

Notes from the Ground:

Teachers, principals, and students' perspectives on the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative, year two

Susan E. Sporte

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Joseph Kahne

Mills College

Oakland, CA

Macarena Correa

Consortium on Chicago School Research

A Report of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative Research Project

September 2004

by



Consortium on Chicago School Research

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge colleagues John Q. Easton and William David Stevens for their assistance in the preparation of this descriptive data brief and Steering Committee reviewers John Ayers and Peter Martinez for their careful and thoughtful comments. Finally, and most importantly, we thank the principals, teachers, and students at the 11 CHSRI-supported small high schools for their time, openness, and trust. Without their full cooperation, this document could not have been written. This study was made possible by a grant from the Chicago Community Trust.

Additional Information

For additional information about the formative stages of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative, see other reports from our research update series, including Chicago High School Redesign Initiative: A snapshot of the first year of implementation (www.consortium-chicago.org/publications/p64.html) and “Creating Small Schools in Chicago: An early look at implementation and impact” in *Improving Schools*, November 2004. (This article also will be available at www.consortium-chicago.org/publications beginning fall 2004.)

Notes from the Ground:

Teachers, principals, and students' perspectives on the
Chicago High School Redesign Initiative, year two

Susan E. Sporte

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Joseph Kahne

Mills College

Oakland, CA

Macarena Correa

Consortium on Chicago School Research

September 2004

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Setting the Context	7
Findings from Interview Data, 2004	9
Issues for Discussion and Action	20
Appendix A	25
Appendix B	26
Endnotes	29

Introduction

In spring 2003, the Consortium on Chicago School Research, in partnership with Mills College, undertook a short-term, interview-based study of five small schools created under the guidance of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (CHSRI) in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). This research resulted in a descriptive data brief, *Chicago High School Redesign Initiative: A snapshot of the first year of implementation*, released in August 2003.

In spring 2004, we followed up that earlier data brief by interviewing students, teachers, and principals at 11 small schools—five schools from the spring 2003 study and six schools that were opened in fall 2003, which included two contract schools. These interview data allow us to provide a snapshot of the schools' implementation experiences, to explore whether the issues that the second wave of schools faced were the same as those confronted a year earlier by their sister schools, to learn about new issues faced by the first wave of schools, and to highlight emerging questions.

As we did in 2003, we categorized the interview data that we collected in the second year of CHSRI into important themes. As presented below, these emerging themes and findings are intended to stimulate discussion among stakeholders and focus attention on critical areas for action. In addition, this study was designed to be a springboard for a systematic, three-year qualitative study that begins in the fall of 2004.

Data and Analysis

In fall 2003, the CHSRI opened four new small high schools within the Bowen, Orr, and South Shore high school buildings. These joined the five small high schools that opened in those buildings in 2002.

- Global Visions Academy opened in Bowen High School, joining B.E.S.T. (Bowen Environmental Studies Team) and Chicago Discovery Academy.
- Mose Vines Academy opened in Orr High School, joining Phoenix Military Academy.
- School of Leadership and School of Technology opened in South Shore High School, joining School of the Arts and School of Entrepreneurship.

In addition, two contract schools, operated by the Big Picture Company, opened in the Williams school and in the Chavez Resource Center.

In conducting this study, we transcribed interviews and wrote back-up field notes. We then grouped responses into categories across schools and across the roles of participants within the schools. Our data were collected as follows:

- We interviewed principals/directors at all 11 schools.
- We held focus groups with teachers at 10 schools, meeting with between six and 20 teachers at nine of them.¹ We administered a short implementation survey to teachers in nine schools, receiving 135 responses, or about a 75 percent response rate.
- We held focus groups with students at 11 schools, each time meeting with between five and 18 students. Most student participants were ninth and 10th graders, although we also met with juniors at two of the schools.

This report summarizes the composite experience of participants in 11 CHSRI-supported small high schools. These experiences provide a powerful description of what is happening in the schools as seen through the eyes of those most directly involved. Careful attention to their reports can make planning for future new small high schools more relevant and productive.

That said, this update is not an exhaustive qualitative study. It relies only on the spoken words of participants who themselves have a vested interest in the outcome of the study and does not seek to verify any of these comments through other means of data collection. In addition, it makes no attempt to compare the experiences expressed by these individuals with those of other teachers and principals in the Chicago public schools. In some cases, teachers and students were able to compare their experiences in two different settings, but we did not seek a systematic comparison between these 11 schools and any other schools within Chicago.

Review of Findings—2003

Our interviews in the five CHSRI schools that opened in 2003 found the following:

1. *Principals, teachers, and students reported a high level of student-teacher personalism.*
2. *Teachers and principals reported a strong professional community in at least four of the schools.*
3. *Focus on instruction was limited in year one.*
4. *Participants reported implementation challenges related to planning, operations, and autonomy.*
5. *Relationships among the schools sharing a building were not defined clearly.*
6. *There was a general sense of optimism and commitment for the next year.*

Based on our interviews and these emerging themes, we raised the following questions for stakeholders and school participants to consider:

1. *What can CPS and CHSRI do to ensure that these small schools create desirable change related to teaching and learning?*
2. *How can CPS and CHSRI provide more support for planning and reduce the challenges of securing adequate infrastructure?*
3. *How can authority and oversight between the district and the small schools be aligned?*
4. *How can tension about student and teacher recruitment, staffing, space, authority, and resources within a building be managed to benefit all?*

As presented below, we found many of the same themes and questions when we met with small school personnel in the spring 2004. As one would expect, some issues appear to have been resolved, others remain or have become more complex, and still other tensions have arisen as the Initiative has progressed.

Organization of Findings—2004

As part of our larger, qualitative study of small high schools in Chicago, we reviewed or collected new information relating to the theory driving the development of small high schools. We developed a Theory of Action based on a review of CHSRI documents, academic literature on small schools and school reform, a limited number of interviews with CHSRI Advisory Board members and staff from CHSRI and the CPS, and our own experience in the schools. While the theory will be refined further as the study unfolds over the next three years, we have found this a useful framework to organize our findings. (See Figure 1). For the purposes of this descriptive data brief, we have combined some of the categories in Figure 1.²

Summary of Findings—2004

Comparison with 2003

Findings from 2004 are presented under their theoretical context, followed by a discussion of similarities and differences between 2003 and 2004.

Chicago Public Schools' Relationship with Small Schools

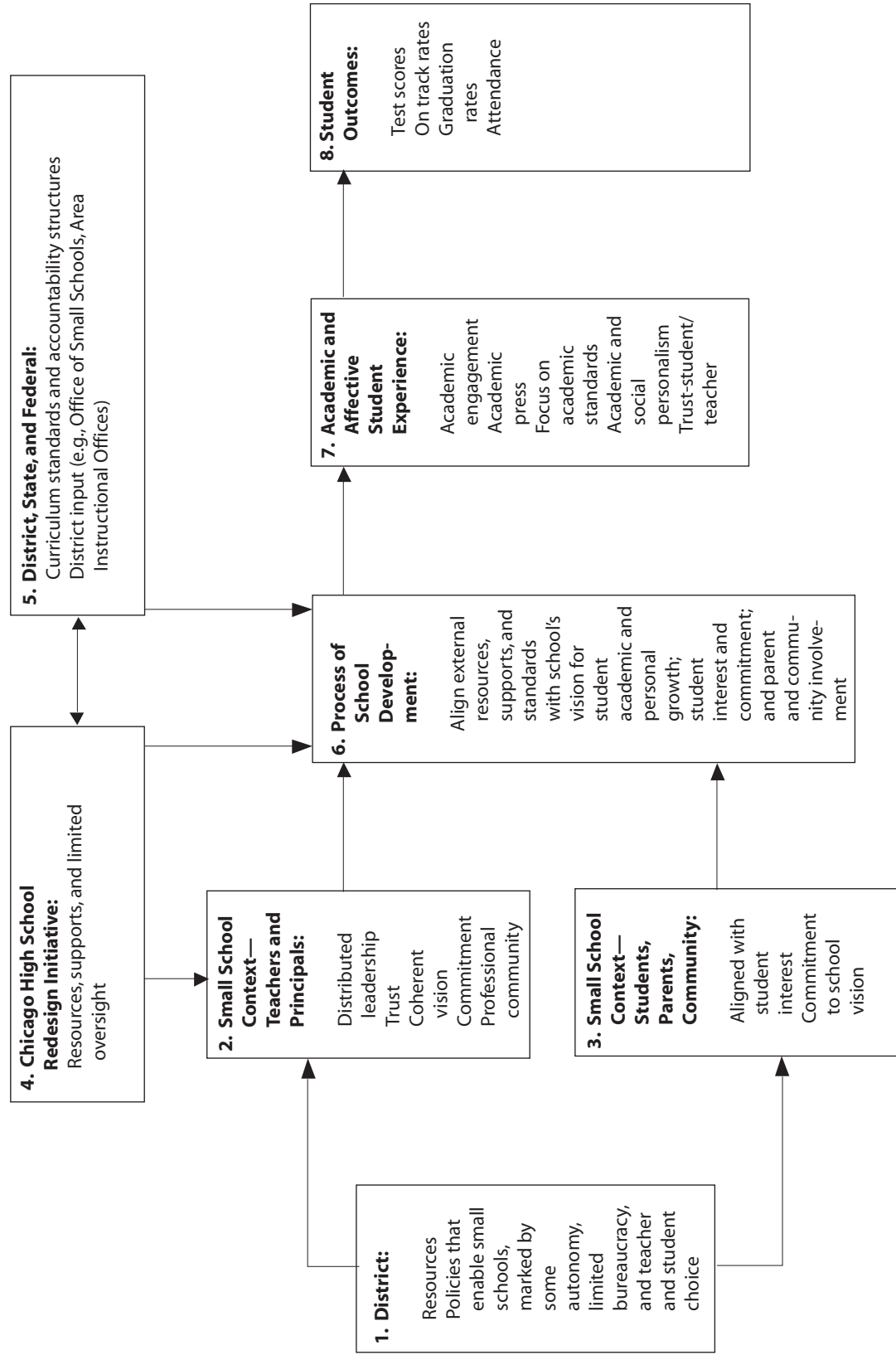
(Figure 1: Box 1)

- CPS Board action and CHSRI requests for proposals were designed to create new schools with fewer than 500 students, a cohesive and self-selected faculty, more flexibility and autonomy than traditional high schools, and a student body committed to a coherent curricular or pedagogical focus. Participants in these schools report that, in general, these conditions prevail in these schools.
- At the same time, teachers and principals emphasized the need for attention to enrollment policies, greater flexibility and consistency from the district, more support for teacher-led reform, help in clarifying and supporting improved relationships between small schools that share buildings, and attention to funding issues.

2003-2004 Comparison. The commitment and enthusiasm we found in 2004 parallels what we saw in 2003. Some of the pressing issues concerning planning and operations seem to have been reduced between

Figure 1

Theory of Action



2003 and 2004. However, some issues present in 2003 concerning enrollment policies, flexibility, and within-school relationships are still present and have become more complex, and leadership philosophies, staffing and funding issues appear to have taken on new importance in 2004.

Small School Characteristics

(Figure 1: Boxes 2 and 3)

- The small-school characteristics have created an environment for principals and teachers marked by trust, commitment, and strong professional community. Most schools are committed to distributed leadership, although patterns of decision-making differ across schools.
- Many students chose their school because they were interested in its theme or vision. However, others passively accepted assignment to their school.

2003-2004 Comparison. Participants reported commitment, trust, strong teacher professional community, and strong teacher-student personal relationships in both 2003 and 2004. However, the definition of what it means to be “teacher-led” varies more across schools this year than last.

Integrating External Support, Standards, and Accountability with Small School Vision, Student Interest, and Parent and Community Involvement

(Figure 1: Boxes 4, 5, 6)

- Both CHSRI and CPS have provided operational support.
- Professional development provided by both CHSRI and CPS is appreciated by some, but viewed as irrelevant, distracting, and unsustainable by others.
- Some small schools are having difficulty aligning their themes with CPS graduation standards and with Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) content.

2003-2004 Comparison. While we found general appreciation for CHSRI, the Office of Small Schools, and professional development opportunities in both 2003 and 2004, we found more concern about competing professional development demands in 2004. In addition, the issue of aligning themes with standards had not yet arisen in 2003, and improving PSAE results has received more attention in 2004.

Instructional Reform in a Personalized Setting

(Figure 1: Box 7)

- Students are generally pleased with the personal attention and support they receive from adults in the school. Teachers and students report less violence than what they had experienced prior to the breakup into small schools.
- There is not a commonly understood definition of what constitutes good instruction. In most of the schools, there is not a connection between a school’s theme and its curricular and instructional design.

- Instructional leadership—and who should provide it—is not always clearly defined.
- Teachers talked about using new instructional strategies. Students described some classrooms where the work was challenging and engaging and others where they felt little learning occurred.
- While some small schools have maintained their theme as an integrated part of their curriculum, others have not.

2003-2004 Comparison. In 2003, participants indicated that pressures of starting a new school had limited their ability to concentrate on instructional reform. In 2004, staff talked more about instructional improvement, but a shared description of high-quality instruction has not yet emerged.

Issues for Discussion and Action

Drawing on our data, we have identified six questions that we believe merit discussion and action. We believe this descriptive data brief will be of greatest value if key stakeholders focus attention on these and related issues.

- 1. How can school enrollment/choice policies be designed to take advantage of the benefits of choice while also maintaining small schools as a resource for their neighborhoods?*
- 2. In what ways should the district, principals, and teachers distribute leadership, responsibilities, and authority for shaping the reform?*
- 3. What constitutes high-quality instruction and how can it be pursued?*
- 4. What are some productive ways in which principals and teachers are exercising leadership that lead to curricular and instructional improvement? What supports should CPS and CHSRI provide?*
- 5. What policies and practices can be developed to help schools share buildings in a productive manner?*
- 6. How can administrative and other non-teaching roles at small schools be structured to efficiently meet the school's administrative and program needs, given their sizes?*

Setting the Context

When talking about these new schools, it is important that we situate them in their specific context.³ The three converting high schools have been on probation since 1997 due to low performance, and they have historically served a relatively high percentage of students with special needs. While the two contract schools do not have this past history, as the data in the Appendix show, they too serve students who have relatively low levels of academic achievement. The points below summarize some of the salient demographic data.

- More boys than girls attend small schools. In only two of the eleven small schools do girls outnumber boys.
- Small-school and contract-school students are either African-American or Latino, with no school enrolling more than a few white students.
- The average eighth-grade Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores for freshmen at the nine conversion schools was 229 (227 is the national norm for end-of-sixth-grade achievement). Among non-CHSRI schools, the comparable average was 246, where 250 is the national norm for end-of-eighth-grade achievement. Therefore, CHSRI students perform about one and one-half grade levels below non-CHSRI students when they enter ninth grade. The average eighth grade ITBS score for the two contract schools is 238, which is higher than the conversion schools, but still not as high as the CPS average.
- Among the nine conversion schools, 23.3 percent of freshmen receive special education services, while across the whole district, 17.7 percent of freshmen receive special education services. The two contract schools have special education populations of 18 and 20 percent.

- Some of the student background characteristics make these schools very challenging learning environments.

We took them on a retreat in the suburbs. They loved it, and I could tell that they couldn't believe that this kind of a world existed. Because it was only on television, and of course, it's so untouchable on television, you can never imagine it....One of the students said he had never been to the mall before. *Teacher*

We struggle to keep these kids in this building learning something and providing them with positive role models for their future because a lot of them are coming out of some homes that would make you sit down and cry. *Teacher*

Findings from Interview Data, 2004

Chicago Public Schools Policies Related to Small Schools

(Figure 1: Box 1)

- **Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) board action and Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (CHSRI) requests for proposals were designed to create new schools with no more than 500 students, a cohesive and self-selected faculty, more flexibility and autonomy than traditional high schools, and a student body committed to a coherent curricular or pedagogical focus.**

- Principals, students, and teachers are generally supportive and enthusiastic.

My observation has been that 95 percent of the people are onboard for this idea and this structure of administration. *Teacher*

With small schools, just like it's easier, it's better because you don't get looked over as quick as you would in a regular large school. . . . Like if you need help, they'll be able to give it to you. *Student*

- Many students actively chose the school they now attend and many teachers chose to be part of the faculty because of a specific belief or commitment.

In the letter, they had it all mapped out, all nice, and I said, 'wow, this sounds like a nice school.' *Student*

And I really am completely in support of small schools. I've worked in large schools; I've worked in small schools. And I just believe that the format is more conducive for personalization, individuality, and gives the students that much more attention. *Teacher*

- Teachers and principals appreciate the small size and the flexibility they have been granted to pursue varied themes and to structure their curriculum, schedule, and other school attributes.

We really control the curriculum and what goes on in our classroom. I mean, that ability to really dictate what's going on in the curriculum is huge in my mind as far as the effects we have on the students and our goal, our support of the curriculum, and the way we are able to transmit the material to the students. *Teacher*

The key is the common prep time. I mean, it's such a simple solution, I don't know why all schools don't have it. *Teacher*

The huge upside of the small school is you have an amazing amount of input. You see the results very quickly. You feel very much a part of the team. *Teacher*

O Teachers and principals also voiced significant concerns regarding the district’s support for implementation and regarding policies related to the small schools.

- The small schools felt forced to accept all students living in their neighborhoods, even those who did not actively choose their school. This constrained the benefits of choice and resulted in freshman enrollment that often exceeded 125 students (the upper limit on freshman enrollment stipulated in the policy).⁴ Other CPS schools’ enrollment caps and cache policies contributed to an overflow at the small schools. In addition, since the schools have a reputation for enrolling low-performing students, and the neighborhood high schools housing the small schools have been on probation since 1997, attracting better students has proven to be difficult.

We were forced to take in every student that walked in the door. It was like next one in the door, okay, [Small School A] it’s your turn. So student choice was gone at that point. *Principal*

And then once school started, they just kept coming and coming. *Principal*

We were supposed to have common planning times for each grade level team, and what happened this year was that we all picked up a sixth class [so we could serve our enlarged] freshman [class]. *Teacher*

[Our host school] seems to have a reputation of being the school that they send the low-achieving students to. So not only do we receive a lot of the low-achieving regular ed students, but we see a lot of the low-achieving special ed students, because the majority of our students are either EMH [Educably Mentally Handicapped] or moderate to severe learning disabled; no high functioning LD. So that’s a problem. *Teacher*

- Some teachers and principals at small schools would like greater flexibility from the district and more clarity regarding the degree to which they are or are not free to differ from general high school procedures and policies.

We come into a system and they’re not flexible. They’re using the same prescription for every principal, for every child, for every school, and it doesn’t work. *Principal*

The people between us and [people in high levels] in the bureaucracy...are not proponents of what we’re doing. I think some of them are hostile, but most of them, I don’t think have a position at all, which is not helpful. *Principal*

I think the district is continually trying to make a non-traditional thing very traditional, which makes it very difficult. Like this automatic Assistant Principal. Did [the district] even ask me what I wanted? Did [they] even ask the teachers? [Are we] teacher led? It’s a big push from the district to make the Small Schools Office make us adhere to these common policies. *Principal*

[The teacher-leader at the new school] had done all of this work, and it was a lot of work. And she won't get to start as director [because CPS' policy changed.] That's just like doing all the work and then you just hand it to somebody. I think that's unfair. I think CPS was unfair. *Principal*

I think CPS is trying to dictate what books we can have. But like going into like an inquiry based learning thing...they're not allowing it. It just makes no sense at all. *Teacher*

- Several principals and teachers felt that the district did not support leadership styles that emphasize shared decision-making rather than a top-down approach. These teachers and principals stated that such leadership is essential in small-school reform.

[During my interview with CPS personnel], the first time when I said 'teacher led' and ... I saw their reaction I knew right then they didn't want to hear that and so then I did a brain shift and went back to the way traditional schools are run. *Principal*

But they really don't want to fundamentally change the structure of high school. What they've bought into is a high school has 2,000 kids, and it has a principal. That principal is the boss. . . . And small schools are scary to them, because you're talking about fundamental change in organization. That the role of the principal is not to be the boss. It's to be the facilitator. It's to empower teachers, to allow teachers to solve their own problems. *Principal*

So they want to fill the jobs or give people a career progression path or something. . . . So you're going to bring the downtown mentality over here, and it's not going to work. *Teacher*

- Despite extra resources, the small schools find that they often do not have enough books and equipment, and almost half of them expressed some concern about what will happen when the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation money ends.

We might only have one set of books that the whole, all seven class periods have to use, so you can't take them home. There are certain classes that you can take books home for, but other classes you can't. *Student*

Kids having to use folding tables in the science labs, because there are no desks. No lab tables. The tables they've got have been dug in so deep from the 1940s. *Teacher*

One of the things about having an [our] curriculum is that [it's] expensive. It costs money to bring these people in here. So once the Gates money is gone, we're going to really have a problem. *Teacher*

The principal here is forced to accept students because our money is getting low. That's why we're growing. So until they figure out a way to fund the small schools, it's not going to be small schools. *Teacher*

- The small schools and the District need to work together to design efficient and effective staffing structures for administrative and other non-teaching roles.

You can't have five programmers, five attendance officers, five lunch room managers, five this, five that. At some point there has to be a core staff that's shared.
Teacher

It's still a teacher-led institution and being top heavy with administrators. That makes a big part. So I requested not to have it [Assistant Principal position]. *Principal*

The real problem though is how the Board calculates the teachers to begin with.... The Board has a system where so many kids, so many teachers. But they don't take into account the fact that there are many staff who have teacher designations or teacher position numbers, but really don't do the teaching jobs. And they're not in front of the kids. And, for example, like the programmer. Every school needs a full-time programmer. That programmer does not have children that sit in front of them. *Teacher*

Most of my teachers serve dual purposes. We are not just teachers, but there is a teacher/disciplinarian; teacher/programmer; teacher/case worker. *Principal*

- Participants voiced different perspectives regarding the degree to which schools should view themselves as part of a larger whole or whether they should operate more as separate entities. Most schools have arrived at workable solutions to sharing a building. However, the schools still want some independence and more control over their own physical space.

It's either you're going to be a separate school or you're going to be one school. I mean,...we want to have a good campus and all the schools are doing well, so there are some shared things that are good. We don't need to hang on to a one-school philosophy. The whole thing was trying to make separate schools because that was supposed to work better. *Teacher*

And it's all Host School community, but we still all play separate. Some of us had the idea that we're all in this together, we all have the same type of kids, we all know what we're dealing with. You just teach, you know your theme is just a little bit different than my theme, but we all know the same thing, we're all in this together. Some do that, but if not everyone does...it's that division. *Teacher*

I wanted to use the computer lab a couple of times...and it was like I had to like drop names or something. Like who are you to ask to use the computer lab? . . . Yeah, the other school does that. They're like, this is mine. I'm like, no it's ours, you know, it's for the kids. *Teacher*

To be able to [develop a unique school culture], you have to be able to control your hallways....[The schools in New York] had control of their hallway wall space, which we don't have. We've even had a lot of stuff that we've put out in the hallways to try and create a school environment here, taken down, by someone in the Host School. *Teacher*

So when our kids see what their kids get away with, they try to push us in that way. And no one really stops their children from coming down into our area. *Teacher*

Well, in this building, it's like living in a condominium. Other kids saw our kids leaving early....It caused problems for them. So we [restructured our schedule]....By compromising, it really affected our program negatively. *Principal*

Characteristics of the Small Schools

(Figure 1: Boxes 2 and 3)

- **For teachers and principals, the school environment is predominately characterized by trust, commitment, and strong professional community. This appears to result from the small-school features. While most schools remain committed to distributed leadership, there are differences in the way it is being lived out.⁵**

- There is a sense of openness and trust among teachers and between teachers and principal/directors. The staff feels committed to the success of the small school.

As far as the other people on the team, there's a closeness. They don't let you fall short. They help you out, wherever you come up short. They guide you. They give you good direction and that works in the classroom. When you have a question, you're able to go to somebody and say, 'I need this. I need that.' Even with the leaders, you're able to say, 'I have a problem. Can you help me?' *Teacher*

At the school I was at before, there was never any, 'what do you think about what's going on in the school?' I was never inside the principal's office [there]....Here, if I need to talk to [my principal]...there's never any hesitation for him to hear anything that we have to talk about. I can go in his office any time. You know, the difference between them is night and day. There was never any request for any kind of input from me, even though I was willing. *Teacher*

First of all, the teachers feel an ownership of it. We created this. So, they work to make it good because we feel like these children belong to us. So, in doing that, everybody works—you know how you take care of your own? We sit down and plan things together. Not just the English teacher, the math teacher, but the whole team works together. *Principal*

- Teachers meet frequently to discuss students and teaching.

I know I'm very narrow in my own personal experience, what I have to offer. But when you can do that times four, which is the people on my team that I meet with on a regular basis to do integrated curriculum with and come up with ideas or talk about what's going on and what's going on with the kids, then good ideas come out of that. So it makes you even better than what you normally would be....You're not just you. *Teacher*

We talk about students, problems that we see, solutions that we can find, ways that we can get them to participate more. You know, I might have a problem with this person; [my colleague] might not. She does something every day that I haven't done. And I can go ahead and implement that in the class. *Teacher*

- All schools have developed a shared decision-making process. Areas of responsibility vary from school to school, although in most schools teachers have some responsibility for budget and hiring.

I think I have a very competent staff. I mean, they do many of my responsibilities—every AP responsibility and many of my responsibilities. We work it out together and have a check and balance. *Principal*

The staff elects the [leadership team], and we meet once a week....The day-to-day operations I don't really bother them too much with. But if there's something with the budget where we want to move money or spend a large amount of money, possibly if there was controversy say in hiring a teacher, that might go to them, and then they would give their input. They did all the selection of the principal candidates, and we did all the interviewing and set up the open forum and things like that. They make the meaty decisions, if there are any. *Principal*

Teachers are not trained in that type of endeavor, so I was a complement to that because I had a different background. [Hiring an administrator] freed them to do some of the things that they were experts in—the curriculum and the instructional strategies. So we taught each other a lot. *Principal*

[As far as hiring, our administration] asks for staff to be involved in the recruiting sessions and that kind of thing. We're just not involved in actual interviews, in the final decision, but I would say our input is valued. *Teacher*

O Although many students chose their school and are interested in its program or theme, that is not universally true.

- While many students actively chose their school, others did not.

I heard like it's going to be college prep. I thought it was a little better than [Host School] because I wanted to get away from all the distractions. I thought if I was in a small environment I might be able to learn a little more. *Student*

Q. Why did you choose this school?

A. Because it's close to home. *Student*

A. My counselor made me. *Student*

A. It's my neighborhood school and other schools wouldn't accept me. *Student*

Q. What made you choose this school instead of [others in the building]?

A. Actually they just placed me in here. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be here. They put me in and said if I don't like it I can leave. *Student*

- In general, students are committed to their school and identify with its theme.⁶ However, at three of the nine CHSRI schools, students were not able to state the school's theme.

Yeah, we really want our own school. So hopefully within a few years even if we won't be here it would be my honor to help them push and have our own school. I would come back with pride. *Student*

I'm glad that I went to [Small School] because I learned how to be a leader not a follower and how to live your life instead of fighting, and they really focus us here. *Student*

We don't do that much talking about [our theme]. We don't do enough....But they're not like last year when they first started; last year we did a whole bunch. *Student*

Q: What is this school's theme?

A: Failure Is Not an Option? [Not the school's theme] *Student*

Integration of Support, Standards, Thematic Focus, Student Interest, and Community Involvement

(Figure 1: Boxes 4, 5, 6)

O CHSRI, CPS, and the small schools are in the process of attempting to align resources, supports, and standards with the schools' reform needs.

- Teachers and principals report that they have found CHSRI supportive, but some expressed concerns about specific situations.

They took...a group of us to New York to visit the small schools so we could, you know, see how they're working [and] how we could incorporate some really good ideas. It was a really great trip. *Teacher*

Our [suggested activity] was something brand new....And they had faith in us that it would work.... And it did work out....They're letting us grow. *Teacher*

All of them have been very, very, very wonderful....You can always call them to get answers. *Principal*

As far as providing things to us, I think they have done a great job with that. I do, however, feel that they should have had more of a say so or a voice in the principal type things, since they were the ones that started things, they're the ones that held the purse strings. I think they could have had more of a voice than they did have....I feel like CHSRI should have done more or said more. And perhaps they couldn't.... Now, we do appreciate the fact that they did step in to say, 'Okay, you've got to create a position for the directors.' Because I do believe had it not been for CHSRI that we could have gone wherever as far as CPS is concerned. *Principal*

- Teachers and principals reported that some CPS staff and offices have also been supportive.

My AIO [Area Instructional Officer]...really makes you step up to the plate. But it makes me a better hitter. I found her very supportive in anything I've ever needed. She's right there...and then she's directed me in every direction when I need help with the layers of CPS. *Principal*

[Name's] support has been great in Small Schools, and [name]. *Principal*

Whatever I request from downtown, they respond most of the time—I would say 98 percent of the time. *Principal*

- Professional development from both CHSRI and CPS is appreciated by some. Others expressed a desire to help guide selection of opportunities to better align it with school needs and priorities. Principals also reported that it was difficult to free teachers to participate in these opportunities and teachers and principals said it was difficult to ensure that what was learned was shared with the full staff and acted upon.

Then they had this wonderful guy, this guy with authentic learning, he's like the greatest guy ever. *Principal*

The things that they are teaching I want to learn...I felt like what he had to offer was taking us to the next level, to the place where I feel education is stuck, which is looking at student work. How do we begin to have honest conversations about school and work and how do we do that without feeling attacked? *Principal*

And they've been good professional development. This was great. I thought it was a great use of my time, but . . . we haven't yet had a chance to go back and share this with our colleagues. *Teacher*

They offer this stuff in a marginal way at best. It's not seated in instructional curricular context. It is simply given as a lot of little tricks and whistles and bangles that a person can do to hopefully get their students engaged, which it does not. *Teacher*

But it was tough to get staff to go to that. They were fantastic workshops. But they have them during the school day. We have to cover the teachers' classes, five teachers out in one day, you know, and they keep going to this like three days in a row. . . . It's like a Catch 22. They don't want to go on Saturdays; they don't want to go after school. So that's definitely hard. *Principal*

They shouldn't pull teachers out for a couple of days at a time. There's not enough follow through on it, and I'm not sure if there are enough connections. There needs to be professional development between CPS and the Initiative that first of all has our input into it, when do we have it, how do we have it, who gives it. We need to have more input into what it is and when it takes place, not that we should have total input but it should be some input. *Principal*

- In response to the need to raise PSAE scores, schools have received support from CPS. We are not sure how this effort was connected to schools' themes or to broader instructional reform.

We felt like we were doing very social type things, nurturing type things. We've got to get to the business, because we have to survive, we have to figure out how we're going to make these numbers better. *Principal*

Because it seems like I have to do CPR on the PSAE....Bring the test scores up. Everybody is focusing on this test score. *Principal*

Like the other day, CPS came out and we had a professional development on the PSAE. Although we don't take that until they're juniors, but my teachers, you know, right then they just started thinking how they could work that. So what they started doing, even for our final exam this year, they're modeling it on the PSAE. *Principal*

With the PSAE, our AIO is really very supportive of that. Early in the year, they gave us discs of the analysis of the PLAN. So I handed my tech coordinator the discs. I sat down with the department chairman. We went through the discs and analyzed each question and saw where the students' weaknesses were—if there was a trend. You know, is it punctuation? Is it sentence structure? Is it commas? You know, understanding usage or spelling—whatever the weaknesses were. And then hopefully the teachers would look at their kids and analyze that on their own. We actually got to sit and do some of that. That didn't happen at all last year. *Principal*

- Some schools have begun to align curriculum standards and graduation requirements with their thematic focus, while others have found this difficult.

We're really going back to revisit our vision and our mission. . . . And then from that, point out exactly what we said we were going to do....We said we were going to be college prep, we said we were going to align EPASS, which is national standards, to the the Illinois State codes. And then do our Chicago criteria—CRI (Chicago Reading Initiative) and CSMI, the math/science initiative. And then go to our local criteria. What did we say we want to do? We want to be [mentions school theme] integrated and have negotiated curriculum, which is the student-focused piece. What would happen, if we truly...did what we said? Our action research [project is to create exit standards that reflect these commitments]. *Principal*

We haven't been able to capture everything we wanted to capture this year, simply because we have to comply with CPS' requirements. [In our proposal] we said we are going to provide this and provide that. How are we going to mix our commitment [with CPS requirements]? *Principal*

Student Experience and Instructional Reform

(Figure 1: Boxes 7 and 8)

- **Student experience is characterized by generally positive interactions among students and by strong student-adult relationships.**

- There seem to be fewer violent incidents at small schools.

We haven't had a fight, which is good...

Principal

We just had a metal detector search. Normally when we would have a metal detector sweep by CPS and Chicago Police Department I would get a minimum six expellable offenses. . . . This year when we did it we actually got zero expellable offenses.

Principal

The physical violence at the other school was much more frequent and at a higher level. We've had a couple of incidents; it's going to happen at any school. We got kids that they argue and they say things without thinking, but the intensity of it at a really large school is dramatically greater. Here, I can step into the hall if I see kids about to square off, and nine times out of 10, in this setting, holler them down.

Teacher

- Many students and staff described their school as providing a personalized environment with academic support.⁷

So if the kid is having a problem or they don't have their homework or they had a bad morning, we usually know about it by lunch time. We're always talking. We're always getting together talking with the other teachers. *Teacher*

Some teachers will ask you, like, how are you doing in another class. And you might need help in that other class, like it might be math, but you can probably go to your English teacher and get help, on their part. Or you might go to your world studies teacher and get help in that subject. *Student*

And one thing [teachers] help [with] is not to be afraid of one another. You sit in class and you don't know the answer, and they're teaching us. [The teachers say,] 'if you don't know it, we're here. There's nobody who's going to laugh.' *Student*

- **The impact of small-school reform on instruction remains unclear. It is difficult to assess the quality of instruction through interviews. The data we have collected through interviews indicates that reform is occurring in some, but not all, classrooms. In addition, there is no shared articulation of what constitutes quality instruction, nor a clear understanding of what instructional leadership is necessary to move the task forward.**⁸

- The district and the small-schools reform effort in Chicago lack a clearly articulated vision(s) of high-quality instruction

[We attended a meeting of] high school principals and AIO's, where we were given a presentation...about how to make a mediocre teacher better. As part of this, he showed us a video clip of a teacher. He didn't say it was mediocre, he just said, 'here's a teacher.' Fifteen minutes of it. At the end of it we all had to rate them. Those who rated them high went to one part of the room, those who rated them low went to another room, and those in the middle stayed in their seats....Well, what was interesting was almost all the AIO's there rated them low, and our very diverse race and gender, age, whatever kind of school principals rated them high. As we explained, it was real obvious that there was a disconnect in the system on what is mediocre teaching. *Principal*

- From our teacher interview data, it appears that teachers are largely responsible for instructional leadership

If you're just in a regular classroom, you might have an idea or two and you try it, it may work and it may not. But we have the ability and system where we're always trying new ideas. We're always brainstorming what to do here. How are we going to make this work? *Teacher*

Whereas in the old school, you know, I feel I'm a good teacher, but I knew that X, Y, Z, teacher wasn't doing their job. It's two years before they had to retire, and they just want to put their feet up. But here, we all bust our [behinds] to make sure these kids are learning. And you know we all do it in a way that's interesting to them, in every class. *Teacher*

- It also appeared that most principals don't feel they have enough time for instructional leadership, or that it should be a teacher responsibility, or that it is something that they bring in others to do.

[As a leader,] I want them to concentrate on curriculum, instruction, and let me deal with the frustrating things that happen....I make phone calls and e-mails about [those]. That's my role and that's my responsibility. *Principal*

When talking to my leadership team [about] skills we needed in an AP, they agreed with me...that we needed somebody who could work directly with teachers on improving instruction. So that's going to be really key. We wanted somebody who's been in the classroom very recently. *Principal*

We have an expert on the premises who does everything that those [professional development] trainers are trying to do, and she's ten times better....**Q.** So the model that you have here with an in-house coach for you all, that works better? **A.** Yeah. She can handle it all....She's the only one that has stuff that's engaging. *Teachers*

As administrator or principal [of a small school], you don't have the free time that you would like, not having assistant principals. Also with being a new principal, you're in training really, you're pulled out of the building quite often, so the instructional time that you have to visit is extremely reduced. If I had an Assistant Principal, it would have been a lot more visitation and so forth. *Principal*

- In preparation for CHSRI's Accountability Dialogues, some teachers and principals engaged in action research projects and other school-based efforts to reflect systematically on their instruction and to reform practice. It is not clear how widespread or efficacious these and related efforts have been.

We had a group of four people, and two people did instruction, two people did assessment. . . . My problem was reading comprehension, and so I was trying to increase it. I was tracking it as it goes along and writing summaries....[I found] that they needed a lot of practice with it and decided that more practice helps a lot. I tried different strategies because some kids are better at different ways. So it was actually very beneficial for me. *Teacher*

And part of that is kind of tracking a random sample of students over time—and trying to design a good assessment and keeping the results of that, and then reflecting on it and keeping the whole portfolio together, and so looking over time how your assessments are improving and thinking about them. *Teacher*

I was wondering why we were doing that [project you just described] (laughter).
Teacher

Now they're doing a big thing called action research. Well you know we're not really sold on why we're doing it. We're doing it to please them, we're not doing it because we really want to be doing it. *Principal*

- We heard many examples of project-based learning and cross-curricular instruction as well as many examples of worksheet-based instruction. From our interviews, we are not able to assess the general quality of instructional practice.

For example, we had to do an arts project on Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. We could do a rap or song and make a cover sheet. It really works for people to do it this way. *Student*

We do so many projects. It was like a different project every week. . . . Every other week, we've got a project. It's not just one class do a project, it's all classes. *Student*

That whole concept is really inherent in a small school where the teachers are working together. You're doing interdisciplinary projects and assignments, and so that was really kind of the broad picture of what the small school would be. *Teacher*

I say most of the people here by now have figured it all out. They might not be doing it as well as they'd like to do it, but I bet a dollar to a dime's worth of donuts that they're doing integration, that they're doing constructivist teaching, that they're doing experiential models, and they're teaching deep, not wide. *Teacher*

[In] my English class, we basically just read and do a worksheet. *Student*

- Some students described disruptive peers and a poor learning environment.

[The teacher does not] know how to control them. . . . I don't learn nothing, I just go there; I don't learn. We don't do nothing in there. *Student*

From my view, they don't like to pay attention, they like to goof around. And when it comes to like, the midterms, finals, and all that, they like, want to cheat off somebody that like, knows the work. And still get it wrong. *Student*

- Many of the students we talked to described their classes as engaging and challenging. They appreciated being pushed academically by their teachers.⁹

We have to think in his class basically, because he don't just say the answer or whatever. Not like some teachers you get—they just tell you the answer. But he wants us to go to different sources or use our friends whatever to help us. He just don't come out with it. *Student*

Some teachers get into it. They make you want to be included. It's not like they force you. It's like the way they do it . . . they make it interesting. . . . Like the way they make us act out in English. . . . Make you want to come to that class . . . *Student*

She'll pick a person that she knows that she has to stay on, because if she don't stay on that person, then she knows he's going to mess up and he's going to fall off track. But if she stays on that person, he's going to do what everything he's got to do. *Student*

Like two weeks later we got another book to read, then we got to write papers back to back, then we, you know, a lot of work in everybody else's class and they expect us to do all the work. So I feel like, man, it's a much more challenging stuff because they getting us prepared for college so we doing two years in one. *Student*

Issues for Discussion and Action

The following questions are intended to stimulate discussion among stakeholders about emerging implementation issues faced by current small schools, to focus on critical areas for further study, and to assist with the planning of future small schools.

- ◇ *How can school enrollment/choice policies be designed to take advantage of the benefits of choice while also maintaining small schools as a resource for their neighborhoods?*

While the current enrollment/choice process permits many students to select their school, many students from the school's neighborhood are assigned to a particular school even when they do not voice a preference. This process is consistent with the Initiative's desire to keep these small schools as "neighborhood" schools, and it may help the district provide placements for students. However, we suspect that these enrollment policies have constrained some benefits that are generally associated with school choice. Specifically,

- Students who are assigned to small schools are likely less committed to and interested in the offerings of the school than students who choose the school. This may limit the school's effectiveness.
- Because many students are assigned, schools that fail to offer a program that students find compelling will still persist. The assignment of students will mask their failure to attract students.
- The fact that these schools serve low-performing students will likely further constrain their ability to attract better-performing students from elsewhere.
- The current choice structure does not limit enrollment at 125, which current policy says should be the upper limit for each small schools' freshman class. As a result of large classes, the benefits of small schools may be compromised.

Thus, it makes sense to discuss the design of current choice structures and related recruitment designs as well as appropriate professional development related to admissions, planning, recruitment, and parent/guardian engagement.

- ◇ *In what ways should the district, principals and teachers distribute leadership, responsibilities, and authority for shaping the reform?*

As they reported in the 2003 Snapshot report, many teachers and principals said that they have received less flexibility and autonomy to direct the reform of their schools than they had been promised and expected. While differing perspectives on the level of leadership and independence granted to teachers and principals are hardly surprising, they are worthy of attention—especially given the emphasis small-school reform places on teacher- and principal-driven change. All parties would benefit from a sustained dialog that leads to greater clarity regarding the forms of small-school leadership that the district would support and the various forms of autonomy and flexibility that those in the schools most desire.

- ◇ *What constitutes high-quality instruction and how can it be pursued?*

The district and the small schools' reform effort in Chicago lack a clearly articulated vision of high-quality instruction. In addition, greater clarity regarding the ways in which attention to schools' themes might inform curriculum and instruction would be helpful.

- ◇ *What principal/teacher leadership models have the schools developed that facilitate curricular and instructional improvement? What supports do CPS and CHSRI provide?*

Some schools appear to be making good progress with their curricular reform. We suspect that examination of the ways principals and teachers at these schools are pursuing curricular reform might help teachers, principals, and the district think about how best to support curricular development and instructional improvement in a coordinated and supportive way.

- ◇ *What policies and practices can be developed to help schools share buildings in a productive manner?*

As noted in the text, some schools have experienced time-consuming conflicts over resource sharing, control over their space, scheduling, and the degree to which the schools see themselves as part of either a larger whole or as separate entities.

- ◇ *How can administrative and other non-teaching roles at small schools be structured to efficiently meet the schools' administrative and programmatic needs, given their size?*

Though we do not know the specifics, we suspect that small schools may be more expensive to staff than larger schools because they have some similar administrative overhead costs and a smaller student base. If this is the case, then it makes sense to think through staffing structures (perhaps having small schools share some administrative staff or reconfiguring some administrative roles) to meet schools' future needs.

Appendix A

Theory of Action

Figure 1 shows the logic behind the belief that small schools can improve student outcomes. The Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (CHSRI) and its partners believe that multiple factors must come together in order for positive outcomes to develop. First, and primarily, they believe that if a district creates small, voluntary, relatively autonomous schools and limits bureaucratic control (Figure 1: Box 1), it will create schooling contexts where trust, coherent vision, and commitment will be more likely to take root (Figure 1: Box 2). Such schools will also have distributed leadership and be marked by strong and vibrant professional communities, where teachers share in decision making, reflect on and share practice, and collaborate with each other. Moreover, they believe that creating such contexts for teachers and principals is fundamentally important as a means of fostering a setting where productive reform can occur (Figure 1: Box 6). Clearly, both the creation of this context for teachers and principals and the broader context for reform are also being shaped by the provision of resources and supports from both CHSRI and the district (Figure 1: Boxes 4, and 5). Federal and state curriculum standards and accountability structures, as mediated by the district (Figure 1: Box 5) also help structure this setting. Ideally, this combination of internal vision and external forces will lead to improved curricular and instructional quality, which should have a positive impact on student experience (Figure 1: Box 7), leading to improved student outcomes (Figure 1: Box 8). Those helping to shape and implement this initiative must deftly balance their need to provide support and direction with their need to protect small schools' autonomy. The primacy of small-school autonomy and flexibility must also be balanced with the need for accountability and bureaucratic structures so that the reform can function effectively and responsibly on a large scale.

The rationale for small schools extends beyond their ability to foster curricular and instructional quality. Also central to the design are beliefs about how small-school features will be experienced by students and parents. In particular, proponents of small schools believe that a school's small size and provision of student choice (Figure 1: Box 1) will create a highly desirable context for students, one in which students choose a learning environment based on their own interests and are committed to the school's vision (Figure 1: Box 3). Such a context, the argument goes, will be bolstered by parental trust and support, and community involvement, (Figure 1: Box 3) and will help provide an affective setting for reform marked by mutual trust and respect between students, teachers, and parents (Figure 1: Box 6). This, in turn, will further magnify the benefits of the curriculum to create an experience for students characterized by features such as Academic and Social Personalism, Engagement, Academic Press, and Trust between Students and Teachers (Figure 1: Box 7). These experiences, in turn, should make desirable student outcomes (Figure 1: Box 8) more likely.

Appendix B

Additional Demographic and Test-Score Data

Table B.1 Demographic Information: Freshman students in host, small, and contract schools, fall 2001-2003

	Number	%Male	%Female	%African-American	%Latino/a
2001					
Bowen	365	58.6%	41.4%	64.4%	34.0%
Orr	675	51.7%	48.3%	82.7%	17.0%
South Shore	458	55.9%	44.1%	98.9%	0.4%
2002					
Bowen	111	62.2%	37.8%	73.0%	27.0%
Best Academy	66	60.6%	39.4%	84.8%	13.6%
Chicago Discovery	99	41.4%	58.6%	47.5%	51.5%
<i>Total Bowen Campus</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>54.3%</i>	<i>45.7%</i>	<i>66.7%</i>	<i>32.6%</i>
Orr	375	58.1%	41.9%	78.9%	20.5%
Phoenix	97	34.0%	66.0%	74.2%	24.7%
<i>Total Orr Campus</i>	<i>472</i>	<i>53.2%</i>	<i>46.8%</i>	<i>78.0%</i>	<i>21.4%</i>
South Shore	169	58.0%	42.0%	98.8%	0.6%
School of Arts	138	50.7%	49.3%	98.6%	0.0%
Entrepreneurship	107	55.1%	44.9%	96.3%	0.0%
<i>Total South Shore Campus</i>	<i>414</i>	<i>54.8%</i>	<i>45.2%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
2003					
Best Academy	152	57.2%	42.8%	84.2%	13.2%
Chicago Discovery	140	39.3%	60.7%	48.6%	50.7%
Global Visions	156	54.5%	45.5%	84.6%	15.4%
<i>Total Bowen campus</i>	<i>448</i>	<i>50.7%</i>	<i>49.3%</i>	<i>73.2%</i>	<i>25.7%</i>
Orr	303	59.4%	40.6%	79.9%	18.8%
Mose Vines	159	59.7%	40.3%	93.1%	6.9%
Phoenix Academy	94	57.4%	42.6%	73.4%	24.5%
<i>Total Orr campus</i>	<i>556</i>	<i>59.2%</i>	<i>40.8%</i>	<i>82.6%</i>	<i>16.4%</i>

Table B.1 Continued

	Number	%Male	%Female	%African-American	%Latino/a
School of Arts	152	47.4%	52.6%	99.3%	0.0%
School of Entrepreneurship	137	56.9%	43.1%	98.5%	0.7%
School of Technology	118	66.1%	33.9%	100.0%	0.0%
School of Leadership	113	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%	0.0%
<i>Total South Shore campus</i>	<i>520</i>	<i>55.4%</i>	<i>44.6%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
Big Picture at Williams	30	53.3%	46.7%	96.7%	0.0%
Big Picture at Chavez	30	60.0%	40.0%	6.7%	93.3%

Table B.2 Fall 2003, Freshmen: Incoming achievement and special education

School	Number	Special Ed:		Eighth-Grade ITBS for Entering Ninth Graders	
		Number	%	Number	Standard score
At Bowen:					
Best Academy	152	31	20.4%	112	229
Chicago Discovery Academy	140	27	19.3%	114	239
Global Visions	156	34	21.8%	136	232
At Orr:					
Mose Vines	159	36	22.6%	120	228
Phoenix Military Academy	94	32	34.0%	83	223
At South Shore:					
School of the Arts	152	37	24.3%	136	229
School of Entrepreneurship	137	30	21.9%	101	227
School of Leadership	113	28	24.8%	86	223
School of Technology	118	30	25.4%	113	229
Big Picture Schools					
Big Picture at Chavez	30	6	20.0%	23	241
Big Picture at Williams	30	5	16.7%	30	235
CPS, all non-alternative high schools	34,612	6,126	17.7%	25,987	246

*In 2003, ITBS national standard score spring averages were 227 for sixth-grade-level students, 239 for seventh-grade-level students, and 250 for eighth-grade-level students.

Table B.3: Juniors PSAE Scores at Host and Small Schools, Spring 2001-Spring 2003

Year	School	Number with Reading Scores	Average Standard Score Reading*	Meets Standards in Reading	Number With Math Scores	Average Standard Score Math*	Meets Standards in Math
2001	Bowen	154	143	16.2%	155	140	8.4%
	South Shore	119	142	11.8%	119	138	3.4%
	Orr	75	142	9.3%	75	135	0.0%
2002	Bowen	161	142	18.6%	161	139	10.6%
	South Shore	169	140	9.5%	169	135	1.8%
	Orr	87	142	13.8%	87	137	6.9%
2003	Bowen	81	138	6.2%	82	137	3.7%
	Chicago Discovery	74	145	20.3%	74	143	24.3%
	Orr	121	140	10.7%	121	136	2.5%
	Phoenix Academy	30	142	6.7%	32	138	0.0%
	South Shore	89	143	19.1%	89	136	4.5%
	School of Arts	95	142	12.6%	95	138	3.2%

*Cut score between meets and fails to meet state standards is 155 in reading and 156 in math

Endnotes

¹ We met with the two advisors at the 10th school—the only faculty members on staff.

² For a more complete explanation of the theory, see Appendix A.

³ For additional demographic and test-score data, see Appendix B.

⁴ The total number of freshmen served by each of the three buildings in this Initiative has fluctuated widely, decreasing in the first year of the Initiative and then increasing. As detailed in Appendix B, the total number of freshmen in the Bowen building went from 365 to 276 to 448. The Orr building served 675 freshmen in 2001, 472 in 2002, and 556 in 2003, while the number of freshman students in the South Shore building went from 458 to 414 to 520.

⁵ Survey analysis also shows that the small schools had higher scores on many measures of Teacher Professional Community than demographically similar, traditional high schools. (See “Creating Small Schools in Chicago: An early look at implementation and impact,” in *Improving Schools*, forthcoming, available at www.consortium-chicago.org in November 2004.)

⁶ While the contract schools do not have the same kind of thematic focus as the other nine schools, students at the contract schools did identify the schools’ learning philosophy.

⁷ In addition, our survey analyses indicated that students at the small schools had higher scores on Academic Personalism than did similar students at non-small high schools. (See “Creating Small Schools in Chicago,” *Improving Schools*, forthcoming.)

⁸ Given the fundamental importance of instruction and our need to understand efforts to foster improvement in instruction, we would like to make instruction and instructional reform the focus of our first case study.

⁹ Our 2003 survey results indicate that students at the small schools had higher scores on measures of Academic Engagement and Academic Press than similar students at non-small high schools (See “Creating Small Schools in Chicago,” *Improving Schools*, forthcoming.)

This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. Although the Consortium's Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed an earlier version of the report, no formal endorsement by these individuals, their organizations, or the Consortium should be assumed.

This report was produced by the Consortium's Publications and Communications Department:
Sandra Jennings, *Associate Director for Publications and Communications*
Melissa Dean, *Editor*
Kumail Nanjiani, *Webmaster*
Lura Forcum, *Copy Editor*

Steering Committee

John Ayers, Cochair
Leadership for Quality Education
Victoria Chou, Cochair
University of Illinois at Chicago

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

CHICAGO PRINCIPALS AND ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION
Clarice Berry

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Christy Harris
for the Chicago Board of Education

Daniel T. Bugler
Office of Research, Evaluation and Accountability

Barbara Eason-Watkins
for the Chief Executive Officer

CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION
Marilyn Stewart

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Connie Wise
for the Superintendent

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Lauren Allen
Cross City Campaign for School Reform

Gina Burkhardt
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

Louis M. Gomez
Northwestern University

Elizabeth Hawthorne

Timothy Knowles
Center for Urban School Improvement

Janet Knupp
Chicago Public Education Fund

Deidra Lewis
City Colleges of Chicago

George Lowery
Roosevelt University

Peter Martinez
University of Illinois at Chicago

Sam Meisels
Erikson Institute

James Pellegrino
University of Illinois at Chicago

James Spillane
Northwestern University

Josie Yanguas
Illinois Resource Center

Steve Zelman
Leadership for Quality Education

Martha Zurita
University of Notre Dame

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Mission

The Consortium on Chicago School Research aims to conduct research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. By broadly engaging local leadership in our work, and presenting our findings to diverse audiences, we seek to expand communication between researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. The Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action, but does not argue for particular policies or programs. Rather, we believe that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained.

Founded in 1990, the Consortium is located at the University of Chicago.

Directors

John O. Easton
Consortium on Chicago School Research

Penny Bender Sebring
University of Chicago

Albert L. Bennett
Roosevelt University

Mark A. Smylie
University of Illinois at Chicago

Melissa Roderick
University of Chicago



Consortium on Chicago School Research
1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637
773-702-3364 fax -773-702-2010
www.consortium-chicago.org