

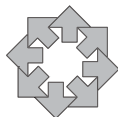
2001 Consortium Survey Reports

Autumn 2001

Pablo Neruda High School

Improving Chicago's Schools

A report specially prepared
to assist in self-assessment
and long-term planning



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Acceptance of this report implies endorsement of the conditions listed below.

The Consortium on Chicago School Research has promised to maintain the confidentiality of all schools and survey participants. This report is the property of Pablo Neruda, and will not be distributed to anyone outside of your school without the written permission of your principal. Anyone accepting a copy of this report promises to adhere to this agreement as well.

Pablo Neruda
High School

Improving Chicago's Schools

2001 Survey Report

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Acknowledgments

In the spring of 2001, nearly 100,000 students, teachers, and principals participated in the Consortium on Chicago School Research's biannual survey of Chicago public schools. Without the time and support teachers and principals gave to this effort, this massive undertaking would never have been possible.

Chicago Public Schools staff supported this survey administration in a wide variety of ways. Phil Hansen and Joe Hahn from the Office of Accountability provided the leadership to make this assistance possible. We would particularly like to thank Andrea Ross for creating the preprint file; John Jablonski for writing scan programs; John Delmonte and Bill Galante for overseeing the scanning operations; and Joyce Copeland and Roy Humphrey for their help in preparing surveys for scanning. Nick Zagotta and his staff in the Bureau of Warehouse Services distributed and collected surveys from schools.

Consortium directors, researchers, and analysts contributed time and effort to distributing the surveys and following up with schools. An efficient and patient crew monitored, recorded, and scanned incoming surveys and communicated with schools. Many thanks to Messina Robinson, Marvin Childs, Paul Cuesta, Veronica Davis, Aaron Lott, Lennie Pruitt, Eben Rogers, Gussie Ross, Pat and Marshall Vinson, and Mary Williams for all of their help.

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About the Improving Chicago's Schools Surveys

The Consortium on Chicago School Research possesses the nation's largest collection of data on any single city's public school system and its students. Our archive includes data provided by the school system, information from a variety of other public sources, and original data collected by us. In 1991, the Consortium began to survey regularly all Chicago public school principals, teachers, and students to learn their views on the state of our public schools and their experiences in them. This past year, nearly 100,000 members of the Chicago public school community participated in the Consortium's 2001 *Improving Chicago's Schools* survey. Students told us about their school experiences, attitudes, and activities. Teachers and principals told us about instruction in their classrooms, their professional development experiences, and answered our questions about the conditions under which they work.

Data from the *Improving Chicago's Schools* survey are used in many ways. One of the most important is the individualized reports that the Consortium prepares for every school in which a sufficient response rate is achieved.¹ This year, 412 elementary and high schools met the response rate criteria. Over the summer the Consortium prepared thousands of pages of school profiles, collected into 412 school-specific, confidential reports for those schools' principals, teachers, and Local School Councils.

These reports paint a picture of the type of learning climate, quality of instructional program, nature of student-teacher relationships, and kind of leadership that exists in each school. They also say something about the professional environment within the school, and the nature of the school's relationships with parents and others in the community. Because Chicago public schools have participated in the Consortium's surveys for the past ten years, the individual school reports also show how these things have changed over time. Taken together, this information about where a school is and how it is developing can help the school assess its progress, and plan for the future. Among other things, this information can prove invaluable in carrying out an internal program review as part of the preparations for the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA).

Survey data are used in many other ways as well. Teacher, principal, and student reports supplement the Consortium's analyses of student test scores and other performance indicators (like graduation and attendance rates) to provide a comprehensive picture of Chicago public school improvement. Along with extensive field work and other research, surveys help identify the classroom practices and school organizational characteristics that are most effective in enhancing student engagement and improving learning. As a result, the public reports prepared from analyses of these data help us to describe the current conditions in schools, the challenges schools face, and the impact of different improvement initiatives and reforms.

¹At least 42 percent of teachers or 50 percent of students must respond in order for a school to receive a report. If the Consortium receives responses from only one group at a school (i.e., teachers, but not students), just that group's measures are reported.

Understanding Your Report

Creating Measures from Item Responses

The 592 items on the teachers' survey and the 284 items on the students' survey offer reports of *how often something happens* (e.g., how often a teacher has conversations with colleagues about what helps students learn best), *how someone feels* (e.g., to what extent teachers feel respected by their students' parents), or *someone's perceptions* (e.g., the extent to which teachers think their principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers).

Sometimes several questions ask about the same thing in different ways (e.g., are teachers involved in making important decisions in their school; do they have a lot of informal opportunities to influence what happens there). We ask similar questions to reach a more accurate, more reliable—better—understanding of, for example, teachers' views of their school as a workplace. So, while it can be interesting to analyze responses to individual survey questions (items) independently, it is often more useful to consider multiple responses to sets of related items.

We are able to do this by constructing *measures* that combine information obtained from several items that are conceptually related. So, for example, the measure of Program Coherence, described on page 10, combines information we obtained from teachers in response to questions about the extent to which curriculum and instruction are well coordinated across grades, the extent to which they are consistent among teachers in the same grade, reports of whether the focus of instruction has changed for the better in the last two years, and other related issues. The Program Coherence measure assesses the overall extent to which the school's instructional programs are coordinated and consistent both within and across grade levels.

Your school is described in terms of how high or low it scores on 53 different measures, each constructed from 1 or more questionnaire items.

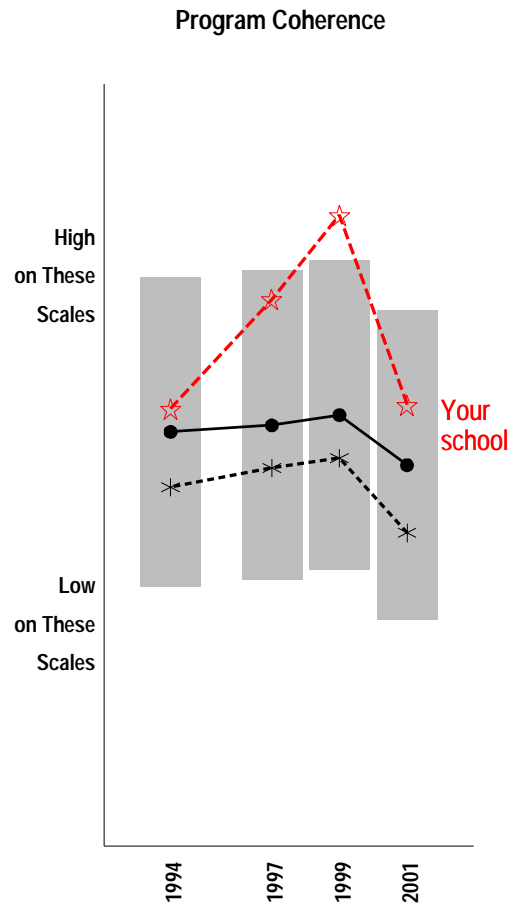
Please note: while in most instances being on the high end of a scale is most desirable, on two measures, Incidence of Disciplinary Action (on page 16) and Uncoordinated Professional Development (on page 24), being on the low end is desirable.

How to Read the Display for Each Measure

The figure on page 4 illustrates the basic reporting format developed by the Consortium for presenting a school's data on each measure. It compares your school both to other schools that are demographically similar to yours, and to the Chicago public school system as a whole.² In most instances, the profiles also include time trend information about your school based on its responses to previous Consortium surveys.³ In addition to providing information about your school's standing in 2001, this trend data can provide useful information about the overall direction of your reform efforts, answering the question, "Are we improving or not?"

²The Consortium relies on test scores, racial composition, neighborhood and socio-economic characteristics, measured in 2000 to identify schools that are demographically comparable to your school.

³A year's data may be missing on some of the profiles. This is because either the questions that comprised these particular measures were not included on the Consortium's surveys that year, or your school did not complete surveys that year.



The illustrative display above charts teachers' perceptions of their school's instructional program coherence at four different points in time (your school's actual score on this measure can be found on page 10). Three report trends appear here:

- your school (in red),
- schools like yours (the dashed line), and
- the Chicago public school system as a whole (the solid black line).

The points connected by the solid black lines represent the systemwide average on a measure over time. The gray box represents the range of reports each year from the middle two-thirds of CPS schools on this measure. A star located above the black line within the gray box means "somewhat above average"; correspondingly, a star located below the black line within the box means a "somewhat below average" report. Reports on the measure from the top one-sixth of schools are charted in the area above the gray box. Such a report is "substantially above average." Similarly, reports from the bottom one-sixth of the schools on the measure appear below the box. Such reports are "substantially below average."⁴

Looking at the figure then, we see that in 1994 the teachers in this school rated the coherence of their instructional program about average as compared to the school system overall.

⁴The uneven spacing between boxes shows that three years passed between the 1994 and 1997 surveys, but only two years passed between the 1997, 1999, and 2001 surveys.

Their levels increased in 1997, and in 1999 they were among the upper one-sixth of all schools. In 2001, however, teachers' reports about instructional coherence dropped substantially. Even so, in all four years, our sample school reported levels of Program Coherence substantially higher than other schools with similar demographic characteristics (i.e., the dashed line).

Please note: Even though a school as a whole may have met the criteria for receiving a specially prepared report, it is possible that some measures are not reported. At least seven students or seven teachers need to respond to all of the survey items that comprise a measure in order to get a valid reading of that measure. If less than seven respond, only the system mean and the "schools like yours" trend appear on the profile.⁵ Also, if your school did not complete surveys in a previous year, no star will appear on the red trend line for that year.

How Your Report is Organized: A Set of Profiles

The Consortium has conducted extensive, in-depth studies of Chicago's public schools since 1990. This research provides compelling evidence demonstrating the importance of school leadership, parent and community partnerships, a student-centered learning climate, professional development and collaboration, and the quality of the instructional program.⁶ These five domains are frequently referred to as the Essential Supports for Student Learning in improving student achievement. Consortium studies show that schools that are strong in these essential supports are more likely to improve academically. Studies also show that schools that are weak are more likely to be academically non-improving.

Because these supports have been shown to have powerful effects on student outcomes, we use them to provide a framework for organizing the profiles presented in this report. Each profile consists of a set of measures. For example, the School Leadership profile is described in terms of a set of six related measures:

- Principal Inclusive Leadership
- Teacher-Principal Trust
- Teacher Influence
- Joint Problem Solving
- Principal Instructional Leadership
- Program Coherence

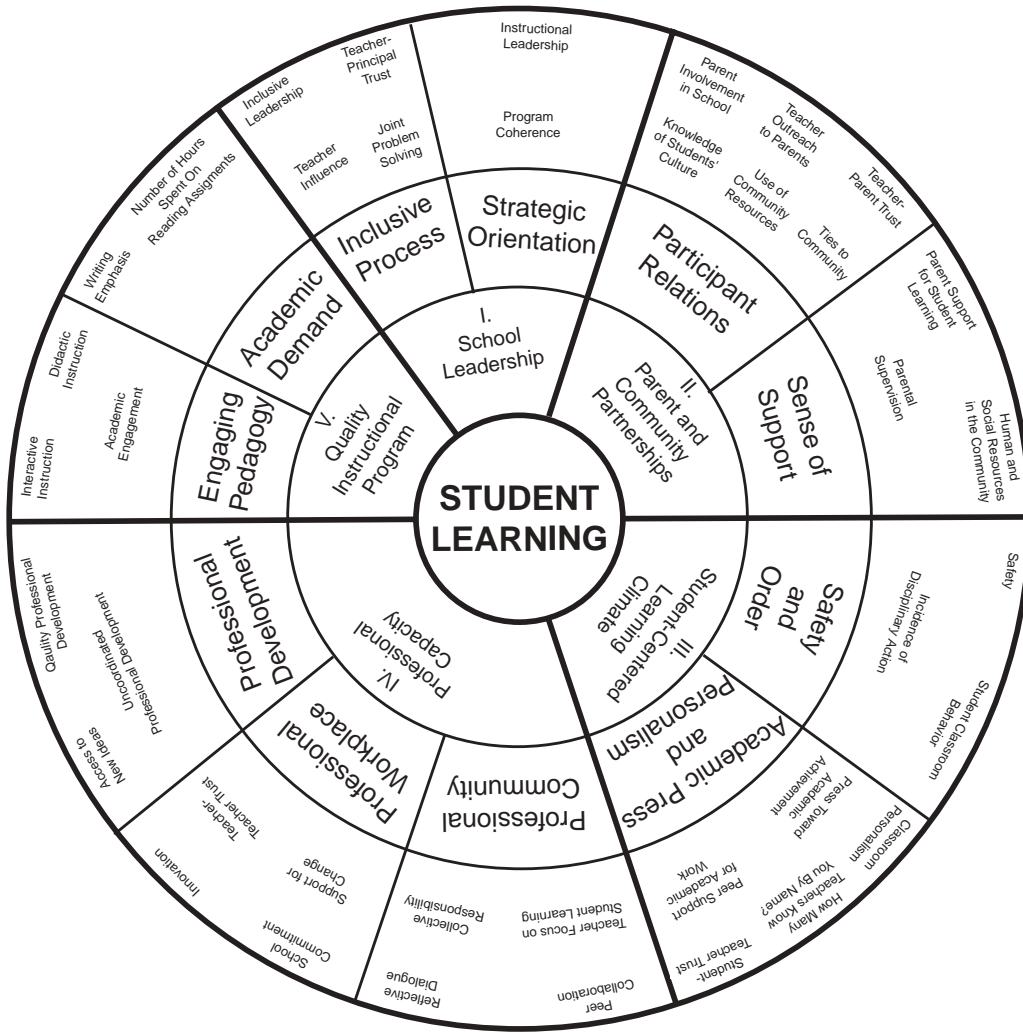
Not surprisingly, while each support is important in its own way, it is the systemic blending of initiatives that makes a material difference in student learning.⁷ For that reason, it is often beneficial to consider a school's profile on each essential support for student learning in relation to its performance on others.

⁵If *no* students or teachers in your school responded, then only the sytem trend will appear.

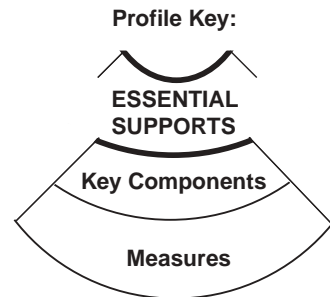
⁶Many of these studies are cited on the pages that follow; most can be downloaded at no charge, and all can be ordered from the Consortium's website at www.consortium-chicago.org.

⁷See the Consortium's report, *Development of Chicago Annenberg Schools: 1996-1999* (2001) and *Long Term Academic Gains in Chicago Elementary Schools: A Theory of Essential Supports* (forthcoming).

Overview of the Five Essential Supports and Corresponding Consortium Profiles and Measures



Student Personal and Social Outcomes Profile
Social Competence
Social Conscience
Liking for School
Student Self-Efficacy



New for 2001: A Look at Education Technology

Measures of your school's relationship with technology are a new feature of this report. One profile addresses your school's support for technology integration, looking specifically at teachers' reports about the support they receive from the principal, the amount of technical and curricular assistance that is available, the support among the faculty for integrating technology into the classroom, and teachers' participation in technology-based professional development activities. A second profile assesses the availability and use of technology in the classroom, including comparisons of student and teacher reports about school-based use.

Data from these measures will be used in an upcoming Consortium study on education technology. This study will provide a snapshot of current technology use; it will examine which classroom activities (if any) use technology, how often, and by whom. The study will also examine new issues such as how equitable the use of technology is within schools and systemwide, and organizational factors at both the individual and school levels that contribute to more frequent and sophisticated uses of technology. In addition, case studies of particular schools will illustrate exceptional technology use. This report will be published spring 2002.

Using this Report

The information presented in this report can be used in a variety of ways. It is intended to supplement your assessments of test score data and other performance indicators on the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement through Quality Assurance Internal Review. It will identify areas that are becoming stronger over time or have always been strong. And it may identify areas that are weak or getting weaker. The definitions of the measures that comprise each profile provide detailed descriptions of what high levels signify, including if they report teacher or student responses, if they are positive or negative measures, and what their questions on the surveys addressed. Measures constructed from teacher responses are marked with a “(T)” after the measure title; measures from student responses are marked with an “(S).”

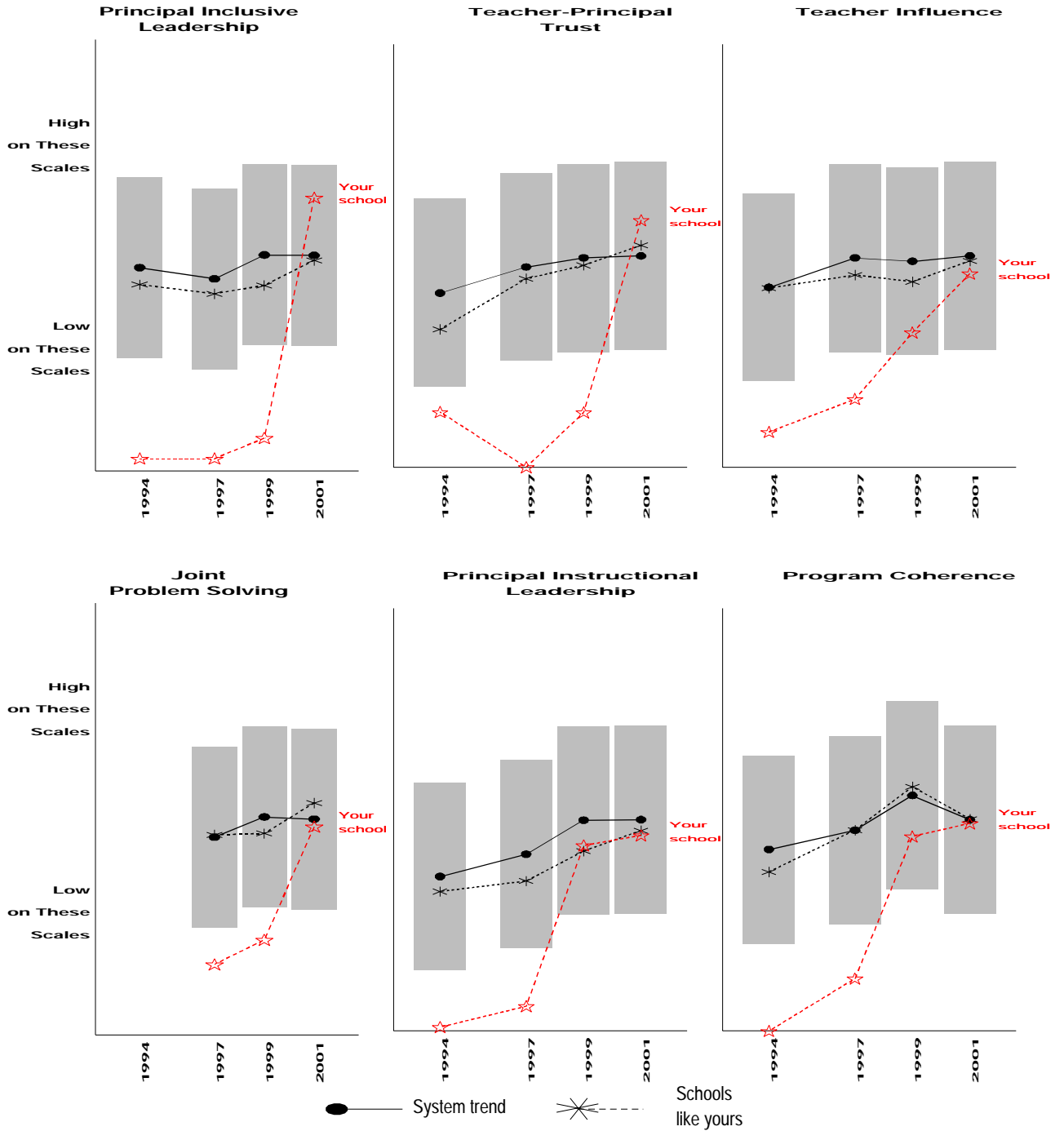
The information provided in this report can stimulate discussion among your school’s principal, teachers, and members of your Local School Council about priority setting. It may help you decide which external partnerships are most likely to benefit your school, how much more effort you should devote to integrating community resources in your programs of instruction, or whether you should be focusing more attention on increasing students’ personal safety inside and outside the school building.

In the pages that follow, we highlight some of the Consortium’s research findings that you may find useful to consider as you review your school’s profiles. We also suggest some questions you might like to ask about your school’s position on these measures. These are by no means exhaustive lists of the sorts of issues you may wish to consider as you use this report in your SIPAAA planning, or in other ways. We hope they give you a feeling for the many ways in which we believe this information can help you as you assess your school’s accomplishments to date and plan for your future.

Item reports for each measure are also available from the Consortium by request. These supplemental reports provide your school’s specific responses to each of the survey items that make up the measures compared to the systemwide average, and to high- and low-rated schools.

Summary Profiles for Pablo Neruda

School Leadership Inclusive Process and Strategic Orientation



Principal Inclusive Leadership (T) Teachers' view of their principal as a facilitative and inclusive leader who engages parents and the community in the school, creates a sense of community, and is committed to shared decision making. *High levels indicate that teachers view their principal as a leader who strongly encourages broad participation in school affairs.*

Teacher-Principal Trust (T) The extent to which teachers feel their principal respects and supports them. Questions ask teachers if the principal looks out for their welfare, has confidence in their expertise, and if they respect the principal as an educator. *High levels indicate that teachers share deep mutual trust and respect with the principal.*

Teacher Influence (T) Measures the extent of teachers' involvement in school decision making. It assesses teachers' influence on the selection of instructional materials, setting of school policy, in-service program planning, discretionary funds spending, and hiring of professional staff. *High levels indicate that teachers have influence on a broad range of issues at the school.*

Joint Problem Solving (T) The extent to which teachers engage in public dialogue to solve problems, specifically whether they use faculty meetings to discuss their alternative viewpoints, and whether there are established processes for making public decisions. *High levels indicate that there is good communication among faculty and that teachers work together to solve problems.*

Principal Instructional Leadership (T) Teachers' perception of their principal as an instructional leader with respect to the teaching and learning standards, communication of a clear vision for the school, and tracking of academic progress. *High levels indicate that teachers view their principal as very involved in classroom instruction.*

Program Coherence (T) The degree to which teachers feel the programs at their school are coordinated with each other and with the school's mission. Questions ask teachers if instructional materials are consistent within and across grades and if there is sustained attention to quality program implementation. *High levels indicate that the school's programs are coordinated and consistent with its goals for student learning.*

TO CONSIDER: Previous Consortium studies have documented that principals in improving schools actively reach out to teachers, parents, and local community leaders to engage them in the tasks of strengthening teaching and learning at the school.⁸ Effective processes are established for involving local actors in school improvement planning. Moreover, in these schools there is a strong strategic orientation toward and concern about program coordination and the quality of implementation.

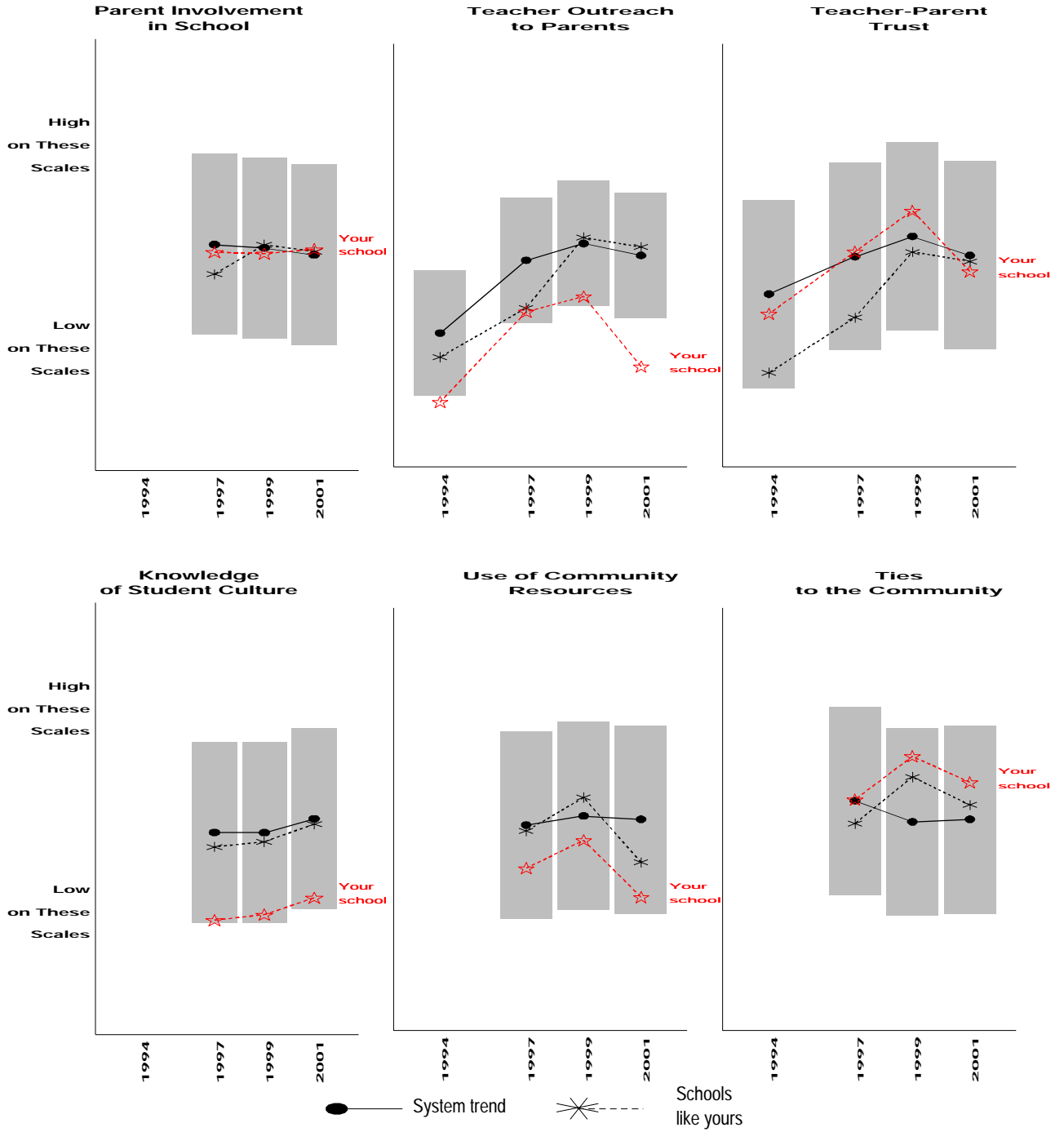
A recent Consortium report showed that instructional program coherence greatly facilitates school improvement initiatives.⁹ Although a school may have many different and exciting programs, a lack of coordination among them may thwart their positive impact.

- Is your school's report on the program coherence measure what you expected?
- As you think about all of your school's efforts to improve over the last two years, do they reflect a coordinated plan?
- Has there been real attention to quality implementation of each initiative?
- Is there a coherent instructional framework that teachers share for each subject, or are there competing goals and programs?

⁸See *Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change* (Westview Press, 1998) and the Consortium report *School Leadership and the Bottom Line in Chicago* (2000).

⁹See the Consortium report *School Instructional Program Coherence* (2001).

Parent and Community Partnerships: Participant Relations



Parent Involvement in School (T) Teachers' reports on the level of parent involvement and support for the school. Questions ask teachers how often parents pick up report cards; attend parent-teacher conferences and school events; volunteer to help in the classroom; and participate in fund-raising events. *High levels indicate that many parents are actively engaged with the school.*

Teacher Outreach to Parents (T) A measure of the school's effort to work with parents to develop common goals, good communication, and strengthen student learning. Questions ask teachers about their efforts to understand parents' problems, invite parents to visit classrooms, seek parents' feedback, and build relations with parents. *High levels indicate that teachers actively reach out to parents.*

Teacher-Parent Trust (T) Teachers' perception of the degree of mutual respect between themselves and parents, and their support of each other's efforts to improve student learning. Questions ask teachers if they consider themselves partners with parents in educating children, if they receive strong parental support, if the school staff works hard to build trust with parents, and if teachers have respect for parents. *High levels indicate mutually supportive relationships among parents and teachers.*

Knowledge of Students' Culture (T) Teachers' reports about their efforts to better understand their students. Questions ask teachers how many of their colleagues talk with students about their culture and home lives, and whether they know about the issues facing the surrounding community. *High levels indicate that many teachers are committed to learning more about their students and the community where they live.*

Use of Community Resources (T) The extent of teachers' use of the local community as a resource in both their teaching and in their efforts to understand students better. Questions ask teachers how often they invite guest speakers from the community to the school, consult community members, and use examples from the community in their teaching. *High levels indicate that teachers are taking greater advantage of community resources and making more of an effort to engage the communities where their students live.*

Ties to the Community (T) Assesses the extent to which teachers interact with the school's surrounding community, specifically how often they visit students' homes, shop, and attend religious and recreational events in the community where students are present. *High levels indicate that teachers are more involved in the school's surrounding community and therefore more able to play an extended role in students' lives.*

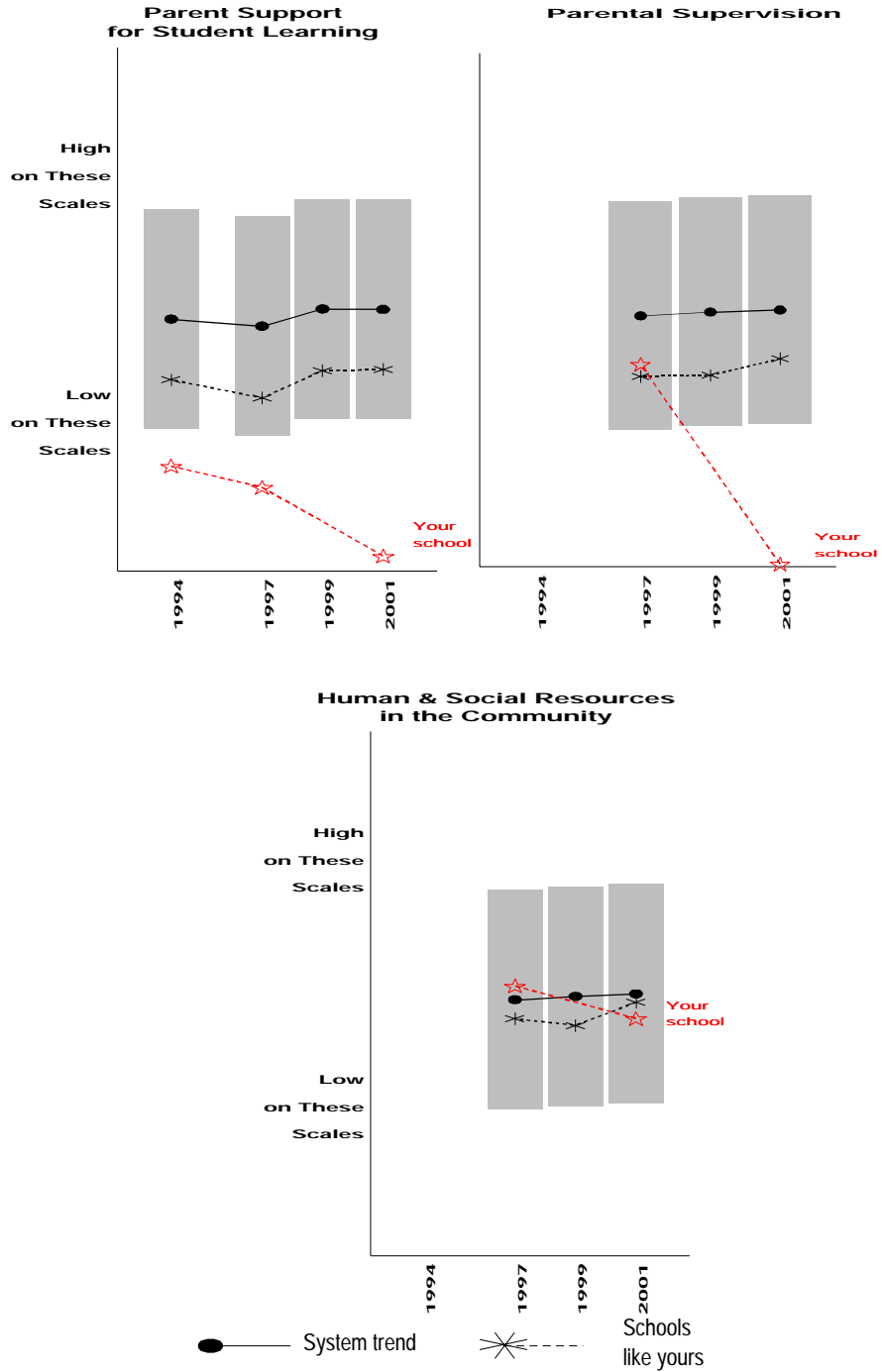
TO CONSIDER: A major issue for urban school reform involves reconnecting local school professionals to the parents and communities they are intended to serve. Unless this occurs, major improvements in student learning remain unlikely. It is incumbent on principals and teachers to reach out to parents, to seek to establish trusting relationships, and to engage them in the tasks of enhancing student learning. For schools in low income and immigrant communities, teachers often need to learn more about their distinctive local context and how they can use this knowledge to promote their students' interest in school and actual learning.

- How do your school's levels on Teacher-Parent Trust compare to Teacher-Principal Trust on the previous page?
- Are levels for Parent Involvement in School and Teacher Outreach to Parents similar?
- Should your school be doing more outreach to increase parent involvement?

Look at Parent Support for Student Learning on the next page.

- Are your results on that profile what you expected given teachers' outreach to parents?
- What else could your school do to encourage parents' involvement and support?

Parent and Community Partnerships: Students' Sense of Support



Parent Support for Student Learning (S) Students' perceptions of their parents' support for their school performance. Questions ask students how often their parents or other adults encourage them to work hard, do their homework, and take responsibility for their actions. *High levels indicate strong parental support.*

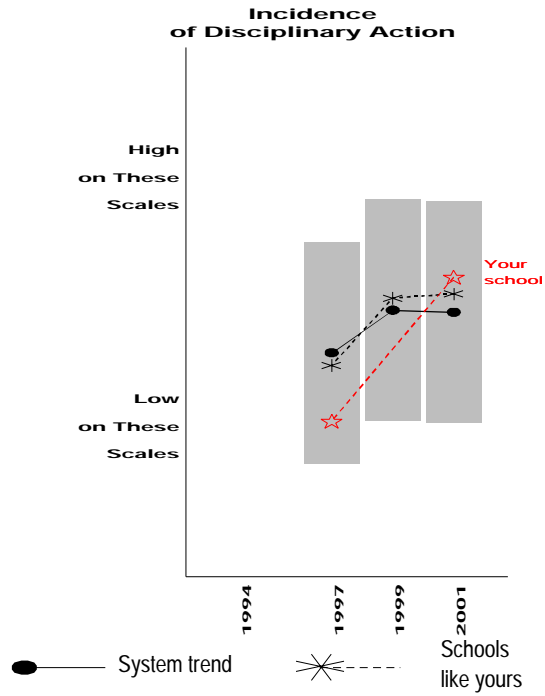
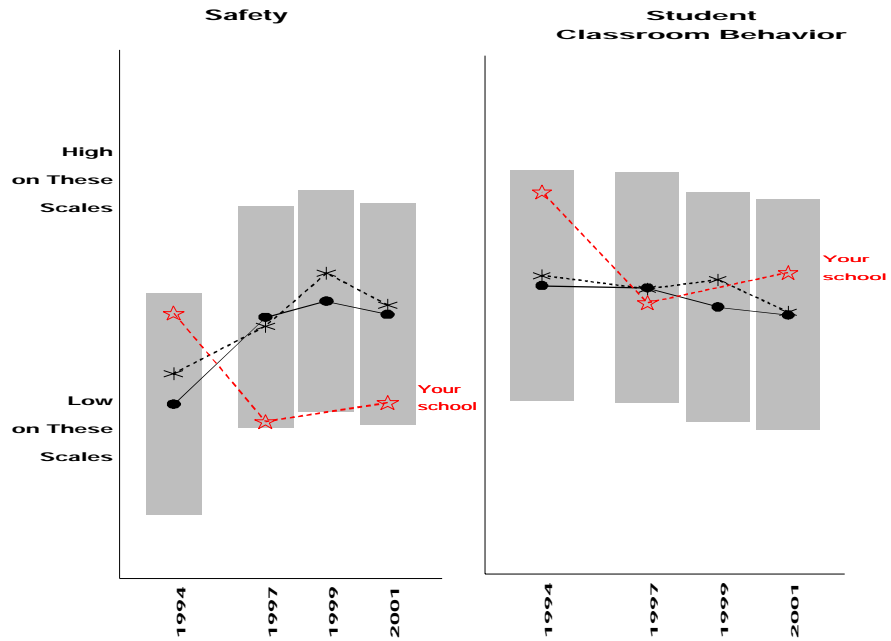
Parental Supervision (S) The extent to which students feel their parents make sure they arrive at school on time, know where they are after school, and can be reached when they need them. *High levels indicate that parents are very accessible and supervise their children's activities closely.*

Human and Social Resources in the Community (S) Students' assessment of the level of their trust in and reliance upon neighbors and community members, and whether they feel adults in the community know and care about them and each other. Questions ask students if adults know who the local children are, make sure they are safe, and can be trusted. *High levels indicate that many students can turn to community resources for support.*

TO CONSIDER: Compare students' perception of their parents' support to teachers' reports about parent, school, and community relations. Is there a marked difference between the two?

- How does Use of Community Resources on page 12 compare to the students' assessment of their trust or reliance in the community?
- What else could your school do to make it easier for parents to contact the school with their concerns and questions?
- What are some promising ideas for improving two-way communication with parents about your school's goals?
- How can you draw on organizations and agencies in the community to support students more? Could the LSC help with this?

Student-Centered Learning Climate: Safety and Order



Safety (S) A reflection of students' sense of personal safety inside and outside of the school, and traveling to and from school. *High levels indicate that students feel very safe in all these areas.*

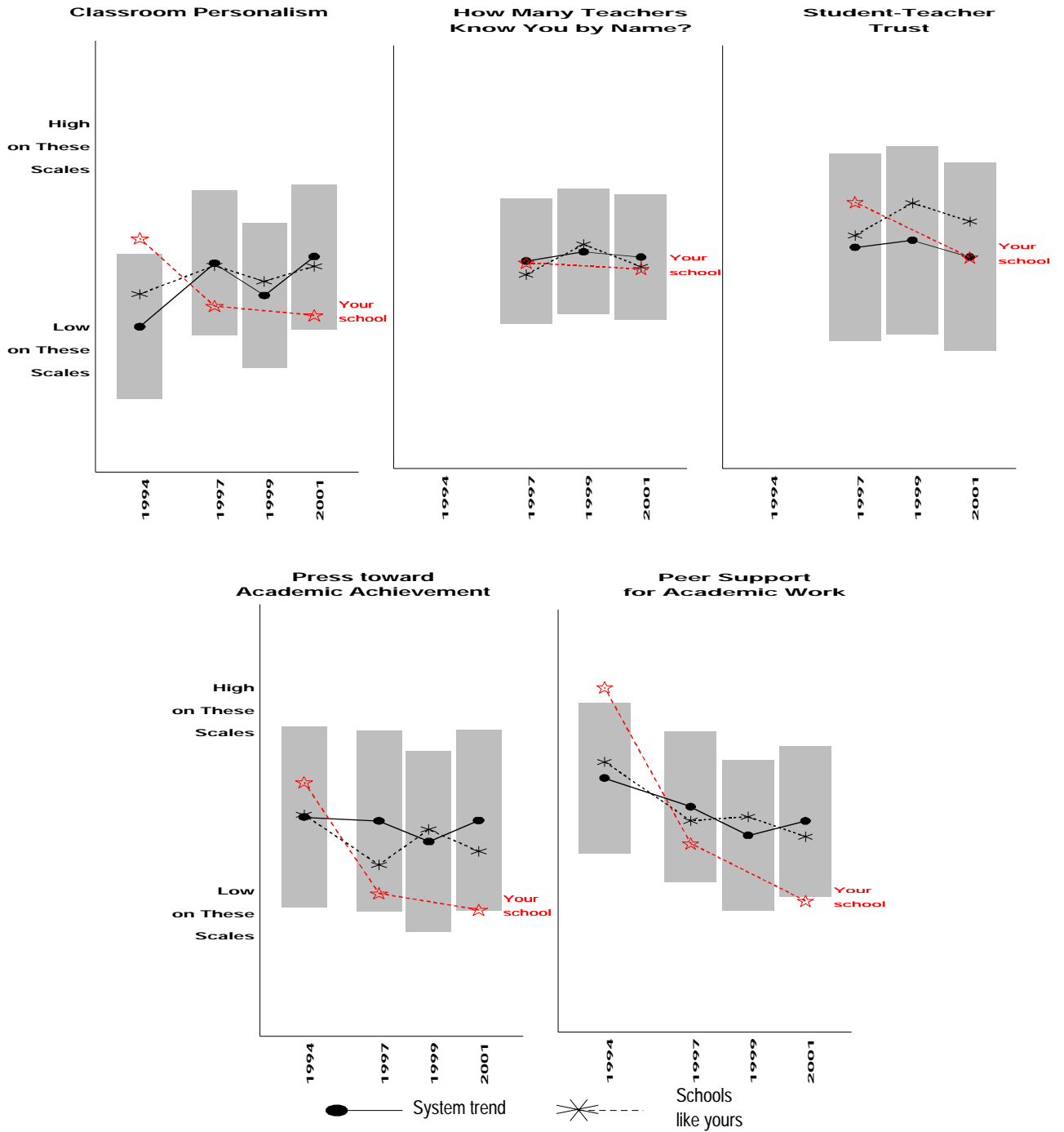
Student Classroom Behavior (S) Students' assessment of their peers' classroom behavior with regard to how they treat each other, how often they disrupt class, if they have respect for each other, and if they help each other learn. *High levels indicate that positive behaviors are more prevalent and problem behaviors are less so.*

Incidence of Disciplinary Action (S) A measure of how often students get into trouble and are disciplined. Questions ask students how many times they have been sent to the office or suspended, and how often their parents have been contacted about discipline problems. *High levels indicate that students get into trouble frequently and often receive disciplinary action.* This is a negative scale; low levels are more desirable than high ones.

TO CONSIDER: Good schools have a strong student-centered learning climate. Such schools are safe and orderly environments—an absolute prerequisite for student learning. Such schools are also very personal environments. Teachers know students by name. While teachers press students toward ambitious academic work, they also provide considerable personal support to help all students attain these high goals. Similarly, students generally support each other in their academic work.

- Is there consensus among the faculty about standards for student behavior and are these communicated consistently with students?
- Consider your school's Academic Engagement (page 26) and Liking for School (page 28) measures. How do they compare with the measures on this page?

Student-Centered Learning Climate: Academic Press and Personalism



Classroom Personalism (S) The degree to which students perceive that their teachers give individual attention to and are concerned about their students. Questions ask students if their teachers know and care about them, notice if they are having trouble in class, and are willing to help with academic and personal problems. *High levels indicate that students receive a great deal of personalized support from their teachers.*

How Many Teachers Know You by Name? (S) This measure is composed of a single questionnaire item: “About how many teachers at this school know you by name?” *High levels indicate that most or all teachers know most students by name.*

Student-Teacher Trust (S) Students’ perceptions about the quality of their relationships with teachers. Questions ask students if teachers care about them, keep promises, listen to their ideas, and try to be fair. *High levels indicate that there is trust and open communication between students and teachers.*

Press toward Academic Achievement (S) Students’ reports about the degree to which their teachers challenge them to meet high expectations for academic performance. Questions ask students if their teachers press them to do well in school; expect them to complete their homework and work hard; give praise; and are willing to give extra help. *High levels indicate that most teachers press all students toward academic achievement.*

Peer Support for Academic Work (S) The norms among students with regard to their peers’ support of academic work. Questions ask students how many of their peers try hard to get good grades, do homework regularly, pay attention in class, and follow school rules. *High levels indicate that students support each other academically.*

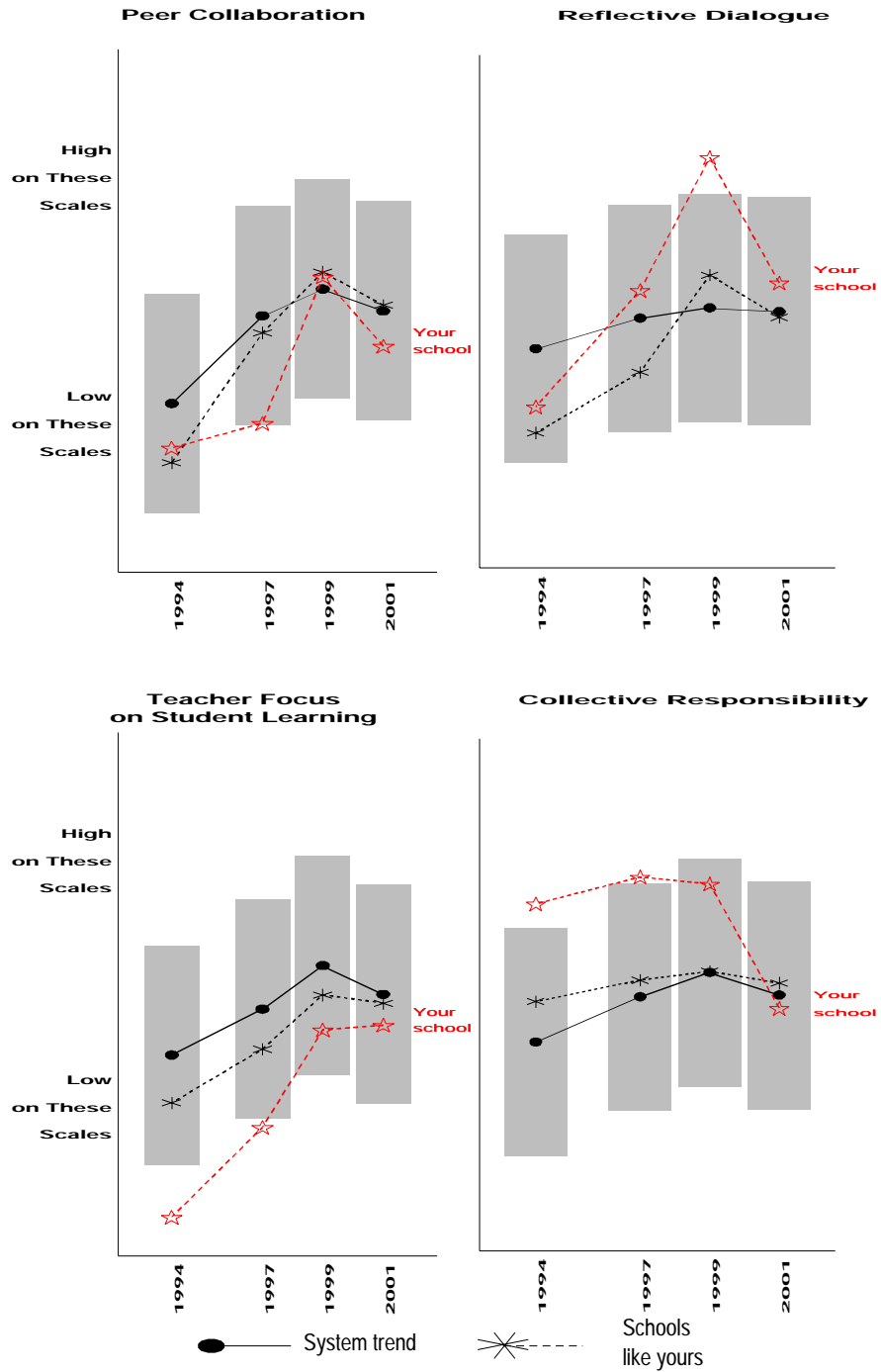
TO CONSIDER: A 1999 Consortium study found that regardless of student background and demographic characteristics, Press Toward Academic Achievement and Classroom Personalism are related to gains in student achievement.¹⁰ Although each is crucial to creating a climate that produces positive student learning, they must occur together to have the greatest impact.

- How do your levels on these measures compare to each other?
- Student-Teacher Trust, Teacher-Parent Trust (page 12), Teacher-Principal Trust (page 10) and Teacher-Teacher Trust (page 22) are the social foundations for meaningful school development.¹¹ How does your school measure up?

¹⁰See the Consortium report *Social Support, Academic Press, and Student Achievement: A View from the Middle Grades in Chicago* (1999).

¹¹See the Consortium report *Social Trust: A Moral Resource for School Improvement* (1996).

Professional Capacity: Professional Community



Peer Collaboration (T) Teachers' reports about the level of cooperation and collaboration among staff. Questions ask teachers about the quality of the relationships among faculty, if staff coordinates teaching and learning across grades, and if teachers collaborate in their design of new instructional programs. *High levels indicate that teachers have moved beyond cordial relationships with their colleagues to ones in which they are actively working together.*

Reflective Dialogue (T) Teachers' assessment of how often they talk with one another about instruction and student learning. Questions ask teachers about their discussion of curriculum and instruction, the school's goals, and the best ways to help students learn and manage classroom behavior. *High levels indicate that teachers frequently discuss instruction and student learning.*

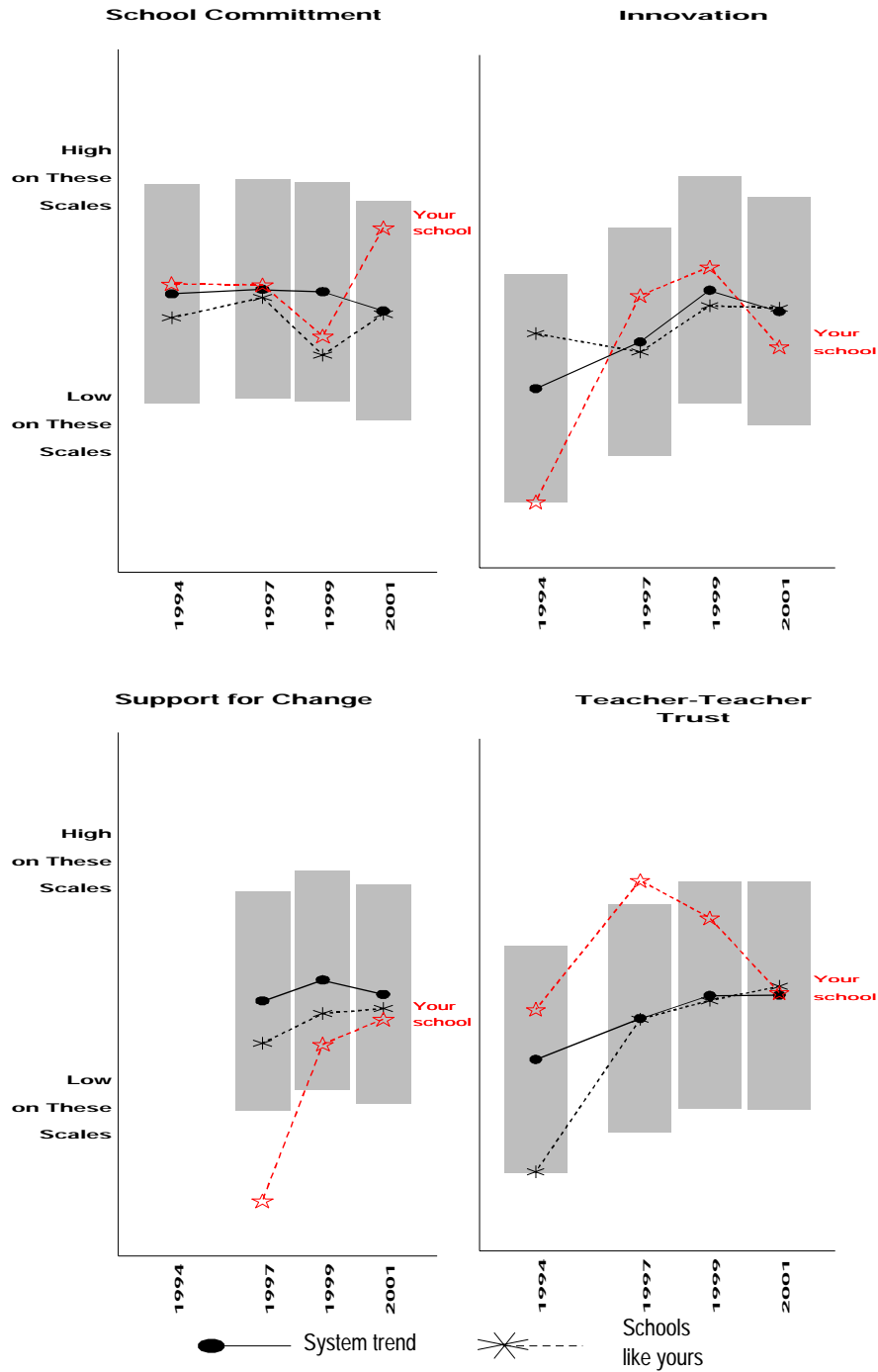
Teacher Focus on Student Learning (T) The extent to which teachers feel that the school's goals and actions are focused on student learning. Questions ask teachers if the school has well-defined learning expectations for all students, sets high standards for academic performance, makes decisions based on what is best for student learning, and works to develop students' social skills. *High levels indicate that the school is working to improve every student's learning.*

Collective Responsibility (T) Teachers' assessment of the strength of their shared commitment to improve the school so that all students learn. Questions ask teachers how many colleagues feel responsible for students' academic and social development, set high standards for professional practice, and take responsibility for school improvement. *High levels indicate a strong sense of shared responsibility among faculty.*

TO CONSIDER: Teachers need support from colleagues in order to improve their practice. When a school is organized as a professional community, many opportunities exist for teachers to learn from one another, to plan and implement instructional initiatives together, and to support each other in the hard tasks of school improvement. At base, teachers in such schools share a collective responsibility for the learning of all students.

- When and how does your school make time for teachers to collaborate and talk with each other about teaching and learning?
- What structures exist within grades, across grades, and schoolwide to promote such conversations?
- Would increased collaboration improve your school's program coherence (page 10), and/or deepen the trust among school community members?

Professional Capacity: Professional Workplace



School Commitment (T) The extent to which teachers feel loyal and committed to the school. Questions ask teachers if they look forward to going to work, would rather work somewhere else, and if they would recommend the school to parents. *High levels indicate teachers are deeply committed to the school.*

Innovation (T) Teachers' perception of whether or not they are continually learning and seeking new ideas, have a "can do" attitude, and are encouraged to try new ideas in their teaching. *High levels indicate that there is a strong orientation toward improvement and a willingness to be part of an active learning environment.*

Support for Change (T) The level of support for change that teachers receive from their principal and colleagues. Questions ask teachers if their principal encourages them to take risks and try new methods of instruction, and to assess whether the faculty as a whole embraces change initiatives. *High levels indicate a schoolwide environment supportive of change.*

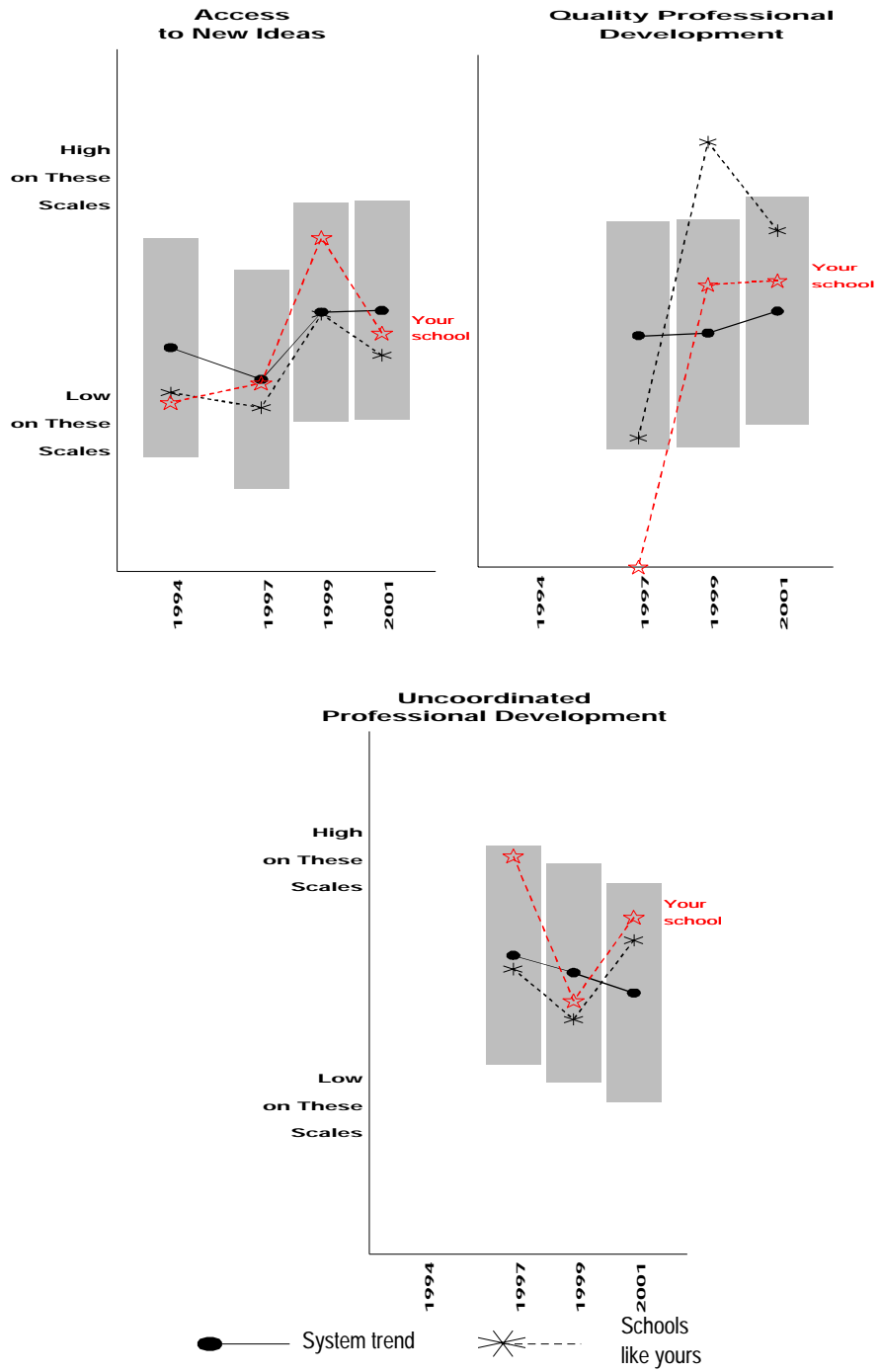
Teacher-Teacher Trust (T) The extent to which teachers feel they have mutual respect for each other, for those who lead school improvement efforts, and for those that are experts at their craft. Questions also ask teachers if they feel comfortable discussing their feelings and worries and really care about each other. *High levels indicate teachers trust and respect each other.*

TO CONSIDER: The nature of teachers' underlying beliefs and values plays a key role in instructional improvement. In improving schools, teachers maintain a "can do" attitude. They believe that changes in their practice can result in enhanced student learning, and they share a commitment with colleagues to promote such changes.

Taken with the measures under Professional Community on page 20, use the measures on this page to consider the following questions:

- Do the teachers here consider themselves a team?
- Are the teachers ready/willing to improve the school?
- Is the principal ready/willing to improve the school?
- What are the major strengths and weaknesses of your school with respect to professional community and professional workplace?
- Are there circumstances that undermine trust? And, if so, what can be done about them?

Professional Capacity: Professional Development



Access to New Ideas (T) The extent to which teachers participate in professional development. Questions ask teachers how often they attend professional development activities sponsored by the school, district, or union; take continuing education courses at a college or university; and network with teachers from other schools. *High levels indicate that teachers are actively involved in professional development activities.*

Quality Professional Development (T) Teachers' assessment of the degree to which professional development has influenced their teaching, helped them understand students better, and provided them with opportunities to work with colleagues and teachers from other schools. *High levels indicate that teachers are involved in sustained professional development focused on important school goals.*

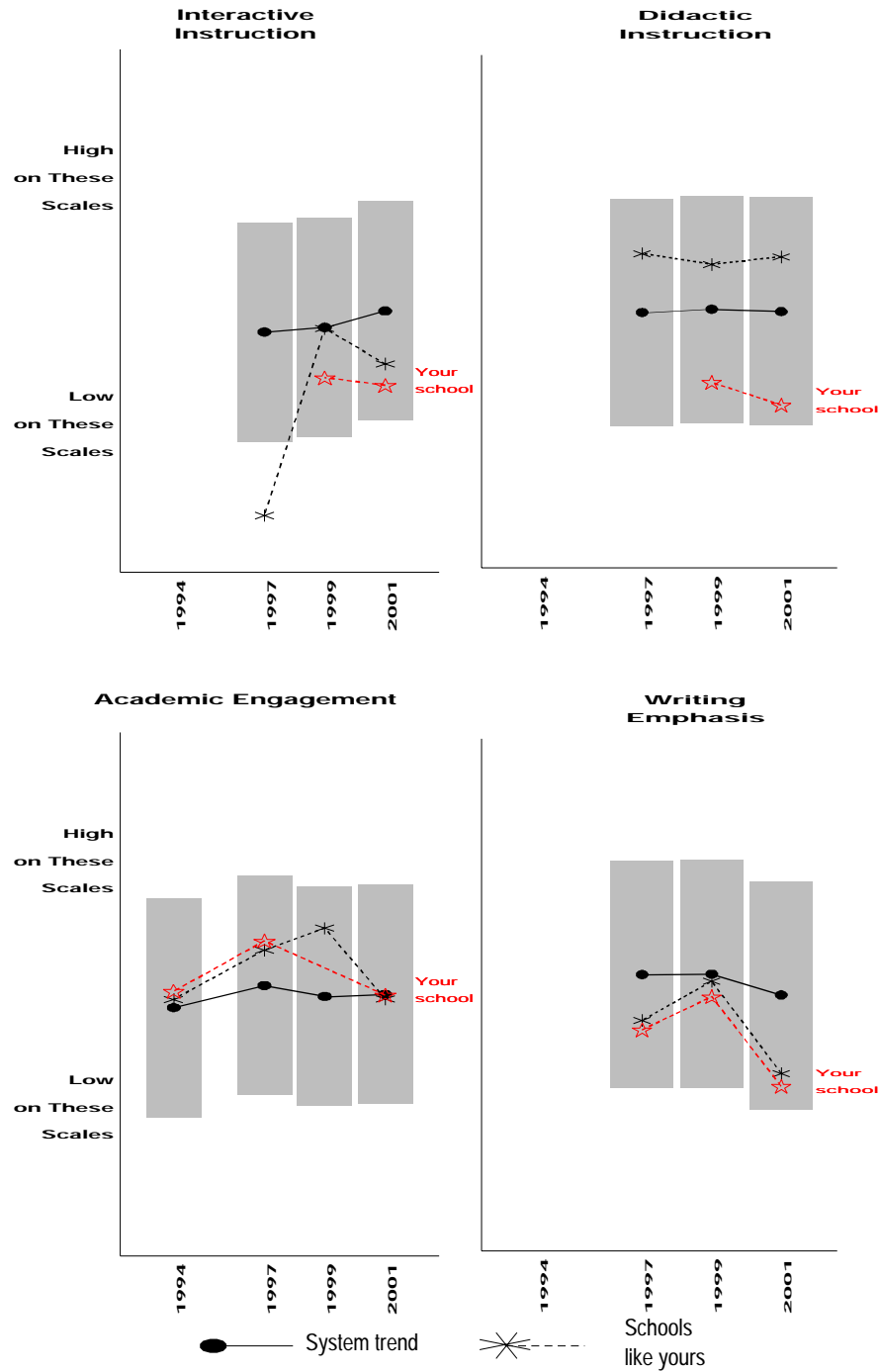
Uncoordinated Professional Development (T) Teachers' assessment of whether the school facilitated their participation in professional development activities, and if the professional development they received was consistent with their beliefs and followed up on. *High levels indicate that professional development activities are uncoordinated.* This is a negative scale; low levels are more desirable than high ones.

TO CONSIDER: Enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills is arguably the single most important initiative schools can undertake to improve student learning. Unfortunately, in many schools professional development is happenstance, left to individual choice and not organized or supported by any coherent and sustained school improvement plan.¹²

- If your staff is poised to make real improvements in instruction, the necessary learning opportunities must be in place for teachers. The measures on this page will help you assess if new instruction initiatives have a greater likelihood of being implemented well.

¹²See the Consortium's report *Teacher Professional Development in Chicago: Supporting Professional Practice* (2001).

Quality Instructional Program Pedagogy & Academic Demand



Interactive Instruction (T) The amount of time teachers devote to having students discuss ideas in class, draw inferences, analyze topics, and relate learning to personal experiences. In classrooms where there is interactive instruction, students study topics in depth and are required to synthesize information to produce a piece of original work. *High levels indicate teachers spend relatively more classroom time on these activities.*

Didactic Instruction (T) The amount of time teachers devote to drills, note taking, and preparing for standardized tests. Teachers who practice didactic methods typically think it is important to ask students to memorize facts and they spend more than half the class lecturing. *High levels indicate that teachers spend relatively more time on these activities.*

Academic Engagement (S) Students' reports about their interest and engagement in learning. Questions ask about students' interest in the topics they are studying and their engagement in the classroom in general. *High levels indicate that students are highly engaged in learning.*

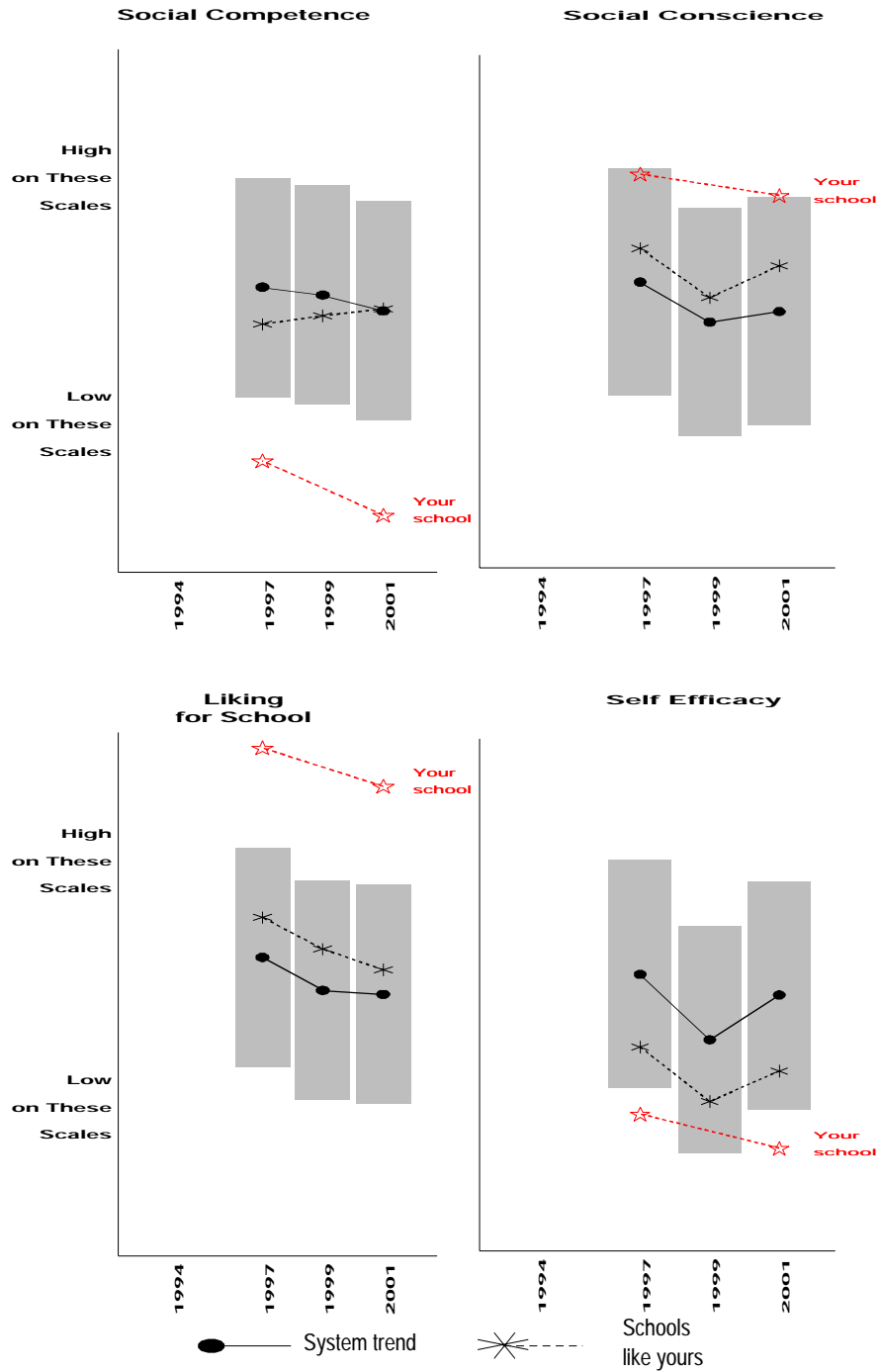
Writing Emphasis (T) Teachers' reports on the amount of writing they ask students to do in the school. *High levels indicate teachers assign longer writing assignments and place greater emphasis on writing.*

TO CONSIDER: A recent study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research provides solid evidence that the type of instruction a teacher uses in the classroom can make a 20 percent or more difference in students' learning per year.¹³ In general, introduction of interactive methods can provide higher learning and performance gains than sole reliance on didactic instruction.

- Where is your school on these measures and how do they compare to your teachers' reports on Quality Professional Development (page 24) and Innovation (page 22)?
- Do you believe the type of instruction affects students' engagement in learning? See Academic Engagement on the previous page to compare your assumptions. Also, see the results for your school on students' reports about Liking for School on page 28.
- Is the number of hours students spend on assigned reading per week consistent with your students' performance on the reading section of the TAP or the ISAT?
- Has the amount of time students spend reading increased over the past four years? What do you think is responsible for this trend?
- Has the emphasis on writing instruction increased over the past four years? What do you think is responsible for this trend?

¹³See the Consortium's report *Instruction and Achievement in Chicago Elementary Schools* (2001).

Student Personal and Social Outcomes



Social Competence (S) Students' impression of their ability to help people end arguments; listen carefully; and share, help, and work well with each other. *High levels indicate that students feel comfortable in a wide range of social situations.*

Social Conscience (S) The level of concern students feel for others and their interest in solving other people's problems. *High levels indicate that students have a strong social conscience.*

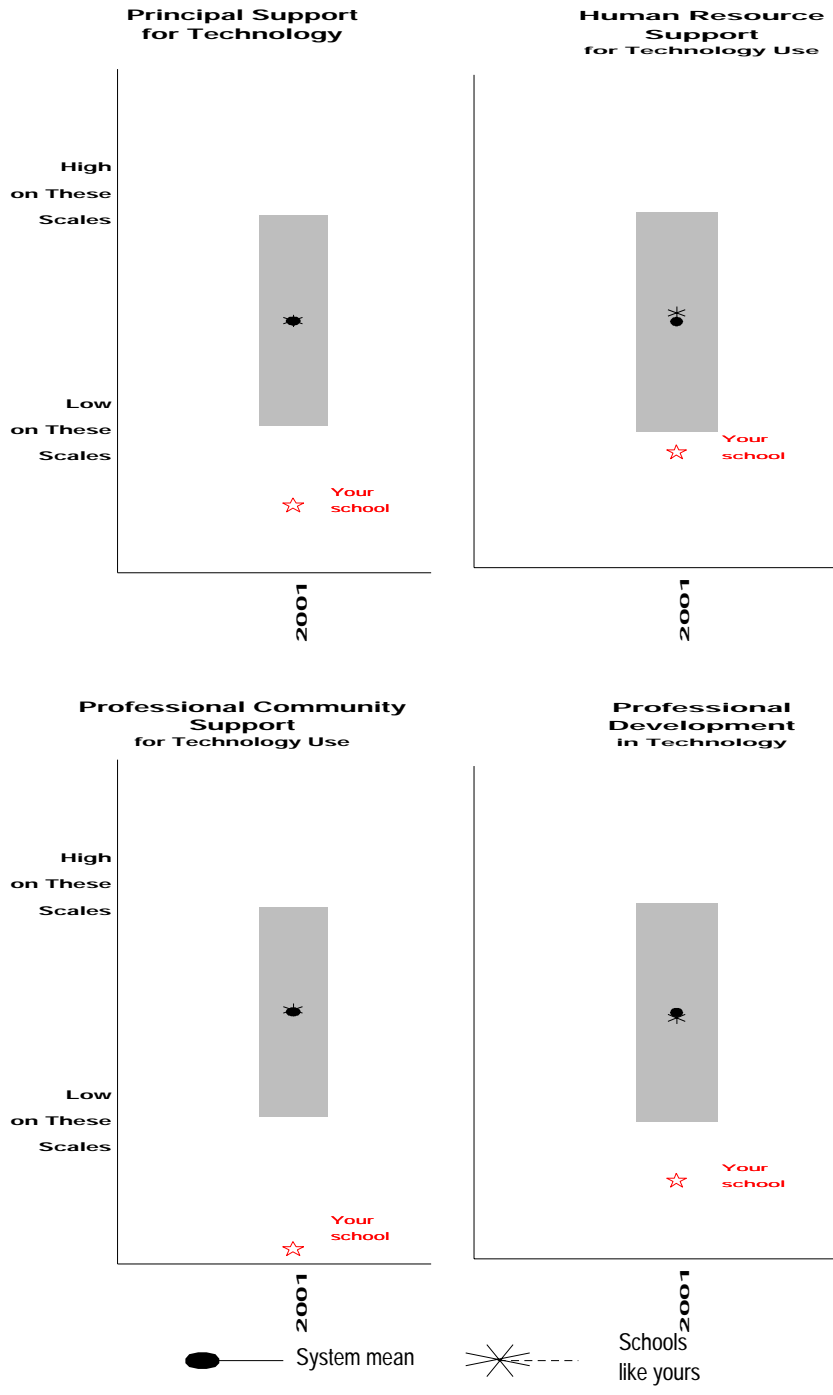
Liking for School (S) How students feel about their school and their level of commitment to going there. *High levels indicate that students have strong loyalty for and emotional ties to their school.*

Self-Efficacy (S) Students' level of confidence in their academic ability. Questions ask students if they believe they can master new skills and succeed at even the hardest tasks if they try. *High levels indicate that students feel they can meet high standards.*

TO CONSIDER: Beside promoting academic learning, schools also shape important personal and social outcomes, including self-responsibility and social engagement.

- How have your school's results on these measures changed over the years?
- Are they keeping pace with your school's standardized test scores?
- Review the measure displays for Student-Centered Learning Climate on page 18 and the measures on this page. What are the strengths and weaknesses of students' experiences at your school?
- How can you continue to support strong practices, and what can you do to address weaknesses?

Support for Technology Integration in Schools



Principal Support for Technology (T) Teachers' perception of the degree of support they receive from the principal for using technology in classroom instruction. *High levels indicate greater principal support.*

Human Resource Support for Technology Use (T) Teachers' reports about the amount of support they receive for using technology as a teaching tool. *Support here means access to a technology coordinator, assistance with curriculum integration, and hardware in good working order.*

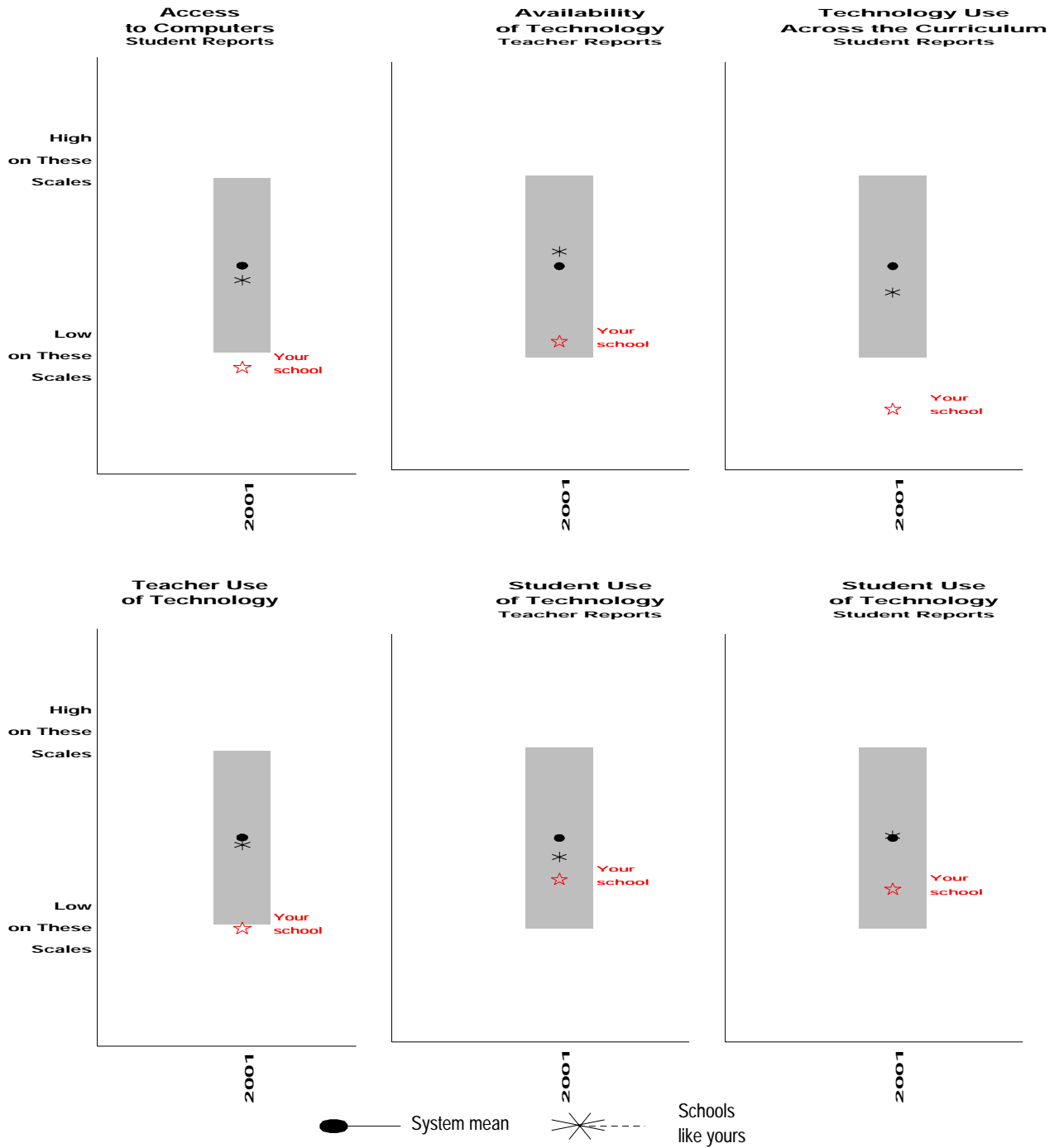
Professional Community Support for Technology Use (T) Teachers' impression of their colleagues' willingness to support technology use and participate in professional development activities on integrating technology into lessons. *High levels indicate there is widespread support among the faculty for implementation and integration of technology for educational purposes.*

Professional Development in Technology (T) Teachers' assessment of their awareness of and participation in professional development activities designed to integrate technology in the classroom. *High levels indicate that teachers are able to find and take advantage of such professional development.*

TO CONSIDER: Technology has changed virtually every workplace, except schools. Now, it is beginning to happen here too. The meaningful integration of technology into the work lives of students and teachers requires extensive support. Schools need to be wired, computers need to be purchased, Internet access assured. Perhaps, even more importantly, teachers need collegial support and professional development in order to learn how to use these new resources well in their classrooms. Absent such developments, maintenance of the "digital divide" seems likely.

- How do the data on your school's support for technology integration relate to students' and teachers' reports about the availability and use of technology found on the next page?

Availability and Use of Technology in the Classroom



Access to Computers Students' reports about the extent to which computer hardware is available to them in school. *High levels indicate greater access by students to computers in school.*

Availability of Technology (T) Teachers' reports about the extent to which they are able to use technology including computers, the Internet, and email in their classrooms and in the school. *High levels indicate more extensive availability of technology for teachers in the school.*

Technology Use Across the Curriculum (S) Students' assessment of the extent to which they use technology for English, social studies/history, math, and science classes. *High levels indicate more frequent use for a larger number of classes.*

Teacher Use of Technology (T) Teachers' assessment of how often they use technology in their own work. Possible uses include creating instructional materials, accessing model lessons plans, and creating multimedia presentations. *High levels indicate more frequent and diverse use among teachers.*

Student Use of Technology (T) Teachers' assessment of how often they incorporate technology into their assignments. Possible uses include practice drills, word processing, creating presentations, and research on the Internet. *High levels indicate more frequent and diverse assignment of technology use.*

Student Use of Technology (S) Students' reports about their use of technology at school for a variety of purposes such as practice drills, word processing, research on the Internet, and creating presentations. *High levels indicate more frequent and diverse use among students in school.*

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Consortium on Chicago School Research

The Consortium on Chicago School Research believes educational policies and practices benefit when they are rooted in the best possible evidence about factors that affect student learning. We work to increase the public's understanding of the instructional practices that affect student achievement and the strategies that support those practices in classrooms, within schools, across the Chicago public school system, and in the community.

The Consortium does not argue a particular policy position. Rather, it believes that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained.

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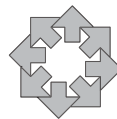
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