

THE POWER OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

How to Create a Powerful Parent Organization

PARENTS UNITED FOR RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION (PURE)

2002

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Appendix: School Reform Act, Illinois school code sections
describing local school council elections, operations, and powers and duties.

PURE's mission and programs

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) exists to build support for and enhance the quality of public education in the city of Chicago by informing parents about educational issues, bringing the views of parents into the decision-making process, and acting as an advocate for parents in their relationships with the school administration. PURE is a citywide organization, run by and for Chicago Public School (CPS) parents.

PURE's Board of Directors, membership, staff, and constituency are multiracial, multi-cultural, and economically diverse. Each year, PURE provides direct assistance or referrals to hundreds of parents and local school council (LSC) members calling our hotline for help and information.

PURE provides workshops for LSCs in all areas of their responsibility. PURE also offers a variety of workshops to meet parents' expressed needs. PURE publishes four newsletters, produces cable tv shows, and runs a web site to keep parents, LSC members, and other school leaders informed of current educational changes and issues. PURE works actively to focus attention on the parents' perspective in any discussion of critical school problems through such means as press conferences, public testimony, and editorials.

**This book outlines some of PURE's history and successful activities
to increase powerful parent participation in the schools.**

**It is dedicated to the thousands of Chicago parents and local school
council members who work every day, often against tough odds,
to improve their children's education.**

The Power of Parent Participation

How to Create a Powerful Parent Organization

Introduction

Research has proven beyond a doubt that parent involvement in a child's education is a key factor in the child's academic success. Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) is an effective parent-organized, parent-run group established in 1987 and based in Chicago. PURE's overall goal is to assure a high-quality education for all children. Our main strategy is to support active, informed, meaningful parent participation in the public schools. This book outlines some of PURE's history and successful activities to increase powerful parent participation.

PURE's strengths center on several key components.

- *Diversity.* PURE has been active in every Chicago neighborhood. Our Board of Directors and constituency has always reflected the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of Chicago public school families.
- *Authentic base.* PURE is recognized as a group of parents who work with and for parents.
- *Grounding in the law.* PURE helped to write the legislation that created local school councils (LSCs), the governing bodies elected at each local public school in Chicago. PURE provides ongoing training for LSCs and for other parents on their legal rights and responsibilities.
- *Credibility.* PURE staffers are experts in the law and school administrative procedures. PURE does research in key educational issues and presents accurate, helpful information to parents in a user-friendly format. PURE prepares materials in both English and Spanish.
- *Strong action.* PURE organizes parents and implements legal strategies when necessary.