THE POWER OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

How to Create a Powerful Parent Organization

PARENTS UNITED FOR RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION (PURE)
2002
Table of Contents

I. How PURE Started 5
II. Yes, Parents, You Have Rights! 17
III. The Power of Workshops 23
IV. Building a Communications Network 31
V. Taking Legal Action 45
VI. Making Parents’ Voices Heard 51
VII. How to Create a Powerful Parent Organization 61

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.
PURE has learned:

- *Parents are powerful:* Parents can do just about anything given the right tools and support.

- *Parents are essential voices in school reform:* Through participation in school governance activities, working with teachers to enhance classroom instruction, or lobbying political representatives, parents make a difference.

- *Education is hard.* The education arena is full of jargon, disagreement, and politics. Parents have to learn how to work in and with the educational system. Absorbing and using this information is a challenge, but with effort and support, parents can learn what we need to know.

PEANUTS reprinted by permission of United Features Syndicate, Inc.
I. How PURE Started

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) originated during a 19-day Chicago Public School (CPS) strike in 1987. The primary organizers of PURE were parents and teachers from Chicago's Inter-American Magnet School, led by parents Joy and Bernie Noven. Bernie was also a CPS social worker. PURE organized weekly meetings at a city park which quickly attracted several hundred people. We held a teach-in for our children outside of the Mayor's office in City Hall and, eventually, a 1,000-person march on City Hall. At the end of that march, we met with Mayor Harold Washington who assured us that the schools would open the following Monday. They did.

After the strike ended, school reform advocates across the city agreed that sweeping changes were needed to improve our schools. PURE continued to hold regular meetings to keep parents actively involved in planning these changes. In the spring of 1988, we were invited, along with other group and individuals, to the office of Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan to hammer out the school reform law. The cornerstone of the new law was the creation of elected local school councils (LSCs) at each school.

Great opportunity: parent majority local school councils

PURE developed our own list of 13 objectives we wanted to see incorporated into the law. One of our most significant points, resisted by other groups, was that the majority of LSC members should be parents. All 13 of our objectives were written into the law.

Until the law was passed, our efforts went towards lobbying for passage of the law, informing the public about the law, and combating special interest groups which were trying to sabotage our efforts. We also filed a lawsuit charging the Chicago Board of
Education and the Illinois State Board of Education with misuse of $2 billion of State Chapter I money, funds which were supposed to help low-income students.

After the law was passed, we organized parents and gave workshops to encourage parents, teachers, and community members to run for the LSCs. More than 17,000 candidates ran in that first election. After the election we trained thousands of LSC members in the details of the new law. We held other citywide workshops in areas of interest for LSCs. We began to published a newsletter which provided up-to-date information about education and school reform issues.

By 1988, PURE had established by-laws, a permanent Board of Directors, and a paid membership which has grown to nearly 800 members in 2002.

What are Local School Councils (LSCs)?

LSCs are elected bodies at nearly every Chicago Public Schools (CPS) elementary, middle and high school. The LSC has 6 parents, 2 community members who are not parents of students at the school, 2 teachers, the principal, and, in high schools, a student member. The parents and community members are elected by the parents and community residents around the school. Teachers are selected by the school staff. These members serve for a two-year term. High school student members serve for one year. By law, the LSC chairperson must be a parent representative.

The LSC's major responsibilities are to approve the school budget and annual strategic plan (called the school improvement plan), to evaluate the principal every year and to decide every four years if they want to renew the principal's contract or hire a new principal. This is the strongest site-based management system in the nation.

LSCs usually meet about once a month, though they may also hold special meetings to vote on budget and other items. The meetings are open to the public with a few exceptions (in cases where the LSC discusses personnel issues, for example) and the meetings must be posted with an announcement giving the time, date, and location of the meeting and what will be on the agenda. Parents and other interested people should also be able to call the school and find out when the meetings are held.

LSCs can be very effective in making change happen at schools. Many LSCs have committees where non-LSC members can participate. The public can also go to LSC meetings and speak out about what's happening in the school.
WHAT IS THE LSC?

What does "LSC" stand for? Local School Council

Where do LSCs work? In every Chicago Public School

Who sits on the LSC? The school principal
Six parents of children at the school
Two teachers at the school
Two non-parent community residents

in a high school...One student

How do you become an LSC member? Parents and community members are elected. Teachers and students are appointed by the Board of Education after non-binding staff and student polls. The principal is automatically a member of the LSC.

What does the LSC do? The LSC is the policy-making body for the school. The LSC’s main responsibilities are:
- approving the school improvement plan.
- approving the school’s budget.
- evaluating the principal, and
- hiring the principal.

When does the LSC meet? LSCs set their own schedule of meetings which must be posted in the school. Most LSCs meet once a month. The schedule of meetings must be posted in the school.

Who can attend LSC meetings? Everyone!! LSCs are subject to the Open Meetings Act. This means that the public has a right to know about all LSC meetings, that meetings are open to the public (exceptions are allowed in limited cases), and that all votes must be taken in public.

How can I become an LSC member? If you are a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the school or if you are a member of the community living within the school attendance boundaries, and you are not a Board of Education employee, you are eligible to become a candidate for your school’s LSC.

When are LSC elections held? On the spring report card pick up day every other year. The next LSC election will be held in the spring of 2004.

For more information about LSCs call: Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) 312/461-1994
Who created LSCs?

LSCs were created by the Illinois state legislature in the School Reform Act of 1988. You can read the current version of the School Reform Act in the appendix. The intent of the law was to provide stronger community accountability and input into local school policies. The LSC is envisioned as a cooperative team giving parents, teachers, and community a voice and providing support to the principal, school staff, and students in each school. LSCs are the eyes and ears of the central school board. They bring their individual school issues and problems to Board meetings by testifying, calling, or writing letters.

What have LSCs done?

LSCs have
★ set up parent patrols,
★ replaced principals who were not attentive to school needs,
★ directed discretionary funds to pay for school bands and other music and arts programs,
★ created computer labs,
★ fought for repairs, renovations, additions and new schools to relieve overcrowding,
★ helped move their schools off of academic probation,
★ set up before- and after-school programs,
★ established schools within schools programs,
★ implemented parent programs to increase parent involvement,
★ created gifted programs,
★ established committees to involve more members of the school community in such areas as facilities, student climate, curriculum, parent involvement, budget, and school improvement planning, and
★ encouraged active teacher leadership through Professional Personnel Advisory Committees.
**LSCs**

*Your authority at your schools is clear:*

"Local school councils are essential units of educational governance, empowered to make important budgetary, educational, and administrative decisions regarding the Chicago public school system....the legislature has given them the primary responsibility for school governance and improvement under the (School Reform) Act. Given the broad, important, and general nature of the powers conferred on the local school councils, their actions and decisions certainly were intended to have a primary and far-reaching effect on the public education system in the City of Chicago.

Illinois State Supreme Court ruling
Fumarolo vs the Chicago Board of Education, 1990

---

**IMPROVE SCHOOLS!!**

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)
407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927 www.pureparents.org e-mail: pure@pureparents.org
Creating the LSC ▲ Summit

In 1996, PURE and a group of other Chicago school reform organizations set up a coalition called the LSC ▲ Summit. We saw the need to join together to fight the increasing attacks on LSC legal authority by the administration of Paul Vallas, the CPS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appointed by the mayor in 1995. In the first year of his administration, Vallas declared an educational crisis at one school for the purpose of disbanding the LSC. He failed to set up the criteria before declaring a crisis, which was a requirement of the school reform law. The LSC ▲ Summit forced him to go back and do the process properly.

Vallas’s most blatant power grab came in 1998. He tried to amend the law with Senate Bill 652 which would allow him to overrule LSC decisions to keep or fire their principals. PURE made an alternate proposal to allow a review of LSC principal selection decisions by an independent review board. The LSC ▲ Summit organized LSC members to call and write their state legislators. We brought dozens of LSC members to Springfield to testify at Education Committee hearings. We even asked the Mayor to help out. We fought hard, and won.

The following pages reproduce part of a paper the LSC ▲ Summit developed and distributed to state legislators during this fight.

Local school council members bring the fight to City Hall:
“Mayor Daley: Oppose SB652, Support LSCs!”
LSC ▲ SUMMIT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

FACTS about the ADVANTAGES and BENEFITS of LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL PRINCIPAL SELECTION

LSC authority to select principals
The School Reform Act gives local school councils (LSCs) sole authority to decide whether to retain their current principal at the end of his or her four-year contract, or to directly select a new principal if the principal is not retained or if a vacancy occurs.

New leadership
Prior to 1989, only two principals were fired in the history of the system, according to Maribeth VanderWeele in her 1994 book, Reclaiming our Schools. All principals had to be selected from a list held centrally and not replenished until all those on the list had been hired.

Since the beginning of school reform in 1989, LSCs have brought hundreds of new principal leaders into the Chicago Public Schools. They have brought leaders with fresh perspectives from outside of the system, the city, and the state. They have increased the diversity of our principal leadership by hiring more minority and women principals.

According to the December 1997 report from the Consortium on Chicago School Research, “Charting Reform: LSCs — Local Leadership at Work,” the vast majority of LSCs have engaged in comprehensive principal selection procedures. “A focus on academic improvement was frequently cited as a key concern in this process,” according to the report.

Local accountability
“The Chicago School Reform Act broke the repressive control of principals under the bureaucratic chain of command and shifted the locus of their accountability from their administrative superiors to LSCs,” according to Fred Hess in Chicago School Reform, 1990.

LSCs monitor the performance of school principals in a way that no central office can, and they will not tolerate leadership which does not serve the students.

Inclusive process
LSCs generally use an open, inclusive selection process for hiring a new principal. This involves establishing a selection committee which may have several non-LSC representatives such as the PTA, various grade level staff, and local business and community leaders. This committee reviews the school mission and status, sets criteria for the new principal, assesses the 50-100 applications LSCs usually receive, interviews candidates, and presents the final “cut” to the school community at a public forum for feedback before making their recommendation to the entire LSC.

The Consortium report on LSCs concludes that LSC selection of principals is viewed positively by LSCs and principals: “we had expected that principals, as compared to other
council members, would offer more critical assessments of this process. Their positive responses stand as a strong endorsement of this most important work of the councils."

**Schools have improved with LSC-selected principals**

Radical, system-wide improvements in the past ten years of school reform have been undeniable. This year, Designs for Change reported that 14 of the 20 elementary schools with the largest reading test gains were led by new principals selected by LSCs.

Designs has also concluded ("Chicago Elementary Schools 1998") that "widespread investment among the key stakeholders in the school community in building effective working relationships pays off in terms of student achievement." LSC selection of the school principal provides the cornerstone for building those relationships.

---

**How LSCs Select Their Principal**

**Table 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Reporting &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
<th>Principals, Teachers, Parents, Community Representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check references of the final candidates</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview several candidates</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact non-LSC parents, teachers, and community members for input</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ado performance criteria to the standard principal contract</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive training in how to select a principal</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present final candidates at a community forum</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principals' Views of the Selection Process**

**Table 21**

| The LSC conducted a formal search process when they hired me | 55% | 24% | 8% | 13% |
| The LSC did a good job interviewing me as a candidate | 50% | 42% | 9% |
| The LSC clearly communicated their expectations of me | 50% | 50% | 12% | 6% |
| The principal selection was fair | 48% | 37% | 10% | 5% |

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

*chart from Charting Reform: LSCs- Local Leadership at Work December 1997
Consortium on Chicago School Research reprinted by permission*
BACKGROUND PAPER #1:
THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF LSC PRINCIPAL SELECTION

BRET HARTE ELEMENTARY

During the 1997-98 school year, the Local School Council of Bret Harte Elementary made a decision to seek new leadership when the contract of DianA Rochon*, came up for renewal.

During Rochon’s tenure, forty teachers had left the school. Staff morale, multiple vacancies filled with full-time substitute teachers, teachers leaving the building promptly at 2:30, and ongoing poor communication were some of the problems the school experienced. Both cumulative reading and math scores posted a decline from 1990-97.

During the time that the Bret Harte LSC was making important decisions about principal retention and selection, they encountered misinformation and condescension from CPS staffers. It was with the assistance of an independent group, the PENCUL project, a program developed by a Chicago business organization, that they carried out a successful principal selection process. The LSC received resumes from 86 applicants, interviewed 12 people, and narrowed that down to four final candidates, from whom they selected one.

Teacher Collaboration Renewed

Their new principal, Michael Keno, has an open door policy and gives teachers more freedom to be creative. Staff are now staying later when classes are over; the beginning

stage in developing the collaborative adult relationships shown to be key to school improvement by Consortium on Chicago School Research studies. The school is also experiencing a surge in enrollment.

According to the LSC Chair, Sabrina Whittington, "Nobody knows better than the parents that are involved" about what is going on in the school. She is emphatic that the LSC should be making selection decisions, and used the Board’s recycling of Rochon to the restructured Jones Magnet School and then to another westside school as proof that the Board’s interest is in keeping people beholden to them as opposed to getting people who are good for schools.

IRMA C. RUIZ ELEMENTARY

Many LSCs experience obstacles and difficulties in carrying out their responsibilities, but few as dangerous as the 1997 Ruiz Elementary School LSC meeting when a school assistant principal, Joel Avrom*, brought out a gun, ostensibly in order to prove a point about school safety.

Even more outrageous was the lack of response from Principal Julia Palos, who had already come under criticism for her refusal to provide the LSC with information necessary to their work. The school had lost over two dozen teachers during Palos’ last term, and a large protest meeting earlier in the year forced the reappointment of a popular teacher whose position Palos
had eliminated (Newstips, 1/14/98).

The LSC made a decision to seek new leadership for the school. They also obtained outside, professional assistance from the PENCUL project. The selection of Beverly Williamson-Ashford, an African-American, by this predominantly Latino LSC, reflects well on the openness of LSCs to selecting the best possible candidate for their school.

New School Environment

According to LSC members, under the leadership of Ms. Williamson-Ashford, Ruiz is now a great, positive environment for students, teachers, and parents. She is praised for being very open-minded, taking the teachers’ opinions into consideration, and working closely with them to improve teaching strategies and to help the students move from one grade to the next. New initiatives since

Williamson-Ashford came to Ruiz include:

✓ a Lighted Schoolhouse which parents had been requesting for years—students are now staying after school for tutoring, singing, chess, Young Authors, cheerleading, step aerobics, computers;
✓ the new soccer team came in fourth place in a city tournament;
✓ a PTO is forming; and
✓ they are working together to try to close down a tavern that is near the school.

According to LSC Chair Eunice Lopez, they are accomplishing things now that they thought could never be done, things which the previous principal never bothered to do.

1998
LSC advocacy

Supporting LSCs often requires intense on-site assistance and dozens of repeat visits to one school. For example, dedicated PURE staffer Wanda Hopkins found herself agreeing to go to an LSC meeting scheduled for Christmas Eve. The school was in a horrible fight after the LSC chose not to give the long-time principal a new contract. Complaints about him included failure to spend needed discretionary funds, unsafe and unsanitary conditions in the school, lack of cooperation with the LSC annual evaluation, retaliation against staff, and questionable hiring practices. The principal was fighting back. His faction hoped that Wanda wouldn't show up to the Christmas Eve meeting, and they would finally be able to bully the LSC into changing their vote. Wanda did show up, and the principal is no longer at the school.

Since 1997, PURE has presented an annual award called the Elsie (LSC) to local school council members whom we believe have shown special leadership. Above is our Elsie class of 2001 which was honored at our annual membership meeting on October 4, 2001.
II. Yes, Parents, You Have Rights!

No city in the nation outside of Chicago has as strong a site-based management system as our local school councils (LSCs). The specific legal powers of the LSC are key to its effectiveness. We urge parents to consider discussing with your legislators how to bring an LSC-style school governance system to your community. However, until that happens, there are other tools that you can use to leverage power and have an impact on your children's schools.

School Boards

Many large urban school systems include some form of site-based management in their structure. Denver has Collaborative Decision Making committees (CDMs). In Los Angeles, schools have one of three types of site-based management. Seattle's school district encourages each school to set up an Advisory Site Council to operate in a manner decided at that school. New York City seems poised to abolish their 32 district school boards; it is not clear what, if anything, will replace them. Parents need to be aware of the school governance structure in place in your community, what the rules are for operation, and how you can get involved and have an impact.

Smaller communities have school boards which may not represent any more students than a Chicago LSC. For example, the school board in the village of Peotone, Illinois, represents about 1400 students, fewer than the 1450 represented by the LSC at Chicago's Eugene Field Elementary School.

Parents need to know about their local school boards, when they meet, what decisions are being made, and how you can get involved. You need to know how to run and vote in your local school board election.
Parent involvement under federal Title 1

Any school receiving federal Title 1 funds must comply with the parent involvement components of that law. At least 1% of the federal Title 1 funds a district receives must be used for parent involvement activities.

All parents of students in schools receiving federal Title 1 funds are entitled to
- participate in programs, activities, and procedures designed to involve them in the school,
- help write and receive a written copy of the parent involvement plan,
- participate in an annual review of the plan,
- provide input into how the parent involvement funds are used,
- attend and participate in an annual meeting where their parental rights are explained,
- attend other parent meetings throughout the year, and
- provide recommendations and participate in decisions relating to their children’s education.

Parents of children who are identified as limited English proficient are entitled to receive detailed information about
- their child’s status,
- bilingual and other programs that are available,
- the overall academic progress of students in those programs, and
- their rights to include or remove their child from a bilingual program;

Parents of children in schools which fail to make annual yearly progress (the new federal standard for school improvement) must receive a detailed explanation of
- the school’s status,
- what the school and school district are doing to improve student achievement,
- how parents can be involved in addressing the academic problems at the school, and
- their option to transfer their child to another, better-performing school.
PURE Fact Sheets and Tip Sheets

Among PURE’s most effective training and informational tools are our Fact Sheets and Tip Sheets.

Fact Sheets are clear, one-page outlines of key issues, news, or other information. Fact Sheets tell parents what they need to know about important educational issues. PURE has developed Fact Sheets on such general topics as parents’ rights and steps in advocating for your child.

PURE Tip Sheets offer ideas for effective ways to be involved in your child’s education. We have prepared Tip Sheets on general topics such as how to read to your child and what to look for in a good school.

We create Fact Sheets and Tip Sheets on issues of specific interest to parents in Chicago, such as the misuse of the Iowa test for promoting children, and LSC-related topics.

These Fact Sheets and Tip Sheets form the content basis for workshops and presentations and are widely distributed at those events and through our newsletters and web site.

Some examples are on the following pages.
YES, PARENTS - YOU HAVE RIGHTS!

In the U.S., we have a variety of rights from a variety of sources. Parents have a lot of rights as individuals and special rights as parents of school children.

BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS and CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS

- Your children have the right to a free and appropriate education. (Illinois)
- You have the right to equal protection under the law, which means that laws and policies must be applied equally and fairly. (U.S.)
- You have a right to your property (this includes the right to a free education) which cannot be taken away without due process. (U.S.)

U.S. FEDERAL LAW

- You have the right to inspect, challenge, and keep confidential your child's school records.
- Your children with special needs have the right to special education.
- If your school receives NCLB federal Title 1 funds, you have the right to join a parent advisory council (PAC) which helps plan, review, and monitor NCLB programs.

ILLINOIS STATE LAW

- Under the School Reform Act, you have the right to be a candidate for the local school council (LSC), and to vote in LSC elections. The public has the right to attend LSC meetings and, at least twice a year, to speak at these meetings.
- You have the right to enter your child's school under school visitor policies which must be applied equitably.
- LSCs may grant the use of school facilities when not otherwise needed; policies for use of the building cannot discriminate.
- If your child has limited proficiency in English, the child has a right to bilingual education, and you have the right to participate in a bilingual parent advisory council.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

- Under the Uniform Discipline Code, you have the right to information about your child's academic progress including a conference with the teacher and/or principal, the right to participate in school activities, the right to be notified of all disciplinary actions taken by the school and the right to appeal school decisions.
- Under the promotion policy, you have a right to timely notification if your child may not be promoted to the next grade, and the right to a review of a decision not to promote your child.
PURE TIP SHEET

Steps for Advocates

- Clearly identify issue/problem.
- Learn about laws and policies...students', parents', teachers' rights.
- Identify responsible people or agencies.
- Go step by step up the "strategy ladder."

Call PURE for support, advice, or just to have another parent to talk to!
312/461-1994

Parents United for Responsible Education
407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927 pure@pureparents.org www.pureparents.org
III. The Power of Workshops

PURE began to provide workshops from the very beginning in 1987. Our first workshops told parents and others about the school reform law. We wanted people to know what their rights were under the law, what local school councils could do, and how they could run for an LSC position.

After the first LSCs were elected, we jumped right into providing workshops on the full range of LSC roles and responsibilities. PURE and other school reform groups received generous funding from the local foundation community to provide these workshops. In addition, the central office gave each LSC $1500 to pay for training.

PURE decided early on not to directly charge LSCs for training. Why, when funds were available? We made that decision because our growing reputation for empowering LSCs made us unpopular with some principals and central office staff. Even now, thirteen years after the school reform law was passed, there are those who do not want LSCs to know or exercise their rights and duties. These bureaucrats deliberately misinform LSCs and refuse to give them the information they need to do their job well. In a surprisingly large number of cases, they want to deny LSCs the right to be in the school at all. Often they will make it difficult or impossible for the LSC to make an informed decision about training.

Against this hostile backdrop, PURE has always been determined to reach as many LSCs as possible. We decided that requiring the LSC to approve funds to pay us was too great an obstacle for many LSCs. We wanted to make it as easy as possible for LSCs to receive PURE’s independent training in the law and LSC rights.

Legal mandate increases opportunity

In 1995, the school reform act was revised to require that all LSC members receive three days of training in their powers and duties. PURE opposed this change
in the law because we felt that LSCs should not be treated differently from other elected officials. No other elected officials are threatened with removal from office if they do not receive training. We would have supported the revision if it had covered everyone, and if that had happened, we might all be better off!

However, the amendment passed, and we joined with other groups and individuals to create a basic LSC training curriculum for the three days of training. PURE's executive director, Julie Woestehoff, was appointed chair of the Content Committee which oversaw the writing of six basic LSC lessons. The lessons covered LSC roles and responsibilities, effective meetings, school improvement planning, school budgeting, principal evaluation, and principal selection.

Despite this training mandate, LSCs no longer receive $1500 for training fees. There were many years when there were no LSC training funds at all. More recently, $400 has been made available for LSC use. Most of the groups that trained LSCs in the early years no longer exist. PURE continues to be the primary independent resource for LSC training. We offer between 100 and 200 LSC workshops per year, reaching 1,000-2500 attendees.

PURE Board member Diana Lauber presents LSC budget workshop.
Parent workshops

PURE also developed a list of parent workshops, or workshops that would be of interest to LSCs and parents alike. These workshops are excellent ways to bring parents into the school and to keep them involved. They also help parents know their rights and how to help their children. The workshops are opportunities for parents to get together, to feel that they have a place in the school, and to learn specific ways to be active in their children's education and in the life of the school.

PURE's assistant director, Ismael Vargas, created a "certificate" workshop series for parents. He meets with parents at the beginning of the school year, and they select a set of workshops from our workshop list. Those who attend all of the workshops receive a certificate and go on a field trip to a special place such as a museum or conservatory. At the end of the first year of this program, several principals wrote to tell us that parent involvement in the school had doubled as a result of the workshops.

Most early childhood programs such as Head Start require a parent involvement component as well. Parents with children in these preschool programs are expected to attend a certain number of meetings at the school. PURE developed a set of workshops especially designed for preschool parents, and we offer them for free to schools.

Parents show off their certificates from PURE
PURE presents an average of 150 parent workshops per year, with an average total attendance of about 3,000.

Spanish-language program

PURE is especially dedicated to providing services for parents whose major language is Spanish, and whose children make up between 20-35 percent of our overall student population.

In the early days, our Spanish-language services were provided on a volunteer basis by our president, Bernie Noven, a school social worker who had taken a sabbatical to Mexico to learn the language, culture, and background of so many of the families he worked with. In 1995, we were finally able to hire our wonderful full-time Spanish-speaking staffer, Ismael Vargas.

On the following pages are some flyers describing PURE’s LSC and parent workshops, and samples of the Tip Sheets and Fact Sheets we use in the workshops.
PURE'S LSC Workshops

What’s special about PURE training?

You set the time and the place; call to schedule any of the following workshops in English and/or Spanish. PURE has been training LSCs since 1989. PURE’s trainers are CPS parents and veteran LSC members. PURE has a strong reputation for reliable, user-friendly, useful workshops that empower LSCs.

⭐ The Top 10 TRUTHS LSCs Need to Know: The real story about school budgets, the SIP, probation, principal selection, working with committees, relationships with the Central Office, and other key LSC issues.

⭐ Quality Educational Leadership: Strengthen the working relationships of all the leaders in your school including the principal, the other LSC members, committee members, teachers, students, etc..

⭐ LSCs that Work: Learn six standards of practice for effective LSCs.

How-to workshops

- **LSC Basics 101:** Review LSC basic roles/responsibilities; LSC Q & A.
- **How to be an LSC Chair/How to be an LSC Secretary**
- **Effective LSC Meetings:** Review LSC roles and responsibilities, rules and guidelines; learn effective meeting strategies, and how to plan a yearly schedule to get things done.
- **Your Own School Improvement Plan (SIP):** PURE will walk you through your own school improvement plan to help you begin to monitor and evaluate your SIP.
- **Your Own School Budget:** PURE will walk you through your school budget in an easy-to-understand way. We will assist you in learning how to read the regular budget reports (Fl-60, etc) from your school computer which will help you monitor your school budget.

- **Introduction to State Chapter 1:** Learn the basics of State Chapter 1 funds and what the LSC needs to know about voting rules and proper use and monitoring of these funds.

- **Introduction to Federal Title 1:** Learn the basics of the NCLB Federal Title 1 program, how these funds can be used, and the LSC's responsibility for the Parent Advisory Committee.

- **Principal Evaluation:** In-depth review of the LSC's annual principal evaluation responsibility; sample surveys, good ideas from other LSCs, and a look through the Board's mandated form.

- **Principal Selection:** In-depth training takes you through the process; includes timelines, sample interview questions, other useful ideas from past LSC experiences.

⭐ Quality Schools for All: Learn how to look for elements of high quality instruction throughout the school, and what steps to take based on what you see.

- Well-informed parents can work more effectively with their children’s school.
- Well-informed LSCs can make better decisions about how to use school resources.
- Everyone can work together to support improvements at the school.

The sessions cover the following topics:

- **How do people learn?** Supports and barriers to learning
- **What are learning standards?** Looking for content coverage
- **Three elements of quality instruction - looking for quality classroom practices**
- **Visiting schools** - what should parents and LSCs look for in schools and classrooms?
- **What you can do** to promote quality education in your local school – action steps
Parent training from Parents United for Responsible Education!

PURE's Parent Workshops

What's special about PURE training? PURE has been training parents since 1989. PURE's trainers are parents and veteran local school council members. PURE has developed a strong reputation for straight-on, user-friendly, reality-based workshops. PURE now offers the following workshops at a time convenient to your school community, and, if needed, in English and Spanish.

What Parents Need to Know...

► **Family Services 101:** What you need to know about basic family services: legal aid, day care, Head Start, social security, earned income credit, gas and electric service cut-off, public aid, etc.

► **Parents' Rights:** Find out about your rights as a parent under federal, state, and local laws.

► **Special Education:** Learn the basics of special education including parent and student rights, IEPs, and how to advocate for your child.

Parent Leadership workshops...

► **Quality Schools for All:** Learn what to look for in a good school and what steps you can take to support quality education at your own child's school.

► **How to be an Active Parent in your Child’s School:** Tips and facts for parents including parent-teacher communication and standards for parent involvement

► **Parents as Leaders:** Why you should become a leader, and how to do it! Help with setting up parent groups and making and achieving your goals.

► **Parliamentary Procedure for Parents:** Learn what parliamentary procedure is all about, and how you can develop skills to run effective meetings.

► **School Safety/Starting a Parent Patrol:** Learn how parents can make a difference in school safety.

Parent-to-Parent workshops....

These workshops include practical tips, group discussion and brainstorming. Topics include:

- **Reading to Your Child**
- **How to Help Your Child Succeed in School**
- **Father-to-Father**
- **Self-Esteem for Parents and Children**
- **Testing- What Every Parent Needs to Know**
- **PURE's Family Smart ✓ Check System for Better Parent Involvement**

**Parents United for Responsible Education**

407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927 pure@pureparents.org www.pureparents.org
Here are some ideas of what you can look for and how you can help your preschool child make good progress during the year.

Think about what your child was doing at the beginning of the year. Compare that with what he is doing now.

How is my child doing in “group time”?
★ Can she pay attention to what’s happening?

Can my child hear and understand?
★ Can he speak and make himself understood?
★ Does he have the confidence to speak up?

Is my child becoming more independent?
★ Can she dress herself better?
★ Can she set the table?
★ Can she water the plants?

Does my child play alone, or does he include other children in his projects?
★ Are he and other children learning together?

How you can help your children progress:

Set up routines at home: your children should go to bed at the same time every night, and they should have breakfast every morning. This routine gives them the confidence to become self-reliant.

Read to your children: teachers say that children who are read to at home can pay better attention during a group story time and have more advanced language development.

Talk to your child: tell them what you are doing, and ask them what they are doing. Talk about the weather, the traffic, your pets, your friends – everything!

Give your child some simple jobs at home: they can help you set the table and pick up their toys.
What do you need to know?
How much $$ you have to work with:
- Use Tentative Budget Report (February) for estimate.
- Review Final Budget Report (August) for agreement with LSC-approved budget.
- Use F160 to watch for rollovers and shortfalls.
- Monitor other school income (fundraisers, grants, etc.).

LSC structures the process
Set up committee.
Set up an annual timeline.
Review previous year's discretionary budget (do you want to spend funds in the same way or change allocations?).
Vote on budget committee recommendations.

Budget committee
Role: to provide effective, timely involvement of staff, parents, LSC members, and the school community in the preparation and review of budget proposals.
Membership: representation from LSC, PPAC, other teachers; principal as a member or to meet with committee regularly.
Responsibilities:
- throughout the year
  - meet in between LSC meetings,
  - report to LSC every month,
  - review F160 and Internal Accounts reports,
  - gather input from teachers and others during the year regarding resource needs
  - monitor fund increases (rollovers, etc.) or shortfalls, and
  - bring proposals for budget amendments to LSC with committee recommendation.
- for annual budget process
  - obtain and review tentative budget for estimate of total discretionary funds; compare to previous year (bring any unexplained discrepancies to the attention of principal, regional or central office budget staff),
  - gather input from staff, parents, other LSC committees, and LSC regarding needs of the school,
  - meet with SIP Committee to discuss initial SIP priorities,
  - draft budget proposal; submit to LSC with input from LSC, prepare final budget proposal, and
  - develop contingency budget (for shortfalls or additional funds).

Remember, these are SUGGESTIONS only! LSCs have developed many different approaches to their budget process. Questions? Call PURE: 312/461-1994
IV. Building a Communications Network

PURE started to publish an occasional newsletter in the very beginning of our existence as an organization. The names and addresses collected at the regular PURE meetings in Wells Park soon provided a mailing list of about 1500. This was an important network. Communication was essential to keeping the movement for LSCs strong.

This newsletter was soon titled PENCIL, which stands for the Parents Education Newsletter for Chicago, IL. PENCIL remains PURE’s membership newsletter.

Reaching 6,000 LSC members

In 1996, PURE started a second and more ambitious publication, PURE Tips and Updates for LSCs. The law requires that the names and addresses of all LSC members, like those of any other elected official, are public information. PURE was able to access that list and use it as a mailing list for this new newsletter.

Tips and Updates provides timely information about LSC and other education issues. LSC members have expressed great appreciation; Tips and Updates is the only regular newsletter LSCs receive from any source. Because we mail to home addresses, the information is not “lost” as it so often is when sent to the school.

Other publications

PURE prepares an occasional digest of PENCIL and Tips and Updates in Spanish. We also publish a quarterly newsletter called PreSchool Update which is mailed to all the CPS preschool classrooms for use by the staff and parents.

The following pages include a sample of PURE newsletters throughout the years.
MAYOR'S SUMMIT

The long awaited Educational Summit reform proposal turned out disappointing. Incredibly, it did not deal with administrative cuts and decided that school councils are not competent to hire principals or deal with curriculum. The reform proposal has turned unto a package of improvements.

P.U.R.E. at WORK

P.U.R.E. continues to be a member of the Citizen's School Coalition with the goal of lobbying in Springfield. A BUS will be leaving for Springfield MAY 25th if interested in going call Citizen's School Committee at

*******
We have also been working hard with the Chicago United Coalition(RENAMED: Alliance for Better Schools...A.B.C.s). We plan a MAY 25th PRESS CONFERENCE to respond to the Summit proposal and to announce a CITY WIDE RALLY for reform. The rally will be at the BISMARCK HOTEL, MONDAY JUNE 6th, from 7:00 to 8:30pm. Each of us must organize our own school for a big turnover BUSSES ARE AVAILABLE for more information and volunteering call Esther at .
This is an opportunity to let legislators know what we want! VOLUNTEERS are URGENTLY needed to meet with local legislators, call Victor at $5,000 for P.U.R.E.

*******

We are happy to announce P.U.R.E has received a grant of $5,000 from the Weiboldt Foundation THANK YOU MARGE AND SUSAN for all your work. How to use this money will be decided at our next P.U.R.E MEETING ON MAY 24th at WELLS PARK FIELD HOUSE at 7:00pm. Anyone interested in a part-time paid staff position with P.U.R.E call Bern at

IMPORTANT DATES

ALLIANCE for BETTER CHICAGO SCHOOLS
PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 23rd
tel, Bernie

NEXT P.U.R.E. MEETING MAY 24th
at WELLS PARK FIELD HOUSE: 7:00pm

BUS TO SPRINGFIELD: MAY 25th
tel, 

CITY WIDE PARENT, TEACHER, CHILD RALLY
BISMARCK HOTEL: JUNE 6th, 7:00pm
tel, Esther

******
Additional Steering Committee members are needed for P.U.R.E. if interested tel, Bernie.

We are developing a new P.U.R.E. phone tree for important school networking; if you wish to be added or dropped call Sue at 2232

Order your P.U.R.E. button now... to be worn at rallies, weddings, births and other fun gatherings!

On May 14th progressive educators Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren will speak at the Cultural Center from 12:00 to 4:30pm

IF YOU WANT TO AVOID A STRIKE IN SEPTEMBER
GET YOUR SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE NOW!!!
PURE NEWS

Victory in Springfield!

PURE won important changes in the school reform legislation when we testified on June 26. Legislators agreed to change the procedures for the election of community representatives at multi-area schools. It will become law as soon as Governor Thompson signs it, and the new law states: "Community residents are to be elected to the Local School Council of a multi-area School. Only the parents of students enrolled at that multi-area School, the principal of such multi-area School, and the school staff employed at that multi-area School shall be eligible to vote for the community residents to be elected to the Local School Council serving that multi-area school."

The definition of multi-area school is also being changed to more accurately reflect the original intent. It now reads: "Multi-Area School means an attendance center which draws and admits students from more than a single attendance area based upon designated selection criteria approved by the Board, except that any such attendance center which has a local attendance area established by the Board shall not be deemed a multi-area school."

Call Joy at 784-PURE if you have questions about the above wording.

Workshops

PURE has been conducting and assisting with workshops set up by community organizations and schools across the city. PURE sees this spirit of cooperation as necessary to the success of school reform and is proud to be a part of it. If your school needs assistance or workshops, call Joy at 784-PURE. Also, you can find a partial list of workshops coming up across the city on the same page as your membership form.

PURE in the Media

PURE had an editorial on Channel 5 on Saturday June 24 and a half hour call-in talk show on Cable TV 21 on Friday June 30. Did you see us?

PURE at the Board

The new Interim Board has already shown their willingness to listen to outside voices in carrying out the spirit of reform by including many reform groups in various committees. PURE's Bernie Noven is chairing the Board of Ed's committee to revise evaluation procedures for special ed children.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed for monthly mailings, typing, general office work and proposal-writing. Call Joy at 784-PURE soon!

Many thanks this month to our volunteers: Anu for newsletters, Bernie for workshops and the Special Ed Task Force, Sandra for monthly reports and typing,
PURE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

MARCH 3RD 10.00 p.m:
LUMP SUM BUDGETING.
presented by Joy Noven and Diana Lauber from
LQE
en espanol 1.00pm - 3pm.

APRIL 7TH 10 p.m
LSC FORUM: Numerous
LSC'S have requested we
have a meeting to permit
LSC's to exchange idea's, information, problems
etc. Facilitators will be
available to answer
questions re: all phases
of the reform.
en espanol 1.00pm - 3pm.

May 5th 10.00 p.m
READING IMPROVEMENT:
The Riggs Institute will
present a widely
recognized workshop on
reading improvement,
"the whole language
approach", reading,
writing and spelling in
the primary grades. We
strongly urge teachers,
administrators and
parents to attend.
ALL WORKSHOPS ARE
HELD AT TRUMAN
COLLEGE 1145 W WILSON
AV F SUITE #2424.

PURE VICTORY
PURE'S lawsuit
succeeded in abolishing
the February 28th
principal selection
deadline. The Board of
education filed a
response to our lawsuit
that said "...the guideline
is not inflexible, no
sanction is provided for
failure to meet the
February 28th cut-off...".
This is the exact
language we asked the
administration to give us
in writing, before we
filed our lawsuit. When
they included it in their
legal response they
conceded their error and
PURE was able to
withdraw it's lawsuit,
with victory. In
effect, the 28th deadline
is not a regulation but a
recommendation and
LSC's are not obligated
to abide by it. The law
clearly states that April
15th is the deadline to
sign a principal contract.
We express our thanks to
lawyer Mike Radzilowski
who gave PURE direction
and many free hours of
legal services in this
latest legal battle.

We urge LSC's to use this
time to conduct
professional, objective
evaluations/searches
for the principal who
will lead their school for
the next 4 years.
PURE urges LSC's to get
principal selection
training from PURE or
one of the other groups
offering this training.
Also when you are ready
to write the contract,
The Lawyer's School
Reform Advisory Project
has lawyers ready to
help your LSC, call them
at 332-2494.

HOW TO FIND A
PRINCIPAL
One LSC used the
following publications to
advertise for their
principal and received 21
replies.
Illinois Principal
Association,
430 E. Bine St.,
Springfield, IL 62704:

Illinois School
Administration,
230 Broadway
Suite #200, Springfield IL
62701:
PURE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SET FOR AUG. 17
On Saturday, August 17, 1991, from 10 am to 2 pm, PURE will hold a general membership meeting at Truman College, 1145 W. Wilson, Lecture Hall B (look for signs to help you find the room). We expect by then to have definitive information about the upcoming elections and will need everyone’s input to develop an effective plan for recruiting and training LSC members. SEE YOU THERE!

PURE WENT TO SPRINGFIELD; WAS IT WORTH THE TRIP?
As the state legislature’s deliberations over revisions to the school reform law went into high gear, PURE members joined other school reform groups in Springfield to bring our issues into the public discussion. On June 12, PURE’s suggested amendments for LSC arbitration language and for strengthening LSCs ability to use State Chapter 1 funds were presented to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committees of the House and Senate. On June 18 and 19, PURE, along with other parents, teachers, LSC members, and assorted school reformers, attended a two-day School Reform Summit where we met with legislators to work on amendments to the school reform law.

Although people came to the Summit with disagreement on some issues, most notably on a new election procedure- 3 or 10 votes?- agreement or compromise were achieved in all areas brought before the Summit participants. Unfortunately, Senator Berman’s Senate Bills 10 and 11 which are on the verge of being passed at this writing reflect very little of what happened at the Summit (see story next page). It seems that the Chicago Teacher Union, the Union of Operating Engineers, and the Board of Education’s paid lobbyist were the real decisive actors in this drama. School reform activists will have to consider how to respond to this disappointing development.

THE BUDGET
After Supt. Kimbrough announced his predicted $315 million deficit, PURE convened a task force to write a budget that would neutralize the crisis the Central Office was trying to create. We evolved into the Citywide Budget Task Force. We found the proposed deficit to be only $179 million and proceeded to write a balanced budget that would not close schools or steal Chapter 1 money from low-income children. After the press conference at which this information was presented, Mr. Kimbrough conceded that the deficit may not be as high as he had predicted. Our budget would cut $40 million from the Central Office. We proposed a renegotiated teachers’ contract which would give classroom teachers a 5% raise; others in the school building would get a 2% raise; employees outside of the school buildings would have their salaries frozen. A copy of the Citywide Task Force proposed budget is enclosed for PURE members; others can get a copy by calling 784-PURE.

MORE BAD NEWS FOR CHICAGO’S NEEDIEST CHILDREN
Two days after reform groups met in Springfield, the House overwhelmingly passed a bill...
FIGHTING BACK TO OPEN SCHOOLS

After we marched on City Hall in 1987, parents learned that if we want a decent education for our kids, we must fight for it. On August 16, 1993, PURE has called a demonstration to fight:

*against those state legislators, especially our governor, who have been irresponsible and indifferent to the well-being of public school children, and
*against those multimillion-dollar corporations who contributed money to defeat the education amendment which would have given adequate funding to our schools.

SPECIAL SESSION:
As things stand now, our schools CANNOT open legally. The Board of Education has not presented a balanced budget to the School Finance Authority. The SFA rightly supports the Board's position, which is that our schools need adequate funding, not a budget balanced on the backs of Chicago Public school children. On August 16, PURE called for the legislature to go back into session and to change the law so that our schools can open. No other school district in the state has this restriction.

GREEDY CORPORATIONS:
Our schools are in crisis because companies who make their money from our communities and from contracts with the Board of Education have taken these profits and used them to lobby against an adequate education for our children. These corporations (list enclosed) funded a misleading ad campaign to defeat the education amendment and bought off cowardly legislators. Their actions were motivated by greed -- they feared they would have to pay their fair share of taxes.

Some of these corporations also fund school reform activities: Helene Curtis, Ameritech, Illinois Bell, CNA, etc. Of course, these donations have earned them both generous tax breaks and reputations as supporters of education, reputations which they have now destroyed by this cynical action.

PURE feels that these multimillion-dollar corporations have a moral obligation to pay off the $300 million dollar deficit which will prevent our schools from opening. 410,000 school children are more important than added profits for executives who already earn huge salaries.

BOYCOTT CALLED:
We are especially disappointed with Walgreen's which makes its money directly from our communities. Walgreen's contributed $5,000 to defeat the education amendment. On August 16, we announced that we are asking parents NOT TO SHOP AT WALGREEN'S, especially for school supplies, until our schools open. Sears also contributed $5,000 to be used against the education of our children. We are asking parents NOT TO SHOP AT SEARS, especially for school clothes, until our schools open. Illinois Bell and Commonwealth Edison gave $10,000 each to defeat the amendment. We are asking parents to attach protest labels to their telephone and electric bills, until our schools open.

Not only do these companies make money from our communities, they also make millions more from contracts with the Board of Education. Last year, Commonwealth Edison earned $34,999,000 from BOE contracts; Illinois Bell was paid $2,692,875; Sears was paid $14,925; Walgreen's was paid $3,111. Other BOE suppliers who contributed to the campaign to defeat the Nov. education amendment were Ameritech (paid
CAN THEY STEAL SCHOOL REFORM?

The Illinois House and Senate "fast track" legislation is the latest front in the battle to destroy the Chicago Public Schools once and for all. The Republicans in power in Illinois believe that they can undo all the progress we have made with school reform, despite the fact that it has been shown to be improving education in Chicago school by school and doing it without adequate revenue. The most obvious attack is the proposal sponsored by Bob Biggins, one of the Repubs from Elmhurst. The sole purpose of his bill is to take authority over State Ch. 1 funds away from local school councils. This is an obvious maneuver to get the money back to the Central Office, balance the budget, and put school reform back in the dark ages.

PURE convened the Save Chapter 1 Coalition, which organized a highly successful press conference on February 21 (press release and clipping enclosed.).

PURE is also an active member of the CityWide Coalition for School Reform Legislative Task Force which convened a Strategy Meeting on Saturday, March 4. At the meeting, a broad representation of school reform groups, community organizations, and schools began to coordinate their ideas and resources for the weeks ahead.

So far, the Chapter 1 bill has not made it out of committee...

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FIGHT FOR OUR SCHOOLS?

Set up an ACTION TEAM at your school. Explain to people that we are fighting to
- open our schools on time
- save State Chapter 1 funds and keep them in the control of LSCs,
- demand fair and adequate funding of all schools in Illinois.

Start to gather the names and phone numbers of people who would be willing to write letters, make calls, go downtown for a rally, or take a trip to Elmhurst or Springfield.

We will be calling on you, our members, and on all the schools we work with to take action in the coming weeks and months. If you want to be on our "fast track fax list", please call the office at 907-4727 and leave your name and fax number. Thanks!

ACTION CALENDAR

March 27, 11 AM
Meet on the fifth floor of City Hall to ask Mayor Daley to support keeping State Chapter 1 funds, etc.

March 27, 4 PM
CityWide Legislative Task Force meeting, 417 S. Dearborn #701.

Saturday, April 8
PURE field trip to Elmhurst. Details to be arranged (TBA).

Monday, April 17
Big all-city rally in downtown Chicago. Time and place TBA. Tues.-Thursday, April 18-20
Buses will take people down to Springfield for all-Chicago lobbying effort during spring break.

Wednesday, April 26, 3:30
March at Walgreen's- they didn't listen! Walgreen's was a contributor to Republican campaigns!

Every Monday, 4 pm
Join the CityWide Legislative Task Force meetings at the CityWide office, 417 S. Dearborn, Room 701. Call them (431-8150) for more information or to get your name added to the fax list for weekly updates.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PURE had varying degrees of concern about each of the "school reform lite" initiatives that came down the fast track, but people
WELCOME TO
PURE TIPS AND UPDATES,
the new news service of
PURE, Parents United for
Responsible Education.

PURE is a parent-organized and
parent-operated organization which
began in 1987 to promote a strong
parent voice in decision-making in
the Chicago Public Schools. We
provide free LSC training and parent
advocacy citywide.

Part of PURE's mission is to
provide real, useful information to
CPS parents and to local school
council members. We have been
considering ways that we could reach
out to all LSCs and will begin by
sending this issue of PURE TIPS
AND UPDATES to each LSC
member at your home address.
Because an every-member home
mailing is so expensive, in the future
we will send 12 copies to each school
to be distributed by the LSC chair.

If you would like to continue to
get PURE TIPS AND UPDATES at
home, you can become a member of
PURE (see membership form on page
3) and you will continue receiving
this information as an insert to the
PENCIL newsletter which all
members receive four times a year.

Meanwhile, we hope that you
find this information useful and that
you will share it with other parents,
teachers, and neighbors.

NEW BOARD
POLICIES THAT
AFFECT LSCS
AND PARENTS

PROMOTION POLICY: This
fall the Board of Education approved
a new promotion policy for passing
3rd, 6th, 8th, and high school
students from one grade to the next.
Students will have to go to summer
school if they do not meet these
requirements and will be held back if
they do not "successfully complete
the summer program."

In order to pass to the next grade
without attending summer school in
elementary schools:

- third grade students must score
  at least 2.8 on their Iowa tests
  and pass both their math and
  reading classes.
- sixth grade students must score
  at least 5.2 on their Iowa tests
  and pass both math and reading.
- eighth grade students must
  score at least 7.0 on the Iowa
test and pass both math and
  reading classes.
- 3rd, 6th, and 8th grade
  students may also be required to
  attend summer school if they
  have more than 20 unexcused
  absences or out of school
  suspension days and their Iowa
  test scores are below the
  national norm - 3.8, 6.8, or 8.8.

In HIGH SCHOOLS in order to
advance to the next grade without
attending summer school:

- ninth grade students must have
  4.5 credits, must score at least
  8.0 on the TAP reading and
  math test, must pass all their
  core courses (English, math,
  science, and social studies), and
  have no more than 20
  unexcused absences or out of
  school suspension days.
- beginning next school year,
tenth grade students must have
  10 credits and must have no
  more than 20 unexcused
  absences or out of school
  suspension days.
- eleventh grade students must
  have 15 credits.

EXEMPTIONS AND APPEALS
Principals may request an exemption
for students based on academic
performance and subject to approval
by the Regional Education Officer.
Parents may appeal a decision to
retain a student to the Regional
Education Officer.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

- By October 1st of every school
  year, principals must notify all
  parents of this policy in writing.
- If your child receives a failing
  grade in reading or math...
  - parents must be notified in
    writing at the fifth week of
    every marking period,
  - parents must be notified by
    certified mail at the end of the
    first school semester (February
    of each year),
  - parents who do not pick up their
    child’s report card at the third
    (April) marking period must be
    notified by certified mail.

If your child’s Iowa test scores fall
below the minimum cut-off
required to pass to the next grade,
so that your child will be required
to attend summer school...

- parents must be notified in
  writing within five days of the
  school’s receipt of Iowa test
  results.

ABSENCES Parents must be
notified by certified mail if their
(continued on p. 3)
LSC POWER!

Legislators are finally beginning to recognize the political strength of LSCs! Thousands of you called, wrote, signed petitions, and otherwise rose to oppose the LSC “Spy” Bill and to save Chapter 1. Because of your actions, the Governor agreed to add to his school funding plan a special piece reserving no less than $261 million for LSCs and local schools. Both in the House and the Senate our representatives affirmed the importance of these dollars remaining under LSCs.

CHAPTER 1 CHANGED IN SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM PLAN: School reformers knew that changes in statewide school funding were very likely to affect Chapter 1. We were also concerned because saving Chapter 1 for LSCs was not mentioned in the legislative plan prepared by the Chicago Public Schools.

So, when the Governor’s plan came out, the alarm bells went off! This plan would actually have reduced the total Chapter 1 amount going to Chicago from about $310 million to $87 million.

With the help of Designs for Change (DFC), the Lawyers’ School Reform Project (LSRAP) and other groups, a special piece of legislation saving the LSCs’ basic $261 million was prepared and a number of LSC members went down to Springfield to present the amendment to the Governor, Chicago legislators, and other supporters of LSCs. CALSC, PURE, DFC, LSRAP and other groups then worked together to get the word out to as many schools, organizations, and individuals as possible to call, write, or fax their legislators in support of the Save Chapter 1 amendment.

The very good news is that support for LSCs’ use of Chapter 1 remains strong in Springfield. The Save Chapter 1 amendment was accepted by the Governor and was supported in both the House and Senate. The bad news is that the Governor’s education funding bill itself is now on hold because Sen. Pate Philip of Elmhurst decided not to let the Senate vote on it. The bill may come up again in the fall. We will keep you posted!

LSC “SPY” BILL DEAD FOR NOW
In another show of LSC power, we headed off the infamous LSC “Spy” Bill. This bill would have given the CEO the authority to appoint a member to any LSC who would then look at all LSC records, attend closed session meetings, and "monitor, evaluate, or review LSC acts and decisions." LSC members who found out about this bill were outraged and insulted.

Quick work by LSC members in Springfield, supported by a flood of complaints from LSC members back home, and great support from Senator Art Berman, who was the Senate sponsor of the bill, led to a complete revision of the bill which actually then died on arrival at the House. Good riddance to that bill!

NEXT: PROTECT LSC PRINCIPAL SELECTION POWER

Rumblings are getting louder that the legislature intends to take away one of the three fundamental LSC powers: principal selection.

Last year, people wanting to weaken the powers of LSCs were able to get SB1019 passed. The bill was secretly tucked onto another bill and voted on without public notice or input, and even without most legislators knowing what was in it.

As you know, SB1019 seriously restricted LSCs ability to select principals, but we have heard that some legislators intend to go even farther by giving the CEO total power to select principals for our schools.

In fact, Vallas has already been exercising this power by appointing interim or acting principals in many schools. Even though he has no legal right to do this, LSCs have been reluctant to complain.

PURE urges LSCs NOT to give up their right under law to select ALL principals: permanent, acting, or interim--stand up for the PRINCIPLE of LSC authority!

And everyone be on the alert for the latest information about possible legislative moves against LSCs. PURE, Designs for Change, and CALSC will be watching out but we need you to act just like you did to save Chapter 1 and to kill the Spy Bill.
DECISIVE COURT VICTORY FOR ALL LSCs
GALE LSC WINS CASE; JUDGE RULES CPS VIOLATED LAW IN DENYING LSC PRINCIPAL SELECTION

On August 5, 1998, LSCs across Chicago won a crucial victory over the Board of Education. Calling the actions of the Board “naked assertions of power (which) fly in the face of the spirit of the School Reform legislation,” Cook County Circuit Court Judge Albert Green ruled that the contract signed in April, 1997, between the Gale LSC and Beverly Martin, their choice for principal, is a valid contract.

“IT is clear that the board-asserted reasons for interfering with the LSC’s critical principal selection decision are inconsequential and contrary to law...in sum, the board’s naked assertions of power based upon its contentions herein fly in the face of the spirit of the School Reform Legislation.”

Cook County Circuit Court Judge Albert Green in his ruling on Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees vs. Beverly Martin, et al (the Gale LSC case).

In his ruling, Judge Green stated that the Board of Education acted illegally in denying Ms. Martin her position and in interfering with the lawful operations of the LSC.

KEY RULING #1- ONLY LSCS SELECT PRINCIPALS:
The judge ruled on two issues of great significance to LSCs. Most important, he reaffirmed that LSCs are the entities which hire principals. According to Judge Green, “the board’s signature is a mere formality such that if the LSC and the principal enter into an otherwise valid contract, the board is bound by it unless it can establish that it is void or otherwise illegal.”

KEY RULING #2: CPS CANNOT USE OMA TO INVALIDATE LSC ACTIONS
Judge Green also ruled on another tactic of the Board- he made it clear that it is improper for CPS to claim LSC violations of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and void LSC actions taken at such meetings. The CPS Law Department claimed there were violations of OMA agenda-posting requirements and asserted that these violations “nullified” the LSC’s April 1997 vote. Judge Green stated that the OMA “does not require anything else, that is, wax seals, signatures, stamps, or other overwrought formalities.”

Judge Green’s opinion throws out a CPS assertion that if a special meeting is called by four members of the LSC, the posted agenda must have the signatures of those four members. PURE and others have long asserted that this was ridiculous and burdensome for LSCs, and Judge Green agreed with us.

Judge Green further stated, “Neither the provisions of the School Code nor the Open Meetings Act require that the posted agendas contain anyone’s name or the inclusion or exclusion of names on the basis of an otherwise valid agenda void. Nor does either act give the board or the CEO the authority to invalidate school principal contracts entered into by LSCs which have allegedly committed minor violations of the Open Meetings Act.”

Finally, Judge Green dismissed the Board’s entire claim by stating that “it is clear that the board-asserted reasons for interfering with the LSC’s critical principal selection decisions are inconsequential and contrary to law.”

CPS ACTIONS CREATED CHAOS, DELAYED SUIT:
For almost two years the Gale School community has suffered from constant turmoil as a result of CPS actions, beginning with the CPS illegal appointment of an interim principal
PURE LSC Training at Your Service

Choose citywide or local site lessons 1 - 9

December 31, 2000, is the deadline for most LSC members to complete your mandated training. This includes the basic lessons 1 - 6 and your additional, "flex" training, lessons 7, 8, and 9.

The school reform law gives new LSC members six months from the time they take office (July 1 for most) to complete the mandated training.

PURE has been busy giving lessons 1 - 6 across the city at local schools and in our Loop office since our staff was approved for basic training by the CPS Office of School and Community Relations in September.

Basic training: Lessons 1 - 6 cover the basics of LSC roles and responsibilities. All LSC members must receive these standard lessons. PURE will be glad to come to your school to provide these lessons, or you may attend the PURE citywide sessions.

PURE's remaining citywide training dates are:
- Wed., Nov. 8 Lessons 4-6
- Wed., Dec. 6 Lessons 4-6
- Sat., Dec. 16 Lessons 1-3 or 4-6 (your choice)

We will add new dates to this schedule if there is a demand to do that. Please call us at 312/461-1994 for more information.

- All sessions will run from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm and will offer three lessons each.

- All English-language sessions will take place at 407 S. Dearborn (the PURE office), 14th floor conference room.
- Some Spanish-language sessions may take place at alternate sites.
- You must pre-register for these sessions. Call us to register at 312/461-1994.

"Flex" training: Lessons 7, 8, and 9 are your additional training hours which you or your LSC may use in any way you like. Your LSC should vote on a "flex" training program.

This could include PURE training at your school (see list of PURE workshop topics inside) or a variety of individual selections.

- For example, you may receive credit for attending your local CAPS or Park District Advisory Board meetings. You may bring in speakers of interest to your school community and use those events as your training. And, of course, you may attend citywide workshops such as PURE's "What Makes a Good High School" series, and receive credit for lessons 7, 8, and 9 (details inside).

More training! Please look inside this newsletter for more information about LSC training: The Rules, PURE training opportunities, and a special citywide training day sponsored by the Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative.

---

PURE Wins Major Changes in CPS Student Promotion Policy

U. S. Dept. of Education's Office for Civil Rights resolves PURE's complaint with major overhaul of CPS policy, ending sole reliance on Iowa test for promotion

On October 4, 2000, PURE announced a resolution to our year-old discrimination complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education against the Chicago Public Schools student promotion policy. OCR's investigation of CPS, and its subsequent complaint resolution activities, resulted in major changes in the policy.

These changes include an end to the use of Iowa test scores alone to judge the progress of any student, implementation of true multiple measures to evaluate student progress, and a fair review process which will be clearly communicated to parents. See the back page for more details about the promotion policy changes.

Year-Long Investigation

PURE filed the complaint with the OCR on October 21, 1999. We charged that the CPS elementary school student promotion policy using student scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills as sole measures to determine promotion or retention had a discriminatory impact on African-American and Latino students. We contended that the CPS policy violated federal legal and civil rights laws and principles.

---

Need Lessons 7 - 8 - 9?
Look INSIDE for PURE's UPCOMING sessions
- What Makes a Good High School
- PURE's LSC training menu
Welcome new CPS leaders!
Let's work together for our children

It has been great to hear that new CEO Arne Duncan and new Board of Education president Michael Scott want to work with parents, local school councils, and school reform groups.

Our schools can't provide a high-quality education without strong leadership beginning with local schools and LSCs and going on up to the central office and school board. All of our school leaders need support from the community. Everyone's role should be respected and encouraged.

This is why we were so pleased to read comments like this from Duncan: "I want to assure every teacher, every principal, and every member of a local school council that I want to work together with you in partnership."

Spirit of cooperation: In that same spirit, PURE has offered our help in making this a successful administration. PURE's executive director met with Arne Duncan last month, and you can meet him, too, at PURE's annual meeting (see box this page and information inside).

Calling a truce on LSCs: When asked about his intentions toward LSCs, Duncan stated that he has no interest in trying to change the make-up of LSCs or LSC powers and duties. This will be a welcome relief: Paul Vallas tried (unsuccessfully) in a number of ways to circumvent and force changes in the school reform law to weaken LSCs. Let's hope this new mind-set trickles down to the Law Department, School and Community Relations and other CPS staffers who have worked against LSCs rather than with and for them over the past few years.

LSC IDs: PURE made a recommendation to Duncan that he direct all schools to issue ID badges to their LSC members. Since every LSC member has now had the same criminal background check as school personnel including parent volunteers, we feel that LSC members should be issued the same ID badge. Some schools already do this, but it is not common across the system. More common is an attitude that LSC members are unwelcome intruders who don't belong in the school outside of LSC meetings. Some principals even threaten LSC members with arrest, threats which were backed up by letters from CPS department heads.

Authorizing LSC ID badges would be a clear sign to LSC members, and the public, that the Vallas war on LSCs is over.

Duncan also met with at least one large group of school reform groups. The purpose of the meeting was to begin working on ways that the "best minds" in education in Chicago can be tapped before policies and other decisions are made. This must include ideas and feedback from LSCs.

CTU: More welcome change!
Congratulations to the winners of the Chicago Teachers' Union election last May. Best wishes to new CTU president Deborah Lynch-Walsh, all the vice presidents and other new officials! Many of the newly-elected leaders are long-time friends and members of PURE.

New department heads
Barbara Eason-Watkins, CEO Duncan's appointment for Chief Education Officer, has an excellent reputation as a principal. She has been recognized for her work including the many effective parent involvement programs at her former school,
Other communication tools

In 1998, PURE joined the local cable access group. In order to host our own once-a-week call-in show, we had to have a few volunteers get training on the use of the equipment used in those shows. We enjoyed doing the shows, but we soon moved on to a more challenging and rewarding aspect of cable production, that of producing our own hour-long shows. In order to do this, our volunteers had to take several more sophisticated training session on the use of the cameras, editing equipment, and computer graphics programs.

We chose to go in that direction in order to control and emphasize our message rather than just respond to random callers as in the hot line weekly show. We have been able to tape and show several PURE meetings and hold our own “Phil Donahue-style” talk show, with a live studio audience, panel, and call-in all on the same show. Johnny Holmes, the PURE staffer who is the moving force behind this program, has become skilled at interviewing people, adding in footage that illustrates our points, and helping bring to life the most important issues and problems in any situation. Once a show is completed, it airs several times on more than one of the local cable channels. A surprisingly large number of people see these shows, and through them we reach people who would otherwise not know about PURE and the work we are doing.

We have also made good use of the internet. A pro bono consultant, Sten Turpin, set up our e-mail and web site, www.pureparents.org. The internet is a way for parents all over the nation to learn from each other. We hope to have an internet discussion board for parents up on our web site soon.

Through the internet and e-mail, PURE has found new ways to share our message about powerful parent involvement. Reporters and others looking for the input of parents find us through internet searches. Interviews that PURE staffers have done over the years, along with information on our own web site, pop up in response to those searches.
V. Taking Legal Action

PURE has always been a strong advocate for public schools and their parents and teachers, and sometimes that means having to take legal action.

Our first lawsuit also took the longest to resolve. We filed this lawsuit against the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education in 1988 to challenge their misuse of so-called State Chapter 1 funds, the money which was supposed to go to low-income children for extra educational services. CPS was using a lot of this money to pay for central office personnel and other non-classroom expenses.

This lawsuit was a key reason why the School Reform Act required the State Chapter 1 funds to “follow the child” to the local school, where LSCs would decide how they were used. You can read the chronology on the next two pages for an idea of why the lawsuit took so long to resolve, and what we eventually won.

Other legal actions

PURE filed another lawsuit against the Chicago Board of Education in 1990 when they ordered the LSCs to make a decision about principal retention by February 28, 1990. This created a terrible dilemma for LSCs who had only taken office in October of 1989. LSCs were not prepared to make such an important decision so quickly. The CBOE backed down in court.

In 1991, we successfully challenged a proposed amendment which would have permitted schools to reevaluate special education students without their parents' permission.

In 1999, we filed a complaint with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights claiming that the CPS student promotion policy, which retained children based on single Iowa test scores, was discriminatory and educationally unsound. Parents had been clamoring to
file lawsuits against the CPS testing and retention policies, but a lawsuit of this sort promised to be extremely costly, and we were unable to find pro bono legal assistance for such a complicated and long-term case.

We received some excellent advice from Elaine Siegel of E.K.B. Siegel and Associates, who recommended that we try filing a U. S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights complaint.

OCR complaints are free. They require that you show evidence of discrimination, that the discriminatory policy or practice is not justified, and that there are other, less damaging alternatives. Elaine did provide us with many thousands of dollars worth of legal assistance on a pro bono basis. She helped us with research, prepared parts of the complaint, and assisted us in our follow-up activities. That was a large part of the reason why our complaint was so successful.

The resolution of PURE's complaint led to major improvements in the way CPS evaluates students. This effort is detailed in our book, “Chicago Parents’ Fair Testing Campaign.”

On the following pages are several fact sheets related to some of these legal strategies.
1988: PURE files Chapter 1 lawsuit
PURE sues CPS and ISBE. The charge: $2 billion in State Chapter 1 money which was designated to provide extra or supplemental educational programs for low-income children was being used for other purposes. PURE is represented by private attorney Michael Radzilowsky and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).
★ School Reform Act passed: includes provision that State Chapter 1 funds must "follow the child" to the local school, where local school councils (LSCs) direct the use of these funds.

1992: PURE wins on "standing" issue
After a trial court dismissed PURE's complaint because it believed parents lacked "standing" to challenge the method of allocating these funds, the Appellate court reversed this ruling and denied CPS and ISBE appeal of the ruling.

1996: PURE wins on issue of "private right of action"
After a trial court once again dismissed PURE's complaint, saying that private individuals (here, CPS parents) had no right to sue governmental bodies for dereliction of duty, but the Appellate court reversed that ruling, saying:
"Under the alleged facts, the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and the Illinois State Board of Education have and continue to permit the misuse of chapter 1 funds. In this situation, where all the state and local entities charged with implementing the General Assembly's mandate have been alleged to have been derelict in doing so, a private right of action is both necessary and proper to provide school children with an adequate remedy."

1997: PURE wins right to seek "mandamus" action
The Illinois Supreme Court handed down a decision to deny the petition of the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education to throw out our Chapter 1 lawsuit. According to PURE attorney Michael Radzilowsky, "the Chapter 1 case is a great victory because of the broad basis the court used to uphold the right of parents and students and groups such as PURE to sue both the Chicago Board of Education and the State Board of Education for their failure to properly use Chapter 1 money. They also upheld the right of the parents, students, and advocacy groups to seek a 'mandamus action' which asks the court to force the Board officials to follow the statute or risk sanctions including being sent to jail."
★ Amicus brief: PURE's case was supported by a Friend of the Court (amicus curie) brief prepared by volunteer attorney John Hundley for CALSC, Designs for Change, the Latino Institute, Senator Miguel del Valle, and Senator Donne E. Trotter.

1998: Circuit Court rules PURE'S 10-Yr-Old Chapter 1 Suit must proceed
After a 10-year delay by city and state school officials, Cook County Circuit Court Judge Albert Green ruled that PURE's State Chapter 1 lawsuit must go forward. Judge Green's September 1 ruling meant that the lawsuit must go ahead unless a settlement acceptable to PURE and the other plaintiffs is offered.

March 27, 2001: Settlement reached with new accountability and LSC support
PURE comes to an agreement with CPS and ISBE to settle our 13-year-old State Chapter lawsuit. The agreement yields increased accountability and LSC support.
Agreement yields increased accountability and LSC support

The Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois State Board of Education have settled a 13-year-old lawsuit filed by PURE alleging that CPS and ISBE failed to allocate State Chapter 1 education funds as required by state law. The funds were earmarked for low-income students. We are delighted with the settlement laid out in this agreement.

We did not demand monetary compensation. Had we done so and won, it would most likely have bankrupted the system again, which means that PURE would be back in the streets marching to get our school doors open. No one wants to go back to those bad old days!

However, this settlement does provide increased accountability by all parties, and more support for local school councils. We believe that these changes will lead to even more effective use of State Chapter 1 funds.

**CPS agreement:** Under the agreement, CPS will
- provide annual expenditure reports to each school for its State Chapter 1 funds;
- conduct two four-hour training sessions on developing budgets – including use of State Chapter 1 funds – no later than March 1 of every year beginning with 2002;
- conduct the first of these sessions together with PURE and ISBE; &
- provide all schools with a list of all of the supplemental programs which CPS provides – these are programs provided to select schools.

Annual expenditure reports will allow LSCs to verify that State Chapter 1 funds have been spent according to the budget approved by the LSC, and not in improper ways. These reports will also be a useful accountability tool for the entire school community. New budget training will increase the capacity of LSCs to make good budget decisions. We are pleased that PURE’s expertise in budget training will be put to use as we develop the training program together with CPS and ISBE. And the report on supplemental programs CPS funds centrally will provide information on the extent and equity of program distribution which is currently unavailable to the public.

**ISBE agreement:** Under the agreement, ISBE will develop a “complaint department” for charges of misuse of State Chapter 1 funds, including a process for receiving complaints, acknowledging them, and reporting back on the resolution of the complaint. They will also help provide the LSC training with CPS and PURE.

PURE has been represented by private attorney Michael Radzilowsky and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in the so-called Noyola v Board of Education case. This lawsuit survived several dismissal attempts by CPS and ISBE and two trips to the Illinois Supreme Court which ruled both times in favor of PURE.

Parents United for Responsible Education

407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927 pure@pureparents.org www.pureparents.org
PURE FACT SHEET

Parents' civil rights complaint forces major changes in CPS promotion policy

On September 25, 2000, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights formally resolved the discrimination complaint filed on October 21, 1999, by Parents United for Responsible Education against the Chicago Public Schools' student promotion policy. OCR's year-long investigation and its negotiations with CPS to resolve PURE's complaint forced major changes in the CPS policy. Parents are very pleased with this outcome which moves CPS away from a one-size-fits-all approach toward a fairer, more educationally-sound way to evaluate children's academic progress.

What are some of the major revisions?

✓ Multiple measures now the standard
The revised policy states up front that all students in 3rd, 6th, and 8th grade "will be promoted to the next grade if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade level as demonstrated by their performance on multiple measurements."

✓ Flexibility for students within score range
The revised policy no longer requires students scoring within the CPS-set Iowa test score range to meet all seven additional criteria to be promoted; they will no longer be required to retake the Iowa test at the end of summer school.

✓ "Any evidence" may be used in review
The revised policy offers parents of students scoring below the CPS-set Iowa test score range the right to request exemption from retention through a review based on the seven stated criteria and "any other evidence of acceptable reading and math skills and knowledge."

✓ Fair, clear waiver process
Under the revised policy, the waiver process must be "applied consistently throughout the District." A clear manual will be written for parents outlining the review process.

✓ Testing accommodations for LEP students. The revised policy requires that any test and all test results used to determine promotion of limited English proficient students will be evaluated to assure that the test properly evaluates LEP students' skills and knowledge.

✓ Curriculum and instruction alignment
The revised policy requires CPS to ensure "that there is a strong alignment between the tests and other assessment criteria, the curriculum, and the classroom instruction."

What was the CPS policy and practice?

✗ Iowa test score as the standard
Under the 1999 policy, Iowa test cut-scores were an absolute barrier to promotion. While CPS has claimed to use multiple measures, those other criteria – attendance and grades – were simply additional barriers.

✗ Additional barriers for students within score range
The August draft policy revision laid out an additional seven broad criteria which a student in the CPS-set score range had to meet in order to be promoted.

✗ Most retentions based on test score alone
Under the 1999 policy, other information about a student with a reading or math score below the CPS-set cut-off points was rarely considered; the student was simply retained.

✗ Waiver process arbitrary and secretive
Under the 1999 policy, students at similar schools received widely varying numbers of waivers, without any clear reason for that variation. No guidelines for the review process were available to the public. Parents were left in the dark about why their child's waiver request was approved or denied.

✗ Iowa test not validated for use with LEP students under the 1999 policy.

✗ Iowa test not aligned with Chicago learning standards
Educators and researchers repeatedly pointed out that the Iowa test is not aligned with either Chicago or Illinois learning standards.
VI. Making Parents' Voices Heard

PURE's mission statement highlights our interest in having parents at the table when decisions about schools are made. Everyone says that parents are important partners, but, in our experience, very little is done to make that happen. In fact, parents are often made to feel unwelcome in the school. This is especially true of parents who ask questions, who raise concerns, or who challenge "the way we have always done things" at the school.

Parents will continue to be marginalized until we refuse to be treated that way. LSCs in Chicago have gone a long way toward raising the level of respect and authority that parents have in the schools. Parents must take steps to make sure that their voices are heard. As the most important, and most motivated, advocate for our children, parents must be true partners with the school, not partners in name only.

March on legislators

In the early days of school reform, PURE spent a lot of time organizing parents to protest delayed school openings. The word "Responsible" is part of our name because we were so disgusted with the lack of responsibility shown by our school, city, and state leaders for our schools. They wanted to pit the parents against the teachers, but we refused to blame teachers for the lack of funding, the lack of resources, and the complete lack of concern these elected leaders showed for our children. We ended up visiting some of them on their home turf.

PURE's first protest was over the 1987 school strike, but Chicago schools opened late for a variety of other reasons. For example, Chicago schools are not legally allowed to open without a balanced budget. At PURE's summer, 1993, membership meeting, we knew that a budget deficit was looming, and we planned a proactive strategy to get school open on time that fall. Members had some great ideas including targeting both the politicians who refused to fund our schools adequately and fairly
and the businesses (such as Walgreen's, a local Chicago corporation) who paid
lobbyists to defeat the November '92 Education Referendum which would have
required the state to fund at least 50% of public education costs.

A committee led by PURE Board and general members met regularly with
community-based organizations in the "Open Schools Coalition" which carried out
extremely successful actions such as a boycott and picketing of the State Street
Walgreen's store and several events out in Wood Dale, a suburban community that is
home to the Illinois Senate President, James "Pate" Philip.

We made contact with parents in the western suburbs, especially Elmhurst where
a school referendum had just been defeated. They joined us in marching on Sen.
Philip's house one day, and on one of their state representatives another day. Then,
on what should have been the first day of school in Chicago, we took two busloads of
our children to the Wood Dale Elementary District administrative office, and
attempted to enroll them in Wood Dale schools. We created "Pate Bucks" which we
offered to Wood Dale school administrators as vouchers for our children's tuition.

These activities kept the crisis on the front burner and, although the opening of
school was delayed for one week, the governor called a special session of the
legislature to allow the schools to open without a balanced budget.
Teach-in on the lawn at the Wood Dale Elementary Schools District office.

Visiting a suburban state representative who sponsored an amendment to the law taking away a portion of the State Chapter 1 poverty money which LSCs use for special programs in their schools. The amendment was defeated.
Getting media attention

If a group of parents march in the forest and no one else is there, will it help change the schools? Of course not.

PURE regularly goes public with our issues and recommendations. PURE representatives regularly testify at Board of Education meetings, legislative hearings, City Council Education Committee meetings, and other places where school policy is discussed and decided. We are most effective when we present both a strong case that there is a problem, and a strong proposal for improvement. The current CPS administration, appointed after Paul Vallas was forced out of the CEO position in 2001, has welcomed and implemented several of PURE’s ideas.

PURE’s Ismael Vargas testifies before the Chicago Board of Education.

PURE has always worked with the media to get our message across. Joy and Bernie Noven quickly developed relationships with Chicago education reporters who appreciated their fresh perspective on the issues. Simply responding to a reporter looking for an angle in an education story has been a good way to become known and to help raise PURE’s profile. We learned to do better, to carefully consider and craft
our messages so that we can use a reporter’s call to get our own point across (if they end up using that quote!).

The best strategy, when used sparingly, is to hold your own press conference. It is important to hold press conferences only when you have an issue that will interest reporters, that has a “news hook.” Create a written package with just enough information to provide the necessary background, and include real people’s stories to illustrate the problem. We developed the capacity to write and fax a press release, make media calls, and produce a press conference. We now have broadcast fax capability and an up-to-date phone and fax list for education reporters in the city and across the country.

The following pages include a tip sheet on testifying and a sample of PURE press releases over the years.

The press interviews PURE’s Ismael Vargas.
How to testify before the Board of Education

Why testify? The Board of Education gives the public an opportunity at every monthly meeting and at special public hearings to provide input into decision making. This is one important opportunity to affect the quality of our schools and our children's education.

Know what's going on! Important things that affect your school take place at every Board meeting. You may want to assign one LSC member the responsibility to keep up with Board meetings and actions.

Speak Out! When, where, and how

- DATE: The Board's regular monthly meeting date is the 4th Wednesday of each month. This may change due to holidays or other special circumstances. Call 773/553-1600 to verify any Board meeting date.

- PLACE: Most Board meetings take place at the CPS Central Office, 125 S. Clark Street, fifth floor. These are morning meetings. School locations: During the school year, the Board may alternate downtown meetings with meetings at school sites. These meetings are held after school hours. Call 773/553-1600 to verify the time and location of that month’s meeting.

- TIME: To sign-up for public testimony, you have to get to the Central Office between 8:00-9:30 am. Public testimony runs from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Afternoon meetings: For the afternoon meetings at schools, sign-up for public testimony is from 1:30-3:00 pm. and testimony runs from 4:00-6:00 pm.

- SIGN-UP PROCEDURE: Sign-up takes place in the lobby of 125 S. Clark. It is a good idea to sign up before 9 am to be sure that you have a chance to speak before 12:30 when the Board cuts off testimony. You generally can't speak at two meetings in a row. Afternoon meetings: Look for a sign-up table near the school auditorium.

- YOUR TOPIC: You will have to fill out a form to register. To testify, you must list your topic. The Board has a policy of listening to people with similar concerns together and at the beginning of the meeting.

- BOARD MEETING TIMES: You may also stay to observe the Board business meeting which runs from noon to mid-afternoon. Afternoon meetings: For these meetings at schools, the Board business meeting will run from about 6-8:00 pm.
Speak Out! What to say

YOUR MESSAGE- Speak out about any public school issue that is important to you, your kids, and/or your school.

- **Individual concerns:** We recommend that you first try to work through personal concerns about your school with the school principal or with the appropriate Board department. If none of your attempts to resolve the problem have worked, it can help to testify about the issue (not the individuals) at a Board meeting. The Board may restrict you from mentioning specific staff people or other individuals by name.

- **Individual school issues:** The Board sometimes operates on the principle that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." It is especially effective to bring a number of people from your school with you, and to have an LSC member as your spokesperson. Be specific about what your school needs, follow up quickly on any promises, and keep in touch with the person assigned to your request.

- **Citywide issues:** It is very important that issues affecting all of our schools are discussed publicly at the Board meetings. Board members need to hear from individual LSC members out in the schools about how their policies may hurt or help us.

HELP! I'M NOT USED TO PUBLIC SPEAKING! Most LSC members have some experience with public speaking. Everyone gets nervous in front of a large formal group, but after a few tries you will become more comfortable. Remember, this is for the KIDS! Some tips to speak out effectively:

- **Write out your comments.** Even the best public speaker can get lost and confused in front of a group. Also, you can make copies of your testimony and hand them to the Board members and any reporters who are there.

- **Keep to one page.** You will have two minutes. Most people can read one typewritten page, double-spaced, slowly, in two minutes. If you talk fast, you can read more, but it is better to say less, say it clearly, make your point, and have a strong finish. You will be given additional time for translation, if necessary.

- **Request some specific resolution or action.** For your individual and school issues, make sure someone in authority is assigned to your problem, and is given specific instructions. For citywide issues, make sure that a process is laid out to address the issue.

Parents United for Responsible Education
407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel: 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927
pure@pureparents.org www.pureparents.org

57
PRESS RELEASE

April 6, 1995
Contact person: Bernie Noven, PURE Co-Chair
Julie Woestehoff, PURE Associate Director 312/907-4727

Chicago public school parents will hold a rally and march at Wilder Park in Elmhurst to protest the inadequate and inequitable funding of Illinois public schools. The rally will take place Saturday, April 8, at 12 noon. We chose Elmhurst because their school referendum was defeated Tuesday, while their legislators, House Speaker Lee Daniels, House Executive Committee member Bob Biggins, and Senate Education Committee Chair Dan Cronin are leading the fight against adequate and equitable public school funding. These legislators also support and sponsor legislation which will destroy Chicago school reform efforts by taking Chapter 1 funds away from our poorest children.

On Wednesday, April 5, PURE’s quarter-page ad appeared in the Elmhurst PRESS, inviting Elmhurst parents to join Chicago parents at our rally. We hope to bring together parents of public school children across the state to fight for our children’s education.

We will be joined by the Drum Corps of Sojourner Truth Elementary School.

People will be coming from several Chicago Public Schools, including:

Avondale
Thorp
Piccolo Middle
Orr High School
Curtis
Ninos Heroes

Inter-American
Salazar
Piccolo Elementary
VanVlissingen
Philip Sheridan

Sponsoring groups:
Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)
CityWide Coalition for School Reform
The Legislative Task Force of CityWide Coalition
(includes 16 member organizations)
Vallas LSC power grab exposes lack of central office support for local control
Timing of unnecessary policy highlights CPS administration’s lack of respect for the hard work of 6,000 volunteer LSC members, just when volunteers are most needed to step up to fill these crucial positions.

Timing of new power grab could affect number of LSC candidates
A proposal before the Chicago Board of Education today contains another inroad into local school decision making, timed to be approved less than a week before the February 29 deadline for LSC candidate nominations. The Board resolution details powers that the central office will take from LSCs whose membership falls below a quorum; other new rule changes simplify and expand the Board’s ability to remove LSC members, making it more likely for LSCs to fall below their quorum requirement.

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) objects to this ill-timed power grab which could discourage people from signing up to be LSC candidates.

Lack of Quorum easily avoided
LSCs whose membership falls below the number needed to hold a meeting and take action are extremely rare. A quorum consists of 6 members in elementary schools, 7 in high schools. The principal, two teachers, and the high school student selected at the school usually provide a stable base of 3-4 members, so that the LSC would have to lose six parent and community members all at once to fall below quorum. LSCs generally fill vacancies as they occur, and monitor potential membership loss due to graduation, student transfer, etc.

CPS accountability: The CPS Office of School and Community Relations has a staff of facilitators assigned to LSCs in each region; among other things, these facilitators are responsible for monitoring LSC membership and assisting LSCs in danger of losing a quorum. Additionally, of the eleven schools cited as lacking a quorum by the Chicago Sun-Times, one is being “re-engineered” under CPS authority (Calumet H. S.), and six others have been under CPS probation authority for several years (Clemente, Fuller, Howland, Hartigan, Smyth, Terrell). The Board’s ever-expanding power to remove LSC members — now including removal for criminal conviction or ethics disclosure violations — should be accompanied by increased Board accountability for monitoring LSC membership and increased due process protection for LSC members threatened with removal by the Board, but this is not the case.

Other options available
Under existing Board policy, school improvement plans including budget plans of schools on probation are approved by the Board, so no new authority needs to be ceded in those cases. Non-probation schools can hold prompt new elections to replace lost LSC members, as has been done in the past. For example, when CPS disbanded the Prosser LSC after declaring that school to be in educational crisis in October 1995, a new election was held the next month.

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) is a citywide organization dedicated to improving the Chicago Public Schools. PURE is a resource for CPS parents for information, support, training, & advocacy. While there are many groups working on school reform in Chicago, PURE has a special role in focusing on issues from the parents point of view.
PURE’s membership and constituency are multiracial, multi-cultural and economically diverse.

407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927 e-mail: pure@pureparents.org
Chicago Public School Parents Win Major Changes in CPS Student Promotion Policy

U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights resolves PURE complaint with major overhaul of CPS policy, ending sole reliance on Iowa test for promotion

Chicago- Today, Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) announced a resolution to their year-old discrimination complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U. S. Department of Education against the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) student promotion policy. OCR's investigation of CPS, and its subsequent complaint resolution activities, resulted in major changes in the policy.

Those changes include an end to the use of Iowa test scores alone to judge the progress of any student, implementation of true multiple measures to evaluate student progress, and a fair review process which will be clearly communicated to parents. (See page 2 for detail of changes)

PURE filed the complaint with the OCR on October 21, 1999. They charged that the CPS elementary school student promotion policy using student scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills as sole measures to determine promotion or retention had a discriminatory impact on African-American and Latino students.

PURE contended that the CPS policy violated federal legal and civil rights laws and principles. The policy has resulted in the retention in grade of tens of thousands of students and sent thousands more to segregated transition centers despite decades of solid research that retention does not help, and often hurts students. The drop out rate of twice- retained eighth graders in CPS is 29%. African-American and Latino students in Chicago have been the most affected under this policy. For example, PURE showed that the enrollment of African-American and Latino students in the transition centers is disproportionately high compared with their overall enrollment city wide.

The resolution of PURE's complaint is a precedent-setting outcome for the entire nation. High-stakes testing of public school children has swept across the country like an epidemic, and Chicago was one of the first places to catch the fever. Parents all over the nation have begun to protest the tests. They are looking for ways to protect their children from improper, discriminatory, and educationally-unsound testing practices. In fact, high-stakes testing is a major theme in the presidential election. The fact that parents in Chicago have been able to force changes in a bad policy will give hope to others. It will help other parents fight against high-stakes testing in their own state or district.

PURE is a citywide organization dedicated to improving the Chicago Public Schools.

PURE is a resource for CPS parents for information, support, training, & advocacy. While there are many groups working on school reform in Chicago, PURE has a special role in focusing on issues from the parents' point of view.

PURE's membership and constituency are multiracial, multi-cultural and economically diverse.
VIII. How to Create a Powerful Parent Organization

We believe that PURE is unique, but not impossible to duplicate. Our power comes from a source that all parents have, that is, our love for our children and our strong drive to make sure that they get a good education. Parents can do anything for their children if we set our minds to it.

Chicago offers special support including a foundation community that really believes in parent empowerment and local school councils, and is willing to fund programs that support them. LSCs themselves give us a huge organizing and communication advantage, since we can contact 6,000 LSC members with one mailing. Also, the LSC structure at each school gives parents a built-in opportunity to have an impact. You can find supports in your own community- you just have to look.

Practically speaking, an organization like PURE will generally start as an all-volunteer project, and may need a specific incident or catalyst to get started. For PURE, it was the 19-day school strike, and the apparent lack of concern our elected leaders showed for our children's education. Your community is more than likely to have some such crisis that really gets parents' attention. What's happened lately in your school or on the local education scene that's made you think, "Someone needs to do something about that!!" You can be that someone. Don't just complain about it to your family or your neighbors- seize on it as a mobilizing opportunity.

Meetings

At first you may need to meet and talk a lot. Brainstorm what you think the problems are and what some solutions could be. Do your research- what are the laws, rules, or guidelines related to the issue? Focus in on one issue and develop a strong message that makes sense so that you can communicate with a lot of people about your concern or your solution.
Identity

Choose and use a name. This should be easier once you have thought about your issue and message. Do things as an organization. Create a newsletter. Talk to your local community newspapers. Go to meetings as a representative of your group. Make buttons.

The following pages provide more tips about setting up a powerful parent organization.
As your group grows and progresses, you will probably begin to think about creating a formal organization. Here are some steps to help you move ahead.

1. **Do a reality check:** Do you have a critical mass of people committed to do the work on a continual basis? You need to have, at a minimum, 3 - 10 people concerned and passionate about the same issue, people willing to devote their time, energy, talent and money to your shared work.

2. **Define your goals and objectives:** What do you hope to achieve? The goals and objectives will also help you to determine if you need a formal organization structure. There is strength in numbers, but only when properly organized and managed.

3. **Consider the pros and cons of formal structure.** Some are listed here:

   **Pros**
   - Strength in numbers
   - Community acceptance/visibility
   - Financial support for programs/efforts

   **Cons**
   - Labor intensive
   - Management requirements
   - Staffing/budget requirements

4. **Research community and state requirements for organizational status:** The Internal Revenue Service provides certain categories of tax-free status for not-for-profit organizations: 501(c)3/7/10. Your status depends on your organizational mission.
   - Contact your Secretary of State’s office to find out the requirements. Most publish procedural guidelines.
   - There may be fees to reserve the organizational name and to incorporate. This is a legal process but it doesn’t require a lawyer to file the paperwork.

5. **Look for a fiscal agent.** Until you have completed all the requirements to be a not-for-profit group, you will need a fiscal agent to accept grant or donation monies on your behalf. Contact groups you are familiar with to ask if they will consider being your fiscal agent.

6. **Get training/consultative services** to learn some basics for effectively running your organization.

7. **Study your philanthropic community.** Pick some groups similar to what you would like yours to be, and find out where they get their funding and support. You can look on their web sites or call and ask for their annual report. Contact those foundations which fund their work and begin to talk to them about possible support for your group.

8. **Look for more resources on the following page** which lists books and web sites which offer more detail about non-profit organizational structure and development.

   **Good Luck!!!**

Parent Reunification and Education (PURE)
407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605  Tel. 312/461-1994  Fax: 312/461-1927  www.pureparents.org  e-mail: pure@pureparents.org
Creating and Managing your Non-Profit Organization

Resource List

Suggested Reading List

John M. Bryson, Creating and Implementing your Strategic Plan, ISBN 0-478790142-3

Web sites

Alliance for Nonprofit Management:  www.allianceonline.org
Association of Fundraising Professionals: www.nsfre.org
Hall Management Corporation:  www.hallmgtcorp.org
National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center:  www.safeyouth.org
National Organizers Alliance: www.noacentral.org
People for the American Way Education Alliance: www.pfaw.org
Parents United for Responsible Education:  www.pureparents.org
Public Agenda:  www.publicagenda.org
The Foundation Center: www.fdncenter.org

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)
407 S. Dearborn #515 Chicago, IL 60605 Tel. 312/461-1994 Fax: 312/461-1927
www.pureparents.org   e-mail: pure@pureparents.org
Julie Woestehoff, Executive Director: Julie has been PURE’s executive director since 1995. She was a PURE volunteer beginning in 1989 and became PURE’s second staff member in January, 1990. She is a parent of two CPS graduates and a seven-year veteran LSC member (Field Elementary, Newberry Math and Science Academy). Julie holds a master’s degree from the University of Chicago.

From 1995-97, Julie chaired the Content Committee of the LSC Training Coalition established by the Dean of Education, University of Illinois-Chicago, which created the LSC basic training curriculum. She is the editor of PURE’s two quarterly newsletters which cover key education issues and have a combined readership of nearly 8,000. She has written articles for the national education journals *Rethinking Schools* and *Catalyst*.

Julie is a frequent speaker on topics of parent involvement, site-based management, and student testing, recently at national conferences of the Diversity Challenge (2002), American Association of Publishers’ Education Division (2000), National Coalition of Chapter I/Title 1 Parents (2000), Rainbow/PUSH (1998), and the Whole Language Umbrella (2001). She is regularly interviewed for national and local education news stories by National Public Radio, *Education Week*, CNN, TIME, MSNBC, etc.

Julie is member of the Board of Directors of the Teachers’ Task Force and the Chicago School Leadership Development Cooperative.

Ismael Vargas, Assistant Director:
Ismael has been PURE’s Assistant Director since July, 2002. A PURE advocate/trainer since January, 1997, he was formerly a public health field interviewer and is a graduate of CPS’s Juarez High School. Ismael is a parent of three children who currently attend public school in suburban Cicero, where the family moved in 2000. Ismael was the LSC Chair at Finkl School and a member of the Finkl Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee and Parent Patrol. Ismael is a past Board member of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning.

Ismael is fluent in English and Spanish. He is in the process of completing coursework and credentialing in counseling and addiction studies at the Christ Center School; the curriculum covers such topics as addictions, pharmacology, family systems, sexuality and intimacy, HIV/AIDS, assessment and treatment planning, diagnosis, and individual, family, and group counseling.

He represents PURE at the Education Committee of Sen. Miguel DelValle, the CPS Task Force on the Bilingual Policy, and the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative.
Johnny O. Holmes, Advocate/Trainer: Johnny joined the PURE staff in December, 1997. He had been a taxi driver and a concession owner. He has also been an election judge. Johnny is a graduate of Calumet High School. Johnny is the parent of two including one current CPS student. He is the former chair of the Revere Elementary LSC where he was a member for seven years. Johnny served as a member of PURE's Board of Directors for three years including two terms as PURE's co-chair.

Johnny has recently completed basic studio production, portable and editing, and PVOM video training through Chicago Access Cable which enables him to produce in the studio and the field. He is especially well-versed in local school budgets.

Wanda Hopkins, Advocate/Trainer: Wanda began working for PURE in December, 1997. She had previously worked at Emerson House, in VISTA both as a paid staffer and a volunteer, as a teacher assistant, and in the Department of Human Services. Wanda has attended Aurora University and Wilbur Wright College, and received a Certificate for Community Developers from John Marshall Law School. Wanda has four children; she has served as an LSC member since the beginning of school reform and currently sits on the Lewis LSC and the Prosser High School LSC as a community member.

Wanda chairs several boards including the A.B. C. Foundation, the Chicago Energy Council, and the 13th District Youth and Family Committee. She has primary responsibility for PURE's Early Childhood project.

Willard Hall, Consultant: Willard is a member of PURE's Board of Directors. He also provides PURE with expert consultant services in several of his areas of expertise which include educational systems consulting, administrative and personnel management, strategic planning, human resources development, computer system management, budget and logistics management, facilities management, conference planning, corporate/organizational outreach, public relations and marketing, school improvement efforts, and teacher professional development.

As a member of the National-Louis University (NLU) College of Education team, Willard spent the past five years working with school and district professional development teams. While he completes his dissertation, he is a member of the NLU adjunct faculty teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in the College of Education. During the period 1994-1998, he served as an organization liaison and consultant for the Department of Defense Dependent School System in Europe working on projects with several community organizations dealing with issues of school improvement and teacher professional development.

Willard is a doctoral candidate at National-Louis University, completing an Ed.D in Curriculum and Social Inquiry. He is in the process of completing his dissertation; his primary research focus has dealt with issues of Urban Education Policy Development. His dissertation topic is "Community Agency and Parental Involvement in School Governance." This study has involved a three-year study of the Chicago school reform and education community.
Appendix
Article 34.
Cities of Over 500,000 Inhabitants - Board of Education
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-1. Application of article; Definitions
Statute text
Sec. 34-1. Application of article; Definitions. This Article applies only to cities having a population exceeding 500,000.
"Trustees", when used in this Article, means the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees created by this amendatory Act of 1995 and serving as the governing board of the school district organized under this Article beginning with its appointment on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of 1995 and continuing until June 30, 1999 or the appointment of a new Chicago Board of Education as provided in Section 34-3 [105 ILCS 5/34-3], whichever is later.
"Board", or "board of education" when used in this Article, means: (i) the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees for the period that begins with the appointment of the Trustees and that ends on the later of June 30, 1999 or the appointment of a new Chicago Board of Education as provided in Section 34-3 [105 ILCS 5/34-3]; and (ii) the new Chicago Board of Education from and after June 30, 1999 or from and after its appointment as provided in Section 34-3 [105 ILCS 5/34-3], whichever is later.
Except during the period that begins with the appointment of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of 1995 and that ends on the later of June 30, 1999 or the appointment of a new Chicago Board of Education as provided in Section 34-3 [105 ILCS 5/34-3]; (i) the school district organized under this Article may be subject to further limitations imposed under Article 34A; and (ii) the provisions of Article 34A prevail over the other provisions of this Act, including the provisions of this Article, to the extent of any conflict.
History
(Source: P.A. 81-1221; 89-15, § 5.)
Annotations
Note.
This section was Ill.Rev.Stat., Ch. 122, Para. 34-1.
As to the purpose and applicability of P.A. 86-1477, see Sections 1, 4 and 5 thereof, which ratify certain actions and proceedings taken pursuant to this Article as enacted by P.A. 85-1418.
Illinois Administrative Code.
See 23 Illinois Administrative Code, § 110.110.
Effect of Amendments. The 1995 amendment by P.A. 89-15, effective May 30, 1995, in the section catchline substituted "Definitions" for "Definition of Board"; added the definition of Trustees; in the definition of Board inserted "or 'board of education'" and substituted the language beginning "(i) the Chicago" for "board of education"; and in the last paragraph, substituted "Except during the period that begins with the appointment of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of 1995 and that ends on the later of June 30, 1999 or the appointment of a new Chicago Board of Education as provided in Section 34-3: (i) the" for "Any" and substituted "and (ii)" for "When an Authority has been created under Article 34A for any district operating under this Article".
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-1.01. Intent
Statute text

Sec. 34-1.01. Intent. The General Assembly has previously established that the primary purpose of schooling is the transmission of knowledge and culture through which children learn in areas necessary to their continuing development, and the General Assembly has defined these areas as including language arts, mathematics, biological, physical and social sciences, the fine arts, and physical development and health. The General Assembly declares its intent to achieve the primary purpose of schooling in elementary and secondary schools subject to this Article, as now or hereafter amended, in cities of over 500,000 inhabitants, through the provisions of this amendatory Act of 1991.

A. Goals. In the furtherance of this intent, the General Assembly is committed to the belief that, while such urban schools should foster improvement and student growth in a number of areas, first priority should be given to achieving the following goals:
1. assuring that students show significant progress toward meeting and exceeding State performance standards in State mandated learning areas, including the mastery of higher order thinking skills in these and other learning areas;
2. assuring that students attend school regularly and graduate from high school at rates that equal or surpass national norms;
3. assuring that students are adequately prepared for further education and aiding students in making a successful transition to further education;
4. assuring that students are adequately prepared for successful entry into employment and aiding students in making a successful transition to employment;
5. assuring that students are, to the maximum extent possible, provided with a common learning experience that is of high academic quality and that reflects high expectations for all students' capacities to learn;
6. assuring that students are better prepared to compete in the international market place by having foreign language proficiency and stronger international studies;
7. assuring that students are encouraged in exploring potential interests in fields such as journalism, drama, art and music;
8. assuring that individual teachers are granted the professional authority to make decisions about instruction and the method of teaching;
9. assuring that students are provided the means to express themselves creatively and to respond to the artistic expression of others through the visual arts, music, drama, and dance; and
10. assuring that students are provided adequate athletic programs that encourage pride and positive identification with the attendance center and that reduce the number of dropouts and teenage delinquents.

B. Achieving goals. To achieve these priority goals, the General Assembly intends to make the individual local school the essential unit for educational governance and improvement and to establish a process for placing the primary responsibility for school governance and improvement in furtherance of such goals in the hands of parents, community residents, teachers, and the school principal at the school level.

Further, to achieve these priority goals, the General Assembly intends to lodge with the board of
education key powers in limited areas related to district-wide policy, so that the board of
education supports school-level governance and improvement and carries out functions that can
be performed more efficiently through centralized action.
The General Assembly does not intend to alter or amend the provisions of the desegregation
obligations of the board of education, including but not limited to the Consent Decree or the
Desegregation Plan in United States v. Chicago Board of Education, 80 C 5124, U.S. District
Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Accordingly, the implementation of this amendatory
Act of 1991, to the extent practicable, shall be consistent with and, in all cases, shall be subject to
the desegregation obligations pursuant to such Consent Decree and Desegregation Plan.
History
(Source: P.A. 86-1477; 87-455; 88-686, § 5.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-1.02. Educational reform
Statute text
Sec. 34-1.02. Educational reform. The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that
educational reform in school districts organized under this Article shall be implemented in such
manner that:
1. the percentage of entering freshmen who 4 years later graduate from 12th grade from each high
   school attendance center within the district in each of the 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1992-93
   and 1993-94 school years exceeds by at least 5% the percentage of similar students graduating
   from that high school attendance center in the immediately preceding school year;
2. the average daily student attendance rate within the district in each of the 1989-90, 1990 91,
   1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years exceeds by at least 1% the average daily student
   attendance rate within the district for the immediately preceding school year;
3. by the conclusion of the 1993-1994 school year, the percentage of students within the district
   failing and not advancing to the next higher grade or graduating is at least 10% less than the
   percentage of students within the district failing and not advancing to the next higher grade or
   graduating at the conclusion of the 1987-88 school year;
4. on an annual basis, each attendance center within the district makes significant progress toward
   meeting and exceeding State performance standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and other
   State mandated learning areas, including the mastery of higher order thinking skills in these
   learning areas. Significant annual progress toward meeting and exceeding State performance
   standards shall occur for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or income status, based
   on the expectation that these subgroups shall meet and exceed State performance standards.
Annual objectives for significant progress and timeframes during which the students' performance
overall and as measured within subgroups will meet and exceed State performance standards shall
be specified in the school improvement plan required in Section 34-2.4 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.4]; and
5. appropriate improvement and progress are realized each school year in each attendance center
   within the district, when compared to the performance of such attendance center during the
   immediately preceding school year, in advancing toward and achieving the objectives established
   by paragraphs 1 through 4 of this Section.
History
(Source: P.A. 86-124; 86-1477; 88-686, § 5.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-1.1. Definitions
Statute text
Sec. 34-1.1. Definitions. As used in this Article:
"Academic Accountability Council" means the Chicago Schools Academic Accountability Council created under Section 34-3.4 [105 ILCS 5/34-3.4].
"Local School Council" means a local school council established under Section 34-2.1 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.1].
"School" and "attendance center" are used interchangeably to mean any attendance center operated pursuant to this Article and under the direction of one principal.
"Secondary Attendance Center" means a school which has students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 (although it may also have students enrolled in grades below grade 9).
"Local Attendance Area School" means a school which has a local attendance area established by the board.
"Multi-area school" means a school other than a local attendance area school.
"Parent" means a parent or legal guardian of an enrolled student of an attendance center.
"Community resident" means a person, 18 years of age or older, residing within an attendance area served by a school, excluding any person who is a parent of a student enrolled in that school; provided that with respect to any multi-area school, community resident means any person, 18 years of age or older, residing within the voting district established for that school pursuant to Section 34-2.1c [105 ILCS 5/34-2.1c], excluding any person who is a parent of a student enrolled in that school.
"School staff" means all certificated and uncertificated school personnel, including all teaching and administrative staff (other than the principal) and including all custodial, food service and other civil service employees, who are employed at and assigned to perform the majority of their employment duties at one attendance center served by the same local school council.
"Regular meetings" means the meeting dates established by the local school council at its annual organizational meeting.
History
(Source: P.A. 86-124; 86-1477; 87-454; 87-455; 87-895; 88-511, § 25; 89-15, § 5.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2. City to constitute district - Corporate status of board
Statute text
Sec. 34-2. City to constitute district - Corporate status of board. Each city having a population exceeding 500,000 shall constitute one school district which shall maintain a system of free schools under the charge of a board of education. The district shall be a body politic and corporate by the name of "Board of Education of the City of ......." and by that name may sue and be sued in all courts and places where judicial proceedings are had.
History
(Source: Laws 1961, p. 31.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.1. Local School Councils - Composition - Voter-Eligibility - Elections - Terms
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.1. Local School Councils - Composition - Voter-Eligibility - Elections - Terms. (a) A local school council shall be established for each attendance center within the school district. Each local school council shall consist of the following 11 voting members: the principal of the attendance center, 2 teachers employed and assigned to perform the majority of their employment duties at the attendance center, 6 parents of students currently enrolled at the attendance center and 2 community residents. Neither the parents nor the community residents who serve as members of the local school council shall be employees of the Board of Education. In each secondary attendance center, the local school council shall consist of 12 voting members - the 11 voting members described above and one full-time student member, appointed as provided in subsection (m) below. In the event that the chief executive officer of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees determines that a local school council is not carrying out its financial duties effectively, the chief executive officer is authorized to appoint a representative of the business community with experience in finance and management to serve as an advisor to the local school council for the purpose of providing advice and assistance to the local school council on fiscal matters. The advisor shall have access to relevant financial records of the local school council. The advisor may attend executive sessions. The chief executive officer shall issue a written policy defining the circumstances under which a local school council is not carrying out its financial duties effectively.
(b) Within 7 days of January 11, 1991, the Mayor shall appoint the members and officers (a Chairperson who shall be a parent member and a Secretary) of each local school council who shall hold their offices until their successors shall be elected and qualified. Members so appointed shall have all the powers and duties of local school councils as set forth in this amendatory Act of 1991. The Mayor's appointments shall not require approval by the City Council. The membership of each local school council shall be encouraged to be reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the student population of the attendance center served by the local school council.
(c) Beginning with the 1995-1996 school year and in every even-numbered year thereafter, the Board shall set second semester Parent Report Card Pick-up Day for Local School Council elections and may schedule elections at year-round schools for the same dates as the remainder of the school system. Elections shall be conducted as provided herein by the Board of Education in consultation with the local school council at each attendance center.
(d) Beginning with the 1995-96 school year, the following procedures shall apply to the election of local school council members at each attendance center:
(i) The elected members of each local school council shall consist of the 6 parent members and the 2 community resident members.
(ii) Each elected member shall be elected by the eligible voters of that attendance center to serve for a two-year term commencing on July 1 immediately following the election described in subsection (c). Eligible voters for each attendance center shall consist of the parents and community residents for that attendance center.
(iii) Each eligible voter shall be entitled to cast one vote for up to a total of 5 candidates, irrespective of whether such candidates are parent or community resident candidates.
(iv) Each parent voter shall be entitled to vote in the local school council election at each attendance center in which he or she has a child currently enrolled. Each community resident voter
shall be entitled to vote in the local school council election at each attendance center for which he or she resides in the applicable attendance area or voting district, as the case may be.

(v) Each eligible voter shall be entitled to vote once, but not more than once, in the local school council election at each attendance center at which the voter is eligible to vote.

(vi) The 2 teacher members of each local school council shall be appointed as provided in subsection (l) below each to serve for a two-year term coinciding with that of the elected parent and community resident members.

(vii) At secondary attendance centers, the voting student member shall be appointed as provided in subsection (m) below to serve for a one-year term coinciding with the beginning of the terms of the elected parent and community members of the local school council.

(c) The Council shall publicize the date and place of the election by posting notices at the attendance center, in public places within the attendance boundaries of the attendance center and by distributing notices to the pupils at the attendance center, and shall utilize such other means as it deems necessary to maximize the involvement of all eligible voters.

(f) Nomination. The Council shall publicize the opening of nominations by posting notices at the attendance center, in public places within the attendance boundaries of the attendance center and by distributing notices to the pupils at the attendance center, and shall utilize such other means as it deems necessary to maximize the involvement of all eligible voters. Not less than 2 weeks before the election date, persons eligible to run for the Council shall submit their name, date of birth, social security number, if available, and some evidence of eligibility to the Council. The Council shall encourage nomination of candidates reflecting the racial/ethnic population of the students at the attendance center. Each person nominated who runs as a candidate shall disclose, in a manner determined by the Board, any economic interest held by such person, by such person's spouse or children, or by each business entity in which such person has an ownership interest, in any contract with the Board, any local school council or any public school in the school district. Each person nominated who runs as a candidate shall also disclose, in a manner determined by the Board, if he or she ever has been convicted of any of the offenses specified in subsection (c) of Section 34-18.5 [105 ILCS 5/34-18.5]; provided that neither this provision nor any other provision of this Section shall be deemed to require the disclosure of any information that is contained in any law enforcement record or juvenile court record that is confidential or whose accessibility or disclosure is restricted or prohibited under Section 5-901 or 5-905 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 [705 ILCS 405/5-901 or 705 ILCS 405/5-905]. Failure to make such disclosure shall render a person ineligible for election or to serve on the local school council. The same disclosure shall be required of persons under consideration for appointment to the Council pursuant to subsections (l) and (m) of this Section.

(f-5) Notwithstanding disclosure, a person who has been convicted of any of the following offenses at any time shall be ineligible for election or appointment to a local school council and ineligible for appointment to a local school council pursuant to subsections (l) and (m) of this Section: (i) those defined in Section 11-6, 11-9.1, 11-16, 11-17.1, 11-19, 11-19.1, 11-19.2, 11-20.1, 12-13, 12-14, 12-14.1, 12-15, or 12-16 of the Criminal Code of 1961 [720 ILCS 5/11-6, 720 ILCS 5/11-9.1, 720 ILCS 5/11-16, 720 ILCS 5/11-17.1, 720 ILCS 5/11-19, 720 ILCS 5/11-19.1, 720 ILCS 5/11-19.2, 720 ILCS 5/11-20.1, 720 ILCS 5/12-13, 720 ILCS 5/12-14, 720 ILCS 12-14.1, 720 ILCS 12-15, or 720 ILCS 5/12-16] or (ii) any offense committed or attempted in any other state or against the laws of the United States, which, if committed or attempted in this State, would have been punishable as one or more of the foregoing offenses. Notwithstanding
disclosure, a person who has been convicted of any of the following offenses within the 10 years previous to the date of nomination or appointment shall be ineligible for election or appointment to a local school council: (i) those defined in Section 401.1, 405.1, or 405.2 of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act [720 ILCS 570/401.1, 720 ILCS 570/405.1, or 720 ILCS 570/405.2] or (ii) any offense committed or attempted in any other state or against the laws of the United States, which, if committed or attempted in this State, would have been punishable as one or more of the foregoing offenses.

Immediately upon election or appointment, incoming local school council members shall be required to undergo a criminal background investigation, to be completed prior to the member taking office, in order to identify any criminal convictions under the offenses enumerated in Section 34-18.5 [105 ILCS 5/34-18.5]. The investigation shall be conducted by the Department of State Police in the same manner as provided for in Section 34-18.5 [105 ILCS 5/34-18.5]. However, notwithstanding Section 34-18.5 [105 ILCS 5/34-18.5], the social security number shall be provided only if available. If it is determined at any time that a local school council member or member-elect has been convicted of any of the offenses enumerated in this Section or failed to disclose a conviction of any of the offenses enumerated in Section 34-18.5 [105 ILCS 5/34-18.5], the general superintendent shall notify the local school council member or member-elect of such determination and the local school council member or member-elect shall be removed from the local school council by the Board, subject to a hearing, convened pursuant to Board rule, prior to removal.

(g) At least one week before the election date, the Council shall publicize, in the manner provided in subsection (e), the names of persons nominated for election.

(h) Voting shall be in person by secret ballot at the attendance center between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

(i) Candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected by the Council. In cases of a tie, the Council shall determine the winner by lot.

(j) The Council shall certify the results of the election and shall publish the results in the minutes of the Council.

(k) The general superintendent shall resolve any disputes concerning election procedure or results and shall ensure that, except as provided in subsections (e) and (g), no resources of any attendance center shall be used to endorse or promote any candidate.

(l) Beginning with the 1995-1996 school year and in every even numbered year thereafter, the Board shall appoint 2 teacher members to each local school council. These appointments shall be made in the following manner:

(i) The Board shall appoint 2 teachers who are employed and assigned to perform the majority of their employment duties at the attendance center to serve on the local school council of the attendance center for a two-year term coinciding with the terms of the elected parent and community members of that local school council. These appointments shall be made from among those teachers who are nominated in accordance with subsection (f).

(ii) A non-binding, advisory poll to ascertain the preferences of the school staff regarding appointments of teachers to the local school council for that attendance center shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures used to elect parent and community Council representatives. At such poll, each member of the school staff shall be entitled to indicate his or her preference for up to 2 candidates from among those who submitted statements of candidacy as described above. These preferences shall be advisory only and the Board shall maintain absolute discretion to
appoint teacher members to local school councils, irrespective of the preferences expressed in any such poll.

(iii) In the event that a teacher representative is unable to perform his or her employment duties at the school due to illness, disability, leave of absence, disciplinary action, or any other reason, the Board shall declare a temporary vacancy and appoint a replacement teacher representative to serve on the local school council until such time as the teacher member originally appointed pursuant to this subsection (l) resumes service at the attendance center or for the remainder of the term. The replacement teacher representative shall be appointed in the same manner and by the same procedures as teacher representatives are appointed in subdivisions (i) and (ii) of this subsection (l).

(m) Beginning with the 1995-1996 school year, and in every year thereafter, the Board shall appoint one student member to each secondary attendance center. These appointments shall be made in the following manner:

(i) Appointments shall be made from among those students who submit statements of candidacy to the principal of the attendance center, such statements to be submitted commencing on the first day of the twentieth week of school and continuing for 2 weeks thereafter. The form and manner of such candidacy statements shall be determined by the Board.

(ii) During the twenty-second week of school in every year, the principal of each attendance center shall conduct a non-binding, advisory poll to ascertain the preferences of the school students regarding the appointment of a student to the local school council for that attendance center. At such poll, each student shall be entitled to indicate his or her preference for up to one candidate from among those who submitted statements of candidacy as described above. The Board shall promulgate rules to ensure that these non-binding, advisory polls are conducted in a fair and equitable manner and maximize the involvement of all school students. The preferences expressed in these non-binding, advisory polls shall be transmitted by the principal to the Board. However, these preferences shall be advisory only and the Board shall maintain absolute discretion to appoint student members to local school councils, irrespective of the preferences expressed in any such poll.

(iii) For the 1995-96 school year only, appointments shall be made from among those students who submitted statements of candidacy to the principal of the attendance center during the first 2 weeks of the school year. The principal shall communicate the results of any nonbinding, advisory poll to the Board. These results shall be advisory only, and the Board shall maintain absolute discretion to appoint student members to local school councils, irrespective of the preferences expressed in any such poll.

(n) The Board may promulgate such other rules and regulations for election procedures as may be deemed necessary to ensure fair elections.

(o) In the event that a vacancy occurs during a member's term, the Council shall appoint a person eligible to serve on the Council, to fill the unexpired term created by the vacancy, except that any teacher vacancy shall be filled by the Board after considering the preferences of the school staff as ascertained through a non-binding advisory poll of school staff.

(p) If less than the specified number of persons is elected within each candidate category, the newly elected local school council shall appoint eligible persons to serve as members of the Council for two-year terms.

(q) The Board shall promulgate rules regarding conflicts of interest and disclosure of economic interests which shall apply to local school council members and which shall require reports or
statements to be filed by Council members at regular intervals with the Secretary of the Board. Failure to comply with such rules or intentionally falsifying such reports shall be grounds for disqualification from local school council membership. A vacancy on the Council for disqualification may be so declared by the Secretary of the Board. Rules regarding conflicts of interest and disclosure of economic interests promulgated by the Board shall apply to local school council members. No less than 45 days prior to the deadline, the general superintendent shall provide notice, by mail, to each local school council member of all requirements and forms for compliance with economic interest statements.

(r) (1) If a parent member of a Local School Council ceases to have any child enrolled in the attendance center governed by the local School Council due to the graduation or voluntary transfer of a child or children from the attendance center, the parent's membership on the Local School Council and all voting rights are terminated immediately as of the date of the child's graduation or voluntary transfer. Further, a local school council member may be removed from the Council by a majority vote of the Council as provided in subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2] if the Council member has missed 3 consecutive regular meetings, not including committee meetings, or 5 regular meetings in a 12 month period, not including committee meetings. If a parent member of a local school council ceases to be eligible to serve on the Council for any other reason, he or she shall be removed by the Board subject to a hearing, convened pursuant to Board rule, prior to removal. A vote to remove a Council member by the local school council shall only be valid if the Council member has been notified personally or by certified mail, mailed to the person's last known address, of the Council's intent to vote on the Council member's removal at least 7 days prior to the vote. The Council member in question shall have the right to explain his or her actions and shall be eligible to vote on the question of his or her removal from the Council. The provisions of this subsection shall be contained within the petitions used to nominate Council candidates.

(2) A person may continue to serve as a community resident member of a local school council as long as he or she resides in the attendance area served by the school and is not employed by the Board nor is a parent of a student enrolled at the school. If a community resident member ceases to be eligible to serve on the Council, he or she shall be removed by the Board subject to a hearing, convened pursuant to Board rule, prior to removal.

(3) A person may continue to serve as a teacher member of a local school council as long as he or she is employed and assigned to perform a majority of his or her duties at the school, provided that if the teacher representative resigns from employment with the Board or voluntarily transfers to another school, the teacher's membership on the local school council and all voting rights are terminated immediately as of the date of the teacher's resignation or upon the date of the teacher's voluntary transfer to another school. If a teacher member of a local school council ceases to be eligible to serve on a local school council for any other reason, that member shall be removed by the Board subject to a hearing, convened pursuant to Board rule, prior to removal.

History
(Source: P.A. 86-124; 86-1477; 87-454; 87-455; 87-895; 88-511, § 8.5; 88-686, § 5; 89-15, § 5; 89-369, § 5; 89-626, § 2-36; 89-636, § 5; 90-378, § 5; 90-590, § 1001-16; 91-622, § 10; 91-728, § 5.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.1c. Multi-Area Schools - Establishment of Voting Districts
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.1c. Multi-Area Schools - Establishment of Voting Districts. (a) On or before September 1, 1991, the Board shall establish a voting district for each multi-area school. The Board shall take into account the following criteria in establishing such voting districts:
(i) in cases where the multi-area school was previously a school with a local attendance area established by the Board, the boundaries of such local attendance area;
(ii) the location of physical characteristics in the surrounding geographic area, including but not limited to, expressways, rapid transit and railroad rights-of-way, rivers and viaducts;
(iii) the location of established neighborhood and community area boundaries and of boundaries established for other elected offices within the city and the State;
(iv) size of student population; and
(v) compactness and contiguity of voting districts.
Prior to establishing voting districts for multi-area schools, the Board shall hold at least one public hearing thereon. The Board shall establish procedures to ensure the maximum participation of all interested persons in such hearing or hearings.
(b) The Board shall publicize the location and description of these voting districts by posting notices at each multi-area school and in public places within each voting district, by distributing notices to students at the multi-area school and by placing notices both in daily newspapers of general circulation published in the city and in local and community newspapers published within each voting district. The Board shall utilize other means to ensure adequate dissemination of the description and location of the voting districts.
(c) The Board may adjust or alter the voting districts of any multi-area school once every tenth year. The Board shall utilize the same criteria and procedures described above in connection with any adjustment or alteration of any voting district.
(d) With respect to any school designated as a multi-area school subsequent to the establishment of voting districts, as described in subsection (a), or subsequent to the adjustment of these districts, as described in subsection (c), the Board shall establish a voting district for that school prior to the commencement of its operation as a multi-area school. The Board shall utilize the same criteria and procedures described in subsection (a) in connection with the establishment of such a voting district.
History
(Source: P.A. 87-454.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.2. Local school councils - Manner of operation
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.2. Local school councils - Manner of operation. (a) The annual organizational meeting of each local school council shall be held at the attendance center. At the annual organization meeting, which shall be held no sooner than July 1 and no later than July 14, a parent member of the local school council shall be selected by the members of such council as its chairperson, and a secretary shall be selected by the members of such council from among their number, each to serve a term of one year. Whenever a vacancy in the office of chairperson or secretary of a local school council shall occur, a new chairperson (who shall be a parent member) or secretary, as the case may be, shall be elected by the members of the local school council from among their number to serve as such chairperson or secretary for the unexpired term of office in which the vacancy
occurs. At each annual organizational meeting, the time and place of any regular meetings of the local school council shall be fixed. Special meetings of the local school council may be called by the chairperson or by any 4 members by giving notice thereof in writing, specifying the time, place and purpose of the meeting. Public notice of meetings shall also be given in accordance with the Open Meetings Act [5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.].
(b) Members and officers of the local school council shall serve without compensation and without reimbursement of any expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, except that the board of education may by rule establish a procedure and thereunder provide for reimbursement of members and officers of local school councils for such of their reasonable and necessary expenses (excluding any lodging or meal expenses) incurred in the performance of their duties as the board may deem appropriate.
(c) A majority of the full membership of the local school council shall constitute a quorum, and whenever a vote is taken on any measure before the local school council, a quorum being present, the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes of the full membership then serving of the local school council shall determine the outcome thereof; provided that whenever the measure before the local school council is (i) the evaluation of the principal, or (ii) the renewal of his or her performance contract or the inclusion of any provision or modification of the contract, or (iii) the direct selection by the local school council of a new principal (including a new principal to fill a vacancy) to serve under a 4 year performance contract, or (iv) the determination of the names of candidates to be submitted to the general superintendent for the position of principal, the principal and student member of a high school council shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present to act on the measure and shall have no vote thereon; and provided further that 7 affirmative votes of the local school council shall be required for the direct selection by the local school council of a new principal to serve under a 4 year performance contract but not for the renewal of a principal's performance contract.
(d) Student members of high school councils shall not be eligible to vote on personnel matters, including but not limited to principal evaluations and contracts and the allocation of teaching and staff resources.
(e) The local school council of an attendance center which provides bilingual education shall be encouraged to provide translators at each council meeting to maximize participation of parents and the community.
(f) Each local school council of an attendance center which provides bilingual education shall create a Bilingual Advisory Committee or recognize an existing Bilingual Advisory Committee as a standing committee. The Chair and a majority of the members of the advisory committee shall be parents of students in the bilingual education program. The parents on the advisory committee shall be selected by parents of students in the bilingual education program, and the committee shall select a Chair. The advisory committee for each secondary attendance center shall include at least one full-time bilingual education student. The Bilingual Advisory Committee shall serve only in an advisory capacity to the local school council.
(g) Local school councils may utilize the services of an arbitration board to resolve intra-council disputes.
History
(Source: P.A. 86-1477; 87-454; 87-455; 87-895; 88-85, § 55; 88-686, § 5; 89-15, § 5; 91-622, § 10.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.3. Local school councils - Powers and duties

Statute text

Sec. 34-2.3. Local school councils - Powers and duties. Each local school council shall have and exercise, consistent with the provisions of this Article and the powers and duties of the board of education, the following powers and duties:

1. (A) To annually evaluate the performance of the principal of the attendance center using a Board approved principal evaluation form, which shall include the evaluation of (i) student academic improvement, as defined by the school improvement plan, (ii) student absenteeism rates at the school, (iii) instructional leadership, (iv) the effective implementation of programs, policies, or strategies to improve student academic achievement, (v) school management, and (vi) any other factors deemed relevant by the local school council, including, without limitation, the principal's communication skills and ability to create and maintain a student-centered learning environment, to develop opportunities for professional development, and to encourage parental involvement and community partnerships to achieve school improvement;

(B) to determine in the manner provided by subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2] and subdivision 1.5 of this Section whether the performance contract of the principal shall be renewed; and

(C) to directly select, in the manner provided by subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2], a new principal (including a new principal to fill a vacancy) - without submitting any list of candidates for that position to the general superintendent as provided in paragraph 2 of this Section - to serve under a 4 year performance contract; provided that (i) the determination of whether the principal's performance contract is to be renewed, based upon the evaluation required by subdivision 1.5 of this Section, shall be made no later than 150 days prior to the expiration of the current performance-based contract of the principal, (ii) in cases where such performance contract is not renewed - a direct selection of a new principal - to serve under a 4 year performance contract shall be made by the local school council no later than 45 days prior to the expiration of the current performance contract of the principal, and (iii) a selection by the local school council of a new principal to fill a vacancy under a 4 year performance contract shall be made within 90 days after the date such vacancy occurs. A Council shall be required, if requested by the principal, to provide in writing the reasons for the council's not renewing the principal's contract.

1.5. The local school council's determination of whether to renew the principal's contract shall be based on an evaluation to assess the educational and administrative progress made at the school during the principal's current performance-based contract. The local school council shall base its evaluation on (i) student academic improvement, as defined by the school improvement plan, (ii) student absenteeism rates at the school, (iii) instructional leadership, (iv) the effective implementation of programs, policies, or strategies to improve student academic achievement, (v) school management, and (vi) any other factors deemed relevant by the local school council, including, without limitation, the principal's communication skills and ability to create and maintain a student-centered learning environment, to develop opportunities for professional development, and to encourage parental involvement and community partnerships to achieve school improvement. If a local school council fails to renew the performance contract of a principal rated by the general superintendent, or his or her designee, in the previous years' evaluations as meeting or exceeding expectations, the principal, within 15 days after the local
school council's decision not to renew the contract, may request a review of the local school council's principal non-retention decision by a hearing officer appointed by the American Arbitration Association. A local school council member or members or the general superintendent may support the principal's request for review. During the period of the hearing officer's review of the local school council's decision on whether or not to retain the principal, the local school council shall maintain all authority to search for and contract with a person to serve as interim or acting principal, or as the principal of the attendance center under a 4-year performance contract, provided that any performance contract entered into by the local school council shall be voidable or modified in accordance with the decision of the hearing officer. The principal may request review only once while at that attendance center. If a local school council renews the contract of a principal who failed to obtain a rating of "meets" or "exceeds expectations" in the general superintendent's evaluation for the previous year, the general superintendent, within 15 days after the local school council's decision to renew the contract, may request a review of the local school council's principal retention decision by a hearing officer appointed by the American Arbitration Association. The general superintendent may request a review only once for that principal at that attendance center. All requests to review the retention or non-retention of a principal shall be submitted to the general superintendent, who shall, in turn, forward such requests, within 14 days of receipt, to the American Arbitration Association. The general superintendent shall send a contemporaneous copy of the request that was forwarded to the American Arbitration Association to the principal and to each local school council member and shall inform the local school council of its rights and responsibilities under the arbitration process, including the local school council's right to representation and the manner and process by which the Board shall pay the costs of the council's representation. If the local school council retains the principal and the general superintendent requests a review of the retention decision, the local school council and the general superintendent shall be considered parties to the arbitration, a hearing officer shall be chosen between those 2 parties pursuant to procedures promulgated by the State Board of Education, and the principal may retain counsel and participate in the arbitration. If the local school council does not retain the principal and the principal requests a review of the retention decision, the local school council and the principal shall be considered parties to the arbitration and a hearing officer shall be chosen between those 2 parties pursuant to procedures promulgated by the State Board of Education. The hearing shall begin (i) within 45 days after the initial request for review is submitted by the principal to the general superintendent or (ii) if the initial request for review is made by the general superintendent, within 45 days after that request is mailed to the American Arbitration Association. The hearing officer shall render a decision within 45 days after the hearing begins and within 90 days after the initial request for review. The Board shall contract with the American Arbitration Association for all of the hearing officer's reasonable and necessary costs. In addition, the Board shall pay any reasonable costs incurred by a local school council for representation before a hearing officer.

1.10. The hearing officer shall conduct a hearing, which shall include (i) a review of the principal's performance, evaluations, and other evidence of the principal's service at the school, (ii) reasons provided by the local school council for its decision, and (iii) documentation evidencing views of interested persons, including, without limitation, students, parents, local school council members, school faculty and staff, the principal, the general superintendent or his or her designee, and members of the community. The burden of proof in establishing that the local school council's decision was arbitrary and capricious shall be on the party requesting the arbitration, and this
party shall sustain the burden by a preponderance of the evidence. The hearing officer shall set the local school council decision aside if that decision, in light of the record developed at the hearing, is arbitrary and capricious. The decision of the hearing officer may not be appealed to the Board or the State Board of Education. If the hearing officer decides that the principal shall be retained, the retention period shall not exceed 2 years.

2. In the event (i) the local school council does not renew the performance contract of the principal, or the principal fails to receive a satisfactory rating as provided in subsection (h) of Section 34-8.3 [105 ILCS 5/34-8.3], or the principal is removed for cause during the term of his or her performance contract in the manner provided by Section 34-85 [105 ILCS 5/34-85], or a vacancy in the position of principal otherwise occurs prior to the expiration of the term of a principal's performance contract, and (ii) the local school council fails to directly select a new principal to serve under a 4 year performance contract, the local school council in such event shall submit to the general superintendent a list of 3 candidates - listed in the local school council's order of preference - for the position of principal, one of which shall be selected by the general superintendent to serve as principal of the attendance center. If the general superintendent fails or refuses to select one of the candidates on the list to serve as principal within 30 days after being furnished with the candidate list, the general superintendent shall select and place a principal on an interim basis (i) for a period not to exceed one year or (ii) until the local school council selects a new principal with 7 affirmative votes as provided in subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2], whichever occurs first. If the local school council fails or refuses to select and appoint a new principal, as specified by subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2], the general superintendent may select and appoint a new principal on an interim basis for an additional year or until a new contract principal is selected by the local school council. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, creed, color or disability unrelated to ability to perform in connection with the submission of candidates for, and the selection of a candidate to serve as principal of an attendance center. No person shall be directly selected, listed as a candidate for, or selected to serve as principal of an attendance center (i) if such person has been removed for cause from employment by the Board or (ii) if such person does not hold a valid administrative certificate issued or exchanged under Article 21 [105 ILCS 5/21-1 et seq.] and endorsed as required by that Article for the position of principal. A principal whose performance contract is not renewed as provided under subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2] may nevertheless, if otherwise qualified and certified as herein provided and if he or she has received a satisfactory rating as provided in subsection (h) of Section 34-8.3 [105 ILCS 5/34-8.3], be included by a local school council as one of the 3 candidates listed in order of preference on any candidate list from which one person is to be selected to serve as principal of the attendance center under a new performance contract. The initial candidate list required to be submitted by a local school council to the general superintendent in cases where the local school council does not renew the performance contract of its principal and does not directly select a new principal to serve under a 4 year performance contract shall be submitted not later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the current performance contract. In cases where the local school council fails or refuses to submit the candidate list to the general superintendent no later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the incumbent principal's contract, the general superintendent may appoint a principal on an interim basis for a period not to exceed one year, during which time the local school council shall be able to select a new principal with 7 affirmative votes as provided in subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.2]. In cases where a principal is removed for
cause or a vacancy otherwise occurs in the position of principal and the vacancy is not filled by
direct selection by the local school council, the candidate list shall be submitted by the local school
council to the general superintendent within 90 days after the date such removal or vacancy
occurs. In cases where the local school council fails or refuses to submit the candidate list to the
general superintendent within 90 days after the date of the vacancy, the general superintendent
may appoint a principal on an interim basis for a period of one year, during which time the local
school council shall be able to select a new principal with 7 affirmative votes as provided in
subsection (c) of Section 34-2.2 [105 ILCS 105/34-2.2].

2.5. Whenever a vacancy in the office of a principal occurs for any reason, the vacancy shall be
filled in the manner provided by this Section by the selection of a new principal to serve under a 4
year performance contract.

3. To establish additional criteria to be included as part of the performance contract of its
principal, provided that such additional criteria shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex,
creed, color or disability unrelated to ability to perform, and shall not be inconsistent with the
uniform 4 year performance contract for principals developed by the board as provided in Section
34-8.1 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/34-8.1] or with other provisions of this Article governing
the authority and responsibility of principals.

4. To approve the expenditure plan prepared by the principal with respect to all funds allocated
and distributed to the attendance center by the Board. The expenditure plan shall be administered
by the principal. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any other law, any
expenditure plan approved and administered under this Section 34-2.3 shall be consistent with and
subject to the terms of any contract for services with a third party entered into by the Chicago
School Reform Board of Trustees or the board under this Act.

Via a supermajority vote of 7 members of the local school council or 8 members of a high school
local school council, the Council may transfer allocations pursuant to Section 34-2.3 within funds;
provided that such a transfer is consistent with applicable law and collective bargaining
agreements.

Beginning in fiscal year 1991 and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Board may reserve up to 1%
of its total fiscal year budget for distribution on a prioritized basis to schools throughout the
school system in order to assure adequate programs to meet the needs of special student
populations as determined by the Board. This distribution shall take into account the needs
catalogued in the Systemwide Plan and the various local school improvement plans of the local
school councils. Information about these centrally funded programs shall be distributed to the
local school councils so that their subsequent planning and programming will account for these
provisions.

Beginning in fiscal year 1991 and in each fiscal year thereafter, from other amounts available in
the applicable fiscal year budget, the board shall allocate a lump sum amount to each local school
based upon such formula as the board shall determine taking into account the special needs of the
student body. The local school principal shall develop an expenditure plan in consultation with the
local school council, the professional personnel advisory committee and with all other school
personnel, which reflects the priorities and activities as described in the school's local school
improvement plan and is consistent with applicable law and collective bargaining agreements and
with board policies and standards; however, the local school council shall have the right to request
waivers of board policy from the board of education and waivers of employee collective
bargaining agreements pursuant to Section 34-8.1a [105 ILCS 5/34-8.1a].
The expenditure plan developed by the principal with respect to amounts available from the fund for prioritized special needs programs and the allocated lump sum amount must be approved by the local school council.

The lump sum allocation shall take into account the following principles:

a. Teachers: Each school shall be allocated funds equal to the amount appropriated in the previous school year for compensation for teachers (regular grades kindergarten through 12th grade) plus whatever increases in compensation have been negotiated contractually or through longevity as provided in the negotiated agreement. Adjustments shall be made due to layoff or reduction in force, lack of funds or work, change in subject requirements, enrollment changes, or contracts with third parties for the performance of services or to rectify any inconsistencies with system-wide allocation formulas or for other legitimate reasons.

b. Other personnel: Funds for other teacher certificated and uncertificated personnel paid through non-categorical funds shall be provided according to system-wide formulas based on student enrollment and the special needs of the school as determined by the Board.

c. Non-compensation items: Appropriations for all non-compensation items shall be based on system-wide formulas based on student enrollment and on the special needs of the school or factors related to the physical plant, including but not limited to textbooks, supplies, electricity, equipment, and routine maintenance.

d. Funds for categorical programs: Schools shall receive personnel and funds based on, and shall use such personnel and funds in accordance with State and Federal requirements applicable to each categorical program provided to meet the special needs of the student body (including but not limited to, Federal Chapter I, Bilingual, and Special Education).

d.1. Funds for State Title I: Each school shall receive funds based on State and Board requirements applicable to each State Title I pupil provided to meet the special needs of the student body. Each school shall receive the proportion of funds as provided in Section 18-8 [105 ILCS 5/18-8] to which they are entitled. These funds shall be spent only with the budgetary approval of the Local School Council as provided in Section 34-2.3.

e. The Local School Council shall have the right to request the principal to close positions and open new ones consistent with the provisions of the local school improvement plan provided that these decisions are consistent with applicable law and collective bargaining agreements. If a position is closed, pursuant to this paragraph, the local school shall have for its use the system-wide average compensation for the closed position.

f. Operating within existing laws and collective bargaining agreements, the local school council shall have the right to direct the principal to shift expenditures within funds.

g. (Blank).

Any funds unexpended at the end of the fiscal year shall be available to the board of education for use as part of its budget for the following fiscal year.

5. To make recommendations to the principal concerning textbook selection and concerning curriculum developed pursuant to the school improvement plan which is consistent with systemwide curriculum objectives in accordance with Sections 34-8 and 34-18 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/34-8 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18] and in conformity with the collective bargaining agreement.

6. To advise the principal concerning the attendance and disciplinary policies for the attendance center, subject to the provisions of this Article and Article 26 [105 ILCS 5/26-1 et seq.], and consistent with the uniform system of discipline established by the board pursuant to Section
34-19 [105 ILCS 5/34-19].
7. To approve a school improvement plan developed as provided in Section 34-2.4 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.4]. The process and schedule for plan development shall be publicized to the entire school community, and the community shall be afforded the opportunity to make recommendations concerning the plan. At least twice a year the principal and local school council shall report publicly on progress and problems with respect to plan implementation.
8. To evaluate the allocation of teaching resources and other certificated and uncertificated staff to the attendance center to determine whether such allocation is consistent with and in furtherance of instructional objectives and school programs reflective of the school improvement plan adopted for the attendance center; and to make recommendations to the board, the general superintendent and the principal concerning any reallocation of teaching resources or other staff whenever the council determines that any such reallocation is appropriate because the qualifications of any existing staff at the attendance center do not adequately match or support instructional objectives or school programs which reflect the school improvement plan.
9. To make recommendations to the principal and the general superintendent concerning their respective appointments, after August 31, 1989, and in the manner provided by Section 34-8 and Section 34-8.1 [105 ILCS 5/34-8 and 105 ILCS 5/34-8.1], of persons to fill any vacant, additional or newly created positions for teachers at the attendance center or at attendance centers which include the attendance center served by the local school council.
10. To request of the Board the manner in which training and assistance shall be provided to the local school council. Pursuant to Board guidelines a local school council is authorized to direct the Board of Education to contract with personnel or not-for-profit organizations not associated with the school district to train or assist council members. If training or assistance is provided by contract with personnel or organizations not associated with the school district, the period of training or assistance shall not exceed 30 hours during a given school year; person shall not be employed on a continuous basis longer than said period and shall not have been employed by the Chicago Board of Education within the preceding six months. Council members shall receive training in at least the following areas:
   1. school budgets;
   2. educational theory pertinent to the attendance center's particular needs, including the development of the school improvement plan and the principal's performance contract; and
   3. personnel selection.
Council members shall, to the greatest extent possible, complete such training within 90 days of election.
11. In accordance with systemwide guidelines contained in the System-Wide Educational Reform Goals and Objectives Plan, criteria for evaluation of performance shall be established for local school councils and local school council members. If a local school council persists in noncompliance with systemwide requirements, the Board may impose sanctions and take necessary corrective action, consistent with Section 34-8.3 [105 ILCS 5/34-8.3].
12. Each local school council shall comply with the Open Meetings Act [5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.] and the Freedom of Information Act [5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.]. Each local school council shall issue and transmit to its school community a detailed annual report accounting for its activities programmatically and financially. Each local school council shall convene at least 2 well-publicized meetings annually with its entire school community. These meetings shall include presentation of the proposed local school improvement plan, of the proposed school expenditure
plan, and the annual report, and shall provide an opportunity for public comment.
13. Each local school council is encouraged to involve additional non-voting members of the school community in facilitating the council's exercise of its responsibilities.
14. The local school council may adopt a school uniform or dress code policy that governs the attendance center and that is necessary to maintain the orderly process of a school function or prevent endangerment of student health or safety, consistent with the policies and rules of the Board of Education. A school uniform or dress code policy adopted by a local school council: (i) shall not be applied in such manner as to discipline or deny attendance to a transfer student or any other student for noncompliance with that policy during such period of time as is reasonably necessary to enable the student to acquire a school uniform or otherwise comply with the dress code policy that is in effect at the attendance center into which the student's enrollment is transferred; and (ii) shall include criteria and procedures under which the local school council will accommodate the needs of or otherwise provide appropriate resources to assist a student from an indigent family in complying with an applicable school uniform or dress code policy. A student whose parents or legal guardians object on religious grounds to the student's compliance with an applicable school uniform or dress code policy shall not be required to comply with that policy if the student's parents or legal guardians present to the local school council a signed statement of objection detailing the grounds for the objection.
15. All decisions made and actions taken by the local school council in the exercise of its powers and duties shall comply with State and federal laws, all applicable collective bargaining agreements, court orders and rules properly promulgated by the Board.
15a. To grant, in accordance with board rules and policies, the use of assembly halls and classrooms when not otherwise needed, including lighting, heat, and attendants, for public lectures, concerts, and other educational and social activities.
15b. To approve, in accordance with board rules and policies, receipts and expenditures for all internal accounts of the attendance center, and to approve all fund-raising activities by nonschool organizations that use the school building.
16. (Blank).
17. Names and addresses of local school council members shall be a matter of public record.
History
(Source: P.A. 86-124; 86-1422; 86-1477; 87-455; 88-85, § 55; 88-511, § 20; 88-686, § 5; 89-15, § 5; 89-610, § 5; 89-636, § 5; 90-14, § 2-135; 91-622, § 10; 91-728, § 5.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.3a. Recommendations of the Principal
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.3a. Recommendations of the Principal. The principal of each attendance center shall be encouraged to make recommendations to the appropriate local school council concerning all educational aspects of the attendance center.
History
(Source: P.A. 85-1418; 86-1477.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.3b. Local School Council Training
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.3b. Local School Council Training. The board shall collaborate with universities and other interested entities and individuals to offer training to local school council members on topics relevant to school operations and their responsibilities as local school council members, including but not limited to legal requirements, role differentiation, responsibilities, and authorities, and improving student achievement. Training of local school council members shall be provided at the direction of the board in consultation with the Council of Chicago-area Deans of Education. Incoming local school council members shall be required to complete a 3-day training program provided under this Section within 6 months of taking office. The board shall monitor the compliance of incoming local school council members with the 3-day training program requirement established by this Section. The board shall declare vacant the office of a local school council member who fails to complete the 3-day training program provided under this Section within the 6 month period allowed. Any such vacancy shall be filled as provided in subsection (o) of Section 34-2.1 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.1] by appointment of another person qualified to hold the office. In addition to requiring local school council members to complete the 3-day training program under this Section, the board may encourage local school council members to complete additional training during their term of office and shall provide recognition for individuals completing that additional training. The board is authorized to collaborate with universities, non-profits, and other interested organizations and individuals to offer additional training to local school council members on a regular basis during their term in office. The board shall not be required to bear the cost of the required 3-day training program or any additional training provided to local school council members under this Section.
The board shall also offer training to aid local school councils in developing principal evaluation procedures and criteria. The board shall send out requests for proposals concerning this training and is authorized to contract with universities, non-profits, and other interested organizations and individuals to provide this training. The board is authorized to use funds from private organizations, non-profits, or any other outside source as well as its own funds for this purpose.
History
(Source: P.A. 88-686, § 5; 89-15, § 5; 90-100, § 5; 91-622, § 10.)
§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4. School improvement plan

Statute text
Sec. 34-2.4. School improvement plan. A 3 year local school improvement plan shall be developed and implemented at each attendance center. This plan shall reflect the overriding purpose of the attendance center to improve educational quality. The local school principal shall develop a school improvement plan in consultation with the local school council, all categories of school staff, parents and community residents. Once the plan is developed and after the local school council has approved the same, the principal shall be responsible for directing implementation of the plan, and the local school council shall monitor its implementation. After the termination of the initial 3 year plan, a new 3 year plan shall be developed and modified as appropriate on an annual basis.

The school improvement plan shall be designed to achieve priority goals including but not limited to:

(a) assuring that students show significant progress toward meeting and exceeding State performance standards in State mandated learning areas, including the mastery of higher order thinking skills in these areas;
(b) assuring that students attend school regularly and graduate from school at such rates that the district average equals or surpasses national norms;
(c) assuring that students are adequately prepared for and aided in making a successful transition to further education and life experience;
(d) assuring that students are adequately prepared for and aided in making a successful transition to employment; and
(e) assuring that students are, to the maximum extent possible, provided with a common learning experience that is of high academic quality and that reflects high expectations for all students' capacities to learn.

With respect to these priority goals, the school improvement plan shall include but not be limited to the following:

(a) an analysis of data collected in the attendance center and community indicating the specific strengths and weaknesses of the attendance center in light of the goals specified above, including data and analysis specified by the State Board of Education pertaining to specific measurable outcomes for student performance, the attendance centers, and their instructional programs;
(b) a description of specific annual objectives the attendance center will pursue in achieving the goals specified above;
(c) a description of the specific activities the attendance center will undertake to achieve its objectives;
(d) an analysis of the attendance center's staffing pattern and material resources, and an explanation of how the attendance center's planned staffing pattern, the deployment of staff, and the use of material resources furthers the objectives of the plan;
(e) a description of the key assumptions and directions of the school's curriculum and the academic and non-academic programs of the attendance center, and an explanation of how this curriculum and these programs further the goals and objectives of the plan;
(f) a description of the steps that will be taken to enhance educational opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, including limited English proficient students, disabled students, low-income students and minority students;
(g) a description of any steps which may be taken by the attendance center to educate parents as
to how they can assist children at home in preparing their children to learn effectively;
(h) a description of the steps the attendance center will take to coordinate its efforts with, and to
    gain the participation and support of, community residents, business organizations, and other local
    institutions and individuals;
(i) a description of any staff development program for all school staff and volunteers tied to the
    priority goals, objectives, and activities specified in the plan;
(j) a description of the steps the local school council will undertake to monitor implementation of
    the plan on an ongoing basis;
(k) a description of the steps the attendance center will take to ensure that teachers have working
    conditions that provide a professional environment conducive to fulfilling their responsibilities;
(l) a description of the steps the attendance center will take to ensure teachers the time and
    opportunity to incorporate new ideas and techniques, both in subject matter and teaching skills,
    into their own work;
(m) a description of the steps the attendance center will take to encourage pride and positive
    identification with the attendance center through various athletic activities; and
(n) a description of the student need for and provision of services to special populations, beyond
    the standard school programs provided for students in grades K through 12 and those enumerated
    in the categorical programs cited in item d of part 4 of Section 34-2.3 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.3],
    including financial costs of providing same and a timeline for implementing the necessary services,
    including but not limited, when applicable, to ensuring the provisions of educational services to all
    eligible children aged 4 years for the 1990-91 school year and thereafter, reducing class size to
    State averages in grades K-3 for the 1991-92 school year and thereafter and in all grades for the
    1993-94 school year and thereafter, and providing sufficient staff and facility resources for
    students not served in the regular classroom setting.

Based on the analysis of data collected indicating specific strengths and weaknesses of the
attendance center, the school improvement plan may place greater emphasis from year to year on
particular priority goals, objectives, and activities.

History
(Source: P.A. 85-1418; 86-1477; 88-686, § 5.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4a. Professional personnel advisory committee
Statute text
Sec. 34-2.4a. Professional personnel advisory committee. At each attendance center operated
pursuant to this Article, a professional personnel advisory committee consisting of certified
classroom teachers and other certificated personnel who are employed at the attendance center
and who desire to be members of the committee shall be elected each school year for the purpose
of advising the principal and the local school council on matters of educational program, including
but not limited to curriculum and school improvement plan development and implementation. The
principal shall convene a publicized meeting of all certified classroom teachers and other
certificated personnel, at which meeting those certified classroom teachers and other certificated
personnel present, excluding the principal, shall elect teachers and other certificated personnel to
serve on the committee. The total number of teachers and other certificated personnel to be
elected to serve on the committee during the school year shall be determined by the certified
classroom teachers and other certificated personnel present at the meeting at which the teachers
and other certificated personnel are to be elected. A staff member eligible to vote may vote for as many candidates as are to be elected, but votes shall not be cumulated. Ties shall be determined by lot. Vacancies shall be filled in like manner.

History
(Source: P.A. 85-1418; 86-1477.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. Limitation upon applicability
Statement text
Sec. 34-2.4b. Limitation upon applicability. The provisions of Sections 34-2.1, 34-2.2, 34-2.3, 34-2.3a, 34-2.4 and 34-8.3 [105 ILCS 5/34-2.1, 105 ILCS 5/34-2.2, 105 ILCS 5/34-2.3, 105 ILCS 5/34-2.3a, 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4 and 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3], and those provisions of paragraph 1 of Section 34-18 [105 ILCS 5/34-18] and paragraph (c) of Section 34A-201a [105 ILCS 5/34A-201a] relating to the allocation or application - by formula or otherwise - of lump sum amounts and other funds to attendance centers, shall not apply to attendance centers that have applied for and been designated as a "Small School" by the Board, the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center and Cook County Jail schools, nor to the district's alternative schools for pregnant girls, nor to alternative schools established under Article 13A, nor to the Michael R. Durso School, the Jackson Adult Center, the Hillard Adult Center, the Alternative Transitional School, or any other attendance center designated by the board as an alternative school, provided that the designation is not applied to a school building that has in place a legally constituted local school council; and the board of education shall have and exercise with respect to those schools and with respect to the conduct, operation, affairs and budgets of those schools, and with respect to the principals, teachers and other school staff there employed, the same powers which are exercisable by local school councils with respect to the other attendance centers, principals, teachers and school staff within the district, together with all powers and duties generally exercisable by the board of education with respect to all attendance centers within the district. The board of education shall develop appropriate alternative methods for involving parents, community members and school staff to the maximum extent possible in all of the activities of those schools, and may delegate to the parents, community members and school staff so involved the same powers which are exercisable by local school councils with respect to other attendance centers.

History
(Source: P.A. 86-124; 87-454; 89-15, § 5; 89-636, § 5; 90-566, § 5; 91-622, § 10.)

§ 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4c. Whistle Blower Protection
Statement text
Sec. 34-2.4c. Whistle Blower Protection. (a) In any case involving the disclosure of information by an employee of the board of education or a local school council member, which the employee or member reasonably believes evidences (1) a violation of any law, rule, regulation, or policy, or (2) waste, fraud, mismanagement, abuse of authority, or a danger to the health or safety of students or the public, the identity of the employee or members may not be disclosed without the written consent of the employee or member during any investigation of the information or related matters.

(b) No disciplinary action may be taken against any employee or local school council member for
the disclosure of information by that employee or local school council member that evidences (1) a violation of any law, rule, regulation, or policy, or (2) waste, fraud, mismanagement, abuse of authority, or a danger to the health or safety of a student or the public. For the purposes of this Section, disciplinary action means any retaliatory action taken against an employee or local school council member by the board of education, employees of the board of education, local school councils, or exclusive bargaining representatives of employees, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, discharge, demotion, involuntary transfer, harassment, or denial of promotion or voluntary transfer.

(c) A violation of this Section shall be a Class A misdemeanor.

History

(Source: P.A. 89-15, § 5.)