LSCs improve schools!

❖ “Empowered Participation,” a 2004 book by Archon Fung, a professor at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, uses LSCs as a model of empowered deliberative participation. Fung finds that LSCs increase accountability between local officials and the communities they serve, help build social capital, and encourage low-income, minority parents to become more involved in their community. Most importantly, he found that LSCs have a positive impact on student achievement.

❖ “Charting the Course” and other studies by the Consortium on Chicago School Research have found a high level of effectiveness in local school councils.
• They found, among other things, that principals view LSC selection of principals very positively: “Their positive responses stand as a strong endorsement of this most important work of the councils.”
• In 2003, they found that, of the teachers who know about LSCs, 70% said they were “really helping to make this school better,” up from 63% reported nine years earlier.
• The Consortium noted that LSCs comprise “an overwhelming percentage of the minority elected public officials in Illinois.”

❖ “The Big Picture,” a 2005 report by Designs for Change, found a correlation between schools with test scores trending “substantially up” and effective LSCs.

❖ “Sharing Our Successes: The LSC Gold Star Awards 2002,” a report by the Successful Schools Project of the Community Media Workshop, showcased some of the many improvements made by LSCs such as:
• integrating arts into the curriculum
• creating collaborative school improvement plans that have lifted schools out of probation
• successfully advocating for new school buildings and facilities improvements
• involving parents and local businesses in the school’s Character Education program
• implementing a family literacy project.

❖ There has been no research showing any negative effects of LSC governance of schools.
• In fact, LSCs have proven to be the cleanest form of governance in Chicago.