discovered that children of immigrants were not the only ones with low reading levels. The problem extended through the whole district, especially among low-income children of color.

ABOUT MIAMI

Miami-Dade County district schools in 1995 were overcrowded, underfunded, and among the lowest performing in Florida. The district (then known as the Dade Public Schools), with 333,817 students, was the fourth-largest public school system in the United States. More than four-fifths of the district population (85.8 percent) were students of color: half of the students (50.6 percent) were Latino, and one-third (33.8 percent) were Black (National Center for Education Statistics 1995).

The school system was recovering from Hurricane Andrew in 1992, which left more than 250,000 people homeless, destroyed or damaged 82,000 businesses, and caused roughly 100,000 residents to flee the area ("Hurricane Andrew: After the Storm"

PACT's Mission Statement

PACT unites, organizes, and trains leaders from diverse congregations, schools, and community groups to build a powerful community voice. Individually and collectively, we empower ourselves, hold officials accountable, achieve systemic change, and promote fairness, justice, and democracy in Miami-Dade County. ("What We Do," n.d.)

2002). At the same time, waves of refugees from political turmoil in nearby Haiti and immigrants from Caribbean and South American countries were transforming the county's school-age population into an increasingly mobile and culturally diverse student body.

PACT'S EDUCATION ORGANIZING

PACT was created in 1988 in the heart of Miami, Florida, when a group of clergy and local organizers came together to build power for low- and moderate-income families in Miami-Dade County. Since then, PACT has grown to comprise thirty-eight religious congregations, community groups, and public schools.

As a congregation-based organizing group, PACT involves community residents in organizing through their participation in PACT member institutions. Though a majority of these institutions are faith-based, PACT is a secular organization. Nonetheless, religious faith and the ideals of social justice and activism are deeply entwined in the organization's culture. Religious leaders encourage members to participate in the organizing as a way to act on their beliefs. Former organizer Daniel Dodd explained, "In active congregations, the pastor is up there saying: 'This is important. Your spiritual evolution depends on taking action, not just coming to church.'"

PACT is a countywide organization with member institutions that are scattered across Miami's diverse neighborhoods. But the organization's reform efforts focus largely on low- to moderate-income neighborhoods where congregation members live. In particular, PACT's organizing has focused on Carol City, Hialeah, North Miami Beach, and Opa-locka. Efforts to improve conditions in these neighborhoods involve grassroots leadership development, research, mobilization, alliance building, and advocacy to influence multiple levels of government, from municipal leaders to county- and state-level leadership.

This report traces a ten-year effort by PACT to improve reading instruction in Miami-Dade County's public elementary schools. After examining the impetus for the organization's involvement in schools, the study team followed the evolution of PACT's campaign to champion a new literacy program and increase community engagement in more than two dozen low-performing schools. Drawing on a wide range of data, including interviews with district and school leaders, teachers, parents, and community members, as well as teacher surveys and publicly available school data, we analyzed the impact of PACT's education organizing on district priorities, school capacity for improvement, and student educational outcomes.

What Is "Building Power" in Community Organizing?

In community organizing, *building power* refers to a process of recruiting large numbers of people into an organized and strategic effort to influence the priorities of decision-makers in government and the private sector. Like other community organizing groups, PACT uses large meetings, known as public accountability sessions, to show public officials and policy-makers the size and strength of the organization's base of support. In these sessions, public officials are presented a set of reform proposals or "demands" in front of an audience of people who are affected by and invested in the reform proposal. Officials are asked to provide a yes or no response. "No" responses elicit an escalating series of actions from the group that increase the pressure on decision-makers to acquiesce to the group's demands. PACT used public accountability sessions as a core tactic to achieve its objectives.

"In the Caribbean culture, the emphasis is on education. It doesn't matter how poor you are – if there is education, there is hope. . . . With all the [economic and cultural challenges] that these families faced, to have their children leaving school and not be able to read was too much."

— Gloria Whilby, former education consultant with PACT

A New Focus on Education

In 1995, following seven years of organizing to improve neighborhood safety and secure demolition of hundreds of crack houses, PACT turned its focus to the quality of Miami-Dade County's public schools. During the planning process leading to PACT's annual public accountability meeting, organizers and leaders held individual and small-group sessions (known as "house meetings") within congregations to identify priority concerns of parents and community members.

Education, particularly poor reading skills, was a consistent concern in those meetings. Immigrants from Haiti and other Caribbean and South American countries, a large part of the congregations' membership, were distraught that their children couldn't read. Gloria Whilby, a former education consultant with PACT, said:

> In the Caribbean culture, the emphasis is on education. It doesn't matter how poor you are – if there is education, there is hope. For the child to be educated is not just about that child's accomplishments, but about bringing the whole family up. So, for a child to graduate from school and still not be able to read – it is the death knell for the family. With all the [economic and cultural challenges] that these families faced, to have their children leaving school and not be able to read was too much.

Children from immigrant families were not the only ones with low levels of reading, however. Forty-four percent of fourth-graders in the district were performing in the bottom quartile on the statewide assessment test, compared with 25 percent in a national sample ("Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test" 2005). PACT believed most of these students were low-income children of color.

Improving Literacy Instruction in Miami-Dade County Public Schools

PACT began education organizing in response to parents' calls for action to address low levels of reading achievement. Its first move was to create an education committee of clergy and congregation members (including public school parents) to delve into the issue of reading instruction and, specifically, to identify what schools already had in place to support student literacy. Education committee members visited schools and talked to teachers about the programs they were using. They learned that there was great variation in what schools were doing and very little accountability for performance.

Through their research on reading instruction, PACT education committee members learned about a program called Direct Instruction. Formerly known as Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading, Direct Instruction emphasized phonics skills and favored explicit instruction in reading skills over more inductive and student self-directed approaches. The program quickly gained the support of PACT leaders. Many parents liked the program because the instructional methods were familiar to them.

Gloria Whilby explained that Direct Instruction "went back to the original thinking about reading. Parents understood it because that was how they had learned to read." Committee members were also won over by research supporting the program's effectiveness. A series of evaluations funded by the federal government had identified Direct Instruction

as the single most effective program in improving reading instruction for low-income children of color.[3]

Later that year, PACT launched a campaign to convince the district to include Direct Instruction on the list of literacy programs from which schools could choose. District officials were not receptive. Direct Instruction's teacher-directed, phonics-based approach to literacy development differed radically from the whole-language approach favored by the district. In contrast to Direct Instruction, the whole-language model develops children's literacy by exposing students to a variety of reading materials and emphasizes "meaning making" (rather than decoding) of these reading materials as the method by which children learn to read. According to Maria Prieto, a reading specialist at South Pointe Elementary School, "Everybody was whole-language oriented. . . . It was like saying a bad word to mention phonics."

Although PACT was new to education organizing, it was not new to politics. The organization responded to the district's indifference to Direct Instruction with tactics that had been successful in other organizing campaigns. Using a *power analysis*[4] to understand who had the authority to make a decision about Direct Instruction, PACT identified the school board, which was responsible for appointing the superintendent, as a key entity upon which to apply pressure.

PACT met with individual school board members and district staff to introduce the Direct Instruction program and share evidence of its effectiveness. The organization also staged a 300-person rally to demand support from district leaders for implementing Direct Instruction in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. PACT subsequently mobilized 130 leaders to attend a school board meeting, again to demand support from officials for the program. As pressure mounted, district officials agreed to add Direct Instruction to the district's list of approved

"Everybody was whole language–oriented. . . .

It was like saying a bad word to mention phonics."

— Maria Prieto, reading specialist, South Pointe Elementary School

literacy programs. Emboldened by this victory, PACT decided to seek funding that could attract low-performing schools to the program.

In 1996, the school board expanded from seven to nine members in an effort to increase representation of communities of color on the board and more accurately reflect the district's shifting student population. PACT had no role in these events, but it utilized the opportunity presented by the shift in leadership to pursue its campaign for Direct Instruction. The newly constituted school board selected a superintendent who was more open to PACT's proposal. PACT's request to fund Direct Instruction in five low-performing schools drew unanimous support from the school board and the superintendent.

The district and PACT worked together to recruit high-poverty schools receiving federal Title I funds to participate in the pilot effort. The overall cost of the program was $170,000 per school. District funds provided $70,000 per school, with the remainder paid through existing school funds. Under a previous agreement between the district and the teachers

[3] See the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2006) *Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models* for a review of studies going back as far as the 1970s on the positive effects of Direct Instruction (full-immersion model) on reading. The report identified Direct Instruction as one of only two out of twenty-two reform models for which there were convincing data of a moderately strong effect on student achievement.

[4] A power analysis is an organizing tool that maps out key stakeholders, their respective power in the political landscape, and their positions on the issue that the organizing group is trying to influence. A power analysis can help groups develop their strategy.

"When you buy into a program, you're going to work for it, and you're going to want to do everything that's necessary to do the best job with it."

— Helen Stankiewicz, retired teacher and PACT education committee member

union, eighty percent of school staff had to agree to the program before it could be implemented in a school. Helen Stankiewicz, a retired teacher and PACT education committee member, highlighted the importance of staff buy-in:

> When you buy into a program, you're going to work for it, and you're going to want to do everything that's necessary to do the best job with it.

Scaling Up Direct Instruction

Following the first year of implementation in school year 1996-1997, interest in Direct Instruction grew among principals and teachers as word got out about the program in the five pilot schools. Seven additional schools adopted the program in school year 1997-1998. A survey conducted by PACT in 1999 found that 92 percent of 300 teachers in the twelve schools felt positively about the program.

Reports of rising reading scores in schools with Direct Instruction also attracted the attention of a state senator from Miami, who suggested that PACT seek state funds for broader implementation of the program. To build a statewide campaign, PACT sought the help of its sister organizations – other DART affiliates in Florida (see sidebar). Together, they staged a 1,000-person public accountability meeting in Tallahassee, the state capital, to win the support of the Florida commissioner of education, then met individually with key members of the state legislature.

With support from the state education commissioner, the Florida legislature appropriated $7.25 million in the 2001 state budget to fund Direct Instruction in five urban counties. The legislation required participating schools to work with a community organization with an identifiable base of local residents or parents. Miami received $2.3 million to expand the program to additional Title I schools; fifteen schools in Miami voted to implement Direct Instruction during the 2001-2002 school year.

Direct Instruction was a cornerstone of PACT's strategy for improving literacy, but organizers and leaders believed that schools needed additional support to transform reading achievement. Based on recommendations from the National Institute for Direct Instruction, PACT negotiated with state officials to allow state funds to be used for new districtwide staff positions to help the schools implementing the program. The district hired a district-level coordinator and three "super coaches" who spent a half day in each school every week, observing and supporting teachers using the program. The district also provided professional development for school-level reading leaders and funds for schools to free up experienced teachers to serve as school-level coaches.[5]

Direct Action Research and Training Center

PACT is affiliated with DART, the national Direct Action Research and Training Center. DART was founded in 1982 to develop congregation-based organizing groups to work for social, racial, and economic justice. The network currently has twenty-one member organizations, each with its own board of trustees, and staff of professional organizers. DART began in Miami, and continues to have more affiliates (ten) in Florida than in any other state. These organizations are united in the Federation of DART Organizations in Florida and work together to pursue state-level reform in support of the local efforts of member groups. (For more information, see <www.thedartcenter.org>.

Engaging the Community

To complement the district's support for schools, PACT developed a community engagement strategy, drawing on the energy and commitment of its volunteer member base. PACT initiated the program PACT Academically Linking with Schools (PALS), through which it trained twenty-one congregation leaders in the methodology of Direct Instruction to support and monitor its implementation in schools. PALS representatives observed classroom instruction, met with teachers and principals monthly, and attended the district's quarterly professional development sessions. Stankiewicz said:

> We'd go in there so that they know who we are, and if there's something they need to say, or need to talk about, they can. We're not invasive, we are there only to help them.

Participation in PALS deepened community members' knowledge of the issues facing schools and helped them to develop new relationships with school staff. Consistent contact with teachers and principals uncovered new issues to bring to the attention of the PACT education committee. PACT leaders used their relationships with school staff and their familiarity with school- and classroom-level implementation to relay principals' and teachers' concerns to district administrators and advocate on their behalf.

In one school, for example, PACT interceded with the district to win a commitment to maintain the program across a principal transition. PACT also negotiated with the district to override a hiring freeze to fill a vacancy in district-level reading coaches and with the publisher of Direct Instruction materials to obtain extra books for school libraries. The high level of community engagement and support helped PACT gain the trust of principals. One principal commented:

> When we implemented Direct Instruction, PACT representatives would come by the school once a month. They visited classrooms to see how the children were progressing. They were very much into knowing, "Now that you've implemented the program, how can we help you? Are things running smoothly, are the teachers OK? Are the parents OK?"

Internally, PACT broadened the agenda and format of its public accountability meetings so that educators' efforts in Direct Instruction schools would be recognized and praised. Award ceremonies were included as part of the annual public meeting to acknowledge students with exemplary achievement, and principals and teachers were asked to speak and to share their work. Participation in these events numbered in the thousands as generations of family members came out to celebrate their children's success. Gloria Whilby recalled:

> There were families dressed up in their Sunday best, sitting with their children. The children

"PACT representatives . . . visited classrooms to see how the children were progressing. They were very much into knowing, 'Now that you've implemented the program, how can we help you? Are things running smoothly, are the teachers OK? Are the parents OK?'"

— A Miami-Dade principal, elementary school involved with PACT

[5] In 2001, the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind Act and required that school reform models paid for by federal funds show empirical evidence of their effectiveness. PACT used this mandate to push the district to use No Child Left Behind's Reading First funds to support Direct Instruction. (Reading First refers to federal funds specifically targeted for reading instruction in Title I schools.)

"In the [parent organizing] meetings, everything is controlled by the parents [to] give the parents the freedom and the power to make decisions about what they think is necessary in their children's education."

— *Judy McKnight, parent and PTA president*

> were more proud of getting a certificate than getting a [prize] because it was a validation that they could read.

In four schools, PACT also led intensive parent organizing to build leadership committees of parents at the school site that could work with teachers and administrators to address school problems. Three of the four schools were part of the original cohort of twelve Direct Instruction schools. Judy McKnight, a parent and PTA president, became involved in PACT through the school-based organizing. McKnight observed that the role of parent organizing meetings was to empower parents to make changes for what they thought was necessary in their children's school. . . . In the [parent organizing] meetings, everything is controlled by the parents [to] give the parents the freedom and the power to make decisions about what they think is necessary in their children's education.

PACT's school-based parent committees brought new leaders into PACT and led a variety of successful campaigns focused on the specific needs of individual Direct Instruction schools, such as improving school busing services and facilities and preventing strip clubs from opening near schools. In 2004, PACT expanded its institutional membership to permit these schools to join PACT as individual member organizations, with the requirement that they pay nominal annual dues and recruit staff and parents to participate in organization-wide training sessions and events.

All these activities were designed to facilitate implementation of Direct Instruction and support principals' and teachers' school-improvement efforts. The activities also represented an important strategic decision about the relationship between schools and the community organizing group. PACT saw low student literacy as a systemic problem, rather than a school failure, and positioned itself as an ally of principals and teachers. Aaron Dorfman, then–executive director of PACT, explained,

> Most principals, as with most teachers, want the schools to succeed, want the schools to do well, want the same things that parents want. So we've generally taken the attitude that local school folks are allies and the district is the system that we're trying to change.

The End of Direct Instruction in Miami Schools

In July 2004 a new superintendent arrived in Miami: Rudy Crew, formerly the schools chancellor in New York City. He announced his intention to form a "School Improvement Zone" of low-performing schools based on the success of a similar strategy implemented in New York City. Among other stipulations, the superintendent planned to require schools in this new zone to implement a uniform reading curriculum that was not Direct Instruction. Five Direct Instruction schools were designated for participation in the new zone.

When Crew arrived, Direct Instruction was being implemented in twenty-seven schools across the district. Twelve of these schools had implemented the program for six to seven years. The remaining fifteen schools were entering their third year of implementation; four of these fifteen schools were slated to be in the school improvement zone.

PACT leaders were stunned by the superintendent's decision to end the program before it had had a chance to take root in schools. Helen Stankiewicz observed, "Statistics have shown you can't really judge a program until the third year; it didn't make sense to pull Direct Instruction out."

PACT responded cautiously to the superintendent's proposal, requesting that the five schools designated for the zone be allowed to continue using Direct Instruction, at least through the end of the school year. PACT argued that those schools had shown a 14 percent increase in reading scores from 2002 to 2004, compared with a 6 percent increase in schools with similar students that were not using the program. PACT also requested data on the new reading program that the superintendent proposed for Zone schools and asked the district to consider targeting Direct Instruction specifically toward students performing below grade level in reading.

Despite an initial positive meeting between PACT and the new superintendent, the two sides quickly reached an impasse over the future of Direct Instruction. Tensions erupted into public disagreement when the new superintendent sent a representative in his place to attend PACT's annual public accountability meeting in which Direct Instruction was to be discussed. Crew had previously agreed to attend, but as the event grew near, his office rescinded the agreement, citing a scheduling conflict.

PACT leaders were deeply disheartened by the superintendent's decision not to attend the meeting, which they interpreted as a sign of the new administration's disregard for PACT's role in education reform. Stankiewicz, who chaired the public meeting, recalled her decision not to allow the superintendent's representative to address the crowd at the meeting: "He didn't have the power to negotiate with us and he wasn't Dr. Crew; he wasn't the one who made the promise and then didn't show up." On the district's part, PACT was perceived as refusing to negotiate and using inflexible tactics to get its way.

PACT and the superintendent continued to try to negotiate throughout the fall of 2004 but, ultimately, they were unable to reach an agreement about Direct Instruction, which PACT wanted to keep and the superintendent wanted to let go. Opposing positions on both sides solidified. By spring, the district and PACT had developed an openly adversarial relationship as the district reached the decision to eliminate Direct Instruction in all twenty-seven schools.

Ten years earlier, PACT had faced a district administration that held opposing views about how best to support children's literacy development. With the Crew administration, the disagreement was not over how to foster literacy development, but over which program to use in doing so. Though the district supported the instructional strategies at the core of Direct Instruction, it did not want to create a balkanized reading program in the district where schools two blocks from each other were using different reading programs. By adopting a uniform, districtwide literacy program, the district aimed to create consistency in reading instruction for a highly mobile, high-poverty student population.

Ultimately, the district permitted Direct Instruction schools until the end of the 2004-2005 school year. Educators in those schools understood the superintendent's rationale but saw the program's elimination as a sad end to years of effort. Reading specialist Maria Prieto observed:

> Next year we're all supposed to start on Houghton-Mifflin. Maybe it's a wonderful program, but does it do what needs to be done for our kids, especially those in the lower grades and those who can't read in the upper grades? Everything that PACT has done is being undone for next year, at least in Dade County. We're all devastated that we can't do it next year, but that's the way it goes.

When Direct Instruction ended in 2005, PACT dismantled its PALS program. Losing the fight to keep Direct Instruction had taken an emotional toll on PACT organizers and leaders. As Gloria Whilby put it,

> It was like someone slapped you in the face when you were not expecting it. It takes a while to get over that they did it and then to react to the pain.

During the organization's ten-year campaign for Direct Instruction, PACT worked closely with its allies in the DART network to advocate at the state level for increased school funding, higher standards,

"One of the reasons Direct Instruction worked so well was because of the in-class coaching those teachers got. Folks have known intuitively for a long time that the quality of the teacher in the classroom makes a difference."

— Aaron Dorfman, former executive director, PACT

and greater access for low-income families to the state's voluntary pre-kindergarten program. This state-level organizing work continued as PACT assessed its local strategy "to figure out what we're going to do and how we're going to have an impact given the current political realities," Aaron Dorfman, former executive director of PACT, explained. Superintendent Crew had come into Miami with strong support from the school board, and PACT faced the challenge of moving its education work forward in the context of its oppositional relationship with district leadership.

A year later, in 2006, PACT began a new campaign to improve teacher retention through state-level action to create more effective induction programs. PACT leaders saw this work as building on their experiences with Direct Instruction. Dorfman observed:

> One of the reasons Direct Instruction worked so well was because of the in-class coaching those teachers got. Folks have known intuitively for a long time that the quality of the teacher in the classroom makes a difference.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PACT'S EDUCATION ORGANIZING

A substantial number of studies have examined the effectiveness of Direct Instruction for improving student achievement. A 2006 report by the federally funded Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQC) identified Direct Instruction as one of only two programs nationally with convincing evidence of a moderately strong effect on student achievement for high-poverty students of color. Studies cited by the CSRQC report suggested that Direct Instruction is particularly effective in reading. Nonetheless, since its creation in the mid-1960s, the program has provoked debate among school reform advocates about its effectiveness with higher-performing students, as well as the extent to which it promotes higher-order literacy skills and fosters student agency as learners in the classroom.

In Miami, principals, reading specialists, and PACT leaders consistently argued the need to view Direct Instruction as a strategy for building a foundational level of literacy skills among a highly mobile, high-poverty population. Helen Stankiewicz explained: "We think Direct Instruction helps to get students started in reading, but then schools should do whatever they think best to help comprehension." At one school, Stankiewicz recalled,

> I walked in to observe a class, and I said, "They're not doing Direct Instruction. They're writing their own stories; they're creating books." And the teacher said, "And when we're finished with it, we're going to have a tea and invite the parents to come in and hear them read the story. They're doing the illustrations and everything." It was because the students were reading on and above grade level.

Since the goal of this study was to examine the impact of community organizing on student educational outcomes, the analyses focused on understanding the impact of PACT's broad strategy of Direct Instruction in combination with community engagement and district-level supports. Specifically, our research aimed to answer three core questions:

- ✦ To what extent did educators at the school and district levels attribute the adoption and implementation of Direct Instruction and its corollary district and community engagement supports to PACT?
- ✦ How did the combination of Direct Instruction, instructional coaching, and community engagement that resulted from PACT's organizing influence the capacity of schools to educate students successfully?
- ✦ Did participating schools show gains on student engagement and outcome indicators?

Data Collected

To assess the full range of PACT's influence on district policies, school capacity, and student outcomes, the research team used both qualitative and quantitative data sources with an eye toward identifying points of convergence and divergence within the data. The study team developed and administered a teacher perceptions survey to determine what teachers thought about their school's capacity in four domains: district and community influences, school climate, professional culture, and instructional core (see Appendix E for categories and measures used). The survey was given to teachers in ten of the twenty-seven Direct Instruction schools and in three comparison schools.

"We think Direct Instruction helps to get students started in reading, but then schools should do whatever they think best to help comprehension."

— Helen Stankiewicz, retired teacher and PACT education committee member

We also developed and administered a teacher attribution questionnaire, which was given to survey respondents in Direct Instruction schools who reported familiarity with PACT's work. The questionnaire was designed to determine to what extent teachers attributed their school's level of capacity to PACT's involvement. Finally, we reviewed administrative data on demographics and student outcomes for all schools in the district. Figure 3 summarizes the data sources.

FIGURE 3

Summary of data sources for the PACT study

Data Sources	Period of Data Collection	Scope of Data
Interviews	2003–2006	32 interviews • 7 with school- and district-level leaders • 25 with PACT staff and members
Teacher Perceptions Survey (Annenberg Institute administered)	Spring 2005	296 teachers at 13 elementary schools • 232 teachers in 10 schools with Direct Instruction in place (5 schools were drawn from the 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 cohorts and 5 from the 2001-2002 cohort) • 64 teachers in 3 demographically similar comparison schools
Teacher Attribution Questionnaire (Annenberg Institute administered)	Spring 2005	• 45 teachers from the teacher perceptions survey sample who reported familiarity with PACT's work in their schools
Administrative Data	1998–2005	• Demographic data for all schools in the district • Student outcome data for all schools in the district
Document Review	2002–2005	• Documents produced by PACT • Media coverage

Analytic Approach

When possible, longitudinal analyses were conducted to understand trends over time, particularly for student achievement. Data on teacher perceptions and attribution, which were collected at one point in time (spring 2005), rather than across time, required a cross-sectional analysis.

Analysis of influence on district capacity

To address the first research question about the district-level impact of PACT's organizing, the study team relied primarily on educator interviews and archival data. In addition, several measures from the teacher perceptions survey and items from the attribution questionnaire were used to understand the ways in which PACT's organizing influenced district supports for schools.

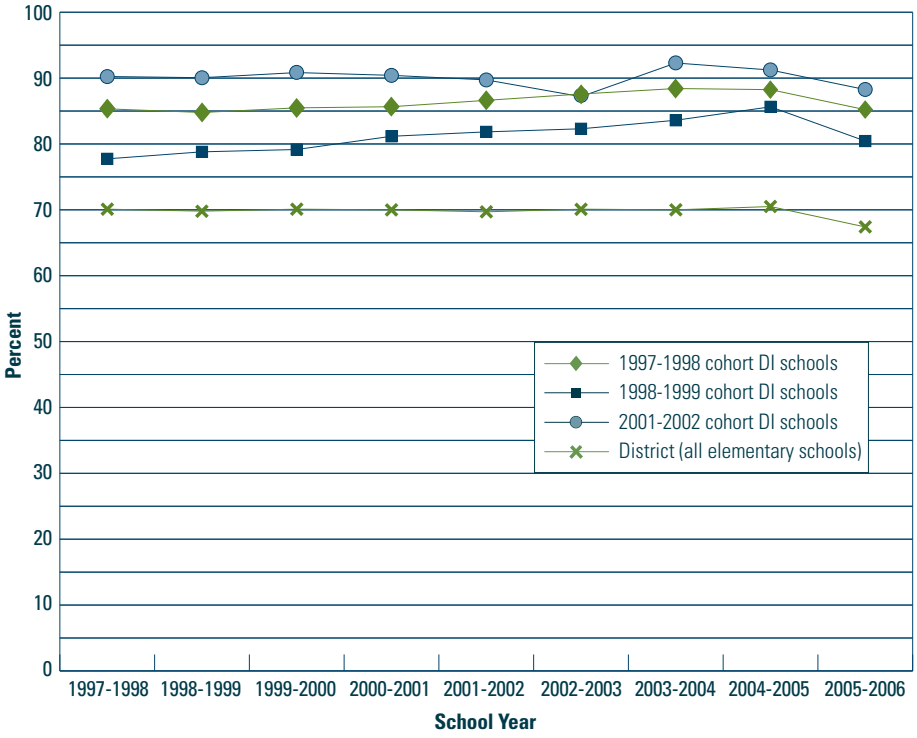
Analysis of influence on school capacity

Data from the teacher perceptions survey, attribution questionnaire, and interviews were used to analyze school capacity. For the purposes of analysis, we differentiated the schools targeted by PACT's organizing into two groups based on when they adopted the Direct Instruction program: Group I (n=12) combined the schools in the 1996-1997 cohort and the 1997-1998 cohort; Group II (n=15) included the schools in the 2001-2002 cohort. By grouping the schools in this way, we were able to consider the effects of the number of years of implementation on school capacity outcomes.

An analysis of school demographic data showed that while all schools implementing Direct Instruction served a substantially larger proportion of high-

FIGURE 4

Students eligible for federal free or reduced-price lunch, Direct Instruction schools by cohort vs. all district elementary schools, 1997–2006



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

poverty students than the district as a whole, this proportion was particularly high for the 2001-2002 cohort (see Figure 4). Similarly, rates of student mobility were substantially higher for the 2001-2002 cohort (see Figure 5) than for previous cohorts or the district. Given the differences between the two cohort groups, it is likely that the two groups had differing levels of school capacity at the onset of implementation of the program.

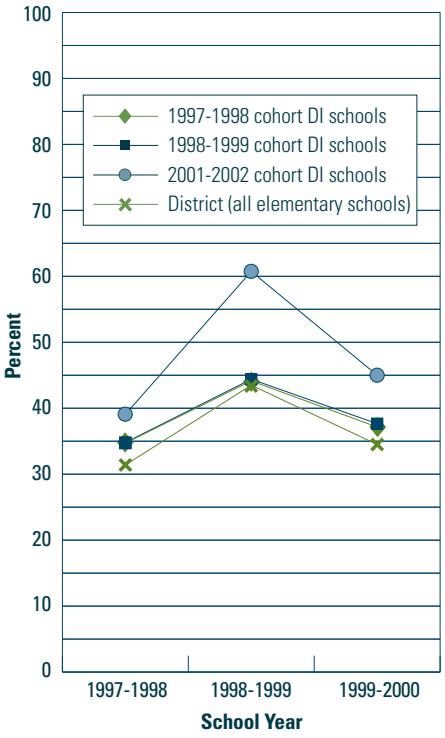
For the teacher perceptions survey analysis, we chose five schools from each of the two analysis groups. Selection of comparison schools for this analysis was based on their demographic comparability with Direct Instruction schools as a whole (including all cohorts). The number of comparison schools in the teacher survey was small (three schools), so we were unable to differentiate these schools to create cohort-specific comparison groups. Instead, the samples taken from the two Direct Instruction analysis groups were compared with the overall set of three comparison schools. This approach likely disadvantaged the 2001-2002 cohort, because they were being analyzed against comparison schools that may have had a higher starting capacity.

To analyze results from the teacher perceptions survey, t-tests were conducted to compare differences between perceptions of school capacity at Direct Instruction and the comparison schools. In addition, effect size calculations were computed to assess the magnitude of the difference between the means. Analyses of t-tests tell us *whether or not there is a statistically significant difference* between two means. Effect size computations give us information about the *size of the difference* (small, medium, large) between the two means.[6] As previously noted, separate analyses were conducted for groups I and II.

To supplement these quantitative analyses, the study team examined interview data from educators to understand how school-level educators experienced the impact of PACT's involvement on their school's capacity to educate students.

FIGURE 5

Student mobility rates, Direct Instruction schools by cohort vs. all district elementary schools, 1997–2000



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

[6] On a t-test, a p-value of less than .05 indicates statistical significance – in other words, a p-value of .05 means that there is a less than 5 percent chance that the difference between the two means is due to chance.

Analysis of student outcomes

Trends in student educational outcomes were assessed through a year-to-year comparative analysis of changes in student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). These analyses examined changes in the percent of students scoring at each of five levels of proficiency on the FCAT in schools targeted by PACT, compared with a matched comparison group and the district as whole. Having data from all schools in the district for this set of analyses allowed us to construct separate comparison groups for analysis groups I and II, to provide as close a match as possible on student demographic indicators (percent of free/reduced-price-lunch–eligible students, percent of limited English proficient students, and student mobility).[7] However, because we were unable to obtain baseline data for at least one year prior to implementation in Group I cohorts, our analysis of student outcomes focused on Group II.

Figure 6 provides a summary of the numbers of Direct Instruction schools included in each cohort and analysis group; the composition of the sample used for the teacher survey and questionnaire; and the numbers of non-Direct Instruction schools used for comparison in different kinds of analysis in the study.

Caveats

Our analyses explored how school capacity and student educational outcomes were changing in schools targeted by PACT's education organizing. As this was not an experimental study, the team's findings must be interpreted as illuminating a phenomenon, rather than providing a causal explanation of effects that might be generalized to other schools and communities. Though efforts were made to construct as closely matched a comparison as possible in our analyses, we do not know what other reforms were occurring in schools that may have influenced the

FIGURE 6

Grouping of schools for study analyses

Analysis group	Cohort	Total years of Direct Instruction implementation	Number of Direct Instruction schools in cohort	Total number of schools in analysis group	Number of schools in survey and questionnaire sample/analysis	Number of schools in administrative data sample/student outcomes analysis
I	1996-1997	8	5	12	5	12
	1997-1998	7	7			
II	2001-2002	4	15	15	5	15
			Total Direct Instruction Schools	27	10	27
				Comparison schools	3	27

Note: SY2004-2005 was the last year of Direct Instruction implementation before the program was ended in all twenty-seven schools. More information about the grouping of cohorts for analysis is provided in Appendix C.

findings in this report. Changes in school leadership and district priorities and the presence of other school reform programs are potentially confounding factors.

In light of these limitations, the inferences presented here are argued on the consistency of evidence across multiple data sources, as well as on their congruence with the theory underlying PACT's reform strategy and the research literature on the effects of Direct Instruction, instructional coaching, and community engagement.

FINDINGS

Influence on District Capacity

Our framework of school capacity posits that the district and community context is an important influence on school-level performance. Equity-oriented resource distribution, district policies, and accountability to communities are key factors in supporting schools to do well. In reporting PACT's influence, we began with an assessment of PACT's impact on the district context.

Policies and resources

The data indicated that PACT's advocacy influenced the priorities and allocation of resources within the district. Educators at all levels of the system credited PACT with directing resources to improve reading instruction for low-performing students. The organization secured approximately $3 million in new funds to implement Direct Instruction in twenty-seven Miami-Dade County elementary schools, plus an additional $4 million to implement Direct Instruction in other schools across the state. These funds were prioritized for Title I schools.

Data also show that PACT's organizing focused on particularly high-needs schools. As Figure 4 on page 18 showed, the percent of students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program was considerably higher in schools targeted by PACT than the district average.

Accountability to community

When asked to rate the extent to which the district encouraged schools to be accountable to communities, teachers in Analysis Group I rated their schools more highly than teachers at comparison schools; this difference was statistically significant (see Figure 7 on the next page). There were no significant findings in Group II or in the sample overall.

Educators reported that the ongoing involvement of community members in schools and the inclusion of schools' needs in PACT accountability sessions with district leaders changed the nature of interaction between the district, schools, and communities. PACT's efforts to increase district accountability provided a mechanism for problem solving and, in some cases, a source of protection for schools. District interviews supported this view; interviewees noted PACT's style of calling school board members "to ratchet up the pressure" on behalf of Direct Instruction. One principal noted, "PACT can go to the district – they can go to regional offices and put pressure that sometimes we, as principals, can't do."

[7] Comparison group schools were identified through a discriminant function analysis that matched schools for these indicators. This strategy yielded comparison groups of roughly similar size and demographic profile for analysis groups I and II.

FIGURE 7

Teacher perceptions of district and community support, Group I schools vs. comparison schools

District and Community Support Measures	Group I Mean (*n*=123)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Creating local accountability†	3.65	3.29	**.006****	medium
Partnering with non-system actors†	3.58	3.37	.159	small

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

*** p < .001
** p < .01
* p < .05

Influence on School Capacity

The study data showed widespread support for PACT's reform strategy within the schools implementing the program. Educators in those schools saw Direct Instruction as an effective program. They also believed that the expanded community engagement and teacher supports that PACT introduced helped build a sense of community, trust, and cohesion among teachers, administrators, and parents in schools.

"PACT can go to the district – they can go to regional offices and put pressure that sometimes we, as principals, can't do."

— A Miami-Dade principal, elementary school involved with PACT

School climate

Survey data indicated that schools targeted by PACT's organizing had a stronger sense of community and safety.

- When groups I and II were combined, the study team found small positive effects on two of six measures of school climate: sense of community and safety and achievement-oriented culture (see Figure 8).
- A cohort analysis shows stronger effects for the earlier cohorts of schools, which had implemented the program for a substantially longer period of time. In Group I schools, the study team found statistically significant differences on four school climate measures: sense of community and safety, achievement-oriented culture, teacher–parent trust, and parent involvement in school (see Figure 9).
- In Group II schools, there were no statistically significant findings in favor of the PACT schools. There was a statistically significant difference on teacher outreach to parents; teachers at comparison schools rated this dimension higher than teachers at PACT schools (see Figure 29 in Appendix D).

FIGURE 8

Teacher perceptions of school climate, groups I and II vs. comparison schools

School Climate Measures	Groups I and II Mean (*n*=232)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Sense of Community and Safety†	3.29	2.99	**.005****	small
Achievement-Oriented Culture†	3.98	3.79	.109	small
Teacher–Parent Trust	2.87	2.78	.218	negligible
Parent Involvement in School†	2.13	2.07	.502	negligible
Teacher Outreach to Parents	3.08	3.15	.351	negligible
Knowledge of Students' Culture†	3.30	3.49	.204	(small)

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

**** p < .001*
*** p < .01*
** p < .05*

Parentheses indicate p-values or effect sizes in favor of comparison schools.

FIGURE 9

Teacher perceptions of school climate, Group I schools vs. comparison schools

School Climate Measures	Group I Mean (*n*=123)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Sense of Community and Safety†	3.53	2.99	**.000*****	large
Achievement-Oriented Culture†	4.16	3.79	**.003****	medium
Teacher–Parent Trust	2.99	2.78	**.004****	medium
Parent Involvement in School†	2.26	2.07	**.034***	small
Teacher Outreach to Parents	3.19	3.15	.622	negligible
Knowledge of Students' Culture†	3.29	3.49	.215	(small)

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

**** p < .001*
*** p < .01*
** p < .05*

Parentheses indicate p-values or effect sizes in favor of comparison schools.

Regardless of cohort, teachers believed that PACT's organizing strongly influenced their schools in the areas of school–community relationships, sense of community and trust in the school, parent involvement, and teacher–parent relationships. Not surprisingly, ratings were higher for Group I schools than for Group II schools, where PACT had been involved for far less time (see Figure 10).

These findings were consistent with PACT members' and principals' accounts of PACT's role in increasing instructional cohesion in schools through Direct Instruction and the organization's work to acknowledge educators' efforts. In one school where PACT conducted intensive parent organizing, the principal noted that involvement in PACT fostered a practice of collective problem solving among parents. Julio Carrera, principal of South Hialeah Elementary School, commented:

> What they actually do is organize the frustrations and the things these parents would like to see changed here, so they can present it to me, not screaming, not with outrage, not poking fun [at] me and saying . . . "I don't like this, I don't like that," but focusing it in a more realistic way and negotiating: "We have seen this and we think that something like this should happen; what is it that you're able to do?"

Principals and teachers asserted that widespread satisfaction with Direct Instruction among parents and family members increased student motivation to

FIGURE 10

Teacher attributions of PACT's influence on school climate

How much do you think that working with PACT has influenced . . .	Group I Mean (*n*=25)	Group II Mean (*n*=20)
School's relations with the community	2.61	2.11
Sense of community and trust in the school	2.57	2.00
School's relations with parents	2.52	2.05
Parent involvement in the school	2.41	2.12
How teachers get along with parents	2.48	2.06
Safety and discipline in the school	2.35	1.74
Physical condition of the school building	2.29	1.75
How students get along with other students	2.18	1.84
Changes in school overcrowding	1.95	1.88

Note: Teachers were asked if they were aware of PACT's organizing in their schools. If they answered yes, they were asked to rate PACT's influence in a variety of areas on a 3-point scale: 3 = very much influence, 2 = some influence, 1 = no influence. Means between 2.1 and 3.0 indicate a high degree of influence. Complete results of the teacher attribution questionnaire are summarized in Appendix D, Figure 31. For more information about the items used, see Appendix E.

attend school. Elementary school attendance is typically high, however, and we found no discernable difference in attendance between Direct Instruction and comparison schools.

Professional culture

As with school climate, schools targeted by PACT appeared to have a stronger culture of staff collaboration and collegiality than comparison schools.

- Groups I and II together showed statistically significant differences on two measures of teacher collegiality and morale: peer collaboration and school commitment (see Figure 11).
- Group I schools showed statistically significant differences from comparison schools on the same two measures: peer collaboration and school commitment. Small positive effects were evident on four additional measures: collective responsibility, quality professional development, joint problem solving, and principal instructional leadership (see Figure 12 on the next page).

"[PACT organizes] the frustrations and the things these parents would like to see changed here, so they can present it to me not screaming, not with outrage, . . . but focusing it in a more realistic way and negotiating."

— Julio Carrera, principal, South Hialeah Elementary School

FIGURE 11

Teacher perceptions of professional culture, groups I and II vs. comparison schools

Professional Culture Measures	Groups I and II Mean (*n*=232)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Peer Collaboration	3.01	2.78	**.007****	small
School Commitment	2.93	2.72	**.045***	small
Teacher–Teacher Trust	2.98	2.86	.162	small
Joint Problem Solving	2.59	2.48	.214	negligible
Quality Professional Development	2.98	2.90	.312	negligible
Principal Instructional Leadership	3.21	3.17	.703	negligible
Teacher–Principal Trust	3.00	3.04	.703	negligible
Collective Responsibility†	3.51	3.47	.728	negligible

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

**** p < .001*
*** p < .01*
** p < .05*

FIGURE 12

Teacher perceptions of professional culture, Group I schools vs. comparison schools

Professional Culture Measures	Group I Mean (*n*=123)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Peer Collaboration	3.00	2.78	**.010***	medium
School Commitment	3.02	2.72	**.014***	medium
Principal Instructional Leadership	3.32	3.17	.126	small
Joint Problem Solving	2.61	2.48	.189	small
Quality Professional Development	3.00	2.90	.235	small
Collective Responsibility†	3.60	3.47	.317	small
Teacher–Teacher Trust	2.94	2.86	.411	negligible
Teacher–Principal Trust	3.01	3.04	.824	negligible

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$.

✦ Group II schools showed statistically significant differences on only one measure, peer collaboration, and small positive effects on teacher–teacher trust and joint problem solving (see Figure 13).

Responses on the attribution survey indicated that teachers believe PACT had a strong influence on their schools' professional culture. As Figure 14 shows, teachers in Group I schools rated all four items in this domain highly, and teachers in Group II schools gave their highest rating to PACT's influence on professional development opportunities.

Survey analyses are supported by interview data on the nature and intensity of the district's and PACT's involvement in schools. Principals and teachers observed a stronger sense of teacher satisfaction, morale, and engagement in their schools after Direct Instruction was adopted. These findings are consistent with teachers' belief in the efficacy of Direct Instruction as a literacy program. Indeed, teacher survey respondents held positive views of Direct Instruction regardless of whether their schools had the program.

The majority of teachers knew something about Direct Instruction, whether their school had the program or not (see Figure 15 on page 28). Seventy-nine percent of teachers in schools using Direct Instruction and 75 percent of teachers in comparison schools reported "generally positive" or "strongly positive" attitudes toward the program (see Figure 16 on page 28). A 1999 survey of 300 teachers conducted by PACT found similar results, with 92 percent of teachers holding favorable views of Direct Instruction (PACT, n.d.).

FIGURE 13

Teacher perceptions of professional culture, Group II schools vs. comparison schools

Professional Culture Measures	Group II Mean (*n*=109)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Peer Collaboration	3.01	2.78	**.020***	medium
Teacher–Teacher Trust	2.94	2.86	.077	small
Joint Problem Solving	2.57	2.48	.363	small
School Commitment	2.82	2.72	.410	negligible
Quality Professional Development	2.95	2.90	.562	negligible
Teacher–Principal Trust	2.98	3.04	.649	negligible
Collective Responsibility†	3.41	3.47	.671	negligible
Principal Instructional Leadership	3.07	3.17	.292	(small)

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

**** p < .001*
*** p < .01*
** p < .05*

Parentheses indicate p-values or effect sizes in favor of low-involvement schools.

FIGURE 14

Teacher attributions of PACT's influence on professional culture

How much do you think that working with PACT has influenced …	Group I Mean (*n*=25)	Gorup II Mean (*n*=20)
Quality of principal leadership	2.48	2.05
Commitment to the school	2.48	2.05
How teachers get along with other teachers	2.43	1.95
Professional development opportunities	2.41	2.29

Note: Teachers were asked if they were aware of PACT's organizing in their schools. If they answered yes, they were asked to rate PACT's influence in a variety of areas on a 3-point scale: 3 = very much influence, 2 = some influence, 1 = no influence. Means between 2.1 and 3.0 indicate a high degree of influence. As the same influence items were used across three survey sites in our study, not all items were relevant to PACT's education organizing. Complete results of the teacher attribution questionnaire are summarized in Appendix D, Figure 31. For more information about the items used, see Appendix E.

FIGURE 15

Teacher knowledge of Direct Instruction

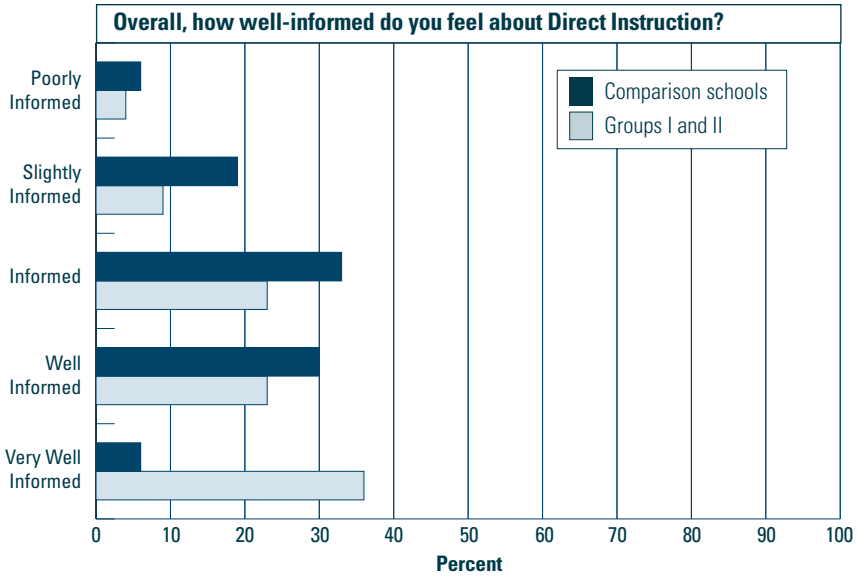


FIGURE 16

Teacher attitudes about Direct Instruction

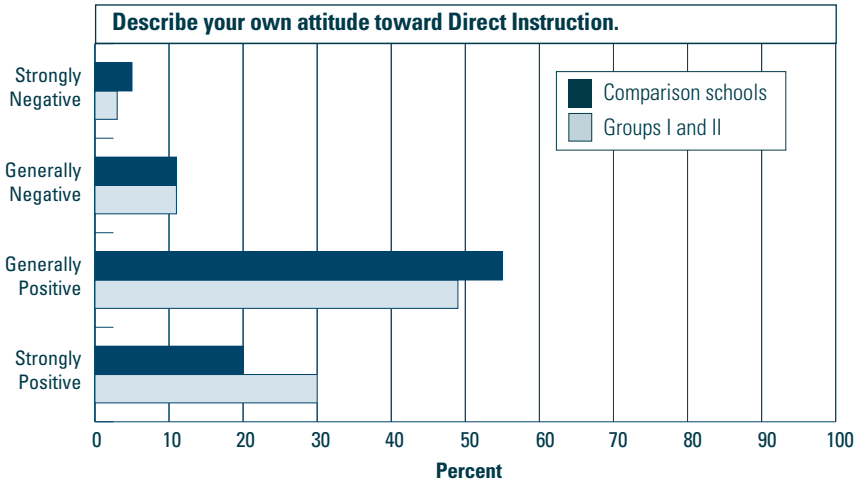


FIGURE 17

Teacher perceptions of instructional core, groups I and II vs. comparison schools

Instructional Core Measures	Groups I and II Mean (*n*=232)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Coherent Curriculum and Instruction†	3.93	3.73	.127	small
Instructional Focus†	3.73	3.54	.186	small
Classroom Resources	3.21	3.18	.720	negligible

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

***** p < .001
**** p < .01
*** p < .05.

FIGURE 18

Teacher perceptions of instructional core, Group I schools vs. comparison schools

Instructional Core Measures	Gorup I Mean (*n*=123)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
Coherent Curriculum and Instruction†	4.05	3.73	**.019***	medium
Instructional Focus†	3.86	3.54	**.029***	small
Classroom Resources	3.28	3.18	.282	small

Note: Complete results for the teacher survey are summarized in Appendix D. Sources and reliability data for subscales are provided in Appendix E.

The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:*

***** p < .001
**** p < .01
*** p < .05.

Instructional core

Since Direct Instruction aimed to improve the quality of literacy instruction in schools, we expected to find the strongest effects on the school's instructional core.

- In the overall sample, there were small effect sizes in favor of two dimensions of instructional core: coherent curriculum and instruction and instructional focus (see Figure 17).
- Survey analyses showed that these effects were more pronounced in Group I schools. The analyses showed statistically significant differences between Group I schools and comparison schools on coherent curriculum and instruction and instructional focus, as well as a small effect size for classroom resources (see Figure 18). In Group II schools, there were no statistically significant differences between the two analysis groups on any of the three instructional core measures and all effect sizes were negligible (see Figure 29 in Appendix D).

"Seven years ago, if we had two children in every classroom reading on grade level, it was a lot. Now, probably 75 percent or 80 percent of the children in my school are reading on or above grade level."

— A principal

Teachers in Group I schools credited PACT with a very high influence on all the items related to their school's instructional core (teacher expectations for student achievement, classroom resources, quality of curriculum and instruction, and teaching effectiveness). Even in Group II schools, where the program was in place for only three years, teachers credited PACT with a high degree of influence on their schools' instructional core (see Figure 19).

Because we were not evaluating Direct Instruction, we did not collect implementation data – for example, whether teacher instruction was faithful to the model (or, conversely, how teachers may have supplemented the model) or how the presence of other school reform programs or teacher and principal turnover may have facilitated or impeded implementation of the program. Nonetheless, as the preceding sections suggest, principals, teachers, and parents believed Direct Instruction was an appropriate and effective match to the population of students in low-performing Miami schools.

Influence on Student Outcomes

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools made consistent and substantial progress in improving student test score performance across the period of this analysis (2001–2005). In 2006, the district was nominated as a finalist for the Broad Prize for most-improved urban school district.

FIGURE 19

Teacher attributions of PACT's influence on instructional core

How much do you think that working with PACT has influenced . . .	Group I Mean (*n*=25)	Group II Mean (*n*=20)
Teaching effectiveness	2.50	2.16
Quality of curriculum and instruction	2.43	2.18
Teacher expectations for student achievement	2.43	2.00
Classroom resources (e.g., textbooks and other supplies)	2.35	2.16

Note: Teachers were asked if they were aware of PACT's organizing in their schools. If they answered yes, they were asked to rate PACT's influence in a variety of areas on a 3-point scale: 3 = very much influence, 2 = some influence, 1 = no influence. Means between 2.1 and 3.0 indicate a high degree of influence. As the same influence items were used across three survey sites in our study, not all items were relevant to PACT's education organizing. Complete results of the teacher attribution questionnaire are summarized in Appendix D, Figure 31. For more information about the items used, see Appendix E.

The district experienced several changes in leadership during the period of this study, and there are likely many factors that account for the improvement schools made. In addition, although PACT was involved in a critical mass of schools, these schools accounted for less than 10 percent of the district schools overall.

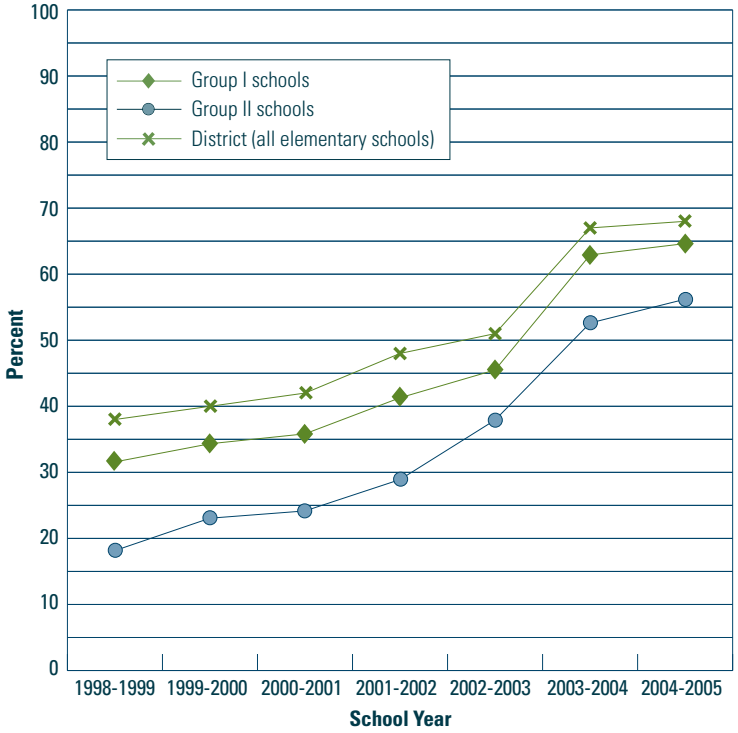
Nonetheless, descriptive analyses of student performance on the state-mandated Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) showed gains in student learning for schools targeted by PACT's organizing, particularly among students scoring at the lowest level of performance on the test.

Figure 20 shows the gains for fourth-grade students scoring at levels 3 and above on the FCAT, comparing groups I and II with the district across time. Though the pattern of improvement is similar for PACT schools and the district, PACT schools began lower and closed the gap considerably over time. These gains are supported by interview data. As one principal observed:

> Seven years ago, if we had two children in every classroom reading on grade level, it was a lot. Now, probably 75 percent or 80 percent of the children in my school are reading on or above grade level.

FIGURE 20

Fourth-grade students scoring at levels 3 and above on FCAT Reading, groups I and II vs. district, 1999–2005, by year of DI implementation

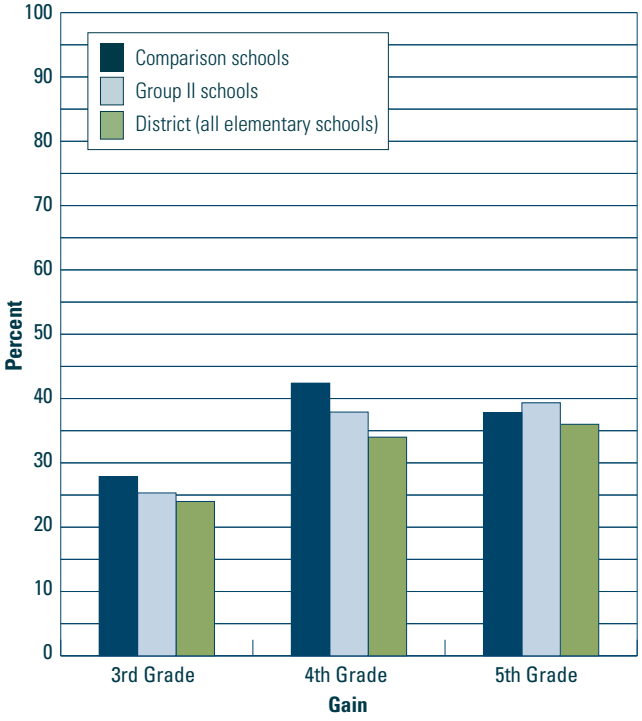


Note: On the FCAT reading tests, students are given scale scores and are assigned to one of five achievement levels. The third level represents proficiency, and students scoring at levels 3, 4, and 5 are considered to be achieving at or above grade level. Students scoring at level 1 are far below standard and risk retention in their grade. For each grade, we examined the percentage of students scoring at level 3 and above, the percentage scoring at level 1, and the changes in the proportions over the course of Direct Instruction implementation.

Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

FIGURE 21

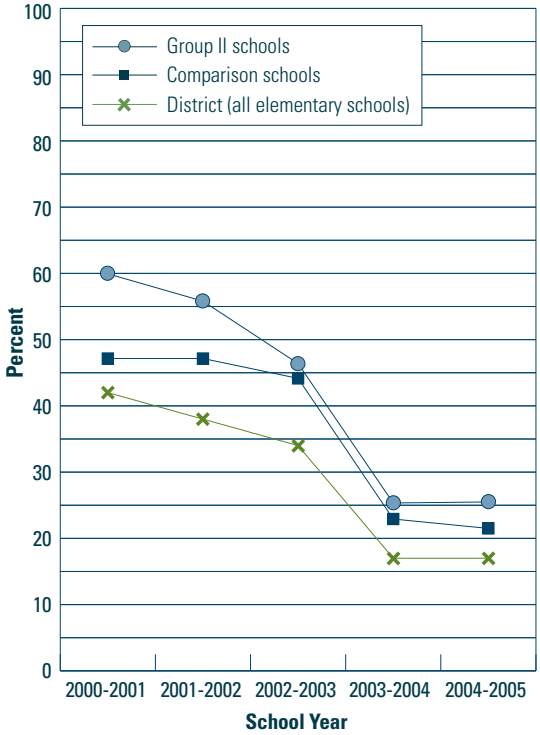
Gain in mean FCAT scores for all students, Group II schools vs. comparison schools and district, 2001–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

FIGURE 22

Fourth-grade students scoring at level 1 in Reading on the FCAT, Group II schools vs. comparison schools and district, 2001–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

Improvement Trends in Group II

Our analyses focused on Group II schools because there were no baseline test score data for the two cohorts of schools in Group I. (Prior to 1998, Florida used a different statewide assessment program.) Group II was larger than each of the earlier cohorts and had implemented Direct Instruction for roughly half the time of the earlier cohorts. Even in these schools, however, the percent of students meeting reading standards increased from 27 percent to 49 percent on the FCAT. As shown in Figure 21 on the next page, these gains outpaced both the district and comparison schools in grades 3 and 4 and outpaced the district in grade 5.

Gains in the Group I schools appeared to be most pronounced for students scoring at the lowest levels on the FCAT, and those schools posted larger gains than comparison schools and the district. As Figure 22 on the next page shows, a year-to-year comparative analysis of the percent of students scoring in the lowest level on FCAT showed a larger decrease in PACT schools over time.

Additional information on student outcomes in Group II schools, along with a summary of student outcomes for Group I schools, is provided in Appendix C.

Survey and interview data supported our statistical analyses of student achievement data. Respondents on the attribution questionnaire rated PACT's influence on student academic performance highly in both cohorts (a mean of 2.38 for Group I schools; a mean of 2.11 in Group II schools on a three-point scale). Principals and reading specialists observed gains in student performance in reading, as well as increased student confidence in other academic subjects. Direct Instruction's role in providing a platform of literacy skills for struggling students may also explain why the gains in grades 3 and 4 of Direct Instruction schools compared with comparison schools and the district are larger than the gains for grade 5. Julio Carrera, principal of South Hialeah Elementary School, noted:

> Reading impacts on everything – science, math – it's the basis for everything in school. Next year, our fifth-graders will no longer be in Direct Instruction. They will be using readers and other textbooks that we have here for reading because they're reading on grade level and above. And that's what we want.

REFLECTIONS ON FINDINGS

In Miami, concerns about low levels of reading achievement led to PACT's ten-year effort to improve literacy instruction in schools serving large numbers of low-income students. Triggered by immigrant parents' alarm that their children could not read, PACT organized parents, community members, clergy, teachers, and principals to implement Direct Instruction in twenty-seven district schools and provided intensive community engagement and support for those schools.

PACT's involvement in schools helped to build school–community trust and relationships that enhanced the implementation of Direct Instruction. Teachers in schools involved with PACT gave their schools high ratings on measures such as sense of school community and safety, teacher commitment, and norms of peer collaboration. These effects were stronger for Group I schools than Group II schools.

"Next year, our fifth-graders will no longer be in Direct Instruction. They will be using readers and other textbooks that we have here for reading because they're reading on grade level and above."

— Julio Carrera, principal, South Hialeah Elementary School

Schools in the earlier cohorts had slightly lower rates of student mobility and lower percentages of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch. Group I schools also had the program in place for twice as long as Group II schools. These factors likely influenced the differences in capacity that we found.

Our analyses of student outcomes were constrained by difficulties in obtaining comparative student-achievement data prior to 1999. However, analyses of Group II schools show steady improvement in third- and fourth-grade performance on the FCAT between 2001 and 2005. Gains made during this period exceeded demographically similar comparison schools, as well as the district as a whole. Academic gains were particularly large for students scoring in the lowest performance level on the test in PACT schools.

Like many multi-issue organizing groups, PACT's education organizing was part of a larger effort to address the needs of its members. PACT has advocated for access to health care, transportation, and language services in federal and city agencies and has helped immigrant and low-income families with their struggles to find affordable legal services. In this context, PACT's education organizing was not only a response to concerns about poor schooling outcomes, but also the natural expansion of support for families most in need.

The story of PACT's organizing to win Direct Instruction and expand the program to other schools, only to lose the program when a new superintendent took the helm, is as much about the role community groups can play in identifying reforms as about the difficulties community constituencies face in building relationships with school system leaders. Who decides which strategies are most suited to the needs of school communities? In the case of Direct Instruction, parents and community leaders brought the program to educators' attention. Principals and teachers in Direct Instruction schools wholeheartedly embraced the program for the same reasons that parents did: struggling students made great gains. As principal Julio Carrera noted: "Progress shot up."

PACT recognized the controversy around Direct Instruction as an instructional strategy and used data and research to make its case that the program was effective for the specific population of students served. Indeed, the new superintendent's decision to remove the program stemmed not from disagreement with the highly scripted instructional model, but from a desire to establish greater uniformity in literacy instruction across the district.

As the struggle over Direct Instruction's future played out, PACT faced the twin challenges of building an encompassing educational vision and expanding its base of power. PACT's difficulty in framing its efforts as both a program for moving students beyond a basic level of literacy to higher levels of performance and a strategy for building community investment in instructional reform weakened its position in negotiations with educators. Such a vision, combined with a greater mutual understanding of each other's motivations and organizational cultures, might have helped PACT and the superintendent to find a resolution that allowed schools to continue using Direct Instruction for the students who needed it most.

When the fight arose over Direct Instruction, the organization realized too late that it had not sufficiently maintained accountability relationships with school board members who might have otherwise supported PACT's efforts. As former PACT executive director Aaron Dorfman said:

> After years of working with supportive superintendents, we had ignored the need to keep relationships of power with school board members. [When the superintendent] decided to forge ahead with removing Direct Instruction, we didn't have enough power in the relationship to [force] him to stop it. No amount of vision or framing would have changed that.

Despite the ultimate fate of Direct Instruction in Miami, PACT's organizing demonstrated the potential of community engagement strategies to create shared, focused conversations on student learning and to support and strengthen the work of teachers and principals. PACT's organizing presented a highly cost-effective intervention. Operating with an average organizational budget of about $200,000 to $300,000 per year (in which education was only one part of the organization's activities), PACT won a substantial instructional reform – and provided crucial implementation support to schools and the district – that leveraged considerable improvement for the district's lowest-performing students.

APPENDIX A

Data Sources for the Case Study Series

Over the six-year study, the study group collected and analyzed a total of 321 stakeholder interviews; 75 observations of organizing strategy sessions, campaign activities, and actions; 509 teacher surveys; and school demographic and standardized test score data.[8]

INTERVIEWS

Our research team conducted 321 open-ended, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders across the sites. Between January 2003 and September 2006, we conducted 160 interviews with organizing staff, 77 interviews with parent and youth leaders, 56 interviews with educators, 28 interviews with allies, and 15 interviews with national network staff.

In the initial phase of the study, we interviewed organizing staff and leaders and focused on organizational characteristics – including the group's mission, theory of change, strategy, capacity, and leadership development activities. Early interviews also aimed to understand the impetus for and strategies underlying groups' campaigns for school improvement. To follow campaign developments, we interviewed organizing staff multiple times over the course of the study.

Interviews with allies, principals, teachers, district administrators, superintendents, and other key stakeholders elicited perceptions of the groups' power and reach and the ways in which the groups' organizing efforts may have impacted school, district, and community capacity.

OBSERVATIONS

During multiple site visits to each of the groups, we observed committee meetings, trainings, negotiation sessions, and public actions. More than seventy-five field notes written by research team members document these observations.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

We reviewed documentation and archival materials produced by the groups, including newsletters, organizational charts, and training materials, across five years of the study.

CONTEXT REVIEW

In addition to conducting extensive background research on the local and state context for each group (e.g., defining the critical policy reforms, state-level issues, governance structure for each school system, political landscape), we followed the local media coverage of education issues in all of our sites. Our database includes more than 1,700 articles. These articles, combined with the interview data, provide a picture of the shifting context for reform in each site.

TEACHER SURVEYS

We administered online teacher surveys in three sites – Austin, Miami-Dade, and Oakland – where organizing groups had used an intensive school-based strategy of organizing and had mounted signature campaigns for several years. The survey explored four critical areas of school capacity, including district support, school climate, professional culture, and instructional core. Survey questions were drawn from a variety of established measures, but primarily from scales developed by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. Appendices in the Austin, Miami, and Oakland case studies include a description of survey measures and their psychometric properties.

[8] We also collected 241 adult member surveys and 124 youth member surveys to understand how involvement in community organizing influenced members' leadership skills and their community and political engagement. However, the case reports focus on school and district outcomes and do not include an analyses of these parent and youth survey data. Results of these surveys will be presented in future publications.

Surveys were administered to teachers at schools where the group was highly engaged in organizing efforts, as well as in a set of comparison schools. A total of 509 teacher surveys were collected from the three sites.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

We also examined publicly available teacher and student data from all districts. Data vary from district to district but include measures of teacher and student race/ethnicity, years of teaching experience, dropout rates, graduation rates, student performance on standardized tests, and a range of other variables. To assess indicators that did not have corresponding data for publicly available download, data requests to the district were made. In Austin and Oakland, these publicly available data included district-administered parent and teacher surveys.

APPENDIX B

Data Sources for the PACT Case Study

To address the research questions (see page 17), the analyses drew on a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data included interviews and archival documents produced by PACT and the local media. Quantitative data were derived from an Annenberg Institute–administered teacher survey and questionnaire and publicly available administrative data.

INTERVIEWS

Between January 2003 and September 2006, the study team conducted twenty-five interviews with PACT staff and members to understand the organization's theory of change and to document the trajectory of PACT's education organizing. Beginning in 2005, we interviewed seven educators at the school and district levels to learn their perspectives on the impact of PACT's organizing. Because interviews took place during a period of conflict between PACT and district leadership, several of the educators we interviewed asked not to be identified in this report.

PERCEPTION SURVEY

In spring 2005, 296 teachers from thirteen elementary schools in the Miami-Dade County school district responded to an Annenberg Institute–administered survey. The survey included multiple measures of school climate, professional culture, and instructional core and assessed teachers' perceptions of their school's capacity in these dimensions. (A complete list of the sources and reliabilities of measures used in the teacher survey can be found in Appendix E.)

Our survey sample consisted of ten schools working with PACT and using Direct Instruction and three demographically similar comparison schools not working with PACT and not using Direct Instruction. PACT schools included two from the original 1996-1997 cohort, three from the 1997-1998 cohort, and five from the 2001-2002 cohort. Survey respondents within each school were not randomly selected; they were recruited through flyers passed out in the schools. The response rate was approximately 58 percent, with 232 teachers (of approximately 505 total) responding in the ten PACT schools, and 64 teachers (of approximately 100 total) responding in the three comparison schools.

ATTRIBUTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Embedded within the teacher survey was a series of attribution questions to assess the extent to which teachers in Direct Instruction schools believed there was a relationship between their school's internal capacity and the actions of PACT. A subsample of 45 of the 232 PACT respondents reported being familiar with PACT's work in their school and answered this questionnaire. Teachers rated PACT's influence on items relating to different areas of school capacity (for example, safety and discipline in the school, professional development opportunities, quality of curriculum and instruction).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

We obtained data on student demographics (free/reduced-price lunch, race/ethnicity, and limited English proficient status) and attendance and discipline for all Miami-Dade County public schools from 1997-1998 to 2005-2006. To assess trends in student outcomes, we examined student performance on statewide standardized reading tests (FCAT). For fourth grade, we examined data from the 1998-1999 school year, the first year for which student achievement data are publicly available through the state's Web site, to 2004-2005, the last year of Direct Instruction usage. Third- and fifth-grade FCAT reading tests, first reported publicly in 2002, were examined through 2004-2005.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

We also reviewed documents produced by PACT and monitored local newspapers to keep abreast of events in Miami.

APPENDIX C

Detailed Analysis of Student Performance

GROUP I SCHOOLS

As noted earlier, our assessment of student outcomes was limited by the lack of baseline test-score data from the years prior to the adoption of Direct Instruction. Five schools began using the program in the 1996-1997 school year and seven more in 1997-1998, which is the first year for which fourth-grade FCAT data became available. Because we do not know how schools in those two cohorts performed relative to their comparison schools before adopting Direct Instruction, we cannot draw conclusions about the impact of the program on test scores in those schools. For purposes of analysis, these two cohorts were combined to form Analysis Group I.

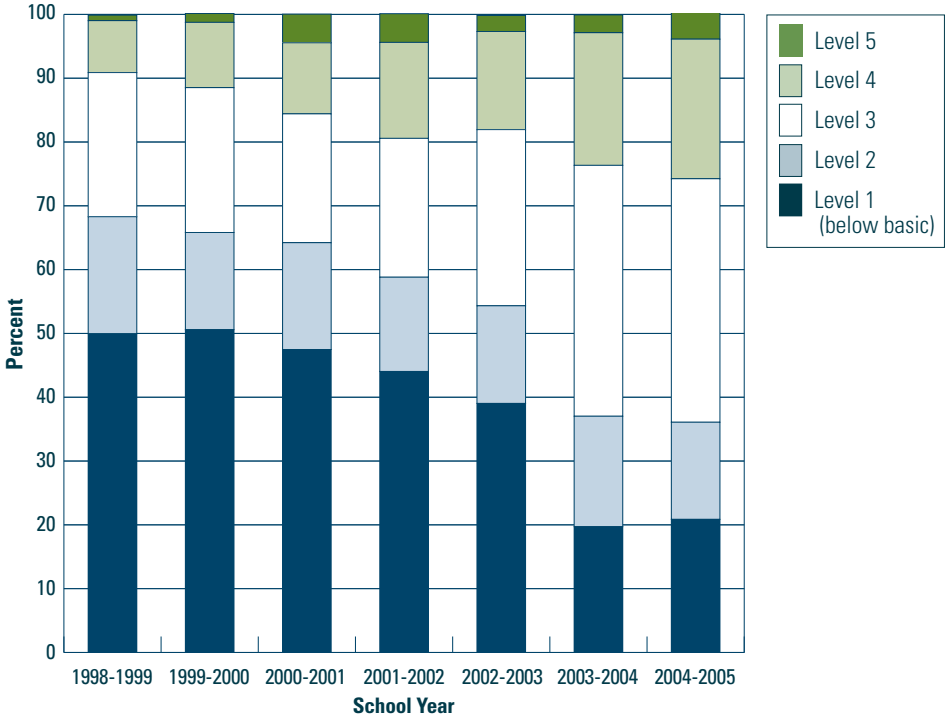
Group I schools increased the proportion of fourth-grade students reaching proficiency (levels 3 and above) by 33 percentage points from 1999 to 2005; individual schools' gains ranged from 4 to 45 percentage points. Over the same time period, the proportion of students scoring at level 1 (below basic) fell from 50 percent to 21 percent (see Figure 23). Since these gains are measured from the middle of the initiative, rather than from the baseline year, it is possible that Group I schools posted much larger gains than our data show.

Group I schools had slightly more fourth-grade students reaching proficiency and slightly fewer students at level 1 than the comparison schools in 1998-1999, but the comparison schools made slightly faster gains through 2004-2005 (see figures 23 and 24).

Grade 3 and 5 trends are more difficult to assess for Group I schools, because the earliest year of available data is 2000-2001, several years after these schools began using Direct Instruction. In general, though,

FIGURE 23

Percentage of fourth-grade students scoring at each proficiency level in Reading on the FCAT, Group I schools, 1998–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

the same pattern holds as for fourth grade. Direct Instruction schools have more proficient students and fewer students at level 1 than comparison schools and make slightly slower progress.

GROUP II SCHOOLS

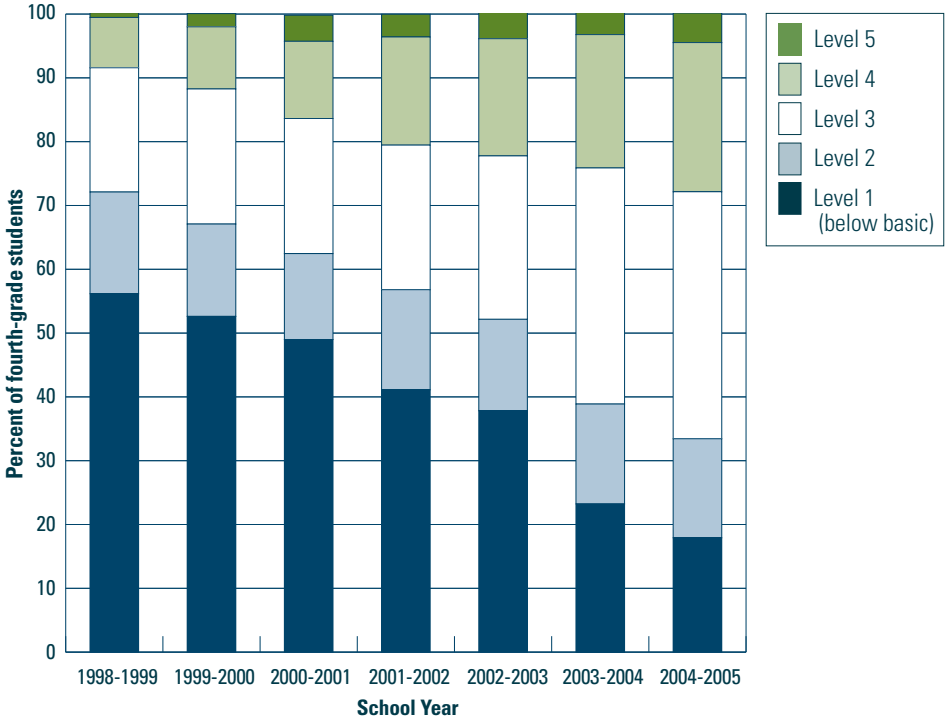
Figures 25 and 26 show the performance of fourth-grade students between 2000 and 2005 in the 2001-2002 cohort (Analysis Group II) and in comparison schools.

In the year prior to adopting Direct Instruction, the fifteen Group II schools reported substantially lower achievement than their demographically matched comparison schools. In 2000-2001, 60 percent of students in Group II schools scored at the lowest achievement level on the FCAT (see Figure 25 on the next page), compared with 47 percent in comparison schools (see Figure 26 on the next page). Likewise, only 24 percent of students in Group II schools scored at levels 3 or above, while 38 percent of students in comparison schools did. Between 2001 and 2005, Group II schools made faster progress, particularly in terms of reducing the proportion of students scoring at level 1, than the comparison schools.

Between 2001 and 2005, Group II schools reduced the proportion of students at level 1 by 34 percentage points, from 60 percent to 26 percent of students. Group II schools also increased the proportion of students reaching proficiency from 24 percent to 56 percent. These gains outpaced those of the comparison schools by 9 and 7 percentage points, respectively. The same pattern of improvement was true for third grade, though the difference in gains between Group II and comparison schools was less pronounced; in fifth grade, Group II schools made slightly faster progress in reducing the proportion of students at level 1 and slightly slower progress in increasing the proportion of students achieving proficiency.

FIGURE 24

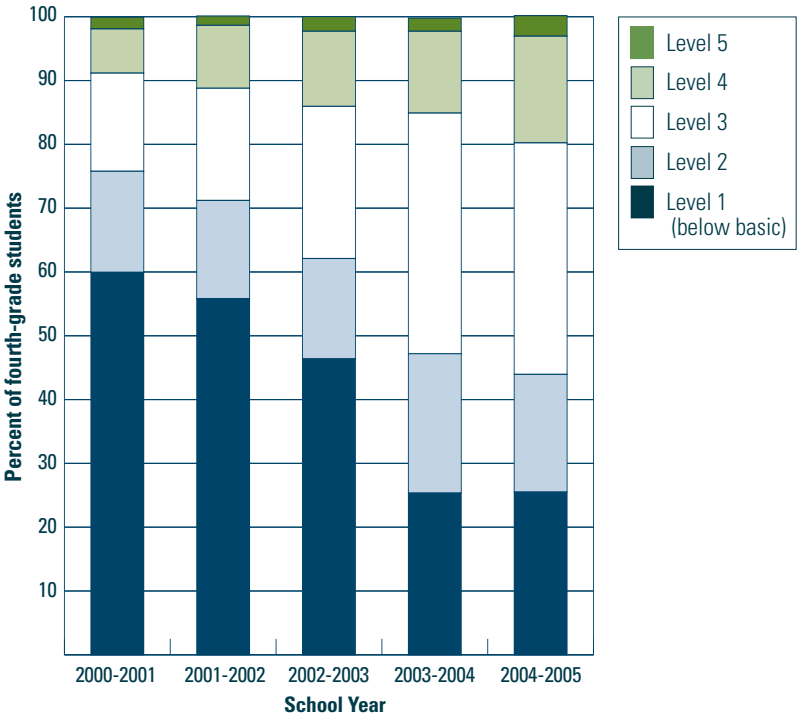
Percentage of fourth-grade students scoring at each proficiency level in Reading on the FCAT, comparison schools, 1998–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

FIGURE 25

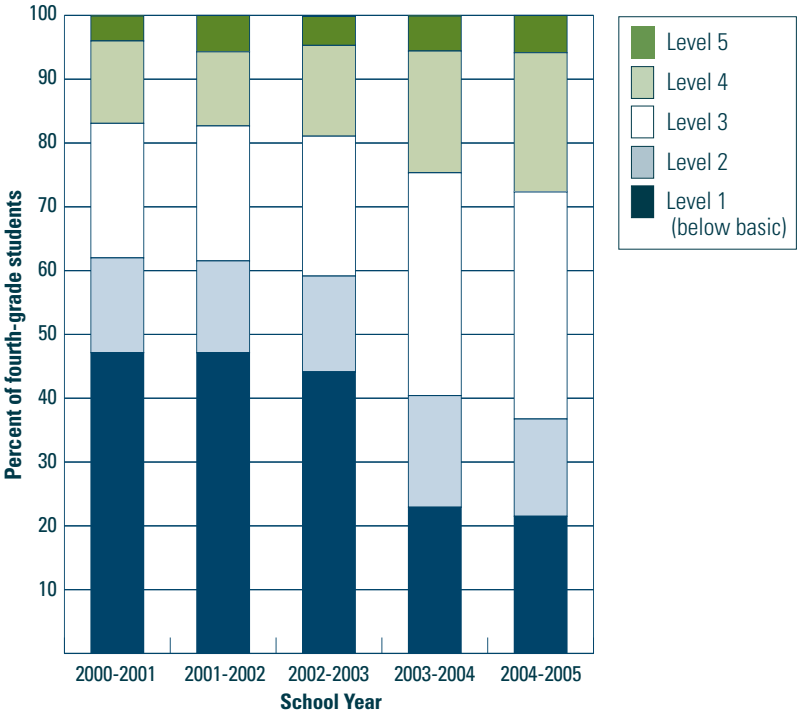
Percentage of fourth-grade students scoring at each proficiency level in Reading on the FCAT, Group II schools, 2000–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

FIGURE 26

Percentage of fourth-grade students scoring at each proficiency level in Reading on the FCAT, comparison schools, 2000–2005



Source: Florida Schools Indicators Report, Florida Department of Education, <http://data.fldoe.org/fsir>

APPENDIX D

Teacher Perceptions and Attributions regarding School Capacity

FIGURE 27

Teacher perceptions of school capacity, groups I and II vs. comparison schools

Domains	Category/Measures	Groups I and II Mean (*n*=232)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
District and community influences	**District support**				
	Creating local accountability†	3.43	3.29	.246	negligible
	Community support and accountability				
	Partnering with non-system actors†	3.37	3.37	.983	negligible
School climate	**School environment**				
	Sense of school community and safety†	3.29	2.99	**.005****	small
	Achievement-oriented culture†	3.98	3.79	.109	small
	Teacher–parent trust	2.87	2.78	.218	negligible
	Knowledge of student's culture†	3.30	3.49	.204	(small)
	Parent roles in the school				
	Teacher outreach to parents	3.08	3.15	.351	negligible
	Parental involvement in school†	2.13	2.07	.502	negligible
Professional culture	**Teacher collegiality and engagement**				
	Peer collaboration	3.01	2.78	**.007****	small
	Teacher–teacher trust	2.98	2.86	.162	small
	Collective responsibility†	3.51	3.47	.728	negligible
	Teacher morale and retention				
	School commitment	2.93	2.72	**.045***	small
	Professional development				
	Quality professional development	2.98	2.90	.312	negligible
	Instructional leadership				
	Joint problem solving	2.59	2.48	.214	negligible
	Principal instructional leadership	3.21	3.17	.703	negligible
	Teacher–principal trust	3.00	3.04	.703	negligible
Instructional core	**Classroom characteristics and effectiveness**				
	Coherent curriculum and instruction†	3.93	3.73	.127	small
	Instructional focus†	3.73	3.54	.186	small
	Classroom resources	3.21	3.18	.720	negligible

Note: The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:* *** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

Parentheses indicate effect sizes in favor of comparison schools.

FIGURE 28

Teacher perceptions of school capacity, Group I schools vs. comparison schools

Domains	Category/Measures	Group I Mean (*n*=123)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
District and community influences	**District support**				
	Creating local accountability†	3.65	3.29	**.006****	medium
	Community support and accountability				
	Partnering with non-system actors†	3.58	3.37	.159	small
School climate	**School environment**				
	Sense of school community and safety†	3.53	2.99	**.000*****	large
	Achievement-oriented culture†	4.16	3.79	**.003****	medium
	Teacher–parent trust	2.99	2.78	**.004****	medium
	Knowledge of student's culture†	3.29	3.49	.215	(small)
	Parent roles in the school				
	Parental involvement in school†	2.26	2.07	**.034***	small
	Teacher outreach to parents	3.19	3.15	.622	negligible
Professional culture	**Teacher collegiality and engagement**				
	Peer collaboration	3.00	2.78	**.010***	medium
	Collective responsibility†	3.60	3.47	.317	small
	Teacher–teacher trust	2.94	2.86	.411	negligible
	Teacher morale and retention				
	School commitment	3.02	2.72	**.014***	medium
	Professional development				
	Quality professional development	3.00	2.90	.235	small
	Instructional leadership				
	Principal instructional leadership	3.32	3.17	.126	small
	Joint problem solving	2.61	2.48	.189	small
	Teacher–principal trust	3.01	3.04	.824	negligible
Instructional core	**Classroom characteristics and effectiveness**				
	Coherent curriculum and instruction†	4.05	3.73	**.019***	medium
	Instructional focus†	3.86	3.54	**.029***	small
	Classroom resources	3.28	3.18	.282	small

Note: The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant, as follows:* *** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

Parentheses indicate effect sizes in favor of comparison schools.

FIGURE 29

Teacher perceptions of school capacity, Group II schools vs. comparison schools

Domains	Category/Measures	Group II Mean (*n*=109)	Comparison Schools Mean (*n*=64)	p-value	Effect Size
District and community influences	**District support**				
	Creating local accountability†	3.17	3.29	.361	(small)
	Community support and accountability				
	Partnering with non-system actors†	3.12	3.37	.089	(small)
School climate	**School environment**				
	Teacher–parent trust	2.73	2.78	.524	negligible
	Achievement-oriented culture†	3.77	3.79	.846	negligible
	Sense of school community and safety†	3.00	2.99	.912	negligible
	Knowledge of student's culture†	3.31	3.49	.284	(small)
	Parent roles in the school				
	Teacher outreach to parents	2.96	3.15	.019	(small)
	Parental involvement in school†	1.97	2.07	.231	(small)
Professional culture	**Teacher collegiality and engagement**				
	Peer collaboration	3.01	2.78	**.020***	small
	Teacher–teacher trust	3.04	2.86	.077	small
	Collective responsibility†	3.41	3.47	.671	negligible
	Teacher morale and retention				
	School commitment	2.82	2.72	.410	negligible
	Professional development				
	Quality professional development	2.95	2.90	.562	negligible
	Instructional leadership				
	Joint problem solving	2.57	2.48	.363	small
	Teacher–principal trust	2.98	3.04	.649	negligible
	Principal instructional leadership	3.07	3.17	.292	(small)
Instructional core	**Classroom characteristics and effectiveness**				
	Classroom resources	3.13	3.18	.590	negligible
	Coherent curriculum and instruction†	3.79	3.73	.660	negligible
	Instructional focus†	3.57	3.54	.866	negligible

Note: The majority of measures were scored using a 4-point scale, with a higher score indicating a more positive response. A dagger (†) denotes measures that were scored on a 5-point scale.

An explanation of t-tests and effect sizes can be found on page 19. Values in **bold** *represent p-values that are statistically significant in favor of Direct Instruction schools, as follows:*

**** p < .001*
*** p < .01*
** p < .05*

Parentheses indicate effect sizes in favor of comparison schools.

FIGURE 30

Teacher attributions of PACT's influence in their school

How much do you think that working with OCO has influenced . . .	Group I Mean (*n*=123)	Group II Mean (*n*=64)
District and community		
School organization	2.24	1.82
Student readiness to learn (e.g., access to pre-K programs)	2.29	2.00
School climate		
Parent involvement in the school	2.41	2.12
Sense of community and trust in the school	2.57	2.00
School's relations with the community	2.61	2.11
How teachers get along with parents	2.48	2.06
School's relations with parents	2.52	2.05
Physical condition of the school building	2.29	1.75
Safety and discipline in the school	2.35	1.74
How students get along with other students	2.18	1.84
Changes in school overcrowding	1.95	1.88
Professional culture		
Commitment to the school	2.48	2.05
Quality of principal leadership	2.48	2.05
How teachers get along with other teachers	2.43	1.95
Professional development opportunities	2.41	2.29
Instructional core		
Teacher expectations for student achievement	2.43	2.00
Quality of curriculum and instruction	2.43	2.18
Classroom resources (e.g., textbooks and other supplies)	2.35	2.16
Teaching effectiveness	2.50	2.16
Student learning		
Student academic performance	2.38	2.11

Note: Teachers responding to the perception survey were asked if they were aware of PACT's organizing in their schools. If they answered yes, they were asked to rate PACT's influence in a variety of areas on a 3-point scale: 3=very much influence, 2=some influence, 1=no influence. Means between 2.1 and 3.0 indicate a high degree of influence. As the same influence items were used across three survey sites in our study, not all items were relevant to PACT's education organizing. For more information about the items used, see Appendix E.

APPENDIX E

Description of School Capacity Measures

Category/Measures	Items	Objective	Sample Item	Scale	Reliability
District Support					
Creating Local Accountability (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001-2002 Teacher Survey)[9]	5	To assess the district's efforts to foster local accountability	This district encourages schools to be accountable to their own local communities.	5-point	0.86
Community Support and Accountability					
Partnering with Non-system Actors (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001-2002 Teacher Survey)	2	To measure partnerships with non-system actors	District staff make an effort to reach out to individuals and organizations outside of the school district.	5-point	0.90
School Environment					
Teacher–Parent Trust (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003 Teacher Survey)	4	To assess parent–staff relationships	At this school, it is difficult to overcome the cultural barriers between staff and parents.	4-point	0.63
Sense of School Community and Safety (Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project, 1997 Teacher Survey)[10]	7	To assess facility conditions and school environment	Please rate the sense of safety in the school.	5-point	0.90
Knowledge of Students' Culture (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	4	To measure teachers' efforts to understand their students' culture	How many teachers at this school talk with students about their lives at home?	5-point	0.86
Achievement-Oriented Culture (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001-2002 Teacher Survey)	4	To measure the extent of an achievement-oriented culture within the school	Students are well aware of the learning expectations of this school.	5-point	0.84

(continues on page 46)

[9] One item from the original scale was omitted.

[10] One item, "Please rate the sense of safety in the school," was added to the original six-item scale.

(continued from page 45)

Category/Measures	Items	Objective	Sample Item	Scale	Reliability
Parent Roles in the School					
Parent Involvement in School (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)[11]	4	To measure parent participation and support for the school	For the students you teach this year, how many parents volunteered to help in the classroom?	5-point	0.68
Teacher Outreach to Parents (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003 Teacher Survey)	8	To assess the school's efforts to work with parents to develop good communication and common goals and to strengthen student learning	Parents are greeted warmly when they call or visit the school.	4-point	0.88
Teacher Collegiality and Engagement					
Peer Collaboration (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	4	To assess the extent of a cooperative work ethic among staff	Teachers design instructional programs together.	4-point	0.82
Collective Responsibility (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	7	To assess the collective commitment among faculty to improve the school so that all students learn	How many teachers in this school feel responsible when students in this school fail?	5-point	0.92
Teacher–Teacher Trust (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)[12]	5	To assess the extent of open communication and respect among teachers	Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.	4-point	0.89
Teacher Morale and Retention					
School Commitment (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	4	To assess teachers' commitment and loyalty to the school	I would recommend this school to parents seeking a place for their child.	4-point	0.87
Professional Development					
Quality Professional Development (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)[13]	8	To measure the quality of professional development	Overall, my professional development experiences this year have included opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school.	4-point	0.92

[11] Two items from the original scale were omitted.

[12] One item from the scale was omitted and another was modified from "To what extent do you feel respected by other teachers?" to "I feel respected in this school."

[13] The following item was not used from the original nine-item survey: "Included opportunities to work productively with teachers from other schools."

Category/Measures	Items	Objective	Sample Item	Scale	Reliability
Instructional Leadership					
Principal Instructional Leadership (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	7	To assess the extent to which teachers regard their principal as an instructional leader	The principal at this school understands how children learn.	4-point	0.93
Teacher–Principal Trust (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)[14]	7	To assess the extent to which teachers feel that their principal respects and supports them	It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal.	4-point	0.94
Joint Problem Solving (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1999 Teacher Survey)	5	To assess the extent to which teachers maintain a public dialogue to address and solve problems	Many teachers express their personal views at faculty meetings.	4-point	0.86
Classroom Characteristics and Effectiveness					
Coherent Curriculum and Instruction (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001-2002 Teacher Survey)	9	To assess the degree of coherence in the school's curriculum and instruction	The curriculum is planned between and among grades to promote continuity.	5-point	0.93
Classroom Resources (Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project, 1997 Teacher Survey)[15]	4	To assess school resources	Basic materials for teaching (e.g., textbooks, paper, pencils, copy machines) are readily available as needed.	4-point	0.64
Instructional Focus (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003 Teacher Survey)[16]	3	To examine the school's instructional core	The school day is organized to maximize instructional time.	5-point	0.82
Direct Instruction (Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report, *Direct Instruction and the Teaching of Early Reading: Wisconsin's Teacher-Led Insurgency,* by Mark Schug, Richard Western, and Sara Tarver, March 2001, vol. 14, no 2, "Appendix: Teacher Training Survey, Fall 2000"	2	To assess how well-informed teachers are about Direct Instruction and their attitudes toward this form of instruction	Describe your own attitude toward Direct Instruction.	5-point	(not a scale)

[14] One item from the scale was omitted, and another was modified from "To what extent do you feel respected by the principal?" to "I feel respected by the principal."

[15] Two items were taken from Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project's (LAAMP) "Instructional Materials" scale and two items from LAAMP's "Student Assessment" scale.

[16] One item was taken from the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) 2003 Teacher Survey "Focus on Student Learning" scale and two from the CCSR 2003 Teacher Survey "Program Coherence" scale.

(continues on page 48)

(continued from page 47)

Category/Measures	Items	Objective	Sample Item	Scale	Reliability
Organizing Attribution Questionnaire					
Influence of Organizing (Annenberg Institute generated)	21	To assess the extent to which teachers believe that working with People Acting for Community Together (PACT) has influenced changes in various domains of school capacity and school climate	How much do you think that working with PACT has influenced changes in safety and discipline in the school?	3-point + "don't know"	(not a scale)
Student Readiness					
Student Readiness (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003 Teacher Survey)	2	To assess the extent to which students are prepared for grade-level material	About what portion of your students have serious reading difficulties?	6-point	(not a scale)
Teacher Characteristics					
Teacher Demographic Questionnaire (Annenberg Institute generated)[17]	8	To collect demographic and professional information about respondents including race/ethnicity	How long have you been teaching in this school?	N/A	(not a scale)

[17] The questionnaire was based on similar items from the Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003 Teacher Survey, elementary edition.

References

Berliner, David C. 2002. "Educational Research: The Hardest Science of Them All," *Educational Researcher* 31, no. 8:18–20.

Bryk, Anthony, and Barbara Schneider. 2002. *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Connell, James P., Anne C. Kubisch, Lisbeth B. Schorr, and Carol H. Weiss, eds. 1995. *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts.* Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. 2006. *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models.* Washington, DC: Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, American Institutes for Research, <www.csrq.org/documents/CSRQCenterCombinedReport_Web11-03-06.pdf>.

Elmore, Richard. 1996. "Getting to Scale with Good Educational Practice," *Harvard Educational Review* 66, no. 1:1–25.

Elmore, Richard. 2002. *Bridging the Gap between Standards and Achievement: Report on the Imperative for Professional Development in Education.* Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.

Elmore, Richard. 2004. *Knowing the Right Thing to Do: School Improvement and Performance-Based Accountability.* Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

"Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test: Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) – Grade 4 Report (1995)." 2005. Florida Department of Education, <http://fcat.fldoe.org/nrt/nrtrd495.asp>.

Gold, Eva, Elaine Simon, and Chris Brown. 2002. *Successful Community Organizing for School Reform: Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools.* Chicago, IL: Philadelphia, PA: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform and Research for Action.

HoSang, Daniel. 2005. *Traditions and Innovations: Youth Organizing in the Southwest.* Occasional Paper no. 8 (September). New York: Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing.

"Hurricane Andrew: After the Storm." 2002. *St. Petersburg Times*, <www.sptimes.com/2002/webspecials02/andrew/>.

Mayer, Daniel P., John E. Mullens, Mary T. Moore, and John Ralph. 2000. *Monitoring School Quality: An Indicators Report.* NCES 2000-030. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Mediratta, Kavitha. 2004. *Constituents of Change: Community Organizations and Public Education Reform.* New York: New York University, Institute for Education and Social Policy.

Mediratta, Kavitha, and Norm Fruchter. 2001. *Mapping the Field of Organizing for School Improvement.* New York: New York University, Institute for Education and Social Policy.

Mediratta, Kavitha, Seema Shah, and Sara McAlister. 2008. *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: A Preview of Research Findings.* Providence, RI: Brown University, Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Available for download at <www.annenberginstitute.org/WeDo/Mott.php>

National Center for Educational Statistics. 1995. *Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States: 1994-95.* NCES 98-214. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Available for download at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98214.pdf>

Oakes, Jeannie, and Martin Lipton. 2002. "Struggling for Educational Equity in Diverse Communities: School Reform as Social Movement," *Journal of Educational Change* 3:383–406.

Oakes, Jeannie, John Rogers, and Martin Lipton. 2006. *Learning Power.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sebring, Penny Bender, Elaine Allensworth, Anthony S. Bryk, John Q. Easton, and Stuart Luppescu. 2006. *The Essential Supports for School Improvement.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Available for download at <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=86>

Shirley, Dennis. 1997. *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Warren, Mark R. 2001. *Dry Bones Rattling.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

"What We Do." n.d. PACT–Congregation-Based Community, <www.miamipact.org >.

Zachary, Eric, and oyeshola olatoye. 2001. *A Case Study: Community Organizing for School Improvement in the South Bronx.* New York: New York University, Institute for Education and Social Policy.

About the Annenberg Institute for School Reform

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform is a national policy-research and reform-support organization, affiliated with Brown University, that focuses on improving conditions and outcomes in urban schools, especially those serving disadvantaged children.

In pursuing its mission, the Institute collaborates with a variety of partners committed to educational improvement – school districts, community organizations, researchers, national and local reform support organizations, and funders. Rather than providing a specific reform design or model to be implemented, the Institute's approach is to offer an array of tools and strategies to help districts strengthen their local capacity to provide and sustain high-quality education for all students.

For more information and to obtain additional copies of this brief, please visit our Website at<www.annenberginstitute.org>.

Annenberg
Institute for
School Reform

AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

Providence
Brown University
Box 1985
Providence, RI 02912
T 401.863.7990
F 401.863.1290

New York
233 Broadway, Suite 720
New York, NY 10279
T 212.328.9290
F 212.964.1057

www.annenberginstitute.org