



Daley's 'Renaissance' concentrates rival gangs, violently destabilizes neighborhood schools...

Bloody days increase in Chicago's general high schools

By George N. Schmidt

Despite intense efforts by public relations staff at the Chicago Board of Education and the some of the editors at Chicago's daily newspapers, increasing gang violence in Chicago's general high schools couldn't be completely ignored during the opening months of the 2006-2007 school year.

But even the most attentive public citizen would have had difficulty figuring out what was true from the conflicting reports provided by public schools officials, the Chicago Police Department, and the major media. By November 2006, the main story line, repeated by the school board's public relations staff and repeated as news from the front page of the Chicago Tribune, was that things were better as far as violence went in the city's public schools.

"Student arrests drop" proclaimed a page one Tribune headline on November 14. The lengthy story left the impression that an alleged reduction in violence at Steinmetz High School (3030 N. Mobile) was real and was the result of new programs which focused on social work rather than arrests of students — even those who had committed violent crimes in the school.

Less than two months earlier,

Continued on Page Five



Many teachers, parents and community leaders are concerned that Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School, at 1147 N. Western Ave. (above), is the next target of Mayor Daley's school board's plan for charter school expansion. Critics charge that the Duncan administration has created a racial and gang security crisis at Clemente by funneling gang members from the Austin High School area into Clemente since September 2004. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

Destabilizing Chicago's remaining public schools.

This month:

Part One: Undermining general high schools through gang transfers via school closings.

January 2007:

Part Two: Chaos and gangs in the largest neighborhood elementary schools.

February 2007:

Part Three: How the charter schools selectively enroll their students and kick out their problems (then blame the public schools).

Duncan's huge SNAFU wrecks retiree security

By George N. Schmidt

Anyone who didn't know the dictionary definition of SNAFU should have been looking it up at the end of November 2006, and the word should have been spray painted across the entrance to the headquarters of the Chicago Public Schools at 125 S. Clark St.

The largest breach of personal data security in the history of Chicago's

Continued on Page Seventeen

In November 2006, Chicago's schools CEO mailed the Social Security numbers and addresses of 1,739 retired teachers and administrators to addresses across the USA — and nobody was fired for the mess!

Continued privatization of public schools... Massive charter expansion

By Lotty Blumenthal and George N. Schmidt

If each meeting of the Chicago Board of Education had it's own theme song, the November 15, 2006, meeting's song would have been "Hey Look Me over..." Although the Board has been carefully orchestrating the regular appearance of teachers, students and parents from its charter schools at every meeting, the November 15 meeting was a first. Not only did highly paid central office administrators reserve seats for the charter school people queuing up for the meeting, but one \$110,000-per-year bureaucrat even served donuts to the charter school people — but not to anyone else who arrived at 7:00 a.m. to sign up to speak at the board's monthly meeting.

And while the increasingly assertive President of the Chicago Board of Education, Rufus Williams, criticized students and a former teacher from one of Chicago's top high schools for speaking out at the Board, he had nothing but what one observer called the "warm and fuzzies" for every group that stood before him to proclaim how great their schools were going to be — even though the schools did not exist except in the imagination of Williams, his fellow Board members, and the ideologues who populate the growing bureaucracy in the Board's "Office of New Schools Development."

By the end of the board meet-

Continued on Page Twelve



November 22, 2006. A tattered American flag flies over the University of Chicago charter school housed in what was once the Donoghue Elementary School on Chicago's South Side. The school dismissed students for the entire Thanksgiving week, a sign on the door reported. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

Editorials

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759-C

The cruelty of
Duncan’s ‘data
driven’ special
education
‘bottom line’

More than a year ago, a small team in the Chicago Board of Education’s budget office — led by Pedro Martinez and Tyra Newell — began an attack on special education services for Chicago children using computers. Instead of asking what special services the children needed, the bottom line specialists in the Budget Office established a bunch of abstract matrices —very much like the now-discr edited formulas used by Donald Rumsfeld in his management of the Pentagon — and decreed that no child would be left behind when the abolition of services was complete.

The project, as absurd as it was evil, pushed ahead, driven by computers and accountants, with no regard for children’s needs. Like so many of the decisions made by the miracle management team at CPS during the past decade, this was driven by ideology, not by reason or a concern for children.

Last month, more examples came to the public, even if they were ignored by most of our colleagues in the press. In October, it became clear that children at the Blair Early Childhood Center would die if there was a fire because of the cuts in Child Welfare Attendants at the school. Other schools faced similar problems across the city, but as long as the media cover up continues, those problems don’t concern the data driven tyrants who run Chicago’s public schools.

Basically, Arne Duncan and his mismanagement team are trying to take away human services and replace them with robots and medicines. In October, staff at the Jahn school tried to take away the one-on-one aide who had helped a kindergarten child last year and replace the aide this year with a part-time service and medication.

The family, after a heroic struggle that cost the mother her job because she had to tend to her special needs child, has filed a complaint with the district court. In any other city in the USA, this story would be page one news, but in Chicago it is ignored because the dominant narrative is that

Mayor Richard Daley and his miracle management team have done miraculous things for Chicago’s public schools. Although CPS bureaucrats have been caught red-handed trying to deprive children of services to which they are entitled and replace those services with untested and unproven chemicals (some of which have led to children’s suicides), the frenzy to drive down “personnel” costs and the worship of the “bottom line” by both CPS officials and the media who are supposed to provide a check on such insanities means that instead of facts Chicagoans are given assertions of belief and platitudes about fantasies.

When special education advocates return to federal court again on December 8 (U.S. District Court, 219 S. Dearborn St., Judge Robert Gettleman), attorneys for the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education will again tell the judge the lies they have been telling since last summer, when the budget cuts were made and Chicago’s school board claimed that special education children had not been hurt.

Added to the lies are the cruelties at places like the Jahn school, where the Valenzuela family was put through what can only be described as a Kafkaesque nightmare in trying to defend the rights of a seven-year-old to an appropriate education, with human supports, as opposed to the chemical and spreadsheet fantasies that drive Chicago’s “education” leadership at the present time.

Evil at the holiday season is as bad as any other time. 🍏

Demolishing public education in Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New Orleans

It was surreal the day after Election Day to read the Chicago Tribune’s influential columnist John Kass try to remind Chicago that if Paul Vallas had won his bid for the governorship in 2002, the current waves of political corruption in Chicago and Springfield would not be lapping at every taxpayer’s door.

The surrealism came from the fact that as Kass was writing, thousands of Philadelphia residents — including the mayor and a growing number of the city’s “school reform” commission (which replaced the city’s school board and selected Vallas as “CEO” shortly after he lost his Illinois bid — were learning just how corrupt and incompetent the Vallas administration had been in their city.

But Philadelphia is not alone in the corruption wrought by the “mayoral control” model of corporate “school reform.”

In New York City, Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, and a number of smaller cities, the Business Roundtable, joined by Republican politicians and Clinton Democrats, has been pushing the mayoral dictatorships on cities whose public schools serve largely minority populations.

After a series of propaganda articles in the Detroit Free Press, Detroit adopted the “mayoral control” model of “school reform” in 1999, after fierce resistance. Six years later, the plan was dropped after it was proved to be a disaster. But the reason that Detroit was sold a bill of goods in the first place was that reporters from Detroit recycled clip files from Chicago and sold them as “news” back home. Detroit was fleeced.

The same thing happened in Philadelphia, which is now learning the hard way that the “Chicago miracle” was nonsense, built on corruption and a pile of civic lies that would heap over the Millennium Park bean.

Other cities that are following the propaganda coming out of Chicago are also learning the hard way that Chicago’s claims are lies, propaganda for a corporate model of school governance that has traditionally been called dictatorship, or even fascism.

The worst so far has happened to New Orleans, where the public schools were abolished, replaced for the most part with charters assisted by Chicago bureaucrats and corporate hacks. The danger grows. 🍏

Resistance News

Defend Democracy: A \$71.40 plan to Stop NCLB... Let's start a revolution that works for real people...

By Susan Ohanian

[Editor's Note: The following speech was given on November 18, 2006, at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in Nashville. It is reprinted here as Susan's monthly Resistance column for Substance and is being widely circulated elsewhere. Further information about the campaign can be gotten at www.susanohanian.org and at www.educatorroundtable.org, where interested people can sign the petition to end No Child Left Behind.]

Federick Douglass told us that "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." Even though it is difficult for us teachers, who come from a culture of people-pleasing and trying to be agreeable, a culture of conciliation and compromise, we must learn how to refuse.

I came here wearing a T-shirt: "Defend Democracy: Stop NCLB Insanity." But then a teacher handed me a shirt from the Northwest Inland Writing Project. This shirt declares "Be a Malcontent." I approve this message. I wear the shirt with pride.

They didn't ride the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. We must not DIBEL, follow the script, or give the tests.*

We must stand up and say "No!" Which amounts to saying "Yes!" for children.

And I have a little plan for achieving this goal, a \$71.40 plan to help teachers come together in a grassroots movement of refusal. I never recommend that a lone teacher here or there refuse to give the test. I'm calling for a grassroots movement of refusal. We must join together in our resistance, presenting a solid mass of speaking up for children. We must be a solid mass of refusal.

Elizabeth Jaeger is in the audience, one of the Downer 5 from California. {<http://www.susanohanian.org/show_atrocities.html?id=4966>. Things ended badly for them because when they stood up for children, they were left standing alone. Colleagues didn't join them. We must grab hands and present a united front. And here is how we can do it:

One My website: <http://www.susanohanian.org>

I made my first online commentary about NCLB in June 2002. By now, I feel rather like Mme. Defarge, knitting a register of outrage. Dickens notes that Madame Defarge's own cruelty and bloodthirstiness does not reflect any inherent flaw, but rather results from the oppression and personal tragedy that she has witnessed at the hands of the aristocracy.

Realizing that I spend about eight hours a day documenting the oppression and personal tragedy suffered by children at the hands of the corporate-politicos education plan, the Business Roundtable and their political handmaidens, I worry about how much longer I can contain my anger. I'm sure that the pounding I've suffered this year by pneumonia and hypersensitivity pneumonitis, a.k.a. "mushroom picker's disease," results from bearing witness

THE TENNESSEAN

LOCAL NEWS

B

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2006

NCLB critic a hit with teachers

Conference speaker draws ovation with plan to lobby against '02 law

By NATALIA MIELCZAREK
Staff Writer

Susan Ohanian has a \$71.40-a-person plan to stop the federal No Child Left Behind act.

That's the sum that thousands of teachers would have to shell out to finance a whirl-

wind lobbying effort aimed at abolishing the 2002 law, which is up for reauthorization next year.

Ohanian, a longtime teacher who writes and speaks about educational issues, spoke Saturday at the National Council

of Teachers of English annual conference in Nashville, which drew about 7,000 people. Her talk got a standing ovation.

"There comes a time when you can't participate in a system that's harming the children," said Ohanian, a senior fellow at the Vermont Society for the Study of Education.

The law "declares that 100 percent of children must be reading on grade level by 2014. I taught children with learning

INSIDE

National group of English teachers lists changes it wants in NCLB. On 3B

difficulties for 20 years. That's not going to happen.

"It's a formula designed to declare public schools bankrupt. It's setting schools up for failure because there's a concerted movement to privatize education," she said.

The "resistance movement," as Ohanian called it, would include collecting and submitting 1 million signatures to Congress, organizing a march on Washington, buying ads in national publications and supporting existing groups that are working to repeal the law.

No Child Left Behind went into effect Jan. 8, 2002. It sets achievement goals for various

► Please see NCLB, 3B

to the personal tragedies brought on families by NCLB.

I get a lot of mail from desperate teachers, parents, grandparents. Lisa wrote me from Oregon, asking for advice, and her story of the DIBELS oppression of her young son became the introduction to "Examining DIBELS: What it is and What it does," ed. by Ken Goodman.

Sarah, a California first grade teacher, is one of my most regular teacher correspondents, and I am so moved by her fight to nurture her students that she has her own page now: Sarah's Page <http://www.susanohanian.org/show_sarahsnotes.html?id=11>. Just a few days ago, Sarah wrote me:

"My school is currently imposing a program that 'trains' children to write the 'Perfect' sentence. Then the 'Perfect' paragraph. Then the 'Perfect' composition.

"This is an expensive Directed and so-called explicit writing program that 'trains' students to write well on assessments.

This goal is not only the school mission, it is the purpose of school life. Or, as I was just trained to understand via the Hollingsworth DataWorks model, All students taught at grade level — on Standards" — all day, every day. The Mission Statement.

Especially if you are 6 years old. And learning English.

The district goal of the same page, same instructional process, same formalized method in every room, every day as a mantra of school writing done the "right" way.

Just recently, we've witnessed the horror story coming out of Mobile, AL: Schools now require letter grades for kindergarten students. If a child does not speak in complete sentences for Show and Tell, he fails. Here's what a dissenting teacher described:

"Before, if my kids wrote, 'Apples are red,' I was excited. But if they write that same sentence in the week when we're writing narratives, they get a low grade. It's descriptive, not narrative."

This assault on kindergartners isn't just oppressive, it's also wrong, revealing a whole lot of ignorance about writing. And telling kindergartners that they're failing, that they're not good enough, is part of the corporate plan to create a scared, compliant, obedient workforce for the Global Economy. Tell kids that it's a dog-eat-dog world out there and that they don't measure up. Tell them that often enough, and they'll start to believe it. Pound that message home and they'll never know about education for the common good, education for democracy.

Take a look at the job projections over the next 15 years: The huge mass of jobs will be in the service industry, where lots of bodies are needed to work for minimum wage. Corporate America needs lots of school failures, people who have been trained to believe they don't deserve better. The crime isn't that people take jobs in the service industry; the crime is that they do not receive a living wage for their labor.

As Kathy Emery and I documented in our book "Why Is Corporate America Bashing our Public Schools," this plan to demean children and create a passive workforce started with the California Business Roundtable and quickly morphed into the national Business Roundtable plan, "America 2000," "Goals, 2000," and now No Child Left Behind — NCLB. It is embraced by both political parties. Reward and punish schools based on high-stakes standardized test scores.

***Two. DIBELS and Focused Activism Vermont Society for the Study of Education** <<http://www.vsse.net>>*

The little engine that could: this tiny, penniless group published Ken's book on DIBELS. Ken gave us publishing rights and CELT pre-paid for books before they existed — so we could pay the printer. Now, we mail it out at cost. The important thing here is to show people how DIBELS oppresses young children. This is a message the public can understand.

"Examining DIBELS: What it is and What it does" <<http://vsse.net/>

dibels/ node/86>, ed. Ken Goodman

The book costs \$5.95, to cover printing and mailing. The special Convention rate: \$5.00.

Let's give Congressman George Miller something to think about. Let's scare him into conversation. If everybody would buy a copy and send it to George Miller, he'd be forced to "notice."

Rep. George Miller
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the senior Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, will seek the Chairmanship of the Committee in the 110th Congress. Miller said that it is his intention to use the Committee to benefit America's children, families, and workers. Specifically, the first three priorities for the Committee will be to increase the national minimum wage, reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act, and make college more affordable.

VSSE's second publication is "A ROADBLOCK in Vermont's Design for Education" by Susan Ohanian.

This volume deconstructs Vermont's application for a Reading First grant, comparing the goals, language, and purpose with the values of the Vermont Design for Education, values which were dumped in order to comply with the Feds. We hope people in other states will use this as a model for calling their own state departments of education to task. The public needs to know about this massive sell-out of children.

Price: \$5.95. Free to VSSE mem-

Continued on Page Four

If you want to learn more about the widespread national resistance to high-stakes testing and inhuman 'education reform' policies, visit Susan on her website:
www.susanohanian.org

November 2005

Revolution against NCLB

Continued from Page Three

bers.

VSSE also conducted a survey of Vermont Teacher Attitudes about the “Effects of NCLB on State Policy, Classroom Climate, and Quality of Education” <<http://vsse.net/node/187>>

We received good press from this survey. Others may want to replicate it.

Join us! Send \$25: VSSE, P. O. Box 186, Brandon, VT 65733-0186

Coalition for Better Education <<http://www.theebe.org>>

This Colorado group represents grassroots organizing at its best. Joining hands, parents, students, and teachers are fighting to regain control of their schools from the politicians and large multinational corporations who advocate and profit from standardized testing programs like CSAP. It has been both impressive and heartwarming to watch their campaign to get ads on benches at bus stops, advising parents of their right to opt children out of the state test.

****Three. CD: No Child Left Behind? Bring Back the Joy... Sing Out for Students! 15 songs for \$15.00**

Can you imagine a resistance movement without song? With this CD we bring you 15 songs.

Sing loud, sing often, joining hands to fight the destructive federal mandates.

Listen to samples <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/dhbdrake4> <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/dhbdrake4>

All proceeds from the sale of this CD go to the World of Opportunity <<http://worldofopportunitywoo.org>> in Birmingham, Alabama, to help them in their efforts to rescue young people systematically removed from the public schools in order to increase standardized scores on the state test. Birmingham was in danger of being taken over by the state if they didn’t improve their test scores, and we all know the easiest way to do that — get rid of probable low scorers. Thanks to the WOO, some of these ‘probable low scorers’ are now in college.

More WOO <<http://susanohanian.org/woo.html>>

Some of the songs are original; some are old folk songs with new lyrics.

I wrote one to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands,” but my lyrics were rejected by the musicians, who feared that the lyrics would ‘date’ the song. Here’s how that song began:

*If you cannot find Osama,
Test the kids.*

I guess I should have hung tough for those lyrics. . . but there are plenty of others that are quite wonderful.

***Four Substance* Substance** <<http://www.substance news.com>>

Substance is the only newspaper of resistance in the country. George Schmidt, a longtime Chicago English teacher as well as the editor/publisher of /Substance/, was sued <http://susanohanian.org/outrage_fetch.php?id=113> by Chicago school authorities for \$1.4 million for publishing the disreputable city exam in the newspaper. Secrecy about tests is killing us and George made visible how inaccurate, and nonsensical the Chicago test was.

Twelve teachers at Curie High School in Chicago announced ahead of

time that they would not give the test. And then the test was cancelled for everybody.

Dead. Never to rise again.. <http://www.substancenews.com/archive/Oct02/caseno.htm>

This quote appears on the /Substance/ front page: “Where ignorance is the standard, intelligence is subversive.”

Let us support “Substance” in their activism. As the National Resistance editor, I invite you to contribute. Send \$16 to: Substance, 5132 W. Berteau, Chicago, IL 60641

It would help if you added a little extra. We must support our own.

Five: Educator Roundtable

The Educator Roundtable: Ending NCLB <<http://www.educatorroundtable.org>> is a grassroots movement of educators, parents, and concerned citizens who have signed a petition, rejecting the misnamed No Child Left Behind Act and calling for legislators to vote against its reauthorization. We do so not because we resist accountability, but because the law’s simplistic approach to education reform wastes student potential, undermines public education, and threatens the future of our democracy.

Here are the goals of the Educator Roundtable:

Goal 1: full-page ad in the Sunday “New York Times”. NEED: 17,000 educators/concerned citizens to cough up \$10.40 each.

Goal 1A: At the same time, we are positioning teachers, scholars, and activists to pursue a unified media campaign opposing reauthorization of NCLB. This will involve letters to editors and legislators, phone calls to media outlets, web-activism, and most importantly, physical presence at all 50 state capitals.

We are going to scare the hell out of the corporate politicians by our sheer numbers.

Goal 2: 1,000,000 signatures, to be printed and hand-delivered to a member of Congress committed to ending NCLB.

Sign the Petition: <http://www.petitiononline.com/1teacher/petition.html>

Goal 3: Witness the meltdown of NCLB.

The Educator Roundtable is a work in progress, an example of educators working together, despite geographic/ideological distances, to challenge NCLB on two fronts: 1) in the media 2) at the policy level

Here is our rationale of dissent <<http://www.educatorroundtable.org>>. http://www.susanohanian.org/show_nclb_cartoons.html?id=125

Six. Take Back the Profession

At his presentation at NCTE Nashville (watch this site for news of its posting on the web) — “NCLB: A Call to Action Part 2” — Dick Allington provided evidence that there are no “proven” reading programs. No core or supplemental reading program exists that meets the federal “gold” standard. The Inspector General’s report shows that Reading First is corrupt and illegal. Allington suggests that every teacher look at the state code of professional ethics. Then, when asked to read a script or DIBEL a child, teachers should insist, “Tell me in writing that I must violate this state code of ethics.”

Tell me in writing.
NCLB is destroying any sem-

blance of a teaching profession. We must take back our profession!

[Ten Comandments of No Child Left Behind*

And Congress spake, “We are your masters who brought you out of the wilderness of teacher professionalism and into the house of direct instruction.”

I. We are the State, which has brought students out of the wilderness of teacher-led classrooms and into the kingdom of test prep. Thou shalt have no other guidance before thee, and then it will follow as night follows day that No Child is Left Behind.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven images, not any likeness of anything that contradicts the Standards and their tests. For the State is a jealous god, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them who don’t obey.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Standardistos, thy gods, in vain. For the State nor the testing company will not hold him guiltless that takes their name in vain.

IV. Remember the Standards and keep them holy. The State blessed the tests and hallowed them. Thy adequate yearly progress scores shall comfort thee.

V. Honor thy Standards, that thy days as teachers may be long upon the land of direct instruction which the State gives you.

VI. Thou shalt not kill Standardistos.

VII. Thou shalt not have intercourse with any other than thy lawful Standards and test prep materials.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal time away from the Standards and preparation for the State’s tests for frivolous matters.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against the Standards.

X. Thou shalt not covet lesson plans of bygone times. Nor shalt thou covet libraries, books, recess, art, music, nor anything that went before.

In these days comes the band of the Reading First 73 to preach to the multitudes.”Verily we say unto you seeking Title 1 funds, among the skills of reading, none is greater than Phonic Segmentation.”

Blessed are those who follow the Standardisto drum roll, for theirs is the kingdom of government contracts.

Here’s news of the Eleventh Commandment http://susanohanian.org/show_nclb_cartoons.html?id=125 <http://www.susanohanian.org>

A Coda

I’d like to do something a little nery here and read from a work in progress. This is from a book titled “A Three-Cornered Year.” I read to you from the first section, “Fall.”

Labor Day: The first Monday in September, Dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers, Marks the end-of-summer return to the enslavement of children.

*Schoolyards once alive
With running, jumping laughter
Are now silent
As recess is outlawed.
Children trained to follow corporate orders.*

*Standardisto,
So sure of knowledge
So ignorant of childhood.*

*Emerson reminded us,
What standardistos hever knew:
We boil at different degrees,
Children do
And teachers too.*

*Start each day
With an invocation:
“May happiness pursue you,
And catch you often.”
Children
And teachers too.*

*Map me no maps.
Search for years to find
A Way.
And then the path changes.
Standardistos insist on blueprints
Of humiliation and defeat,
Marking out their shares of the kingdom.
A fishy map for facile fishery.*

*Show me the coordinate grid system
For happiness.*

*Put down your business plans and tell me:
Which is harder —
Putting a man on the moon
Or teaching long division?
Or the apostrophe.*

*Teachers,
Take your Congressional representative’s behavior
With a grain of salt.
And a pound of emetic.
Ask him to explain his NCLB vote.*

*Ah, Standardistos: Those with the haunting fear
that some child,
Somewhere
May be having a good time.*

*Peagogical Principle:
When Standardistos speak, dead frogs fall out of their mouths.
Lack of kid-savvy
Is no impediment to Standardisto rules.*

*Pedagogical quackery turns princes
Into frogs.
And teachers discover that the arid Standards desert
Of deficiency and recrimination
Won’t save them.*

*Mediocrity cherishes rules
And when corporate politicians
Ballyhoo for Standards,
Sure as night follows day,
Children lose recess.*

*Terrible things done in the name of Standards
Aren’t Standards at all,
Just terrible things.*

Note: Of all the members of the United Nations, the United States of America and Somalia (which has no legally constituted government) are the only two nations that have failed to ratify the U. N. convention on the Rights of the Child.

“fini”
Do you know why the Standardisto crossed the road? To kill the chicken and sell the data.

I repeat: They didn’t ride the bus in Montgomery. We must not DIBEL, follow the script, or give the tests*.

Take The Pledge http://susanohanian.org/cartoon_fetch.php?id=177 http://www.susanohanian.org/cartoon_fetch.php?id=177
Stages of NCLB <http://susanohanian.org/show_nclb_cartoons.html?id=329> http://www.susanohanian.org/show_nclb_cartoons.html?id=329
\$71.40:
You decide: Do you want a revolution or not?🍌

Bloody days in the general high schools?

Continued from Page One

on September 27, 2006, the Chicago Board of Education approved a Board Report that showed something which many thought demonstrated the opposite.

A great deal of security information was buried in a routine motion (Board Report 06-0927-PR24) approving the continuation of payments of millions of dollars for Chicago Police Department services inside and around the public schools. The September 27 Board Report included the following statement: *“During the period from January 1, 2006 — June 30, 2006, there were 5,508 physical arrests in and around schools made, 27,899 student school absentees found, and 20 guns recovered.”*

Ignoring the “20 guns recovered” during one six month period, Chicago school officials and the Tribune reported less than two months later that things were better inside and around Chicago’s schools. What had happened? The Duncan administration holds schools and teachers to a very strict “standard,” and has closed more schools than at any time in history for “failure” and “underperformance” — always as measured solely by scores on multiple-choice standardized tests. Yet in many matters regarding administrative performance in Chicago, there is no standard at all. Administrators are allowed to practice a selectivity of standards and data that amounts to cherry picking both data and the criteria used to evaluate them. The result is always to show the school system’s central administration — and Mayor Richard M. Daley — in the best possible light.

In 2005, a reduction in the number of guns confiscated in and around Chicago schools was the criterion for proclaiming that the school system was improving in school security. It had been the Tribune, in a January 2, 2005, article, that utilized gun confiscations as a measure of how safe the schools were becoming. *“Schools report good gun news — just 1 student found with one this year”* the January 2, 2005, Tribune headline read.

The 2005 article claimed that gun confiscations had decreased significantly from a high in 1994 and into the 2000s. The January 2005 report implied that the number of guns confiscated in the public schools was a very good measure of the safety in the schools. The article listed the school at which the one gun had been discovered *inside* the building: Phillips High School. The article also noted that guns were found *near* two other high schools (Chicago Agricultural and Hancock) and that a fourth gun had been confiscated from a security guard.

At its September 27, 2006, monthly meeting, the Chicago Board of Education was told that 20 guns had been confiscated during the six month period between January 1, 2006 and June 30, 2006. There was no discussion of the report during the Board meeting. Nor did the other media report that gun confiscations in Chicago’s public schools had increased by either 500 percent or 2000 percent in a little over one year (Substance reported the issue in an October editorial).

On December 1, 2006, the CPS communications department issue a press release reminding reporters that on December 4, CEO Arne Duncan would be delivering his annual “State of the Schools” address to the City Club of Chicago at a luncheon at Maggiono’s Restaurant on Grand Ave. in Chicago.

According to the press release



SPORTS
NO! NO! ... GO! GO! GO!
Watching Hester game film with Bears special teams coach



TEMP
WI
cat



50¢ City & Suburbs; 75¢ Elsewhere
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2005
NORTH TOWN — NO. 114 © CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Student arrests drop

Security, mediation credited for 13% reduction in city school incidents

By Tracy Dell'Angela
Tribune staff reporter

Steinmetz Academic Centre senior Crystal Lankford once feared coming to school. Her Northwest Side neighborhood high school was an unwelcoming and “scary place,” she said, where students fought in the hallways and threw food in the cafeteria.

Now a student leader at Steinmetz, formerly one of the district’s most violent schools, Lankford brags about the turnaround she has seen in the last two years.

“This school is a great place to be now ... much safer than it used to be. Now, you want to be here. Before it was ‘Do we really have to come?’”

Reforms at schools such as Steinmetz helped fuel a 13 percent drop in the number of students arrested in Chicago public schools last year, the same year the district faced intense scrutiny from parents for “criminalizing” student misconduct such as fights and talking back to the staff.

About 7,400 students were arrested in the 2005-06 school year, down from some 8,500 in 2004-05, according to Chicago Police Department records. That’s also down 17 percent since 1999, when arrests topped 9,800.

The decline was driven largely by a dramatic reduction in the number of students charged with simple battery, a misdemeanor for a fight that doesn’t involve weapons, attacks on staff members or serious injury.

School administrators have a lot of discretion in how they handle these conflicts, and their responses often determine whether a student is hauled off in handcuffs or disciplined on campus.

PLEASE SEE ARRESTS, PAGE 18



Security officers Anselma Chaparro (l.) and students to class at Chicago's Steinmetz where student arrests have dropped

Two years ago the Chicago Tribune considered the number of guns confiscated in and around Chicago's public schools a sign of progress in security and safety (below right). This year — with the help of Board of Education officials — the Tribune decided that the one measure of improvement is student arrests. No mention is made in the reports of the victims of the various crimes for which the perpetrators receive “mediation” instead of arrest. Is there approval of negotiating with Chicago gang leaders on schools. The November 14 report (above) claimed that CPD reports of arrests in and around individual schools were not available. Not true. A citywide reduction in arrests of 13 percent at a time when the Duncan administration is trying to force principals to reduce both arrests and suspensions is not a true measure of whether schools have gotten safer. In fact, it may simply be an indication that Chicago is “killing crime” again by manipulating crime data. Killing crime in the accounting books while it increased in the streets has happened in the past.

06-0927-PR24September 27, 2006

APPROVE PAYMENT TO THE CITY OF CHICAGO
FOR SECURITY SERVICES RENDERED AT VARIOUS HIGH SCHOOLS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS THE FOLLOWING DECISION:

Approve payment to the City of Chicago for security services rendered at various CPS High Schools in the amount of \$4,000,000 for the period beginning on January 1, 2006 and ending on June 30, 2006. These services were rendered without prior Board approval.

CONSULTANT:

City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602
(312) 744-5000
Vendor #47512

USER:

Bureau of Safety and Security
125 S. Clark St.
Chicago, Illinois 60603
(773) 553-6900

SCOPE OF SERVICES: The Chicago Police Department's School Security Teams enforced all laws and preserved order in and around designated schools while protecting all school students, employees and property. The CPD provided uniformed, sworn officers for eight hour tours of duty in two officer teams at designated high schools, District supervisors designated as Chicago Public School liaisons, a sergeant designated as liaison to the Bureau of Safety and Security, District School Car Units that provided transportation for arrests and police services to elementary schools.

DELIVERABLES: Two-member uniformed officer teams were deployed to 73 High Schools and 1 Special School; 33 School Car Officers patrolled elementary schools; 26 Sergeants provided supervision and were liaisons to the Chicago Public Schools; totaling 207 sworn Chicago Police Department members.

OUTCOMES: During the period from January 1, 2006 – June 30, 2006, there were 5,508 physical arrests in and around schools made, 27,899 student school absentees found, and 20 guns recovered.

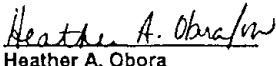
COMPENSATION: The City of Chicago will be paid the sum of \$4,000,000 for the period beginning January 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2006 for police services rendered based on direct costs and administrative fees.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: A review of Minority and Women Business Enterprise participation was precluded due to completed contract performance.

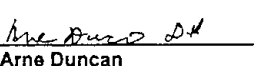
LSC REVIEW: Local School Council approval is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: Charge to Bureau of Safety and Security \$4,000,000Fiscal Year: 2006
Budget Classification: 0950-215-000-3303-5400Source of Funds: Tort Funds -215

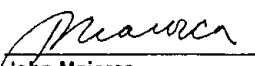
Approved for Consideration:


Heather A. Obora
Chief Purchasing Officer

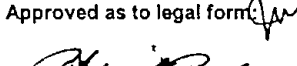
Approved:


Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Within Appropriation:


John Maiorca
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to legal form:


Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel

announcing the event, Duncan’s speech was to “tell a City Club audience that improving public education is “Chicago’s greatest civic achievement.” The press release, which arrived as Substance was on deadline [a complete report on the event will be published in the January Substance], also stated: “Duncan will highlight a series of accomplishments since Mayor Daley took over the school in 1995...”

One of those achievements, according to Duncan, has been “Reducing violence in the schools.”

At the time Mayor Daley was given control over Chicago’s public schools in July 1995, Arne Duncan was playing professional basketball in Australia. His information regarding the accomplishments he reports for the schools since Daley took over is based on materials provided to him by others — not on information he acquired himself while working in the schools (which he never did).

Despite the fact that Duncan has been CEO of the massive school system since July 2001, he has never developed a method of reporting “school violence” that would enable him to make a claim that the Daley administration has reduced violence in the schools. The current situation is an example of the problem analysts confront when trying to match the claims of the Board of Education’s publicists and their speech writers with the realities in the schools. Duncan reports the data that makes the administration’s claims look good, but there has been no standard for reporting and analyzing trends and problems, despite the fact that massive amounts of information are available from disparate sources.

Contrary to the reports in the Tribune and claims made to the City Club by Arne Duncan, there is little or no evidence that violence has decreased in Chicago’s schools during the past decade, and a growing body of evidence that violence — especially gang violence — has increased dramatically since Duncan became CEO and Daley’s “Renaissance 2010” policy was put into place. But since the increase in violence has been in a small percentage of the schools, the overall trends have been misleading.

The reason why public confusion is possible, as the accompanying suspension data show, is that the Duncan administration has systematically concentrated the most dangerous high school students in a smaller and smaller number of schools — generally the city’s “general” high schools which are required to take any student who resides within a certain area.

Beginning in 2002, a series of changes allowed the Duncan adminis-

Continued from Page Six

CHICAGO

Schools report good gun news

Just 1 student found with one this year

Maybe it's the threat of a prison sentence or expulsion. Perhaps it's the certainty that a classmate or a teacher is going to rat them out. Whatever the reason, one thing is sure—fewer guns are showing up in Chicago schools. So far this year, only one student has been caught bringing a gun to a school—a weapon discovered during a routine metal-detector screening at Phillips Academy High on the South Side.

Security officers seized three other guns on high school campuses this fall: one found in an animal barn at the High School for Agricultural Sciences; one in a bush outside Hancock High School; and one seized from a security guard who was not authorized to carry weapons at school.

Compare this to 1994, when Chicago school officials seized 67 guns on school property during the school year.

The number of guns seized dropped to 26 in 2002-03 and 13 last school year.

“If we come in under 10 this year, I’ll jump up and down and click my heels,” said Andres Durbak, safety and security director for Chicago Public Schools.

Durbak said the motivation behind these gun possession cases also has shifted over the years. In the early to mid-1990s, some cases involved gang violence. Now, most of the gun seizures involve students who have no intention of using them—elementary school students who find guns at home and bring them in to show classmates, or scared teens who bring them for protection.

“The message is getting out: Don’t bring guns to school or you’re going to get caught,” Durbak said. “Kids know it’s a danger now and they are very apt to report it. That’s extremely positive because it means kids are taking ownership of their own safety.”

Most Chicago public high schools have always been

Continued from Page Five

tration to effectively sabotage the general high schools. Although the destruction of Lucy Flower Vocational High School (which became “small schools”) began before Arne Duncan was appointed CEO and Michael Scott Board President in July 2001, the pattern was set by the fate of Flower.

In 2002, the approval of a plan to convert DuSable High School (at 49th and Wabash) into “small schools” combined with the conversion of King High School into a “College Prep” high school forced students into Phillips, Tilden and Kenwood high schools. All three experienced additional problems, but the most dramatic were at Phillips, where rival gangs clashed in the school’s hallways despite the fact that the Board of Education’s Office of School Security and Safety was located in the Phillips building.

By 2004, the pattern was being repeated at other schools. When told of the problems at Phillips, Board President Michael Scott visited Phillips and himself witnessed the problems. Instead of working with the Chicago Teachers Union and others to solve the growing security problems that were created by his policies, however, Scott adopted a policy of scapegoating the general high schools, closing them amidst a media barrage about “dangerous conditions” and academic “failure.”

Prior to 2004, the closing of the general high schools (and the shifting of students into adjacent schools) was accomplished through the vehicle of “conversion” to small schools. In 2004, the script was changed dramatically. I know because I was there. By April 2004, the Chicago Teachers Union, under the leadership of Deborah Lynch, who was then president, had established a Bureau of School Security and Safety. The job of the bureau was to deal directly with the problems of the city’s violent schools. Working on the model established in New York City, the CTU leadership decided that the first activities would be directed at those schools which had the greatest amount of violence, usually gang related.

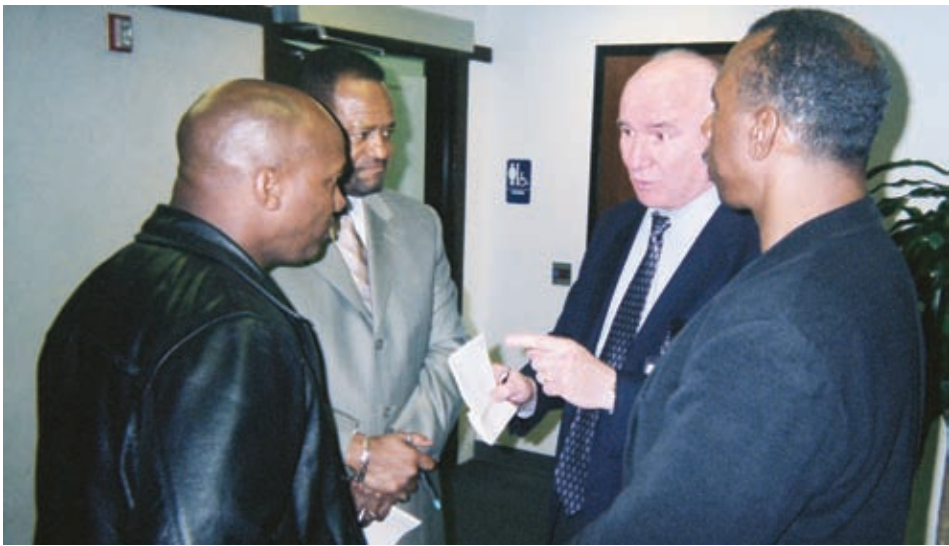
As director of school security and safety, I helped organize a conference in April 2004 involving nearly 100 schools and representatives from the major agencies that deal with youth crime and violence. These included the Chicago Police Department, Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, CPS, and several schools. The conference was considered a success, due in a large part to the cooperation of all the agencies, which knew that the problems in the minority of Chicago schools that had them were severe and required immediate attention.

Two of those schools — Calumet and Austin high schools — were cooperating fully with both the union and all of the other agencies. At Calumet High School, the school had identified the most violent student offenders and had run a check on home addresses, among other things. One result of that project, which we had planned to replicate, was that Calumet was able to learn that two of its most violent students were actually residents of a nearby suburb, not Chicago residents at all. The school’s problems lessened dramatically once those students were removed from the school.

Similar projects were taking place at Austin High School, and I was regularly visiting two dozen other schools that faced serious violence, in-



April 26, 2006. William Morris (at microphone) and Marvin McNeill tried to bring the increasing security problems at Harlan High School to the attention of the Board of Education’s April meeting. Harlan was one of seven south side high schools to receive students from high schools being closed under Mayor Daley’s “Renaissance 2010” program. Under “Renaissance 2010,” public schools are closed and their students sent to other schools, usually without any preparation for either the students or the receiving schools. Then the public school that is closed is refurbished before being given away to an EMO (Education Maintenance Organization) such as the Chicago International Charter School, simple privatization. Beginning in September 2004, Harlan received additional students, first from Calumet High School (which stopped taking 9th graders in September 2004) and then from Englewood High School (which stopped taking 9th graders in September 2005). Harlan parents warned that the transfers would cause chaos at Harlan, both during the hearings on the closing of Calumet and later at numerous Board of Education meetings like the one above. Between the 2004-2005 and the 2005-2006 school year, suspensions for violent incidents at Harlan increased by 73 percent. Despite the regular appearance at school board meetings of parents and students pleading for relief from violence in the schools, the Duncan administration instead escalated school closings and began to force principals to reduce both arrests and suspensions for criminal activities. Rather than solve the problem by ending school closings, Duncan usually sends those who complain publicly for what some call the “talk and stall” treatment off camera and in the halls behind the Board’s chambers. Below, McNeill and Morris discuss Harlan’s problems with Don Pittman (CPS high schools chief) and Andres Durbak (with pad), CPS security chief. Substance photos by George N. Schmidt.



cluding a number of elementary schools.

With the cooperation of the schools’ administrations, teachers, and parents, we arranged for people from Austin and Calumet to describe their problems to Michael Scott and others from the administration. We believed, wrongly it turned out, that we had begun working on a cooperative plan to confront school crime and violence in those places where it was most severe. Calumet High School CTU Delegate Tim Galloway (since retired) joined us at a meeting in the Board’s offices. At the meeting were Michael Scott and repre-

sentatives of various departments.

Less than two months later, I first heard, from teachers at Austin and Calumet, that we had been “betrayed” by Duncan and Scott. Instead of working on a comprehensive plan to deal with the violence in those schools, Duncan was going to proposed the closing of the schools because of the violence that we had helped identify!

In June 2004, two events took place which sealed the fate of Austin and Calumet high schools and projected the future for the city’s general high schools. First, Mayor Daley announced his “Renaissance 2010” plan. It was

based on a right wing report drafted by Eden Martin and published by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club. According to Martin, a radical conservative who opposes urban public schools as “failures” and supports “choice” and “free market” alternatives, charter schools and other schools have to be publicly funded to break the cycle of failure in urban schools.

In 2004, Eden Martin’s radical right wing attack on public schools became Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley’s “Renaissance 2010” plan. Under the plan, which was unveiled by Daley in a lengthy speech to the Civic Committee, Chicago was to create “100 new schools” by 2010.

Following Daley’s lead, Duncan and Scott quickly reacted. Although Calumet and Austin were not “failing” academically at the time (they were in the middle of the general high schools, as measured by standardized test scores over a reasonable number of years), Duncan declared that the schools were dangerous and would stop accepting 9th graders in September 2004.

At intense public hearings in June 2004, students, teachers, parents and others from both Calumet and Austin opposed the closings. Notably, LSC members from the schools that were slated to receive the 9th graders who would be forced out of Calumet and Austin also protested, noting that gang problems were likely to result if the changes went through.

I helped organize the responses to the proposal at the hearings that were held, but such hearings are actually kangaroo courts, since they are convened to affirm the conclusions already reached by the CEO. [In June 2004, Deborah Lynch lost her bid for a second term as CTU President. Upon taking office in August 2004, Marilyn Stewart, Lynch’s successor, fired me and had her staff discard the materials that had been assembled by the bureau of school security and safety at the CTU. It wasn’t until nearly a year later that Stewart realized that she had a major problem in the schools and appointed a “coordinator” of school security and safety].

By late 2004, it was clear that the problem was widespread across the south side and the west side. Austin and Calumet were closed to 9th graders in September 2004, and heck (or worse) broke loose in the schools that received those of the students who were able to attend other schools. (CPS never admits that when such changes are made, a large percentage of the students simply disappear, which is what happened in this case).

Within a year after the closing of Austin and Calumet to 9th graders, teachers, parents, and students from more than a dozen schools were appearing monthly at the meetings of the Chicago Board of Education reporting the increase in gang problems and violence at schools as far away from the sending schools as Clemente and Wells high schools (on the north side) and Harlan and Hyde Park high schools (on the south side).

Under pressure from the mayor to create the “100 new schools” announced with “Renaissance 2010,” instead of admitting that the closing of 9th grade at Austin and Calumet had spilled major problems into the general high schools across the city, Duncan and Scott continued closing the general high schools. In January 2005, under the pretext of saving children from “academic

fairly safe. Gang-infested schools are the problem.

Continued from Page Six

failure”, Duncan announced he was going to close Englewood High School to 9th graders. Despite warnings that the problems seen at the schools that had received the “spillover” from Austin and Calumet would be worsened when Englewood was closed, Duncan persisted, delivering the by then cliched talking points about how he had a responsibility to “make the tough decisions” and save the children from another “round of failure.” When teachers and community leaders challenged the characterization of their schools, while others warned of what would happen when the schools were closed, Duncan simply forged ahead. At every step, he lined up community leaders and others who gave support to his programs (often rewarded for it).

Englewood was closed to 9th graders in September 2005, and things got worse in the receiving schools.

By 2006, the program was moving ahead despite all evidence of the danger it was posing. Even a dramatic series of charges by the Chicago Teachers Union (published in stories that appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times) focusing on the impact of the closings on Hyde Park and Wells high schools did little good. In January 2006, Duncan announced that he was closing Collins High School, at 1313 S. Sacramento on the west side by ending the acceptance of 9th graders into the school. The impact of the Collins closing is now being felt at schools across the west side. Just as Collins had been destabilized by the closing of Austin and the creation of charter schools which skimmed many of the better students, now the schools adjacent to Collins were facing the same pinch.

By the time the Board provided Substance with its suspension data for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, the patterns that first became clear in the first years of the Duncan administration were obvious for anyone familiar with the city.

While all of the high schools generally had a few problems, the greatest problems were concentrated in fewer than 20 general high schools. Where these problems have escalated during the past four years, the specific causes of the escalation can be easily identified as the disruptive impact of the Board of Education’s “Renaissance 2010” policies.

Not only does “Renaissance 2010” close (and later, give away to charter schools) existing public schools, but it also creates a new group of elite schools which reject the most deprived and often dangerous students. As a result, those students are being concentrated more and more intensely in the city’s remaining general high schools.

Since 2004, the Board of Education has been allowed by the public and most of the media, as well as by powerful political and community leaders, to get away with what amounts to a program that undermines, sabotages and destabilizes the city’s general high schools, while allowing more middle class families to put their children in the city’s magnet high schools or the growing number of “College Prep” high schools.

The resulting dangers in the general high schools cannot be characterized as an “unintended consequence” of the policies of the Daley and Duncan administrations. On the contrary, they are the result of these policies, and have been predicted by LSC members, by



February 2006. Above: Four years after they first began closing schools and proclaiming a “Renaissance” with the closing of Dodge, Terrell and Williams elementary schools in April 2003, Chicago Board of Education President Michael Scott (above left) and CEO Arne Duncan held a press conference to announce that they were recommending the closing of Collins High School and three elementary schools. Collins was the fourth high school closed under Mayor Daley’s “Renaissance 2010,” and at the time of the closing teachers and community leaders (below) warned that violence and problems would increase at the receiving schools across the West Side. Duncan, Scott and the Chicago Board of Education make up the rules for school closings as they go along. In June 2004, they hastily closed Austin High School and Calumet High School declaring that the schools were “out of control” (not “academic failures” as had been the case with earlier closings). Duncan and Scott were warned that the September 2004 closing of the 9th grades at Austin and Calumet would result in increased gang violence across the West Side and South Side and pushed forward with Mayor Daley’s privatization plans anyway. The spike in violence at Wells, Marshall, Orr, and Clemente high schools resulted directly from the closing of Austin. The spike in violence at Harlan, Fenger, Kennedy, Hyde Park and other South Side high schools resulted from the closing of Calumet. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.



February 22, 2006. Above, former Collins High School principal Grady C. Jordan testifies against the closing of Collins at the February Board of Education meeting. The Board closed Collins’ 9th grade despite massive protests, and the students who would have attended Collins have been dispersed across the city, just as the students from Austin, Calumet and Englewood were beginning in 2004 and 2005. As predicted by critics of the Duncan administration, Austin and Calumet were privatized and turned over to charter school operators by Board action in November 2006. Calumet will be run by the “Perspectives” Charter School and Austin is being turned over to at least two schools, one headed by former Illinois Schools Supt. Michael Bikalis. In November 2006, as predicted, Duncan recommended that Collins High School be turned over to the North Lawndale College Prep Charter School. Substance photos by George N. Schmidt



teachers, by this reporter, and most recently by the leaders of the Chicago Teachers Union, which as an institution was already on the record in opposition to the closing of 9th grades in the general high schools as early as 2004, although it took the current leadership of the union until March 2006 to confront the problem publicly (again) on behalf of the union.

While there are a few random examples of high schools in Chicago where gang violence and other problems are spinning out of control independently of the central planning that has sabotaged the general high schools in the interests of “Renaissance 2010”, these are exceptions. (One notable one is Lincoln Park High School, where the escalating problems with security seem to stem from the unique problems created by the school’s administration and its arbitrary policies and personnel practices; at this point in history, Lincoln Park is more dangerous than it should be. Schools where politics interfere with an even-handed administration of discipline are in for trouble...).

It is likely that the forces driving “Renaissance 2010” will cause Arne Duncan to announce another high school targeted for closing in the next three months. If that school turns out to be Clemente, which has faced some of the most extreme problems, no one will be surprised. If it turns out to be any of the other 20 general high schools which have borne the brunt of Duncan’s policies, there should be a major outcry across the city. 🍏

March 13, 2006. Left: A dramatic press conference at the headquarters of the Chicago Teachers Union allowed two students who had been brutally attacked at their schools and teachers from some of the schools affected by the school closings and resultant gang problems to speak to the press. The temporary attention paid to the problem had no impact on the policies of the Chicago Board of Education, however, and by the time the 2006-2007 school year opened in September 2006, the addition of the closing of 9th grade at Collins High School had added to the pressure on the remaining general high schools, which receive all of the problems. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

Suspensions in Chicago high schools 2004-2005 to 2005-2006

Suspensions for the most serious offenses under the ‘Student Code of Conduct’ (before 2006, the ‘Uniform Discipline Code’ (Groups IV, V, and VI) in Chicago public high schools from 2004-2005 school year to the 2005-2006 school year. Ranked by number of suspensions for offenses involving violence.

Name of School	Suspensions for...	2004-2005		2005-2006		Change (No.)	Change (Percent)
		Violence	All	Violence	All		
Chicago Vocational H. S.	AA	147	289	147	266	0	0%
Tilden H. S.	AA	156	256	138	179	-18	-12%
Marshall H.S.		164	252	126	178	-38	-23%
Clemente H. S.	AA	36	80	119	206	83	231%
Fenger H. S.	AA	82	142	117	210	35	43%
Morgan Park H. S.		78	125	108	211	30	38%
Phillips H. S.		79	100	102	135	23	29%
Julian H. S.	AA	136	192	97	162	-39	-29%
Bogan H. S.		62	90	93	198	31	50%
Corliss H. S.		45	66	91	156	46	102%
Manley H. S.		80	151	91	161	11	14%
Farragut H. S.		96	172	85	128	-11	-11%
Orr H.S.		61	85	85	114	24	39%
South Shore H. S.		79	135	78	133	-1	-1%
Bowen H. S.		100	151	76	138	-24	-24%
Steinmetz H. S.		142	233	74	117	-68	-48%
Senn H.S.	AA	97	126	70	100	-27	-28%
Wells H.S		67	115	69	114	2	3%
Kennedy H. S.		33	70	63	111	30	91%
Harper H. S.		59	77	62	90	3	5%
Kelly H. S.		96	164	62	131	-34	-35%
Schurz H. S.		60	177	62	177	2	3%
Kelvyn Park		54	92	59	103	5	9%
Clark College Prep H. S.		27	32	56	87	29	107%
Collins H. S.		81	150	54	111	-27	-33%
Taft H. S.		28	63	53	118	25	89%
Hyde Park H. S.		86	170	48	87	-38	-44%
Curie H. S.		59	133	48	129	-11	-19%
Dunbar H. S.		71	157	48	104	-23	-32%
Roosevelt H. S.		26	82	47	129	21	81%
Robeson H. S.		53	87	46	77	-7	-13%
Kenwood H. S.		47	69	46	58	-1	-2%
Austin H.S.		86	129	46	79	-40	-47%
Harlan H. S.		26	45	45	74	19	73%
Crane H. S.		54	69	43	61	-11	-20%
Von Steuben H. S.		36	71	41	79	5	14%
Dyett H. S.		25	32	40	68	15	60%
Juarez H. S.		49	110	38	81	-11	-22%
Englewood H. S.	AA	41	66	36	67	-5	-12%
Mather H. S.		15	66	35	115	20	133%
Las Casas		48	67	32	44	-16	-33%
Sullivan H.S.		18	35	29	42	11	61%
Washington H. S..		47	97	27	46	-20	-43%
Hirsch H. S.		18	26	27	45	9	50%
Amundsen H. S.		29	88	27	101	-2	-7%
Hubbard H. S.		36	56	26	51	-10	-28%
Foreman H. S.		59	125	26	77	-33	-56%
Douglass Jr. High		15	27	26	41	11	73%
Gage Park H. S.		63	98	25	60	-38	-60%
Lincoln Park H. S.		20	34	25	44	5	25%
Lake View H. S.		10	14	22	57	12	120%
Raby H. S.		7	8	21	35	14	200%
North-Grand H.S.		5	11	19	42	14	280%
Chicago Agricultural H. S..		13	41	18	35	5	38%

Notes: “AA” along with the name of a high school indicates the school contains an “Achievement Academy” for students who have not yet passed the 8th grade graduation test criteria but are 16 years of age or older. CPS does not keep anyone 16 years of age or older in elementary schools, but they are not considered full high school students. This chart is based on data supplied by Chicago Public Schools, Office of Communications, November 2006. School names have been rendered as “High School” except in the cases of Occupational high schools (which serve special education students) and selective enrollment College Prep high schools.

Suspensions in Chicago high schools 2004-2005 to 2005-2006

Suspensions for the most serious offenses under the ‘Student Code of Conduct’ (before 2006, the ‘Uniform Discipline Code’ (Groups IV, V, and VI) in Chicago public high schools from 2004-2005 school year to the 2005-2006 school year. Ranked by number of suspensions for offenses involving violence.

Name of School Suspensions for...	2004-2005		2005-2006		Change (No.)	Change (Percent)
	Violence	All	Violence	All		
Richards H. S.	23	33	17	35	-6	-26%
Hope College Prep H.S.	13	20	16	27	3	23%
Calumet H. S.	29	46	13	20	-16	-55%
King College Prep H. S.	5	10	13	22	8	160%
Westinghouse H. S. AA	17	27	13	20	-4	-24%
Payton College Prep H. S.	5	11	12	21	7	140%
DuSable	33	53	12	21	-21	-64%
Best Practices	6	12	11	17	5	83%
Lane Tech Coll. Prep H. S	26	123	11	84	-15	-58%
Little Village H.S.	0	0	10	25	10	100%
Chicago Academy H.S.	5	8	10	17	5	100%
Prosser H.S.	16	31	9	15	-7	-44%
Carver Milit Acad H.S.	16	26	7	8	-9	-56%
Northside Coll. Prep H. S.	1	2	6	7	5	500%
Hancock H.S.	12	16	5	10	-7	-58%
Big Picture /Williams H.S.	0	0	5	8	5	100%
Brooks College Prep H. S.	2	5	4	9	2	100%
Simeon H.S.	3	13	4	9	1	33%
Big Picture /Chavez H.S.	3	6	4	5	1	33%
Chicago Milit Acad H.S.	22	36	4	14	-18	-82%
Jones College Prep H.S.	7	25	4	10	-3	-43%
Phoenix Milit.Acad H.S.	22	32	4	12	-18	-82%
Southside Occup. H.S.	2	4	3	5	1	50%
Young College Prep H.S.	6	22	3	7	-3	-50%
Lindblom Math-Sci. H. S.	0	0	2	4	2	100%
Graham Training Center	0	0	2	2	2	100%
Simpson Acad. H.S.	12	12	2	4	-10	-83%
Spalding H.S. (Closed)	0	0	1	2	1	100%
Northside Learning Center	3	4	1	1	-2	-67%
Hope Middle H.S.	0	0	0	0	0	
Lindblom Coll. Prep H. S.	3	3	0	1	-3	-100%
Second Chance Alt. H.S.	2	2	0	0	-2	-100%
York Alternative H.S.	0	0	0	0	0	
Cregier Multiplex H.S.	0	0	0	0	0	
Jefferson CTR/Factory	0	0	0	0	0	
Jefferson IDOC/Healy No.,	0	2	0	0	0	
Near North H.S. (Closed)	0	0	0	0	0	
DeVry University Aca. H.S.	0	0	0	0	0	
Rickover Navy Acad. H.S.	0	0	0	0	0	
Vaughn Occupational H.S.	8	10	0	0	-8	-100%

Notes: “AA” along with the name of a high school indicates the school contains an “Achievement Academy” for students who have not yet passed the 8th grade graduation test criteria but are 16 years of age or older. CPS does not keep anyone 16 years of age or older in elementary schools, but they are not considered full high school students. This chart is based on data supplied by Chicago Public Schools, Office of Communications, November 2006. School names have been rendered as “High School” except in the cases of Occupational high schools (which serve special education students) and selective enrollment College Prep high schools.

‘Data Base’: a new service for Substance subscribers

**By George N. Schmidt
(Editor, Substance)**

With this issue of Substance, we begin a new service available exclusive to subscribers to our print editions. “Data Base” will be published in the print edition of Substance but will not be available on line in the Substance Web site until one year after its publication in the print edition. Our general policy is to provide the content of the most recent edition of Substance on line by the 15th day of the month after the data of publication. This service, however, has caused considerable consternation among our paid print subscrib-

ers, whose subscriptions and other support provide all revenues for Substance. If you are reading this article but the space above is blank, you are reading it in the Web edition of the December 2006 Substance, and the chart contained on these pages has been redacted. If you wish to receive a copy of the entire chart, please contact Substance either by phone (773-725-7502) or at Csubstance@aol.com. We will verify your subscription and provide you with the Data Base for this month immediately. During the coming months, Substance will publish one or more it-

erations of the “Data Base” feature in each print edition. These charts and other materials will include data on the budget of the Chicago Board of Education, information regarding contractors and consultants working for the Chicago Board of Education, and data regarding salaries of present and former employees of the Chicago Board of Education. It is unlikely that our data base materials will provide information about questions outside of the Chicago Public Schools during the 2006-2007 school (and publication) year. As the publication of a print and Web news service evolves, we will

consider other alternatives to this policy for our Data Base and other materials. Information about subscriptions to the print edition of Substance is available on Page Twenty-Four of this Substance. Information is also available on line at www.substancenews.com. Substance will not be able to continue publication until we are able to significantly increase the number of subscribers to our print edition. We hope both our print subscribers and others reading this understand and take the necessary steps to keep the information and analysis of Substance flowing. 🍏

Lincoln Park H.S. conflict continues...

Students continue support for librarian

By Joseph Guzman

It is always refreshing to see young people take a stance against injustice and bad role model examples. In the ongoing development of the Lincoln Park High School saga, Substance has had the pleasure to discuss the problem with four exceptionally intelligent and articulate students who agreed to an extended interview. The students have been part of the public political process surrounding the decision by Lincoln Park Principal Bessie Karvelas to terminate school librarian Bernice Eshoo, a 17-year Lincoln Park veteran who had also served as Chicago Teachers Union delegate and one of two teacher representatives on the Lincoln Park LSC.

Not only have Lincoln Park students attended meetings of the Local School Council in large numbers, but they have also attended Chicago Board of Education meetings in October and November 2006 to speak out against the termination of Eshoo.

So far, most of the story about the Lincoln Park conflict has been from the point of view of the adults. This is part of the students' story of the conditions at Lincoln Park.

At the heart of the matter and what sparked the mass protest and investigation of the administration was the undignified and public dismissal of 17-year veteran teacher librarian — Ms Bernice Eshoo — by the Principal, Bessie Karvelas. After lengthy discussion throughout the community and at LSC meetings, it was clear that Karvelas's decision to get rid of Eshoo was made under the pretense of staff cuts due to budget constraints in early October of 2006. Despite Karvelas's denials that she had the discretionary power, this was confirmed at the November 15 Board of Education meeting by Don Pittman, CPS Chief High School Officer, who told students and reporters (including this reporter and the Chicago Tribune's Tracey Dell'Angela) that the decision was made by Karvelas, not forced on the school by the Board of Education.

At the time of the November 15, 2006, Board of Education meeting, Ms. Eshoo was still receiving her salary till the end of the school year, but she was no longer permitted to teach, work in the library, or do her numerous other jobs at Lincoln Park.

Since Eshoo had offered to do her time as a "reserve teacher" in the Lincoln Park library until the June retirement of the lone remaining librarian, students at the school found this absurd and wrong. They told Substance that they decided among themselves to address this situation, especially given the fact that the lone librarian left at Lincoln Park is retiring in June and Ms. Eshoo offered to work her "reserve teacher" days at Lincoln Park until then.

"Mrs. Eshoo is one of the best teachers, mentors, and friends that we students have there" Jeff Pickert, a senior at Lincoln Park, told Substance.

Joanna Wolska, Michelle Gautier and Laura Saltzman, all seniors, concurred and added examples of why Eshoo has gained the respect — and, some would say, adoration — of stu-



Above: Despite threats (including one student being removed from class by a security guard), several Lincoln Park High School students (above) took their protest against the removal of librarian Bernice Eshoo to the November 15 Board of Education meeting. Laura Saltzman (at microphone) told the Board that she had been threatened by the school administration and that the administration had torn down announcements concerning the meetings of the Lincoln Park Local School Council in October and November, as well as materials encouraging students to attend the November 15 Board of Education meeting. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

dents over years.

"She kept the library open before and after school, home schooled pregnant girls at the Cabrini Green housing projects. Eshoo took a number of students down to New Orleans last summer to assist in the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort as part of Service Learning," they all added as examples piled out.

Bernice Eshoo (known as "Bernie" to friends and colleagues) also served as a teacher representative on the Lincoln Park LSC for a number of years. The students told Substance that an announcement at the school was heard Thursday on November 30 about an

open teacher rep seat on the LSC. They said it was uncertain which of the two seats this pertained to, but feared it was the seat held by Bernie Eshoo.

In her work with students and for the school, the students reported, Eshoo was also assistant coach to the softball team, worked with the gospel choir, and "has never missed a Lincoln Park football or basketball game." Eshoo ran the mandatory youth "Service Learning" program, in which every student must volunteer at least 40 hours of community service in order to graduate (more for the I.B students). What was less visible to the students — and what got Eshoo into trouble with

the principal — was that Eshoo also served as Chicago Teachers Union (CRU) delegate representing the school's faculty and other union staff. Eshoo w—as also one of the top elected officials of the CTU, serving as one of six high school vice presidents who represent the city's 6,000 high school teachers on the CTU executive board.

In the interviews that follow, we are using the first names of the four students with whom we talked.

"She is willing to go out of her way – above and beyond for everything", Michelle says. Despite the devotion to the youth and school, the attack upon Eshoo was because of her outspokenness and support of teacher an student rights, which had made her a clear antagonist of the Principal.

Strange email and Day of Dismissal

An email was circulated among the staff regarding staff cuts, author unknown, but it was suspected that Principal Karvelas penned it, as similar syntax and grammar were used. A few days after the e-mail, an ordinary day in early October greeted Eshoo. She was in the library helping a student with a project during second period when one of the assistant principals (there are three A.P's at Lincoln Park), entered the library and was seen talking with Eshoo in plain sight. Eshoo was ordered to leave her keys at the office immediately and to return to the library until the end of the period. Eshoo was observed shaken and emotional after the blitzkrieg encounter. Students and staff approached her to find out what horrible thing happened. The assistant principal returned at the end of the period and escorted her out of the building.

"They just let her sit there and cry in front of students and didn't do

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Have You Forgotten?

- **You** are here to educate **children** in a specific area of curriculum
- **You** are in charge of what takes place in your classroom
 - why would **you** allow students to "take over" and take away from valuable time to discuss rumors and incite violence?
- Almost every person in this school is here because they applied to be here, aren't **you** one of them?
- To listen to the news?
 - Corporate America (and Yes- CPS is a corporation) is laying off workers across the nation
 - Many of these workers are in the upper level of the payscale
 - Why? Budget cuts, plain and simple
- If **you** are not happy here **you** can apply to leave and work somewhere else
 - New job postings may be found every Thursday at cps.k12.il.us
Human Resources
Job Openings
e Bulletin
- **Children** learn and respond to what they see adults doing and saying
 - this includes gossip, rumors, pettiness, infighting, lies, bullying, and disrespect of each other
 - your students have certainly gotten this lesson correct judging by their rumor and bullying responses these past few days- and you bought right into it didn't you?
 - F.Y.I. Jen Johnson- "Secret" emails and text messages are a form of bullying
- David Roe and Kevin Hough clearly stated repeatedly to anyone and everyone that they were refusing to follow policy. If you were management, would you honestly retain them, regardless of how "good" they were? And how good can you be if you refuse to plan and let people see what you have done and will do, seriously?
- CPS mandated position cuts across the city for budgetary reasons
- CTU negotiated the ten-month period with pay to enable people to find a new position and not terminate them immediately- again, look at what corporate America does- has anyone ever heard of severance pay, buying out a contract?
 - You pay union dues- have you read the contract? Would you expect your union to do less for you than any other corporation?
- Jones College Prep and Payton College Prep have **NO** librarians
- Lincoln Park has a highly qualified librarian.
- B. Eshoo selected the current LP librarian from a pool of candidates knowing her selection had more seniority than any of the other finalists
- B. Eshoo is not qualified to teach any subject- only to be a librarian
- Help students by giving them change when they need funds, or school supplies when they are without- which of us hasn't performed that service?
- Staff in the library when the librarian isn't available are perfectly capable of helping students- they just don't have the years of being there they do have an education and they also care about the students needs this business of "setting them up for failure"- in front of students no less is beneath contempt

Above: An anonymous e-mail was sent to all staff at Chicago's Lincoln Park High School last month from someone who had the current e-mail addresses of the staff. The document had the style of Principal Bessie Karvelas, according to a number of staff. Karvelas denied she had produced the document, even though it took direct aim at three teachers with whom Karvelas had had disagreements. The discussion of the three teachers was also in a personal way, just as teachers had noted that Karvelas had previously tried to share personal gossip about a Local School Council member and others in what many considered an unprofessional and an inappropriate way.



Above: Retired high school administrator Edward Klunk (above, talking on the side with high schools chief Don Pittman at the November 15 Board of Education meeting) now works as a consultant in the Board's high schools office. Klunk coached Karvelas on how to eliminate Eshoo's position. When Karvelas was forced by a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request to provide e-mails and other documents showing the careful planning that went into the Eshoo purge, the Board's Law Department redacted most of the files [see story, Page Eighteen] before providing material to Substance. Klunk, who is now drawing a pension of more than \$90,000 per year, is just one of many consultants who are allowed by CEO Arne Duncan to exercise enormous administrative powers, despite the fact that they are supposedly no longer in office. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

Lincoln Park H.S. tyranny hit

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anything about it”, Michelle angrily added.

The students wondered what was happening and asked the teachers during third period. It was then that the mysterious email was discovered by the students, after the fact about the staff cuts. They told Substance they felt shut out, violated and offended that a beloved member of the Lincoln Park family was treated in this manner. They said that many teachers were understandably too scared to discuss it with anybody, but just as many were upset and could not hide the fact. And as students build up relationships with their teachers, what affects them affects the students — and all education was put to a halt that day as a result of the event.

Little Whispers

Only those in the general library area were witnesses to the incident, but word of the act quickly spread throughout the school. Michelle and Laura heard about it in their psychology class. Students were whispering among each other, starting out quietly and slowly with only a select few, “*Did you hear about Ms Eshoo? Did you see them kick her out?*”

Michelle’s reaction was one of shock and disbelief. It then involved the entire classroom, discussing the situation and all in joint disgust in how it was handled. Laura and the others sharing this story with Substance never would have believed this. “If you asked any of the 2,200 students at Lincoln Park which teacher would be cut, no one would have named Ms. Echoo,” she said.

“She was the voice for us,” Michelle added.

Weeks before, the students told Substance, Karvelas was seen repeatedly screaming at Eshoo at random things in front of students and other teachers.

“It was common knowledge that there was some tension between the two, way before the position was cut,” said Jeff.

Substance has learned that Eshoo, being the union rep, was too vocal in her criticisms of some of the policies and practices that Karvelas was bringing to the school. Among these, Substance learned, was the fact that Karvelas was allowing classes and programs to become overcrowded, while providing some staff with additional overtime pay and reduced workloads.

Eshoo was also well liked in the school — and many of the students felt that rubbed the Principal the wrong way from Day One.

All agreed, however, that the basic problem was that Eshoo wouldn’t ignore injustice. Michelle and Laura agree that if something was apparently wrong, Eshoo would speak out about it, “Clearly [Karvelas] didn’t want anybody up against her.”

It is felt that since Karvelas has been principal, (about three years), that vindictive and petty power plays from the main office have become the norm. The students interviewed by Substance were at the school before Karvelas became principal, and faculty members have confirmed this feeling.

Michelle and Jeff said, “We have seen the change in the school since our freshman year, when we had an interim principal. When Karvelas arrived, things started to change. It feels like this was the year that Karvelas has put down her rules. It also seems like she has put her foot down and the school has be-



Above: Chicago Board of Education President Rufus Williams (above right, gesturing) criticized the Lincoln Park High School students for leaving the school to bring their protests to the Board of Education meeting. During the two hours prior to the presentation by Lincoln Park staff and students, Williams had listened to teachers, students and parents from more than a dozen Chicago charter schools without criticizing anyone for missing work or classes. The biases of the Board president and Board members (including Clara Muñana, staring at the camera above left) against the public schools becomes more clear to observers of the Board meetings as the Board rushes to eliminate as many public schools as possible, replacing them with privatization plans usually involving charter schools or other unproven entities. The Lincoln Park High School controversy was reported to be of particular concern to the Board members because Lincoln Park is one of the city’s top schools, having even been named by Newsweek magazine as one of the top 100 high schools in the United States. Substance photos on this page by George Schmidt.

come militarized and a repressive climate exists”

“We know that the principal had two teachers removed who had spoken out against her and there were protests regarding her poor decision,” Laura added.

The removal of Eshoo is one that perplexes the students, since the other librarian, Mr. McDonald, has made his retirement at the end of the school year known, and his departure will leave Lincoln Park without a librarian for next year.

All this has a negative effect upon the student body. Jeff feels that the impact is a sour one. “We have noticed a climate of students being treated as if we are not a vibrant part of the school, that we don’t matter, and more like wards or charges of the school”.

And Joanna feels more restricted and suffocated. She under-

stands the security measures that the school must implement, but seems like all students are treated as bad apples and creates a lot of unnecessary conflict. Others have told Substance that Karvelas’s administration has devoted far too much time to bothering students who disagree with the principal’s policies and far too little time confronting a growing problems of gangs and violence in and around the school.

A recent decision that angered many was the diversion of funds from the drama department in their production of “Fiddler on the Roof”.

“The drama teacher put his own money into the production and staging. They practiced for months,” said Laura and Michelle. But the funds that were raised were given to the football team, according to the students. The drama department is struggling with funds and considering that a small fire destroyed a lot of props and equipment, the drama students felt that 100 percent of the funds raised by the drama department should have gone to the drama department.

An unusual announcement

Michelle told Substance that she discussed the situation with her grandmother, Ms Joan Palmer, the same night Eshoo was dismissed, as she tells her everything. She said that Ms Palmer and others felt that there had to be something sinister behind it. She called the principal’s office, but kept getting the runaround. “She’s in a meeting, she’s out of the office” etc...”

When asked what this was regarding, she told the office that her granddaughter deserved an explanation on what’s going on. Ms. Palmer kept calling. She finally was successful in reaching Karvelas around 9:00 a.m. and was told that is not her responsibility to inform the students on what occurred, but the teacher’s responsibility to share the news. In contrast to the phone conversation, however, Substance learned that teachers were strictly told not to share anything with the students because it was not their responsibility. But surprisingly, Karvelas apparently was corresponding with some students, as she told Palmer that she was letting some students know through e-mail. As the situation has developed, Karvelas’s



Above: Retired Lincoln Park High School teacher Jim Gibbons, above, continued to attempt to present his arguments politely even after Board President Rufush Williams became rude and tried to claim that Gibbons’s information was “hearsay” at the same time the Board’s Law Department was denying Substance access to the documents and e-mails showing the Karvelas and staff the the Board’s high schools office had worked carefully to purge Eshoo from the school’s staff because she was an outspoken union delegate and advocate for teacher and student rights.

e-mails have also become an issue.

Soon after the Palmer/Karvelas phone conversation, a startling, unexpected and rude announcement was heard crackling over the school intercom during third period class. Standing policy is that unless a dire emergency is at hand, no announcements are to be made during class periods, but saved for homeroom/division periods. This day was to be different.

“It seems like my grandmother pushed the issue,” Michelle said. “and after stating that it was not the principal’s responsibility to inform the students, look who’s now on the intercom!”

According to the students, Karvelas made a *ten-minute* announcement, reading and responding to a student email in a mournful, saddened voice. Paraphrasing what has now become a famous moment in recent Lincoln Park High School history, the students told Substance that Karvelas announced that she wanted to let the students know what really happened because she was getting a flood of emails. Karvelas said that the decision to let Eshoo go was not personal, but in fact was to prevent making mid-term program changes from the budget cuts, and that she had selected the least important person effecting the students. She also stated that Eshoo was not qualified to teach any other class. Rounding off the announcement, she also accused teachers of inciting gossip and rumors.

Jeff says he remembers the intercom speech: “She said that she was saddened to know which teachers were spreading the lies,” in a veiled threat it seemed. It affected her personally and she was hurt by this too, she concluded. There are recordings of this announcement floating around, but Substance has not gotten a copy of any of them yet.

Jeff and Joanna were taking an exam in their Theory of Knowledge class when the intercom unexpectedly blared. “Theory of knowledge is a very in-depth I.B. Cognitive thinking class, examining how you know what you know,” they explained. Karvelas’s announcement was ironically appropriate to the subject matter, but it disrupted one of the most important times in the I.B. student calendars. The students taking the exam were getting increasingly aggravated, torn between listening to the principal’s soliloquy and working the exam. Jeff said he felt he was being talked down to and told not to fill their heads with such things.

“I felt the tone she used was very condescending and constantly referring to us as her children,” he said irritably.

Joanna was not aware what was going on and was trying to figure out why this disruption of the exam. The Theory of Knowledge class was given five more minutes to complete the exam, but it was hardly enough. “Students were making hand gestures of anguish,” say Jeff, “You can’t write and complete these really big tests and listen to this stuff coming out of the intercom and do both well.”

Laura and Michelle were in psychology class when the announcement surprised them. They felt their day disrupted and in disbelief. “I felt she was trying to prove herself, what is she trying to do, why is she making a fool out of herself?” says Michelle. “Why did she feel she had to justify herself if we are not at her level like she told us?”

“The administration is not well liked at the school,” said Laura, even among the double honor students, and fewer like Karvelas for personal reasons.

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Boardwatch

Charter school orgy dominates November meeting of Chicago Board of Education



Tony Pajakowski told the Board that he was working to end the “culture of failure” at Calumet High School, which is being turned over to Perspectives Charter School, where Pajakowski works. The 2004 closing of Calumet was officially because of safety concerns, not academic failure, despite Pajakowski’s slanders.



Chicago International Charter School (CICS) received an additional \$2.7 million from the Chicago Board of Education to open another “campus” at the shuttered Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School on the northwest side. Beth Purvis, director, did not respond to community opposition to the plan.



Despite major problems at the \$21 million “Aspira Haugan” charter school on the northwest side, Aspira was granted an additional \$5.4 million by the November 2006 Chicago Board of Education meeting. Above, Mary Rawlins speaks while Jose Rodriguez and others look on.



Confirming rumors that began when Arne Duncan announced he was closing Collins High School, staff of the “North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School” were told they are receiving an additional \$1.8 million plus the Collins building. Above, Charles Martin speaks while John Horan (left) looks on. Photos this page by George N. Schmidt, Substance.



Above: Part of the group that is receiving nearly \$1 million to open the “Polaris” charter school in the Morse Elementary School building at 620 N. Sawyer Ave. In addition to the charter schools noted in the photographs on these pages, the Chicago Board of Education approved several others, either as new charter schools or as expanded “campuses” of existing charter schools. The total amount approved for expanding Chicago’s charters at the November 15 Board meetings was in excess of \$30 million, although charter schools are not itemized in the annual CPS budget.

Charter adulation

Continued from Page One

ing, it was clear to informed observers that officials from one of the Board’s most expensive administrative departments organized dozens of teachers, administrators, and students from the city’s growing number of charter schools to attend the meeting and continue the regular chorus of praise for the illegal expansion of charters in Chicago. And while most of those who tried to attend the monthly school board meeting to speak out on the problems in the shrinking number of public schools, highly paid CPS bureaucrats reserved seats for the charter schools contingent and assisted them in other ways.

To no one’s surprise, the Chicago Board of Education, unanimously and without debate, approved another radical expansion of the city’s charter

schools, bringing the number to more than 60 despite the fact that state law says that Chicago is to have no more than 30 charter schools.

Of the 61 people signed up for public participation at the November meeting of the Chicago Board of Education, 46 were brought to the meeting through the “New Schools” bureaucracy at Clark St. and spoke in favor of the charters. Without discussion or debate, the Board voted to approve more than \$30 million in additional charter schools (and so-called “campuses”) during the business portion of the meeting.

Many long-time Board observers have noted that in the past three years, the Duncan administration has routinely encouraged charter school operators to attend Board meetings and promote their activities, even while bringing students who are supposed to be in class and teachers and administrators who are supposed to be work-

ing on the clock for those events. The presentations are then used to further market the charter schools. At the same time, the Board President (both Michael Scott and now Rufus Williams) issued criticisms of students and teachers from the city’s remaining public schools when they attend the same meetings to speak out on important matters. In December 2004, for example, hundreds of students from Senn High School walked out and went to the Board meeting to protest the Board vote (which took place that day) to place a “military academy” inside Senn. The students were warned they might be arrested for “truancy” when they showed up at 125 S. Clark St., and as a result a large number left without attending the Board meeting.

In November 2006, a combination of intimidation at Lincoln Park High School and criticism from Board President Rufus Williams chilled protests by students and teachers from one

of the city’s most prestigious public high schools. While Williams smiled, he told the students that they should have been in class, and tried to bait a retired Lincoln Park teacher who joined the students in opposition to the termination of Lincoln Park librarian Bernice Eshoo.

Although the orgy of adulation for the charter schools and their generally unfounded claims of “success” (even from those schools that have virtually no record — like many of the “campuses” of Chicago International — and from those whose years have been marked by controversy and failure — like the Aspira charter school at the “New Haugan”) both the CEO and the members of the Chicago Board of Education show their ongoing opposition to the city’s public schools and their willingness to continue spending millions of dollars on charters. 🍏

Boardwatch

October 25 Board of Education meeting

By Lotty Blumenthal

After the Chicago Board of Education finished honoring many people and students, the public participation at the October 25, 2006, Chicago Board of Education meeting began with Jose Ocampo of Advanced Youth Leadership Power (AYLP) criticizing the special education cuts. Even though some positions had been won back in some schools, IEP's for individuals were not being implemented. He talked of individual cases — such as male teachers having to take female students to the toilet — because the aides were laid off, and students being strapped to seats because of no attendant. Ocampo is in a wheelchair.

Curtis Harris of AYLP talked of the laid off aides for students with autism. The current services were inadequate for having any of the challenged students reach their potential for either test scores or admittance to college, said Harris, who has autism and is presently a journalist.

Amber Smock of Access Living talked of the suffering caused to challenged students because of the lack of school funding sources. Oddly, there seems to be no shortage in funding 45 to 60 charter schools where no cuts in services seem to occur or in administrative perks like television and publicity contracts. Renee Grant Mitchell explained funding. Williams thanked her for coming. Smock, who is deaf, spoke to the Board half in American Sign Language and half voicing.

Christopher Persons of Senn High School spoke in opposition of the Rickover Naval Academy taking over a wing at Senn High School. It is the wing with all science labs. The 200 Naval Academy students have science in real labs with real experiments. The 1,500 regular students at Senn get a cart that rolls into a classroom. Persons told of the Town Hall meeting of September 26, the majority of the community being against the military school's presence. He asked Board President Rufus Williams to attend or send a designee to a October 10th meeting at 7:00 p.m. Williams said he did not see the value of continuing open discussion and would not attend. Persons gave evidence of the majority of the ward of the school being against it. Persons is running for Alderman with the slogan "People for Persons" in the election on February 27, 2007. Anyone interested in more information should call 773 250 3225.

Security issues

Security issues were almost as important to the Board's October meeting as the special education cuts. Terence Gadsden of Penn Elementary talked about police protection in the schools. Apparently, without warning, the police who had been assigned to the school and area were taken away. Prior to police presence, there was much violence. That abated with the advent of police. He cited incidents of crime near the school. He said he had left messages for his alderman, Andres Durbak (the Board's director of security and safety), and the local police commander. None of them returned a call to him or the school. Duncan said he'd have his staff look into it and send him a reply. He added that Durbak was present and would talk to him.

The next issue, one of the great



Amisha Patel of SEIU Local 73 spoke about the special education cuts. She is flanked by Jitu Brown (left) of KOCO and Frank Klein (right) of SEIU 73. Substance photo by George Schmidt.

cases of injustice from the board, shows all good, new teachers why they should not stay with CPS. If people are looking for a reason for teacher turnover, here's one of the reasons.

Speaker number seven was Bernice ("Bernie") Eshoo, a displaced teacher who had served as librarian at Lincoln Park High School for more than 16 years. She is displaced because her principal went out to get her. Eshoo was both the CTU delegate and teacher representative on the LSC. The principal had to make a budget cut of one faculty member. The school's population is well over 2,000. Lincoln Park High School also has a high profile IB program in which the students need to do much research. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, Eshoo was one of two librarians, a number far below the recommended number of librarians by federal education suggestions, State Board guidelines, professional organization standards, or even past practices of the Chicago Board of Education. Eshoo has 17 years of service with a superior rating. Many faculty and staff have less seniority. But the unprincipled principal chose to eliminate her position. A normal principal, not an "odd" one or evil one, would do what most do, choose the one with the lowest seniority in the largest department and make other adjustments. The principal at Lincoln Park did not do that. According to student speakers, the library is now closed either early or later in the day or open during a period in the day with a library person who does not know how to aid students in the library.

In addition, the remaining librarian is listed to retire in June. There's a national and state need for librarians. With a shortage, one would think the librarian would be one of the last people cut. The editor of this paper talked to the principal who could not explain her "reasoning." Mrs. Eshoo, in addition to her library duties, coached softball, chaperoned events, never missed a basketball game, did homebound for indisposed students including in the Cabrini Green area, and mentored students in other school groups academically. As part of the LSC that hired the principal, all was well until Eshoo — doing her LSC and delegate job — spoke out about the strange way the principal handled the budget, criticizing the expenditure of funds for a new Assistant Principal by closing the attendance office and

questioned other problems in the school.

The principal then took the other librarian out of the library and into the closed attendance office, leaving Eshoo alone in the library. Then, after the 20th day, she cut Eshoo's position.

One of the things that resulted in a conflict between Eshoo and the principal was that Eshoo reported unbalanced, overcrowded classes: two teachers with class loads of more than 140 were examples.

Joanna Wolska, a Lincoln Park student talked about the importance to her life of Ms Eshoo's mentoring and abuses by the administration and library access. She spoke of the reaction of the student body, which was appalled at the unjust actions of the principal. She also said the principal told her and students the library was open when it was not. She asked for the return of the librarian since there's supposed to be one for each 500 students, and there are over 2,000 students in the school.

Jeffery Pickert, a Lincoln Park student, also spoke on this topic. He said Eshoo represented the best of what Lincoln Park is as well as a librarian, mentor, sponsor and friend. He said, "The very best of what Lincoln Park is about is embodied in this woman." He believed the firing was political since the budget problem could be solved in other ways. Pickert said that economically disadvantaged students were most affected by this situation, since Eshoo is their mentor for research with computers. Pickert said that he has computers at his home. He said that for others the loss of library time has caused their classwork to be late or poor because of the loss both the computer time and help in the library since many Lincoln Park students have fewer resources at home. He also said that the fervor and energy of the students would continue until resolved.

Williams responded by saying that they'd all look into it, that the words of student are important, and they should return to school where he believed they lawfully belonged; however, if the students parents gave permission for them to be there, it was lawful.

Michelle Clyburn thanked the Board for her child's wonderful charter school.

Betty De'cou of Morgan Park thanked Dr. Pittman for his personal help and counsel after her son was attacked first in November of 2005 and again in February of 2006. He is now in the U.S. Air Force and will graduate from its training in November. Williams thanked her and said he'd relay the message to the missing Pittman.

Danilyn Rutherford of Blair Early Childhood Center told of the horrors created by the sustained budget cuts of personnel from special education at Blair where most students are listed as severe and profoundly challenged.

There are unsafe conditions during fire drills and on buses, IEP's are not being enacted, 15 students have been added the special ed school's population while cuts have remained. A petition has over 400 signatures and letters have been sent to the Law Department. Williams thanked her for coming, said they were running more fire drills, and looking into the situations brought to them.

Lydnic Morris of the Citywide

Advisory Council asked the Board for a five-year lease for the Parent Resource Service Center. The parent group has been "homeless" for more than five years. They wanted a site with at least five years of stability and restoration of \$300,000 in operating funds. Currently, they are without a budget.

Alice Hill-Richards gave a detailed and accurate account of Federal Funds distribution under NCLB. She gave the Board a packet with statistics and charts. She said, "Funds are missing." She asked for a timeline for restoration of funds for parents. Lyvetter Irving also spoke of NCLB. She asked for conference funding to be restored.

Williams responded that the budget department would meet with them and that money isn't missing, it's just not where all can see it. Unfortunately, no one laughed. Hill-Richards did say that federal mandates are for parental activities, not allocated to administrative costs. He said, "That makes the money missing." Williams urged a meeting.

Maureen Savas, principal of Nightingale school, I said that the school has been overcrowded for 19 years and taken many measures to deal with it. With a charter and choice school, they went off of controlled enrollment, only to have a boundary change increasing it size. After a September meeting on boundaries, the LSC met with the demographics department. Savas thanked James Despenza of the demographics department for coming to an agreement good for all. Paula Jeske of Casals also said that Despenza and his staff came out to her school and alleviated all fears and problems with boundary changes to everyone's satisfaction and lauded his efforts.

Mitch Hutton of Pritzker talked of the need for correcting physical plant damage that may be unsafe, and education being disrupted by classes having split grade levels and overcrowded. Repairs and asbestos removal were hindered by removal of an engineer for theft, the new good engineer who wrote up work orders unexplained removal, and apparently whoever was there now was not following through on already written work orders. Also buses were late. Duncan had him meet with Chris in charge of physical plants and said he'd look into the bus and class situations.

Amisha Patel of SEIU asked if the Board members were bored, irritated, annoyed by the constant barrage of parents, students, LSC members, community members constantly talking of the problems caused by cutting special ed aids. She said that the suffering of the students as well as employees lives by this action would end if the cuts were restored.

She then turned the microphone to Rhonda Cross of Everett School, whose daughter's IEP was given to the Board. Cross talked of how her daughter was doing well until her aide was cut. Now her daughter often was being attended by other students or was without an aid, causing her to fall behind academically as well as physically on school premises, become a discipline problem, and have health issues.

Renee Grant Mitchell came to the microphone to say that the day before, an instructional aide had been

Every day is Christmas in the Department of Daley... ‘Intergovernmental Affairs’ hand extended into CPS despite the pious Daley myths

By Frank Coconate

They should call it the “Department of Daley” instead of the Chicago Park District, City of Chicago, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Department of Aviation, and Chicago Board of Education. But it at least deserves a closer look.

Two days before Thanksgiving, the headlines read: “Sorich gets 46 months... Daley’s ex-patronage chief refuses to apologize” and the story was that Sorich had received a sentence of three years and ten months in federal prison after being convicted in a hiring scheme to make sure that the mayor’s supporters got important jobs in city departments. In news reports, Sorich was described as “a top aide in Daley’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.”

One of the most interesting things about the recent revelations regarding all of the hiring scandals of the Daley administration is that they involve every governmental part of Chicago (and Cook County) government except one: The Chicago Board of Education.

According to the official version of reality, Sorich corrupted hiring at City Hall, the Park District, and numerous other public agencies throughout Chicago and the Cook County suburbs. Members of HDO (the Hispanic Democratic Organization first exposed as a patronage center in new reports) were among those who received highly paid (and not so highly paid) jobs and were expected to work the precincts for Daley and those Daley supported.



“Terry” Garate (above, at the June 20, 2006, budget hearings at Lincoln Park High School)) didn’t get her \$105,000 per year job at the top of the Board of Education’s Office of Specialized Services by working as a child welfare attendant, special education teacher or case manager in Chicago’s public schools. Her City Hall experiences were the only qualifications for the job of “Director” in the CPS Office of Specialized Services. Schmidt photo.

Every part of government in Chicago and Cook County came under Sorich’s “Intergovernmental Affairs”

(don’t you love that title, when you think about it) except Chicago Public Schools.

Is it that CPS is the only clean governmental agency in the Chicago area — or that reporters and investigators have been covering up the patronage hiring at CPS since Mayor Daley took over the schools in 1995?

If you think there was a cover up, stay in touch.

Let’s take a few questions that need to be answered about CPS before anyone but someone who still believes in the tooth fairy can accept that “CPS stayed clean” stuff.

How many people called “Chief of Staff” did CPS have before Mayor Daley took over the schools in 1995? How many are there now (at salaries above \$100,000 per year) and where did they come from?

If CPS is so clean, why does the current Chief of Staff, Hosannah Mahaley Johnson, deny Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the work histories of the school system’s top executives? And while we’re at it, where did Hosannah work (while Sorich was in “Intergovernmental Affairs”) before she came down the street to CPS headquarters at 125 S. Clark St.

Everyone knows that CPS supposedly had to make big cuts in this year’s budget in order to balance that budget. One large batch of those cuts came out of the special education people making between \$20,000 a year and \$35,000 a year, working as bus aides,

child welfare attendants, and special education classroom assistants. More than 700 of those people — some of the lowest paid in the school system — lost their jobs at CPS because of the budget cuts.

At the same time, a few people with interesting job titles kept their \$100,000 a year jobs, while a few others were hired (while the CWAs and SECAs were being fired) into very high paying jobs (at \$70,000 an up)?

Over the next several issues of Substance, City Beat will be asking more questions and publishing the answers we get. And when people like the Board of Education’s “Chief of Staff” say the answers to those questions are none of our business, we’ll be publishing those “None of your business letters” here as well.

The Christmas Holiday season is a time to believe in wonderful things, it’s true. But anyone who believes that “Intergovernmental Affairs” stopped at the doors of the city’s public schools when Richard M. Daley took over the school system probably also believes that his children’s Christmas presents were brought to the house on a sleigh pulled by a bunch of reindeer following one whose nose looked like an 11th Ward voter after finishing his election day rounds at Schaller’s Pump. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer is about as real as the claim that Mayor Daley’s patronage (er., “Intergovernmental”) army stopped before it got to the schoolhouse door. 🍏

October 25

Continued from Page Thirteen

hired. However, no one told Cross just as Cross was not notified after 10 days that she had lost the aide. Then the aide who had been with Cross’ daughter for the last four years came and told Duncan that since she was cut for “budget” reasons, four new people had been hired in the last week.

Cross asked if the aid would follow her child since she is changing schools because of unsafe conditions for her child at Everett. Mitchell said yes. Duncan said if anyone’s IEP requires an aide, an aide will be provided.

Sylvester Hendricks asked for a moment of silence for all recently deceased, then brought a junior at Walter Payton whose problem has not been resolved from last month because, he said, the principal at the school is not cooperating.

A long conversation followed about the practical nursing program.

Amy Zimmerman of Inter-American Magnet Elementary School praised the Board for its new facility after temporary schools. The Board got \$24 million for the old site, she said. However, few of the repairs for the new site have been made — like the kitchen, floors, playground and gym. There are meetings each week on the repairs but not one person representing the parents, students, or LSC have been allowed to be there. The meetings of only administrators bar them. Duncan had Zimmerman talk to Chris Rule about repairs and representation.

Amy Lux of Coalition for Children’s Health thanked Arne Duncan for his position in favor of re-

cess. She spoke of the needs of children and the longer school day allowing for a recess break. She spoke in favor of dodgeball. Williams said he too was in favor of recess.

Joyce Chapman LSC Chair of Brooks Academy, thanked James Deanes for past help. She then gave a detailed account of how the Brooks LSC followed the state law in filling a vacancy of principal for the school. She said that members of the LSC chose a person with no high school experience in July. Mr. Williams suggested in September that the LSC go on a field trip of three top high schools. Chapman said such a field trip would violate the open meetings law. They again remained resolute in choosing the same person. The Board had not ratified this decision by October.

Howard White of Curtis was very angry because the AIO for five years has given him trouble. The latest is that the previous principal has been gone since June. The AIO said he had the right to choose an interim. Law says only Duncan appoints an interim. A letter in writing should have been sent to the LSC of any such appointment. Of course, no such letter has arrived; but a person claiming to be the appointee has and began changing all locks, making derogatory remarks about the previous principal with the AIO claiming that there is no vacancy in the job. The LSC would like to begin a new principal advertisement and search. Obviously, the last principal is gone, and anyone is in that job not chosen by the LSC, then there is indeed a vacancy. Williams and Eason-Watkins passed the buck to Board Attorney Rocks, who said he’d respond in writing to White after research.

Shannon Bennett of the

Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) was making his first appearance to let the Board know that his group is monitoring the effects of school closings, especially in his area. He said the displacement of students, staff and location has brought violence to schools like Hyde Park and Dyett. Receiving schools never receive resources as books and teachers before the students. When a school is re-opened, children who live across the street can’t go there because it is now a school to which one must apply, sending children greater distances from their homes with no transportation provided. In fact, no one has no one monitoring any effects. Bennett said they are.

Board member Norman Bobins said he’d been a member for ten years and thought that low enrollment or poor performance were the reasons for closings. Bennett challenged Bobins on the issue, but nothing was resolved at the meeting.

Sharon Adams told of LSC problems at Arthur Ashe school. She said there was wrongful electioneering at the last LSC election on the part of one person; a gerrymandered hearing was held with outproper testimony. The wrongful person was not removed as stated since she was secretary at a meeting for which Adams used freedom of information to obtain the notes. She asked for Rocks to meet with her and others to see to the removal of the wrongly elected person.

Paul Collins of Harper High School, a school victimized by “boundary changes,” talked of safety. Collins is on the LSC. He said that a gang called “Crash Town” seems to have clout with the administration since they keep beating up Collins’ two sons, who are then

suspended, while none of the Crash Town gang members are suspended — even when an assistant principal and other staff were witnesses and saw one incident. The administrator keeps suspending the victims, Collins charged.

Collins named five people who wrote letters because of the same problem. Andres Durbak, the Board’s security chief, said because of the letters police were able to identify “Crash Town Members.” There were more unanswered questions than answers after the presentation: The question is why are these people who keep beating up others still in school? Why are only victims, or one side only, suspended?

When the public participation portion of the meeting ended, the board called the regular Board Meeting to order. The presentation was about mathematics programs in elementary schools involving teacher training and coordinating with high school entrance for students. Then two Board policy changes were read: one involved student privacy and the other when incidents of tests scores being missing and needed for school entrance, then an average of two previous years’ tests would be used. Then the Board went into closed session. 🍏

Got a juicy tip?

Substance is waiting to hear from you. Be sure you are ready to verify your information. We have protected confidential sources for 32 years, but you have to be able to prove what you’re saying. We do not take anonymous phone calls either. Call 773-725-7502 or e-mail us at Csubstance @ aol.com. 🍏

Letters

Alderman Mary Ann Smith still slandering Senn

November 18, 2006

Finally, the truth about Senn High School – and the 48th Ward’s Alderman, Mary Ann Smith

The 48th Ward deserves the truth about Senn High School and if you attended the Candidate’s Forum at St. Gertrude’s Church on Saturday, October 28, 2006, you certainly didn’t get that from Alderman Mary Ann Smith. When she stated that there was “no ambition” at Senn High School, I could not believe my ears. She was attacking the integrity of the dedicated people at the one public high school in her ward! And it was completely unfounded. As a long-time faculty member at Senn High School, I particularly took offense to the comments.

No ambition she said? Did Senn not show ambition when in 2002 the school was recognized as a National Service Learning Leader School? It is, perhaps, forgivable that she did not attend the celebratory assembly to which she was invited in recognition of this accomplishment. But as a matter of courtesy, a reply to the invitation would have been nice. Other dignitaries, including Senator Dick Durbin, Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, the United States Secretary of Education, the Illinois Secretary of Education, and the Director of Learn and Serve America in Washington, D.C., took the time to congratulate us. Even the President of the United States wrote a letter of congratulations, but apparently the school’s very own alderman hadn’t the time to do so. Is it not the responsibility of the Alderman to show support for the schools in her district? I have heard Alderman Smith time after time speak negatively, not positively about the students, faculty, and staff at Senn High School. I believe she not only owes a public apology to the school, but she needs to begin showing support instead of disgust.

Let’s get back to ambition. Was it not ambitious for Senn to apply for and receive acceptance as an International Baccalaureate School? Was it not ambitious for Senn students and teachers to work towards making it one of the most successful IB programs in the city of Chicago? I suppose in Alderman Smith’s mind, this is not ambition. But how would she know any of this anyway? When was the last time she was even in the Senn High School building walking around, visiting classrooms to see the wonderful learning that is taking place in her ward? Not since I have been here, and that’s about ten years. She did, I believe, make an appearance at the opening of the Rickover Naval Academy, a school whose installation in Senn High School she approved despite overwhelming opposition to it in her very own community.

So, on what is Alderman Smith basing this “no ambition” claim? Nothing; because in actuality, she has no idea about the incredibly ambitious faculty and staff and the hardworking students of Senn who extend their efforts well beyond the opening and closing bells of the school day. Were the (approximately) 100,000 hours of service that

Senn students have contributed to the local community not ambitious? Has she ever recognized that? I wonder if her attitude would be any different if she showed up at just one of the countless events in which Senn students have volunteered. Perhaps if she attended one of the projects when over 100 Senn students served at the Broadway Armory Improvement Days, the Senn Play Lot Community Build, or the Osterman Beach Clean-Ups, just to name a few.

So I ask Alderman Smith — why aren’t you singing our praises? Why do you continue to speak negatively about our students and staff? When are you going to start showing support for Senn? Why is the glass perpetually half-empty? Such pessimism should not reside in our local political leaders. It is time for leadership in the 48th ward that will show support for the local schools, not bash them in public time and time again.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Leven
Senn High School
Sleven25@yahoo.com

Is Americorps subsidizing Chicago charter schools?

November 15, 2006

Dear Substance:

Keep up the good work. Enclosed is our renewal.

I was just wondering. Are you and your readers aware that Americorps people are being placed in charter schools as “tutors”? I don’t know the arrangement, but it reeks of more of my tax money going to charter schools. A daughter of a friends joined Americorps to help pay off her students loan and has been placed in Noble Street Charter School.

Bonita Lyles
Chicago
Lylesjbks@comcast.net

How to publish your letter in Substance

Regular readers who wish to publish letters in Substance are encouraged to do so.

Letters should be submitted by e-mail to Csubstance@aol.com and be as brief as necessary to cover the topic chosen.

All letters must be signed and are encouraged to include an e-mail or other address so that interested readers can communicate.

Anyone who wishes to know how our Letters policies are implemented can browse the letters available on our website (www.substancenews.com) or e-mail the office for examples.

Because of our limited budget, we generally do not find the space to publish letters which come from those who are not regular readers. When we are in doubt, we check with our subscriber list before making a decision.

Letters. Csubstance@aol.com



Wadsworth under attack by University of Chicago and CPS ‘New Schools’ office

October 31, 2006

To: George N. Schmidt
Editor Substance

Thanks for your speedy reply to my email. I really would like for you to visit Wadsworth and see for yourself what is going on here. We have written hundreds of letters and made many phone calls in trying to attain a solution to our problems.

Our classrooms are too small; we have lost almost our whole educational program. Every year we have progress and as of the last school year came off of probation with high honors.

Yet we have lost three large computer labs with 30 -32 computers in each, science and math labs, reading and math stations in each classroom, all of our large classrooms. How? The Univer-

sity of Chicago’s charter school, which is taking over part of our building. The U of C will not use some of them until a year from now.

We were promised that a replacement of one computer lab will be built, and we were told would also get 60 laptop computers, carts and changers. This has not happened as of this writing. Everything started without the Local School Council or community input. Many promise after the fact was made — and these promise were later broken.

We were told that our computers should be put in storage in a CPS building or we should give those computers to another school. Our computer program served all of our student daily — Pk - the eighth grade. Every day, the U of C Police come to the campus park at our school and tell our students that they have to go home. This in fact makes out students feel that they have committed a crime. Our students only have about 20 minute to eat lunch, after they are seated from getting their lunch they have only minutes before they have to leave the lunch room.

Again, I am inviting you to visit Wadsworth.
Thanks again.
Darnell T. Glover, President
Wadsworth Elementary School LSC



November 2006. Above (above and below the Wadsworth letter). Parents and teachers at Wadsworth Elementary School in Chicago warn that the Chicago Board of Education’s Office of New Schools Development is working with the University of Chicago to force community residents out of the school and to end the Local School Council. The photo at the top of the page shows Wadsworth in early November 2006. The photo below the letter shows the broken swings in the Wadsworth playlot. The pattern of placing a charter school in one part of a regular public schools and then strangling the public schools from the inside of its own building became CPS policy three years ago under Arne Duncan and was first used on Chicago’s West Side. According to parents, it is now being used by the school board’s \$5 million “New Schools” office against schools on both the west and south sides. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

Corrections and clarifications

Although we try to verify the accuracy of all information published as fact in these pages, like everyone in the real world, we sometimes slip. Without an infallible miracle management team to guide us, we err, then try to correct our errors.

If you think that an error has appeared in the news or analysis articles in Substance, please let us know precisely and we will make a correction if it is deemed warranted.

We are aware that every issue of Substance contains typographical errors and slips in proofreading that should have been caught. These are the results of a newspaper that works on difficult deadlines with an all-volunteer staff. We are well aware of typos and proofreading errors and do not need to have those brought to our attention unless they make meaning unclear.

Corrections. Csubstance@aol.com

Mother threatened with arrest at Jahn school for defending rights of disabled seven-year-old son

By George N. Schmidt

Lawyers representing the family of a disabled first grade child will be in federal court at noon on Friday, December 8, to argue that they should be allowed to intervene in the Corey H case on behalf of their client.

After a controversial October 4 decision by U.S. District Judge Robert

Gettleman to deny a motion for an injunction barring the Chicago Board of Education from carrying out \$26.5 million in special education cuts, Board executives and attorneys celebrated and told the press they had won a “victory”.

Apparently, at the same time, they issued orders to schools that special education services should be further

reduced. The complete motion filed on behalf of the Valenzuela family appears on this page. Attorneys expect that it will be a factor in the December 8 court hearings. Since June, CPS CEO Arne Duncan has carefully crafted his words regarding the special education cuts, stating precisely that “No IEP” will be violated. Students and teachers have

charged that schools are under pressure from Duncan’s budget office to change IEPs and end the use of one-on-one aides, even for the most disabled children. The Jahn school case is evidence that those charges have merit and that administrative sophistries are being challenged, even if it means that families risk the loss of jobs defending their children’s rights.🍏

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION

COREY H.,
Plaintiffs,
vs.
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
THE CITY OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION,
Defendants.

No. 92 C 3409
Judge Gettleman

MOTION TO INTERVENE

NOW COMES ADRIANA VALENZUELA (“Intervenor”), individually, and as next friend of her son, MARCEL V., by and through her attorneys, MONAHAN & COHEN, and pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(a), states as follows as her Motion to Intervene in the Corey H. class action suit:

I. FACTS

- Marcel V. was found eligible for special education services by Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) on March 21, 2006 as having developmental delays and a seizure disorder.
- CPS wrote an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) for Marcel on March 21, 2006 in which Marcel was placed in a full time, regular education kindergarten and was to receive occupational therapy and modifications and accommodations in the regular kindergarten classroom.
- When the 2006-2007 school year began, there was no aide for Marcel at Jahn School, and Marcel’s adult brother or other relatives acted as his aide without pay for approximately two weeks.
- On September 27, 2006, the assistant principal of Jahn School told Marcel’s mother that the CPS office that approves individual aides denied Marcel an aide because Jahn School is “overstaffed.”
- On that same day, CPS personnel told Marcel’s mother that CPS wanted to have an IEP meeting in two days, on September 29, 2006, to change Marcel’s IEP, but would not explain why changes to the IEP were needed.
- CPS personnel told Marcel’s mother that Marcel would be suspended if she did not sign a statement waiving her right to ten-day notice of the IEP meeting, so Intervenor signed the waiver under duress, and against her will.
- On September 29, 2006, CPS held an IEP meeting regarding Marcel. Although Intervenor was concerned about giving insufficient notice of absence to her employer, she attended the IEP meeting.
- On September 29, 2006, without further testing of Marcel, and after Marcel had been in school for less than a month, CPS personnel changed Marcel’s eligibility label from developmental disability to emotional disturbance.
- Also at the September 29, 2006 IEP meeting, CPS personnel changed Marcel’s placement from full day regular kindergarten to a half day self-contained special education classroom, over the objection of Marcel’s mother.
- CPS personnel told Marcel’s mother that Marcel would be moved to another school, but placed him in a special education classroom at Jahn School until the new school was identified.
- In violation of state law, CPS personnel insisted that Marcel start taking medication to address his attentional difficulties. See 105 ILCS 5/34-18.23. Although Marcel’s physician believed that Marcel needed an aide, rather than medication, Marcel’s mother began medication to appease CPS.
- On Monday, October 2, 2006, Marcel was suspended from the Jahn School special education classroom for four days. Marcel received no educational or related services until October 10, 2006, when he returned to school. Marcel’s mother never received any incident report related to the suspension.
- On Friday, October 13, 2006, CPS personnel called Marcel’s mother and informed her that Marcel would be transferred to Behr School. Marcel’s mother refused this school because it is far from her home.
- When Marcel went to Jahn School the following Monday, on October 16, CPS personnel insisted that Marcel was “trespassing,” that he had been dis-enrolled from the school and that CPS would call the police to handcuff Marcel if his family did not pick him up from the school.
- CPS personnel then told Marcel’s mother that Marcel had been transferred to Hamilton School. Marcel’s mother visited Hamilton School on October 17, but Hamilton had no information concerning Marcel.
- On October 18, 2006, Hamilton School told Marcel’s mother that Marcel could not attend school there until she signed consent to place Marcel in a self-contained special education classroom.
- Because Marcel’s March 21, 2006 IEP requires that Marcel attend regular kindergarten with an individual aide, and his family believes this placement is appropriate, his mother does not agree to a special education placement or to the September 29, 2006 IEP.

18. Because Marcel’s mother has refused to agree to the special education placement, Marcel has no school to attend at this time and remains at home.

19. Marcel’s mother has lost her employment because she has no one to care for Marcel during the day and must stay home with him.

20. Without employment, Marcel’s mother has lost income necessary to address the basic needs of her family.

21. It appears that because CPS denied Jahn School an aide for Marcel due to overstaffing, Marcel’s eligibility, special education placement and school were changed to his educational detriment and to his family’s economic detriment.

II. INTERVENTION OF RIGHT

22. The Corey H. Plaintiffs filed a Motion for Preliminary or Permanent Injunction on August 4, 2006 and requested that this Court enjoin the Board of Education for the City of Chicago from implementing cuts in special education paraprofessionals.

23. This Court denied the Corey H. Plaintiffs’ Motion for Injunction.

24. Intervenor has a specific interest in this Motion because Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) denied her son an individual aide. Jahn School was denied an aide due to “overstaffing,” and consequently CPS changed Marcel’s eligibility, special education placement, and entire school. See *Michigan St. AFL-CIO v. Miller*, 103 F.3d 1240, 1245 (6th Cir. 1997) (intervenor need not have interest in every part of litigation; but can intervene on significant, specific issues).

25. Intervenor has a direct, substantial and legally protectable interest in the Corey H. proceedings, and in particular with regard to CPS’ cuts in paraprofessionals. Marcel’s IEP requires that he have an individual aide.

26. There is a tangible threat to Marcel V.’s right to an individual aide required by his IEP. If CPS is not required to fulfill IEP obligations for paraprofessionals, Marcel may be denied his right to a free appropriate public education.

27. Intervenor’s interest in the Corey H. action regarding CPS cuts in paraprofessionals may be impaired by this Court’s unfavorable disposition of the Corey H. plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary or Permanent Injunction. Given this Court’s denial of the Motion, CPS may refuse to provide Marcel with an aide in the least restrictive environment.

28. Intervenor’s interests may not be adequately represented by the present parties. Intervenor offers necessary elements to the proceedings, and an emergency situation, that the class has not presented to this Court. See, e.g., *Forest Conserv. Council v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 66 F.3d 1489 (9th Cir. 1995). Intervenor asserts a personal interest that does not belong to the general class. *Id.* at 1499.

NOW THEREFORE, Intervenor respectfully requests that this Court allow her to intervene in the Corey H. class action regarding her interest in the denial of special education paraprofessionals.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney N. Stillman, One of the Attorney
for the Family

VERIFICATION

I, Adriana Valenzuela, verify that the facts stated in this Motion for Preliminary Injunction are true and accurate.

Adriana Valenzuela

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on November 16, 2006, a true and complete copy of the foregoing **Motion to Intervene** was provided via facsimile and first class mail, postage prepaid, to the following individuals:

Kathleen Gibbons
Board of Education of
the City of Chicago
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Illinois Attorney General’s Office
100 West Randolph Street
13th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Elissia Simmons

Subscribed and Sworn to before me
this 16th day of November, 2006.

Notary Public

Matthew D. Cohen
Courtney N. Stillman
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225 West Washington Street
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Dated: November 16, 2006

ENCASE\VALENZUELA\motion to intervene

Subscripts

Continued from Page Twenty-Three

“Raisin in the Sun” author Lorraine Hansberry and Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart, is being converted into a quasi-privatized charter school for guys. (Admissions requirements; restrictions; but most importantly, the big sign over the door, and not funny like in Peanuts: NO GIRLS ALLOWED). Second, every media event about the conversion trashes Englewood and praises the huckster (and that’s the only word for Tim King, who’s now up and running with his Chicago guys’ school inside Lindblom) who’s replacing Englewood. Third, the Chicago Board of Education devoted its considerable propaganda resources to assuring that “Urban Prep” (King’s new school for guys, which currently has about 100 students) skewered all the coverage and headlines during the opening of school, even going so far as to putting Rufus Williams on stage for the opening publicity stunt on behalf of Urban Prep. Fourth (and finally, but not last), the bureaucrats who approved Tim King’s thingy were led by a bunch of women (although not African American ones) who apparently don’t see any problem in slandering and destroying the education of the majority of Englewood’s current students (those young women still in the building) so they can continue to push their “vision” on the world. At the least, Jeanne Nowaczewski (\$105,000 a year) and Beatriz Rendon (\$122,000 a year) should have their resumes shared with the world. This is 21st Century “teaching” — and feminism? Back before the Daley miracle stuff and the quickie charterizations under “Renaissance 2010”, this kind of stuff was called racist and sexist. We’re looking forward to hearing more and more (and publishing more and more) about the destruction of Englewood, the courage of the young women who are completing their high school careers at Englewood

(some, in the traditions of Lorraine Hansberry) and what our readers think of the hypocrisy of those earning six figure salaries (despite their lack of teaching experience) whose careers are built on engineering such atrocities — while they parade some of their qualifications as coming from their “feminist” stuff...

...**Here is a story you can bet we’ll never read in Chicago about Chicago and Chicago’s mayor.** On November 17, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported: *“Big city mayors have a lot on their minds. It’s a mark of the urgency with which he views the truancy problem in the city that it apparently is near the fore of Mayor John Street’s mind lately. On Wednesday, he committed \$3 million in city money to put 400 more Philadelphia truant officers (PTOs) on the streets to check on absent children in Philadelphia schools. The mayor has brought up the subject of truancy in many of his public appearances during the last month, often promising to announce a major truancy initiative soon. Wednesday soon arrived. Mayor Street repeatedly has said he believes the city has a responsibility to educate all of its children and, to the best of its ability, insure all children are in school during regular school hours. That’s not happening in Philadelphia, where it’s reported at least 32,000 children a day are absent from school...”* As Chicago’s underground historians know, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley got rid of all the city’s truant officers (who are paid about the same as teachers) more than ten years ago as part of the first round of corporate “school reform”. To this day, Chicago is the only major school district in Illinois without truant officers. Ten years ago, when a Substance editor asked former Chicago Schools CEO Paul Vallas whether he was going to restore the truant officers at a love-in for Vallas sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union ten years ago, Vallas stated (honest: we couldn’t make up stuff like this) that some of the truant officers the

mayor had fired were alcoholics. Now we learn that in Chicago, we’re paying cops to hunt down truants. (Honest, read on). Since dumping the truant officers, Daley has forced his supine Board of Education (appointed by Daley) and his craven Schools CEO (ditto) to pay Chicago cops to be truant officers — at a cost of more than \$8 million per year to the Board of Education (not the city budget, which is separate). Why aren’t similar stories in Chicago’s daily newspapers? In Philadelphia, reporters are still allowed by their editors, publishers and owners to ask critical questions. Sometimes a major story bubbles up through the cracks of “school reform” when the answer reveals that more than 30,000 kids cut school. In Chicago, the major newspapers get their “news” at the editorial board briefings (often, complete with Power Point) from the mayor’s propagandists. So, for example, the City Hall stories should all carry the by-line “By Jacqueline Heard” (the mayor’s press secretary). The public education stories might as well all carry the by-line “By Peter Cunningham” (the \$120,000 per year CPS consultant who serves as chief of “Communications”). Why bother spending corporate dollars (from Tribune Inc. or the Sun-Times Group) when you can get the news pre-packaged from the multi-million dollar spin factories operated by an for the city’s most powerful politician and his corporate handlers. Mayor Daley has more assistant and deputy press secretaries than Chicago has truant officers, and the CPS “Office of Communications” has a larger staff (and definitely better equipment) than some small elementary schools in Chicago...

...**Now that a Princeton professor and philosopher has made it OK to use the word “bullshit” to describe bullshit, we hope Chicago teachers will take the lead from our colleagues in New York City and liberate “STM” from the**

world of anonymous acronyms. After that, we’ll discuss why SNAFU is now Arne Duncan’s middle name (and what the acronym means), and how staffing an office like “New Schools Development” with arrogant \$100,000-a-year FNGs is not a really cool way to make schools better and will lead to more and more SNAFUs in the coming years — even if our colleagues in the Chicago media continue to play lapdog for the Daley Miracle Show. But for this month, let’s stick with “STM.” There is a group in New York that’s been meeting Sundays calling itself “STM.” That stands for “Shit, tomorrow’s Monday.” Any teacher in a hard core school can relate to that. Once STM has been freed, we might consider going on to FNG. Trouble is, in both Chicago and New York, that is more and more a phrase describing CEOs, top “education” executives, principals, and “master teachers”... Nowadays, the less you know and the less experience you have, the better you are to be overpaid to “think outside the box” and burst a few paradigms — or at least make them “shift.” They’re still FNGs in the real world, but lately fantasy has been the rage in more than baseball and football...

...**Speaking of FNGs and other erotica and exotica, we wonder whether George W. Bush will soon follow his fellow REMF Donald Rumsfeld out of their warrior costumes and back into civilian life.** If it meant anything, the November election meant that the Halloween warriors had better find another cool way to put on costumes, because real warriors are fed up with it. If anything, Virginia Senator-elect Webb was too polite when he snubbed W’s brainless banter at a recent White House event. When the bad guys are using live ammunition, it’s better to be real and not a phony. That’s right: cowards like Rumsfeld and Bush aren’t even REMFs. At least REMFs were in a combat zone...

Social Security

Continued from Page One

public school system slowly became known to the public between November 25 and December 2. According to public school officials, a privatized printing contractor — repeatedly recommended by Schools CEO Arne Duncan for multi-million dollar contracts — mailed a 125-page list of personal information about 1,739 retired teachers and administrators to each of them as part of a mailing that was supposed to explain the retirees’ eligibility for COBRA medical benefits.

According to Board of Education officials, the mailing was done by All Printing and Graphics, a suburban Broadview corporation which also has a large office on the third floor at CPS headquarters at 125 S. Clark St. All Printing and Graphics is one of several printing companies that has done printing for the city’s public school system since the Daley administration privatized the school system’s printing and gave away the system’s printing presses and supplies ten years ago.

Although one press report claimed that All Printing & Graphics handles “most of the district’s administrative printing,” a cursory review of Board Reports and other records indicates that the Board’s printing work has been done by a number of companies over the past ten years. Additionally, neither the Duncan administration nor its predecessor, the administration of

Paul Vallas, has ever done a comprehensive study of how much its printing costs are and a comparison with the actual costs of printing when the Board had its own printing presses and employed skilled union printers and other related workers (graphics designers; computer typesetters and, apparently most importantly, proofreaders and supervisors).

Contrary to at least one press report and quote from CEO Arne Duncan, problems have arisen before since the outsourcing of printing at CPS. Reflecting the general practice of the Duncan administration, problems are only noted if they result in potentially adverse media coverage, especially during the television news cycle.

To date, other printing problems that have resulted from mistakes that were never tolerated under the former sysstem have simply been the subject of expensive corrections (i.e., reprinting entire jobs after errors were discovered too late) and had been ignored by the public. Most of the media have ignored the problem since the Vallas administration gave away more than \$1 million worth of Chicago Board of Education printing presses and computer graphics equipment a decade ago.

There are other current problems with the Board’s privatized printing work.

One humorous problem that has not been widely noted by the public — and which has not been reported

A Grim Fairy Tale

Continued from Page Twenty-Two

three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D. On the twelfth day of Christmas my school board gave to me... Twelve bells a-ringing, eleven new consultants, ten old erasers, nine kinds of testing, eight different textbooks, seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

“Well,” they agreed. laughing, “ that was fun.”

“Right. Except I couldn’t fit in ‘obsolete maps’,” complained Millicent.

“You know, we forgot one of the best things they gave us all year,” said Ewenice.

“What would that be?”

“The Bored calendar.”

“Why? What’s special about that?” asked Scott.

“Did you look ahead to April?”

“No. Why?”

Millicent and Ewenice were giggling. “In the Bored calendar, April has 31 days.”

“So?”

“Oh. I see.”

“O.I.C.” 🍏

in the press — involves the current CPS “Calendar and Directory.” The annual “Calendar and Directory” is designed and printed for CPS by “Chandler White Publishing,” a company other than All Printing & Graphics.

In its current calendar, for the 2006-2007 school year, Chicago’s public school system has given the month of April 31 days instead of the usual 30 days. Although the CPS Calendar and Directory contains the usual CPS “copyright” bug, Substance has decided to publish a copy of that unique page from the current calendar (on Page Twenty-Three of this Substance).

The special calendar, which is distributed in all schools and through the CPS headquarters, hangs on the wall

of many classrooms and most offices throughout the city’s massive public school system — and in many other city departments and other locations.

The Chicago Board of Education has routinely approved administration requests for multi-million dollar printing contracts without discussion or debate. Most of the members of the Chicago Board of Education have copies of the unique 2006-2007 calendar, yet none has asked, at a public meeting, why Chicago has decided that April has 31 days this year, while in the schools children are being taught the ditty “Thirty days have September, April, June, and November...” The CPS mailing of 1,736 social security numbers is part of a larger management problem. 🍏

Lincoln Park H.S.

Continued from Page Eleven

“The announcement did not help the situation,” she said.

Laura says this desperate attempt was very unprofessional and quite disruptive. “She could have waited a few minutes more to make this announcement while we were all in division”.

Karvelas made it known that she thought that the announcement was the end of the issue, and instructed teachers to no longer talk about it.

Call to Action

According to the students who spoke with Substance, usually the general student population, the AP (Advanced Placement), HH (Double Honors) and the IB (International Baccalaureate) students do not interact much, but this situation brought together the young people of Lincoln Park.

Everybody was angry about the injustice, and the pitiful attempt in handling the growing unrest just helped coalesce the school. What was the course of action to take?

“The October 12th LSC meeting was coming up, “ said Joanna, and it was agreed that they should show up in support of Ms Eshoo. Michelle decided to put up around 100 flyers a couple of days before the meeting to encourage the students to attend. Posted around the school before 3rd period, but by 4th period - 80 percent of them were torn down. She approached Karvelas about putting more up, but the principal recommended the LSC bulletin oard for the flyer. In this low profile site, the students wouldn’t see them, “but other notices such as homecoming events are everywhere” Michelle noted. Karvelas asked what the notice was “trying to get at.” Michelle told her that they were to invite the students regarding the issue of Eshoo. She was then told to follow her into her office. Michelle told her that it was okay and that the students could address the issue at the LSC meeting, but she was “encouraged” to go into the Principals office anyway.

“It wasn’t too pretty.” says Michelle. “She basically told me that I was a little kid and that I really don’t understand what’s going on and that it is at a much higher lever that I could comprehend.” Clearly nothing was going to get accomplished here, she thought, and the LSC meeting would be best place to voice the concern. Karvelas relented on approving posting of the flyers and suggested that the schools marquee would display the invite as well, but it was not observed to be so. But even the approved posters were seen being torn down by administrators and students. Regardless, approximately 200 students attended or tried to attend the LSC meeting.

Jeff remembers that the room was overflowing, “with teachers and students sitting on any available space including the floor, and a line leading out the door!” But Laura wonders why they did not relocate the LSC meeting to a larger available room: “They must have broken several fire code regulations keeping the room packed.” It wasn’t just Lincoln Park staff that was eager to see and hear, but representatives from the teachers union, Payton and Whitney Young high schools, parents and former Lincoln Park teachers were present. The four young adults, (Michelle, Laura, Jeff and Joanna), relating these inside details to Substance felt it was quite inappropriate, that Eshoo

was obligated to sit as a teacher rep on the council, considering Eshoo was no longer part of the staff at the school,

The professionalism of the council during this stressed meeting was also questioned. As students were sitting quite close to the council, the comments among the parent representatives were easily heard. Harsh and derisive comments were exchanged among the council members about the students that were speaki, especially from the LSC Chairwoman, who’s daughter was provided with additional reserved Homecoming tickets (five) more than other students were allowed (two), according to the students. In an earlier time, Karvelas was overheard telling the Chairwoman, “We’ll take care of you — we got you covered.”

Laura says that the student speakers were repeatedly asked to spell their names and the Dean of the school was observed writing them all down, “The speakers are public record, but why is the Dean writing them down? Which was kinda scary!” she adds. Also, that when teachers were speaking, he would write down their names too, one in particular had her name underlined four times! The students speaking with Substance for this article have not been the recipients of reprisal, but several teachers have been called to the main office to “chat with Karvelas.” The principal believed that the issue was “Dead”, and that the intercom announcement was the end of it.

At the LSC meeting the principal spoke for six minutes, (students were only offered two), on why she could not remain and participate at this council meeting. “Basically what she said was the same thing she said on the intercom,” the students told Substance. Wearing an elaborate cape and using it for dramatic effect, flinging it over her shoulder, Karvelas looked like “a snow queen,” the students commented. [See the October issue of Substance for the fashion statement]. “And at the end of her speech, she takes off her glasses and her voice changes from harsh tones to softer ones,” Jeff added. She concluded: “And to my children — the students in the audience — I’m so very proud of you.” Avoiding questions from the audience, she failed to directly answer one, and ducked under the “Bring Back Ms Eshoo” banner on her way out. Prior to the LSC meeting 880 signatures were gathered in support of Eshoo. Teachers wanted to sign the petition, said Jeff, “But I suggested that they didn’t because these were going to the CPS administration and to keep reprisals at bay.”

When asked how they felt about the LSC meeting, the students felt that nothing came out of it. “They let the students have their rant, but did not act on it. They said they had no power, they did not respond at all.” said Jeff. When some in the audience said it’s a shame that this is happening to Ms Eshoo, the LSC responded “Yeah, it’s a shame, but we should definitely go to Springfield and beg for more money for the budget.” The students feel that the LSC had some control over the situation and chose not to do anything, and the solution was not to be found there. So they students decided to go to the Board.

Presenting to the Board of Ed

The students who took time from school on October 25th to make this plea felt that the Board was more responsive. “It was weird, we were actu-

ally being recognized by the members and it seemed that they were paying attention to what we were saying,” Laura told Substance. While making their presentation, people in the audience were heard gasping in shock and agreeing with the students. The board asked questions and told them that they would look into it. A report on the meeting is in the November issue of Substance.]

Now that the board was aware of the situation the students returned to the November LSC meeting to see if any thing had changed. Joanna said, “ I spoke at the last LSC meeting and now this one. I wanted to know what’s up”. The council responded that it was great they were there and not to worry — your voice will be heard. Laura added: “It was a brush off.” It was non-productive. Again, nothing came out of this meeting, but the students wanted to “keep the heat on them” and not let the issue fade away.

Later, teachers were sent an anonymous letter referencing and playing on the country song “Have you forgotten?” a song about 9/11. While not signed by Karvelas, “the diction, syntax is all reminiscent of her,” saidthe group. And the only person who refers to the students as children is the principal. In that same note were accusations of teachers encouraging the students to protest and inciting violence. There were no violent actions pertaining to this situation, and the students don’t know what this was about.

Michelle says that nobody really knew of this second CPS board meeting coming up. “We were not really sure if we should go again, but the LSC meeting was useless. Two days prior we put up more flyers to announce the board meeting,” she said. “ I did not ask permission to put them up this time, since I felt it was okay from the last time.” But the next day, she was pulled out of hers econd period Arabic class by the freshman dean of students and a police officer. In the hallway, the officer shaking her hand asked her if she was responsible for the flyers. Responding yes, she was told that she could not and required authorization. “I knew I wasn’t going to get it now,” she said, “so I let it be, shook his hand and that was it.” The school administrators took down all the flyers.

A day before the board meeting, a memo was sent to all divisions warning that any walkouts, class cuts or putting up unauthorized propaganda would be a violation of certain sections of the school code. Laura said, “Several students were told by teachers that they would be expelled or suspended if they did go to the meeting. This scared many and kept them in school.” Michelle added: “Students have constantly placed up flyers without authorization and cut class all the time and have never been threatened with expulsion. We strongly believe in this, regardless of the consequences, and we are going!”

The students defiantly made another presentation to the board on November 15, presenting the various notes, letters and petitions to the members and seeking resolution. When they brought up the teacher intimidation, the members perked up and asked the students if they felt intimidated. They said yes, and the expulsion letter was an example. After the presentation, the students were encouraged to return to school, but they all wanted to stay and listen to the response. They were beckoned to exit the room for a conference outside by Dr. Don Pitman. He told them that the situation was looked into and that they could not do anything on

the past issues, but now will investigate the intimidation. He also relayed to the students that Karvelas told him that teachers were encouraging them to protest at the board meeting. “That is an outright lie!” said both Michelle and Laura. “He was pretty dismayed at that.” Pitman kept stating false facts to the students that day such as Eshoo already had a job, when only minutes earlier she told the students that she was on her way to an interview. Pitman told them he was going to send in a team to investigate, “But the damage has been done, and a team won’t fix anything.” said Michelle. “But he promised me directly that he would visit the school, sit down with me and the principal to investigate.”

As of press deadline, no action or contact has been initiated or observed.

Who will continue?

A harsh reality faces the vocal seniors of Lincoln Park. They will soon leave the school for higher education opportunities in about five months, and with them, the cause. But the group feels that it has already died down and are afraid that once they leave no one will carry on the vigilance. Joanna thinks it’s dying down because they are not getting a response. “I was hurt that I was not given anything by the LSC and just pat on the head. I put a lot of emotion into it.” Laura thought is that the LSC does not know their authority. “They kept saying that they have the power to fire Karvelas, but in the next breath saying that they do not have any power in this matter.” Michelle is quite vocal about her departure from the scene. “Once we leave it’s going to be the end of this story. She will get away with whatever she wants. Lincoln Park will be going downhill. Karvelas will just wait us out.”

When asked to rate the Lincoln Park LSC, it was given a very low rating by the group, including a low score for the student rep. Some think he is intimidated, but he does not represent the student interests of the vocal. Jeff and others feel that the concept of just one student rep is unjust for the whole population of the school, whereas the teachers get two.

When asked what the resolution or satisfaction would be from this situation, aside from the return of Eshoo, the answers shared a common theme:

Laura born and bred in Chicago and a news junkie spent her four years at Lincoln Park in double honors/AP/IB. She wants to be a professor of social science and perhaps a political aid, as she is very interested in politics. She wants a review of Dr. Karvelas’s actions and motives, addressing her poor administrative style.

Michelle works in a daycare and was raised in Las Vegas and thought that college was out of her reach, but now is excited about a career in nursing and special ed/neo-natal. An honors/double honors/IB student, she doesn’t know what else can be done now. It has gone so far and what can they possibly get from it? She has been strongly affected by Lincoln Park High School and wants incoming freshmen to experience the same, but she doesn’t know if that is still possible with the present administration and atmosphere Dr. Karvelas has created.

Jeff has lived in Chicago all his life. He desires to work in social justice activism, He is interested in anthropology and working with Amnesty International teaching in Oaxaca Mexico, and

Rationing Education

Continued from Page Twenty-Four

class. Why? It's data-driven. Yet this is what her colleagues have been doing, and Marshall's scores are up. The community is proud, and the principal has been anointed one of the most promising educational leaders in the state. At every faculty meeting, the principal presents a "league table," ranking teachers by the percentage of their students passing the latest benchmark test. And the teachers talk, as they always do. The table makes perfect fodder for faculty room gossip: "Did you see who was at the bottom of the table this month?"

Mrs. Dewey has made compromises, both large and small, throughout her career. Every educator who's in it for the long haul must. But this institutionalized policy of educational triage weighs heavily and hurts more.(1). Should she focus only on Brittney, Julian, Shennell, Tiffany, George, and Marlena — the so-called bubble kids — to the exclusion of the other 17 students in her class? Should Mrs. Dewey refuse to tutor Anthony, a persistent and eager little boy with no chance of passing the state test this year, so that she can spend time with students who have a better shot at passing? What should she tell Celine, a precocious student, whose mother wants Mrs. Dewey to review her entry for an essay contest? Celine will certainly pass the state test, so can Mrs. Dewey afford the time? What about the five students who moved into the school in the middle of the year? Since they don't count toward Marshall's scores, should Mrs. Dewey worry about their performance at all?

In her angrier moments, Mrs. Dewey pledges to ignore Marshall's approach and to teach as she always has, the best way she knows how. Yet, if she does, Mrs. Dewey risks being denounced as a traitor to the school's effort to increase scores — in short, a bad teacher. Given 22 years of sacrifices for her profession, it is this reality that stings the most.

Mulling over her choices, Mrs. Dewey shuts her classroom door and begins her class.(2).

Unintended Consequences of Accountability Systems: Educational Triage

Test-based accountability systems aim to direct the behavior of educators toward the improvement of student achievement. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act codified accountability as our national educational blueprint, requiring schools to increase test scores incrementally so that all students are proficient in reading and math by 2014. Yet, despite the stated intent of NCLB to improve outcomes for all students, particularly those who have been historically neglected, educators and others may adopt a series of "gaming" practices in order to artificially inflate schools' passing rates. Such practices include giving students a special education classification to exclude them from high-stakes tests, (3) retaining students in grade to delay test-taking, (4) diverting attention away from subjects not evaluated on high-stakes tests (5), teaching to the test (6), and cheating (7).

In what follows, I discuss two of the dilemmas presented by a less-well-known gaming practice: educational triage. The insights offered here derive from an ethnographic study of an urban elementary school in Texas, to

Dictators of corporate 'accountability' in the 2000s...



On November 2, 2006, at Chicago's Orr High School, Mayor Richard M. Daley (above at podium) announced that Chicago had received a \$27 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to begin merit pay programs for inner city teachers. At a time when CPS needed nearly \$27 million to cover a budget "deficit" in special education, federal officials ignored children's needs and pushed merit pay.

which I have assigned the pseudonym "Beck Elementary." Educational triage has become an increasingly widespread response to accountability systems and has been documented in Texas, California, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and even England (8). By educational triage, I mean the process through which teachers divide students into safe cases, cases suitable for treatment, and hopeless cases and ration resources to focus on those students most likely to improve a school's test scores. The idea of triage, a practice usually restricted to the direst of circumstances, like the battlefield or the emergency room, poignantly captures the dynamics of many schools' responses to NCLB. In the name of improving schools' scores, some students must inevitably be sacrificed. And the stakes are high — for schools, which face serious sanctions for failing to meet adequate yearly progress targets; for students, who increasingly face retention if they do not pass state tests; and for teachers, who are judged by the number of students they "save."

Dilemma 1. Data can be used to improve student achievement, but they can also be used to target some students at the expense of others. Data-driven decision making has become something of a sacrosanct term in education policy circles. Who could be against it? The public face of data-driven decision making — identifying the needs of each in-

dividual child and introducing interventions to remediate any learning difficulties — is sensible and beyond question.

But the Achilles' heel of education policy has always been implementation. When I listened closely to the conversations that educators at Beck Elementary School had about "being data-driven," the slippage between evaluating the individual needs of every student and deciding which students to target to maximize school performance quickly became evident. As I moved closer and closer to the classroom, the administrators' ideal version dissipated and gave way to a triage-based understanding of data-driven decision making. Teachers were most attuned to the chasm between administrators' theoretical proclamations and how the same administrators expected them to operate: teachers understood that the bottom line in this numbers game was the percentage of students who passed. Because of the unrelenting pressure to increase test scores, one mode of using data became dominant at Beck: the diversion of resources (e.g., additional time in class; enrichment sessions with the literacy teacher; and after-school, Saturday, and summer tutoring) to students on the threshold of passing the test, the "bubble kids."

All my questions about which students received extra help were met with the deferent maxim, "It's data-

driven." When I asked one teacher how the school allocated additional services to students — for example, the reading specialist or after-school and Saturday tutoring — she provided the following response: It's all data-driven. . . . We do projections — how many of them do you think will pass, how many of them do you think will need more instruction, how many teachers do we have to work with, what time limit do we have. Based on that, who are we going to work with? It comes down to that. . . . We really worked with the bubble kids . . . that's the most realistic and time-efficient thing we can think of.

In this conception of data-driven practice, the choice to privilege one group of students over another is viewed as neutral and objective. The decision to distribute resources to those most advantageous to the school's pass rates is not understood as a moral or ethical decision. Instead, it is seen as a sterile management imperative. Protected by its scientific underpinnings, the data-driven focus on the bubble kids is difficult for teachers to attack. In sum, at Beck Elementary, the invocation of the phrase "data-driven" obscures, neutralizes, and legitimates a system of resource distribution that is designed to increase passing rates rather than to meet the needs of individual students.

The blunt vocabulary of triage infiltrated every corner of Beck. The tenor of the phrases used to describe students — "the ones who could make it" and "hopeless cases" — speaks not only to the perceived urgency to improve test scores but also to the destructive labeling of those children who find themselves below the bubble. Driven by the pressure to increase the passing rate, teachers turned their attention away from these students. As one teacher related in an interview: I guess there's supposed to be remediation for anything below 55%, but you have to figure out who to focus on in class, and I definitely focus more attention on the bubble kids. If you look at her score [pointing to a student's score on her class test-score summary sheet], she's got a 25%. What's the point in trying to get her to grade level? It would take two years to get her to pass to the test, so there's really no hope for her. . . I feel like we might as well focus on the ones that there's hope for.

To say that hope is absent for a 10-year-old child is a particularly telling comment on how dramatically the accountability system has altered the realm of imagined possibility in the classroom. Now, with an unforgiving bottom line for which to strive, teachers can retain hope only for those perceived as potential passers. To assert that students below the bubble are just too low-performing to help establishes that the only worthwhile improvement in this brave new world is one that converts a nonpasser to a passer.

The problem is that those students who arrive at school as the most disadvantaged are often the lowest scoring. And since the focus on the bubble kids at Beck Elementary begins not in the third grade — the first year that students take state tests — but the moment students enter kindergarten, they are branded as "hopeless cases" from the very first days of their schooling.

An important shift occurs in a system focused on the percentage of students above a particular threshold. When a low-performing student enters

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The test doesn't matter as long as it ranks from 'best' to worst...

By George N. Schmidt

In a recent Business Week column, retired General Electric CEO Jack Welch defended, again, his "20-70-10" system for evaluating employees. Under the system, management has to establish a matrix of ways to evaluate everyone in the workforce, then rank and sort them from "best" to "worst." Although there is a great deal of talk about teamwork in some industries, since the 1980s, the Jack Welch system has been as pervasive as the notion that raw competition is best for everything, everywhere all the time.

Under the "20-70-10" system, the ranking is completed and then the winners, losers, and middle are identified in simple percentages. The "top" 20 percent are rewarded greatly. The middle 70 percent are allowed to con-

tinue. The bottom 10 percent are forced out, either directly or by subtle means.

When business leaders and CEOs began organizing for "standards and accountability" in public schools, what they meant was a variation on the "20-70-10" system. There had to be winners and losers for the system to work.

That is why it is irrelevant what the test is, or even whether the test measures anything meaningful about the quality of schools, classrooms, and children's work. A test as bad as CASE, as mediocre as the ISAT, or as technically decent as the Iowa Tests — all are the same. Why? Because they are there to give ratings, not to help schools improve.

Jack Welch is training principals in New York in his version of management. It's already in place here. 🍏

Rationing Education

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a teacher’s classroom, he or she is seen as a liability rather than as an opportunity to promote individual student growth. As Michael Apple trenchantly wrote, the emphasis changes “from student needs to student performance, and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school.” (9).

Certainly one can imagine uses of data that could turn attention to the individual needs of each and every student. However, the current monolithic discourse on data-driven decision making begs for a discussion of unintended consequences. Data can be used to target some students at the expense of others, and it is happening today.

When we blindly defer to “the data,” we abdicate responsibility for tough decisions, all the while claiming neutrality. But data are not actors and cannot do anything by themselves. Data do not make decisions; people make decisions that can be informed by data. Decisions about resource allocation are ethical decisions with which educators and communities must grapple and for which they must ultimately take responsibility. What we need above all is a sustained discussion among educators and the broader polity about the very real tradeoffs involved in schools’ responses to accountability systems. If schools adopt the practices of educational triage in response to NCLB, the consequence may be suboptimal outcomes for students “below the bubble,” as well as for their peers who are mid-level and high-achieving students. And all of these unintended consequences can happen while official pass rates increase.

Dilemma 2. It is unfair to hold schools accountable for new students or for subgroups that are too small to yield statistically reliable estimates of a school’s effectiveness; however, the consequence of excluding some students may be to deny them access to scarce educational resources. Educational triage does not end with the diversion of resources to the “bubble kids.”

Because of the fine print in NCLB, all students are not equally valuable to a school’s test scores. Subgroups are not disaggregated if the number of test-takers does not meet a minimum size requirement, and students are not counted at all in a school’s scores if they are not enrolled in a school for a full academic year. For example, in Texas, the scores of students who arrive at the school after the end of October do not count toward schools’ scores. Such a

definition is logical, for it attempts to isolate the impact of schools on students. Including students who have not attended the school for a reasonable period of time might bias estimates of the school’s quality and unfairly penalize schools serving more mobile students.

However, if resources flow only toward those students who affect a school’s outcomes, students who do not “count” may be denied access to scarce educational resources. I found that another pithy term, “the accountables” — those students who count toward a school’s scores — was incorporated into the lexicon of Beck educators. Teachers engaged in a second kind of educational triage by focusing resources on the “accountables,” to the virtual exclusion of students who “did not count.” In accountability’s ultimate contradiction, the protean word “accountable” retained only a semblance of its intended meaning — taking responsibility for each and every student.

How many students are affected by the mobility provisions of NCLB? Take the Houston Independent School District as an illustrative example. Serving 211,157 students, this district is the largest in Texas and the seventh largest in the nation. The average Houston school excludes 8% of its students from its “accountables.”¹⁰ Almost one-third of Houston schools (31%) exclude more than 10% of their students from scores used for accountability. By any measure, this is not an insignificant number of students. Moreover, because mobility is not uniformly distributed across the population, some demographic groups have much higher numbers of mobile — and thus unaccountable — students. In Houston, an average of 16% of special education students and 11% of African American students are not counted in schools’ scores because they have not been enrolled in a school for a full academic year. Ironically, the very students NCLB was designed to target are often those least likely to be counted.

A second way that students may “not count” stems from states’ definitions of the subgroup size required for disaggregation. If states define subgroup size expediently, the scores of various subgroups will continue to be buried in schoolwide averages. Again, Texas is a good example of artful definition of subgroup size. Under the Texas state accountability system, subgroups must include at least 30 students and account for at least 10% of all students — or include 50 or more students — to

be evaluated. Under Texas’ NCLB implementation plan, subgroups must include at least 50 students and make up at least 10% of all students — or include 200 or more students — to be evaluated. Under the state system, 82% of Houston schools with African American test-takers disaggregate scores for African American students, while for the purposes of NCLB, only 66% do.

Though Texas does not include a special education subgroup in its state system, the impact of using the 50 and 10% or greater than 200 definition rather than the lower threshold is significant. Shifting the definition upward reduces the percentage of Houston schools that disaggregate scores for special education from 55% to 24%. Other states have similarly gamed the subgroup-size provision of the law. In 2005, the U.S.

Department of Education allowed Florida to change its minimum subgroup size to 30 students who also make up 15% of test-takers. Because special education students rarely account for more than 15% of a school’s population, very few schools in Florida will be required to disaggregate scores for these students.

There is an irreconcilable tension between accurately measuring school effects and forestalling the potential negative consequences of excluding some students from accountability calculations. If accuracy of measurement is privileged, some students will necessarily be excluded from accountability calculations. In order to best estimate school effects, a school should not be responsible for students who attend it for a short period of time. Similarly, small subgroups may yield statistically unreliable estimates of the school’s efficacy with a particular group of students. Moreover, mainstream state tests may be inappropriate measures for some English-language learners or special education students. In other words, there are valid reasons, from a measurement perspective, for excluding students from schools’ scores. On the other hand, the consequence of excluding these students may be to deny them access to scarce educational resources.

Better Choices?

So Mrs. Dewey can choose to teach all of her students, regardless of their potential contribution to her school’s bottom line, or she can participate in educational triage. If she refuses to focus her time and attention on those students most likely to raise the school’s scores, she risks not only the school’s survival but her professional reputation as a good teacher and, potentially, her job.

Mrs. Dewey should not be asked to make such choices, and it is unconscionable to question her ethics when she does what she has little choice but to do. Systems of public policy cannot be designed solely for those with the moral certitude to qualify them for sainthood.

Educators will respond to systemic incentives, and NCLB’s current incentives structurally induce behaviors that are inimical to broader notions of equity and fairness. In many cases, these perverse incentives turn educators’ attention away from NCLB’s intended beneficiaries. Until these issues are addressed, we can expect to see educational triage practices flourish across the country.

Footnotes:

1. My use of the phrase “educational triage,” as well as the title of this article, draws on the work of David Gillborn and Deborah Youdell, *Rationing Education: Policy, Practice, Reform, and Equity* (Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press, 2000).
2. Like Ted Sizer’s Horace Smith, Mrs. Dewey is not one informant whom I encountered during an ethnographic study of an urban elementary school in Texas. Instead, she is a representative amalgam of the school’s teachers. My study included 71 interviews — 34 with teachers and administrators and 37 with students — in addition to 180 hours of participant-observation. Some of the findings discussed here were initially reported in Jennifer Booher-Jennings, “Below the Bubble: ‘Educational Triage’ and the Texas Accountability System,” *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 42, 2005, pp. 231-68.
3. Julie B. Cullen and Randall Rebeck, “Tinkering Towards Accolades: School Gaming Under a Performance Accountability System,” Working Paper, University of California, San Diego, 2006; David N. Figlio and Lawrence S. Getzler, “Accountability, Ability, and Disability: Gaming the System,” Working Paper 9307, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2002, www.nber.org/papers/w9307; and Brian A. Jacob, “Accountability, Incentives, and Behavior: The Impact of High-Stakes Testing in the Chicago Public Schools,” Working Paper 8968, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2002, www.nber.org/papers/w8968.
4. Walt Haney, “The Myth of the Texas Miracle in Education,” *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 2000, epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n41; Linda M. McNeil, “Faking Equity: High-Stakes Testing and the Education of Latino Youth,” in Angela Valenzuela, ed., *Leaving Children Behind: How “Texas-Style” Accountability Fails Latino Youth* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2005), pp. 57-112.
5. Linda M. McNeil and Angela Valenzuela, “The Harmful Impact of TAAS Testing in Texas: Beneath the Accountability Rhetoric,” in Gary Orfield and Mindy L. Kornhaber, *Raising Standards or Raising Barriers? Inequality and High-Stakes Testing in Public Education* (New York: Century Foundation, 2001), pp. 127-50.
6. Linda M. McNeil, *Contradictions of School Reform: The Educational Costs of Standardized Testing* (London: Routledge, 2000).
7. Brian A. Jacob and Steven Levitt, “Rotten Apples: An Investigation of the Prevalence and Predictors of Teacher Cheating,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 118, 2003, pp. 843-77.
8. Booher-Jennings, op. cit.; Gillborn and Youdell, op. cit.; “Making AYP: Cause to Celebrate?,” Philadelphia Public School Notebook, Winter 2004, www.thenotebook.org/editions/2004/winter/editorial.htm; Joel Rubin, “Are Schools Cheating Poor Learners?,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 November 2004, p. B-1; Daniel White, Dara Wexler, and Juliette Heinz, “How Practitioners Interpret and Link Data to Instruction: Research Findings on New York City Schools’ Implementation of the Grow Network,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, 2004; and Katie Weitz White and James Rosenbaum, “Inside the Black Box: Sociological Mechanisms Affecting Professional Deviance, Student Classification, and School Culture,” in Allan R. Sadovnik et al., eds., *No Child Left Behind and the Reduction of the Achievement Gap: Sociological Perspectives on Federal Education Policy* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
9. Michael W. Apple, *Educating the “Right” Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 71.
10. Jennifer Booher-Jennings and Andrew A. Beveridge, “Who Counts for Accountability? High-Stakes Test Exemption in a Large Urban School District,” in Sadovnik et al., op. cit. All analyses of Houston data mentioned in this article derive from this paper. [JENNIFER BOOHER-JENNINGS is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at Columbia University, New York, N.Y. She would like to thank Andy Beveridge, Jason Booher-Jennings, Herb Gans, Toni Molnar, and Uri Shwed for their helpful comments and suggestions.]

Lincoln Park

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has applied to a school in Palestine in the West Bank. An AP/Double Honors/IB student, he wants to let the administration know of the teacher/student solidarity. Anytime teachers have a problem, the students are there to support them and vice versa-to build bridges. He wants the administration to treat students in a more dignified manner.

Joanna emigrated from Poland and is seeking a career as a speech pathologist. She volunteers at the Shriners hospital for children and is an AP/Double Honors/IB student. She wants the voice of the students recognized, in contrast to this recent sordid episode.

The LSC needs to be more sensitive and react to problems, and not ignore concerns like they did during the past two meetings.

Kudos to all the young activists who see a wrong and try to right it - peacefully and intelligently. We thank these four young people — Joanna, Jeff, Laura and Michelle — for their diligence and appreciate their insights.

It’s a shame that injustices like this occur in our schools, but unfortunately it’s a much too common practice that goes unpunished and often rewarded.

“They will give a Type 75 administrative certificate to anybody it seems,” a teacher who asked to remain anonymous told Substance. 🍏

Surprise \$73 million deficit explodes miracle manager myth... Vallas under fire in Philadelphia

By George N. Schmidt

Six months after he was forced to fire former Chicago Chief of Staff Cozette Buckney and get rid of other top administrative staffers in Philadelphia, where he has been serving as CEO of the school system since 2002, Paul Vallas, once Chicago's schools CEO, saw more of his carefully crafted public image unravel during the weeks before Thanksgiving.

The fact that almost none of the Vallas scandals were reported in Chicago became more and more odd as November ended. In Philadelphia, Vallas was front page news on more days in November than any other individual for the corruption and incompetence of his administration.

But in early November in Chicago one of Chicago's top corporate media pundits, the Chicago Tribune's John Kass, used one of the city's most prominent media positions and newspapers to tout Vallas as the solution to corruption in Illinois. Kass bemoaned the fact that Vallas was not celebrating an electoral victory with Kass the day after Election Day in Illinois at a time when most political and civic leaders in Philadelphia would have gladly shipped Vallas back to Chicago.

As Alan Bukovitz, controller of Philadelphia, told Substance in early November "A year ago, Paul Vallas was toast of the town. Today he's toast..." Bukovitz has been investigating waste and corruption in the Vallas administration for more than a year and has uncovered the scandals that led to Buckney's resignation and closer scrutiny of Vallas and his claims.

Although the Philadelphia scandals had been going on for some time, most of them have only come to light and received serious media attention during the past month. In early November, Philadelphia woke up to learn that instead of financial stability, Vallas had brought an unannounced deficit of at least \$70 million to a school system with a total budget of a little more than \$2 billion.

On November 10, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported as follows:

"Three of five members of the Philadelphia School Reform Commission [Philadelphia's version of the "Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees" that was put into power in Chicago when Mayor Daley took over Chicago's schools in 1995] yesterday blasted their chief executive officer, Paul Vallas, saying they felt 'betrayed' and 'disappointed' in his handling of a deficit that will force midyear cuts in the school system.

"I am disappointed with where we are and I lack a sense of confidence and... faith in this management person's ability to move us forward with balanced books," Commissioner James Gallagher said before an auditorium packed with students and citizens, including Mayor Street.

"Gallagher's comments followed criticism from Street on Wednesday on the surprise deficit and the Vallas administration's attempts to deal with it. Gallagher, president of Philadelphia University, called the Vallas team's explanation of how the \$73.3 million deficit evolved a 'financial charade.' The deficit represents about 3.6 percent of the district's \$2.04 billion budget. Commissioners Martin Bednarek and Daniel Whelan also took shots at the Vallas



Above: Cozette Buckney (foreground) speaking at a meeting of the "Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees" in 1998. At the time, Buckney was a prominent member of the "Vallas Management Team" serving as Chief Education Officer. In 2002, she left Chicago and joined Vallas in Philadelphia. Buckney was forced to leave the Vallas administration in Philadelphia last summer after an investigation by the Controller's office revealed that she was drawing a salary from the Philadelphia school district while simultaneously working for the St. Louis school district and drawing her pension of \$119,000 a year as a retired Chicago school administrator. Recent scandals in Philadelphia have also called into question secret meetings and illegal votes by Philadelphia's "School Reform Commission," a body similar to Chicago's appointed school board. Behind Buckney in the photo above is Tariq Butt, a member of the Chicago school board for the past eight years. During that time, Butt has voted to approve more than 3,000 Board Reports without discussion. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

team, along with more than 20 students, parents and citizens who showed up to protest cuts. It was the second day of commission hearings on the deficit."

Vallas has been running the Philadelphia schools for four-and-a-half years. Since the beginning of November, the newspapers have been willing to hear more criticisms of Vallas than at any time during his tenure in Philadelphia, and reporters and their editors are finally showing skepticism about Vallas's abilities and policies.

At the same time, Vallas has fought back in the media by attacking the city's mayor. According to a November 10 Philadelphia Daily News story: "The outspoken schools CEO and the mayor have sparred over city funding of the district and Street's refusal to station police officers in schools. Vallas most recently quipped at a public forum that he could get more money for the school system as the sixth borough of New York than he can from the city under Street."

By the week before Thanksgiving, lengthy hearings on the proposed cuts were being held, with students and parents telling the members of the School Reform Commission that they had already suffered enough from earlier cuts under Vallas.

By November 17, the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin was reporting a challenge to secret meetings of Philadelphia's school board, similar to those that take place regularly in Chicago and have since Vallas became CEO in Chicago in 1995.

"School Reform Commission Chairman Jim Nevels Wednesday exploded when The Evening Bulletin questioned the legality of his board's decision-making process," The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin reported on November 17. "Philadelphia's School Reform Commission has made a show of taking public testimony as it moves to solve the deficit crisis that has hit the school district with all the sudden fury of a Kansas tornado.

"The question is: Does the public testimony make a difference or is the board ignoring the public by illegally holding private discussions and making decisions in executive session out of the public view? It appears an important vote taken on a financial resolution was only pro forma. The decision to cut 188 administrative jobs and change the nature of the CEO's financial accountability seemed to have already been made before the board walked into the room. The vote was taken before any public comment.

"The SRC has held four meetings, including a rare evening meeting Thursday, to take public testimony on the budget cuts proposed to balance the budget.

"The school district was surprised to discover last month that it ran a \$23.3 million deficit in the 2005-2006 school year and is facing at least a \$50 million deficit this year. In addition, \$50 million budget reserves was emptied last year to cover deficits. District CEO Paul Vallas calls the \$73.3 million "manageable," pointing out it represents less than 3 percent of the district's \$2.1 billion budget. The cuts he has proposed to the SRC will not affect teachers, programming or class size he promised."

While Chicago newspapers — with the exception of Substance — have generally ignored the routine violations of the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act by the Chicago Board of Education and the "School Reform Board of Trustees" that ran the schools during the first four years after Mayor Daley took over, news media in Pennsylvania are being more critical of the secret ways of "school reform" in Philadelphia now that Vallas's wizardry with budgets has crashed.

The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin stated: "The resolution exerts SRC oversight of hiring criteria, use of overtime, contract purchases in excess of \$25,000 and normal office expenses - everything from cell phones to travel to

laptop computers. The SRC is also demanding all capital spending be approved by the district CFO (who is hired by the SRC, not the CEO), and it is requiring monthly finance reports from management five days before the commission's regular monthly meeting.

"SRC Chair Jim Nevels introduced the resolution and offered an explanation. Board members then spoke in favor of the proposal and immediately voted 5-0 for it.

"The lack of discussion and the fact the board was obviously prepared to receive the resolution both point to the strong probability the resolution was discussed in executive session prior to the meeting.

"If such a discussion did take place, it would be a violation of the State Sunshine Act and Open Meetings law. That law allows governing bodies to discuss only specific real estate transactions and items dealing with specific personnel matters in executive session. Attorneys for the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association agree courts have held general directions such as cutting 188 administrative jobs would not be enough to meet the personnel exclusion clause of the Sunshine Law.

"The SRC's new General Counsel Sherry Swirtskey has ignored repeated requests over the last month, including a request placed Wednesday afternoon, to talk about the legality of SRC's executive session discussions under the Sunshine Act and Open Meetings Law.

"After making his announcement about the resolution, Nevels noted the school district had just provided the SRC with a report detailing the impact of the CEO's proposed budget cuts on the district."

At the same time, the Philadelphia Inquirer noted that Vallas and Philadelphia Mayor John Street were at odds, with Vallas trying to deflect the mayor's criticism using glibness that was no longer appreciated in Philadelphia.

"The outspoken schools CEO and the mayor have sparred over city funding of the district and Street's refusal to station police officers in schools," the Inquirer reported on November 19. "Vallas most recently quipped at a public forum that he could get more money for the school system as the sixth borough of New York than he can from the city under Street.

"Street, in an interview, called the comment 'ridiculous,' and said it shows in Vallas 'a level of immaturity and frustration. Now that he's under a lot of pressure, he's starting to show a little wear and tear.'"

After nearly five years of playing a kind of journalism well known in Chicago, reporters for the Philadelphia newspapers have also begun to challenge Vallas's "I'm really too busy to talk now because I have to rush off and save someone..." routine.

Nevertheless, in an ironic note indicating the problems with the understanding of the nation's schools, in November Harvard University gave Paul Vallas and award as one of the best educators in the USA. 🍎

[Editor's Note: Substance will continue covering the Philadelphia story as it unfolds, and we hope that some of our staff will be able to go to Philadelphia within the next couple of months. A great deal of information about the Philadelphia scandals is available on line at this time. Tips about the Vallas years are also appreciated.]

A Grim Fairy Tale



Baa Baa Humbug

By Sister Grim

Once upon a time it was December in the city of Chicago, which was still, saaaadly, located in the sorry, scandal-ridden cheapskate state of Ill-A-Noise, as well as the county of Crook. No “Oops” this time.

Each and every part of the local government was a textbook example of all the things that made the old days famous: vote fraud, nepotism, contract corruption, crony and kelpto capitalism, ghost payrollers, patronage, lies, lies, more lies, and lots of broken promises. Not to mention attacks on pension funds, unless, of course, it was for politicians. And that was just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

Some things were just so perfect already that there was no need for change. Take, for example, the Big Baaad Bored of Education of Chicago, where teachers were terminated, for financial considerations, on a fairly regular basis. It wasn’t even newsworthy anymore. No one cared, except maybe the poor downtrodden membersheep of the increasingly toothless CTEwe, whose only concern was loss of dues revenue.

Back at the opulent riverfront offices of the CTEwe, there had been considerable discussion of the apparently haphazard closing of employee positions; no one was secure, except for the consultants and consultantesses, who displayed Dracula-like tendencies of the undead.

And then, once upon a time, a secretary at the CTEwe office said “Oh oh”, pressing the silent alarm as she spoke. One of the security guards at the heated garage level had notified a guard on the main floor of the Merchandise Maaart, where the world-famous CTEwe headquarters were located, that Pammy Pretty, erstwhile CTEwe lobbyist (and head triple-dipper) was on her way up.

Teddy, the Obsequious Toady, had been pacing around his little cubicle. He was the only member of the leadersheep assigned to the Chicago office; everyone else was at a hastily arranged educational conference. It was far, far away. In another state.

“Where is everybody???” screeched Pammy as she stomped along in her designer stilettos. “This snow is terrible. My poor chauffeur was stuck driving for the last three hours.”

“From Sssspringfield?” ventured Teddy.

“ARE YOU NUTS??? Why would I be in Sssspringfield?” she demanded, as he retreated back into his office.

“Because you’re the lobbyist, and that’s where you belong,” he muttered.

“I heard that!!” she yelled back. “I’m supposed to be in charge here,” he said to himself.

“HA!!” she said from down the hall.

It was a fascinating paradox, mused Teddy, that her hearing was so acute, while she deafened everyone around her.

“So, where is everybody? We have problems to solve. Like, for every member who loses a job, we have to calculate how much to raise the dues so we can stay even—”

“They are at the conference,” he said.

“And just what conference would that be?” she said as she arrived at his doorway.

“The Hawaiian Hula Conference,” he blurted as he ducked for cover behind his desk.

“What did you say? Why wasn’t I notified of this?”

“They thought you were in Sssspringfield, working on our behalf—”

“And they went to Hawaii without me? When did they make the reservations?”

“It was a last-minute opportunity,” he gulped. “They were invited.”

“By someone in Hawaii?”

“Not exactly.”

“Well who, exactly? Tell me now,” she demanded.

“I’m not at liberty to divulge that information at this time.”

“Tell me now, or go back to the classroom tomorrow.”

“Okay, okay. It was Arne.”

“Arne?”

“When they got the predictions about the blizzard and all the cold weather, the members and administrators of the Big Baaad Bored of Education decided to go to the conference, because they found some leftover money, and it was educational.”

“And because it was in Hawaii,” she added.

“And they had to leave right away, in case the weather got worse and they couldn’t fly out. And then Arne called and said they had accumulated enough first-class frequent flier miles to take the entire CTEwe leadersheep team along. Everyone said it would be a nice way to start our contraact negotiations,” he added helpfully.

“So tell me, Teddy, why are you here?”

“They said I could be in charge. I always wanted to be in charge,” he admitted sadly.

“I have to think about this,” said Pammy, as she whirled out of his office. “Don’t bother me,” she added as she slammed the door.



Meanwhile, just as predicted, a major snowstorm descended upon the city; it was thick, white and beautiful as it coated the trees and the houses and everything else. Unless you had to be somewhere, in which case it was largely impassable, and impossible to travel. It began on a Thursday afternoon, well before the nightly news programs.

The membersheep of the CTEwe, along with hundreds of thousands of parents and children listened expectantly for those magic words. You know the ones: “Schools are closed.” But it was in vain. Many private and parochial schools were closed, as well as several suburban schools.

Once upon a time, however, it was as though the Chicago public schools had simply ceased to exist. There was no announcement whatsoever. Not that schools were closed. Not that they would remain open. Nothing. Nada. Nil.

“You know,” said Millicent Militant to her friend Ewenice, who was still Toonice for her own good, “it almost makes me nostalgic for the good old days, when we had Our Pal Paul.”

“Paul?” asked Ewenice.

“Paul Vallas. Our previous leader. You can’t have forgotten him already.”

“Oh, right. Vallas. Didn’t he go to Dallas?”

“Very funny. He’s in Philadelphia now. But don’t you remember when he told us to take shovels and dig out the schools? At least we knew they would be open when we got there.”

“You’re right. You know, some of our schools were closed. Some were open. It was very confusing.”

“And terrible for all those little kids,” added Scott Skeptic, journalism teacher-in-exile, as he joined his friends for their weekly get-together. “This was the most irresponsible behavior I’ve seen in a long time. Total disregard for kids and employees. Where were they?”

“I heard they are out of town,” said Millicent, who had her sources.

“And where was our esteemed CTEwe?”

“Well, I heard they were out of town, too.”

“You don’t suppose they’re off somewhere warm and sunny, together, plotting against us, do you?” joked Ewenice.

Millicent and Scott exchanged knowing glances.

“Well, I think we should just make the best of a baaad situation, and get into the holiday spirit,” said Nancy Naive.

“And what do you suggest?” asked Scott.

“We could start making decorations, and sing some holiday songs.”

“Ooh, ooh,” said Ewenice excitedly. “We have a song right here. It might not be politically correct, but it’s always been one of my favorites. Shall we?”

And so, once upon a time, they actually had a good time singing.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my school board gave to me
A laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the second day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Two rubber gloves and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the third day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the fourth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the fifth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the sixth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the seventh day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the eighth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Eight different textbooks, seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the ninth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Nine kinds of testing, eight different textbooks, seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the tenth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Ten old erasers, nine kinds of testing, eight different textbooks, seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Eleven new consultants, ten old erasers, nine kinds of testing, eight different textbooks, seven butter cookies, six angry parents, five extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my school board gave to me
Twelve different textbooks, eleven butter cookies, ten angry parents, nine extra kids; four spelling words, three red pens, two rubber gloves, and a laaaminated plastic I.D.

Subscripts

Thirty days have September, April, June, and November... Except in Chicago, which has the miracle of Mayor Daley’s school reform...



...Anyone who thinks the Duncanian phuequeups of November and December 2006 were “honest mistakes” should consider the document above. As winter begins, the screwup list gets very very very long, and grows daily: the Social Security security breach; the snow days horrors when power went out across the North Side; the Holden school collapsing roof thingy; and the ongoing lies about special education staffing are just a few we know about... Only in a dictatorship like the Daley “miracle” world Chicago lives in could something like the first 31-day April in the history of American public education be formalized in an official document. That’s right. The above “April” is part of the official CPS 2006-2007 Chicago Public Schools Calendar and Directory. If you’re quick about it, you might still be able to get your hands on a couple of them as collectables before they go to the shredder. From memory, we believe

...How many scabs have been hired to work for the CTU since August 2004? For the past year, Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart has been thumping her chest and proclaiming that the Chicago Teachers Union, in its return to true labor militancy, is asking everyone to get ready for a BIG STRIKE. The United Progressive Caucus (UPC), Stewart’s political party in the union, didn’t lead any strikes during between 1987 and its ouster from power in 2001 by Deborah Lynch’s ProActive Chicago Teachers caucus (PACT). During those long years, CTU lost power, members lost wages and benefits (and jobs), seniority was surrendered (under Tom Reece, by the UPC) and lots of other bad things happened. Not striking was definitely a bad idea. Things changed by 2003, when there was a strike vote for the first time in a decade. (By the way, Stewart and the UPC hardcore opposed that strike vote...). When the members voted by a large margin to strike when Debbie Lynch brought in her contract proposal, there was a breath of relief. Members of the Chicago Teachers Union were ready

that the Board of Education pays a non-union print and graphics outfit more several hundred thousand dollars a year for this job. Or maybe, after the Lewis Carroll manner in which public business is often conducted in this town, Arne Duncan can add a paragraph in his next State of the Schools speech. It can be about how Mayor Daley’s school reforms included adding a year to the year and a day to the month of April. We don’t know if CPS will sue us for another million dollars for “copyright infringement” for publishing the above exact replication of one of their copyrighted materials, but we’ll risk it. Like the CASE tests we published in these pages eight years ago next month, that thing above is an exact copy of a calendar published (in several hundred thousand copies) and distributed by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago this school year...

to fight back on the picket lines, where most of the real gains of the city’s teachers and other school workers had been won. At least, many said, we would go back to fighting, rather than surrendering. The strike proved unnecessary (and Stewart got her wish, since she had voted against it). Then the UPC flummoxed its way back into power in 2004 and began talking tough to prepare members for a BIG STRIKE. So some veteran union members were curious. Why would a group that sold out unionism for more than a decade under “school reform” and mayoral control be talking so tough? Why would a group that cheered Tom Reece when he proclaimed an end to strikes (and that he would never go to jail for leading one) suddenly pirouette in the other direction? Why would a group — the UPC — that sold out thousands of the members of the other unions in CPS (engineers, custodians, lunchroom workers, trades — to name a few) to privatization schemes and the Daley dictatorship suddenly discover its old militancy? Or was it all just posturing, even the talk by Marilyn Stewart about doing a ghetto “beat down” of anyone who

scabbed (i.e., crossed a union picket line)? Either Marilyn Stewart has already held at least one beat down in the CTU offices — and against a colleague of hers — or she is a liar and a hypocrite. Subscripts hears that one of Stewart’s major appointees to a \$100,000-plus union job scabbed while working at Kinzie Elementary School just about 20 years ago. Subscripts also hears that Stewart hired the scab for a top union job anyway. Most of the members of the Substance staff were there on the picket lines in 1987. Jackie Vaughn was leading the Chicago Teachers Union back then, and the lines were militant and strong. After 19 days, more than 95 percent of the people working for CPS were still striking, and the handful of scabs was obvious to everyone. There were very few scabs in 1987, our last strike. Every one had an obnoxious excuse for selling out other union members (“I need my money...” was the usual excuse). The teachers who scabbed were particularly obnoxious because they always claimed they didn’t have enough money, even though people earning half their pay were walking the picket lines. But that’s not all: every scab in 1987 (and after every other strike) had a chance to go before a union trial, pay a fine equal to every dollar “earned” by crossing the picket line, and reinstate into the union. In the case of Marilyn’s friends, however, we hear that never happened. For all its tough talk, the Stewart administration has become the first in the history of the Chicago Teachers Union to hire a scab, then try to cover that fact up, then try to claim it was all OK when the story began coming out. Scabbing is a unique qualification to get a person a full-time union staff job. More than 10,000 veteran teachers (who were working in 1987) who held those picket lines strong in 1987 were not offered that union job, including dozens of members of Stewart’s United Progressive Caucus. The next time Marilyn growls about “beat downs” and roars about striking, someone should take a closer look at what she and her colleagues do, not what they say. It’s hard to maintain a picket line without all that silly macho bellowing. It’s impossible if you’ve already proven that scabbing is viewed with tolerance by your actions, not matter how many words you’ve bellowed...

...There are few things more demeaning than being referred to as “left-overs.” In the context of the Players Clubs at various executive departments at CPS, this is made even worse because some of the young and not-so-young Monica Lewinskies cast aside actually thought that we love that caused all the organic lotions and stains. Sigh. Since the days of James Moffat, Chicago’s schools — and especially their executive ranks — have been examples of the truisms about power corrupting and all that stuff. What gets us in the high schools offices and in some of the offices in the high schools is that some people actually still believe it’s love...

... The acronym is “ACE”. The question is whether Chicago is getting an ace in the hole, the ace or the hole for the \$10 million it voted to spend on November 15. At its November 15 meeting, the Chicago Board of Education approved, without debate or dissent (as usual) a Board Report submitted by CEO Arne Duncan that will pay a thingy called the “American College of Education” a total of more than \$10 million over the next three years to train “edu-

cational leaders.” The ACE “educational leaders” program will yield either a “masters” in curriculum and instruction or a master in “leadership.” In order to get into the ACE program, you have to be a CPS teacher. You have to have a recommendation from a CPS administrator. And you have to have a CPS “mentor.” Don’t look for ACE in the phone book yet, because it isn’t there. The address given for the “American College of Education” in the November 15, 2006, Board Report (06-1115-ED4) is 150 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 1275, Chicago, IL 60606. Now everyone who knows Chicago knows that there are a lot of corporate offices and corporate law firms on north and south Wacker Drive, but nobody knew until November that a major graduate program was also there, too! Silly us; we thought all the colleges and universities in the Loop were on the east side of downtown (DePaul; Columbia; Spertus; Robert Morris; Art Institute, to name a few of the legitimate ones). It turns out that ACE, a for-profit outfit, is the creation of former U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, former U.S. Department of Education “reading” guru Reid Lyon, and a host of others. It has apparently been able to exist because it purchased, via DePaul University and Barat College in Lake Forest, the rights to the Barat College accreditation. Not Barat’s library. Not Barat’s staff. Not even Barat’s real estate. Just the accreditation! (Apparently, ACE students will get access to a “virtual” library out of the deal; where classes will be held is another story). Had there been any checks and balances in Chicago’s Board of Education, there might have been some discussion on the Board and the public might have been alerted to another \$10 million of its dollars being spent. But there was none. The proposal to pay ACE more than \$10 million over the next three years appeared on the agenda on Monday, November 13, and by sunset on Wednesday, November 15, it had been approved in silence by the Board of Education of the third largest school system in the USA. And since Chicago’s major media was rushing around covering a bit of Chicago Board of Education accounting fraud (the Board’s reduction in arrests by reclassifying battery and other crimes) and the Sun-Times doesn’t even send reporters to school board meetings in Chicago anymore, that’s the story, for now...

...One of the most disgraceful things about the fawning media coverage (Defender, Sun-Times, Tribune) of Chicago’s rush to establish a privatized charterized all-guys school under Tim King on the ruins of Englewood High School is that nobody seems to care about the girls and young women who are being screwed by this duplicitous, racist, male supremacist charade. Here is a quick historical review (for anyone who’s missed it). Englewood’s being closed and replaced by a charter school for guys called “Urban Prep”. As anyone who has taken a close look knows, the majority of the remaining students at Englewood are females (also, we hear, the remaining teachers). The lives of these young ladies have been partly ruined by the destruction of Englewood by the Duncan and Daley administration’s charter schools juggernaut. To understand how this adds insults to multiple injuries, several points. First, Englewood High School, which served such famous Chicago women as

AfterThoughts

‘Triage’ against the most needy children?
Rationing Education in an
Era of Accountability

[The following article is reprinted with permission from the Phi Delta Kappan. November 9, 2006. Phi Delta Kappan, http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v87/k0606boo.htm. Note that the teachers, schools and administrators here are identified by pseudonyms and are composites, as the author’s notes indicate. See the notes an bibliography for additional studies on this process].

By Jennifer Booher-Jennings

Meet “Mrs. Dewey,” 46 years old and a veteran fourth-grade teacher at Marshall Elementary School. Mrs. Dewey entered the teaching profession in the wake of A Nation at Risk and has weathered the storm ever since. For the last 20 years, she has survived the continuous succession of faddish programs that has characterized American education reform. Year after year, administrators have asked Marshall teachers to alter their practice to conform to the latest theory. Mrs. Dewey’s colleagues, frustrated by the implementation of

such silver-bullet approaches, have often flouted the administrative directives and chosen instead to serve as the sole arbiters of their classroom practice.

But it is the newest of the new solutions that worries Mrs. Dewey most. The language of accountability is swift and uncompromising: hold educators responsible for results. Identify those teachers who, as President Bush says, “won’t teach.” Fair enough, Mrs. Dewey thinks. The consummate professional, Mrs. Dewey always looks for the silver lining.

Like other reforms, accountability requires teachers to embrace a new strategy. Data-driven decision making, a consultant told the faculty at a professional development session, is the philosophy Marshall teachers must adopt. The theory is simple. Give students regular benchmark assessments; use the data to identify individual students’ weaknesses; provide targeted instruction and support that addresses those

A willingness to spout oversimplified spreadsheet data and the mastery of mindless cliches are now the main qualifications to run urban schools...



From the date in July 1995 when Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley (above right) was given control of the Chicago school system by a Republican legislature and governor, Chicago has led the nation in using over-simplified multiple-choice test scores as the measure of both student and school success. It wasn’t until 2001 with the passage of “No Child Left Behind” that the simplistic use of such questionable data took hold over the entire nation — city, suburb, and rural. The spread of test-based “reform” was based partly on unverified but constantly repeated claims of miraculous success from Chicago and Texas. In Chicago, under Daley’s imperial control, and in Texas, where George W. Bush had controlled the schools as governor before his 2000 election as President of the United States, corporate “school reform” based on test driven instruction had taken hold during the 1990s, accompanied by massive publicity campaigns and unverified claims of stunning success. As the article reprinted here demonstrates, the miracles claimed came at the expense of the poorest and most vulnerable children. Hundreds of thousands were simply triaged out of instruction in schools facing sanctions for marginal test scores. The trumpeting of Daley’s claims led to the adoption of the “mayoral control” model in Detroit, Cleveland, New York City, Baltimore and Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, Paul Vallas, above right, was eventually made CEO of the public schools after his ouster as Chicago schools chief by Daley in June 2001. The above photo is from the press conference at which Daley accepted Vallas’s resignation. Substance photo by Sharon Schmidt.

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areas. Mrs. Dewey remembers nodding approvingly. After all, this approach — gathering textured information on each student to guide instructional activities — was one she had been using for 22 years.

The consultant moved on. “Using the data, you can identify and focus on the kids who are close to passing. The bubble kids. And focus on the kids that count — the ones that show up at Marshall after October won’t count toward the school’s test scores this year. Because you don’t have enough special education students to disaggregate scores for that group, don’t worry about them either.” To make this concept tangible for teachers, the consultant passed out markers in three colors: green, yellow, and red. Mrs. Dewey heard someone mutter, “What is this? The traffic light theory of education?”

“Take out your classes’ latest benchmark scores,” the consultant told

them, “and divide your students into three groups. Color the ‘safe cases,’ or kids who will definitely pass, green. Now, here’s the most important part: identify the kids who are ‘suitable cases for treatment.’ Those are the ones who can pass with a little extra help. Color them yellow. Then, color the kids who have no chance of passing this year and the kids that don’t count — the ‘hopeless cases’ — red. You should focus your attention on the yellow kids, the bubble kids. They’ll give you the biggest return on your investment.”

As the bell tolls a final warning to the boisterous 9-year-olds bringing up the rear of her class line, Mrs. Dewey stares blankly into the hallway. Never did she believe that the advice offered by that consultant would become Marshall’s educational mantra. Focus on the bubble kids. Tutor only these students. Pay more attention to them in

Continued on Page Nineteen