



Should Chicago Have an Elected Representative School Board?

A Look at the Evidence

Pauline Lipman

Eric (Rico) Gutstein

University of Illinois at Chicago

Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education

1040 W. Harrison St., M/C 147

Chicago IL 60607

plipman@uic.edu

gutstein@uic.edu

FEBRUARY 2011



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following people who contributed to this report: Phillip Cantor, Lynette Danley, Aisha El-Amin, Sandra Gutstein, Rhoda Rae Gutierrez, Sarah Hains, Stephanie Hicks, Pavlyn Jankov, Chris Sabino, Rachel Serra, Danielle Akua Smith, and Kelly Vaughn. We would also like to thank Christine Olson for help with the production of this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

Introduction..... 5

Methodology..... 6

Brief History of School Boards..... 7

Mayoral Control of Schools..... 9

 Justifications for Mayoral Control 9

 Effectiveness of Mayoral Control and Mayor-Appointed Boards:

 What Do We Know? 10

Chicago: Assessment of the Mayor-Appointed School Board 11

 High-Stakes Top-down Accountability..... 11

 Academic Achievement as Measured by the NAEP..... 13

 Graduation and Dropout Rates 18

 Renaissance 2010..... 19

 Teacher Turnover and Loss of Teaching Staff 22

 Expansion of Charter Schools 24

 Chicago High School Redesign Initiative..... 26

Public Accountability and Community Participation 27

Elected School Boards..... 28

 Steps to Strengthen Democratic Participation and

 Public Accountability 29

 Can an Elected School Board Make a Difference?..... 30

 Milwaukee Public Schools..... 30

 Tucson Unified School District..... 31

 San Francisco Unified School District 32

 San Diego Unified School District 33

Conclusion..... 35

Recommendations..... 37

References 38

Appendix A: A Sample of Elected School Boards in Large U.S. Cities 45

Appendix B: Biographies of CPS Board of Education Members 47

Endnotes 48



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2010, the Chicago Teachers Union-Community Board proposed a shift from a mayor-appointed school board to an elected board representative of and directly accountable to Chicago Public Schools' constituencies. This report, authored independently of the Community Board, summarizes research on the effectiveness of mayor-appointed school boards and the record of Chicago's mayor-appointed board. The report was written to provide information to elected officials, educators, parents, and members of the general public concerned about improvement of education in Chicago and the proposal to shift to an elected representative school board.

This report addresses the question: Should Chicago Have an Elected, Representative School Board? To address this question we explored several sub-questions:

- What does research say about the track record of mayor-controlled school systems?
- Has mayoral control improved education for Chicago public school students?
- Have the appointed board's policies increased educational equity?
- Are there examples where elected boards have been responsive and accountable to educators and communities?

To answer these questions, we reviewed research on school governance nationally. To review the record of Chicago's mayor-appointed board we examined CPS and Illinois State Board of Education data, reports of research pertinent to the Chicago experience, Chicago's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and qualitative studies of the effects of CPS policies on teaching, students, and communities. We also gathered information on elected school boards in four major cities drawing on media reports, published research, school district websites, and conversations with local actors.

Key findings are:

- 1. There is no conclusive evidence that mayoral control and mayor-appointed boards are more effective at governing schools or raising student achievement.**
- 2. The Board's policies of top-down accountability based on standardized tests, and its simultaneous expansion of selective-enrollment schools, expanded a two-tier education system in Chicago.** Based on their scores on a single test, thousands of primarily

African American and Latino students were subjected to probation, retention, scripted instruction, test drills, and basic-skills education. This was not supported by education research, did not result in real improvement, and reinforced a lower tier of educational opportunities for these students. At the same time, the Board also expanded a top tier of world-class, selective-enrollment schools that serve just 10 percent of high school students and are roughly three times more white and more affluent than CPS high schools overall.

- 3. Under the mayor-appointed Board, CPS has made little progress in academic achievement and other measures of educational improvement, and on nearly every measure there are persistent, and in some cases, widening gaps between white students and African American and Latino students.** Chicago's scores on the NAEP have increased very modestly in ways that cannot be distinguished from increases in other urban districts, and Chicago continues to significantly lag behind other large cities. There are persistent and significant racial disparities at the At-Or-Above-Proficient and Advanced levels in math and reading on the NAEP, and scores for African American students at these levels are abysmal. Graduation and dropout rates have improved slightly but graduation rates are still very low and dropout rates still very high, and the gap between the rates for whites and for African Americans and Latinos has widened.
- 4. The Board's policy of closing neighborhood schools and opening charter schools (Renaissance 2010) has generally not improved education for the students affected. In some cases, it has made things worse.** Most displaced elementary school students transferred from one low-performing school to another with virtually no effect on student achievement. Eight of ten students displaced by school closings transferred to schools that ranked in the bottom half of the system on standardized tests. In the affected communities, the policy has increased student mobility and travel distances, led to spikes in violence, and increased neighborhood instability. School closings are also associated with patterns of gentrification, raising troubling questions about the relationship of Board policies and real estate interests and about the prioritization of affluent students who make up a small percentage of CPS families.
- 5. Although data on charter schools, nationally and locally, are mixed, there is no evidence that, overall, CPS' charter schools are significantly better than its traditional public schools.** The largest study conducted to date in the U.S. found that students in charter schools are not doing as well as students in regular public schools: 17% of charter schools perform significantly better, 37% significantly worse,

and 46% show no significant difference. Chicago charter school outcomes are mixed, overall showing roughly comparable performance to neighborhood schools. On average, Chicago charter high schools served fewer English language learners and low-income and special education students, and on average, Chicago charter schools replaced more than half of their staff between 2008 and 2010.

6. Chicago's mayor-appointed board is comprised of elite decision makers who are neither representative of the student population of CPS nor directly accountable to the public. Board structures and processes severely limit public input in decisions. The Board is composed primarily of corporate executives, while the district is 92 percent students of color and 86 percent low-income students whose communities have no role in school district decisions. This is problematic because perspectives and knowledge of parents, educators, and students are essential to good educational decision-making. It is evident that community members feel that the Board is unresponsive to their input and concerns. Parents have felt it necessary to take extreme measures to be heard, including candlelight vigils, marches, campouts in front of Board headquarters, a hunger strike, and a recent 43-day occupation of a school field house to get a long-needed school library. Case studies in this report illustrate that elected school boards can create conditions for democratic public participation.

The evidence we collected for this report does not support the "Chicago miracle." There is compelling evidence that, for over 15 years, the Board's policies have failed to improve the education of the majority of Chicago public school students, especially African American and Latino and low-income students. Some students' entire K-12 education has been dominated by high-stakes testing, the fear of retention, a basic-level education, and school closings and their resulting instability. There is an urgent need to shift course. Although responsive and directly accountable governance structures are not sufficient by themselves to improve schools, they are an important condition.

Recommendations:

- **Chicago should transition to an elected representative school board (ERSB).**
- **The ERSB's operations should be transparent and publicly accountable.**
- **The ERSB should establish structures and practices that strengthen democratic public participation in district initiatives and decisions.**
- **The ERSB should draw on sound educational research and educator, student, and community knowledge to develop and evaluate policy.**
- **Achieving equity in educational opportunities and outcomes should be integral to all ERSB decisions**

INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the Illinois State Legislature used its power to put the mayor in charge of Chicago Public Schools.¹ The 1995 Amendatory Act (an amendment to the 1988 School Reform Act) gave the mayor authority to appoint a five-member Board of Trustees and a CEO to lead the school district. The legislature's rationale was that school reform was moving too slowly; centralizing authority in the mayor's office would drive reform and improve efficiency in CPS. In 1999, the Amendatory Act expanded the Board to seven and restored the name "Board of Education of the City of Chicago." After 15 years of the appointed Board in power, there are calls for a shift to an elected representative school board.

This report addresses the question: Should Chicago have an elected representative school board? The impetus for the report was the December 2010 call by the Chicago Teachers Union-Community Board (CB)—a coalition of a number of well-known community organizations in Chicago and the Chicago Teachers Union—for an elected representative school board in Chicago.

The CB asked researchers at the *Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education* (CEJE), at the University of Illinois at Chicago, to investigate the case for an elected board and make recommendations. This report was written to provide

information to elected officials, educators, parents, and members of the general public concerned about improving education in Chicago and to recommend policy changes. (The study was not funded by the CB nor do the conclusions imply its endorsement.)

A concern voiced by the CB is that under mayoral control, the Board has been composed primarily of corporate and banking leaders who are not directly accountable to the public. None is an educator. In a system in which 92% are students of color and 86% qualify for free or reduced lunch (a measure of low-income),² the mismatch between the composition of the Board and the students in CPS raises concerns about how representative the Board is of the communities it is charged to serve. Thus, our assessment of Chicago's mayor-appointed school Board over its 15-year history highlights the effect of its policies on learning opportunities and educational outcomes for these students.

This report addresses the question: Should Chicago have an elected representative school board? To address this question we explore several sub-questions:

- **What does research say about the track record of mayor-controlled school systems?**
- **Has mayoral control improved education for Chicago public school students?**
- **Have the appointed Board's policies increased equitable opportunities to learn and equitable outcomes?**
- **Are there examples where elected boards have been responsive and accountable to educators and communities?**

The report begins with a brief history of school boards and the move to mayoral control and mayor-appointed boards in some big cities. The next section summarizes research on the effectiveness of mayoral-controlled school systems. The third section reviews outcomes of policies of Chicago's mayor-appointed Board and implications for low-income African American and Latino students from the standpoint of equitable opportunities to learn. The fourth section discusses public accountability and community participation. Finally, we present short case studies of four urban school boards that illustrate their capacity to be responsive and

accountable to educational concerns of their communities. We conclude with recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

Although governance is important, there is not a simple cause-and-effect relationship with school improvement. Many factors, in addition to school district governance, contribute to successful education systems.³ However, school boards are responsible for the policies and outcomes of their school districts. Therefore, we evaluate Chicago's appointed Board on the results of its decisions.

For this report, we reviewed research on school governance nationally. To look specifically at the record of Chicago's mayor-appointed board, we used publicly available CPS data, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data, and research and reports compiled by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR), National Research Council, and other researchers pertinent to the Chicago experience. To examine test scores, we turned to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the "nation's report card." According to the U.S. Department of Education, which administers it, "NAEP...is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas."⁴ We also reviewed qualitative studies of the effects of CPS policies on teaching, students, and

communities. For the school board case studies, we drew on information from media reports, published research, school district websites, and conversations with local actors.

Although we examine test scores as one measure of student achievement, many education experts agree that standardized tests do not comprehensively or even accurately assess student learning for several reasons.⁵ First, test scores may simply reflect a focus on a narrow set of skills measured by high-stakes tests, rather than real learning.⁶ As the bar for *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP) set by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) increases annually, schools, districts, teachers, administrators, and students have been under increasing pressure to focus on preparing for standardized tests. Second, test scores should not be used by themselves to assess the many aspects of learning.⁷ Third, instructional practices designed to raise test scores are not necessarily aligned with what is best for students. For example, researchers have documented that many schools around the country, including in Chicago, have focused instruction on those scoring closest to the “meets expectations” level who are most likely to raise the school’s scores, while neglecting students far below or above.⁸

Thus, although we looked at test scores, we examined a broader set of indicators of academic achievement,

opportunity to learn, and effects on schools and communities. These include graduation and dropout rates, effects of school closings on students and communities, teacher turn over and loss of teaching staff, and opportunities for public participation in education decisions. Researchers use *opportunity to learn* as a measure of the extent to which students have access to necessary school resources, high-quality school facilities, highly qualified teachers, rigorous and relevant curricula, higher-order thinking activities, safe school environments, and so on.⁹

BRIEF HISTORY OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Schools are part of the foundation of a democratic society. They are charged with educating and preparing the next generation of democratic participants in society. The role of school boards in this process is to provide “leadership, policy direction, and oversight to drive school improvement.”¹⁰ In fulfilling this role, it is the responsibility of school boards to ensure that schools work to advance the public interest—the education, health, and welfare of all members of the community.

Historically, elected school boards have been a central feature of local democracy in the U.S. Underlying their election is the belief that the democratic process is a means for community members to express and implement a vision of the common good. Local school boards are the

political institutions that are closest to voters. As Allen and Plank summarize, “Public education remains the policy domain in which citizens [residents] have the greatest opportunity for democratic participation and democratic control.”¹¹

Elections of school officials, public school board meetings, and Local School Councils (LCSs) (e.g., in Chicago) are opportunities for all community members, not only parents and students, to have a voice in policies that affect them and the well being of the community. This is why the vast majority of school boards in the U.S. have been, and continue to be, elected by and directly accountable to their constituencies.

“Public education remains the policy domain in which citizens [residents] have the greatest opportunity for democratic participation and democratic control.”

However, in the past two decades, elected school boards have been the target of criticism by business leaders, think tanks, and various policy makers who charge that they are ineffective in leading school reform, particularly in urban districts. These critics also contend that elected school boards allow “interest groups” to influence policy

(specifically singling out unions), are not accountable to the community at-large, and lack fiscal discipline.¹² Especially in urban districts, they have pushed for mayoral control and mayor-appointed boards. Mayoral control is commonly linked to an agenda of high-stakes, top-down accountability, charter schools and vouchers, teacher pay based on student performance, and the belief that public participation in education should occur primarily through private consumer choice.

Over the past decade, mayoral control has spread to several large urban districts with the promise of improved student learning, higher school-completion rates, fewer dropouts, and better test scores. Mayoral control with mayor-appointed school boards is a central plank of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s initiatives, especially the competitive *Race to the Top* federal funds for education.¹³

Still, in the U.S. today, most school boards are elected by municipal voters. In 2008, 96% of U.S. school districts had elected boards, including more than two-thirds of the 25 largest districts.¹⁴ According to the National School Boards Association, as of June 2009, 31 states have only elected boards.¹⁵

In 2008, 96% of U.S. school districts had elected boards, including more than two-thirds of the 25 largest districts

MAYORAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS

Under mayoral control, mayors appoint some or all of the members of the school board and superintendent/CEO. In 1991, Boston became the first U.S. city to shift school governance to mayoral control. In 1995, Chicago followed suit. As of 2009, roughly a dozen big-city mayors controlled their school districts.¹⁶ Across the U.S., appointed boards are mostly in large urban or municipal districts. In California, only Los Angeles has an appointed board. Of the almost 900 school districts in Illinois, Chicago is the only one with a mayor-appointed board.¹⁷

Justifications for Mayoral Control

There are four main justifications given for centralizing power in the mayor's office:¹⁸

1. Efficiency: Mayors are best equipped to efficiently coordinate municipal and educational services and work as ambassadors to business interests who are expected to play a key role in shaping school policies.
2. Accountability for results: Because mayors are high-profile elected officials subjected to media scrutiny, they are more responsive to popular demands and more accountable to the public. When schools are not making progress, the public knows whom to blame.

3. Alignment of schools with business goals: Because the city's business climate and corporate economic development are tied to the quality of its school system, mayors are in the best position to align educational goals with business interests.
4. Streamlining education systems: Mayoral control streamlines educational systems by aligning organizational goals, curriculum, rewards and sanctions, professional development of teachers and principals, and classroom instruction with academic achievement.

In cities that have moved to mayoral control, the business community has usually enthusiastically supported the shift. Business leaders favor a management model that puts a single executive in charge and accountable for efficient coordination of resources and delivery of services.¹⁹ "Corporate leaders have assumed the unrivaled authority to define the purposes and methods of public schooling in response to the new technology-driven global economy."²⁰ Chicago is a well-known example of the dominance of business ideas and practices in education.

“Corporate leaders have assumed the unrivaled authority to define the purposes and methods of public schooling in response to the new technology-driven global economy.”

Effectiveness of Mayoral Control and Mayor-Appointed Boards – What Do We Know?

Research on the relationship of mayor-controlled school districts and school improvement is limited and inconclusive. Hess’s 2007 research survey found that there were few rigorous, systematic studies of the effect of appointed boards on aspects of school improvement.²¹ Researchers at the Institute on Education Law and Policy at Rutgers University—Newark found that while mayoral control does have some benefits (public attention to public education, increased funding, and stability), there is “no conclusive evidence that governance changes increase achievement.”²² As documented by Hess, who drew upon “a survey of more than 25 years of research on the effectiveness of school boards” and from research conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy,²³ there exists “remarkably little evidence that mayors or appointed boards are more effective at governing schools than elected boards.”²⁴ Larry Cuban, nationally

respected education expert, says simply, “there is no connection at all [of mayoral control] with academic achievement.”²⁵

There is “remarkably little evidence that mayors or appointed boards are more effective at governing schools than elected boards.”

Some cities with mayoral control have posted increases in scores on state standardized tests.²⁶ However state tests are problematic because states have progressively lowered the bar to make AYP under No Child Left Behind. Even Secretary of Education Duncan admitted in a 2009 speech before the Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences,

When states lower [academic] standards, they are lying to children and they are lying to parents. Those standards don’t prepare our students for the world of college or the world of work. When we match NAEP scores and state tests, we see the difference. Some states, like Massachusetts compare very well. Unfortunately, the disparities between most state tests and NAEP results are staggeringly large.²⁷

On the NAEP, some cities with mayoral control score above and

others below those with traditional governance.²⁸ In short, there is no clear evidence that student achievement improves under mayoral control and appointed boards. And Kenneth Wong, a leading proponent of mayoral control, contended that it does not reduce the racial “achievement gap.”²⁹

Even case studies that suggest some positive impact of appointed boards on test scores emphasize the trade off in loss of broader involvement in democratic processes, particularly the participation of African Americans and Latinos.³⁰ This loss is particularly serious for a district like Chicago with a high percentage of African American and Latino students. There is an emerging body of research on the important role of community participation in school reform.³¹ Including the perspectives, knowledge, and political power of these communities can ensure that the district adopts policies that improve educational opportunities for their children.

In short, there is no clear evidence that student achievement improves under mayoral control and appointed boards.

CHICAGO: ASSESSMENT OF THE MAYOR-APPOINTED SCHOOL BOARD

Should a mayor-appointed school board be retained in Chicago? In this section we assess the Board’s record over the past 15 years. In particular, we examine its record of improving equitable opportunities to learn and equitable outcomes for the vast majority of students—low-income African American and Latino students. We look at results of the Board’s two major initiatives: a) a system of top-down accountability using high-stakes tests while simultaneously expanding selective enrollment schools; b) Renaissance 2010, a policy to close neighborhood schools and replace them with charter, contract, or CPS performance schools.³²

High-Stakes Top-Down Accountability

The hallmark of the early years of mayoral control in Chicago was high-stakes testing, which was used to enforce a system of top-down accountability with penalties for low-scoring students and schools. The Board added more stakes with the expansion of selective-enrollment schools in the late 1990s.

Beginning in 1996, the Board mandated strict accountability for failing schools and students. It placed low-scoring schools on probation and retained students at grades 3, 6, and 8 based on their scores on standardized tests. Eighth graders who failed the test were not

allowed to graduate with their classmates, and eighth graders, 15 or older, who failed the test in summer school, were assigned to remedial Academic Preparation Centers. These basic skills high school programs were geared to passing the standardized test, and their students were segregated from other students and academically stigmatized.

The consequences of failing the tests pushed low-scoring schools to focus on intensive test drill and practice.³³ Robert Hauser, Chair of the Committee on Appropriate Test Use of the Board of Testing and Assessment at the National Research Council wrote, “The NRC Committee concluded that Chicago’s regular year and summer school curricula were so closely geared to the ITBS [Iowa Test of Basic Skills] that it was impossible to distinguish real subject mastery from mastery of skills and knowledge useful for passing this particular test.”³⁴ Some schools were mandated to adopt scripted instruction for all students (a model designed for special education students). There was also evidence that to raise their scores, some schools triaged instruction to focus on students on the cusp of passing the standardized tests (“bubble kids”).³⁵

These Board policies contradict a consensus among assessment experts that using standardized tests to make high-stakes decisions about individual students is inappropriate and inequitable,³⁶

particularly because all students do not have an equal opportunity to learn.³⁷ Yet, based on their scores on a single test, tens of thousands of Chicago students were sent to summer school, retained in grade for as long as three years, barred from their 8th grade graduation, and assigned to remedial high schools.

These policies did not result in real improvement. While citywide test scores went up, students retained in 1997 were doing no better in 1999 than previously promoted students, and in many cases were doing worse.³⁸ Nearly one-third of retained eighth graders in 1997 dropped out by fall 1999.³⁹ By 2001, Chicago’s test scores leveled off as the effects of intensive test prep reached their limits.⁴⁰

The consequences of these policies fell heavily on African American, Latino, and low-income students.⁴¹ In 1996 CPS placed 109 schools on probation. They were overwhelmingly African American, and the average poverty level of the 71 elementary probation schools was about 94%.⁴² And, in 2000, *Parents United for Responsible Education* won a civil rights complaint against CPS for adverse discriminatory impact of the retention policy on African Americans and Latinos. The students and schools subjected to scripted instruction, drilling for standardized tests, and basic skills education were also overwhelmingly and disproportionately African

American and Latino. As a whole, top-down high-stakes accountability consolidated a lower tier of learning opportunities in CPS.

In the late 1990s, the board expanded a top tier of world-class schools with six new selective-enrollment high schools. The new schools in affluent or gentrifying areas were in “lavish” new or remodeled buildings with state-of-the-art resources.⁴³ There was also evidence that these schools drained resources from neighborhood schools.⁴⁴

Current data on the eight selective-enrollment high schools⁴⁵ show that only 10.1% of CPS high school students attend them; furthermore, they are disproportionately white and non low-income. As of the 2010-11 school year, CPS as a whole was 9% white and 14% non low-income, but the selective-enrollment high schools were 25.3% white and 43.5% non low-income.⁴⁶ Thus, the selective-enrollment high schools’ student bodies are roughly three times more white and more well off than the district as a whole.

CPS policies created a two-tiered educational system along lines of race and income.

In sum, the Board’s high-stakes accountability policies were not backed up by research, and its expansion of world-class selective-

enrollment schools benefited a very small percentage of CPS students. The Board’s policy decisions led to improvements for a disproportionate percentage of more well-off white students and test-driven, remedial education and penalties for low-income students of color. These policy decisions created a two-tier educational system along lines of race and income.

Academic Achievement as Measured by the NAEP

Chicago’s academic improvement has been widely accepted and reported in the media as “the Chicago miracle.”⁴⁷ The mayor, the CEO of CPS, and the Board contend that student achievement has improved under mayoral control. In fact, the Board of Education section of the district website states, “Chicago Public Schools is regarded as a leading innovative model for public education around the nation.”⁴⁸ These claims have largely been made based on state test data. However, in 2010, the Chicago Tribune reported that Illinois had lowered the cut score for passing the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT)—making it easier to pass the test—while claiming students were making gains.⁴⁹

Noting this, the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago wrote:

As recently as January 2009, CPS distributed brochures showing that 8th grade reading scores improved from

55% of students meeting/exceeding standards in 2004 – to 76% in 2008. And 8th grade math scores improved from 33% in 2004 to 70% in 2008. But these huge increases reflect changes in the [state] tests and testing procedures – not real student improvement. The reality is that most of Chicago’s students are still left far behind. Real student performance appears to have gone up a little in Chicago elementary schools during the past few years – and even those gains then dissipate in high school.”⁵⁰

Therefore, we evaluate Chicago’s academic achievement based on NAEP scores rather than use problematic state test data. NAEP scores are recorded by district for math and reading in grades 4 and 8.⁵¹

Since 2002, CPS NAEP scores have increased very modestly in ways that cannot be distinguished from increases in other urban centers around the country

Since 2002, CPS NAEP scores have increased very modestly in ways that cannot be distinguished from increases in other urban centers

around the country.⁵² Chicago trailed other urban districts (NAEP refers to these as “Large Cities” [LCs] of over 250,000 residents) as a whole in 2002 (and 2003⁵³). And despite small increases, CPS did not make up any ground as of 2009, the last time NAEP scores were recorded (in math and reading). In short, CPS lagged then and still lags now.

Average Scores: The Department of

The only place Chicago significantly leads the Large Cities is in the percent of students Below-Basic in math (grades 4 and 8) and reading grade 4.

Education (DoE) records average NAEP scores of each district. It also groups together Large Cities and uses their average combined scores as a basis of comparison with individual urban districts. From 2003 to 2009, Chicago’s average scores in math (grade 4 and 8) and 4th-grade reading slightly increased, while its 8th-grade reading scores stalled. Chicago’s increases were comparable to the gains of the Large Cities. However, in both 2003 and 2009, CPS significantly trailed the Large Cities’ average scores in math (4 and 8) and reading (4), while slightly trailing in 8th-grade reading. The gap between Chicago and the LC average scores that existed in

2003 remained the same in 2009 (see Tables 1 & 2 below).

Table 1: Math Grades 4 & 8, CPS vs. Large Cities Average Scores—2003 & 2009

Subject-Grade	Year	CPS Avg	LCs Avg	CPS-LCs Difference	Year	CPS Avg	LCs Avg	CPS-LCs Difference
Math-4	2003	214	224	-10	2009	222	231	-9
Math-8	2003	254	262	-8	2009	264	271	-7

Table 2: Reading Grades 4 & 8, CPS vs. Large Cities Average Scores –2003 & 2009

Subject-Grade	Year	CPS Avg	LCs Avg	CPS-LCs Difference	Year	CPS Avg	LCs Avg	CPS-LCs Difference
Reading-4	2003	198	204	-6	2009	202	210	-8
Reading-8	2003	248	249	-1	2009	249	252	-3

Percent meeting or exceeding NAEP benchmarks: The DoE also records the percentage of students meeting or exceeding various NAEP benchmarks. Chicago significantly lags behind urban districts across the U.S. The NAEP defines four levels: Below-Basic, At-Or Above-Basic, At-Or-Above-Proficient, and Advanced. CPS 2009 scores significantly trailed the Large Cities average in At-Or Above-Basic, At-Or-Above-Proficient, and Advanced in math (grades 4 and 8) and reading (grade 4).

In 8th-grade reading, Chicago is comparable to the Large Cities average only At-Or-Above-Basic and is significantly behind in At-Or-Above-Proficient, and Advanced (see Tables 3 & 4). In other words, the only place Chicago significantly leads the Large Cities is in the percent of students Below-Basic in math (grades 4 and 8) and reading grade 4.



Table 3: Math Grades 4 & 8, CPS vs. Large Cities—At-Or-Above Basic, At-Or-Above Proficient, Advanced—2003 & 2009

Subject & Grade	Year	CPS: At-Or-Above Basic	LCs: At-Or-Above Basic	CPS: At-Or-Above Proficient	LCs: At-Or-Above Proficient	CPS: Advanced	LCs: Advanced
Math-4	2003	50%	NA	10%	NA	1%	NA
Math-4	2009	62%	72%	18%	29%	2%	5%
Math-8	2003	42%	NA	9%	NA	1%	NA
Math-8	2009	51%	60%	15%	23%	2%	5%

Table 4: Reading Grades 4 & 8, CPS vs. Large Cities—At-Or-Above Basic, At-Or-Above Proficient, Advanced—2003 & 2009

Subject & Grade	Year	CPS: At-Or-Above Basic	LCs: At-Or-Above Basic	CPS: At-Or-Above Proficient	LCs: At-Or-Above Proficient	CPS: Advanced	LCs: Advanced
Reading-4	2003	40%	NA	14%	NA	3%	NA
Reading-4	2009	45%	54%	16%	23%	3%	5%
Reading-8	2003	59%	NA	15%	NA	1%	NA
Reading-8	2009	60%	63%	17%	22%	1%	2%

Racial and income disparities: Average scores of CPS African American and Latino students significantly trailed white students in math and reading at grades 4 and 8, in 2003 and in 2009. Similarly, low-income students significantly trailed non low-income students in 2003 and 2009. African American and Latino students made up no ground on white peers; low-income students made up no ground on wealthier peers.

Furthermore, the racial disparity for students meeting or exceeding

various benchmarks was large in 2009. In math (grade 4), 44% of white students were At-Or-Above-Proficient, but only 9% of African American students; 7% of white students were Advanced, but 0% of African Americans. The disparities for 8th-grade math and for 4th- and 8th-grade reading are similar. In particular, African American students, in 2009, had 0% advanced in 4th-grade math, 8th-grade math, and 8th-grade reading, and 1% advanced in 4th-grade reading (see Table 5 below). This is alarming.



Table 5: 2009 CPS NAEP Scores: White-Black Racial Disparities, At-Or-Above-Proficient and Advanced Levels

2009 CPS NAEP SCORES	Math Grade-4	Math Grade-8	Reading Grade-4	Reading Grade-8
White At-Or-Above-Proficient	44%	39%	41%	40%
African American At-Or-Above-Proficient	9%	7%	10%	11%
White Advanced	7%	10%	12%	3%
African American Advanced	0%	0%	1%	0%

The percent of CPS African American students at “Advanced” in the 2009 NAEP were:

- Reading grade 4: 1%
- Reading grade 8: 0%
- Math grade 4: 0%
- Math grade 8: 0%

These results raise significant issues about equal opportunity to learn. The data reinforce the concern about mathematics learning for low-income students and students of color raised long ago by education expert Walter Secada.⁵⁴ Secada pointed out that most of the gains for these students were in lower-level computation skills, rather than conceptual understanding, higher-order thinking, and problem-solving skills that would have shown up in gains at the “Advanced” level. That is, to the extent there are gains, low-

income students of color are likely acquiring very basic skills.

To the extent there are gains, low-income students of color are likely acquiring very basic skills.

In summary: Chicago students made only very modest progress on the NAEP test from 2003 -2009 under mayoral control and the mayor-appointed board. Moreover, those modest gains were statistically indistinguishable from the gains made by students in other large central cities around the country. CPS students trailed students in Large Cities in 2003 and made up no ground by 2009. Racial disparities were statistically significant in 2003 and remained so in 2009. The percent of African American students at the Advanced level in 2009 is abysmal.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

Chicago high school graduation and dropout rates under mayoral control have barely improved. The gap between the rates for African Americans and whites, and between Latinos and whites, has widened. Dropout rates at schools on probation—essentially all low-income students of color—have increased.

Chicago high school graduation and dropout rates under mayoral control have barely improved. The gap between the rates for African Americans and whites, and between Latinos and whites, has widened.

In his report for the Education Research Center on the 50 largest urban areas in the U.S., Swanson reported a 2003-4 school year graduation rate of 51.5% for CPS. (Chicago ranked 31st of the 50.)⁵⁵ A 2005 CCSR study found that “[o]nly 54 percent of the CPS students who were 13 years old in 1998 graduated from CPS by age 19 in 2004.”⁵⁶

More recent data show little or no increase since 2004. *Catalyst*, using CCSR data, reported that the graduation rate had inched up to 56% in 2006.⁵⁷ However, after 2006, the graduation rate slipped back. In Summer 2010, *Catalyst* reported a CPS graduation rate of 54%, no

higher than what the CCSR reported for the 1998-2004 time period.⁵⁸

Under the appointed Board, graduation rates at very low-performing CPS schools, which overwhelmingly serve low-income students of color, are especially troubling. In 2006, *Catalyst* reported that graduation and dropout rates barely budged in the 18 high schools that were on probation from 2002 to 2006, although they had extra instructional support.”⁵⁹ The *Catalyst*, using CCSR data, also reported in 2007 that the gap in graduation rates between African American and white students grew from 15.4 percent in 2002 to 18.5 percent in 2006.⁶⁰ District data corroborate the racial gap. According to CPS, the differential in graduation rates between Latinos and whites, and between African Americans and whites, increased from 1999 to 2010.⁶¹

The district made progress overall in lowering dropout rates since 1999, although they stopped decreasing after 2007. CPS refers to a “5-year cohort dropout rate,” which is the percent of students who drop out within five years of entering high school. This dropout rate declined from 50.1% in 1999 to 41.1% in 2010.⁶² However, racial disparities increased. The difference between the dropout rate for African American and white students was 6.4 percent in 1999. This grew to 10.8 percent in 2010. Latino students’ 1999 dropout rate was 0.7 percent higher than the white

dropout rate; this grew to 3.4 percent by 2010.⁶³

Under the mayor-appointed Board, graduation rates barely improved and then trended downward, while dropout rates decreased slightly. Racial disparities increased for both graduation and dropout rates. African Americans and Latinos graduate at lower rates than whites, and the gap is growing. Both African Americans and Latinos drop out at higher rates than whites, and the gap is growing.

Renaissance 2010

In 2004, the Board approved Renaissance 2010, a policy to close 60-70 failing schools (later under-enrolled schools were added) and open 100 new schools, two-thirds as charter or contract schools (similar to charter schools). CPS states that Renaissance 2010 is an initiative to “expand quality education options” to children in “the most underserved areas.”⁶⁴ Yet overall, Renaissance 2010 has not improved education for these students who are low-income students of color. Six years after the policy began, almost 75% of Chicago school children still attended low-performing schools.⁶⁵ And only 16 of the 92 new schools created under the policy have reached the state average on test scores.⁶⁶

Renaissance 2010 has not improved education for students it was designed to affect – primarily low-income students of color in low performing schools.

School closings

After the first two years of school closings, most displaced students were reassigned to schools academically and demographically similar to those they left, with 84% attending schools with below-average district test scores and 44% in schools on probation.⁶⁷ This pattern continued.

A CCSR study of Renaissance 2010 in 2009 found that most displaced elementary school students transferred from one low-performing school to another with virtually no effect on student achievement. Eight of ten students displaced by school closings transferred to schools that ranked in the bottom half of the system on standardized tests.⁶⁸ At the same time, teachers and community members claimed that schools closed for low performance had not been given the resources to succeed. Parents and educators in an area of the Midsouth,⁶⁹ where Renaissance 2010 was first focused, said that they were “set up for failure.”⁷⁰

Renaissance 2010 has been destabilizing for communities already under stress.⁷¹ The evidence

indicates that for students and schools directly affected by Renaissance 2010, mobility went up,⁷² travel distances increased, and school violence spiked.⁷³ The Board closed some schools for low achievement, although they showed a record of improvement, and in some cases, documented that they lacked necessary resources.⁷⁴ Good neighborhood schools, particularly in Latino communities, were closed for low enrollment despite evidence that they were utilizing their facilities in educationally appropriate ways and that some of the best schools in the system had even lower enrollments.⁷⁵ CPS transferred some students in the Midsouth to as many as four schools in three years as the district closed one school after another. Receiving schools were also destabilized by the influx of dislocated students.⁷⁶

For students and schools directly affected by Renaissance 2010, mobility went up, travel distances increased, and school violence spiked.

As CPS closes neighborhood schools, more students are forced to travel outside their neighborhoods. In 2008, the *Catalyst* reported, “Among charters opened since 2004, when Renaissance 2010 was launched, the percentage of

students who commute to school from 6 miles away or more has increased – to 13 percent for elementary school students, up from 9 percent; and 15 percent for high school students, up from 10 percent”⁷⁷

School closings also led to spikes in violence in high schools and some elementary schools. CPS transferred students to schools out of their neighborhood and placed them in physical jeopardy. For example, there were violent confrontations when Austin High School students were transferred to Clemente, and Englewood students were transferred to Robeson, Dyett, Hirsch, and Hyde Park High Schools.⁷⁸ After the Board turned Carver Area High School into a selective-enrollment military academy and transferred neighborhood students to Fenger High School five miles away, violence spiked at Fenger, culminating in a highly publicized student death in September 2009.

Local School Councils (LSCs)

Under Renaissance 2010, the Board closes neighborhood schools with elected LSCs and opens charter and contract schools without them. Yet LSCs are an important component of building school-community relationships and a means for parent input in local school decisions. (LSCs hire principals and approve school improvement plans and discretionary budgets.) The Board seems to be ignoring substantial research on the

important role of school-community partnerships and the value of LSCs in school improvement.

Two large-scale studies of successful CPS neighborhood schools identify relationships with parents and communities as essential to substantially improve academic achievement.⁷⁹ Designs for Change researchers studied 144 high-achieving “inner-city” elementary schools that had been low performing but had significantly improved academic achievement in reading and mathematics over 15 years. They found that “the most consistent feature of these schools is that **all adults** work as a team to improve education, including the teachers, parents, Local School Council, principal, and community agencies” [emphasis in the original].⁸⁰

The CCSR’s extensive research on “successful school reform” in CPS⁸¹ identified “parent, school, and community ties”⁸² as one of the “five essential supports”⁸³ for school improvement. Effective LSC’s institutionalize this relationship in CPS, yet by reducing the number of LCSs, Board policies diminish the capacity of parent-community involvement to improve schools.

The Relationships of School Closings and Gentrification

Maps produced by the Data and Democracy Project⁸⁴ show that under Renaissance 2010, school closings have been concentrated in African American and Latino areas

experiencing gentrification – the displacement of low-income and working-class residents by upper-income residents. In 2008 and 2009, proposed school closings were mostly in, or adjacent to, areas where housing prices had gone up rapidly and significantly.⁸⁵ Large changes in housing prices are one indicator of gentrification.

Closing a school is a very serious decision under any circumstances, but it can have particular consequences for already-destabilized, low-income communities. A school closing can be the “last straw” pushing low-income residents out of the neighborhood and facilitating the process of turning it over to middle-class residents. Closing a school means the loss of community programs, trusted educators, and increased student mobility. It means disruption of established parent-school connections.⁸⁶ Schools are anchors in neighbourhoods already destabilized by high housing prices, foreclosures, unemployment, and the loss of community institutions due to disinvestment. At several CPS hearings about school closings, community members testified that their school was the heart of the community.

The Board’s decisions, in 2008 and 2009, to phase out several neighborhood schools serving low-income African American and Latino students are examples. The Board’s rationale was that the schools were underenrolled.⁸⁷ However, teachers

and parents presented substantial evidence of the educationally appropriate utilization of the schools' space and the schools' academic success and enrichment programs. They argued that their schools fit the criteria for small schools, an innovation that the Board supported at the time.

Despite broad support from the school communities, the Board voted to phase them out even when other schools in the district were more significantly underenrolled.⁸⁸ Two of the planned phase-out schools were in gentrifying areas with high concentrations of new million and half-million dollar homes.⁸⁹ In 2008, the Board voted to phase out Andersen elementary school and replace it with LaSalle Language Academy II, a prestigious selective-enrollment magnet school that few Andersen students were able to attend. In 2009, the Board voted to phase out Carpenter elementary school, which had one of the premier hearing-impaired programs in the city and a variety of enrichment programs for neighborhood children. The school was phased out so the facility could be turned over to Ogden International School, a grade 6-12 magnet school that parents in the affluent Gold Coast area, across the expressway, had lobbied for as an extension of their elementary school. The Board assigned Carpenter children to other schools.⁹⁰

The apparent association of school closings with gentrification raises

Are the Board's decisions to close neighborhood schools and open new schools made on educational grounds or are they to benefit real estate and development interests and affluent families?

the question: Are the Board's decisions to close neighborhood schools and open new schools made on educational grounds or are they to benefit real estate and development interests and affluent families? In the context of the focus of this report, this highlights the problem of a mayor-appointed board in which the business community is highly over represented and which is not directly accountable to the public.

Teacher Turnover and Loss of Teaching Staff

Under mayoral control, CPS has a high rate of teacher turnover, particularly affecting schools serving low-income African American and Latino students. In 2009, the CCSR reported "within five years, the typical CPS school loses over half of its teachers. Many schools turn over half of their teaching staff every three years."⁹¹ Most alarming, about 100 mostly low-income African American and Latino schools lose a quarter or more of their teaching staffs every year. Further, the study found that teachers are less likely to stay in schools that are

predominantly African American than schools with other racial/ethnic compositions.

While some teacher mobility is to be expected, high rates of teacher turnover disrupt sustained professional development and program continuity. This is critical because the majority of these schools struggle with low student achievement, and teacher instability makes it more difficult to strengthen teaching and learning.

Over the past 10 years, there was a

The loss of 11% of African American teachers in a district whose student population is nearly 50% African American is a step backward for educational equity.

disproportionate loss of African American teachers. From 2000 to 2010, CPS' African American teaching force declined by 11% (from 40.6% to 29.6% of the teaching force) while the percentage of white teachers increased by 5.2%. (See Figure 1.) ISBE state report cards show that the district lost 2759 African American teachers.⁹²

Because most schools closed under Renaissance 2010 were in African American communities with the heaviest concentrations of African American educators, these teachers have been particularly affected by school closings.

Education research shows that successful teachers of African American and Latino students understand and relate to their students' communities, backgrounds, and cultures.⁹³

Increasing the percentage of teachers from these communities is one important way to address this component of effective teaching. Thus, the loss of 11% of African American teachers in a district whose population is nearly 50% African American is a step backward for educational equity.

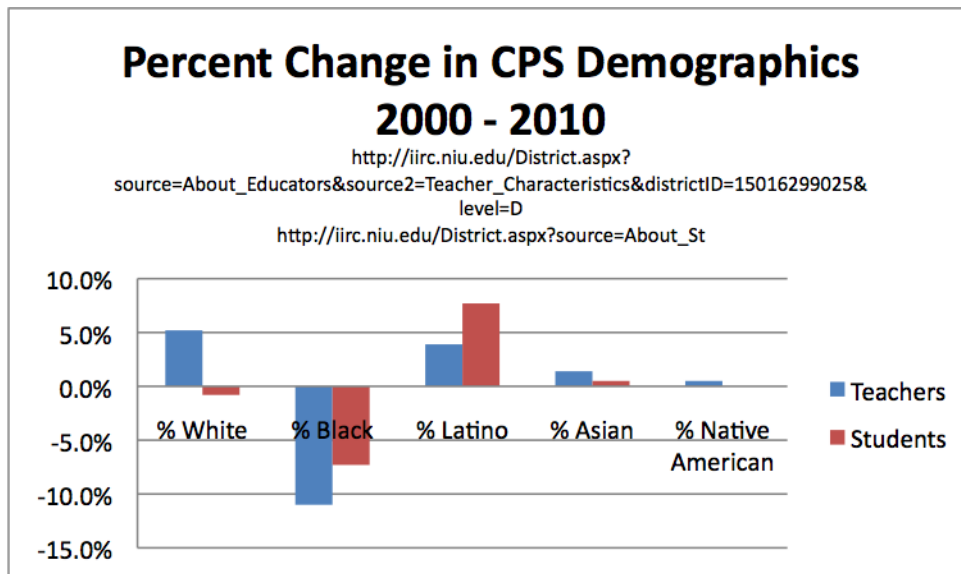


Figure 1: Percent Change in CPS Student and Teacher Demographics, 2000-2010

Expansion of Charter Schools

The Board has significantly expanded charter schools in Chicago since 1996 when the Illinois State legislature authorized charter schools to operate in the state. Under the Board’s authority, charter schools increased from six in 1996 to 77 charter school campuses in 2011.⁹⁴ Arguably, closing neighborhood schools and opening charter schools, primarily serving students of color, is the district’s most dramatic education initiative.

Yet, in an era of “evidence-based reform” there is little evidence that charter schools overall improve students’ educational experiences and outcomes. When charter schools began in the 1990s, they were seen as incubators for innovative educational practices

that could revitalize public education in general. Instead, over the last decade, charter school expansion exploded nationally as a “silver bullet” for lagging urban schools, without adequate data to warrant this move.

The data on charter school outcomes are mixed. The most authoritative national study to date was published by the Stanford CREDO Institute in 2009 and encompassed data from 70% of the students in U.S. charter schools. (Researchers reviewed over 1.7 million records from more than 2400 schools.)⁹⁵ CREDO researchers compared charter school students to those in what they called “traditional [neighborhood] public schools” (TPS).



The CREDO study found that, overall, charter school students are not performing as well as TPS students: 17% of charter schools perform significantly better than TPS, 37% significantly worse, and 46% show no significant difference. Elementary charter schools, overall, do better than TPS, while charter high schools do worse. Additionally, charter schools nationally are more segregated by race and poverty than public schools.⁹⁶

Although data on charter schools, nationally and locally, are mixed, there is no evidence that, overall, CPS charter schools are significantly better than traditional public schools.

Chicago charter school outcomes are also mixed. CREDO concluded that charter school students in Chicago are doing significantly better, however, the study only examined Chicago data from students in grades 3-8. Since their study found that charter high school students are doing significantly worse nationally, it is likely that CREDO results for Chicago would have been different if high school students had been included in the Chicago data. The study found that Chicago elementary charter students are performing no better in reading than their peers in TPS but significantly better in mathematics.

However, racial disparities surfaced. African Americans in Chicago elementary charter schools did no better in mathematics but significantly worse in reading, and Latino students did significantly worse in both mathematics and reading than their peers in elementary TPS. Another study of Chicago charter schools, conducted by the RAND Corporation in 2008, examined achievement in grades 3-8 in 32 charter schools and found “...only small differences in average achievement gains between [elementary] charter schools and CPS schools, and these differences do not point in consistent directions.”⁹⁷

The RAND study also “...found evidence that Chicago's charter HSs [high schools] may produce positive effects on ACT scores [of 0.5 points], the probability of graduating, and the probability of enrolling in college—but these positive effects are solidly evident only in the charter HSs that also included middle school grades.” It is important to note that these data are estimates based on probabilities.

A 2009 study by Brown and Gutstein, found that Chicago's charter high schools produced no significantly better academic achievement on the ACT than neighborhood high schools, while serving fewer English language learners and low-income students, and significantly fewer special-needs students. The study also documented that CPS charter high

school teachers have less experience and less education on average than those in neighborhood high schools. There is also a higher rate of teacher turnover in charter schools than other CPS schools. On average, Chicago charter schools replaced more than half of their staff members between 2008 and 2010.⁹⁸ The Catalyst notes that this is usually symptomatic of a “school in turmoil.”⁹⁹

Chicago High School Redesign Initiative

One Board policy that showed promise was the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (CHSRI). However, when external startup funding ended, the Board chose to end CHSRI and pursue Renaissance 2010. Before CPS embarked on a broad policy of closing neighborhood schools, the district embraced small high schools through CHSRI. Under the initiative, CPS created 23 small, neighborhood high schools between 2002 and 2007. In August 2008, the Board ended the program with 17 of the original schools still in existence. Yet, a comprehensive 2010 report on CHSRI outcomes by the CCSR found that CHSRI schools offered a promising alternative to improving educational outcomes for low-performing students in areas of the city not served by high-quality high schools.¹⁰⁰

The CHSRI small schools were “intended to provide educational opportunities for students in under-served neighborhoods—neighborhoods marked by

significant educational need.”¹⁰¹ The report found that CHSRI schools did this. They served students who did not have “privileged backgrounds” or “strong academic records”¹⁰² (so-called “at-risk” students, in CCSR’s language), and who would have likely attended traditional under-performing neighborhood high schools.

Students in CHSRI schools, in comparison to their peers in regular neighborhood schools, as a whole tended to have lower elementary school achievement and greater mobility and were more likely to have changed schools right before high school. They were also more likely to have received special education services. Across the years, they were about 98% students of color. Yet the CHSRI students “performed as well or better than similar students in other similar CPS schools on a number of important outcomes.”¹⁰³ These outcomes included attendance, grades in core subjects, percentages of students on-track to graduate, and graduation rates.

Although the report found that CHSRI graduates as a whole were not yet “college-ready” (based on their ACT scores), CCSR researchers concluded:

...this initiative did accomplish much, but not all, of what it was intended to do....Many other school districts are facing the same problem: how to bring under-performing students to college

readiness in the span of four years. Countless researchers and practitioners are searching for a replicable, scaleable method to accomplish this formidable task. The CHSRI schools have gotten at least part of the equation: their students persist in school and they graduate. This foundation should be recognized and built upon—and not forgotten—as schools continue to find ways to accelerate academic achievement for their students.¹⁰⁴

CHSRI was a relatively successful initiative to accelerate academic achievement in neighborhood public schools. But the Board dropped the program and directed resources to closing neighborhood schools, expanding charters, and opening turnaround schools.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Chicago Board's structures and practices significantly limit the involvement of parents, teachers, students, and community members to have input in Board policy and decisions. Years of announcing school closings on short notice without consultation with those affected have left many communities cynical about the responsiveness and accountability of the mayor-appointed Board.

Board members generally do not attend hearings related to school closings. Instead, the Board hires hearing officers to take two-minute testimonies from community members, teachers, parents, and students. At the February 2009 meeting, Board members admitted that none of them had read the transcripts of these community hearings even though they were to vote on school closings that day.¹⁰⁵ Some hearings take place at CPS headquarters downtown, making it difficult for community members to attend.

The structure of Board meetings minimizes public participation. Meetings are held on Wednesday mornings when most people work. To speak at a meeting, one must get in line as early as 6:00 AM to sign up for an opportunity to speak. Those who actually get to speak are limited to two minutes. Seating in board chambers is extremely limited, with nearly one-third of seats reserved for CPS staffers, who rarely participate in the meetings. At times, hundreds of community members who wish to attend the meeting of a public body making critical decisions about their children's education are excluded from the chambers. After a public comment period, the board discusses behind closed doors.

It is evident that community members feel that the Board is unresponsive to their input and concerns. The Board used to have several committees that met

monthly and allowed multiple opportunities for the public to speak on key issues. These were disbanded under mayoral control.

Parents, students, community members, and teachers have felt it necessary to picket, hold candlelight vigils, and even sleep out twice in front of CPS headquarters, once in the dead of winter, to have their views heard. In 2010, parents of Whittier elementary school became so frustrated by years of the Board's unresponsiveness to their request for a school library that they occupied the school field house for 43 days. This recalled the 19-day, 2001 hunger strike by parents and community members in Little Village. The hunger strike was a last resort after years of petitioning the Board for a new high school and after \$30 million earmarked for the school was diverted to build two new selective-enrollment high schools in gentrifying neighborhoods.¹⁰⁶

At Board meetings and community hearings, teachers, parents, and students warned about the dangers of district proposals to close specific schools and transfer students across neighborhood boundaries. The Board made the decisions to close the schools anyway, and violence to students followed. Teachers and administrators in schools slated to be closed (or phased out) for low enrollment provided the Board with documentation that the buildings were being used appropriately, that educational programs were of high

quality, and that the school space was being used to the benefit of the community.¹⁰⁷ In the vast majority of cases, the Board closed (or phased out) the schools nevertheless. This record raises a fundamental question: How well can the Board make informed policy decisions when it does not involve the public it serves?

The current Board composition is sharply distinguished from CPS families who are nearly 90% low income. The Board members are: a partner in one of the 10 largest law firms in the world, a chair of a financial consulting company, a president of a management consulting firm, a corporate vice president, a vice president of an investment company, a president of a financial consulting firm, and a physician. None is an educator.

This Board is an appointed body of elite decision-makers, not directly accountable to the public. This is disturbing because there is substantial research demonstrating that the knowledge and experience of proven educators and engaged parents is essential to good educational decision-making.¹⁰⁸

ELECTED SCHOOL BOARDS

Ninety-six percent of school districts in the nation have elected school boards, with a variety of structures and methods of electing members. Election by subdistricts or regions is more frequently found in large urban areas. Boards elected by subdistricts increase broad

representation. They are more heterogeneous, bringing a more racially and economically diverse group of people into school policy making.

In contrast, boards elected citywide tend to be homogeneous and disproportionately white, and middle and upper class¹⁰⁹ and tend to disadvantage working-class candidates and people of color.¹¹⁰ Boards elected citywide tend to pass more unanimous resolutions and may appear to operate more smoothly. Yet, evidence suggests that they are often more connected to (and possibly influenced by) special interests. Individuals need more money to run citywide campaigns and are therefore more likely to be associated with powerful business interests¹¹¹ and thus less representative of all the students in the school district.

Boards elected by subdistricts are more heterogeneous, bringing a more racially and economically diverse group of people into school policy making.

Steps to Strengthen Democratic Participation and Public Accountability

A number of problems have been identified with elected school boards: representatives can

narrowly represent their constituencies and fail to look out for the interests of students as a whole; board meetings can become partisan and adversarial with localized interests predominating; election are a weak form of democracy if there is little interaction with constituencies and if voters with less power have less access to elected representatives; voter turnout tend to be small; and those with less power in the city are disadvantaged in running candidates.¹¹²

While these problems exist, research suggests structural and procedural steps can strengthen democratic participation and public accountability:¹¹³

1. School board elections held at the same time as municipal elections result in higher voter turnout.
2. Election by district or region of the city increases racial and economic diversity.
3. Processes of open, deliberative democracy and engagement promote public participation—"we" rather than "I" thinking.
4. School boards elected as a slate committed to working together toward a common education program offer voters clear policy choices and decrease local self interest in decision-making.

Can an Elected School Board Make a Difference?

We searched for examples demonstrating that having an elected school board can make a difference in the kinds of policy decisions the board makes. We especially looked for cases of elected boards being responsive and accountable to concerns of communities and teachers—issues addressed in this report. We wanted to see if democratic processes of elected boards helped to advance equity policies. The following cases illustrate processes of deliberative democracy. In these cases, having an elected school board seemed to create conditions for community members and teachers to contribute to educational decisions.

Milwaukee Public Schools

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has a nine-member elected Board of School Directors with eight members elected by subdistrict and one at large. Currently the Board consists of two former teachers, three professors, an accountant, a city administrator, a retired community and union activist, and a firefighter. Committee meetings and regular Board meetings generally begin at 6:30 p.m.

Board processes. The MPS Board has structures and processes that enable community members and educators to raise issues and affect decisions. Members of the public can bring issues to individual Board

members or to the Board's Office of Governance, or they can request a public hearing before the Board's Parent and Community Engagement Committee. Each of the Board's five committees has monthly public meetings where anyone can speak on each agenda item. The committees meet until everyone who wishes to speak has done so.

Proposed school closings go through a community-based process that includes the Superintendent meeting with the school community and school personnel, a period of discussion, and then a public Board meeting to consider the closing. After lengthy deliberations, the Board has cancelled some school closings while approving others.

Textbook adoption issue. A recent textbook adoption illustrates a Board process that facilitates community involvement. In 2008, teachers and community members learned that MPS was about to adopt a K-8 social studies textbook series that they believed would miseducate students and fail to teach social responsibility. (The National Council for the Social Studies recommends that curriculum should provide accurate content and diverse and global perspectives to allow students to understand the realities of our world and their responsibilities as caring and effective citizens/community members.¹¹⁴) The 5th-grade text did not mention racism or anti-Semitism, hardly mentioned discrimination, and did not

acknowledge that some U.S. presidents had owned slaves. At the same time, social movements that have historically addressed injustices (e.g., labor, women's, peace, and environmental movements) were omitted from the books.¹¹⁵

The educators and community members voiced their concerns publicly and lobbied their elected school board members. In response, the Board postponed adoption of the series and gave concerned parties time to review the texts and the district's approach to teaching social studies. In June, community members and educators formed a Social Studies Task Force, a broad coalition of educators and community organizations, co-chaired by a representative of the NAACP and an award-winning elementary teacher.

Ultimately, the Task Force and district decided to: a) reject the K–3 textbooks in favor of securing alternate high-quality resources and promoting best instructional practices; b) adopt the Wisconsin State Historical Society's 4th grade textbook and provide a supplement to address race and labor issues; and c) adopt the publisher's 5th-grade textbook if the publisher supplied a district-approved supplement to address its weaknesses.¹¹⁶ The district also agreed to provide supplementary professional development on “antiracist, multicultural

understandings and teaching strategies.”¹¹⁷

The social studies textbook adoption, involving \$4 million, was a serious decision for the district. Because there was a process of public discussion and a responsive school board, the final decision was more aligned with MPS's “Characteristics of High Performing Urban Classrooms.” The process also began a public conversation among community members, teachers, and administrators about appropriate textbooks and curriculum.

Tucson Unified School District

The Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) has a five-person Governing Board elected citywide. The Board is composed of a lawyer, a city transportation department manager, a director of a County teen court, a professor, and a university student. The Board holds its monthly public meetings at 6:30 PM.

School Closings. In January 2008, the district superintendent proposed that the Board close four schools for budgetary reasons, including Ochoa Elementary, an 85-year old school that is 95% Latino and Native American and has relatively low test scores. At the February 2008 Board meeting, many in the large gathering expressed anger that the superintendent made the proposal without consulting the affected schools. Board members decided to consider the proposal, but also

planned to hold evening community hearings at each school, which they and the superintendent would attend. In March, the 600 people attending the Board hearing at Ochoa school overwhelmingly supported keeping the school open.

At the April Board meeting, three of the five Board members spoke against any school closures, partly in response to concerns about the district's federal desegregation order and partly in response to the outpouring of support for the four schools. Thus, the district closed no schools.

When the superintendent retired soon afterward, the Board selected a replacement who agreed to consult with school communities before proposing closings. The newly hired superintendent offered the idea, adopted by the Board, that school communities facing possible closings due to poor performance or low enrollments develop their own proposals about consolidating with other schools, closing, remaining open, or exploring other options.

Mexican American Studies Program. Tucson has had a Mexican American studies program since 1997. Its goals include that schools use students' culture and language to support learning, cultural awareness, and civic engagement. High school seniors in the Mexican American Studies program have higher achievement and graduation rates than students not in the program.¹¹⁸ Starting in 2007, then-State Superintendent of Schools,

Tom Horne, began to criticize the program for teaching Mexican American history, saying that it had "a radical separatist agenda."¹¹⁹

Throughout the multi-year conflict over the program, teachers, students, parents, and university faculty supporting Mexican-American studies in Tucson maintained a consistent presence at Board meetings. In January 2011, a law passed by the state legislature went into effect essentially requiring TUSD to disband the program or forfeit 10% of state education funds. On December 30, 2010, under threat of losing millions of dollars, the Board resolved to "implement ethnic studies in TUSD," while also being in "accordance with all applicable laws."¹²⁰ The Board's attempt to preserve a program that benefits all students was in response to strong support in the Mexican American community.

San Francisco Unified School District

The seven-person San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Board of Education is elected citywide. The Board is composed of a writer, an education policy expert, a director of a parent organization, a former teacher, a director of a women's health program, a public administrator, and a fundraiser. The Board holds its regular monthly meetings at 6:00 PM.

Racial Equity Report Card. The San Francisco case illustrates that a

community can hold an elected board accountable for transparency and for addressing equity issues. In 2005, community members and educators concerned with inequitable educational experiences of African American students pressed the Board to publish student outcomes by race and to produce a Racial Equity Report Card. The Report Card reported academic achievement and truancy, drop out, suspension, and expulsion rates by race. It also reported kinds of discipline infractions and severity of punishments by race. The results revealed broad racial inequities and disparities.

The Report Card demonstrated to the public where the district needed to concentrate resources and provided a basis in evidence to lobby for change. The discipline data were the basis for community members and educators to press for a restorative justice policy (enacted in 2009) that has brought down the rate of expulsions and suspensions. The Racial Equity Report Card is now published annually as a way to gauge progress, press for necessary initiatives, and hold the district accountable.

School closings. In 2004, the district superintendent proposed closing schools to address low academic achievement. However, many parents, teachers, and community members believed sound alternatives existed. They organized to elect Board members who pledged to find educationally effective

alternatives to school closings. The new Board selected a new superintendent more aligned with the community's goals and educational philosophy, who has since closed no schools. Instead, the superintendent has opened the doors of his office to meet with stakeholders and has worked closely with the Board of Education to pass and implement policies that are more inclusive of students of color and to address disparities in racial achievement.

The San Francisco case also illustrates a mechanism for an elected board to coordinate effectively with other branches of city government. In San Francisco, a joint committee of the city council and Board of Education coordinates schools policy. In 2007 the city council set aside surplus city funds in a "rainy day" fund for schools. In the last two years, despite revenue losses, similar to other cities, the SFUSD has not had to lay off any teachers because of this fund. Because both the city council and Board are elected, constituents can hold them collectively accountable.

San Diego Unified School District

The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) has a five-member Board of Education. Members are nominated by geographic area and elected by San Diego county residents. The current Board, elected after a series of community forums, is composed of a teacher, a

psychologist, a president of a taxpayer organization, a union/community organizer, and an ex-teacher. The Board holds monthly meetings at 5:00 PM.

College-Ready Graduation Requirements. Community-based and other civic organizations in San Diego have proposed several initiatives to which the Board has agreed. One proposal was to change the district graduation requirements so that all graduating seniors would be fully qualified for the highly competitive University of California (UC) system. This proposal was initiated by the Education Consortium (EC), a broad-based, non-partisan collaboration of organizations and individuals working to increase educational opportunities and achievements of economically and educationally disadvantaged students in San Diego County. The EC includes diverse organizations such as the ACLU and NAACP.

In June 2009, the SDUSD voted to adopt an EC-drafted resolution directing the district superintendent to ensure that all graduating seniors meet UC entrance requirements, starting with students in the 2010-11 school year. The resolution has major implications for SDUSD because in 2009, only 42% of graduating seniors took the appropriate courses—and an even smaller percentage of students of color, low-income students, English-language learners, and special-needs students. The College-Ready

Graduation Requirements represent a commitment to equitable opportunity to learn for these students.

Education Not Arms. The Board also responded to two initiatives of a coalition of community organizations and high school students. One was a decision in February 2009 to ban weapons training and JROTC gun ranges in San Diego schools. Students were integral to convincing Board members. One member, John Lee Evans, said, “I am extremely impressed by this fine group of young people. I have an immense amount of respect.... [for] a group of young people who are committed to education, committed to non-violence and who are also committed to the democratic process in terms of organizing themselves in the community and speaking out.”

He was responding, in part, to a high school student’s testimony at the meeting: “A school that teaches students to shoot weapons seems clearly ironic. Our books are the ultimate weapons to succeed, not guns. I also expect the board to uphold the idea that no guns in school means no guns in school!”¹²¹

The second initiative was also a response to public pressure, particularly from organized students who said they were besieged by unwanted solicitations from military recruiters in their schools. The Board voted in November 2010 to limit military recruiters to no more

than two visits per school year for any given school. Under new Board rules, students have to initiate contact with recruiters, and students' personal information is no longer available to the military without permission. Prior to the board decision to restrict military access to students, military recruiters had been able to set up daily recruitment stations within schools and could approach students to recruit them.

CONCLUSION

This report addresses the question: Should Chicago have an elected representative school board? The rationale for mayoral control of Chicago Public Schools was that an appointed Board of Education, answerable only to the mayor, would more effectively and efficiently improve schools. After 15 years, we can take stock of Chicago's mayor-appointed Board and how well it has measured up. Several themes emerge from a review of the research.

First, despite the press for mayoral control nationally, there is no conclusive evidence that appointed boards are more effective at governing schools, nor is there definitive evidence that mayoral control improves achievement.

Second, contrary to the story of "the Chicago miracle," there has been minimal improvement in academic achievement, graduation rates, and dropout rates in Chicago Public Schools. Chicago continues to

significantly lag behind other large cities on the National Assessment of Education Progress, and to the extent Chicago has made progress, it has largely been at the basic level.

Third, the Board has reinforced a two-tier system of public education that is differentiated by race and economic status. Opportunities to learn and educational outcomes have actually become more inequitable for African American and Latino students. Chicago continues to have large racial disparities in achievement, and racial disparities in both graduation and dropout rates increased from 1999 to 2010. African American students have an abysmal rate of achievement at levels above basic proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Over the past 15 years, African American and Latino students have disproportionately experienced a string of punitive and destabilizing policies. They have borne the brunt of the negative effects of high-stakes testing as thousands have been subjected to school probation, retention, curriculum narrowed to basic skills, and drilling for standardized tests. African American students' schools have also faced the highest rates of teacher turnover, and the percentage of African American teachers in the district has dropped significantly.

In contrast, the Board created world-class selective-enrollment schools, but these have benefited

only a small percentage of students who are disproportionately white and not low income.

Board decisions to close neighborhood schools have primarily affected African American, Latino, and low-income communities. School closings have increased student mobility of affected students and negatively impacted their safety. They have also contributed to community instability, particularly in gentrifying areas. These impacts have not been offset by gains. Most students have transferred to schools no better than the ones that were closed. The Board has closed dozens of neighborhood schools and replaced them with charter schools, but national research shows that, on balance, charters do no better and sometimes worse than traditional (neighborhood) public schools, while in Chicago, there is no evidence that, overall, CPS' charter schools are significantly better than traditional public schools.

Fourth, Chicago's appointed Board of Education is not responsive to the community it serves and not directly accountable to the public. The Board's policies, processes, and structures virtually exclude genuine public participation and input in decisions. As a result, the knowledge and experience of educators and parents are largely excluded even though they are essential to educational improvement. On the other hand, there are examples of elected school

boards that are open to community input and that respond in ways that support equitable opportunities to learn and improve education for all students in the district. There is an urgent need to change course.

In sum, there is compelling evidence that, for over 15 years, the Board's policies have failed to improve the education of the vast majority of Chicago public school students. Some students' entire K-12 education has been dominated by high stakes testing, fear of retention, a basic level education, and school closings and the resulting instability. An elected school board will not guarantee more effective educational policies, but the evidence in this report indicates it is an important—perhaps even necessary—condition. A board that is representative of the community it serves and directly accountable to the public would be a significant step toward a more inclusive process of decision making to improve education in Chicago for all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Transition. Chicago should transition to an elected representative school board (ERSB).

- The ERSB's composition should be representative of the broad community and the population of the school district.

2. Transparency. The ERSB's operations should be transparent and publicly accountable.

- ERSB meetings should be held when the working public can attend at an accessible location.

3. Democracy. The ERSB should establish structures and practices that strengthen democratic public participation in district initiatives and decisions.

- The ERSB should work with members of the school community, including Local School Councils, in a deliberative process of local school and district improvement.

4. Informed Decision-Making. The ERSB should draw on sound educational research and educator, student, and community knowledge to develop and evaluate policy.

5. Equity. Achieving equity in educational opportunities and outcomes should be integral to all ERSB decisions.

REFERENCES

- Allen, A., & Plank, D. N. (2005). School board election structure and democratic representation. *Educational Policy, 19*, 510-527
- Allen, A., & Mintrom, M. (2010). Responsibility and school governance. *Educational Policy, 24*, 439-464.
- Allensworth, E. (2005). *Graduation and dropout trends in Chicago: A look at cohorts of students from 1991 through 2004*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Allensworth, E. M., & Rosenkranz, T. (2000). *Access to magnet schools in Chicago*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research and Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.
- Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). *The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Alpert, E. (2010, September 6). The unusual road to the San Diego school board. *Voiceofsandiego.org*. Retrieved from http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/education/article_119a65a8-ba2d-11df-90d8-001cc4c002e0.html
- Alter, G.T. (2009). Teaching social responsibility: Challenging the textbook. *Educational Leadership, 66*(8), 72-75.
- Brown, J., Gutstein, E., & Lipman, P. (2009). Arne Duncan and the Chicago success story: Myth or reality. *Rethinking Schools, 23*(3), 10-14.
- Brown, L., & Gutstein, E. (2009, February). *The charter difference: A comparison of Chicago charter and neighborhood high schools*. Chicago: Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education, University of Illinois-Chicago.
- Bryk, A. S., Bender Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2005). *Options for school governance reform in South Carolina*. Report to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, August 15, 2005. Retrieved from <http://eoc.sc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A0B54705-750C-4499-AD21-920170567420/0/OptionsForSchoolGovernanceReformInSC.pdf>
- Chambers, S. (2006). *Mayors and schools: Minority voices and democratic tensions in urban education*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

- Consortium on Chicago School Research. (2010, January 13). *New book by consortium researchers identifies proven formula for successful school reform in Chicago*. Press Release. Retrieved from <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/OrganizingSchoolsPressRelease.pdf>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011a). *About CPS: Board Bios*. Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/AboutCPS/TheBoardofEducation/BoardBios/Pages/Boardbios.aspx>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011b). *About CPS: The Chicago Board of Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/AboutCPS/TheBoardofEducation/Pages/TheChicagoBoardofEducation.aspx>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011c). *High schools A-Z index*. Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Highschools/Pages/HighschoolsIndex.aspx?Type=1&Filter=CPSSchoolGrade%3dHigh+school>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011d). *Office of new schools: Who we are*. Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/NewSchools/Pages/WhoWeAre.aspx>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011e). *Office of performance: Cohort dropout and graduation rates*. Retrieved from <http://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/Reports/citywide.html>
- Chicago Public Schools. (2011f). *Schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Pages/Schools.aspx>
- Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets and America's schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago. (2009). *Still left behind: Student learning in Chicago's public schools*. Chicago: Author.
- CNN.com. (2010, May 12). *Anderson Cooper 360 degrees: Arizona culture clash*. Retrieved from <http://archives.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1005/12/acd.01.html>
- Coulson, A. (2009, July 15). *CATO Research Note: Questioning the "Chicago miracle."* Washington, DC: Cato Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.cato.org/pubs/researchnotes/coulson-questioning-chicago-miracle.pdf>
- CREDO (Center for Research on Education Outcomes). (2009). *Multiple choice: Charter school performance in 16 states*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). What happens to a dream deferred? The continuing quest for equal educational opportunity. In J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (2nd ed.) (pp.607-630). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- de la Torre, M. & Gwynne, J. (2009a). *Changing schools: A look at student mobility trends in Chicago Public Schools since 1995*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- de la Torre, M. & Gwynne, J. (2009b). *When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Designs for Change. (2005). *The big picture: School-initiated reforms, centrally initiated reforms, and elementary school achievement in Chicago (1990 to 2005)*. Chicago: Author.
- Duffrin, E. (1999). Classes revolve around test prep. *Catalyst*, X(6), 9-11.
- Duncan, A. (2009, March 31). *Mayors should run schools*. NBC Chicago. Retrieved from <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local-beat/arne-duncan-mayors-schools-033109.html>
- Duncan, A. (2009, June 8). *Speech to the Fourth Annual Institute for Education Sciences Research Conference*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06082009.html>
- Education Commission of the States. (2011). *State notes: Local school boards*. Retrieved from <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=170>
- Feuerstein, A. (2002). Elections, voting, and democracy in local school district governance. *Educational Policy*, 16,15-36.
- Fleming, J., Greenlee, A., Gutstein, E., Lipman, P. & Smith, J. (2009, February). *Examining CPS' plan to close, consolidate, turn-around 22 schools*. Data and Democracy Project: Investing in Neighborhoods. Chicago: Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education and Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, University of Illinois-Chicago.
- Fraga, L., Meier, K., & England, R. (1986). Hispanic Americans and educational policy: Limits to equal access. *The Journal of Politics*, 48, 850-876.
- Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Wang, J. (2010). *Choice without equity: Charter school segregation and the need for civil rights standards*. Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles.
- Greenlee, A., Hudspeth, N., Lipman, P., Smith, D. A., & Smith, J. (2008). *Examining CPS' plan to close, consolidate, turn-around 18 schools*. Data and Democracy Project: Investing in Neighborhoods. Chicago: Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education and Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, University of Illinois-Chicago.

- Henig, J. (2009). Mayoral control: What we can and cannot learn from other cities. In J. Viteritti (Ed.), *When mayors take charge: School governance in the city* (pp. 19-45). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hess, F. M. (2008). *Assessing the case for mayoral control of urban schools. Education Outlook (4)*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- Heubert, J.P., & Hauser, R. M. (Eds.) (1999) *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy Press.
- Hursh, D. (2008). *High-stakes testing and the decline of teaching and learning*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Illinois Interactive Report Card (2011). *City of Chicago SD 299*. Retrieved from <http://iirc.niu.edu/District.aspx>
- Illinois State Board of Education (2011). *Illinois district report card: City of Chicago, SD 299*. Retrieved from: http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getReport.aspx?year=2010&code=150162990_e.pdf
- Karp, S. (2010, Summer). Renaissance 2010: Search for equity. *Catalyst in Depth, XXI (4)*.
- Kirst, M. W. (2007). *Mayoral control of schools: Concepts, tradeoffs, and outcomes. Final report, Commission on School Governance, volume III*. New York: Commission on School Governance.
- Kirst, M., & Bulkley, K. (2000). 'New, improved' mayors take over city schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*, 538-546.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Land, D. (2002). Local school boards under review: Their role and effectiveness in relation to students' academic achievement. *Review of Educational Research, 72*, 229-278.
- Lenz, L. (June 2004). Stars were aligned behind Daley. *Gambit Weekly*. Reprinted *Catalyst Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/stat/index.php?item=133&cat=0>
- Lipman, P. (2004). *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform*. New York: Routledge.
- Lipman, P., & Haines, N. (2007). From education accountability to privatization and African American exclusion – Chicago Public Schools' 'Renaissance 2010.' *Educational Policy, 21*, 471-502.

- Lipman, P., Person, A, & Kenwood Oakland Community Organization. (2007, January). *Students as collateral damage? A preliminary study of Renaissance 2010 school closings in the Midsouth*. Chicago: Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education, University of Illinois-Chicago.
- Moore, D. (2000). *Chicago's grade retention program fails to help retained students*. Chicago: Designs for Change.
- Moscovitch, R., Sadovnik, A. R., Barr, J.M., Davidson, T., Moore, T.L., Powell, R., Tractenberg, P.L., Wagman, E., & Zha, P. (August 2010). *Governance and urban improvement: Lessons for New Jersey from nine cities*. New Brunswick, NJ: The Institute on Educational Law and Policy, Rutgers University—Newark.
- Myers, J. (2007, February). *School autonomy all over the map*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/assets/20070201/extra/0207reportcard.pdf>
- Myers, J. (2008, November, December). Staying on point. *Catalyst in Depth*, XX(2), 11.
- National Council for the Social Studies, (2011). *National curriculum standards for social studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards>
- National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (2010, July 10). *JROTC Shooting ranges, San Diego, CA*. Retrieved from http://www.nnomy.org/index.php?option=com_flexicontent&view=items&cid=306%3Aschool-policies&id=368%3Achanging-board-policies&Itemid=147
- National School Boards Association. (2011). *NSBA school board composition chart*. Retrieved from www.nsba.org/MainMenu/SchoolLaw/Issues/.../electionschart.aspx
- Newmann, F. M., Secada, W. G., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *A guide to authentic instruction and assessment: Vision, standards, and scoring*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin O'Day, J. (2002). Complexity, accountability, and school improvement. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72, 293-329
- Oakes, J., Joseph, R., & Muir, K. (2004). Access and achievement in mathematics and science: Inequalities that endure and change. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed.) (pp. 69-90). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Oakes, J., Rogers, J., & Lipton, M. (2006). *Learning power*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Parents United for Responsible Education (1999, October 21). *Office of Civil Rights letter—Discrimination complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Retrieved from <http://pureparents.org/data/files/OCRletterPUREhtml.pdf>
- Peterson, B. (2008, September 14). Teach students the whole story of our country. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/32538819.html>
- Rado, D. (2010, October 18). New ISAT lets kids pass with more wrong answers. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-10-18/news/ct-met-isat-answers-20101018_1_math-tests-new-isat-wrong-answers
- RAND Corporation. (2008). *Achievement and attainment in Chicago charter schools*. Technical Report. Santa Monica, CA: Author.
- Renée, M. & McAlister, S. (2011). *The strengths and challenges of community organizing as an education reform strategy: What the research says*. Providence, RI: Brown University, Annenberg Institute for School Reform and Nellie Mae Education Foundation.
- Roderick, M., Bryk, A.S., Jacob, B. A., Easton, J. Q., & Allensworth, E. (1999). *Ending social promotion: Results from the first two years*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Bacon, J., & Easton, J. Q. (2000). *Update: Ending social promotion*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Russo, A. (2003). Upfront Little Village: Community organizing pays off. *Catalyst*, XIV (9), 21.
- Secada, W. G. (1992). Race, ethnicity, social class, language, and achievement in mathematics. In D. A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 623-660). New York: Macmillan.
- Shaeffer, B. (2000, December). Some see elite schools as drain on system. *Catalyst*, XII(4), 12-13.
- Shippo, D. (2000, November, 19-22). Echoes of corporate influence. *The Courier*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Sporte, S., & de la Torre, M. (2010). *Chicago high school redesign initiative: Schools, students, and outcomes*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Swanson, C. B. (2008). *Cities in crisis: A special analytic report on high school graduation*. Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education, Inc.

- Tucson Unified School District. (2010, December 30). *Resolution to implement ethnic studies in Tucson Unified School District in accordance with all applicable laws*. Retrieved from <http://www.tusd.k12.az.us/contents/govboard/Documents/ethnicstudiesres123010.pdf>
- Tucson Unified School District. (2011). *Mexican American studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/depart/mexicanam/index.asp>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *National Assessment of Educational Progress: Program description*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/naep/index.html>
- Valenzuela, A. (2005). (Ed.). *Leaving children behind*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Viteritti (2009). (Ed.). *When mayors take charge: School governance in the city*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Weissmann, D. (2002). How three families are dealing with displacement. *Catalyst, XIII* (5), 12.
- Williams, D. (2000). Board gives North Side preps lavish facilities, ample planning time. *Catalyst, XII* (4), 4-9.
- Woestehoff, J. & Neill, M. (2007). *Chicago school reform: Lessons for the nation*. Chicago: Parents United for Responsible Education.
- Wong, K. K. (2009, June 25). Mayoral accountability as governance redesign in urban districts. *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=15687>
- Wong, K. K., & Shen, F. X. (2003). Big city mayors and school governance reform: The case of school district takeover. *Peabody Journal of Education, 78*, 5-32.

APPENDIX A

A Sample of Elected School Boards in Large U.S. Cities

Atlanta Public Schools (APS)

The Atlanta Board of Education is made up of nine members: six represent specific geographical districts; the remaining three are elected at-large. Each of the at-large members represents two of the districts. The term for all members is four years.

Dallas Independent School District (DISD)

The DISD has a nine-member Board of Trustees elected to three-year staggered terms to maintain a balance of veteran and new members. After the city census is taken, the Board of Trustees divides the school district into nine areas of similar population. Each of the nine board members represents a specific area. The board member must live in that area.

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)

MPS has a nine-member elected school board with eight members elected by district and one at large. The present school board passed a resolution calling on the state legislature to reshape and expand the districts from eight to nine, eliminating the at-large member. One of the districts would encompass communities that are majority Latino. However, the Chamber of Commerce is lobbying

to change to nine at-large positions and no community/district representation.

Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)

The MPS Board of Education is in transition. Between 2008 and 2013 the board will transition from seven elected members to nine elected members. Prior to 2010, the seven members were elected at-large. In order to better represent the various neighborhoods, a referendum was passed in 2008 to have six elected by districts determined geographically by the Parks and Recreation Board and three members elected at-large. The Board has established a transitional process to move to representative elections with members serving two- and four-year terms on a rotating basis.

San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD):

The SDUSD is broken up into five sub-districts, each with one elected school board member. The elected member must live in that sub-district. The sub-districts are determined geographically with two in the north, two in the south and one in the west. The members are nominated within their sub-district and elected by the entire SDUSD for a four-year term on a rotating basis.

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)

The SFUSD Board of Education is comprised of seven members, elected at large to serve four-year terms. Board members are unpaid, but there is currently a campaign to give the board members salaries (at a rate equivalent to a beginning teacher's salary in the San Francisco area). The rationale is that education in the city is so important that board members should focus on it full time and especially have time to visit schools and meet with teachers and parents.

Tucson Unified School District (TUSD)

The Tucson Unified School District has a five-person board that is elected citywide. Members serve four-year terms on a rotating basis, with no term limits.

Appendix B¹²²**Biographies of CPS Board of Education Members**

President Mary Richardson-Lowry is a private-sector lawyer whose primary practice area is Public Law. She is a Partner at the law firm of Mayer Brown LLP, one of the ten largest law firms in the world.

Clare Muñana is President of Ancora Associates, a management consulting firm. She has completed both domestic and international engagements for not-for-profit, public and private sector clients in the U.S., Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Peggy A. Davis is the Vice President of Diversity and Recruiting at the Exelon Business Services Corporation. She was a former partner in the government relations and labor and employment practices at Winston & Strawn LLP.

Norman R. Bobins is chairman of Norman Bobins Consulting, LLC (NBC), which provides financial consulting services to various clients. He also serves as the non-executive chairman of The PrivateBank and Trust Company.

Roxanne Ward is Vice President and Corporate Liaison of Ariel Investments, a Chicago-based investment management firm founded in 1983.

Dr. Tariq Butt is a Board Certified Family Physician with teaching appointments at the University of Illinois' Medical College, Rush University Medical School, and the Faculty with Mt. Sinai Family Practice Residency Program affiliated with the Chicago Medical School.

Alberto A. Carrero, Jr. is President of CBSS USA, a firm which provides financial, operational, and business consulting expertise and services.

Endnotes

¹ Prior to 1995, the mayor selected Board members from a pool put forward by a nominating committee composed of 23 parent and community representatives from Local School Councils across the city and five mayor-appointed individuals.

² Illinois State Board of Education (2011).

³ Henig (2009).

⁴ U.S. Department of Education (2009).

⁵ Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage (1995).

⁶ Hauser in Moore (2000).

⁷ Hauser in Moore (2000); Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage (1995).

⁸ Hursh (2008); Valenzuela (2005); Wong (2009).

⁹ Darling-Hammond (2004); Oakes, Joseph, and Muir (2004); Oakes, Rogers, and Lipton (2006).

¹⁰ Hess (2008).

¹¹ Allen and Plank (2005), p. 511.

¹² Feuerstein (2002).

¹³ Duncan (2009, March 31).

¹⁴ Hess (2008).

¹⁵ National School Boards Association (2011).

¹⁶ Allen and Mintrom (2009).

¹⁷ Education Commission of the States (2011).

¹⁸ Chubb and Moe (1990); Kirst (2007); Shippo (2000); Viteritti (2009); Wong and Shen (2003).

¹⁹ Viteritti (2009).

²⁰ Shippo (2000), p. 19.

²¹ Hess (2008).

²² Moscovitch et al. (2010), p. 2.

²³ Center for the Study of Social Policy (2005), p. 14.

²⁴ Hess (2008), p. 3.

²⁵ Alpert (2010).

²⁶ Wong and Shen (2009); Kirst and Bulkeley (2000).

²⁷ Duncan (2009, June 8).

²⁸ Henig (2009).

²⁹ Wong (2009).

³⁰ Chambers (2006).

³¹ Renée and McAlister (2011).

³² We do not discuss *turnaround* schools in this study because of a lack of data.

³³ Duffrin (1999); O'Day (2002); Woestehoff and Neill (2007).

³⁴ Hauser in Moore (2000), p. 29.

³⁵ Lipman (2004); O'Day (2002); Wong (2009).

³⁶ Heubert and Hauser (1999).

³⁷ Darling-Hammond (2004); Oakes, Joseph, and Muir (2004).

³⁸ Roderick, Bryk, Jacob, Easton and Allensworth (1999).

³⁹ Roderick, Nagaoka, Bacon, and Easton (2000).

⁴⁰ Lenz (2004).

⁴¹ Moore (2000).

⁴² Parents United for Responsible Education (1999).

⁴³ Williams (2000).

⁴⁴ Shaeffer (2000).

⁴⁵ The schools are Gwendolyn Brooks College Prep, Jones College Prep, King College Prep, Lane Tech, Lindblom, Northside College Prep, Walter Payton College Prep, and Whitney Young.

⁴⁶ Chicago Public Schools (2011c).

⁴⁷ Coulson (2009).

- ⁴⁸ Chicago Public Schools (2011b).
- ⁴⁹ In 2010, fewer correct answers were required to pass 11 of 12 ISAT tests in reading and math than in 2006. For example, in 2006, students passed the fifth-grade reading test with a score of 64 percent correct; in 2010 it was 55 percent correct (see Rado 2010).
- ⁵⁰ Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago (2009), p. 2.
- ⁵¹ NAEP score are on a 0-500 scale. NAEP also records scores in writing and science, and for grade 12.
- ⁵² Coulson (2009).
- ⁵³ Chicago NAEP scores in reading became available in 2002 and in math in 2003.
- ⁵⁴ Secada (1992).
- ⁵⁵ Swanson (2008).
- ⁵⁶ Allensworth (2005).
- ⁵⁷ Myers (February 2007).
- ⁵⁸ Karp (2010, Summer), p. 7.
- ⁵⁹ Myers (February 2007).
- ⁶⁰ Myers (February 2007).
- ⁶¹ Chicago Public Schools (2011e). We note that CCSR researchers use a different mechanism to evaluate graduation and dropout rates than the methods used by CPS researchers (see Allensworth 2005).
- ⁶² Chicago Public Schools. (2011e).
- ⁶³ Chicago Public Schools. (2011e).
- ⁶⁴ Chicago Public Schools (2011d).
- ⁶⁵ Karp (2010, Summer), p. 6.
- ⁶⁶ Karp (2010, Summer).
- ⁶⁷ Myers (2007), p. 7.
- ⁶⁸ de la Torre and Gwynne (2009b).
- ⁶⁹ The Midsouth area is bounded by 22nd Street on the North, the Dan Ryan Expressway on the West, 55th Street on the South, and Lake Michigan on the East.
- ⁷⁰ Lipman, Person, and the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (2007).
- ⁷¹ Lipman and Haines (2007).
- ⁷² de la Torre and Gwynne (2009a).
- ⁷³ Brown, Gutstein and Lipman (2009).
- ⁷⁴ Fleming et al (2009).
- ⁷⁵ See Greenlee et al. (2008); Fleming et al. (2009).
- ⁷⁶ Lipman, Person, and the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (2007).
- ⁷⁷ Myers (2008).
- ⁷⁸ Brown, Gutstein, and Lipman (2009).
- ⁷⁹ Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010); Designs for Change (2005).
- ⁸⁰ Designs for Change (2005), p. ii.
- ⁸¹ Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010); CCSR (2010).
- ⁸² Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010).
- ⁸³ This builds on the work of Designs for Change who originally developed this concept.
- ⁸⁴ Fleming et al. (2009); Greenlee et al. (2008).
- ⁸⁵ Fleming et al. (2009); Greenlee et al. (2008).
- ⁸⁶ Weissmann (2002).
- ⁸⁷ Fleming et al. (2009); Greenlee et al. (2008).
- ⁸⁸ Fleming et al. (2009); Greenlee et al. (2008).
- ⁸⁹ Fleming et al. (2009).
- ⁹⁰ Fleming, et al. (2009).
- ⁹¹ Allensworth, Ponisciak and Mazzeo (2009), p. 1.
- ⁹² Illinois Interactive Report Card (2011). <http://iirc.niu.edu/District.aspx>
- ⁹³ Ladson-Billings (1994).
- ⁹⁴ Chicago Public Schools (2011f).
- ⁹⁵ CREDO (2009).
- ⁹⁶ Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley and Wang (2010).
- ⁹⁷ RAND Corporation (2008).
- ⁹⁸ Karp (2010).

-
- ⁹⁹ Karp (2010).
- ¹⁰⁰ Spote and de la Torre (2010).
- ¹⁰¹ Spote and de la Torre (2010), p. 11.
- ¹⁰² Spote and de la Torre (2010), p. 2.
- ¹⁰³ Spote and de la Torre (2010), p. 23.
- ¹⁰⁴ Spote and de la Torre (2010), p. 3.
- ¹⁰⁵ Both report authors were present and witnessed this.
- ¹⁰⁶ Russo (2003).
- ¹⁰⁷ Greenlee et al. (2008); Fleming et al. (2009).
- ¹⁰⁸ Oakes, Rogers, and Lipton (2006); Renée and McAlister (2011).
- ¹⁰⁹ Land (2002), p. 10.
- ¹¹⁰ Fraga, Meier, and England (1986).
- ¹¹¹ Land (2002), p. 11.
- ¹¹² Feuerstein (2002); Chubb and Moe (1990).
- ¹¹³ See Allen and Plank (2005); Allen and Mintrom (2010); Land (2002); Feuerstein (2002).
- ¹¹⁴ National Council for the Social Studies (2011).
- ¹¹⁵ Peterson (2008).
- ¹¹⁶ Alter (2009), p. 74.
- ¹¹⁷ Alter (2009).
- ¹¹⁸ Tucson Unified School District (2011).
- ¹¹⁹ CNN.com (2010, May 12).
- ¹²⁰ Tucson Unified School District (2010, December 30).
- ¹²¹ National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (2010).
- ¹²² Chicago Public Schools (2011a).
-