



Public Advocate
Betsy Gotbaum

Commission on School Governance

Dear Reader:

The materials available through this webpage are the property of the Commission on School Governance and are protected by intellectual property laws. You may view, copy and print pages from the webpage only for personal use, provided that you maintain this proprietary notice. You may not otherwise use, reproduce, download, store, post, broadcast, transmit, modify, sell or make available to the public content from the website without the prior written approval of the Commission on School Governance.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Commission on School Governance.

**Updating Tradition:
Governing the Schools from Chicago's City Hall**

Dorothy Shipps

Dorothy Shipps is Associate Professor of Public Affairs and Education at the School of Public Affairs, Baruch College, CUNY. She teaches courses in educational policy analysis, school-community relationships, accountability, and leadership. Prior to becoming a professor, she was a co-director of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, consultant to policy makers and civic leaders on school reform. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, she directed education extension for several universities in California.

Shipps is the author of a recent book on Chicago's schools *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago 1880-2000* (2006), and is co-editor with Larry Cuban of *Reconstructing the Common Good in Education* (2000). In addition, she has published numerous chapters and articles on school reform, mayoral control in Chicago, and the civic capacity needed to institutionalize reform.

She has been honored as a Carnegie Scholar (2000-01), and a Warren Weaver Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation (1994-5). Her Ph.D. is from Stanford University and her M.A in Asian Studies is from the University of California at Berkeley.

The promises of mayoral control are significant and well known. Managerial logic suggests, and Chicago's recent experience corroborates, that mayors may be especially adroit at stabilizing system leadership, focusing civic elites on education, mobilizing resources, and straightening the lines of accountability.

¹ Some argue that these organizational benefits lead to improved student performance.²

Chicago's experience with mayoral control also points to negative consequences that require policy attention. Mayors who have staked their reputation on progress in the schools have no incentive to reveal bad news and often spin apparently neutral data. Families feel left out of key decisions when school boards stop being forums for community debate, especially low-income families that lack the social resources to command special accommodations. Mayors may bring additional resources, but they also add new programs, which can balloon budgets. And, the ethos of city hall affects the schools: corruption, chronic budget problems, or a willingness to accept performance gaps may all be reasons to question the empowerment of mayors.

To address these crosscutting observations, I draw upon 15 years of research to clarify what is meant by mayoral control in Chicago, how it came about, and what has changed since.³ Next, I summarize current progress on measures of success. Finally, I describe Chicago's unique institutional protections against some of the negative consequences of mayoral control and the areas of remaining weakness that educational policy has yet to address. But first, I review why Chicago matters.

The Chicago Model

Chicago has been promoted as a national model for mayoral control for more than a decade. When he was President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 1997, Richard M. Daley

told the National Press Club: "if the Chicago Public Schools can be managed, any school system can...The lesson for all school systems is that no problem is unmanageable." ⁴ Daley then linked his control of the schools to Chicago's ability to attract and retain middle class families and maintain corporate employers, goals many urban mayors find both practical and pressing.⁵ President Clinton found Daley's arguments compelling and commended his efforts as a "model for the nation," singling him out in both the 1998 and 1999 State of the Union addresses.⁶

Chicago's mayor was also quick to use his new authority. In his first year as education mayor, Daley began a series of accountability experiments that included basing student promotion on test scores and curtailing the autonomy of schools when aggregated test scores fell below a benchmark. With modification, these ideas were subsequently adopted by many districts in response to the *No Child Left Behind* law. Moreover, Chicago's experience has been widely studied, arguably amassing more evidence than any other mayoral control city.⁷ And Chicago's results are uncompromised by mayoral turnover, since the city has no term limits and the current mayor no prospect of being defeated by a rival.

A Chicago Political Tradition, Updated

Chicago is one of a handful of U.S. cities that has never had an elected central school board. Every Chicago mayor since the mid-1800s has had the statutory authority to appoint the school board, subject to the city council's pro forma approval.⁸ Until 1979, mayors were also expected to influence school system budgets because key school accounts were housed in city hall. These powers have led to a range of high profile abuses, for which mayors have been repeatedly censured.

In one infamous case in point, Mayor William Hale Thompson (1915-1923, 1927-1931) admitted to following “the dictation of a political boss” in appointing new board members and dismissing the seated ones. Challenged by a well-respected superintendent, Thompson responded by stripping him of his powers. The next two and a half years of chaos included two warring school boards and multiple court challenges.⁹

Such political opportunism is not limited to the distant past. For example, when struggling to maintain her electoral credibility with the White, ethnic coalition that had kept her predecessor in office for decades, Mayor Jane Byrne (1979-1983) summarily dismissed two Black businessmen she had appointed just three months earlier. She replaced them with two White women, one of whom was known for participation in anti-integration demonstrations. This time the outrage was largely confined to the Black community, by then representing 38 percent of the central office staff, 30 percent of principals, 43 percent of teachers and 60 percent of students.¹⁰

Although previous mayors, including Richard J. Daley (1954-1976), had occasionally agreed to consider the advice of a citizen nominating commission to mollify outraged Chicagoans, its advice was often ignored. Richard “Rich” M. Daley (1989-present) was the first mayor to be legally constrained by such a commission. The candidates he was offered rarely satisfied him, so he routinely turned back whole slates. During the few years that the commission functioned, he hamstrung the school board by leaving half the seats vacant.¹¹

Chicago’s city hall has long had a troubled relationship with the schools budget. The most notorious example came just as the Great Depression hit the city. A group of the city’s corporate leaders and bankers approached the profligate Mayor Thompson with demands for school cutbacks because neither they nor most small property owners were able to pay their

taxes. When he refused, the businessmen took matters into their own hands, and eventually got their way with his successors. Notwithstanding protests by dozens of community organizations and the teaching unions, Democratic machine Mayors Anton Cermak (1931-1933) and Edward J. Kelly (1933-1949) both supported the resulting Committee on Public Expenditures, whose corporate and banking members cut educational services, closed programs, and fired teachers in order to balance the school budget, although city hall's school patronage hires were not touched.¹² The ensuing chaos temporarily lost Chicago's high schools their accreditation.¹³ Disbanded in 1939, the committee left an abiding legacy; today Chicago has almost no junior high schools because the businessmen considered them expendable.

Daley Sr. took the opposite approach to the schools budget. After granting the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) collective bargaining rights, he developed the habit of personally settling nearly biennial strikes with promises of money the system did not have. He often prevailed upon state legislators to make changes in state aid or to loosen the legal constraints on school borrowing. But he also used questionable accounting maneuvers to keep the district's bond ratings artificially high. Most egregious was the *pro-rata line* in which a deficit was "balanced" by a transmittal letter from the board to itself saying how much it expected to fall short. These practices were publicly revealed after his death by a legislative investigation triggered when Chicago's bankers slashed the district's bond ratings to below investment grade in 1979.¹⁴

Daley's shady bookkeeping cost the school system its fiscal independence for the next 15 years. In exchange for buying the system's near-worthless bonds, Chicago's bankers, backed by the city's corporate leaders, insisted upon a School Finance Authority (SFA), which they would control. The SFA cut personnel and services, abrogated union contracts, and kept the schools closed when the budget was unbalanced.¹⁵

Another product of outsized mayoral influence has been patronage employment, which brought its own censure. In the 1940s the school system was condemned by the National Education Association for rampant corruption, patronage, and a general lack of professional accountability in the hiring of teachers, principals, and faculty for the Chicago Teachers College.¹⁶ School custodial positions, as well as half of the jobs emanating from city hall remained patronage hires through the 1970s, until the Shakman Decrees of 1979 and 1983 formally outlawed the practice in a posthumous rebuke to Mayor Daley Sr.¹⁷ Harold Washington's mayoralty was punctuated by repeated claims that Black Chicagoans were simply using the district's central office to bootstrap into the middle class, a form of affirmative action patronage.¹⁸

Under federal investigation for corruption and patronage since 2004, Rich Daley's city hall has had an estimated 5,000 patronage employees, several hundred of whom owed their jobs to falsified civil service test scores and sham interviews. Chicagoans are also currently paying for legal judgments to qualified, but excluded, contractors who refused to pay bribes to the city.¹⁹ Although the schools have generally avoided corruption scandals, Daley has been unwilling to reveal the rationale behind capital spending in the district, which has produced manifestly unequal benefits across schools, prompting one respected journalist to comment that "good old City Hall patronage is alive and well at Chicago Public Schools."²⁰

Thus, the 1995 law, far from being an unprecedented empowerment of Chicago's mayor, is actually an extension of mayoral powers, both formal and informal, that all Chicago mayors have had, for better and worse. So why was the law written, and what actually changed in the summer of 1995?

The short answer is that Chicago's business community had tired of overseeing the schools through the SFA. They especially disliked the public scrutiny their decisions attracted. African Americans protested the cutbacks as racially motivated. A rapidly growing Latino community (20% of the population by 1990, 26% by 2000) thought the SFA ignored their priorities too. Nor could the SFA balance the budget. After a decade of relative peace, deficits and strike threats resurfaced, and the board's bond ratings were, once again, downgraded. Corporate leaders reasoned that because the mayor and the governor jointly selected the members of the SFA, the "bottom line...should be accountability with the mayor and the governor...[since] that's where the ultimate control is."²¹ Using this logic, it seemed reasonable to make a trusted politician publicly accountable, and simultaneously back away from the limelight themselves.

A Gingrich-inspired Republican legislative takeover gave them the opportunity. At the request of Illinois Senator James "Pate" Phillips and the newly empowered Republican House Speaker Lee Daniels, the business executives crafted a school law giving Rich Daley greater authority over the schools than any of his predecessors had enjoyed. Corporate leaders believed Daley to be a mayor they could trust. They had backed his losing candidacy in 1983, ensured his election in 1989, and knew they had guaranteed access to him. "Our goals" said one to the legislature, "are to make him as accountable as possible."²² The executives subsequently promoted mayoral control as a way Chicago's voters could hold a politician accountable for the system's performance. But after 1996, all citywide electoral contests were made "nonpartisan," a law passed at Daley's request. This eliminated primaries and access to the party apparatus that could finance and promote rivals. Consequently, the possibility of his losing an election became exceeding remote.

Mayoral control also returned Chicago schools to the historical status quo following a much more radical governing experiment. A short-lived reform law, passed in December 1988, had created the nation's most decentralized school system. From the corporate leaders' perspective, reaffirming mayoral control of the schools was made all the more urgent by decentralization's shortcomings, which they summarized as misplaced micromanagement and insufficient accountability.²³

The 1988 law had created Local School Councils (LSCs) at each school: elected bodies made up of six parents, two community representatives (adults who lived in the school's catchment zone, but had no children attending the school) and two teacher representatives. Akin to an elected board of education, the LSC's main authority was to hire and fire the school's principal. Principals' tenure was eliminated, turning the position into a four-year renewable performance contract subject to LSC approval. Each LSC was also authorized to establish a reform strategy for the school and to approve its discretionary budget, expanded by the redirection of state and federal anti-poverty funds.

The 1988 law also created two of the three governing bodies that would be eliminated in 1995. Eleven district boards were established in 1988 as support organizations for LSCs, which selected their members. District board members, in turn, hired district superintendents. LSC representatives also picked a School Board Nominating Commission (SBNC), which identified slates of candidates from among whom Rich Daley was obliged to select his central school board appointments. District boards and the SBNC were both eliminated in 1995, as was fiscal oversight by the SFA. To community activists who championed decentralization, the six years between 1988 and 1995 constituted a brief interregnum between two different versions of mayoral control.

What Changed and What Remained the Same?

The 1995 law strengthened the mayor's authority in a number of subtle ways. It mandated a corporate management structure, with enhanced fiscal and managerial flexibility. The law also limited union influence over school policy, and sharply reduced the importance of the board of education by reducing its size and taking away its ability to hire the system's chief executive officer. And it gave the mayor and his CEO a broad range of new, largely unspecified powers to sanction schools, students, teachers, and principals.

The legislation was drafted by a committee of corporate business executives who adapted the corporate management structure to the schools, specifying that the system be led by a CFO, COO, CPO, and a Chief Educational Officer, all answerable to a CEO not required to have any education credentials. Nevertheless, the CEO retained all the powers previously delegated to the general superintendent, including authority to establish the curriculum. Late in the negotiating process, Rich Daley asked for, and received, the unprecedented authority to handpick the chief executive of the system.

Neither of the two men Rich Daley has selected as schools CEO since 1995 have been educators. Paul Vallas (1995-2001) had been the mayor's Budget Director for one year, a promotion from his job as city revenue collector. His chief credentials at the time were his budgetary abilities—Daley demanded a balanced budget within a few weeks of Vallas appointment—and his loyalty to the mayor who made no secret of not trusting educators. An aide explained that Daley thought that it “isn't realistic” to ask an educator to “run a \$3 billion operation.”²⁴

CEO Vallas was replaced six years into his tenure when test scores began to plateau, some of his many new programs began to unravel, and relationships with the teachers union grew strained. Arne Duncan (2001-present), 36 when first appointed CEO, had briefly been Vallas' chief of staff after heading a small foundation and playing professional basketball in the European League. His tenure has been marked by an open door policy to grassroots reformers whom Vallas had derided. Duncan has focused on improving schools through instructional support, choice, and specialization, but has had a lower public profile than Vallas, generally deferring to the mayor in public.²⁵

Although Rich Daley had also asked the legislature for more school funds in 1995, he did not receive them. Instead he was given unprecedented fiscal and managerial flexibility. The 1995 law lifted the requirement of a balanced budget, collapsed 16 separate tax levies into one fungible source of support and replaced 25 state categorical programs (e.g., bilingual education, driver's education) with two block grants to the district. The consolidation initially "freed up close to \$130 million," according to Vallas.²⁶ The law also removed all restrictions to outsourcing and contracting. Daley had long promoted "privatization," in his words, to "recast government as more of an overseer than a producer," and thereby reduce public cynicism.²⁷ The school system has taken full advantage of its new fiscal flexibility, although Vallas wondered, "if we've saved money on privatization," since the budget grew by \$1.5 billion over his tenure. Nevertheless, bankers showed their approval by repeatedly raising the district's bond ratings.²⁸

This combination of new accounting rules and privatization calmed immediate budgetary fears, but failed to provide sufficient resources. Daley has frequently used the city's TIF tax deferments to underwrite borrowing for school construction. He also raised property taxes five times in Vallas' six years.²⁹ His close relationship with the Clinton White House facilitated

federal grants while his corporate partners helped pry one-time dollars from the legislature. But when the booming 1990s gave way to the belt-tightening 21st century, the specter of deficits began to re-appear and programs were cut back, largely because huge requests to Illinois for more funding were only partially met. Since 2003, Illinois budget shortfalls and partisan arguments about how to pay for education have derailed efforts to reform the state's school financing, requiring the mayor to beg for one-shot fiscal boosts each year, and cutback capital spending and even some educational programs. In 2007, the mayor finally raised property taxes to the legal limit.³⁰

The third major change in the school law was a set of restrictions on the Chicago Teachers' Union's ability to achieve non-pecuniary gains through collective bargaining. Thirteen previously bargained school and workplace conditions (e.g., class size, teacher assignments) were stricken from the school code. Teacher strikes were prohibited for 18 months. Daley knew that this part of the law would jeopardize his relationship with unions, key members of his electoral coalition. He called them together in the spring of 1995, asking that they refrain from fighting the law; its passage was virtually assured anyway. In return, he promised to rescind most of its anti-union restrictions after he gained control. "Every right they took away, Daley gave them back in bargaining, every one" rejoiced a union leader.³¹

The fourth shift was to a corporate-style school board. Like the city council itself (which votes unanimously with the mayor on 1,000 to 2,000 pieces of legislation each year, and on the 29 divided votes between 2003 and 2005, voted with the mayor 85% of the time), the board now serves a pro-forma function.³² In 12 years, Rich Daley's school board (initially five members, increased to seven in 2001) has only split its votes three times. Citizens are permitted the opportunity to address the board for two minutes, but not to hear its deliberations, since it does

not publicly debate issues.³³ This is a big difference from both the pre-1995 board and the school boards selected by mayors before 1988. Nearly all were legislative bodies, casting public votes, debating issues, and developing factions that could derail the mayor's plans.

Finally, the mayor and his CEO were granted the special authority to sanction any Chicago school with "remediation," "probation," "reconstitution," and/or "intervention," although none of these punishments was spelled out in the law. After six years of decentralized accountability, in which LSCs made judgments about school effectiveness, this change promised to re-standardize the determination of educational performance, but it did not clarify what those standards would be, nor specify how they should be implemented. Instead, this was left to the mayor and his CEO to decide.

Informal Influence

With such latitude, it was inevitable that the law could not anticipate some of the most important developments. Those come from Rich Daley's style of governing. For example, Daley, who cultivates the image of the "chief executive of a nearly \$5 billion corporation," moved quickly to jettison the symbols of the "old" school bureaucracy.³⁴ For example, the school system's central administration was relocated from its Pershing Road headquarters in Chicago's Black Southside to a newly renovated Loop building near city hall. The move signaled the importance of the schools to the economy and the close relationship between Vallas and Daley.

Daley also saw the schools as a magnet to attract the middle class, linked to his role in providing the infrastructure to revitalize economic growth. Both meant focusing on downtown development—94% percent of new development in the 1990s took place in seven of Chicago's 70 neighborhoods that surround the Loop and 91% of TIF-leveraged improvements were in the

downtown business district.³⁵ After 1995, he demolished three crime-ridden low-income housing projects to make way for gentrification and began a school building and remodeling program in West Town and the Near North Side.³⁶ It mushroomed to a \$2.6 billion initiative for 28 elementary schools and 7 college preparatory academies by the end of Vallas' tenure.³⁷

The mayor has maintained close ties to a shrinking unionized labor force through abundant building contracts and higher than typical union wages. Consequently, he has moved gradually when threatening outsourcing, preferring to delay job losses through attrition, or simply requiring contractors to hire union labor.³⁸ Even so, Chicago has shifted from industrial production to a service economy in which only about 13 percent of the workers are unionized.³⁹ The CTU is one of the few large public sector employee groups with which he negotiates, and he has been nearly as generous as his father. Since 1995, Daley has offered the teachers a series of 4-to-5-year contracts, each with between 3-4% yearly raises. In return he has asked the CTU to accept his initiatives and steer clear of engaging in reform.

The bargain was kept until 2001, when a "reform" slate, led by a former employee of the national AFT under Al Shanker, won leadership of the CTU. Deborah Lynch demanded that the union have a role in reform. Since Vallas had resigned two weeks after her election, it was CEO Duncan, Mayor Daley and Lynch who signed the agreement allowing the union to co-manage 10 failing schools. They also convinced the legislature to restore the union's legislative rights to bargain. But 3 years later, Lynch lost the CTU leadership in a bitter run-off election. Her African American challenger was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2007 on a platform that keeps to "bread and butter" bargaining, and leaves reform to the mayor.⁴⁰

But the most controversial changes have been Daley's involvement in the processes of promoting children from grade-to-grade and rating schools. Daley envisioned a school system in

which he and his CEO held everyone below them accountable for concrete results. The consequences of this approach to school governance were first felt by students, then educators, and eventually parents.

In spring 1996, eighth grade elementary school students learned that their scores on the reading portion of the nationally normed Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) would determine their promotion to high school, a policy Daley championed as the end of “social promotion.”⁴¹ Those whose scores fell below a benchmark level set by CEO Vallas were required to attend remedial test-taking instruction in summer school, after which a re-test would determine promotion or retention. A year later the same policy was extended to third and sixth graders, and the math test was added. Each year the cutscore was raised. When multiple retentions encouraged students to drop out before reaching high school, alternative schools were created for 15-year olds still in elementary school.

Educators’ accountability came in the way that Daley interpreted “probation” and the other vague school sanctions he was authorized to impose. Again turning to ITBS test scores, he determined that schools would be put on probation if 15% or fewer of the school’s students (incrementally raised to 20%, 25%, and now 40%) scored above national norms. LSCs of probationary schools lost their authority and principals were subject to dismissal by the CEO. Initially, probationary schools were assigned external assistance providers including a “probation manager” to guide planning and evaluate the principal. They were further required to contract with one of 18 “external partners,” for teacher professional development and other instructional services, requiring a redirection of the school’s discretionary budget. Failure to get off probation with these measures could lead to more severe sanctions.

In June 1997, seven of 38 probation high schools were “reconstituted” because they were deemed the system’s worst performers. Their LSCs were disbanded and all principals and staff were required to re-apply for their jobs. Increased shame, less autonomy, some new faculty, and mandated district-created scripted lesson plans in four subjects—9,360 plans in all—were expected to turn around these and the troubled schools on probation. “This is not rocket science,” Vallas explained, “If you’re a new teacher, or a weak teacher, or a teacher that doesn’t have skills, or if you have a teacher that’s burned out...if you stick to that curriculum you’ll be able to deliver quality instruction.”⁴²

In 2000, the mayor initiated parent report cards, aiming to increase the accountability of parents of children in the pre-kindergarten to third grades. Twenty-three evaluation marks, including items like “spends quality time” with a child, were sent home every 5 weeks, because “the school system has got to identify the things that parents are clearly not doing.”⁴³ But “insulted” parents and LSCs resisted, and only half the schools agreed to use the accountability devise.⁴⁴

After 6 years, Daley replaced Vallas just as news reports were revealing less performance gain than city hall had promoted. Mayor Daley and new CEO Duncan backed away from scripted lessons, to emphasize reading instruction. Duncan has included faculty from Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, and the University of Chicago among his advisors, and took a different path to student and school incentives. Among his changes was the tacit acknowledgement, under threat of a U.S. Justice Department probe, that holding children back in grade based on a single test score could be discriminatory. He expanded the retention criteria, permitting grades and attendance to count. It had already been revealed by then that retention was not administered equally: about one third of all retained students were

unaccountably waived through and the odds of receiving such a waiver were higher for Whites than Blacks.⁴⁵

In 2004, Daley adopted another corporate-initiated plan for the schools, dubbed *Renaissance 2010*, which aimed to close 100 low-performing schools and reopen them as charters, small schools, or “performance” contract schools. Corporate leaders justified their new strategy, as providing much needed competition for the “virtual monopoly” of public schools they still judged “radically dysfunctional.”⁴⁶ Daley agreed on condition that a business entity would raise one third of the seed money for *Renaissance 2010*, a goal as yet unmet.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, CEO Duncan simultaneously adopted stiffer criteria for school probation—40% of the students had to achieve national standards or state standards, increasing the pool of schools eligible to be closed. By February 2007, 43 new charter, performance or contract schools opened.⁴⁸ Most of them do not have LSCs.

With all the other substantive changes, it surprises some observers that LSCs were not eliminated in 1995. They still underpin Chicago’s mayoral control today, serving primarily as the representative voice of Chicago school parents, albeit with constrained school improvement and budgetary powers. Principals in most schools are still selected by LSCs. Although the mayor has several times tried to end LSCs’ power to fire principals, Illinois legislators, in favor of giving parents some check on city hall, have so far rejected his efforts. Consequently, Chicago parents do have collective access to their children’s schools, and a clear option if they do not like its performance – run in biannual LSC elections and change the principal if needed.⁴⁹

Does it Work?

Mayoral control can be judged by several standards. One is aggregated student test scores. Mayor Daley promoted test scores as the key measure of accountability for students and schools more than six years before *No Child Left Behind* became law. During those years scores on the ITBS tests rose significantly, while the proportion of low achieving students fell.⁵⁰ However, attributing all the gains to the re-instatement of mayoral powers has been contested. The proportion of students whose scores were counted fell from 82% to 74% even though student enrollment increased, which may have inflated reported scores.⁵¹ Some analyses suggest that the rise in test scores began before mayoral control was initiated and the scores flat-lined in 2000.⁵² And score improvement did not transfer from one test to another; Chicago students initially performed much more poorly on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT). In 2000, only 20% of 8th graders met its standards in math, for example, as compared to 45% on the ITBS test.⁵³ Reasons given include differences in the tested content, and the fact that test-prep had been almost exclusively focused on the ITBS.

Since 2002, test score trends have been harder to untangle. One reason is that the district changed the national norming sample it was using for the ITBS, automatically boosting scores and making accurate test score comparisons with trends before 2002 more difficult. Then, in 2005, the ISAT replaced the ITBS as the testing standard. 2006 saw significant changes in the ISAT scale that sent scores soaring. One comparison study of the two tests between 1999 and 2002, when both were given, showed no clear trend overall, small increases in 3rd grade, declines in 5th grade and mixed results (e.g., trend lines that ran in opposite directions on the two tests) in the 8th grade.⁵⁴ Even so, since 2005, test scores have risen on the ISAT, 2-7% more students met Illinois standards on the ISAT in 2006 than the previous year and 2007 saw

somewhat smaller gains.⁵⁵ After the first two cohorts of 8th graders were hit by the retention policy, subsequent graduation rates have also steadily improved, although Chicago researchers believe them to be lower (54% in 2002) than the rates reported by the state (64.8%).⁵⁶

Another way to examine success is by tracking test score performance gaps between Chicago's White and Asian students, about 12% of the school population, and its large majority of African American and Latino students. Asians and Whites were both scoring at national norms before 1995, and their scores rose significantly above those norms in the latter half of the decade. Latinos, 34% of the students, saw smaller gains in their scores. But African American students (53%) saw test score gains for only a few years, then stalled, and in some grades declined. By 2001, the test score gap between African Americans and all other groups had widened.⁵⁷ Graduate rates between African American students and others have widened as well, with African American boys substantially below all others, only about 39% graduating by age 19.⁵⁸ Researchers explain the disparity by the differences in classroom performance (i.e., GPA, attendance, and number of "F"s) during their first year of high school.⁵⁹

In 2006 a lack of comparable data across years encouraged researchers to compare African American and Latino students in Chicago with their counterparts in the rest of Illinois, with some surprising results: these two groups of students in Chicago begin much lower on average but approach parity with their Illinois counterparts by the 8th grade, even though they remain far below White and Asian students (e.g., the median Black score on third grade reading was 31 points below the median White score, but the gap on the eighth grade reading test was a smaller 21 points).⁶⁰

Retention and Promotion as Measures of Success

For the dozen years Daley has been in control of the schools, poor test scores have had two consequences: students were held back in grade (“no social promotion” or retention) and schools lost autonomy (“probation”). Both create their own measures of success. One can ask: How has retention affected the students held back? Have sanctioned schools turned around?

Although the numbers fluctuated from year to year, from 1996 until 2001 about 7,000-10,000 elementary students have been retained in grade annually, almost 20% of the third graders and about 10% each of the sixth and eighth graders. Retained third graders saw no improvement and retained sixth graders had 6% lower achievement growth, compared to their peers who had the same or similar scores but were not retained. On average, retained third and sixth graders were three times more likely to be placed in Special Education, where their scores did not count towards promotion decisions, than similarly achieving students who were not retained. Those unfortunate enough to be retained more than once or designated Special Education students experienced a considerable drop in their performance. Dropouts also increased by 8-13% among the students retained, and 78% of those retained twice dropped out by age 19. Mandatory test-prep summer school did not substantially alter the average student’s long-term performance, and the tendency of African American students to drop out more than others was exacerbated.⁶¹

Ninety-seven percent of those retained for low test scores have been African American or Latino. Latino students were exempted from retention for three (later extended to four) years if they were in bilingual education classes. Reasons given for this disparity include the research observation that predominately African American schools received by far the slowest

instructional pacing, meaning these students have not had the opportunity to learn the tested material.⁶²

Test-based school sanctions rapidly produced a schools hierarchy. At the top have been college preparatory schools, many of them new, with test admission criteria, and an accelerated program. Some of their principals have been recently rewarded with additional autonomy to make fiscal and instructional decisions without central office oversight.⁶³ The 60% of schools just below them have generally been required to respond to district curriculum demands, but otherwise left alone. At the bottom, about one fifth of the schools have been “on probation.” One hundred and nine schools were put on probation in 1996. Between then and 2001 about 150 got off probation, but some were reassigned a second time, while others languished. Throughout, the relative size of the three layers stayed much the same. Reasons for recidivism included multiple partners and district consultants assigned to probation schools that “almost guarantee fragmentation,” and were unsystematic and “too weak” to change instruction in most of the demoralized, poorly performing schools.⁶⁴

In 2004, stiffer criteria resulted in a record high of 212 schools (one third of the district) on probation, and these schools were required to spend their discretionary funds on district-specified interventions, like readings specialists.⁶⁵ Thereafter, the criteria for being on probation were loosened: to get off probation, schools could count their achievement on state norms using the ISAT, national norms on the ITBS, and/or significant progress short of meeting either standard. Consequently, by 2007, 140 schools were eligible to be taken off the probation lists based on their scores.

Low performing elementary schools *not* put on probation saw larger gains in student test scores (i.e., 23.6% average gain in proportion of students meeting national norms on ITBS

English exam, 27% on math exam), than probation schools, which as a group remained far below national averages by 2003. Twenty-six percent of low performing elementary schools that escaped probation in 1996 still fell below the probation standard by 2005. Yet this was far better than the schools first placed on probation in 1996, of those 87% did not meet the new standard.⁶⁶ Reconstitution, the sanction applied to a handful of the worst high schools proved even less effective: test scores in those schools plunged, as did teacher morale. Reconstitution was eliminated in 2002.

Another means for evaluating the system was provided by Mayor Daley. He sought to attract a tax-paying middle class. By this measure mayoral control has done somewhat better. The primary contribution of the school system to attracting and retaining the middle class has been constructing new schools in gentrifying areas and targeting college-bound students as the audience. Charters and Renaissance 2010 schools receive more resources than schools not targeted for this transformation process; 62% of these new schools (who teach 3% of the system's 414,000 students) have had their capital needs fully funded compared to 45% of traditional schools. According to district officials, these schools are being "prioritized" in order to get them ready for their new students.⁶⁷

Given the uncertainty involved in sifting through the many possible measures of performance, the complexity of the reform strategy—nothing about Chicago's experience suggests that any current gains can be attributed simply to a reform law—it is useful to ask: What has built Chicago's capacity to bounce back from mistakes, continue making incremental progress, and keep faith in city hall?

Building Capacity for Reform

Chicago's history teaches us that mayoral control of the schools is a governing strategy insufficient to guarantee reform. Yet Chicago has seen clear improvements, if also many missteps, in its school performance over the last dozen years. Instead of freighting mayoral control with all the credit or blame, and then drawing narrow distinctions between earlier and current versions of control, this section describes the capacity-building institutions that underpin governance change. These include independent and credible sources of research about what is working and for whom, and organizations dedicated to interpreting this research for the general public, debating interventions, and investigating policy consequences. Both depend upon an audience of active residents who have the statutory power to alter conditions in their children's schools when needed. Independent of the mayor's authority, Chicagoans have created three institutions that give their system enormous capacity to ground improvements in research, evaluate mayoral initiatives, make school performance transparent, and enable parents and community members to act if the results are not what they want or need. All three institutions had been functioning for half a decade before 1995. Only one depends upon tax dollars for its operation.

Independent Research

Mayors are not educational professionals, and neither of Mayor Daley's school CEOs has been a professional educator. This is one of the arguments for giving them control. As generalists, mayors are less likely than professional superintendents to micro-manage the schools.⁶⁸ But it is also a weakness. Non-specialists are likely to make decisions based on intuition, or to assume that a policy instrument that produced gains in another domain—policing,

or economic development, for example—will also succeed in education. In Chicago, vague slogans like “no social promotion” and “accountability” have driven policy even when the processes for implementing these ideas were not understood.

Sloganeering makes it difficult to alter course when evidence suggests that unintended harm undermines good intentions. For example, although criticized for “sacrificing everything for test scores,” and censured by the National Research Council in 1998, Chicago’s student retention policy was not altered until CEO Vallas left.⁶⁹ The NRC had pointed out that the ITBS test “had not been validated [for] identifying low-performing schools and students,” and recommended multiple measures for these high stakes decisions. But neither the mayor nor his CEO would budge, claiming that any change to a more suitable test or broader measures might cause the system a loss of credibility.⁷⁰

Sometimes, for fear of losing momentum, mistakes were deliberately buried. High school reconstitution, for example, was revealed to be a failure; but because Vallas commissioned the research, its lead author was not allowed to reveal findings to anyone except the CEO. When the results were finally made available, it was already well beyond the time the policy should have been altered for the sake of the youngsters involved.⁷¹

Consequently, it has been crucial that Chicago have an independent research body with routine access to public school data, qualified to conduct technically high quality research, and prepared to follow the results wherever they lead. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) has filled that analytical function since 1990. Founded by researchers Anthony Bryk and Penny Sebring, both at the University of Chicago, it is a collaborative effort involving the University of Illinois, Northwestern University, and Roosevelt University researchers among its directors and principal investigators, and including a wide array of community stakeholders on

its Steering Committee.⁷² CCSR's policy analysis is motivated by the practical problems of implementing reform in Chicago, so called "place-based research."

Bryk initially argued that social science methods applied to school assessment could help low-income LSC members make good decisions about principal hiring, and school improvement planning. "Pluralistic policy research" was intended to compensate for the social capital they lacked.⁷³ Parents and community members, as non-specialists, would need ongoing longitudinal research based on Chicago's schools, so that they could see the consequences of their decisions and learn from the successes of others under the same systemic constraints. To this end, the Consortium created an "individual school report" that provides schools with the results of their own student performance and teacher, principal, and student surveys as compared to a peer group and the system as a whole. These external reports are not used to evaluate schools, however, but to help them improve.

Since mayoral control was reasserted, the Consortium's system-wide research reports became more crucial. Major policy decisions intended for district-wide implementation almost invariably suit some schools, but not others. And some decisions, like the mayor's first efforts at high school restructuring, have proven bad ideas altogether. Where the Consortium has been given access to the school data, its reports have proven a crucial source of credible analyses. CCSR receives individual student achievement test scores, administrative data, and high school course transcripts every year from the school system and conducts biannual surveys of teachers, principals, and students under an agreement with the district that predates Mayor Daley's new powers. Its studies of retained students, for example, would have been impossible without this data and the ability to link student records by individual student codes. Yet they provide Chicago's (and the nation's) most sophisticated analyses of "no social promotion" policies to

date, revealing nuanced implementation concerns, like the differential effects on 3rd graders and older children. Virtually none of the performance results reported above would have been possible, or even fully credible, without the Consortium's independent analyses.

Although initially skeptical, and sometimes overtly hostile to the Consortium, even CEO Vallas came to appreciate its research after he had taken over Philadelphia's schools, largely because CCSR had offered suggestions about how to improve programs, understand roadblocks, and always took seriously his efforts to raise achievement. Arne Duncan has been more receptive all along.

CCSR's nearly 20 years of longitudinal data enables the creation and ongoing monitoring of outcome indicators, the testing of alternative hypotheses, and evaluative analysis unparalleled in any other urban community. It also provides technical assistance to other researchers who perform their own independent analyses (under appropriate human subjects and professional competency constraints). They test the Consortium's conclusions, develop different metrics of success, and offer new ideas for improvement, but rely on the CCSR for their core data. In this way the Consortium's longitudinal database and educational mission perform a crucial public function: increasing the capacity of all Chicago researchers to develop educational expertise among generalist policy makers and to help local school practitioners make improvements.

The CCSR's governance structure enables this impact. The Consortium operates under the direction of researchers who lead major projects: an Executive Director and several Co-Directors. These individuals are ultimately responsible for crafting the research agenda, maintaining the quality of the research, guiding its dissemination and use in schools, as well as sustaining the organization. The Co-Directors are greatly aided by a Steering Committee of about 20 members made up of stakeholders from across the city. Steering Committee meetings have

several purposes: to review research designs and help researchers interpret their findings, provide reactions to preliminary reports, and periodically, to help create the next research agenda. By the time a report is published, stakeholders have debated its methods, findings, and meaning, each bringing different concerns to the dialog. All have a strong sense of how the research affects their educational work, whether that is improving policy or adjusting implementation.

Institutional members of the Steering Committee include the school district, the state board of education and the principals' association and teachers' union. Individual members, selected for their "expertise, diversity of opinions, and their involvement in school reform," outnumber these institutional actors.⁷⁴ Neither the mayor nor the CEO establishes the research agenda or has a veto over the Consortium's work.

Transparency

Mayors have no incentive to reveal bad news. Even Mayor Daley must periodically run for office. His reputation is his re-election platform. Consequently, like all politicians, he cherry-picks data to enhance his standing, and buries, or "spins" information that is negative. But when the topic is the public schools, where the life-chances of the city's children hang in the balance, the results of this normal political process can be dire. Transparency is most needed just when all the incentives work to undermine it.

This does not mean that journalistic coverage of the schools falls off under mayoral control; on the contrary; its status is boosted on the local policy agenda.⁷⁵ An editor of one of Chicago's dailies put it this way: "One of the major changes that's occurred since the mayor took over the school system is that the mayor's office is holding press conferences now about schools. The biggest news events concerning change in the Chicago Public Schools are now announced at

city hall . . . which means that all the city hall reporters are covering education issues.”⁷⁶ But when their sources of information work in city hall, journalists covering that “beat” stand to lose access if they question the mayor. And those inclined to challenge him are often unprepared to probe; they rarely understand how the school system works or how to interpret educational data.⁷⁷ Add to the mix an activist CEO, savvy about media relations, and the public may learn little of importance about the schools, even from dedicated journalists determined to hold officials’ feet to the fire.

Thus, initial impressions of success in Chicago were fostered by a city hall publicity campaign, “the mere perception of success [was] feeding itself.”⁷⁸ According to one active foundation executive, one result was “more political support for the school system...than ever.”⁷⁹ Vallas was lionized in *Forbes* magazine as “Chain Saw Paul” for his “tough tactics” and “plenty of publicity,” and because he came from “outside the education establishment.”⁸⁰ With publicity came credibility; in 1997 civic elites overwhelmingly identified Vallas and his senior staff as their sources of information about the system. Vallas, admitted one journalist, “was a master at using the media. I mean he had everything that we want. He was accessible, he gave us his home phone number, he was plain spoken, and he didn’t speak in educationese.” The CEO also personalized contacts with the media by announcing reform initiatives at the last minute through phone calls designed to leave little time in which journalists could seek alternative perspectives. “Before long,” commented one education editor, the relationship between district and press “was a love fest.” Mayoral control and Vallas’ extraordinary media skills also resulted in “very little, if any, skeptical reporting.”⁸¹ Even a corporate supporter claimed he was “not sure that [the media] are sufficiently critical.”⁸²

But Chicago had a means to counter the public relations barrage. In 1990, the city's foundations had joined with the Community Renewal Society to create *Catalyst*, a newsmagazine solely dedicated to covering the city's schools. Linda Lenz, a local reporter frustrated by editors preoccupied with advertising revenues, wanted to develop a new form of journalism that would support school reform, rather than write "gottcha" stories. She reasoned that reformers could only be effective if they had a source of independent information about how the education system worked, and a cross-sector forum for debate that was also "mindful of the complexities" when describing studies of program effectiveness.⁸³ To the extent that it meets these goals, *Catalyst* may be more important since 1995 than it was when initially conceived.

One study revealed that Daley's re-assertion of authority had a significant chilling effect on the number of diverse opinions reported in *Catalyst*. But its editors explained that they were compensating for a deliberate lack of transparency on the part of the new central administration. After 1995, *Catalyst* provided the missing information, including detailed descriptions of policy changes no longer readily available to the public and assessments of their impact largely drawn from CCSR reports. But *Catalyst*'s editors and funders were not content to explain the mayor's and Vallas' policies to a passive populace. They remained committed to providing a forum for all of Chicago's school stakeholders, from Latino parents to long-established city hall operatives, educational researchers to Black activist organizations. Commissioned studies of *Catalyst*'s effectiveness around 2005 led them to revamp the newsmagazine's format and renew their attention to investigative analysis. One explicit focus has been their attention to the resource and implementation disparities between middle class and low-income communities in the highly segregated city.

Citizen Representation and Involvement

Even an active media outlet dedicated to the schools, capable of interpreting research results and conducting its own investigations, requires a committed audience. Chicago has filled that need too. As a Cleveland newspaper editor put it, “Chicago has a much, much, much more engaged community, both in terms of the academic concentration on schools as well as on the local neighborhood groups of either ethnic, or academic or human services.”⁸⁴ Chicago’s public engagement processes began with a citywide summit called by former Mayor Harold Washington. Even after his untimely death the summit continued, engaging the city for many months. A wide array of residents, representing all of the city’s neighborhoods, influenced the decisions that led to the decentralized governing law of 1988. This participatory democracy was subsequently institutionalized in the form of LSCs.⁸⁵

After their euphoric first year of existence, LSCs fell short of their most idealistic supporters’ hopes. Community activists had been pleased that the Illinois Supreme Court gave LSCs legal status equivalent to the central school board. But corporate leaders sided with the one dissenting justice who said LSCs were “simply to implement in the particular school the district wide policies set by the board.”⁸⁶ Such differences of opinion over the meaning of local school governance reflected different perspectives on who had the legitimacy to make substantive decisions about public schooling. Corporate leaders worried about the potential for corruption and poor decision-making. As one of them put it, “A lot of these people had never had *any* kind of experience like that before.”⁸⁷ The costs of biannual electioneering and LSC training were recurring district expenses, for which there was no enthusiasm among those concerned with balanced budgets. One survey conducted in the early 1990s reported that 10-25% of the LSC respondents characterized theirs as being rancorously divided or lacking in transparency, and the

press has reported examples of LSCs letting contracts to organizations that did not provide services.

The greater concern has been electoral apathy. Steep declines in the numbers of candidates who ran for LSC slots, and in voter turnout, began almost immediately. Fewer than half as many candidates came forward in 1991 as had in 1989. Today, LSC elections in a school are considered successful if at least one candidate runs for each open seat, and 62 schools had fully contested elections in 2006. Turnout declined from 192,771 in 1989 to 175,845 in 1996, demonstrating that LSCs draw voters in no greater numbers than elected school boards. But there is little evidence that the teachers union is engaged in LSC slate making, since teachers only have two seats, and cannot vote for parents. But in some schools, community organizations have created electoral slates to ensure that a principal who represents them was seated.

Yet the concern about electoral legitimacy misses the greater contribution that LSCs make to Chicago's school reform. LSCs assemble a body of engaged parents and community members in each school who have the means to turn conversation into action should they feel the school is being served poorly. Independent of their capacity to make sound educational decisions—a question on which Mayor Daley and Illinois legislators so far disagree—they provide Chicago's only public forums for debate of school policies.

Absent LSCs, the system's governance is highly centralized and in the hands of a politically unaccountable mayor. He effectively holds his position for life and city hall remains largely inaccessible to ordinary citizens. The school board serves as an advisory group to the mayor, not a citizen forum. And Chicago's central office is as bureaucratic as any big city school system. CCSR's Steering Committee is a forum for researchers and community elites to engage in debate about the schools, but LSCs provide the only political outlet for individual parents and

community members whose concerns and criticism would otherwise be ineffectual. And although LSC elections do not draw large numbers of voters or candidates they remain a means to alter the implementation of the mayor's plans one school at a time. Notwithstanding inter-school competition for capital improvements and extra resources that tilt the scales towards middle class parents, this is the one place where even low-income parents and community members can affect the education their children receive. Perhaps this is why LSCs are so strongly defended.

As educative institutions in their own right—in theory, as many as 44,000 Chicagoans have learned about their schools first hand while serving as LSC representatives—they also sustain both *Catalyst* and CCSR. Absent LSCs, these two institutions would otherwise be addressing a small, elite audience of political leaders, educational insiders, and a few civic activists. *Catalyst* speaks to LSC members as concerned residents with a need to know about the schools. LSC members also afford *Catalyst*'s journalists a legitimate, grassroots alternative to official district and city hall sources. LSCs create the structural conditions that permit democratic decision making to survive, if only one school at a time, even in the context of centralized mayoral control at the top of the system. *Catalyst*'s award-winning journalists, and CCSR's highly respected researchers bolster those conditions by providing LSCs with reliable information and school-based research that is needed to make local decisions. Evaluating a principal's performance is done more credibly as a result, so too is evaluating the mayor's latest initiative.

No other mayoral control experiment in the nation has this bottom-up decision making process. Ironically, without these three grassroots institutions, many of Mayor Daley's initiatives would likely have had much greater opposition. They may be the primary reasons why

Chicagoan's have not revolted in masse when problems have surfaced.

Unsolved Problems

Notwithstanding its institutional resources and civic capacity, there are also problems Chicago has not solved. Despite 15 years of oversight by the School Finance Authority, unprecedented flexibility to move funding from one need to another, a hamstrung union, and the goodwill of businesses and foundations that grew to \$29 million in 2006, Chicago's budgetary woes remain. Mayor Daley has used heroic measures each year since 1996 to balance the budget, and Chicagoans have seen large tax hikes, but the system remains fundamentally out of balance.

Part of the problem is that the school budget has ballooned. In order to be successful, mayors must initiate new programs. Finding ways to raise new funds for summer school, after school programs, all-day kindergarten, wiring the schools, redressing long-deferred maintenance, and a host of other priorities has required every ounce of ingenuity the mayor possesses. And when the strategy for improvement involves a large share of outsourcing, there are additional startup, construction and contract maintenance costs. In addition, Chicago has incurred substantial financing costs through TIF loans and bonds, all of which eventually have to be paid.

Illinois contributes a relatively low share of baseline funding to the public schools compared to other states. This has had the consequence of making local funding disparities larger than they would otherwise be. Illinois legislators have repeatedly been asked to re-examine school funding on these equity grounds. Yet, to date, no plans have received sufficient legislative support. Until something is done to remedy this situation, Chicago's version of mayoral control will continue to strain the resources of the city. Without a more rational and reliable state

funding stream, the costs of public education under this mayor's control are likely to outstrip the city's taxing capacity.

Qualified teachers and principals, bilingual staff in schools serving Latino communities, knowledgeable parents to serve on LSCs, expert school support teams, reliable partners for new schools, and expert advisors for those still troubled are resources as important to schooling as stable finances. Beyond funding, each of these resource streams requires community support, and an organizational base to draw upon. Chicago is fortunate to have many institutions of higher education, all of which have agreed to alter their preparation of principals and teachers, serve as partners to help turn around schools on probation, perform evaluation studies, and serve as high level advisors. The city is also blessed with a wide range of activist community-based organizations.

These resources have been consolidated and sustained in one of two ways. They have been acquired through costly district contracts. Alternatively, extra-school organizations have been motivated to participate as part of a larger reform coalition willing to raise its own private philanthropic funding to perform the needed services. To the extent that Rich Daley has chosen the first option, it provides him with loyal contractors while supporting Chicago's large organizational base with selective, material incentives. To the extent that Chicagoans have demonstrated an autonomous interest in reforming their schools, they are independent of city hall, free to criticize and "audit" its educational performance. They can also add ideas and voices, providing political protection for politicians worried about seeming indecisive if their policies do not work out as planned. Crucially, the second mobilization strategy relies on philanthropic persistence among funders who often want only to "seed" organizations and then turn to other priorities. Chicago is lucky to have a philanthropic community with remarkable

tenacity that has so far maintained the Consortium, *Catalyst*, and several other capacity building institutions key to improving the city's educational knowledge base, its educational workforce, and principal preparation. Added recently are mission-driven foundations that aim to seed new types of schools. But when the private philanthropy dries up, the need for these human resources will remain. Chicago has not yet solved this sustainability problem.

Breaking with Tradition

By some accounts, mayoral control in Chicago represents a new and unprecedented governance structure. This narrative argues that Richard M. Daley is a “new style” mayor, who takes his school leadership and management responsibilities seriously. If so, this means success for Chicago's schools is dependent on one man and his remaining in charge of the city. It begs the questions: How are the traits that make Daley a school leader transferred to the next mayor? What should the electorate look for in replacing him, when the time comes? Even if we had technical answers to these questions, they might not be useful. Politicians are seldom elected to fulfill a predecessor's mandate, and most political executives prefer to put their own governing stamp on the offices they hold.

This “educational mayor” narrative ignores the capacity-building institutions that Chicagoans created, independently of mayoral control, to assist school improvement. These organizations are Chicago's bulwark against another less-than-ideal mayor, lowering the risks of this governing strategy for everyone concerned. They are arguably more important institutional changes than any mayoral power shifts. Whatever governing strategy is adopted in the future, Chicagoans have, in CCSR, dedicated and independent research on which to base program evaluation and improve activities, a means to receive credible information about the schools in

Catalyst, and should it be needed, the ability to redress problems one school at a time through elected LSCs. Each of these institutions contributes crucial external resources that Chicago's mayors can rely on, but that also will correct glib claims, reveal the underlying processes of success, and keep the media spotlight on the schools and students that are still struggling. While some cities have one of these institutions, no other U.S. city has them all.⁸⁸

Chicagoans may be less confident of the funding streams to keep their schools moving forward, especially those needed to tackle the more difficult tasks of dramatically improving performance among educationally disadvantaged, low-income Black and Latino students. If the current mayor can use his political capital to resolve the resource problem, not simply balancing the budget one year at a time, but rather by acquiring permanent funding, his legacy as an education mayor may well be secure.

Notes:

¹ Kenneth J. Meier, "Structure, Politics and Policy: The Logic of Mayoral Control," in *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*, ed. Jeffrey Henig and Wilbur Rich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

² Kenneth K. Wong et al., *The Education Mayor: Improving America's Schools* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

³ See for example, Dorothy Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago 1880-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

⁴ Quoted in F. James, "Daley Lectures on Schools: If Chicago Can Turn around, Others Can, Mayor Says," *Chicago Tribune*, June 6 1997.

⁵ U.S. Conference of Mayors, "Best Practices in City Governments, Vol. 3: Focus on the Mayor's Role in Education," (Washington D.C.: U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1997).

⁶ William J. Clinton, "State of the Union Address by the President," (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, January 27 1998), Federal News Service, "Full Text of President Clinton's State of the Union Address as Delivered on January 19, 1999," *The Washington Post*, January 20 1999.

⁷ See for example Elaine Allensworth, "Graduation and Dropout Trends in Chicago: A Look at Cohorts of Students from 1991 to 2004," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2005), William Ayers, "Chicago: A Restless Sea of Social Forces," in *A Union of Professionals: Labor Relations and Educational Reform*, ed. Charles T. Kerschner and Julia E. Koppich (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), Marilyn Bizar and Rebecca Barr, eds., *School Leadership in Times of Urban Reform* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), Anthony S. Bryk et al., *Charting Chicago School Reform: Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change* (Boulder Co.: Westview Press, 1998), Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, "Left Behind: A Report of the Education Committee," (Chicago: Commercial Club of Chicago, 2003), Paul T. Hill, Lawrence C. Pierce, and James W. Guthrie, *Reinventing Public Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), Michael M. Katz, Michele Fine, and Elaine Simon, "Poking Around: Outsiders View Chicago School Reform," *Teachers College Record* 99, no. 1 (1997), Pauline Lipman, *High Stakes Education: Inequality, Globalization and Urban School Reform* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), Pauline Lipman, "Making the Global City, Making Inequality: The Political Economy and Cultural Politics of Chicago School Policy," *American Educational Research Journal* 39, no. 2 (2002), William S. McKersie, "Reforming Chicago's Public Schools: Philanthropic Persistence, 1987-1993," in *Advances in Educational Policy*, ed. Kenneth Wong (Greenwich CT: JAI Press, 1996), Donald Moore, "Chicago's Grade Retention Program Fails to Help Retained Students," (Chicago: Designs for Change, 2000), Jennifer O'Day, "Complexity, Accountability and School Improvement," *Harvard Education Review* 72, no. 3 (2002), Melissa Roderick and Mimi Engel, "The Grasshopper and the Ant: Motivational Responses of Low Achieving Students to High Stakes Testing," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 23, no. 4 (2001), Alexander Russo, ed., *School Reform in Chicago* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2004), Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago 1880-2000*, Deborah Lynch Walsh, *Labor of Love: One Chicago Teacher's Experience* (Lincoln NE: Writers Club Press, 2000), Wong et al., *The Education Mayor*.

⁸ Dick Simpson et al., "Chicago City Council's Newly Found Independence: Chicago City Council Report, May 7, 2003-December 7, 2005," (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006). p. 2.

⁹ Quoted in Julia Wrigley, *Class Politics and Public Schools: Chicago 1900-1950* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1982). p.141.

¹⁰ Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago 1880-2000*. p.95.

¹¹ Mayor's Chief of Staff, Interview with Author, June 25 1997.

¹² The cuts are detailed in Mary Herrick, *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1971).

¹³ Citizen's Schools Committee, *Chicago Schools* I, no. 1 (1934).

¹⁴ Joint House and Senate Chicago Board of Education Investigation Committee, "The Chicago Board of Education's 1979 Financial Crisis and Its Implications on Other Illinois School Districts: Final Report," ed. Illinois General Assembly (State of Illinois, 81st Illinois General Assembly, January 13, 1981).

¹⁵ Citizen's Schools Committee, "Report Iii," (Chicago 1980), G. Alfred Hess Jr., *School Restructuring, Chicago Style* (Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, 1991).

¹⁶ National Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education, "Certain Personnel Practices in the Chicago Public Schools," (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1945).

¹⁷ Stephen P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁸ Douglas Gills, "Chicago Politics and Community Development: A Social Movement Perspective," in *Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods: Progressive City Government in Chicago, 1983-1987*, ed. Pierre Clavel and Wim Wiewel (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Amanda Paulson, *Chicago Scandal Takes It Toll* (Christian Science Monitor, August 12 2005, [cited December 24 2007]); available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0812/p02s01-uspo.html>, Fran Spielman, "City's Hiring Still Not Clean, Monitor Says; "Subtle Types of Manipulation"," *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 19 2007.

²⁰ Veronica Anderson, "Equity and Transparency Elusive," *Catalyst*, May 2007.

²¹ Henry Mendoza, Interview with Author, November 26 1991.

²² President of the Civic Committee to The Honorable Mary Lou Cowlshaw Arnold Weber, in *Cowlshaw Papers (in author's possession)* (New York: 1997).

²³ David Paulus, Interview with Author, September 30 1991, B. Kenneth West, Interview with Author, November 14 1991.

²⁴ Mary Sue Barrett, Interview with Author June 25 1997.

²⁵ *Catalyst*, "Duncan Charts a New Path for Chicago Public Schools," September 2001.

²⁶ Quoted in Paul Vallas, Telephone Interview with Author, September 3 1997.

²⁷ Quoted in Richard M. Daley, "Chicago City Government: Smaller in Size, but Greater in Performance," *Business Forum*, Winter/Spring 1994.

²⁸ Vallas.

²⁹ Rosalind Rossi, "Board OKs \$48 Million Tax Levy for Schools," *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 18 1997. Rosalind Rossi and Fran Spielman, "School Tax Hike on the Table," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 23 2001.

-
- ³⁰ Aaron Chambers, *Cps Budget Hanging in the Balance* (Catalyst, Chicago, December 2007 [cited January 15 2008]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/index.php?item=2331&cat=30>, John Myers, *Cps Releases 'Keep Afloat' Budget* (Catalyst, Chicago, August 2007 [cited January 15 2008]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/index.php?item=2234&cat=23>.
- ³¹ Margaret Blackshire, Interview with Author October 27 1997.
- ³² Simpson et al., "Chicago City Council Report."
- ³³ John Myers, "Rubber Stamp or Glue?," *Catalyst Chicago*, September 2007.
- ³⁴ James L. Merriner Jr. and Mike Cramer, "The Stealth Boss," *Illinois Issues*, March 1998.
- ³⁵ Eli Lehrer, *The Town That Loves to TIF* (Governing Magazine, September 1999 [cited July 7 2003]); available from <http://www.governing.com/archive/1999/sept/tif.txt>.
- ³⁶ Alan Ehrenhalt, *Pleasure and Guilt on Michigan Avenue* (Governing Magazine, July 1999 [cited July 7 2003]); available from <http://www.governing.com/archive/1999/jul/assess.txt>.
- ³⁷ Brett Schaeffer, "Watchdog Group: Cps Capital Plan a Project Wish List," *Catalyst*, April 2001.
- ³⁸ Steven Alexander, "Black and Latino Coalitions: Means to Greater Budget Resources for Their Communities?," in *The Collaborative City: Opportunities and Struggle for Blacks and Latinos in U.S. Cities*, ed. John L. Betancur and Douglas Gills (New York City: Garland, 2000). 206.
- ³⁹ Kim Phillips-Fein, "The Still Industrial City: Why Cities Shouldn't Just Let Manufacturing Go," *The American Prospect*, September/October 1998.
- ⁴⁰ Quoted in John Myers, *'Bread and Butter' V. Reform Agenda* (Catalyst, May 2004 [cited September 15 2004]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/05-04/0504ctu.htm>. See also, John Myers, *Teachers Ratify 5-Year Contract* (Catalyst, Chicago, September 2007 [cited January 15 2008]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/index.php?item=2267&cat=30>.
- ⁴¹ Rosalind Rossi and Fran Spielman, "Daley Backs Board: Mayor Opposes Sham Graduation for 8th Graders," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 5 1997.
- ⁴² Vallas.
- ⁴³ Vallas quoted in Amanda Paulson, "In an Era of 'Accountability,' Parents Get Report Cards Too," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 18 2000.
- ⁴⁴ Rosalind Rossi, "Parents to Get Grades: Chicago Schools Chief, Paul Vallas Wants to Issue Report Cards to Tell Mom and Dad How They Are Performing Too," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 18 2000.
- ⁴⁵ Jenny Nagoaka and Melissa Roderick, "Ending Social Promotion: The Effects of Retention " (Consortium on Chicago School Research 2004).
- ⁴⁶ Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, "Left Behind."51.
- ⁴⁷ Maureen Kelleher, *First Renaissance Schools Chosen as Charter Leaders Depart* (Catalyst Chicago, February 2005 [cited June 10 2005]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/02-05/0205ren2010.htm>.
- ⁴⁸ Catalyst, "Ren 2010 Watch," *Catalyst, Chicago XVIII*, no. 5 (2007).
- ⁴⁹ Aaron Chambers, *Web Extra: No Traction on Plan to Strip LSC Powers* (Catalyst Chicago, 2007 [cited December 24 2007]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/index.php?item=2212&cat=30>.

-
- ⁵⁰ John Q. Easton, T. Rosenkranz, and Anthony S. Bryk, "Annual Cps Test Trend Review, 2000," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2001), Melissa Roderick, Brian A. Jacob, and Anthony S. Bryk, "The Impact of High Stakes Testing on Student Achievement in Promotional Gate Grades," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 24 (2002).
- ⁵¹ Todd Rosenkranz, "2001 Cps Test Trend Review: Iowa Test of Basic Skills," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2002).
- ⁵² Anthony S. Bryk et al., *Charting School Reform: Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1998).
- ⁵³ Designs for Change, "The Big Picture: School-Initiated Reforms, Centrally Initiated Reforms, and Elementary School Achievement in Chicago (1995-2005)," in *Insights* (Chicago: Designs for Change, 2005).
- ⁵⁴ John Easton et al., "How Do They Compare? ITBS and ISAT Reading and Mathematics in the Chicago Public Schools: 1999-2002," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003).
- ⁵⁵ Designs for Change, "The Big Picture."
- ⁵⁶ Allensworth, "Graduation and Dropout Trends."
- ⁵⁷ Rosenkranz, "2001 CPS Test Trend Review: Iowa Test of Basic Skills."
- ⁵⁸ Allensworth, "Graduation and Dropout Trends."
- ⁵⁹ Elaine Allensworth and John Easton, "What Matters Most for Staying on Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2007).
- ⁶⁰ John Q. Easton, Stuart Luppescu, and Todd Rosenkranz, "2006 ISAT Reading and Math Scores," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2007).
- ⁶¹ Elaine Allensworth, "Ending Social Promotion: Dropout Rates in Chicago after Implementation of the Eighth Grade Promotional Gates," (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2004), Nagoaka and Roderick, "Effects of Retention." Moore, "Grade Retention Program Fails.", Melissa Roderick, Mimi Engel, and Jenny Nogaoka, "Ending Social Promotion: Results from Summer Bridge," (Consortium on Chicago School Research 2004).
- ⁶² Julia B. Smith, Valerie E. Lee, and Frank M. Newmann, "Instruction and Achievement in Chicago Elementary Schools," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2001), Julia B. Smith, Betsann Smith, and Anthony S. Bryk, "Setting the Pace: Opportunities to Learn in Chicago's Elementary Schools," (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1998).
- ⁶³ Chicago Catalyst, "School Report Card," (Chicago: Catalyst, 2007).
- ⁶⁴ Kara Finnigan and Jennifer O' Day, "External Supports to Schools on Probation," (Consortium on Chicago School Research and Consortium on Policy Research in Education, 2003). pp. viii, 43.
- ⁶⁵ Catalyst on Line, *School Reform Timeline 2004* (Catalyst, 2004 [cited June 20 2005]); available from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/timeline/time04.htm>.
- ⁶⁶ Designs for Change, "The Big Picture."
- ⁶⁷ John Myers, "Going to the Head of the Class," *Catalyst, Chicago* XVIII, no. 8 (2007).
- ⁶⁸ Meier, "Structure, Politics and Policy: The Logic of Mayoral Control."
- ⁶⁹ Quoted in Suzanne Kerbow, Interview with Karin Sconzert, July 10 1997.
- ⁷⁰ Quoted in Jay P. Heubert and Robert M. Hauser, *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion and Graduation* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998). 31.

⁷¹ G. Alfred Jr. Hess, April 22 2003, D. Newbart and Rosalind Rossi, "Scores Drop at Schools under Tightest Rein," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 6 2001.

⁷² Between 1996 and 1999, I was a director at the Consortium.

⁷³ Anthony S. Bryk and Kim L. Hermanson, "Educational Indicator Systems: Observations of Their Structure, Interpretation and Use" (paper presented at the Conference on the Research Agenda for Assessing School Reform in Chicago March 8 1991).

⁷⁴ Roderick, Melissa, and John Q. Easton. 2007. Developing New Roles for Research in New Policy Environments: The Consortium on Chicago School Research. In Social Science Research Council, nycresearchpartnership.ssrc.org/Paper%202.pdf (accessed November, 2007).

⁷⁵ John Portz, "Boston: Agenda Setting and School Reform in a Mayor-Centric System," in *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*, ed. Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁷⁶ Chicago Education Editor, interview with Author, October 24 2003.

⁷⁷ Dorothy Shipps, Elisabeth Fowlkes, and Alissa Peltzman, "Journalism and Urban School Reform: Versions of Democratic Decision Making in Two American Cities," *American Journal of Education* 112, no. 3 (2006).

⁷⁸ Greg Hinz, "Executive of the Year: Schools CEO Vallas Goes to the Head of the Class," *Crain's Chicago Business*, June 8 1998.

⁷⁹ Patricia Graham, Interview with Author, July 16 1997.

⁸⁰ Bruce Upbin, "Chain Saw Paul," *Forbes*, April 6 1998. p. 66.

⁸¹ Shipps, Fowlkes, and Peltzman, "Journalism and Urban School Reform."

⁸² Ronald Gidwitz, Interview with Author, July 8 1997.

⁸³ Linda Lenz, Interview with Author, December 12 2003.

⁸⁴ Cleveland Education Editor, Interview with Author, February 23, 2003.

⁸⁵ Jim Carl, "Harold Washington and Chicago's Schools: Between Civil Rights and the Decline of the New Deal Consensus, 1955-1987," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2001), Jeffrey Mirel, "School Reform, Chicago Style: Educational Innovation in a Changing Urban Context, 1976-1991," *Urban Education* 28, no. 2 (1993).

⁸⁶ *Arthur Fumarolo Et Al V the Chicago Board of Education Et Al*, 142 Ill. 2nd 54; 566 N.E. 2nd 1283; 1990 Ill LEXUS 136; 153 Ill. Dec 177 (1990).

⁸⁷ Kenneth B. West. Interview with author, November 14, 1991.

⁸⁸ For example, Cleveland has its own *Catalyst*, but nothing equivalent to LSCs the CCSR. Philadelphia has a dedicated and independent research institution in *Research for Action*, but nothing like *Catalyst* or LSCs.