



Improving Chicago's Schools



Consortium on
Chicago School
Research

The Chicago Annenberg Challenge: Successes, Failures, and Lessons for the Future

Final Technical Report of the
Chicago Annenberg Research Project

Mark A. Smylie
Stacy A. Wenzel

with
Elaine Allensworth
Carol Fendt
Sara Hallman
Stuart Luppescu
Jenny Nagaoka

August 2003

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Executive Summary

This final technical report of the Chicago Annenberg Research Project addresses four central questions: (a) Did the Chicago Annenberg Challenge promote improvement of the schools that it supported? (b) Among those schools, did it also promote improvement in student academic achievement and other outcomes? (c) What factors might explain improvement or lack thereof among Annenberg schools? and (d) What can we learn from the Challenge's experiences to promote school improvement in the future? In answer to these questions, this report provides a macro view of the Challenge's success in promoting school improvement and student learning. Additionally, it looks closely at several Annenberg schools to understand what makes local school improvement successful.

This report focuses on the period between the 1996 to 1997 and 2000 to 2001 school years, the five full years during which the Challenge supported local school improvement. In all, the Challenge supported about 210 high schools and elementary schools, but because approximately 90 percent of these were elementary schools, this report focuses only on them.

The Challenge's "bottom line" was improving student achievement and other social and psychological outcomes. Our research indicates that student outcomes in Annenberg schools were much like those in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools and across the Chicago school system as a whole, indicating that among the schools it supported, the Challenge had little impact on student outcomes.

- Analyses of ITBS scores indicate that between 1996 and 2001, student academic achievement improved across Annenberg schools as it did across the Chicago Public School system as a whole. At the same time, rates of gain in student achievement among Annenberg schools did not improve markedly. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg schools and non-Annenberg schools in rates of achievement gain.
- Across Annenberg schools, student academic engagement was only slightly greater in 2001 than before the Challenge. Classroom behavior, students' sense of self-efficacy, and social competence were weaker in 2001 than before the Challenge. Like student academic achievement, there were no statistically significant differences in these outcomes between Annenberg schools and non-Annenberg schools.

Although Annenberg schools did not achieve an overall effect on student outcomes, we examined whether the Challenge promoted improvements in schools that might lead to subsequent improvement in student outcomes. Using the Model of Essential Supports for Student Learning as a framework for analysis, we assessed seven areas of school improvement: (a) quality of classroom instruction; (b) student learning climate; (c) school leadership; (d) teacher professional community; (e) parent and community support; (f) relational trust; and (g) instructional program coherence.

Findings from large-scale survey analyses, longitudinal field research, and student achievement test score analyses reveal that while the Challenge contributed to the improvement of a number of Annenberg schools, there is little evidence of an overall Annenberg school improvement "effect." Any improvements were much like those occurring in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools.

- The overall quality of instruction improved somewhat among Annenberg schools, particularly teachers' use of interactive teaching strategies, the intellectual demand of instruction, and teachers' emphasis on writing. Some aspects of student learning climate also improved, particularly school safety and classroom personalism. Some small improvements occurred in school leadership, teacher professional community, parent involvement in schools, and relational trust. At the same time, other areas failed to improve and some weakened. These included student peer support for academic learning, inclusive school leadership, and teacher commitment to school.

- Initial improvement that occurred by 1999 among Annenberg schools in a number of areas of school organizational capacity—school leadership, teacher professional community and professional development, parent and community support, relational trust, and instruction program coherence disappeared by the end of the Challenge in 2001. Although some measures of organizational capacity were slightly stronger or weaker in 2001 than at the beginning of the Challenge, there was little net change. In all, the organizational capacity of Annenberg schools at the end of the Challenge looked much like it did at the beginning.

Factors that might explain the lack of an overall Annenberg effect on school improvement and student outcomes include (a) various shortcomings in the design and implementation of the Challenge, including broad goals and vague strategies, too few resources for too many schools, and weak levers for change; (b) External Partners' lack of capacity; (c) schools' lack of capacity to "do Annenberg," including weaknesses in human, social, and material resources; (d) schools' lack of commitment to the Challenge; (e) sources of disruption and persistence within schools; and (f) countervailing forces outside of Annenberg schools, notably the school system's high-stakes accountability policies. The loss of initial improvement among Annenberg schools may have resulted from both the decline in Annenberg financial and professional support after 1999, and intensified CPS accountability policies.

In addition to trends in school improvement across all Annenberg schools, this report examined trends in school improvement among a small group of "Breakthrough Schools." These Breakthrough Schools received special financial and professional support from the Challenge between 1999 and 2001. At the same time, the Challenge began withdrawing funding from the remainder of Annenberg schools.

The findings indicate that Breakthrough Schools began to develop in ways that distinguished them from other Annenberg schools. Although there were no statistically significant differences between Breakthrough Schools and other Annenberg schools in 1999, the year they were selected by the Challenge, Breakthrough Schools sustained or strengthened aspects of teacher professional community, school leadership, and relational trust while other Annenberg schools

did not. This suggests that these schools may have built a stronger foundation for subsequent development of instruction and student learning climate, and this, in turn, may promote future improvement in student outcomes.

Factors that might explain the relative success of Breakthrough Schools include (a) greater initial capacity for development, coupled with (b) different and sustained resources, and perhaps (c) a motivational boost from their selection.

The fourth component of our research helped us to better understand what factors influenced successes and failures in Annenberg schools. We examined the development of 12 Annenberg schools over a five-year period and studied the relationship of their development to the improvement activities in which they engaged. Four factors emerged from this study that distinguished strong schools and schools that improved from those that were weak and those that did not improve. Strong schools or schools that improved focused on improving multiple, mutually-reinforcing aspects of school organization and practice (e.g., classroom instruction and aspects of school leadership and professional community that might support instructional improvement) rather than a single aspect of school organization or practice (e.g., instructional improvement alone). They used an array of complementary, reinforcing strategies (e.g., professional development with incentives and accountability) rather than only one (e.g., accountability or professional development alone). Schools that were strong or that improved were generally more effective at searching for, securing, and taking full advantage of external resources. However, what distinguished these schools from nonimproving schools was the ability to secure resources aligned with a particular development agenda and to employ these resources in an efficient and strategic manner. Finally, schools that were strong or that improved distinguished themselves from weak schools and nonimproving schools by the cultivation of strong, distributive leadership. Teacher leaders make substantial contributions to school improvement, but this analysis highlights the “make-or-break” role of the principal, even when people in different roles join principals in “leadership work.”

This report concludes with several lessons drawn from the experience of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge for promoting future large-scale school improvement. First, while it may be important to encourage local pluralism and self-determinism in developing, adopting, and implementing initiatives to improve schools, it may be equally important to provide guidance for local initiatives in the form of well-researched and well-thought out maps of change. Second, it may be more effective to concentrate greater amounts of resources on a relatively small number of schools that are selected in part for their capacity to implement the particular reform at hand. This report argues it is less effective to distribute relatively small amounts of resources among a very large number of schools that have been selected with less discrimination. Third, adequate and sustained financial support for school improvement is essential, but as important is how that money is spent. Money appears to be a necessary but insufficient resource to promote and support school improvement. Also important are intellectual, social, and political resources that build upon and extend a school's existing resources. Resources should be aligned with coherent goals and plans for school improvement. Fourth, constructive interaction with and engagement of the school system seems to be an important ingredient for supporting local school improvement. Conflicts and contradictions among reform initiatives and system policies pose implementation problems at the school and classroom levels. Finally, school improvement is a difficult and complex task that requires hard and sustained work over long periods of time. While it may be foolish to spend too much time and too many resources on bad reform ideas, it is also foolish to give up prematurely on potentially effective ones.

Part One: Introduction

In 1995, the Chicago Annenberg Challenge launched a six-year, large-scale initiative to improve Chicago’s public schools. It set out a broad vision for change, calling for the “enhancement of learning for all students through dramatically improved classroom practice and strengthened community relationships.”¹ The Challenge funded networks of schools and External Partners to plan, develop, and implement activities to improve local schools and student learning. At its peak, it supported improvement activities in about 210 schools in the Chicago public school system. These focused on many different areas of school organization and practice, including curriculum and instruction, student learning climate and social services, teacher and leadership development, and the involvement of parents and the community in schools and student learning.

Overview

This final technical report of the Chicago Annenberg Research Project describes the Chicago Annenberg Challenge and the broader context of Chicago school reform within which it was established and operated. It documents changes among participating Annenberg schools from 1996 to 1997 through 2000 to 2001, the five full school years the Challenge supported local school improvement activity. It also presents trends among Annenberg schools in academic achievement and other student outcomes during the same period. The report analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the Challenge as a strategy for promoting large-scale local school improvement and identifies a number of factors that may have affected what it was able to accomplish. Finally, drawing on the experiences of the Chicago Challenge, it discusses several lessons about how to promote urban school improvement in the future. This report follows and extends two previous technical reports, *Getting*

¹ Hallett, Chapman, and Ayers (1995). See also Sconzert, Shipps, and Smylie (1998).

*Started: A First Look at Chicago Annenberg Schools and Networks and Development of Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1996–1999.*²

This report addresses four central questions: (a) Did the Chicago Annenberg Challenge promote improvement of the schools it supported? (b) Among those schools, did it also promote improvement in student achievement and nonacademic outcomes? (c) What factors might explain improvement or the lack thereof among Annenberg schools? and (d) What can we learn from the Challenge's experience to promote school improvement in the future? In the process of answering these questions, this report provides a general assessment of the overall success of the Chicago Challenge in promoting school improvement and student learning.

This report focuses primarily on the Challenge as a whole and on the large group of schools it supported. The vast majority of these—about 90 percent—were elementary schools. Because so few high schools participated in the Challenge, and because of the unevenness of data available on them, we only discuss elementary schools here. We draw upon citywide survey and student achievement data to identify trends in school change and student outcomes across Annenberg schools. As described in our discussion of research methodology, a significant part of the Chicago Annenberg Research Project was longitudinal field research. We draw on this field research to illustrate broad trends across Annenberg schools in survey data. Although much can be learned about large-scale school improvement from examining Annenberg schools as a whole, much can also be learned by looking at the experiences of individual schools. So, this report contains a section that draws on the field research to examine closely differences between improving and nonimproving schools and to understand in-depth what helps make local school improvement successful.

Overall, this report presents a story of a particular large-scale, decentralized approach to educational reform. It is a complex story from which we can draw important lessons about how to make reform more efficient and effective.

² Smylie et al. (1998) and Wenzel et al. (2001). The Challenge made its first grants to networks and External Partners in December 1995. Winter and spring of 1996 were used primarily for planning and development. For most funded networks, implementation of development activities did not begin in earnest until the fall of the 1996–97 school year.

The Chicago Annenberg Challenge

The Chicago Annenberg Challenge was established in January 1995 with a \$49.2 million grant from the Annenberg Foundation.³ It was one of six such projects that received funding that year or the year before. Other Challenges were established in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay area. A national network of rural schools also received a grant. Since 1995, additional projects were begun in other cities. As a condition of funding, all projects were required to raise a two-to-one match of additional money or in-kind contributions. In addition, each had to commission and support its own local evaluation. The Consortium on Chicago School Research conducted the Chicago study referred to as the Chicago Annenberg Research Project.

The Chicago Challenge grew out of the city's 1988 school decentralization reform, which shifted substantial authority for local school governance from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) central administration to local school communities. The Challenge was based on the premise that taking reform beyond school governance meant allowing teachers, parents, and communities to rethink and restructure public schools. The Challenge reflected a particular view of democratic localism and community organizing that placed great faith in the ability of local schools, in partnership with parents and their communities, to define their own problems, challenge their own assumptions, identify their own goals for improvement, and develop their own strategies to achieve them. This was very different from "old reform" that prescribed goals and strategies and attempted to improve schools from the "top down." The Challenge eschewed establishing common goals and designating particular programs or strategies to achieve them. It followed the principles of the national Annenberg Challenge, a group associated with the Annenberg Institute that coordinated, monitored, and supported the work of the

³ For a more detailed description of the establishment and early organizational history of the Challenge, see Shipps and Sconzert with Swyers (1999).

different local Challenges. The Annenberg Institute described these principles in 1998 as follows:

An abiding tenet of the Annenberg Challenge since its inception, one that distinguishes it from other major school reform initiatives, is its embrace of pluralism. Believing that there is no magic bullet, no single panacea, for fixing what ails our nation's most troubled schools, the Challenge has eschewed privileging one reform strategy over another. Rather, like all pluralist efforts, the Challenge accommodates an array of theories, in this case about how change occurs in schools and in the systems of which they are a part. And like all pluralist efforts, its constituent elements are characterized by both similarities and differences.⁴

Consistent with these principles, the Chicago Challenge was organized and operated much like a foundation that provided financial support to a large number of locally defined and developed improvement initiatives. In addition to money, the Challenge sought to promote local school improvement by connecting grant recipients to schools with similar problems and interests and to External Partners in networks of mutual support and assistance. Although the Challenge provided school leaders and External Partners some guidance for developing their funding proposals and hosted some professional development and workshop activities, it believed that the primary source of support for local improvement activity would come from the relationships among the schools and Partners that worked together. It did not develop a strong central program of technical assistance.

Goals of the Challenge

The goals of the Chicago Challenge were broad and diffuse and evolved over the course of the initiative. The proposal that brought the 1995 grant from the Annenberg Foundation laid out the overall goal of the Chicago Challenge this way:

The goal of the Annenberg Challenge in Chicago is to increase student learning and achievement in Chicago schools. The Challenge will be the catalyst for a dramatic increase in [the] renewal of active and effective instruction, classroom change, and school reorganization at a significant number of schools.

⁴ Annenberg Institute for School Reform (1998).

The proposal laid out a number of outcomes that would be achieved. It claimed that participating schools would be “dramatically restructured” with respect to the size of student enrollment, time for student learning, and teacher professional development. Teachers would become leaders in developing curricular and instructional innovation. Local School Councils (LSCs), the school-level parent and community-based governing bodies established through the 1988 reform, would grow in their knowledge of effective practices. As a result, student academic achievement would improve and students’ social and emotional development would be enhanced. Overall, the Challenge would further energize the 1988 reform movement in Chicago.

Initially, the Challenge sought to focus local school improvement activity by encouraging its grantees to address several basic problems of school organization. “Time, size, and isolation” were seen as impediments to improving teaching and student learning. These organizational problems are discussed below. Midway through its work (at the same time the school system was drawing attention to student academic achievement and performance on standardized tests), the Challenge reasserted its initial goals of improving instruction and student learning. It also encouraged “whole school change,” that is, schoolwide improvement rather than improvement aimed at only individuals or small groups within schools.

In addition, the Chicago Challenge sought to influence the course of school reform in the city. This goal was promoted by the national Annenberg Challenge across all the local Challenges and was embraced by local organizers of the Chicago Challenge, most of whom were school reform advocates and community organizers who had been involved with the development of the 1988 school decentralization reform.

Strategy for Promoting School Improvement

The Challenge intended to build upon Chicago’s 1988 decentralization reform and extend the changes that were achieved in school-level governance to other areas of school improvement and student learning. Its primary strategy was to create

networks of schools with common interests and needs and to link them to individuals and organizations that would serve as External Partners. This strategy followed a logic that schools would find more direction and support for improvement if they worked together and with an External Partner than if they worked alone. Partners were to perform a number of different functions. They were to serve as fiduciary agents of Annenberg grants. They were to bring human, material, intellectual, and occasionally political resources to support local school improvement. They were to create focus and sustain imperative to develop local leadership and help schools in their networks support each other. Partners were also encouraged by the Challenge to bring additional financial resources to local school improvement efforts. Initially, the Challenge saw networks as the main agents for local school improvement. Over time, as networks struggled to develop, External Partners became more and more central to the Challenge's strategy.⁵

As noted above, the Chicago Challenge did not articulate specific goals for individual school development, nor did it specify any particular activities or processes to follow. Rather, it believed that educators, parents, and community members could and should identify their own ways to solve local problems and improve their schools. The Challenge initially encouraged schools to focus their efforts on addressing three basic problems of school organization that were seen as obstacles to improvement: (a) the lack of time for effective teaching, student learning, and teacher professional development; (b) the large size of school enrollments and instructional groups hindering the development of personalized, supportive adult-student relationships; and (c) schools' isolation from parents and communities, which reduced their responsiveness to local needs and their accountability to their most immediate constituents. Isolation was later extended to include teachers' isolation from one another, which could limit opportunities for teacher learning and development, innovation, and professional accountability.

⁵ For more information about Annenberg External Partners and their work, see Newmann and Sconzert (2000) and Sconzert, Wenzel, and Smylie (2003).

In making its first network grants, the Challenge encouraged schools to address one or more of these organizational problems. Thereafter, it encouraged schools and External Partners to focus more specifically on teaching and student academic learning, teacher professional development, and whole school change.⁶ Schools and External Partners that received funding were asked to demonstrate how their Annenberg-supported activities might lead to improvement in student learning. Later, the Challenge accepted grant applications by invitation only and did not renew the funding of several particularly weak networks. In its last two years, the Challenge concentrated a substantial amount of its remaining resources on a group of selected “Breakthrough Schools.” The Breakthrough School initiative is described later in this section.

Breadth and Depth of Support

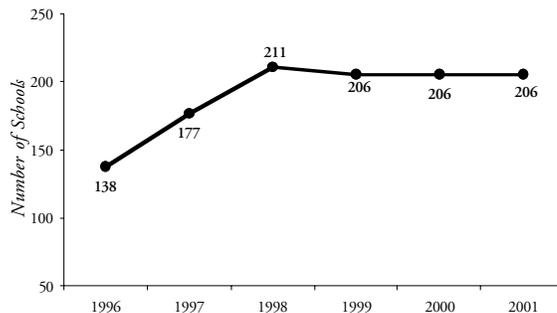
The Chicago Challenge made two types of grants. It distributed small amounts of money in one-year planning grants to schools and External Partners to develop networks and school improvement plans. Additionally, schools and Partners could apply for implementation grants that provided larger sums of money to support school improvement activity. Implementation grants usually supported several years of activity and could be renewed. Due to the large number of schools that received implementation grants, and because of their amount relative to planning grants, this research project focused only on schools that were members of networks receiving implementation grants.

Beginning in 1995, the Challenge made implementation grants to 45 External Partners and their networks of schools. The size of networks ranged from three to 15 schools. The average network consisted of four to five schools. Through the networks, the Challenge funded a large number of elementary, middle, and high schools—as many as 211, or about 40 percent of all schools in the Chicago public school system. Approximately 90 percent were elementary schools. The Challenge

⁶These developments are examined in more detail in other reports of the Chicago Annenberg Research Project. See Newmann and Sconzert (2000); Shipps and Sconzert with Swyers (1999); and Smylie et al. (1998).

awarded most of its implementation grants in two major waves. Thirty-four networks received initial funding at the end of 1995; the remaining networks first received funding in 1997.⁷ The total number of schools receiving funds rose from 138 in 1996 to 211 in 1998. From 1999 through 2001, the last year of school and network funding, the Challenge supported about 206 schools (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of Schools in Chicago Annenberg Implementation Networks, 1996 to 2001



Overall, Annenberg schools resembled schools across the system. As a group, those schools that received grants in the first wave of funding differed somewhat from the system as a whole in that their enrollments were slightly larger and had somewhat larger proportions of low-income and low-achieving students. Also, a slightly larger proportion of Annenberg schools than schools citywide had enrollments that were more than 85 percent African-American or more than 85 percent African-American and Latino. By the 1998–99 school year, as a result of the inclusion of schools funded in the second wave, these differences all but disappeared. The average enrollment size, level of academic achievement, racial and ethnic composition, and percentage of low-income students (those eligible for federal free and reduced-price lunch programs) in Annenberg elementary schools were virtually identical to the system as a whole (see Table 1).⁸

⁷ From the Chicago Challenge's directories of grants and project records.

⁸ We present school characteristics for the 1998–99 school year because the networks and schools funded at that time remained the Challenge's core grantees through 2001.

Table 1. Characteristics of Chicago Annenberg Elementary Schools and Elementary Schools Citywide, 1998–1999

	ANNENBERG SCHOOLS	SCHOOLS CITYWIDE
Average student enrollment	696	706
Low income	85%	85%
English language learner	18%	18%
<i>Racial/ethnic composition:</i>		
African-American	53%	54%
Latino	33%	34%
White	10%	9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	4%
Native American	<1%	<1%
<i>1993 Eighth grade graduates who:</i>		
Graduated from CPS high school	40%	40%
Dropped out	35%	36%
Left CPS	25%	24%
<i>Students in grades three through eight scoring at or above national norms on the ITBS:</i>		
Reading	36%	35%
Mathematics	43%	42%

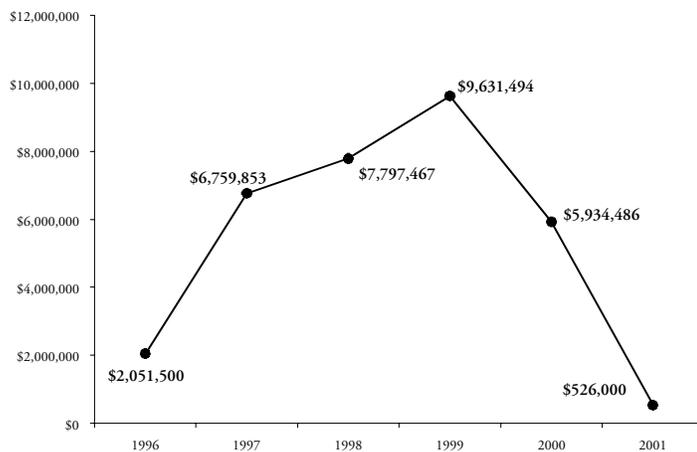
The Challenge supported relationships between schools and a large and diverse group of External Partners. Of the 45 External Partners working with Annenberg schools, about 35 percent were Chicago-area colleges and universities; 23 percent were arts and cultural institutions; and 28 percent were education reform and education services organizations. The remaining 14 percent of the Challenge's External Partners were neighborhood and community-based organizations. Almost two-thirds of all External Partners had some experience working with schools on long-term improvement projects, but one-third had no such experience. The names of Chicago Annenberg External Partners and the numbers of schools in their networks are listed in Appendix A.

Annenberg grants supported a wide range of school improvement activity. About 55 percent of the networks focused primarily on improving curriculum and instruction. Sixteen percent worked to improve student learning climate and social services for students and families. Another 13 percent were concerned primarily with

developing parent and community support. The remaining 16 percent of Annenberg networks adopted more comprehensive foci to improve a number of areas concurrently, including curriculum and instruction, teacher professional community, school leadership, student learning climate, and parent and community support. Within these general categories were a number of specific initiatives such as parent education programs, literacy programs, integration of arts and technology into the curriculum, health/science education, creating small schools, middle school restructuring, principal and teacher leadership development, and strengthening school-community ties.

Figure 2 shows the total amount of financial support provided by the Challenge through implementation grants.

Figure 2. Total amount of Annenberg Funds to Support School Improvement through Implementation Grants, 1996 to 2001



As indicated in the figure, the total amount of funding grew considerably between 1995 and 1999. This growth was associated not only with an increase in the number of schools that the Challenge supported, but also with an increase in the average amount of funding per school. In 1999, at its peak, the Challenge distributed \$9.6 million to support local school improvement activities. Between 1999 and

2000, however, the total amount of money distributed through implementation grants was reduced by almost 40 percent. By 2001, it was reduced further to less than one-tenth of the amount provided in 2000. These reductions in total funding occurred even as the Challenge continued to support more than 200 schools, albeit at rapidly diminishing levels.

To get some sense of the implications of this decline in total funding, it is instructive to examine levels of average per school funding. Of course, different networks received different amounts of money and individual schools received varying amounts of money within and across their networks. Moreover, it is difficult without detailed analyses of network budgets to determine how much money was used by External Partners to cover their own costs, to purchase goods and services for schools, or to give directly to schools. Initial budget requirements set by the Challenge limited Partners to spend only 10 percent of any total grant to cover their own expenses. Later, however, the Challenge recognized that some Partners required more money to be effective and it altered this requirement to permit larger percentages of grants to be used by partners to cover their own expenses.⁹

Keeping this in mind, a rough measure of average annual per school funding was calculated based on the total amount of implementation grants awarded and the total number of schools within networks that received those grants. As shown in Figure 3, the average funding per school grew between 1996 and 1999 from about \$15,000 to \$47,000. Afterwards, this amount dropped considerably; from about \$47,000 in 1999, to \$29,000 in 2000, to about \$2,600 in 2001, leaving schools and Partners on average with almost no financial support.

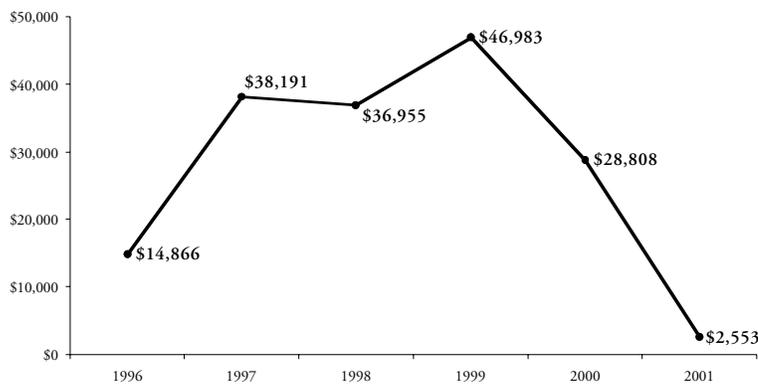
Even at its highest level, the average amount of per school funding made up only a small percentage of a typical elementary school's budget. In 1999, \$47,000 represented about 1.2 percent of the annual operating budgets of the elementary schools we studied in our field research.¹⁰ This percentage does not take into account

⁹ Newmann and Sconzert (2000).

¹⁰ Among Annenberg schools, the average annual budget was approximately \$3,810,000; see Newmann and Sconzert (2000).

other grants these schools might have obtained, in which case the Annenberg proportion of the budget would have been even smaller. To look at it another way, the funds provided by the Challenge in 1999—the peak year of network funding—to support an average size network of five schools amounted, in practical terms, to about enough to provide salaries, benefits, and support to two professional staff members.

Figure 3. Average Annenberg Funding Per School, 1996 to 2001



In addition to funding, the Challenge provided different forms of professional support to its schools and External Partners. In 1997, it sponsored workshops to help schools and Partners develop stronger school improvement plans and proposals for Challenge funding. Some schools and Partners received direct coaching on their program and proposal development. The Challenge also held workshops that year on the themes of time, size, and isolation, and on its vision of successful school improvement. External Partners from a few successful networks served as trainers and facilitators at these workshops. Also in 1997, in an effort to promote communication among schools and Partners, the Challenge printed the first of several directories listing its implementation networks and their member schools and External Partners. The directories also contained descriptions of the networks' primary activities.

Later on, the Challenge sponsored another strand of workshops to provide networks with opportunities to share ideas and engage in joint problem solving. These workshops were also designed to bolster commitment to local improvement efforts. In addition, it sponsored presentations by outside speakers, some of whom were national figures in school reform. And finally, the Challenge organized fairs for schools and External Partners to display their work and celebrate their accomplishments.

Providing these and other support activities was primarily the responsibility of one member of the Challenge staff, the Program Director. A Grants Manager and the Challenge's Executive Director joined the Program Director in this effort. Both the Program Director and the Grants Manager had some, but not extensive, experience in school development. The Executive Director was hired from the local foundation community. His primary experience had been in grant making and community development.¹¹

Breakthrough Schools

In 1999, the Challenge identified 18 schools to receive sustained funding during its last two years to further promote their improvement and encourage them to serve as models and sources of support to other schools. The Challenge's objective was to "[deepen] its work with schools that have demonstrated a readiness for reform." The Challenge staff nominated schools for Breakthrough status relying on network progress reports, school visits, and records of school participation in Challenge activities. The Chicago School Reform Collaborative and the Donors Forum Education Group provided additional information.¹² Among their specific criteria was that schools be models of comprehensive, focused reform and be able to show

¹¹ The entire Challenge staff consisted of an Executive Director who was hired in October 1995; an Office Administrator, who was hired in spring 1996; and a Program Director, Grants Manager, and Financial Officer, each of whom was hired in summer 1996. Between April and December 1997, the staff expanded to include a Director of Development, whose responsibility it was to help raise matching funds; a Communications Director and Assistant, who were to develop communication strategies and work with the local media; a Clerical Assistant, and a Data Manager. All told, relatively few staff resources were dedicated to provide professional support to schools and External Partners.

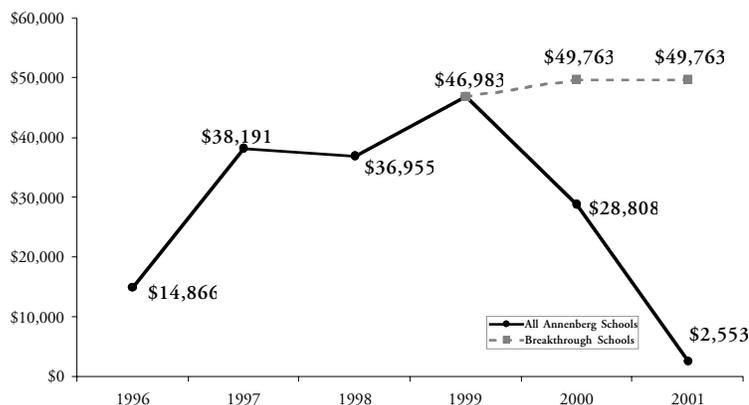
¹² Chicago Annenberg Challenge (1999).

evidence of gains in student achievement. Schools also had to be examples of strong teacher professional learning communities and strong school leadership. Moreover, they had to have had a strong record of participation in Challenge-sponsored activities.

To become Breakthrough Schools, nominated schools had to make written requests to the Challenge. In their requests, schools had to indicate how they met the selection criteria and outline plans to deepen and extend their improvement efforts. Most schools proposed to use resources from the Challenge to deepen their commitment to teacher professional development, curriculum development, and student social support and learning climate. Breakthrough Schools were selected by Challenge staff in December 1999 and announced to the public in February 2000.

As a group, Breakthrough Schools were similar to other Annenberg schools in size, student achievement, and demographic characteristics; however, they received substantially more funding during the Challenge's last two years. While other Annenberg schools' average funding dropped precipitously during this period to almost nothing, Breakthrough Schools were awarded nearly \$100,000 or approximately \$50,000 a year to support improvement activity (see Figure 4). It is important to note that Breakthrough funding went directly to the schools, not to the schools through their External Partners. As such, Breakthrough Schools had greater discretion over a somewhat larger sum of money than other Annenberg schools.

Figure 4. Average Annenberg Funding per School, Breakthrough and All Annenberg Schools, 1996 to 2001



In addition to two more years of sustained funding, Breakthrough Schools received ongoing professional support from the Challenge. For example, in February 2000, the Challenge organized a workshop for Breakthrough School principals on how to read and interpret individual school reports of teacher and student survey data prepared by the Consortium to assist with school improvement planning (these surveys are described later in this part of the report). Another workshop involved teaching faculty how to assess their classroom assignments in terms of the intellectual demands those assignments make on students. Other workshops aimed to help Breakthrough Schools write better grant proposals to support future improvement activities and communicate their accomplishments to the media and the larger community. Overall, by the end of the Challenge, the differences in funding and professional support provided to Breakthrough Schools stood in stark contrast to the funding and support provided to the other Annenberg schools.

Relationship of the Challenge to the Chicago School System

Recall that the Chicago Challenge was established to work “along side” of the Chicago public school system. Although it was designed to support local school improvement within the system and influence the direction of Chicago’s reform policy, it was never intended to be part of the system itself. Therefore, to understand the Challenge, it is important to understand Chicago’s reform agenda. Figure 5 juxtaposes the Challenge’s development with that of key school reform initiatives developed by CPS and the Illinois General Assembly.¹³ This figure is not meant to be all-encompassing, only to depict key events that describe each.

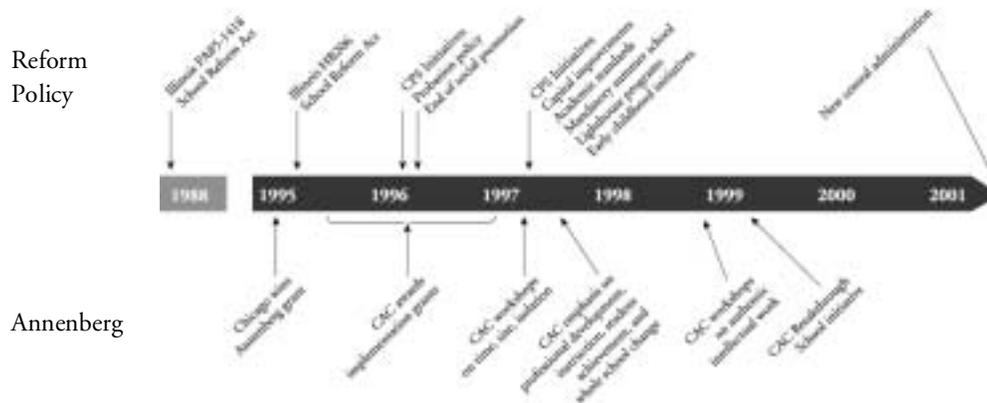
The Chicago Challenge was designed according to many of the principles of democratic localism and grassroots action that defined Chicago’s 1988 decentralization reform (Illinois PA85-1418 School Reform Act). It sought to extend

¹³ For more detail on school reform in Chicago, see Bryk et al. (1998a); Hess (1991, 1993); and Shipps, Kahne, and Smylie (1999). For a detailed description of the influence of Chicago school reform on the development of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, see Shipps and Sconzert with Swyers (1999).

the work of what is considered Phase I of Chicago school reform from governance to other areas of school improvement. It is important to note that when the Challenge was designed, it was assumed that the then current central administration would be in place for the foreseeable future and that decentralization and local school governance would be the foundation for school reform for some time to come.

Six months after the Challenge was established, everything changed. The Illinois legislature ushered in Phase II of reform when it passed an amendment to the 1988 school reform bill, the Illinois HB206 School Reform Act. This amendment restructured the CPS central administration around a corporate-style management team that included a Chief Executive Officer in place of the superintendent and a five-member Reform Board of Trustees appointed by the Mayor. The amendment established greater accountability within the system by clarifying and extending the authority of the CEO to intervene in nonimproving schools.

Figure 5. Key Events in the Chicago Annenberg Challenge and in Chicago School Reform Policy, 1988 to 2001



As the Chicago Challenge began awarding its first implementation grants, the new central administration introduced two major initiatives to bring centralized, high-stakes accountability into the system. It placed schools with fewer than 15 percent of students scoring at or above national norms on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) on academic probation and assigned each a probation partner and a probation manager to direct school improvement efforts. Schools on probation that failed to improve their test scores over a period of time could be reconstituted. The administration also developed a new policy to end social promotion. Students in the third, sixth, and eighth grades were required to meet specified cut-off scores on the ITBS in order to advance to the next grade level. If they failed to meet these benchmarks, they had to attend mandatory summer school and, if they failed again to achieve the cutoff scores at the end of the summer, they were retained at grade level.

A year later, the administration developed new systemwide goals and standards for student achievement. It began to create lesson plans keyed to these standards and curriculum-specific examinations for high school graduation. A major capital

improvement initiative was begun to build new schools, repair and renovate existing facilities, and alleviate overcrowding. CPS established the Lighthouse program to provide after-school academic, recreational, and social learning opportunities for students, and began to place new emphasis on early childhood education.

Against the backdrop of centralized initiatives and high-stakes test-driven accountability, the Challenge was encouraging its schools and External Partners to address the organizational issues of time, size, and isolation. Later, as more and more attention was placed on student academic achievement and test score performance, the Challenge encouraged its grantees to intensify their focus on teaching, learning, and whole school change in general and intellectually challenging instruction and teacher professional development in particular. Developed to build upon and extend decentralized school reform in Chicago, the Challenge began to experience conflict with the school system's reform initiatives emphasizing uniform performance standards and centrally imposed sanctions.¹⁴ The ground had shifted, and the Challenge found itself eclipsed by a highly visible central administration, the Mayor's office, and a business community and local media that were largely supportive of the new administration's initiatives. According to the Challenge's Executive Director, the Challenge was "not the elephant in the town."¹⁵

There were, of course, areas where the school system's initiatives and the Challenge's efforts were compatible and mutually reinforcing. An earlier Chicago Annenberg Research Project report provided some examples where they supported each other.¹⁶ For instance, the system's capital improvement efforts were instrumental in improving learning climates in several of the schools we studied.

Nevertheless, the Challenge promoted a reform agenda that often collided with specific system policies, which created tensions and dilemmas for principals and teachers at the school and classroom levels. Nowhere was this more sharply pronounced than in the interaction between high-stakes standardized testing and

¹⁴ Shipps and Sconzert with Smylie (1999).

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Wenzel et al. (2001).

efforts to improve instruction. Early field research documented examples of schools where high-stakes testing, coupled with the system's probation and student retention policies, played a crucial role in catalyzing a press for accountability and a perceived need for change.¹⁷ These policies moved some schools from complacency into action. At the same time, the field research identified examples of other schools in which high-stakes testing pushed teachers and principals in low-achieving schools to focus on the quickest means of administrative compliance that was at hand—test preparation—and to abandon or push aside at least for a while efforts to achieve more ambitious, long-term instructional improvement.

Structurally and politically, the Challenge had difficulty developing a close and productive working relationship with the CPS central administration. The relationship was tenuous at best; for the most part it was strained and at times it was antagonistic. Top system administrators did not fully trust the Challenge's leadership, whom they associated with the "failed" efforts of decentralization reform. These administrators were uncomfortable with their inability to control the largest independent reform initiative operating within the system and its substantial resources. And, although the Challenge's leadership sought to cultivate a working relationship with the CPS central administration, it also made no secret of its intent to influence the system, sometimes using the local media to expose flaws it perceived in CPS policies and practices. Indeed, a number of persons associated with the development and operation of the Challenge were openly critical of the system's leadership and its initiatives.

In spring 2001, the system's Chief Executive Officer, who was appointed in 1995, resigned and a new central administration was appointed. The new administration focused more attention and resources on instructional improvement, creating new initiatives in reading, teacher professional development, and leadership development. These initiatives signaled a new direction, a Phase III of school reform in Chicago. Ironically, just as the reform agendas of the system and the Challenge began to converge, the Challenge reached the end of its operation. Several

¹⁷ *ibid.*

implications of the Challenge's relationship with CPS and its reform agenda are explored at the end of this report.

How the Study Was Conducted

The research on which this report is based was organized around an elaborated conceptual framework of school development and a multi-method research design. This framework, the Model of Essential Supports for Student Learning, identifies areas of school organization and practice that have been shown both in the literature and in other research performed by the Consortium on Chicago School Research to promote student learning.

The research design was composed of four related strands of inquiry: (a) longitudinal field research in a sample of Annenberg elementary schools; (b) documentation of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge as a reform initiative and as an organization; (c) analyses of systemwide teacher, student, and principal survey data; and (d) analyses of standardized test scores. Field research was used to document improvement in specific areas of school organization and practice and to gather evidence of how improvement was achieved. It was also used to document the Challenge's support of local school improvement. To this micro-level work was added a scaffold of survey research and analyses of student standardized test scores. These macro-level analyses were conducted to identify patterns of improvement in the Essential Supports and student outcomes across Annenberg schools as a whole. They were also used to compare patterns of improvement and student outcomes in Annenberg schools to patterns across demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Detailed information about the research methodology can be found in the appendices.

Both field research and survey data analyses were used to answer the first central question addressed by this report—Did the Chicago Annenberg Challenge promote improvement of the schools it supported? Analyses of survey data and student test scores were used to answer the second central question—Did the Challenge promote

improvement in student achievement and nonacademic outcomes in those schools? Field research and descriptive survey data were used to address the third question—What factors might explain improvement or the lack thereof among Annenberg schools? Finally, findings from all strands of inquiry were used to address the fourth question—What can we learn from the Challenge’s experience about promoting school improvement?

Model of School Development

School improvement can mean many different things. Unlike the more general concept of change, to say that a school has improved implies that it has changed in some positive, valued direction. However, there are any number of positive, valued directions for school change that might be considered improvement. Not articulating what those directions are may render the study of school improvement ambiguous and without much meaning. Therefore, it was important to define school improvement at the beginning of the research to determine how improvement by that definition may have occurred.

The definition of school improvement used in the Chicago Annenberg Research Project proceeded from the goal of increasing student academic learning. The type of student academic learning with which the project was primarily concerned included the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, but went further to include deeper understanding of subject matter and students’ ability to produce “authentic” intellectual work.¹⁸ This involves the development of cognitive capacities that allow students to work with existing knowledge and to create new knowledge to analyze and solve real-world problems, manage personal affairs, and become economically productive and responsible members of society. Following from the goal of increasing this type of student academic learning, school improvement was defined in terms of those aspects of school organization and practice that, when strengthened, would most likely promote such learning among students.

¹⁸ Newmann, Bryk, and Lopez (1998). See also National Research Council (2000) and Newmann and Associates (1996).

The Model of Essential Supports identifies seven areas of school organization and practice that support such intellectually ambitious academic learning: (a) high-quality instruction; (b) supportive student learning climate; (c) school leadership; (d) teacher professional community; (e) parent and community involvement; (f) relational trust; and (g) instructional program coherence (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Model of Essential Supports for Student Learning



According to the model, schools are said to have improved when they have developed from lower to higher (or weaker to stronger) states on one or more of the Essential Supports. When schools are said to have failed to improve, they have made no progress from lower to higher states on the supports. Finally, when schools are said to have worsened or regressed, they have fallen from higher to lower states of development. Each of the Essential Supports and their states of development are described in more detail in Part Two of this report. Specific indicators of high and low states of development of each are presented in Appendix B.

The model specifies that each support, when developed, may serve to promote student academic learning. Implicit in the model is a logical “ordering” of the supports in their relationship to one another and to student learning. This ordering, which reflects the literature on academically effective schools, suggests that student academic achievement is most likely to be promoted by developing those supports most proximal to students’ learning—high-quality instruction and supportive student learning climate.¹⁹ Although the other supports in the model may contribute

¹⁹ See Good and Brophy (1997) and Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993).

in some direct ways to improving student academic learning, their influence is more likely to be indirect, providing the organizational conditions necessary to develop and support instruction and learning climate. For example, even though school leadership and teacher professional community may both play an important role in improving student academic learning, that role may be more indirect than direct through their respective and related influences on the development of instruction and learning climate. Likewise, the two “overarching” supports in the model—relational trust and instructional program coherence—may also influence student academic learning indirectly, providing the social and structural bonding to hold together the other organizational and practice supports and direct them toward improving student learning.

Such a logical ordering suggests that without developing quality instruction and a supportive student learning climate, it is unlikely that a school would be able to achieve substantial, sustained improvement in student academic learning. It also suggests that it would be unlikely that a school could achieve much in the way of developing quality instruction and student learning climate without antecedent or concurrent development of the elements of school organization required to facilitate high-quality instruction and a supportive student learning climate. This suggests the possibility that a school may show signs of improvement in developing the organizational supports of leadership, professional community, parent and community involvement, relational trust, and program coherence that are arguable antecedents to quality instruction and supportive student learning climates but not yet show signs of improvement in the latter two supports. Likewise, a school may show signs of initial development of the Essential Supports, including quality instruction and student learning climate, without those supports having developed sufficiently and for a long enough time to result in improved student achievement.

The Model of Essential Supports was selected for this research for several reasons. First, it has strong support in the empirical literature on academically effective schools and school improvement and is being validated by ongoing analyses at the

Consortium on Chicago School Research.²⁰ Second, the model is well established in Chicago public schools. It had served as a template for local school improvement planning for several years prior to the Challenge and had been adopted by CPS as a model for principal leadership development. Third, and most importantly for this study, the model was consistent with and inclusive of the wide range of local school improvement goals and activities supported by the Chicago Annenberg Challenge.²¹

Longitudinal School-Level Field Research

At the center of this study was longitudinal school-level field research conducted from the 1996–97 school year through 2000–01. The initial field research sample consisted of 23 elementary, middle, and high schools in 10 Annenberg networks. Due to the importance of networks in the Challenge’s initial strategy, field research schools were selected on the basis of their participation in certain networks that were chosen because they represented different school improvement emphases (e.g., curriculum and instruction and parent and community involvement) and had different types of External Partners (e.g., universities, community organizations, and cultural institutions). Consideration was also given to select some networks that were newly formed and networks that were built on well-established relationships between schools and the External Partners.

Once the 10 networks were chosen, two or three schools from each were identified to serve as research sites. One to two of these schools were identified because of their promise for working well with their External Partners and succeeding in their efforts to develop. An additional school was chosen because of indications that it might struggle to succeed. The intention was to create a purposive sample of schools that would provide points of comparison and contrast to understand reasons for more and less successful improvement. School selections were informed by previously collected Consortium survey data and by assessments from the External Partners of the networks that were sampled.

²⁰ See Bryk et al. (forthcoming); *Designs for Change* (1993); Newmann et al. (1998); Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka (2001); and Wenzel et al. (2001).

²¹ Chicago Annenberg Challenge (2000) and Hallett et al. (1995).

Field research schools were sampled in two stages. The first group of schools was selected in fall 1996 from the networks that received implementation grants during the Challenge's first round of grant making. The second group was selected in fall 1997 from networks that received implementation grants in the second round. Field data were collected from all 23 schools in this initial sample in the 1996–97 or 1997–98 school years, depending on when the school entered the Challenge, and then again in the 1998–99 school year. After that year, the sample was reduced to 14 elementary schools. Among the nine schools dropped from the study, several chose not to continue in the project. For others, there was such little school improvement activity that subsequent data collection activity would have yielded very little useful information. From 1999–00 through 2000–01, data collection proceeded in these 14 schools. During these two years, two of these 14 schools failed to provide adequate data for cross-school comparisons. Due to lack of data from these two schools, we focused our qualitative analysis of school development on the 12 elementary schools from which full longitudinal data were obtained from the 1996–97 or 1997–98 school year through 2000–01.

The final research sample of 12 elementary schools was quite similar in characteristics to the initial full sample. Half were in networks from each round of initial funding (either in 1996 or 1997). Like the initial field research sample of 23 schools, the schools in the final sample were generally typical of schools across the Challenge and the system as a whole, although their average student enrollment was somewhat larger (see Tables 1 and 2).

Several types of data were collected from each field research school by a lead researcher (typically a university faculty member or advanced doctoral student) and a research assistant. These data were collected during either the 1996–97 or 1997–98 school years (depending on when the school's network first received funding) and in both 1998–99 and 2000–01. Data included (a) classroom observations of six language arts teachers and six mathematics teachers, two each from the third, sixth, and eighth grades; (b) classroom observations of two or three additional teachers involved with specific Annenberg initiatives; (c) samples of instructional assignments

and student work in reading/writing and mathematics from the observed classrooms; (d) interviews with each observed teacher, the principal, the school's External Partner and coordinator, the LSC chair, an LSC teacher representative, a member of the school's Professional Personnel Advisory Committee, and the teacher union representative; (e) observations of meetings and events associated with the school's Annenberg activities and other major school improvement initiatives; and (f) documents pertaining to school improvement and to Annenberg network membership and activity.

Table 2. Characteristics of First Sample of Twelve Field Research Schools, 1998–1999

	FIELD RESEARCH SCHOOLS
Average student enrollment	888
Low-income	89%
English language learners	21%
<i>Racial/ethnic composition:</i>	
African-American	50%
Latino	41%
White	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	<1%
Native American	0%
	FIELD RESEARCH SCHOOLS
<i>1993 8th grade graduates who:</i>	
Graduated from a CPS high school	39%
Dropped out	39%
Left CPS	22%
<i>Percent of students in grades 3 through 8 scoring at or above national norms on the ITBS:</i>	
Reading	32%
Mathematics	37%

Field researchers were responsible for documenting the development of each Essential Support in their schools, as well as the activities in which schools engaged to get better. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Observation notes, documents, and other materials were organized and archived. Researchers wrote structured descriptive case reports of their schools' development at three points in the project—1996–97 or 1997–98, 1998–99, and 2000–01—and wrote vignettes that

described schools' efforts to get better. Cases and vignettes of all field research schools were read and coded independently by three research analysts. Discrepancies in coding were discussed and reconciled by the analysts through consensus procedures. Using this process, field research schools were classified as "developing" or "nondeveloping" and specific areas of development were categorized. These designations and the themes and patterns of school development that were identified across the sample were presented back to field researchers for validation. Analysts identified specific examples of school development and activities to promote that development to illustrate themes and patterns in both the broader field research data and findings from survey data. These examples were also shared with and confirmed by field researchers. See Appendix C for additional information about the field research methodology.

Documentation of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge

Study of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge as both a large-scale reform and an organization relied heavily on documents produced by the Challenge itself, including those associated with its founding, its requests for proposals, meeting notes, records of grant making, and correspondence. In addition, between June 1996 and 1998, a member of the research project staff observed nearly all the Challenge's formal meetings and events and then observed samples of meetings and events through 2001. School-level descriptive data and Challenge grant records were used to identify patterns of decision making.

In addition, research project staff formally interviewed and spoke regularly with the Challenge's Executive Director, Program Director, and Grants Manager. Members of the Challenge's Board of Directors and members of the Chicago School Reform Collaborative, a group that helped organize and manage the Challenge in its first year, were also interviewed. In 1997, 70 organizational leaders from seven sectors in the Challenge's institutional environment were interviewed about the Chicago Annenberg initiative and school reform in Chicago. These sectors included business, community, foundation, government, higher education, labor, and media. Finally,

19, or about 45 percent of External Partners were interviewed in 1997, 1999, and 2001. Together, these interviews provided perspectives on the Challenge as a reform and an organization from both “inside” and “outside” the Challenge.

Surveys of Teachers, Students, and Principals

This study used survey data from teachers and students across the system to map the development of the Essential Supports among Annenberg schools and to compare that development to development found in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Student surveys were used to assess student social and psychological outcomes. The Consortium administered these surveys in the spring of 1994, 1997, 1999, and 2001 (survey samples are described in Appendix D). Surveys from 1994 and 1997 established baseline data and the 1999 and 2001 surveys provided data to track changes. Rasch measures were developed from individual survey items as indicators of various elements of the Essential Supports. Appendix E contains full descriptions of these measures.

Hierarchical linear models were used to track changes in the Essential Supports and student outcome measures over time from baseline years, and to assess differences between (a) Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools and (b) Breakthrough Schools and other Annenberg schools. These analyses controlled for a number of school characteristics including school racial and ethnic composition, school level of achievement, school size, and percent of low-income students (see Appendix D). Tests were also made of network effects on school development. It seemed reasonable to assume that schools in networks that focused primarily on one area of school development might be more likely to show changes in that area than schools in networks that focused on other areas. In 1999, the year with the most overall change in Annenberg schools, we tested for network-level differences by primary network focus. No statistically significant differences among network foci were found, suggesting perhaps greater within-network than between-network variation in development. Therefore, the study’s focus shifted from looking for network-level effects to examine school development across all Annenberg schools.

There are numerous complexities in trying to create a single indicator of school development or making general statements about the overall development of a school or a group of schools. A school may develop on one or more of the Essential Supports but not on others. Moreover, a school may develop on some aspects of a particular support but not others. For example, a school may have a strong and active parent group, but its principal may lack the ability to involve it effectively in the life of the school. A school may increase professional development opportunities for teachers but at the same time experience erosion in the overall quality of the professional development and a decline in teacher participation. A school may make great strides in developing a strong, caring, personal student learning climate, but make little progress in raising expectations for student achievement or improving the quality of classroom instruction. A school may have an excellent relationship with its External Partner, but frustrate the Partner's work by adopting contradictory and competing improvement initiatives. And so on.

In order to deal with such possibilities, we examined change in each of the Essential Supports and change in different aspects of the same support separately. For instance, rather than considering change in teacher professional community as a single construct, change was examined with respect to each dimension of professional community (e.g., teacher collaboration, collective responsibility for student success, teacher innovation, and teacher commitment). The assumption was that if most or all aspects of professional community were found to have changed in a similar direction with statistical significance, some general conclusion about overall development of professional community could be drawn.

The survey data provided two baseline points—spring 1994 and spring 1997—from which to assess development of Annenberg schools through spring 2001. Spring 1994 data formed a baseline point prior to the establishment of the Challenge. Spring 1997 data formed a baseline point aligned with the first full school year of implementation grant funding. For the vast majority of measures for which there are 1997 data, there are also 1994 data. In order to show long-term change across Annenberg schools, 1994 was chosen as the primary baseline point for

analysis. For the few measures for which 1994 data do not exist, 1997 was used as the baseline point. Analyses examined overall patterns of change between 1994 and 2001 and intermediate patterns of change between 1997 and 1999 and between 1999 and 2001. It is important to note that in 1994, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on any measure of the Essential Supports. Unless otherwise noted, differences are considered statistically significant if they occur at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$); that is, if there is less than a 1 percent likelihood of them occurring by chance.²²

Systemwide principal survey data were used to examine Annenberg principals' experiences with and perceptions of the Challenge as an organization, their schools' External Partners, and the support each provided. Data from principal surveys were also used to describe the role that the Challenge played in Annenberg schools and the level of their schools' participation in Annenberg activities. Principal surveys were administered in spring 1997, 1999, and 2001.

Analyses of ITBS Scores

ITBS scores were used as the primary indicator of student academic achievement and were analyzed in several different ways. Yearly rates of gain in Grade Level Equivalents (GEs) were used to map trends in reading and mathematics achievement at and across grade levels in Annenberg schools. Annual GE gains from 1994 through 2001 were calculated in both reading and mathematics for students in Annenberg schools in grades three through eight. GE gains from the same period were also calculated for the same grades in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. In this way, gains in Annenberg schools could be compared to gains in schools that did not participate in the Challenge. In order to assess achievement trends in Breakthrough Schools, GE gains in reading and mathematics were calculated and compared for students in grades three through eight in both Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools. Rather than looking at simple trends in average test scores,

²² Given the number of statistical tests that were performed, this p-value was used to compensate for the possibility of Type 2 errors. A 0.01 p-value is more conservative than a 0.05 value, but still liberal enough to not miss important differences.

academic achievement was assessed using rates of gain. This was done on the assumption that if the Challenge was successful in improving academic achievement, one might expect to see an accelerating and growing difference between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools in the size of gains over time.

GE gains are a familiar and useful indicator to identify trends in academic achievement, but a more rigorous indicator was used to test the statistical significance of differences in achievement between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools and between Breakthrough and non-Breakthrough Annenberg schools. These comparisons used an index of academic productivity developed by the Consortium.²³ This index measures the extent to which schools extend, sustain, or fail to sustain student learning achieved at previous grade levels over time. This index is built using gains in the ITBS scores of students who are enrolled in a school for at least one full academic year and helps account for the effects of student mobility on school-level achievement. The index takes into account students' past academic achievement, as measured by their ITBS score the previous year, and it takes into account effects of different ITBS test forms. The index measures achievement gains in both reading and mathematics in grades three through eight from 1992 through 2001.

Regression analyses were used to compare different groups of schools on the productivity index. These analyses used school group membership—Annenberg versus non-Annenberg and Breakthrough versus other Annenberg—as the key independent variable and the productivity index as the dependent variable. These analyses controlled for the size, neighborhood socioeconomic level, and racial and ethnic composition of the school, among other variables. They determined whether student achievement differed depending on whether a school was or was not an Annenberg school, or whether it was or was not a Breakthrough school. Unless otherwise noted, if differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools or between Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools had occurred at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$); that is, if there was less than a 1 percent likelihood of them occurring by chance, it was concluded that there were statistically significant differences between

²³ For more information about the development of the productivity index, see Bryk et al. (1998b).

the groups of schools being compared.²⁴ More information about the productivity index and these analyses is contained in Appendix F and Appendix G.

Considerations

There are at least three issues concerning aspects of this research methodology that should be considered. The first concerns self-report data collected through survey questionnaires and interviews. Such data may be subject to two types of problems that challenge validity—the difficulty that respondents may have representing a particular phenomenon accurately, and the possibility that because of self-interest, respondents may be positively or negatively biased in their perceptions and reports. Three strategies were used to reduce the potential for these problems.²⁵ A pattern-matching strategy was used whereby findings, particularly those from survey data, were examined to determine whether they were consistent with what is already known about schools and school change from existing theoretical and empirical literature. In addition, data from different sources about the same phenomena were “triangulated” for consistency. For example, data from surveys were compared to data from field research and documents and interview data were compared to documentary and observational data. Finally, findings were presented to and verified by the field researchers, those persons most familiar with the schools being studied and in the best position to identify biases and inaccuracies in self-reported data.

A second issue was that of disentangling the influence of the Challenge on school change from other sources of potential influence. As noted, Annenberg schools were like many other CPS schools in that they were involved in multiple improvement projects. Some worked simultaneously with several external organizations in addition to their Annenberg External Partners. Some of the sources of greatest potential influence on school change were CPS policies, particularly the high-stakes testing and probation policies. In 1999, 54 of Annenberg’s 206 elementary schools, or 26 percent, were on academic probation because of low standardized test scores.

²⁴ As discussed in the next section, differences between Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools that occur at the 0.05 level are reported as part of a broader pattern of findings.

²⁵ See Merriam (1998); Stake (1995); and Yin (1989).

Systemwide that year, 91 elementary schools, or 16 percent of all elementary schools were on probation. Schools on academic probation were required to have a probation partner to help them improve. Of the 54 Annenberg schools on probation, about 20 worked with Annenberg External Partners who also served as their probation partners. The remaining 34 Annenberg schools on probation had different Annenberg and probation partners. These schools represented only 16 percent of all Annenberg schools and, because this proportion was relatively small, the issue of entanglement of Annenberg and probation partner influences is probably not very significant. Moreover, because of the large number of schools receiving Annenberg support and because of their similarity to schools across the system, non-Annenberg sources of influence are likely to have been distributed similarly across Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools.

Still, there are several aspects of the research design and methodology that help to strengthen conclusions about an “Annenberg effect.” Using school achievement level as one of many statistical controls helped account for the effects of probation on both Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools. In addition, the field research revealed much about the influence of the Challenge and its External Partners compared to other sources of influence, including CPS policies. Such distinctions are documented and discussed in several places in this report.

A third issue concerns that of the significance of the research findings. Some of the statistically significant changes and differences between groups of schools are quite small. On the one hand, because the statistically significant differences that are described in this report are based on averages of hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers and students, even the smallest non-chance differences should be considered real and meaningful. On the other hand, it can be argued that even though they may be statistically significant, small non-chance differences may not be very meaningful or educationally significant. There is ongoing debate about this matter in the literature.²⁶ Nonetheless, it is important to consider whether small, statistically significant differences across a very large number of schools are

²⁶ See Berliner (1987).

educationally significant because of the difficulty and length of time it takes to change so many schools, or whether these differences are on average so small that for all practical purposes they mean very little in the daily experiences of individual schools.

Part Two: Findings

Our research findings are presented in four sections. The first two concern the Challenge’s “bottom line” improvement in student academic achievement and non-academic student outcomes—and how Chicago Annenberg schools developed in ways that might promote student learning. Both show how changes among Annenberg schools compare to changes among demographically similar schools that did not participate in the Challenge. The third section presents findings on student outcomes and school development in the Breakthrough Schools. We conclude with an in-depth look at improving and non-improving Annenberg schools to understand the factors that make individual local school improvement successful. Details of the statistical findings presented here are contained in Appendices G and H.

Student Outcomes

As described in Part One, our primary measure of student academic achievement was rates of gain on the reading and math portions of the ITBS. In addition, four social and psychological student outcomes were examined: (a) academic engagement in school, (b) sense of self-efficacy, (c) classroom behavior, and (d) social competence. Academic engagement refers to students’ interest and participation in learning and whether they work hard to do their best in school. Sense of self-efficacy refers to students’ confidence in their own academic abilities and their perceptions of their chance for success on even the most difficult work. Classroom behavior is the extent to which students in a classroom respect each other, work well together, and help each other learn in addition to the degree of student disruption of classroom activity. Finally, social competence refers to students’ sense that they listen well to what others have to say; share, help, and work well with each other; and help resolve arguments.

Data from the Consortium's 1994, 1997, 1999, and 2001 student surveys were used to examine changes in these outcomes and to test for differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools.

Achievement on the ITBS

Analyses of ITBS scores reveal that overall, student achievement in Annenberg schools rose between 1996 and 2001 (see Appendix G). During this period, reading achievement rose an average of 1.01 GEs across grades three through eight. Math achievement rose an average of 0.95 GEs. These increases are consistent with those reported for the system as a whole.²⁷

Although student achievement increased in Annenberg schools, the rate or size of gains did not markedly improve. Across grade levels, the size of one-year gains in GEs remained constant or fluctuated only slightly. This pattern held true for both reading and math achievement, though overall gains in reading were slightly larger than gains in math. Some differences in the size of gains were found at different grade levels. In reading, average GE gains were lower in the third and sixth grades than in other grade levels; in math, average GE gains were lower in the third and seventh grades. These are consistent with the rates of gain across the system as a whole.²⁸

Findings from the third and sixth grades illustrate trends in student achievement gains in Annenberg schools. GE gains in third-grade reading held relatively constant between 1996 and 2001 (see Figure 7). These slight fluctuations are not noteworthy considering the different ITBS test forms used during this period. This pattern is also present in third-grade math and sixth-grade reading, though the size of sixth-grade GE gains were generally larger than third-grade gains (see Figures 8 and 9). Sixth-grade math gains followed the same pattern of no net gain but slight fluctuation (see Figure 10).

²⁷ Rosenkranz (2002).

²⁸ *ibid.*

Analyses using the productivity index reveal that achievement trends in Annenberg schools did not differ from those in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. There were no statistically significant differences in reading or math at any grade level in any year between 1995 and 2001. Although Annenberg schools appeared to outperform non-Annenberg schools in some years at particular grade levels, the reverse appeared to occur in other years. None of these differences were statistically significant.

Figure 7. Grade Equivalent Gains on the ITBS in Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools: Third-Grade Reading, 1994 to 2001

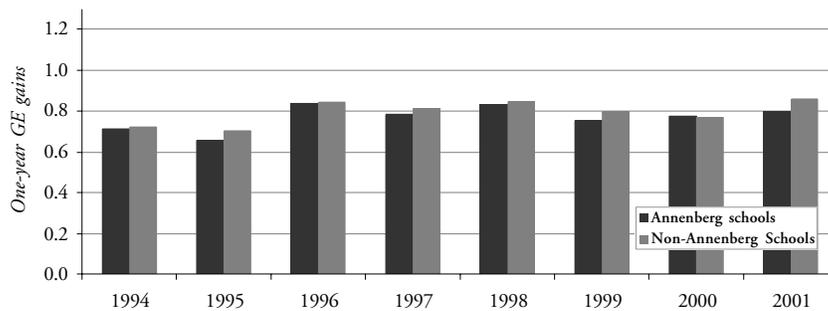


Figure 8. Grade Equivalent Gains on the ITBS in Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools: Third-Grade Math, 1994 to 2001

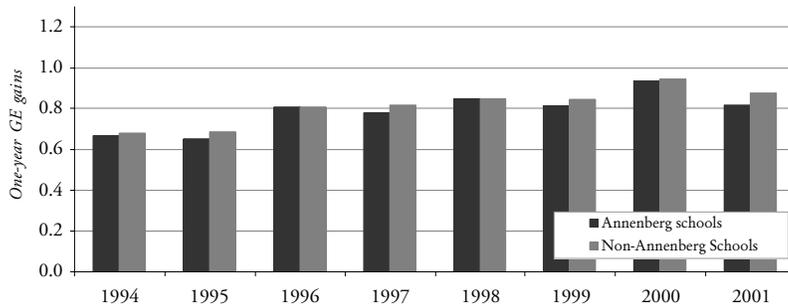


Figure 9. Grade Equivalent Gains on the ITBS in Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools: Sixth-Grade Reading, 1994 to 2001

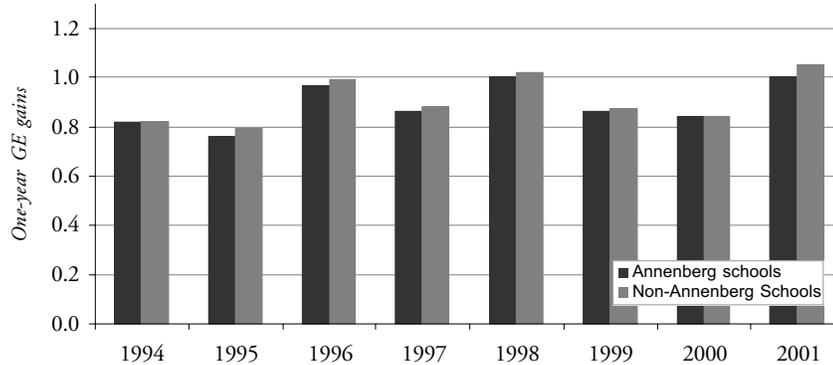
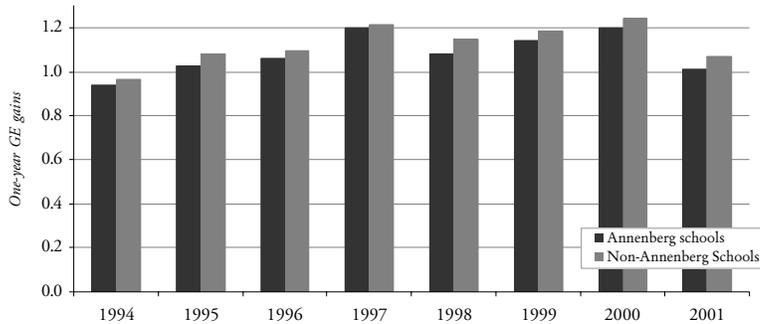


Figure 10. Grade Equivalent Gains on the ITBS in Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools: Sixth-Grade Math, 1994 to 2001



Social and Psychological Outcomes

Trends in different student social and psychological outcomes in Annenberg schools were mixed. Student academic engagement improved while students' sense of self-efficacy, classroom behavior, and social competence weakened. Like changes in academic achievement, changes in social and psychological outcomes among Annenberg schools were similar to changes in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools; there were no statistically significant differences on any outcome.

Table 3 groups student outcome measures according to whether they improved or weakened between the baseline year of 1994 or 1997 (depending upon when data were first available) and 2001 as defined by substantive categories of the measures

(e.g., limited, moderate; see Appendix D). Changes are shown in terms of (a) measure categories; (b) differences in means on the 10-point Rasch scale used to construct each measure; and (c) standardized change unit differences, which show differences in terms of standard deviations in the baseline year (see Appendix H). Finally, the table shows how Annenberg schools, on average, compare to demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on each outcome. Line graphs based on standardized change unit differences from the baseline year also illustrate the trends.

Table 3. Student Social and Psychological Outcomes in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 or 1997 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCES IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON- ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Student Academic Engagement	Limited	Moderate	+ 0.08	+ 0.31	≡
Weakened					
Student Sense of Self-Efficacy	High	High	- 0.08	- 0.30	≡
Student Classroom Behavior	Moderately positive	Moderately positive	- 0.11	- 0.50	≡
Student Social Competence	Moderate	Moderate	- 0.22	- 1.05	≡

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A “+” indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A “≡” indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A “-” indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Student Academic Engagement. Engagement in Annenberg schools rose between 1994 and 1997, then declined slightly between 1997 and 1999, and remained steady between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 11). Overall, student academic engagement in Annenberg schools was greater in 2001 than in 1994, although the difference was quite small. Still, the net difference did move the average level in Annenberg schools from the very high end of the measure’s “limited” category to the very low end of “moderate” category. Students were somewhat more likely in 2001 than in 1994 to report that they worked hard to do their best, that the topics they studied were interesting, that they were not often bored in class, and that they were

interested in what was going on in class. For several years, student academic engagement in Annenberg schools was slightly greater than engagement in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. None of these differences were statistically significant, however.

Student Sense of Self-Efficacy. In 1997, students' sense of self-efficacy in Annenberg schools was "high" but not "very high." That year, students were likely to report that they cared if they got bad grades in school, felt they could do better, and believed they could do a good job if they had enough time. They were also likely to report that they could complete the hardest work they were assigned if they tried and that they were certain they could master the skills taught in class. They were mixed in whether they thought they could understand all class work even if they tried hard. Levels on this measure in Annenberg schools fell between 1997 and 1999, but rose slightly between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 12). Despite this improvement, they remained lower in 2001 than in 1997. There were no statistically significant differences in levels of students' sense of self-efficacy between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. The very slight advantages to Annenberg schools in 1997 and 1999 were not significant and disappeared by 2001.

Figure 11. Student Academic Engagement: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

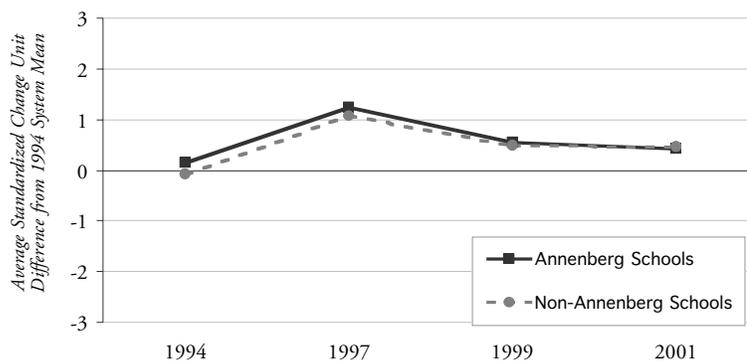
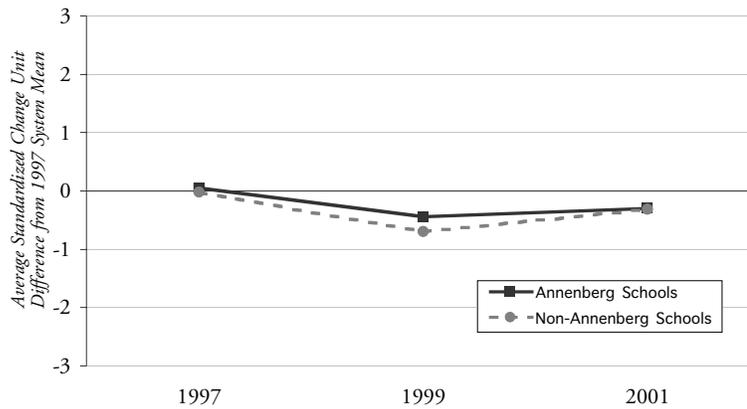
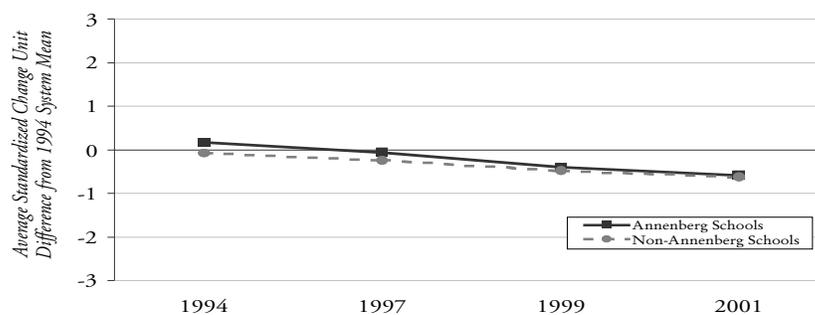


Figure 12. Student Sense of Self-Efficacy: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



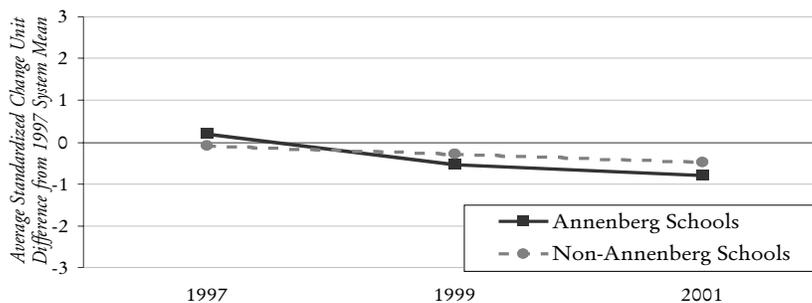
Student Classroom Behavior. Student classroom behavior in Annenberg schools declined between 1994 and 2001 at a small but steady rate, although it stayed within the “moderately positive” category (see Figure 13). In 2001, students in Annenberg schools were somewhat less inclined than in 1994 to respect each other, work well together, and help each other learn. They were somewhat less likely to report that students who do well in school are not made fun of; that students work together to solve problems; and that they get along well, care about each other, and treat each other with respect. They were also somewhat more likely to indicate that students look out just for themselves and like to put others down. They were mixed in their reports that students do not disrupt class, however. Annenberg schools were no different from demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Figure 13. Student Classroom Behavior: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Student Social Competence. In 1997, student social competence among Annenberg schools could be described as “moderate” (see Figure 14). That is, students were likely to report that they were good at helping people, taking turns, working with other students, listening carefully to what others say, and found it easy to make suggestions without being bossy. Students were mixed in their reports that they could always find a way to help others end arguments. Levels on this measure declined slightly by 2001, which mirrored a decline in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. There were no statistically significant differences between these groups of schools on this outcome.

Figure 14. Student Social Competence: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



School Development

Although there was little improvement and no overall differences in student academic and non-academic outcomes between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools, it is nonetheless important to examine trends in school development. Following the Challenge’s logic and the logic inherent in the Model of Essential Supports, one would expect that before improvement in student outcomes can occur, schools need to develop in ways that would promote that

improvement. Therefore, it is important to see whether Annenberg schools as a group developed in ways that would lay such a foundation.

This section presents findings concerning the development of Annenberg schools on each of the Essential Supports. In addition to our analyses of trends in the survey data and comparisons between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools, we provide examples of change in each Support from our field research to illustrate the overall patterns of development across Annenberg schools.

First are findings about the development of instruction and student learning climate, the two supports most proximal to student learning in school. Next are findings about the development of school leadership, teacher professional community, and parent and community involvement, those supports that provide the organizational foundation for teaching and learning. We conclude with findings concerning relational trust and instructional program coherence, the two overarching Supports.

In preview, analyses indicate that as a group, Annenberg schools improved on almost one-half of the Essential Supports. Development was particularly strong in some measures of instruction and student learning climate. There was a consistent pattern among school leadership, teacher professional community, and professional development—most development on the measures of these Supports occurred between the baseline year and 1999, but much of this progress eroded by 2001. Overall, there was almost no difference in patterns of development between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. In 1999, there were small differences that favored Annenberg schools but, by 2001, these disappeared with virtually no exception. At the end of the Challenge, there were essentially no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools on measures of the Essential Supports.

It should be noted that the analyses revealed some very large standardized change unit differences in several of the Essential Supports from year to year, including some of more than two standard deviations. Although these findings may seem quite

improbable, several factors should be considered when interpreting them. Measures of the Essential Supports are constructed on 10-point scales and the distribution of responses on these scales is often very narrow. On a 10-point scale, the standard deviations of measures at the school level are relatively small, indicating little variation across schools (indeed most variations in these measures are within schools). Taking into account the range of the scales and the size of the standard deviations, a standardized change unit difference of two standard deviations may represent only a one-point or 10 percent difference on a particular measure. A 10 percent difference might be a very reasonable amount of change to occur during a seven-year period. In addition, when one considers the substantive categories that define a measure's different levels, a one-point difference on a 10-point scale may mean relatively small movement within a category (e.g., "limited"), but not movement from one category to another (e.g., from "limited" to "moderate").

High-Quality Classroom Instruction

The Model of Essential Supports defines high-quality classroom instruction by three basic elements.²⁹ The first is student exposure to subject matter. In high-quality instruction, subject matter is introduced at a steady, challenging pace and coordinated within and across grade levels. Teachers may teach basic skills, but they seldom rely on repetition and review. They introduce new and more intellectually rigorous concepts in a manner that is appropriately challenging. The second is how teachers engage students in subject matter, or the intellectual demands they make in the classroom. In high-quality instruction, teachers make frequent use of intellectually challenging assignments that require students to study a topic in depth, produce new knowledge and understanding, communicate and explain to others what they have learned, and draw connections to problems and situations beyond school. The third element concerns the instructional methods teachers use to engage their students in intellectually demanding ways. The Model of Essential Supports focuses on two types of instructional methods. The first, didactic instruction, refers

²⁹ See Delpit (1998); Elmore and Burney (1997); Good and Brophy (1997); Newmann and Associates (1996); and Smith, Lee, and Newmann (2001).

to the use of whole-class presentation, recitation, and individual student work to transmit and promote the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. The second, interactive instruction, refers to the use of interactive, problem-oriented, differentiated strategies to promote analysis, application, and production of knowledge. A combination of the two, with a relatively strong emphasis on interactive practices, characterizes high-quality instruction. Finally, high-quality instruction is supported by adequate time for teaching and learning and by strong curricular and instructional materials.

Low-quality instruction is characterized by slow introduction of new subject matter; frequent repetition, review, and reteaching; and lack of coordination within and across grade levels. Teachers rarely expose their students to intellectually challenging subject matter and require little more than the acquisition of discrete pieces of knowledge and skills. Students engage subject matter superficially and are not often asked to apply, analyze, or evaluate it. Students are not required to communicate, explain, or support their work, or to connect it to a problem or situation beyond school. Teachers rely primarily on didactic teaching methods and make little use of interactive instruction. Curricular and instructional materials are weak. Instructional time is not well preserved, nor is it used to full advantage.

Development across Annenberg Schools

We examined four measures associated with these elements of high-quality instruction: (a) demand for authentic intellectual work; (b) teachers' emphasis; (c) use of interactive instructional practices; and (d) use of didactic instructional practices. The first measure assesses the challenge with which teachers engage students. The second focuses on student work with subject matter through writing. The last two assess teachers' use of different types of instructional methods to engage students in intellectually demanding ways. Overall, between 1997 and 2001, instruction in Annenberg schools improved on three of the four measures (see Table 4). Teachers' demand for intellectual work, emphasis on writing, and use of interactive practices were all greater in 2001 than in 1997. Teachers' use of didactic

practices did not increase. On all but teachers' use of didactic practices, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Teachers' use of didactic practices was lower in Annenberg schools in both 1997 and 2001.

Table 4. Development of Instruction in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001: Summary of Findings

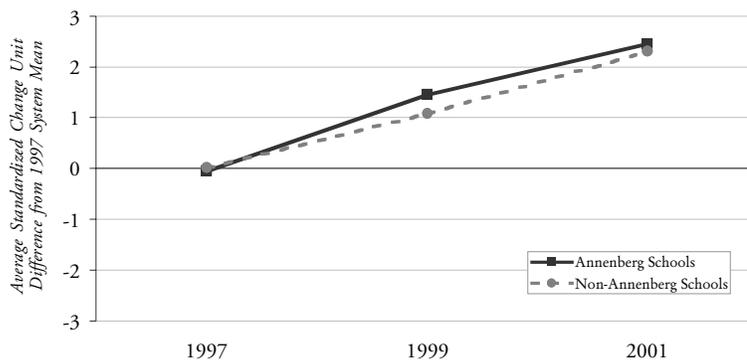
	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON- ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Demand for Authentic Intellectual Work	Low	High	+ 0.33	+2.54	≡
Writing Emphasis	Moderate	Fairly intensive	+ 0.89	+ 2.28	≡
Interactive Instruction	Regularly	Regularly	+ 0.39	+ 2.60	≡
No Net Change					
Didactic Instruction	Infrequent	Infrequent	+ 0.04	+ 0.17	-

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means change between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A "+" indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A "≡" indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A "-" indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Demand for Authentic Intellectual Work. Demand for authentic intellectual work rose steadily among Annenberg schools between 1997 and 2001 (see Figure 15). It rose from the high end of the "low" category to the low end of the "high" category of the measure. This means that in 1997, on average, teachers in Annenberg schools asked students to elaborate their ideas and organize and synthesize information less than once a week; spent between 5 percent and 35 percent of their class time synthesizing ideas from reading, differentiating fact from opinion, and drawing inferences; and more than 50 percent of their time analyzing or interpreting literature. On average, between 10 and 50 percent of teachers' lessons in Annenberg schools dealt with a topic in-depth and asked students to produce original work. In 2001, on average, teachers in Annenberg schools asked students to elaborate their ideas and organize and synthesize information once or twice a week; spent between 35 and 50 percent of their class time on synthesizing ideas from reading, differentiating fact from opinion, and drawing inferences; and between 50 and 75

percent of their time analyzing and interpreting literature. On average, between 50 and 75 percent of lessons dealt with studying a topic in depth and having students produce original work. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Figure 15. Demand for Authentic Intellectual Work: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Writing Emphasis. In Annenberg schools, teachers' emphasis on writing rose slightly between 1997 and 1999 and then rose substantially between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 16). This increase was coincident with the introduction of the new Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) that contained a new, more intensive focus on writing. In 1997, emphasis on writing was "moderate." Teachers typically had students write a one-page assignment once or twice a semester and one or two paragraphs once or twice a week. They did not typically ask students to write anything longer, but did have students revise and edit their writing once or twice a month. By 2001, emphasis on writing was "fairly intensive." Teachers were more likely to have students write one to two paragraphs nearly every day, one page once or twice a month, and one to three pages once or twice a semester. They were more likely to have students revise and edit their written work once or twice a week. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools.

Interactive Instruction. Teachers in Annenberg schools increased their use of interactive teaching methods between 1997 and 2001 (see Figure 17). Nonetheless,

their use was “regular” as opposed to “frequent.” By 2001, teachers were somewhat more likely to assign projects of one week’s duration to students once or twice a month, have students discuss what they read in small groups, and use cooperative learning groups at least once or twice a week. They were somewhat more likely to consider student participation in class to be very important in their judgment of student learning. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools on this measure. Although Annenberg teachers exhibited slightly greater use of interactive practices in 1999 and 2001, these differences were not statistically significant.

Didactic Instruction. Finally, in Annenberg schools, teachers’ use of didactic practices remained steady and at relatively low levels between 1997 and 2001 (see Figure 18). In both 1997 and 2001, Annenberg teachers’ use of didactic instruction was “infrequent.” This means that teachers tended to use highly structured call and response exercises or had students memorize facts less than once or twice a week. They lectured students for more than half a lesson period less than once or twice a month, although they may have had students read aloud as often as once or twice a week. In 1997 and 2001, Annenberg teachers made significantly less use of didactic methods than teachers in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. In 1999, however, they made only somewhat less use of these methods and that difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 16. Writing Emphasis: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

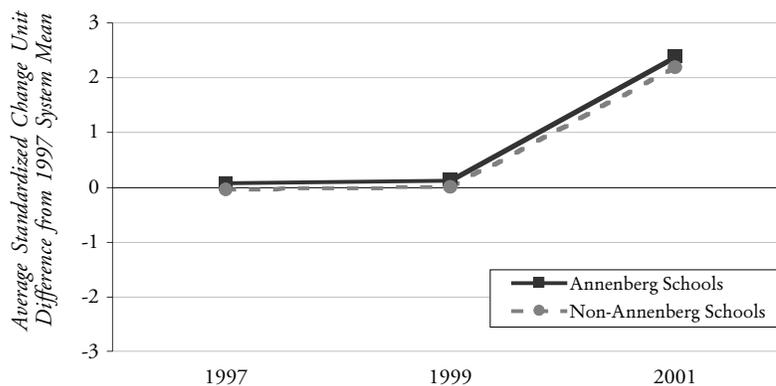


Figure 17. Interactive Instruction: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

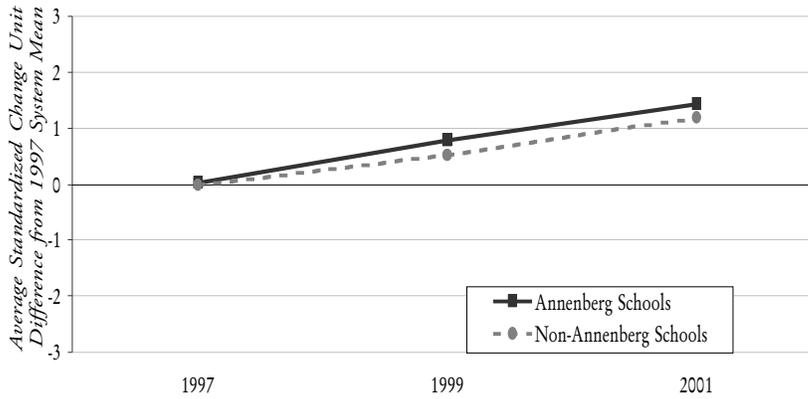
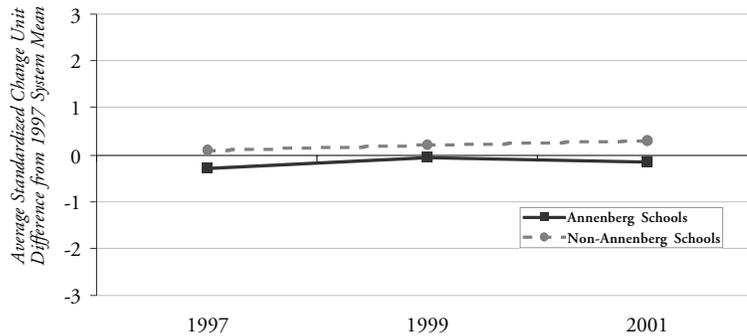


Figure 18. Didactic Instruction: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Examples from the Field

As noted in an earlier Chicago Annenberg Research Project report, the most prevalent school-level change in instruction we observed in our field research was an increased effort to prepare students for standardized tests.³⁰ In 2001, all but two of the 12 schools in our sample were spending greater amounts of time and effort teaching students how to take timed multiple-choice exams. We did observe teachers in some schools working individually or in small groups to increase their use of interactive teaching strategies, raise the intellectual demand of their assignments, and

³⁰ Wenzel et al. (2001).

coordinate subject matter among their classrooms. Unfortunately, there were very few examples of schoolwide efforts to improve instruction in these ways.

Rigoberta Menchu Elementary School experienced many of the instructional trends that are present in the survey data.³¹ For several years prior to the Challenge, Menchu was working with its Annenberg External Partner to implement a comprehensive literacy program to improve classroom instruction and student achievement. Although it differed somewhat at the primary and intermediate grade levels, this program helped teachers develop instructional strategies that called for a balance between skills practice, literature-based activities, writing across the curriculum, and addressing multiple learning styles. The External Partner and most teachers and administrators at Menchu agreed that these strategies would strengthen the overall quality of instruction at the school.

Classroom observations, instructional artifacts, and interviews indicate that instruction improved at Menchu between 1996 and 1999. Teachers began to make subject matter and instructional assignments more intellectually challenging for students. They worked to strengthen the link between classroom instruction and students' experiences outside of school. They introduced new content at a faster pace and reduced the amount of review and repetition. Teachers also increased their use of interactive teaching methods by introducing literature circles and small group collaborative writing projects. During the 1997-98 school year, Menchu's External Partner introduced student assessments tailored to the new literacy curriculum that would help teachers do a better job identifying individual student's learning needs. In interviews, teachers reported that they incorporated more and more elements of the literacy program into their everyday teaching. Classroom observations corroborated these reports.

Instructional improvement can be fragile, however, and Menchu's experience illustrates this. In 2001, while some teachers were still teaching in ways that were consistent with the new literacy program, the schoolwide improvement in instruction

³¹ Pseudonyms are used to maintain the anonymity of the field research sites.

that occurred between 1996 and 1999 had eroded. Menchu lost to retirement and job transfers a substantial number of teachers who were among the strongest implementers of the literacy initiative. Their replacements were unfamiliar with the program and, on the whole, did not use the instructional practices it promoted. Moreover, the influx of new teachers coupled with reductions in the literacy program's funding made it increasingly difficult for the school's curriculum coordinators to provide adequate professional development and implementation support. The External Partner had to reduce the time it spent at Menchu and became less available to teachers. With less support and increased demands from a growing number of high-need students in their classrooms, Menchu teachers found it increasingly difficult to experiment with and implement new instructional strategies. At the end of the field research, instruction at Menchu looked much the same as it did in 1996.

Supportive Student Learning Climate

A strong, supportive student learning climate is characterized by a number of factors that include high expectations and press for student achievement and strong social support for learning from teachers, parents, and peers.³² In a strong, supportive learning climate, students feel their teachers know them personally and care about them as individuals. They count on teachers to notice if they are having academic or personal problems and give extra help. Students feel that their peers think school and learning are important. They have a sense of being physically and psychologically safe in their schools and classrooms. There are few disciplinary problems and those that occur are handled firmly and fairly. Teachers and students treat each other with respect and trust. A strong student learning climate is supported by efforts to develop and sustain a schoolwide focus on teaching and learning and optimize instructional time.

³² See Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993); Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989); Coleman (1988); Dorsch (1998); King and Mathers (1997); Lee et al. (1999); Marks, Doane, and Secada (1996); McDill, Natriello, and Pallas (1986); Noddings (1998); Raudenbush (1984); Sebring et al. (1996); Shouse (1996); and Sizer (1984 and 1992).

Weak student learning climates lack focus on academic learning. Students are not pressed toward high achievement and they receive little support from teachers, parents, and peers. Students do not necessarily feel that their teachers know them personally or care about them as individuals. They may not feel that they can trust their teachers to be fair or notice when they have problems. In weak learning climates, students may not feel physically or psychologically safe. Instructional time may be interrupted frequently and discipline problems may detract from teaching and student learning.

Development across Annenberg Schools

Four measures were used to map the development of student learning climate across Annenberg schools: (a) classroom personalism; (b) safety; (c) press toward academic achievement; and (d) peer support for academic work. Overall, between 1994 and 2001, Annenberg schools as a group improved on two indicators of learning climate: classroom personalism and school safety (see Table 5). These were among the strongest areas of development across all of the Essential Supports. At the same time, peer support for academic work declined across Annenberg schools and levels of press toward academic achievement were the same in 2001 as in 1994. In all but one measure of classroom instruction, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on these measures of learning climate.

Table 5. Development of Student-Centered Learning Climate in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 or 1997 to 2001, Summary of Findings

	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON-ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Classroom Personalism	Considerable	Considerable	+ 0.84	+ 3.23	≡
Safety	Somewhat safe	Mostly safe	+ 1.10	+ 1.90	≡
No Net Change					
Press toward Academic Achievement	Moderate	Moderate	+ 0.03	0.14	≡
Weakened					
Peer Support for Academic Work	Moderate	Moderate	- 0.37	-1.19	≡

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A “+” indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A “≡” indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A “-” indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Classroom Personalism. Students’ perceptions of the care, concern, and attention they received from their teachers were stronger in 2001 than in 1994 (see Figure 19). In 1994, students reported “considerable” but not “strong” levels of personalism. That is, they agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers believed they could do well in school. They agreed but did not strongly agree that their teachers were willing to give extra help, noticed if they were having trouble learning something, helped them catch up if they fell behind, and really listened to what they had to say. Students were mixed in whether they agreed or disagreed that their teachers related subject matter to their personal interests. In 2001, students’ reports of personalism were higher in the “considerable” category of the measure. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Safety. Students’ sense of safety in and around Annenberg schools rose between 1994 and 1997 and remained relatively constant between 1997 and 2001 (see Figure 20). In 1994, students considered Annenberg schools “somewhat safe.” By 2001, they considered them “mostly safe.” This means that in 1994, students felt only

somewhat or mostly safe in their classrooms, in the hallways and bathrooms of their schools, and traveling between home and school, and they felt only somewhat safe in the area around their schools. In 2001, students were more likely to report that they felt very safe in their classrooms and mostly or very safe elsewhere in their schools, in the area around their schools, and traveling between home and school. There were no differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Press toward Academic Achievement. Unlike classroom personalism and school safety, press toward academic achievement in Annenberg schools was much the same in 2001 as it was in 1994 (see Figure 21). It declined between 1997 and 1999, but then increased between 1999 and 2001 to roughly 1994 levels. In both 1994 and 2001, students reported experiencing “moderate” as opposed to “high” levels of press. This means that students agreed, although not always strongly, that their teachers expected them to do well in school, praised them when they worked hard, did not think they were dumb if they asked about things they did not understand, and expected them to finish their homework and do extra work. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Peer Support for Academic Work. Finally, in contrast to the trend in classroom personalism, peer support for academic work declined steadily in Annenberg schools between 1994 and 1999, and then leveled out between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 22). Between 1994 and 2001, peer support fell from the high end of the “moderate” category of the measure to the low end. Moderate peer support means that students report that most but not all of their peers try hard to get good grades, attend all of their classes, pay attention in class, and think homework is important. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Figure 19. Classroom Personalism: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from the 1994 System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

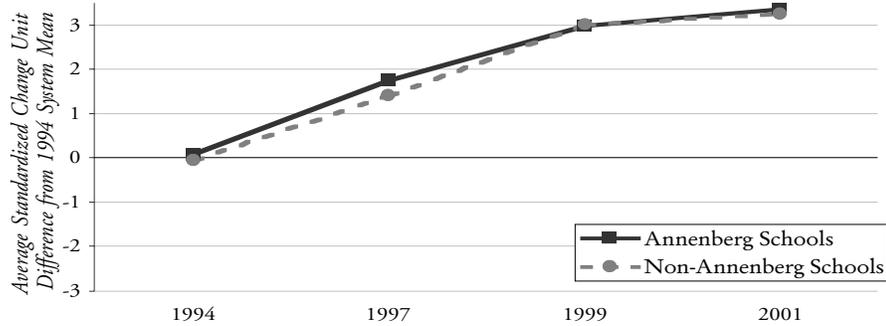


Figure 20. Safety: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

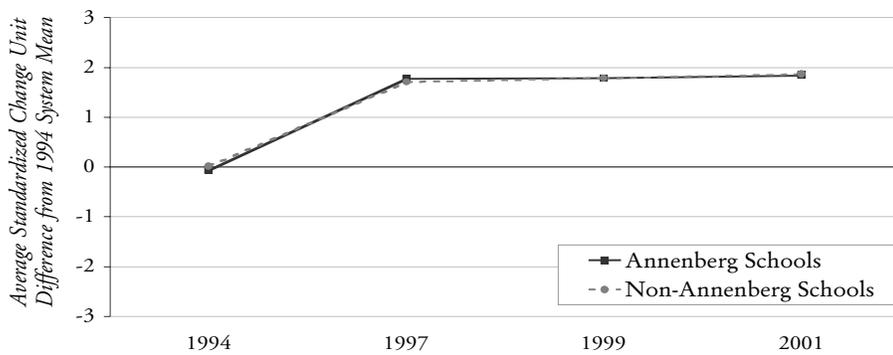


Figure 21. Press toward Academic Achievement: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

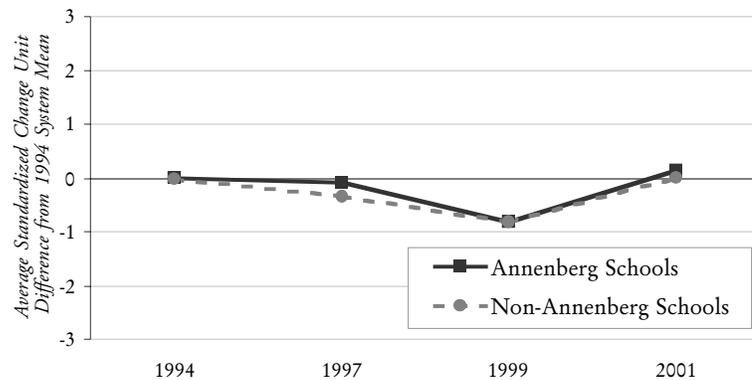
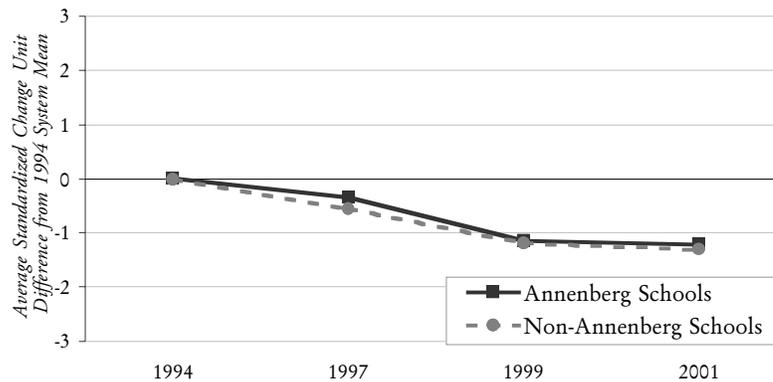


Figure 22. Peer Support for Academic Work: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Examples from the Field

An earlier Annenberg research project report described several field research sites that made substantial efforts to improve their physical environments to foster more supportive student learning climates.³³ At other sites, school staff worked to increase safety and reduce behavioral problems, tried to develop more personalized relationships between students and adults, and provided greater recognition of student work and academic success. Between 1999 and 2001, many of the field research schools continued to work to improve student learning climate. Some found that newly hired teachers brought renewed enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Others took advantage of CPS-funded capital improvements and rearranged classrooms and other learning spaces to promote communication among teachers and create environments that were more conducive for teaching and learning. At the same time, other field research schools did little to improve their learning climates. They remained disorganized and chaotic places where neither teachers nor students felt well supported in their work. These schools failed to make even the most basic changes in their physical facilities or scheduling to improve their learning climates.

³³ Wenzel et al. (2001).

Oscar Arias Sanchez Elementary School made substantial strides in developing a stronger, more supportive student learning climate. Building repairs and renovations dramatically improved space and aesthetics. In 1997, Sanchez suffered from severe overcrowding. Every available space was used for instruction—classes were held in the cafeteria, gymnasium, and even closets. Science, art, and other special classes had to move from room to room throughout the day. Moreover, the school was disorganized and noisy and the daily schedule often changed at the last minute. In 1999, an addition to the building created much needed instructional space. Teachers received permanent classrooms and the noise level was greatly reduced. Moreover, a new custodial staff spruced up the appearance of the building. Walls were freshly painted and teachers began to decorate the halls and classrooms with student work. With order established in the hallways, teachers and the principal turned their attention to protecting instructional time from interruptions. Indeed, after the addition was completed, both teachers and students were observed to be more enthusiastic and invested in the school. They were better able to focus on teaching and learning.

Between 1999 and 2001, the principal and teachers at Sanchez continued their work to improve the school's learning climate. Building space was reorganized to place teachers of the same grade level closer to each other. With increased opportunities for interaction, teachers reported that it was easier to get to know their students personally. They also reported greater opportunity to learn about school resources to help struggling students succeed. In addition, more frequent communication between teachers and administrators helped Sanchez adapt its instructional program and support services to improve student conduct and learning.

Strong School Leadership

According to the Model of Essential Supports, strong school leadership is based on a clear mission and vision for the school.³⁴ It is broadly based and inclusive. It involves the principal, faculty and staff, parents, and LSC members. The principal and other

³⁴ See Blumberg and Greenfield (1980); Bryk et al. (1998a); Chubb and Moe (1990); Lightfoot (1983); Lipsitz (1984); Newmann and Wehlage (1995); and Sebring and Bryk (2000).

administrators communicate well with teachers and involve them in school-level decision making. Teachers work with colleagues and administrators to formulate plans for school development, particularly those related to instructional improvement. The principal takes an active role in instruction and its development by recruiting and retaining effective staff members; encouraging teacher professional development, experimentation, and innovation; and reducing classroom interruption. Strong leadership communicates effectively with the school community. It is strategic and accepts responsibility for fair enforcement of policies, program implementation, and for enacting the school's vision of the future. School management is efficient and effective.

On the other hand, consolidated principal power and authoritarian decision making characterize weak school leadership. It fails to articulate a clear vision for the school and does little to communicate goals and plans for development. It does not focus on instruction and there is little accountability. School management is chaotic and unpredictable. The principal fails to support teachers, neither helping them in their professional development nor protecting them from interruptions to their work.

Development across Annenberg Schools

Four measures were used to map changes in school leadership across Annenberg schools: (a) inclusive leadership; (b) teacher influence in decision making; (c) joint problem solving; and (d) principal instructional leadership. Overall, teacher influence in decision making increased in Annenberg schools between 1994 and 2001 (see Table 6). At the same time, levels of inclusive leadership, which includes parent and community involvement, declined. Principal instructional leadership and levels of joint problem solving were much the same in Annenberg schools in 2001 as in 1994. As described in more detail below, a few statistically significant differences were found between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on several measures of school leadership, but only in 1997 and 1999. These initial improvements in Annenberg schools disappeared after 1999. In 2001, there were no

differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on any dimension of school leadership.

Table 6. Development of Leadership in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON- ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Teacher Influence in Decision Making	Moderate	Moderate	+ 0.21	+ 0.33	≅
No Net Change					
Principal Instructional Leadership	Strong	Strong	-0.04	- 0.04	≅
Joint Problem Solving	Strong	Strong	- 0.14	- 0.15	≅
Weakened					
Inclusive Leadership	Positive	Positive	- 0.29	- 0.34	≅

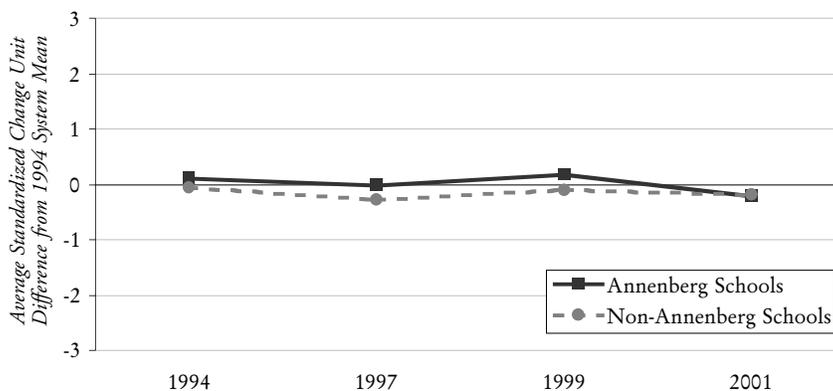
Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A “+” indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A “≅” indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A “-” indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Inclusive Leadership. In 1994, Annenberg schools as a whole had “positive” levels of inclusive leadership. That is, teachers across Annenberg schools were likely to agree or strongly agree that their principals promoted parent and community involvement in school and they tended to agree, though not strongly, that their principals worked to create a sense of community in their schools and were committed to shared decision making. Levels of inclusive leadership in Annenberg schools declined slightly from 1994 to 1997, rose between 1997 and 1999, but fell again after 1999 (see Figure 23). By 2001, inclusive leadership was lower across Annenberg schools than in 1994 although it remained within the “positive” category of the measure. While inclusive leadership was greater in Annenberg schools than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools in 1999, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups by 2001.

Teacher Influence in Decision Making. This was the only measure of leadership that was stronger among Annenberg schools in 2001 than in 1994. This difference existed despite losses between 1999 and 2001 of initial improvement that occurred between 1994 and 1999 (see Figure 24). In 1994, the level of teacher

influence in Annenberg schools was “moderate.” Teachers reported that they had some or a great deal of influence in determining instructional materials for their classes. They tended to agree that they were comfortable voicing their concerns and were involved in making important decisions at their schools. They reported having some influence over establishing curricular programs and setting standards for student behavior, but they reported having a little or only some influence over their teaching assignments, their schools’ use of discretionary funds, and the hiring of principals and other school personnel. In 2001, teacher influence was slightly greater than influence in 1994 but still remained “moderate.” While teacher influence was stronger in Annenberg schools than in non-Annenberg schools in 1997 and 1999, there were no statistically significant differences between these groups of schools on this measure in 2001.

Figure 23. Inclusive Leadership: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Joint Problem Solving. In 1997, joint problem solving in Annenberg schools could be described as “strong.” Overall, teachers tended to agree that other teachers in their schools did not dismiss or ignore problems, did a good job talking through differences in opinions, and expressed their personal views openly. Also, teachers tended to agree that their schools have good processes for resolving conflicts and use faculty meetings for problem solving. Levels on this measure in Annenberg schools held steady between 1997 and 2001 with fluctuations that were not statistically

significant (see Figure 25). Overall, joint problem solving in Annenberg schools in 2001 was much the same as it was in 1997. It did not rise to “very strong” where teachers would be more likely to strongly agree that these practices existed in their schools. Differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools were statistically significant in 1997 and 1999 but not in 2001.

Figure 24. Teacher Influence in Decision Making: Average Effect Size Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

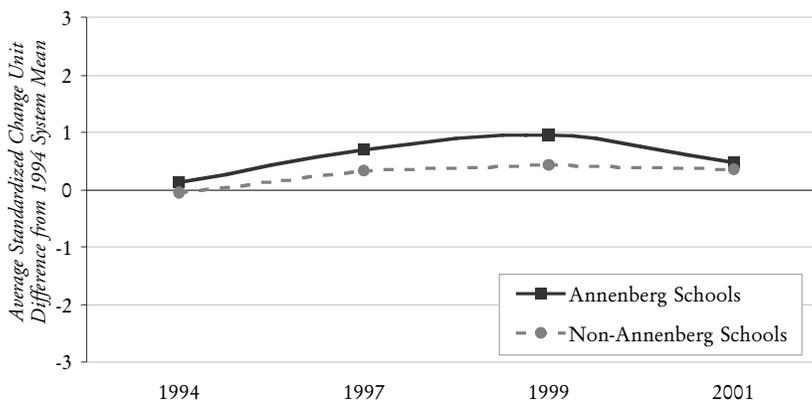
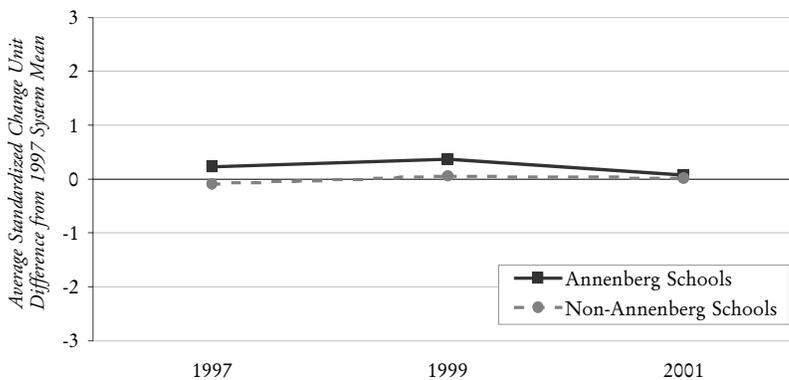


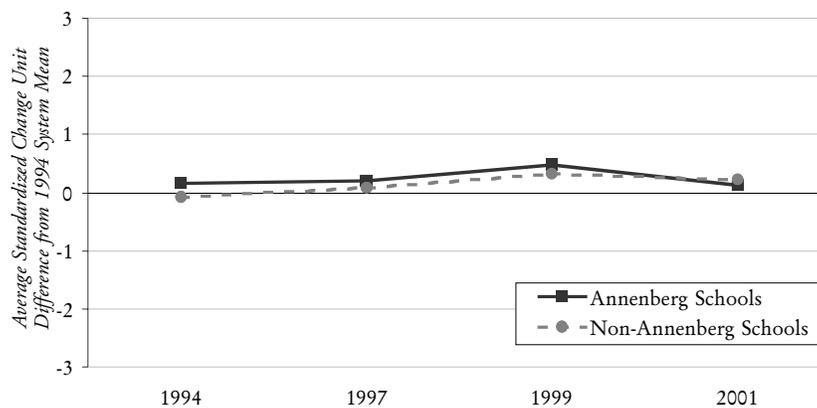
Figure 25. Joint Problem Solving: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Principal Instructional Leadership. In 1994, instructional leadership in Annenberg schools was “strong” according to the measure. Teachers were likely to agree but not strongly agree that their principals made expectations for teaching clear; set high standards for both teaching and student learning; communicated a

clear vision for the school; pressed them to implement what they learned in professional development activities; understood how students learn; and tracked student academic progress. Instructional leadership in Annenberg schools rose slightly from 1997 to 1999 but fell by 2001 to about its 1994 levels (see Figure 26). The increase between 1997 and 1999 and the decline between 1999 and 2001 were statistically significant, but levels of instructional leadership in 2001 and 1994 were statistically equivalent; both were within the “strong” category. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure in any year.

Figure 26. Principal Instructional Leadership: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Examples from the Field

Field research conducted between 1996 and 1999 found many examples of improvement in school leadership. Increases in teacher participation in grade- and school-level decision making were documented. So too were greater emphases on instructional improvement in school-level planning and decision making. In a number of sites, teachers became more involved in school- and grade-level program development, especially in establishing goals for more intellectually ambitious teaching and learning. A number of principals worked to involve parents and other members of their school communities in school leadership.

By 2001, several field research schools built upon or sustained earlier improvement in leadership. Others failed to develop at all. In a third group, leadership that was initially improving had become problematic. For example, in one school, a new principal reversed the progress the previous administration had made. In several others, tension arose between teachers and principals over participation in and control over decision making. In these schools, teachers' expectations for involvement began to conflict with the principals' sense of accountability for school performance and their belief that they needed to take back control of some decisions.

The example of Renee Cassin Elementary School shows how strong principal leadership supported school development in some ways and undermined it in others. In 1997, Cassin was under the threat of academic probation because of its persistently low ITBS scores. When the new principal was hired that year, he took a number of decisive actions. He reviewed all programs and outside organizations operating at the school, eliminated those that served only a few students or did not focus on improving classroom instruction, and retained those that provided professional development and instructional support. He obtained new instructional materials for teachers and counseled teachers he felt were ineffective to move to a different school. He also worked to create stronger relationships between parents and teachers.

In 1999, teachers at Cassin reported that the principal encouraged them to participate in professional development. He provided money and time for them to attend local and national conferences. He restructured the school day so that the whole staff could meet on Friday afternoons twice a month and established two common planning periods each week for grade-level meetings. Teachers believed that these efforts helped strengthen instructional program coherence at Cassin and develop the school's professional community. In 2001, however, several weaknesses in the principal's leadership had begun to undermine much of the progress that had been made. Teachers had become less supportive of the principal, characterizing his leadership as authoritative and even authoritarian. Although he spoke about involving teachers in decision making and school improvement planning, he

admitted that he made most of the important decisions at the school. The direct and consolidated nature of his leadership and fallout from several contentious decisions had begun to frustrate the faculty and had led several of the school's more productive teachers to resign or transfer to other schools.

Strong Professional Community

Teacher professional community refers to the quality of working relationships among teachers and other staff members at a school and the social and normative resources these relationships provide. In strong professional communities, teachers have a clear and common vision for the future and a shared sense of the school's mission and goals.³⁵ They have a common language and similar beliefs and values. Teachers are deeply committed to high-quality instruction; they share responsibility and accountability for their students' success and for achieving the school's goals.

Teachers in strong professional communities are highly collaborative. They exchange information about what they have learned from professional experience and research and engage in reflective conversation about their own practices and assumptions. In strong professional communities, there is a clear disposition toward ongoing learning and innovation. Members do not always agree on everything, but because of high levels of trust, disagreement is most often constructive rather than destructive.

In weak professional communities, teachers work in relative isolation from one another. They may be cordial and interact socially, but they rarely share information, discuss problems, or collaborate. Teachers in weak professional communities do not feel accountable to colleagues or to the school as a whole. They do not share a vision for the future nor do they agree on a set of goals for school development. They lack a common language and are guided by norms of autonomy and privacy.

Disagreements are rarely channeled in productive directions. At best, they remain unresolved in a state of *détente* with teachers agreeing to disagree.

³⁵ Bryk et al. (1998a); Darling Hammond (1990); DuFour and Eaker (1998); Lieberman (1995); Little (1999); Louis, Kruse, and Associates (1995); Newmann and Wehlage (1995); and Rosenholtz (1989).

Development across Annenberg Schools

Six measures were used to trace changes in teacher professional community in Annenberg schools: (a) peer collaboration; (b) focus on student learning; (c) orientation toward innovation; (d) collective responsibility; (e) reflective dialogue; and (f) teacher commitment to school. Overall, in 1994, teacher professional community in Annenberg schools could be described as reasonably strong, with the exception of teacher orientation toward innovation (see Table 7).

Table 7. Development of Teacher Professional Community in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON-ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Peer Collaboration	Significant	Significant	+ 0.32	+ 0.34	≡
Focus on Student Learning	Focused	Focused	+ 0.11	+ 0.13	≡
Orientation toward Innovation	Limited	Limited	+ 0.09	+ 0.11	≡
No Net Change					
Collective Responsibility	Strong	Strong	0.00	0.00	≡
Reflective Dialogue	Regularly	Regularly	+ 0.02	+ 0.05	≡
Weakened					
Teacher Commitment to School	Strong	Strong	- 0.34	- 0.33	≡

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means change between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A “+” indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A “≡” indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A “-” indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Between 1994 and 2001, peer collaboration, focus on student learning, and orientation toward innovation improved. Levels of teachers’ collective responsibility and reflective dialogue were much the same in 2001 as they were in 1994. Finally, teacher commitment in Annenberg schools weakened between 1994 and 2001. The

findings are more complicated than these overall differences suggest, however. Annenberg schools as a group improved on the majority of these measures between 1994 and 1999, but most of these initial improvements were lost. In 2001, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools in teacher professional community.

Peer Collaboration. Levels on this measure in Annenberg schools rose between 1994 and 1999 but fell between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 27). In 1994, peer collaboration in Annenberg schools was “significant” according to the measure. That is, teachers agreed or strongly agreed that other teachers in their schools were cordial. They agreed but did not strongly agree that collaborative efforts made their schools run well, that teachers coordinated instruction across grades, and that teachers designed the instructional program together. In 2001, while somewhat stronger, peer collaboration remained “significant.” It did not rise to the “extensive” category of the measure where teachers would more strongly agree that these types of interactions occurred in their schools. Between 1994 and 1999, peer collaboration rose at a greater rate in Annenberg schools than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Between 1999 and 2001, however, levels fell to roughly the same level as for non-Annenberg schools. Although the difference between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools approached statistical significance in 1999, it was not significant in any year.

Focus on Student Learning. Like peer collaboration, focus on student learning increased slightly between 1994 and 1999 but then declined by 2001 so it was only slightly stronger than in 1994 (see Figure 28). In both 1994 and 2001, teachers in Annenberg schools were likely to agree but not strongly agree that their schools maximized instructional time, set high standards for student academic performance, had well-defined learning expectations for students, and made decisions based on what was best for students. Like peer collaboration, focus on student learning in Annenberg schools appeared to develop somewhat more strongly than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. And like peer collaboration, any advantage that might have been held by Annenberg schools on this measure

disappeared by 2001. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools in any year on this measure.

Orientation toward Innovation. Levels on this measure in Annenberg schools were relatively weaker than peer collaboration and focus on student learning. In 1994, orientation toward innovation was within the “limited” category of the measure. That year, Annenberg teachers reported that only about half of their colleagues really tried to improve their teaching. Some agreed while others disagreed that teachers at their schools were continually learning, that they were encouraged to grow, and that they had a “can do” attitude. They reported that only some tried new ideas or took risks to improve their instruction. Levels on this measure in Annenberg schools improved slightly between 1994 and 2001 although they weakened thereafter and remained “limited” in 2001 (see Figure 29). Orientation toward innovation was slightly stronger in Annenberg schools than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools, particularly in 1999; however, these differences were not statistically significant.

Collective Responsibility and Reflective Dialogue. In 1994, collective responsibility in Annenberg schools was considered “fairly strong.” That is, teachers reported that most of their colleagues felt responsible to ensure that all students learn, that they set high standards for themselves, and that they help students with their self-control. Further, teachers reported that about half or most of their peers took responsibility for school improvement, helped discipline students, helped each other, and felt responsible when students failed. In 1994, reflective dialogue in Annenberg schools occurred “regularly” according to our measure. That is, teachers agreed, but did not strongly agree, that they talked informally with one another about instruction and shared and discussed student work and assumptions about student learning. They agreed but did not strongly agree that they had conversations more than once or twice a month about how students learn best and how to manage student behavior. In addition, they reported having conversations about developing new curriculum and school goals between one to three times a month. Neither collective responsibility for student learning nor reflective dialogue changed between

1994 and 2001 among Annenberg schools (see Figures 30 and 31). For Annenberg schools, collective responsibility remained “fairly strong” and reflective dialogue continued to occur “regularly.” There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on either of these measures in any year.

Teacher Commitment to School. In 1994, teacher commitment in Annenberg schools was “strong.” This means that teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they felt loyal to their schools. They agreed but did not strongly agree that they looked forward to school each day, that they would recommend the school to other parents, and that they would not want to work at another school. Teacher commitment in Annenberg schools declined between 1994 and 2001, especially after 1999 (see Figure 32). Despite this decline, levels of commitment remained in the “strong” category in 2001. Teacher commitment in Annenberg schools rose slightly between 1994 and 1999 while it declined in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. And it appears that it was slightly lower in non-Annenberg schools in 2001, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 27. Peer Collaboration: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

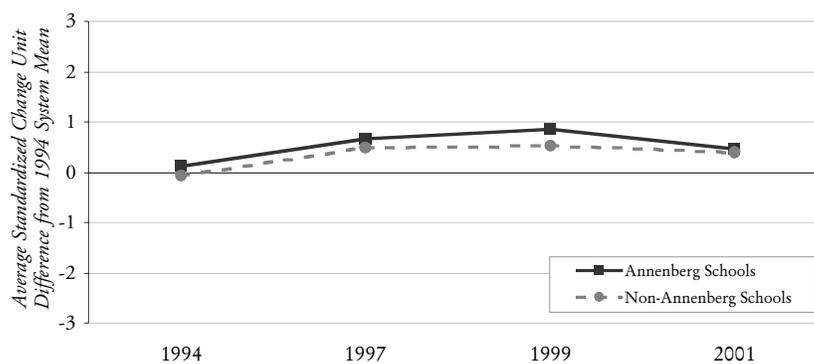


Figure 28. Focus on Student Learning: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

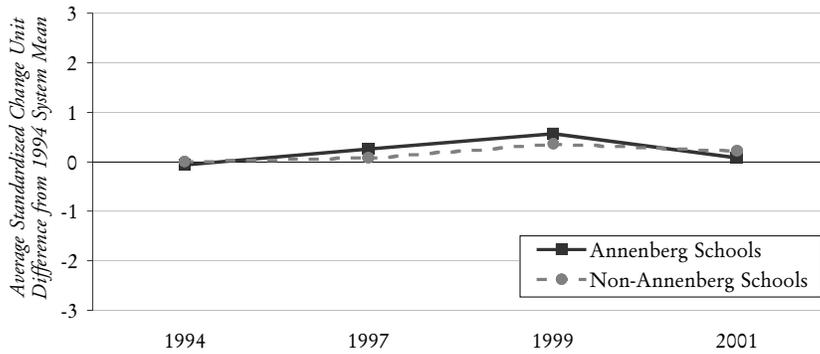


Figure 29. Orientation toward Innovation: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

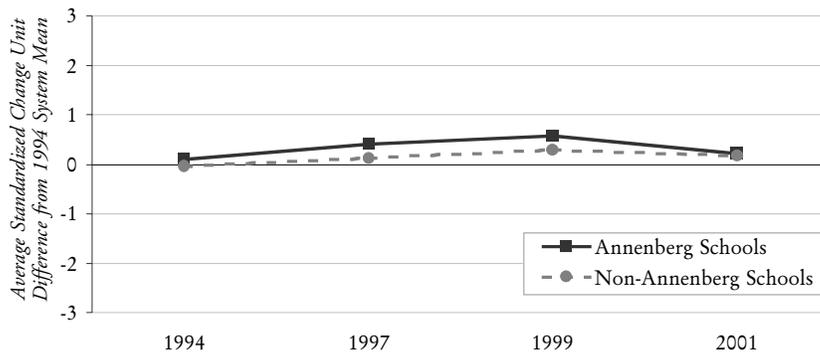


Figure 30. Collective Responsibility: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

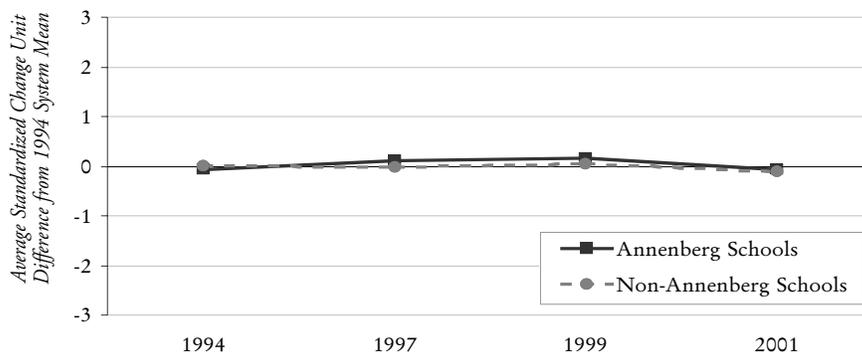


Figure 31. Reflective Dialogue: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

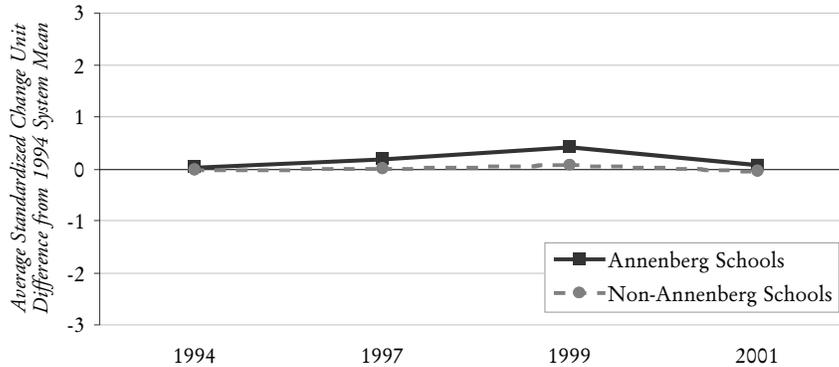
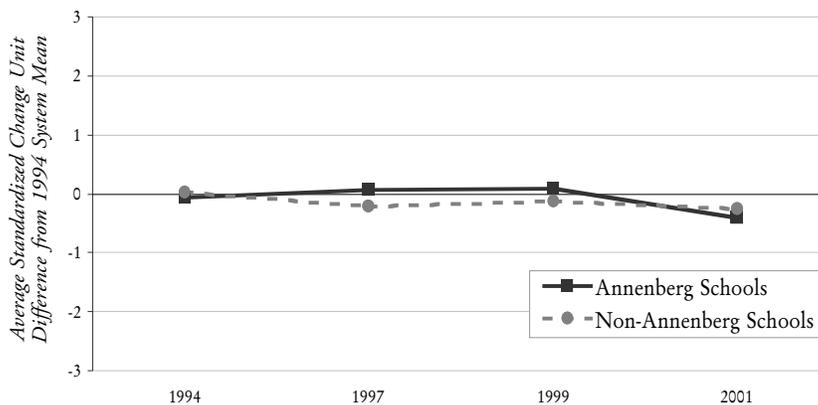


Figure 32. Teacher Commitment to School: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Examples from the Field

Between 1997 and 1999, more field research schools worked to develop teacher professional community than any other Essential Support and more succeeded in this area than in any other. In several schools, groups of teachers began to work together more closely to analyze their classroom practices and address issues of student learning. Growing numbers learned to talk effectively with one another about improving instruction and began to develop a shared language to do so. As a result, teachers' exposure to different instructional practices increased.

Between 1999 and 2001, most field research schools maintained their improvements in professional community. One strengthened it further as its teachers grew even more experienced in working together. For four of the field research schools, however, professional communities weakened and began to fall apart. At these schools, this coincided with the emergence of consolidated principal leadership and decision making. Teachers grew increasingly frustrated by their principals and by their declining involvement and influence. Some stopped meeting altogether, feeling less supported in their efforts and less committed to their school and its improvement. Such changes are illustrated well in the case of Nelson Mandela Elementary School.

In 1997, teachers at Mandela were quite cordial to one another, although very few spent time working together. Even though the principal called whole school faculty meetings several times a year, teachers did not meet regularly to discuss their work. Beginning in 1997, however, a small group began to work with their Annenberg External Partner to increase teacher collaboration and promote teacher learning and development.

By the next school year, there were marked differences in the working relationships among teachers who participated in the Annenberg initiative. These teachers consistently took advantage of their regularly scheduled common planning time and more readily identified themselves as a team. They frequently used their time together to share their experiences from their professional development, giving short presentations about what they learned at conferences and discussing specific pedagogical issues such as literature circles, thematic units, or how to implement advisory periods. Other teachers began to emulate their example and started to interact in more collaborative and reflective ways. Several who did not work with the External Partner expressed an interest in working together more like a school-within-a-school. The principal also said that he would like departments to function more like teams. As one school administrator observed, “Many of the ideas the Annenberg teachers have adopted, the whole school is adopting them.” By 1999, Mandela had made considerable progress in developing a strong schoolwide teacher professional

community, but by 2001, it had all but disappeared. The principal never fully embraced the Annenberg initiative at the school and he left Mandela for another position in 2000. This created a void of administrative support for teacher teaming and collaborative work. Moreover, the External Partner's funding was reduced and its presence in the school decreased. In the end, teachers returned to working in cordial isolation from one another.

Parent and Community Involvement

In schools with strong parent and community support, parents participate in school activities and contribute in significant ways to achieving school goals.³⁶ They support their children's learning at home and are viewed as a crucial resource. There is trust between parents and the school, which is characterized by mutual respect and confidence in each other's abilities. Schools with strong parent and community support aggressively promote that support. Teachers cultivate ties with parents and the surrounding community. They visit students' homes and attend neighborhood events. Teachers are knowledgeable about community and cultural issues that concern students and their families.

For schools with weak parent and community support, parent involvement is not a priority. Consequently, parents seldom help the school achieve its goals and may not support student learning at home. Trust, respect, and confidence between parents and the school may be weak. The school is largely disconnected from the surrounding community and does not take advantage of the support parents and community organizations might provide.

Development across Annenberg Schools

Change in parent and community involvement was tracked in terms of six measures: (a) teacher outreach to parents; (b) parent involvement in school; (c) teachers' use of community resources; (d) teachers' ties to the community; (e) teachers' knowledge of

³⁶ See Clark (1983); Delpit (1998); Epstein (1995); Epstein and Dauber (1991); Furstenberg et al. (1999); Lareau (1989); and Tyack (1992).

student culture; and (f) human and social resources in the community (see Table 8). Overall, only two measures of parent and community involvement improved among Annenberg schools between 1994 and 2001—teacher outreach to parents and parent involvement in school. There was virtually no difference between the baseline years and 2001 in any other measure among Annenberg schools, despite some initial improvement in teachers' use of community resources and human and social resources in the community. Like most other measures of the Essential Supports, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools in any year.

Teacher Outreach to Parents. In 1994, teacher outreach to parents was “significant.” That is, teachers were likely to agree but not strongly agree that parents were greeted warmly when they visited the school, that teachers tried to understand parents' problems, that the principal encouraged teachers to communicate with parents, and that the school welcomed parent feedback. Teachers' reactions were mixed on whether their schools worked at communicating with parents about advancing the school mission and helping children learn. They were likely to disagree that parents were invited into classrooms and that they worked closely with parents. In Annenberg schools, teachers' outreach to parents was greater in 2001 than in 1994 although it declined between 1999 and 2001, remaining in the “significant” category (see Figure 33). Trends in Annenberg schools mirrored those in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools; there were no statistically significant differences between these groups in any year.

Table 8. Development of Parent and Community Involvement in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 or 1997 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON- ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Teacher Outreach to Parents	Significant	Significant	+ 0.51	+ 0.70	≅
Parent Involvement in School	Moderate	Moderate	+ 0.18	+ 0.20	≅
No Net Change					
Teachers' Use of Community Resources	Occasional	Occasional	+ 0.07	+ 0.20	≅
Teachers' Ties to the Community	Slight	Slight	- 0.08	- 0.13	≅
Teachers' Knowledge of Student Culture	Significant	Significant	- 0.04	- 0.06	≅
Human/Social Resources in the Community	Some	Some	+ 0.03	+ 0.10	≅

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A "+" indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A "≅" indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A "-" indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Parent Involvement in School. In 1994, parent involvement in Annenberg schools was "moderate." Teachers in Annenberg schools were likely to report that most or nearly all parents picked up their children's report cards and attended school events and parent-teacher conferences. Teachers were likely to report that some to about half of parents attended special schoolwide events and helped raise funds for the school. They were likely to report that only some parents volunteered to work in classrooms. Parent involvement in Annenberg schools rose gradually between 1994 and 1999 and then declined between 1999 and 2001, remaining in the measure's "moderate" category (see Figure 34). Still, it was greater in 2001 than in 1994. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools in any year.

Teachers' Use of Community Resources. Across Annenberg schools in 1997, teachers' use of community resources in their teaching was "occasional" rather than "frequent" or "extensive." Teachers in Annenberg schools were likely to report that they used people and events from the community as an example and told students about community agencies only once to four times that school year. They consulted with community members to better understand students and collected materials from community businesses for class only once or twice. They took students on field trips or brought in guest speakers from the community only once, twice, or never that year. Teachers' use of community resources increased in Annenberg schools between 1997 and 1999 but then declined between 1999 and 2001, resulting in no net change (see Figure 35). Although it appears that Annenberg schools increased at a greater rate than non-Annenberg schools, the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant in any year.

Teachers' Ties to the Community. In Annenberg schools in 1997, teachers' ties to their schools' communities were "slight." While teachers were likely to report that they had friends who lived in their schools' communities, they shopped there only once or twice a month. They reported that they attended recreational activities in their schools' communities two or three times a month but attended the same religious services as their students and visited their students' homes less than once a month. In Annenberg schools, the levels of teachers' ties to the community did not change between 1997 and 2001 and they showed no statistically significant difference from those in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools (see Figure 36).

Teachers' Knowledge of Student Culture. In Annenberg schools in 1997, teachers' knowledge of their students' cultures was "significant." Teachers were likely to report that most of their colleagues at their schools were aware of community issues. They were likely to report that about half or most talked with students about their lives and cultures and that about half tried to learn about students' cultural backgrounds. This remained unchanged between 1997 and 2001 (see Figure 37).

There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Human and Social Resources in the Community. In 1997, there were “some” supportive human and social resources in the communities of students attending Annenberg schools. These students were likely to agree or strongly agree that people in their neighborhoods cared about what happened there. They tended to agree but not strongly agree that the parks were safe for young people to play at during the day, that adults in the neighborhood knew who the local children were, and that they could look up to the adults in their community. Students were mixed on whether adults in their neighborhoods made sure the neighborhood children were safe, that they could trust people living in their neighborhood, and that community members addressed problems in the neighborhood rather than ignoring them. Levels on this measure increased across Annenberg schools between 1997 and 1999 but declined between 1999 and 2001, resulting in no net change (see Figure 38). There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools on this measure.

Figure 33. Teacher Outreach to Parents: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

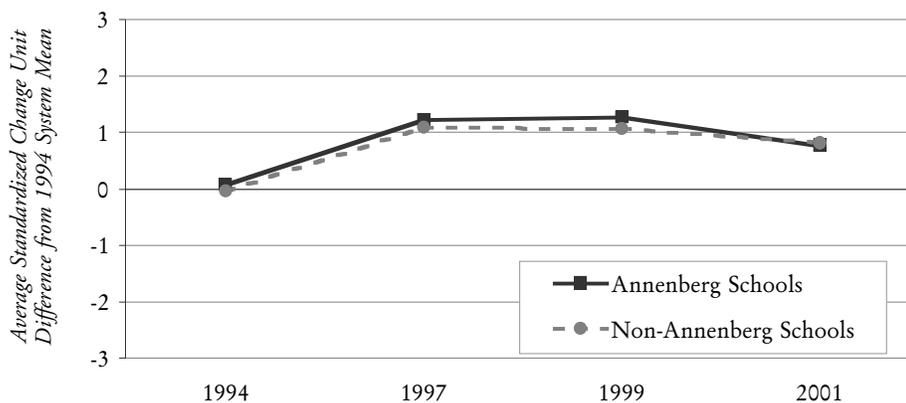


Figure 34. Parent Involvement in School: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Figure 35. Teachers' Use of Community Resources: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

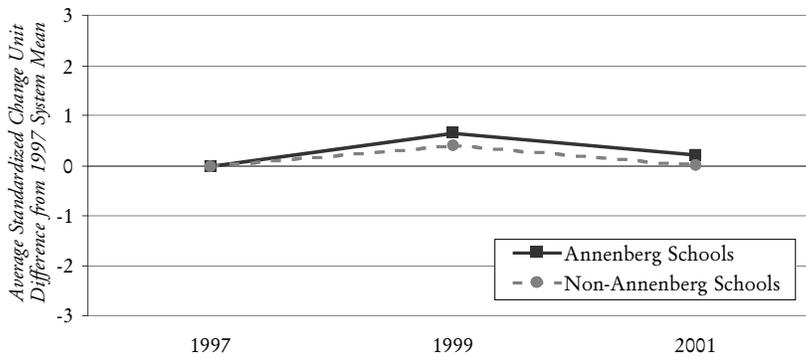


Figure 36. Teachers Ties to the Community: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

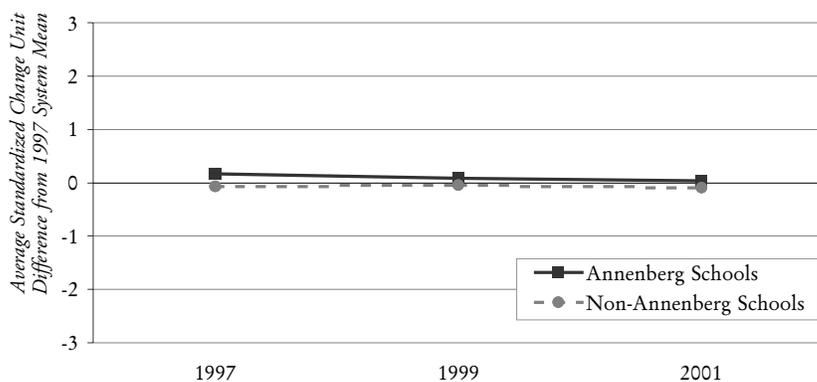


Figure 37. Teachers' Knowledge of Student Culture: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

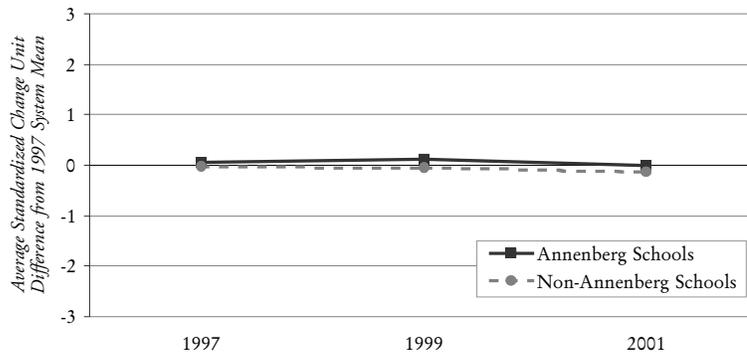
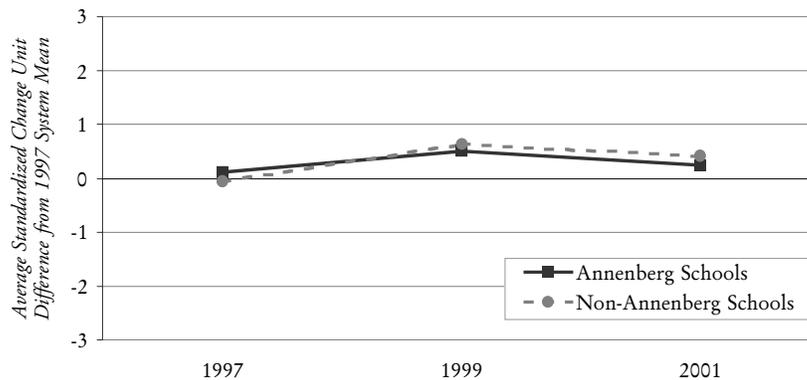


Figure 38. Human and Social Resources in the Community: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Examples from the Field

Compared to the number of field research schools that improved their leadership and teacher professional community, fewer strengthened their relationships with parents and the community. There were several, however, that did strengthen these relationships by establishing new parent education programs, seeking assistance from community organizations, and helping their students gain greater access to community services. Rigoberta Menchu Elementary School was one such school.

With two parent coordinators on staff, an estimated 30 parent volunteers a day, and eight active parent groups, Menchu devoted substantial attention to cultivating parent and community involvement and support. The school invited parents to workshops on a variety of topics from how to help children learn to how to prepare income tax forms. Several parent groups worked on encouraging students and parents to read at home.

Between 1997 and 1999, Menchu increased these efforts. Staff developed new strategies to promote parent involvement and support. According to an LSC representative, the school helped parents gather materials to create a lending library of videotapes and books about parental concerns, gangs, drugs, puberty, and how to support children's academic growth. In 1997, a parent and community coordinator worked with the school's Annenberg External Partner to establish the Parent Leadership Circle. This committee increased coordination and reduced overlap in work among the different parent groups. As a result, they became better organized and more autonomous and one of the coordinators was able to work with parents on increasing student attendance.

Menchu also made substantial efforts to help its students take greater advantage of community resources. The school's staff established relationships with community health organizations so that students might receive preventative health care services like immunizations and physical examinations more readily.

Relational Trust

Relational trust is one of two overarching Supports in the Model of Essential Supports. It refers to shared confidence in the abilities and integrity of others, mutual respect, and personal regard. Strong relational trust is crucial for school development.³⁷ In schools with strong relational trust, teachers feel that their principal respects and supports them, looks out for their welfare, and has confidence in their expertise. They, in turn, respect their principals as educators. In high-trust

³⁷ See Bryk and Schneider (1996, 2002); Sebring et al. (1995); and Smylie and Hart (1999).

schools, teachers and parents respect and support each other. Students feel that their teachers care about them, listen to their ideas, and keep their promises. Moreover, teachers trust and respect each other, communicate openly, and support colleagues who lead development efforts.

In schools with weak relational trust, members of the school community hold little respect for and have little confidence in others. Teachers do not necessarily believe that their principal trusts and supports them or looks out for their welfare. There is little mutual respect and support among parents and teachers, students and teachers, or among teachers themselves.

Development across Annenberg Schools

Four measures were used to examine the development of relational trust in Annenberg schools: (a) teacher-principal trust; (b) teacher-teacher trust; (c) teacher-parent trust; and (d) teacher-student trust (see Table 9). Overall, relational trust in Annenberg schools strengthened between 1994 and 2001. Only teacher-student trust failed to improve. Nonetheless, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on any measure of trust.

Table 9. Development of Relational Trust in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 or 1997 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON-ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Teacher-Principal Trust	Strong	Strong	+ 0.11	+ 0.13	≡
Teacher-Teacher Trust	Minimal	Minimal	+ 0.25	+ 0.40	≡
Teacher-Parent Trust	Minimal	Strong	+ 0.17	+ 0.22	≡
No Net Change					
Teacher-Student Trust	Strong	Strong	- 0.05	- 0.02	≡

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A "+" indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A "≡" indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A "-" indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Teacher-Principal Trust. In 1994, teacher-principal trust in Annenberg schools was “strong.” Teachers in these schools were likely to report that they felt somewhat or to a great extent respected by their principals. They were likely to agree but not strongly agree that they respected their principals as educators; that their principals took an interest in their professional development, had confidence in their expertise, that their principals placed students’ needs before their own personal needs, were effective managers, and looked out for the welfare of their teachers. Similarly, teachers were likely to agree but not strongly agree that they trusted their principals and felt they could discuss their worries with them. Teacher-principal trust in Annenberg schools rose slightly between 1994 and 2001 but remained in the “strong” category of the measure (see Figure 39). This reflected the development of teacher-principal trust in non-Annenberg schools. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on this measure in any year.

Teacher-Teacher Trust. There is a similar pattern in the development of teacher-teacher trust (see Figure 40). Unlike teacher-principal trust, however, levels on this measure in Annenberg schools were “minimal” in 1994. That year, teachers were likely to report that they felt respected by only some of the other teachers at their schools. They agreed but did not strongly agree that teachers in their schools respected colleagues who were experts at their craft, that teachers took the lead in school improvement efforts, or that they could discuss their worries with other teachers. They were mixed on whether the teachers at their schools trusted each other. None to only some reported that teachers in their schools cared about each other. Teacher-teacher trust in Annenberg schools increased between 1994 and 2001 and moved toward the high end of the “minimal” category of the measure. There were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure in any year.

Teacher-Parent Trust. In 1994, teacher-parent trust in Annenberg was “minimal.” Teachers were likely to report that they respected and felt respected by parents only to some extent. They were likely to agree but not strongly agree that

talking with parents helped them understand students better. Some agreed while others disagreed that there was no conflict between parents and teachers and that parents were partners in educating children. Teachers were likely to report that none or only some of the parents at their schools supported their teaching efforts and did their best to help their children learn. None to some of teachers felt good about the overall support they received from parents. Teacher-parent trust in Annenberg schools strengthened between 1994 and 1999 but weakened between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 41). Still, in 2001, teacher-parent trust in Annenberg schools was slightly stronger than in 1994 and the increase was enough to move the average level to the low end of the “strong” category of the measure. In 2001, teachers were more likely to be positive about the above relationships and more likely to report that greater numbers of parents supported their efforts and helped children learn. There were no differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure in any year.

Teacher-Student Trust. In 1997, teacher-student trust in Annenberg schools was “strong.” Students were likely to agree but not strongly agree that their teachers had a good reason for telling them not to do something, that their teachers cared about them and what they think, and that their teachers did not get mad when they made mistakes. They were also likely to report that their teachers always tried to be fair, made them feel safe and comfortable, and could be trusted. Some students agreed while others disagreed that their teachers did not punish them without them knowing what happened and that their teachers kept their promises. Students assessed teacher-student trust in much the same way in 2001 (see Figure 42). Slight year-to-year differences were not statistically different. Overall, there were no differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools on this measure in any year.

Figure 39. Teacher-Principal Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

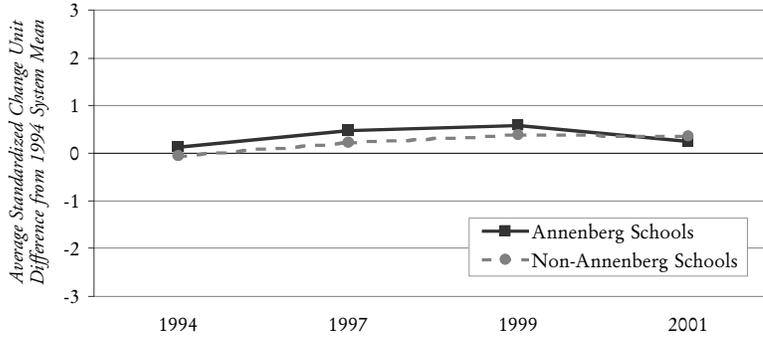


Figure 40. Teacher-Teacher Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

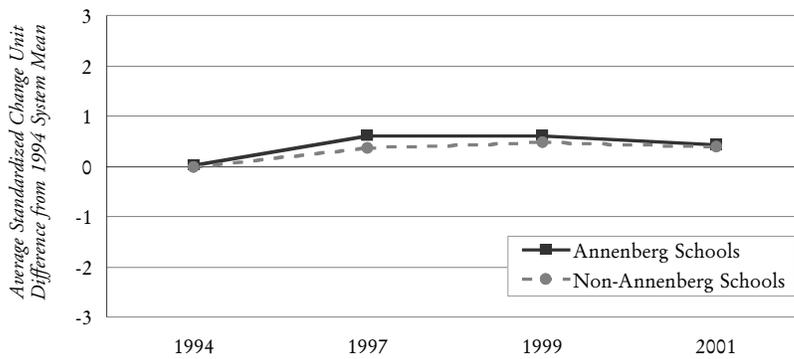


Figure 41. Teacher-Parent Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

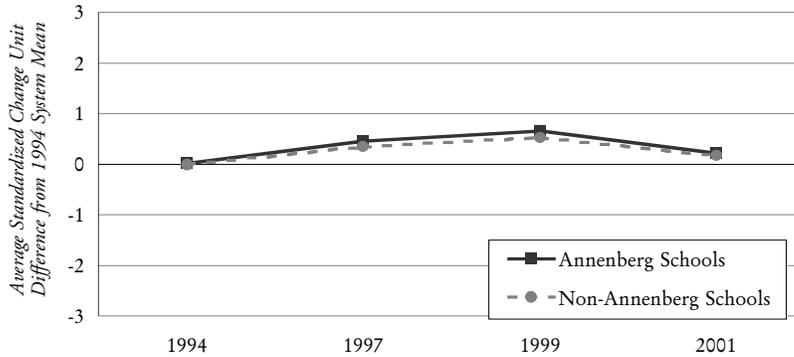
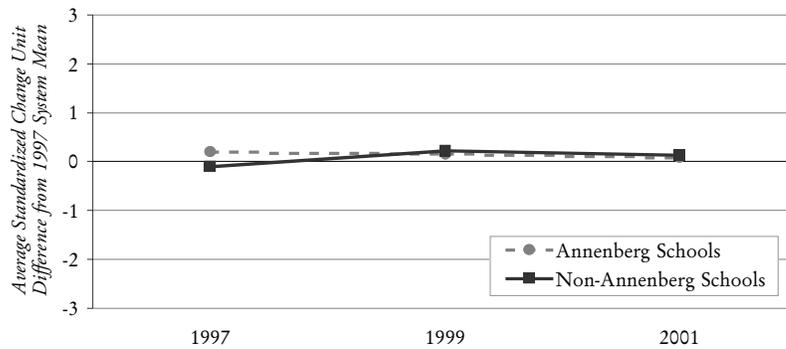


Figure 42. Student-Teacher Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Average for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Examples from the Field

Relational trust among teachers, students, and parents grew stronger in several field research schools. In other schools, teachers developed more trusting relationships with each other and with their principals. In several, teachers became more comfortable working with staff members charged with implementing new curricula and teaching strategies. At the same time, there were several instances where staff turnover or behavior that betrayed expectations compromised growing trust relationships.

Oscar Arias Sanchez Elementary School is an example of how difficult it can be to develop and sustain trust relationships. At the beginning of the field research, teachers at Sanchez were not very comfortable inviting each other into their classrooms, nor were they comfortable discussing their teaching. Through the efforts of an in-house literacy coordinator, trust relationships among teachers began to develop. As these relationships grew, teachers became more willing to collaborate on the school's literacy initiative and join in professional development activity.

The literacy coordinator sought to build her relationships with teachers slowly. At first, she provided only the assistance that teachers requested. This way, she laid a foundation of trust for the work that followed. The coordinator viewed herself as a resource and a service provider. Because of her dependability, patience, and support, greater numbers of teachers began to seek her assistance and share their problems

with her. Through their interactions with the coordinator, teachers began to open up and speak more frequently with one another about their classroom teaching.

Over time, several factors began to undermine the trust the coordinator had begun to establish among teachers. Due to cuts in funding that supported her position, she had to reduce the amount of time she spent working with teachers. Without the coordinator's regular involvement in their day-to-day work, some teachers began to withdraw from collegial activity back into their classrooms. At the same time, growing tensions between teachers and the principal began to undermine the coordinator's work. Some teachers questioned whether the coordinator was working for their interests or for the principal's. Despite these problems, the coordinator continued to work with a small group of teachers at the school and to deepen relationships among them. At the end of the field research, she remained optimistic that her progress would continue and that the trust relationships, while suffering some setbacks, would also continue to grow.

Instructional Program Coherence

School instructional program coherence is the second of the Model's overarching Supports. It is defined by interrelated programs for students and staff that are guided by a common framework and pursued over a sustained period.³⁸ Strong program coherence is present when this common framework directs all aspects of student learning and governs the working environment of the school. Curriculum, instructional strategies, and student assessments are coordinated among grade-level teachers and across the school, showing a progression of more complex aspects of subject matter and intellectual challenge from one grade to the next. Key student support services such as tutoring, remedial instruction, parent education, and opportunities for parent involvement are aligned with the framework and administrators and teachers hold each other accountable for its implementation. The school makes the framework the focus of its professional development efforts and allocates resources to its continued development.

³⁸ See Newmann et al. (2001b).

Schools with weak instructional program coherence lack a common framework. Their programs are fragmented and pull faculty and staff in different directions. There is little coordination among teachers within and across grade levels and student support programs do not necessarily promote the school's instructional efforts. Faculty recruitment, hiring, accountability systems, and professional development are disconnected from any particular instructional focus. Different improvement initiatives may each address discrete problems, but there is little coordination among them to move the whole school forward.

Development across Annenberg Schools

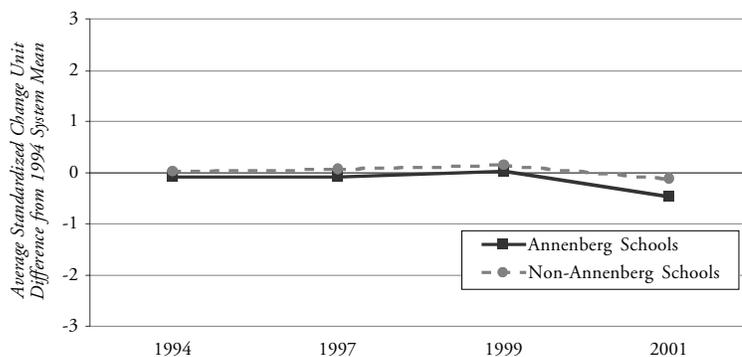
Instructional program coherence in Annenberg schools was “moderate” in 1994 (see Table 10). Teachers were likely to agree but not strongly agree that they could see continuity from one program to the next at their schools, that their schools followed-up on the new programs they started, that curriculum and instruction were well coordinated across grades, and that curriculum and instruction were consistent among teachers at the same grade level. They were likely to agree that special programs do not just come and go and that their schools do not have too many programs to keep track of. They were also likely to agree that the coordination and focus of instruction had changed for the better in the past two years. In 2001, however, instructional program coherence was lower than in 1994, falling to the lower end of the measure's “moderate” category. This decline occurred between 1999 and 2001 (see Figure 43). Levels of coherence were much the same in Annenberg schools and in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools between 1994 and 1999. In 2001, instructional program coherence in Annenberg schools had declined to a point significantly lower than coherence in non-Annenberg schools.

Table 10. Development of Instructional Program Coherence in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON-ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Weakened					
Instructional Program Coherence	Moderate	Moderate	- 0.27	- 0.40	-

Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A "+" indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A "≅" indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A "-" indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Figure 43. Instructional Program Coherence: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Examples from the Field

Several field research schools worked specifically to increase the coherence of their instructional programs. Principals at these schools reduced the number of programs in their buildings, cutting ones that did not align well with the school's mission and goals for development. In other schools, principals worked with teachers to coordinate curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels and promote greater commonality in teachers' approach to instruction. These principals also supplied common curricular and instructional materials. Other schools did little to increase coherence; in fact, some increased program fragmentation by introducing new programs that had little to do with one another or with a central orienting focus.

Linus Carol Pauling School is an example of a school that strengthened its program coherence. The principal at Pauling worked actively to focus her teachers' attention on a common curricular and instructional framework. She promoted this framework by finding appropriate resources, involving teachers in decisions concerning the framework, and giving teachers some measure of instructional autonomy within its parameters.

In 1997 and 1998, Pauling housed many different academic programs and worked with an array of outside organizations. Although teachers thought many of these programs worked well, they also felt their number was overwhelming. By 1999, the principal had reduced Pauling's initiatives to the one promoted by the school's Annenberg External Partner, whose instructional philosophy matched the principal's and who had worked with a group of teachers at the school for several years prior to the Challenge. Between 1998 and 1999, Pauling's school improvement plan was revised substantially. Instead of cataloging many unrelated programs and activities, it promoted a single set of instructional practices. In 1999, the principal established a leadership team that involved more teachers in the decision-making process and, as a result, there was even greater commitment to the school's instructional approach. Between 1999 and 2001, program coherence continued to strengthen as the principal and teachers at Pauling became increasingly committed to this instructional approach. Concurrently, teachers began to discuss their teaching practices in a shared language and in increasingly sophisticated terms and to explore integrating new methods into their instructional repertoires.

In contrast, Andrei Sakharov Elementary School did little to achieve greater program coherence. From 1997 through 2001, Sakharov provided its teachers and students opportunities to participate in a variety of academic programs. From a university-supported mathematics curriculum, to at least three different reading initiatives, to arts projects, to several corporate-sponsored programs, to numerous opportunities for teachers to attend workshops and conferences, there was always something going on at the school. The principal was extremely entrepreneurial and was very successful at bringing in new funds and programs.

Although all the programs at Sakharov had potential for improving instruction and student learning, there were simply too many programs and too little coordination among them. Neither Sakharov's principal nor its Annenberg External Partner saw the many different programs as particularly problematic. Instead, they viewed them as offering opportunities to expose students to as much as possible and to offer teachers professional development and leadership opportunities. Regardless, teachers expressed frustration that they could not keep track of all the programs and that they lacked the time and effort to make any one work particularly well. One teacher observed, "There's a lot going on in this school, but in little vacuums." At times, some of the programs conflicted with others in what they sought to accomplish. Teachers wanted some coherence and focus. In 1998, one teacher explained that having an overarching vision for the school would make it easier to organize the faculty's work in a common direction and bring in and orient new teachers. Moreover, Sakharov's school improvement plan was not used to guide decisions about which new programs the school would adopt. The LSC and teachers noted that the principal felt free to bring new initiatives into the school without their consultation. They observed that she often did so with great enthusiasm but with too little information and planning to implement them properly. Teachers described the principal's style as "She says 'yes' to everything" and "She just shoots from the hip."

Teacher Professional Development and Support for Change

In addition to these seven Essential Supports, we examined changes in teacher participation in professional development, the quality of the professional development they experienced, and the support they felt they received from their principals and colleagues for change in their schools. In other Consortium research, these measures are sometimes considered part of teacher professional community and school leadership. This report discusses these measures separately because they represent important change mechanisms that may promote improvement in a number of other Supports.

Teacher participation in professional development refers to the frequency with which teachers report that they participated in formal professional development activities during the course of a year. These include activities organized by teachers' own schools, networks of teachers from other schools, outside professional groups or organizations, college and university courses, CPS workshops, and activities sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union. Quality of professional development is the extent to which professional development addresses students' needs; is sustained and coherently focused rather than short-term and unrelated; provides enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas; includes follow-up activities; is closely connected to schools' improvement plans; and provides teachers with opportunities to work with peers in their own and other schools.

Finally, support for change refers to the extent to which teachers believe that their principals and colleagues encourage them to take risks and try new instructional approaches. It also refers to the extent to which teachers perceive their schools as places where the faculty as a whole embraces improvement. The frequency with which teachers participate in high-quality professional development relates positively to a school's orientation toward improvement, teachers' classroom practices, the implementation of change, and student academic achievement.³⁹ In addition, the literature indicates that the extent to which change is supported relates to risk-taking, experimentation, and improvement at the school and classroom levels.⁴⁰

Overall, teacher participation in professional development activity was greater in 2001 than in 1994 (see Table 11). The quality of professional development experienced by teachers in Annenberg schools also improved. At the same time, support for change in Annenberg schools declined.

³⁹ Bryk et al. (forthcoming); Cohen and Hill (2000); Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2002); Smylie et al. (2001); Sparks (1986); and Wiley and Yoon (1995).

⁴⁰ Fullan (2001); Hallinger and Heck (1996); Smylie, Conley, and Marks (2002).

Table 11. Teacher Professional Development and Support for Change in Chicago Annenberg Schools, 1994 or 1997 to 2001: Summary of Findings

	1994 OR 1997	2001	DIFFERENCE IN MEANS	STANDARDIZED CHANGE UNIT DIFFERENCE	NON- ANNENBERG COMPARISON
Improved					
Teacher Participation in Professional Development	High	High	+ 0.15	+ 0.47	≡
Quality of Professional Development	High	High	+ 0.11	+ 0.26	≡
Weakened					
Support for Change	Moderate	Moderate	- 0.34	- 0.41	≡

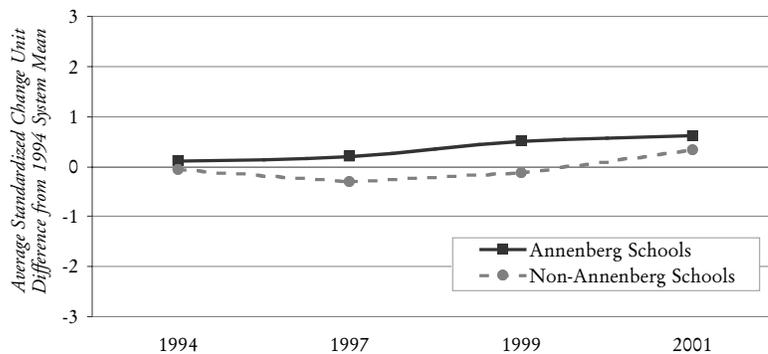
Note: Measures are considered improved or weakened if the difference in means between 1994 or 1997 and 2001 is statistically significant at or beyond 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Comparisons to non-Annenberg schools are for 2001. A “+” indicates that Annenberg schools were stronger than non-Annenberg schools on a particular measure ($p < 0.01$). A “≡” indicates that the two groups of schools were statistically equivalent. A “-” indicates that Annenberg schools were weaker than non-Annenberg schools on the measure ($p < 0.01$).

Teacher Participation in Professional Development. In Annenberg schools, teacher participation increased between 1994 and 2001 with most of that increase occurring between 1994 and 1999 (see Figure 44). In 2001, more than half the teachers in Annenberg schools reported attending professional development activities at their school or at CPS-sponsored forums. More than half reported participating in networks outside of their school and discussing curriculum and instruction with an outside group. Between 20 and 50 percent attended union-sponsored activities or took university or college courses. In demographically similar non-Annenberg schools, teacher participation in professional development declined slightly between 1994 and 1997 and then began to rise through 2001. In 1997 and 1999, it was greater in Annenberg schools than in non-Annenberg schools. By 2001, however, there was no statistical difference between the two groups.

Quality of Professional Development. A similar pattern is present in the quality of professional development. In 1997, the average quality of professional development experienced by teachers in Annenberg schools was “high.” This means that teachers were likely to agree but not strongly agree that their professional development was closely connected to their schools’ improvement plans. They agreed that professional development provided them with opportunities to work with their

colleagues and helped them understand their subject matter better. Their experiences were sustained and focused and included enough time to think about and judge new ideas. They found that their experiences addressed students' needs. Some agreed and others disagreed that their professional development gave them opportunities to work with teachers at other schools. The quality of professional development experienced by Annenberg teachers increased between 1997 and 2001, especially between 1997 and 1999 (see Figure 45). Nonetheless, it remained in the "high" category of the measure. Although it increased between 1997 and 1999 at a greater rate in Annenberg schools than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools, this difference disappeared by 2001. None of the differences between the two groups were statistically significant in any year although the difference in 1999 approached significance.

Figure 44. Teacher Participation in Professional Development: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Support for Change. In 1994, support for change in Annenberg schools was “moderate.” Teachers reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their principals were willing to let them make changes, encouraged them to try new methods, and provided strong support for the changes that were introduced. They agreed that the principal encouraged them to take risks and pursue adequate professional development to support the changes they were making. In addition, teachers agreed that the changes were supported by and involved many teachers. Levels of this measure in Annenberg schools declined between 1997 and 2001 but

remained within the “moderate” category (see Figure 46). In 1999, support for change had become significantly stronger in Annenberg schools than in demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. By 2001, however, it declined to a point where it was no different from non-Annenberg schools.

Figure 45. Quality of Professional Development: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

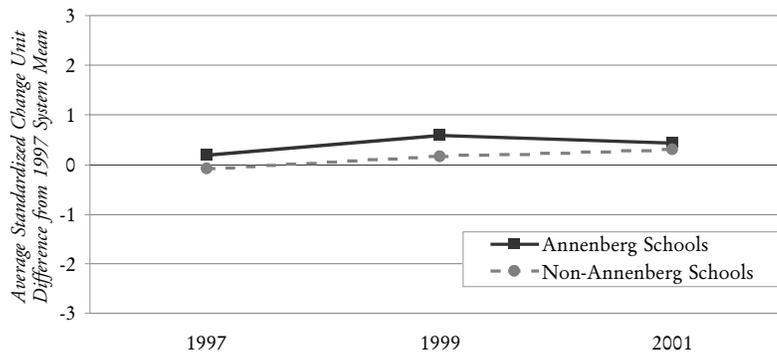
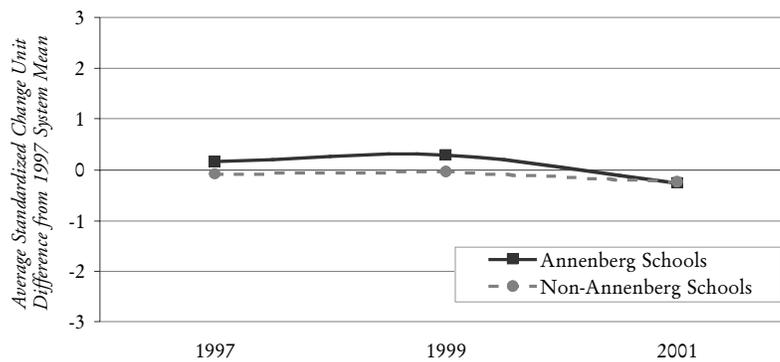


Figure 46. Support for Change: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



Summary

In general, our findings on school development in Annenberg schools are mixed (see Table 12). As a group, schools participating in the Chicago Challenge were stronger on several measures of the Essential Supports in 2001 than they were in 1994 or 1997. At the same time, however, they failed to improve or grew weaker on other measures. The findings reveal no clear patterns of change among particular Essential Supports. That is, there were no Supports in which a predominant number of indicators were stronger or weaker in 2001 than in 1994 or 1997.

The findings also indicate that there were virtually no statistically significant differences in the development of the Essential Supports between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Recall that in 1994, Annenberg and non-Annenberg schools were similar on every measure of the Essential Supports. In 2001, there were only two measures for which there were statistically significant differences (see Table 13). Several measures of leadership and teacher professional community initially improved at a greater rate in Annenberg than demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. After 1999, however, these initial advantages disappeared and by 2001, there were no differences between the two groups on these measures.

Table 12. Summary of Changes in the Essential Supports in Annenberg Schools Between 1994 or 1997 and 2001

	ESSENTIAL SUPPORT
Improved	
Instruction	Demand for Authentic Intellectual Work Writing Emphasis Interactive Instruction
Learning Climate	Classroom Personalism Safety
Leadership	Teacher Influence in Decision Making
Teacher Professional Community	Peer Collaboration Focus on Student Learning Orientation toward Innovation
Parent-Community Involvement	Teacher Outreach to Parents Parent Involvement in School
Relational Trust	Teacher-Principal Trust Teacher-Teacher Trust Teacher-Parent Trust
Other	Teacher Participation in Professional Development Quality of Professional Development
No Net Change	
Instruction	Didactic Instruction
Learning Climate	Press toward Academic Achievement
Leadership	Inclusive Leadership Principal Instructional Leadership Joint Problem Solving
Teacher Professional Community	Collective Responsibility Reflective Dialogue
Parent-Community Involvement	Teachers' Use of Community Resources Teachers' Ties to the Community Teachers' Knowledge of Student Culture Human and Social Resources in the Community
Relational Trust	Teacher-Student Trust
Weakened	
Learning Climate	Peer Support for Academic Work
Teacher Professional Community	Teacher Commitment to School
Other	Instructional Program Coherence Principal-Teacher Support for Change

Table 13. Summary of Differences Between Annenberg and Demographically Similar Non-Annenberg Schools on Measures of the Essential Supports, 2001

	ESSENTIAL SUPPORT
Annenberg Schools Stronger	Didactic Instruction
Annenberg Schools Weaker	Instructional Program Coherence

The Case of Breakthrough Schools

In 1999, the Chicago Challenge awarded new funding to 18 Breakthrough Schools from its 45 implementation networks with the expressed purpose of deepening development in those schools and helping them serve as models of development. Student outcomes and school development were examined among Breakthrough Schools between 1994 and 2001 and compared to student outcomes in other demographically similar Annenberg schools. These analyses controlled statistically for the same school characteristics and demographic variables as analyses for Annenberg schools as a whole.⁴¹

Student Outcomes

As reported earlier in this section, there were no statistically significant differences between Annenberg and demographically similar non-Annenberg schools in student academic achievement or in student social and psychological outcomes. Similarly, there were virtually no statistically significant differences between Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools in these student outcomes. ITBS trends in Breakthrough Schools mirrored trends in other Annenberg schools (see Appendix G). So too did trends in student academic engagement, classroom behavior, social competence, and self-efficacy (see Appendix H). Only on the measure of student academic engagement was there a statistically significant difference in 2001 between Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools, and that difference favored non-Breakthrough schools.

⁴¹ Due to the small number of Breakthrough schools, these findings include differences occurring at the 0.05 level of statistical significance as well as the 0.01 level of significance.

School Development

There was only one statistically significant difference between Breakthrough Schools and other Annenberg schools on any measure of the Essential Supports in 1999, the year Breakthrough Schools were identified. That difference was in teachers' ties to the school community, a measure that was stronger for non-Breakthrough Annenberg schools. When compared in 2001, there were no significant differences between Breakthrough Schools and other Annenberg schools in instruction, student learning climate, parent and community involvement, or instructional program coherence. However, as a group, Breakthrough schools had become noticeably stronger than other Annenberg schools on most measures of teacher professional community and, to a lesser extent, stronger on measures of school leadership and relational trust (see Table 14 and Appendix H).

Table 14. Comparison of Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools on Measures of the Essential Supports, 2001

BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOLS STRONGER	
Leadership	Inclusive Leadership Joint Problem Solving Teacher Influence in Decision Making
Teacher Professional Community	Peer Collaboration Reflective Dialogue Focus on Student Learning Collective Responsibility Orientation toward Innovation Teacher Commitment to School
Relational Trust	Teacher-Principal Trust Teacher-Teacher Trust
Other	Quality of Teacher Professional Development
NO DIFFERENCE	
Instruction	All measures
Student Learning Climate	All measures
Leadership	Principal Instructional Leadership
Parent Community Involvement	All measures
Relational Trust	Teacher-Parent Trust Teacher-Student Trust
Other	Instructional Program Coherence Teacher Participation in Professional Development Support for Change

Trends in measures of teacher professional community indicate that Breakthrough Schools were slightly stronger than other Annenberg schools on measures of professional community in 1999, but these differences were not statistically significant (see Figures 47 through 52). By 2001, however, peer collaboration, focus on student learning, collective responsibility, reflective dialogue, orientation toward innovation, and teacher commitment to school were significantly stronger among these schools. These differences resulted from a continuous, albeit slight, upward trajectory among Breakthrough Schools and a downturn after 1999 among other Annenberg schools.

Figure 47. Peer Collaboration: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

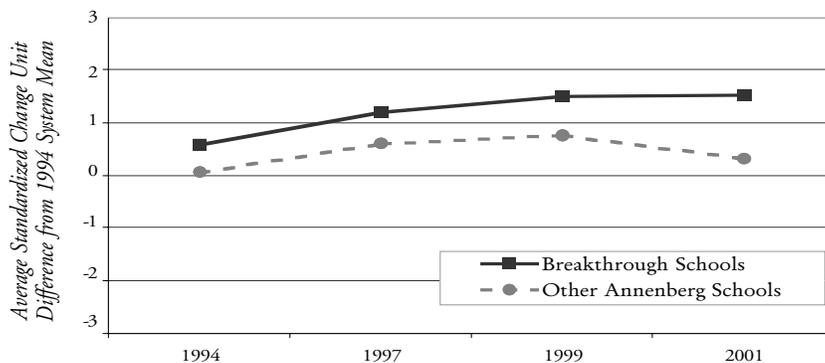


Figure 48. Reflective Dialogue: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

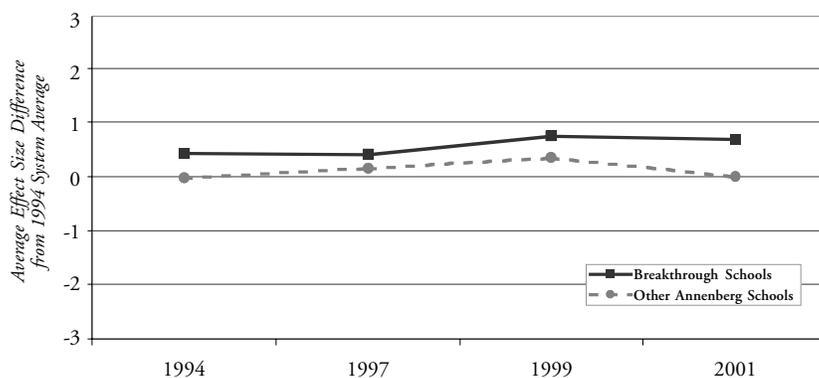


Figure 49. Focus on Student Learning: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

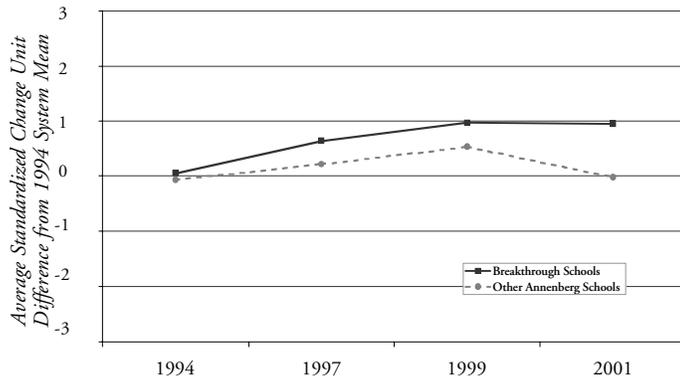


Figure 50. Collective Responsibility: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

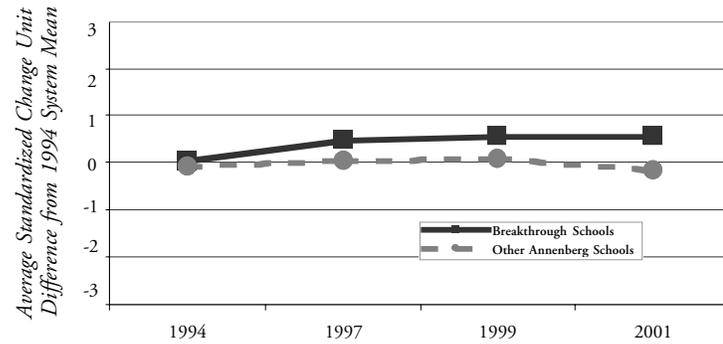


Figure 51. Orientation toward Innovation. Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

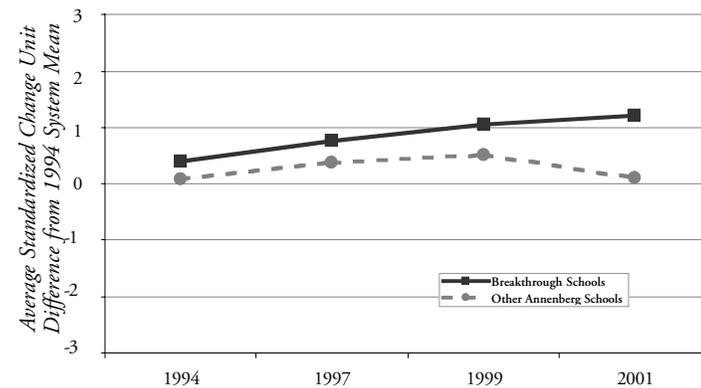
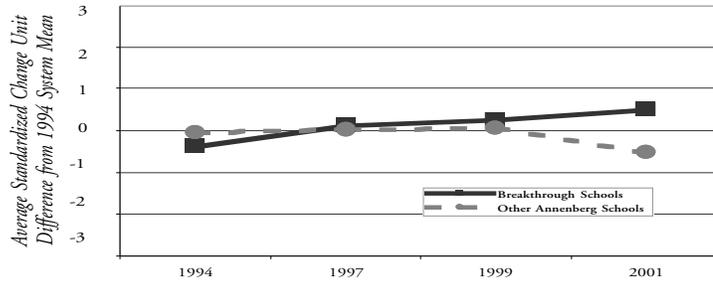


Figure 52. Teacher Commitment to School: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



While not as pronounced as those for teacher professional community, similar differences were also found between Breakthrough and other Annenberg schools on several measures of school leadership (see Figures 53 through 55). In the baseline years and 1999, Breakthrough Schools were slightly stronger on measures of the inclusiveness of school leadership, joint problem solving, and teacher influence in decision making, though these differences were not statistically significant. In 2001, however, Breakthrough Schools were stronger on these measures. Like teacher professional community, differences in school leadership, with the exception of teacher influence in decision making, resulted from gradual improvement among Breakthrough Schools occurring at the same time that levels among other Annenberg schools were declining. For teacher influence, the 2001 difference occurred because the decline in this measure among Breakthrough Schools was not as steep as the decline among other Annenberg schools.

Figure 53. Inclusive Leadership: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

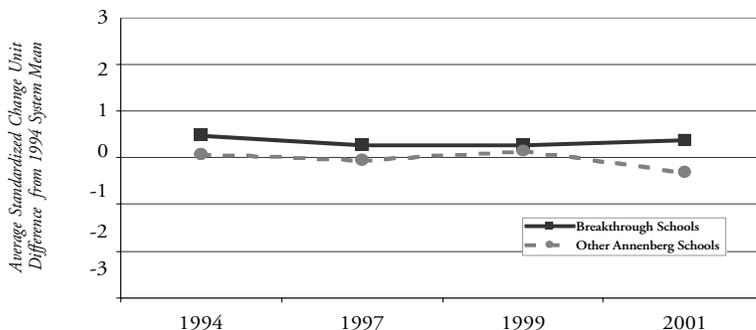


Figure 54. Joint Problem Solving: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001

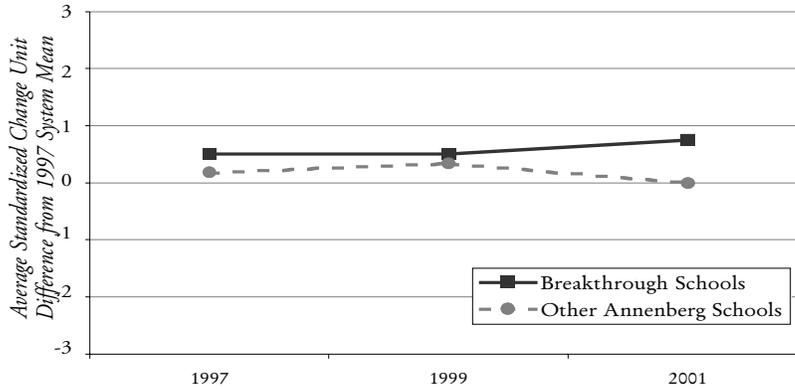
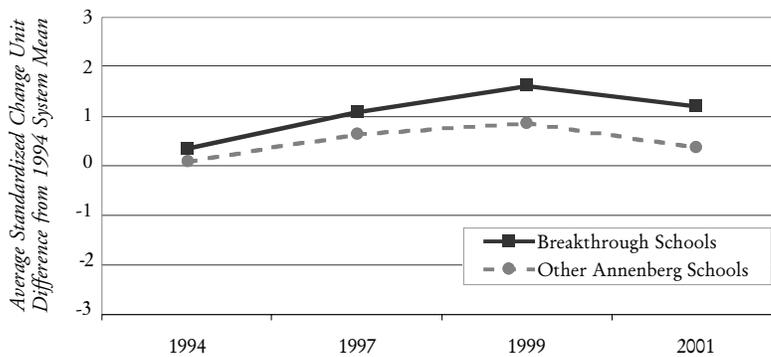


Figure 55. Teacher Influence in Decision Making: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001



Finally, Breakthrough Schools surpassed other Annenberg schools in development of teacher-principal trust and teacher-teacher trust (see Figures 56 and 57). Breakthrough Schools were slightly stronger on these measures than other Annenberg schools between 1994 and 1999, but these differences were not statistically significant. After 1999, Breakthrough Schools were able to sustain and build upon their initial levels of trust while levels of trust declined in other Annenberg schools. The same pattern was found with respect to the quality of teacher professional development. (see Figure 58).

The relative success of Breakthrough Schools is discussed in Part Three of this report.

Figure 56. Teacher-Principal Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

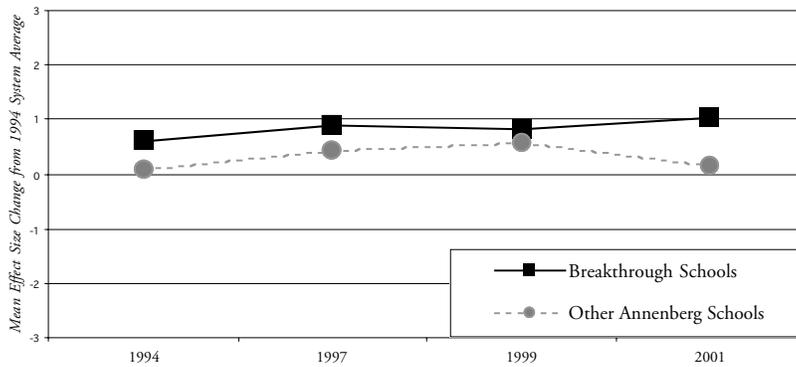


Figure 57. Teacher-Teacher Trust: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1994 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1994 to 2001

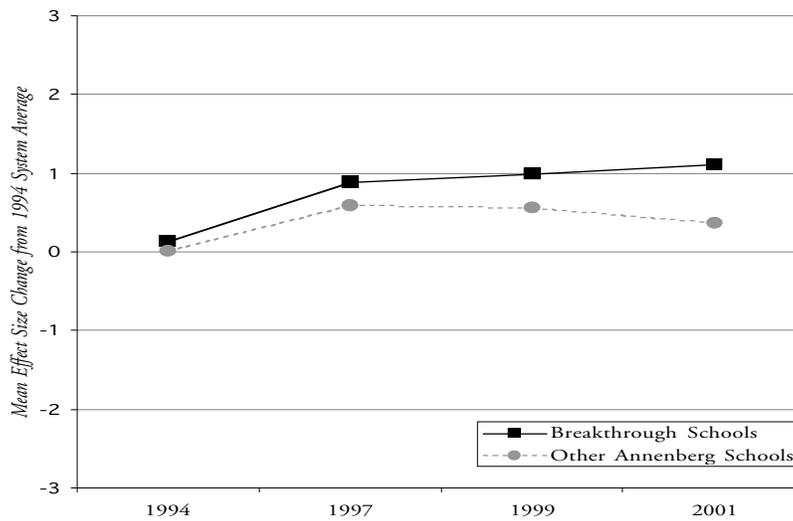
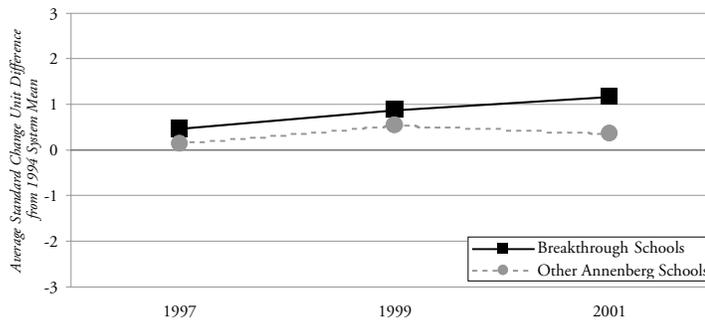


Figure 58. Quality of Teacher Professional Development: Average Standardized Change Unit Differences from 1997 School System Mean for Breakthrough and Other Annenberg Schools, 1997 to 2001



A Closer Look at What Makes School Improvement Successful

As described in Part One of this report, this study of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge included both macro and micro levels of inquiry. Comparative religion scholar Diana Eck provides another way to think about the design of our work in her discussion of how people view icons.⁴² According to Eck, icons can be seen as “objects,” entities in and of themselves that can be described and assessed. On the other hand, icons may also be considered “windows” through which people gain new insight and understanding.

The findings reported thus far consider the Chicago Challenge as an “object,” a large-scale reform initiative to promote local school development whose work across a substantial number of schools can be documented and assessed. Analyses of citywide survey and standardized test-score data described and assessed trends in student outcome measures and indicators of school development among Annenberg schools, and those trends were compared to demographically similar non-Annenberg schools. Analyses of survey and test-score data also compared Breakthrough Schools

⁴² Eck (1993).

to other Annenberg schools. Data from field research schools illustrated aspects of school development found in the analyses.

At the same time, the Challenge is also a “window” through which individual schools can be studied to better understand how school development may be promoted or constrained. The field research was designed with this purpose in mind. This last section of findings presents a view of local school development through the “Annenberg window.” This is not a view of school development as a function of a large-scale reform initiative; instead, it is a view of development from the perspective of individual schools and the work they do to get better. Data from longitudinal field research in 12 Annenberg elementary schools were analyzed to reveal emergent themes and patterns of activities and conditions that were associated with both successful and stagnant development. (See Part One and Appendix C for more information on the field research methodology.)

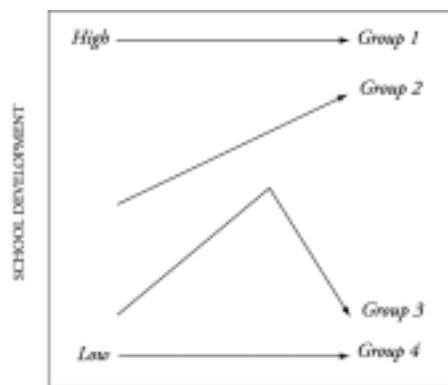
Unlike the previous section in which field research schools were referred to by pseudonyms, we refer to schools in this section by letter and group. We use letters and groups here in order to make more clear the presentation of cross-school findings. In addition, using letters and groups in this section serves to protect the confidentiality of our field research sites by minimizing the possibility that information from this section could be combined with information from the previous section to reveal school identities.

Promoting School Development

Four patterns of development were identified across the 12 field research schools during the five years of this study. These patterns are shown in Figure 56. This figure is a heuristic. The lines represent general directions of development; they do not indicate actual magnitudes of change nor relative differences in starting or ending points among the schools. The first pattern is illustrated by two schools—Group 1—that were relatively high on measures of the Essential Supports in 1997 and did not change in any appreciable way during the five-year study. Two other schools that

developed continuously on one or more of the Essential Supports between 1997 and 2001—Group 2—illustrate the second pattern. Four schools that developed on one or more of the Essential Supports between 1997 and 1999 but then regressed between 1999 and 2001—Group 3—illustrate the third pattern. Four more schools that were quite low on indicators of the Essential Supports in 1997 and failed to develop in any appreciable way—Group 4—illustrate the last pattern.

Figure 59. Patterns of Development among Field Research Schools



The criterion for classifying schools into these groups was their development on one or more of the Essential Supports. We also identified general patterns of student achievement in terms of average changes in the percentages of students scoring at or above national norms in reading and mathematics on the ITBS between 1997 and 2001. This is not a particularly strong measure of achievement and our analysis did not control for school characteristics and demographic factors like the other achievement analyses in this report. The purpose here is simply to illustrate general relationships between different patterns of school development and student academic achievement as suggested by the logic of the Model of Essential Supports.

Following this logic, it would be expected that achievement in schools in Groups 1, 2, and 3 would be greater than achievement in schools in Group 4. It would also be expected that Group 2 schools, those that made continuous progress in development of the Essential Supports, would make the greatest improvement in achievement. As shown in Table 15, average improvement in Groups 1, 2, and 3 was

greater than in Group 4. And as expected, Group 2 showed greater average improvement than Groups 1 and 3.

While these general relationships are what might be expected, they do not illustrate very well how achievement and school development are related. To examine these relationships in more detail, achievement in Group 2 was compared to achievement in Group 3 during two periods. The first was from 1997 to 1999, the second from 1999 to 2001. Group 3 improved on the Essential Supports during the first period and regressed during the second. Group 2 developed continuously during both. As shown in Table 16, improvement in average achievement in Group 2 was somewhat greater in the second period than in the first. On average, Group 3 improved academic achievement as it was developing the Essential Supports and average achievement declined slightly as those schools regressed in their development.

Table 15. Average Change in the Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above National Norms on the ITBS in Reading and Mathematics by School Development Group, 1997 to 2001

	READING	MATH
Group 1	+ 10.1	+ 7.3
Group 2	+ 18.0	+ 13.6
Group 3	+ 8.5	+ 10.0
Group 4	+ 5.8	+ 1.5

Table 16. Average Change in the Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above National Norms on the ITBS in Reading and Mathematics in Groups 2 and 3, 1997 to 1999 and 1999 to 2001.

	1997 TO 1999	1999 TO 2001
Group 2		
Reading	+ 8.55	+ 9.45
Math	+ 5.90	+ 7.70
Group 3		
Reading	+ 11.32	- 2.88
Math	+ 11.43	- 1.40

When examining the field research about schools' efforts to develop, four general findings emerged. First, higher levels of school development and continuous improvement were associated with coordinated or concerted attention to multiple Essential Supports. Second, higher levels of development and continuous

improvement were associated with the use of multiple, reinforcing strategies for change. Third, higher levels of development and continuous improvement were associated with a strong base of external resources aligned with the school's development agenda. Finally, higher levels of development and continuous improvement were associated with strong, broad-based, and distributed leadership. Whether these findings were true for a school was, with few exceptions, associated with its group classification and pattern of development. In general, these findings were consistently true or more true than false of schools that were more highly developed on the Essential Supports or developed on the Supports over the course of the study. They were consistently not true of schools that were relatively weak in the Supports in 1997 and failed to develop. And they were true in 1999 but only partially true (i.e., only one or two were true) in 2001 for schools that developed between 1997 and 1999 and regressed thereafter. This suggests that the different aspects of a school development process work in conjunction and that if one or two fall away, development may be compromised.

These patterns of findings are summarized in Table 17. The columns in this table show the four groups of schools according to their patterns of development. The rows are the major findings that distinguish groups of schools from each other. The cells within the table show the schools in each group and indicate with "+" and "-" whether a particular finding was true or more true than false about the school or whether the finding was false or more false than true about the school in a particular year. The table shows a combination of "+" and "-" for each school in each cell. The first "+" or "-" indicates whether the finding was true or (more true than false) or false (or more false than true) for that school in 1999. The second "+" or "-" indicates whether the finding was true or false for that school in 2001. For example, for School A (Group 1), the first finding was true for this school in both 1999 and 2001. For School E (Group 3), the first finding was true for this school in 1999 but false in 2001.

Table 17. Relationships Between Patterns of School Development and Findings on School Development Processes

FINDINGS	GROUP 1 HIGHER INITIAL STATE, NO DEVELOPMENT	GROUP 2 ONGOING DEVELOPMENT	GROUP 3 INITIAL DEVELOPMENT THEN REGRESS	GROUP 4 LOW INITIAL STATE, NO DEVELOPMENT
<i>School targets multiple Essential Supports in a concerted or coordinated manner.</i>	School A ++ School B - +	School C ++ School D ++	School E ++ School F ++ School G + - School H + -	School I - - School J - - School K - - School L - -
<i>School uses multiple, complementary change strategies.</i>	School A ++ School B ++	School C ++ School D - +	School E ++ School F + - School G + - School H + -	School I - - School J - - School K - - School L + -
<i>School has strong, aligned base of external resources.</i>	School A ++ School B - +	School C ++ School D ++	School E + - School F + - School G + - School H + -	School I - - School J - - School K - - School L + -
<i>School develops strong distributive leadership.</i>	School A ++ School B ++	School C ++ School D ++	School E + - School F + - School G + - School H + -	School I - - School J - - School K - - School L + -

Targeting Multiple Essential Supports

The first finding from this analysis indicates that school development is associated with a coordinated focus on multiple Essential Supports. In the most highly developed schools and in schools that developed continuously (Groups 1 and 2), change initiatives focused on development of several related Supports which created synergy to promote or sustain overall school development. When schools focused on a single Support, or when they focused on multiple Supports in an uncoordinated manner, little overall development occurred (Group 4). When schools shifted their focus from multiple Supports to only one, or when efforts lost momentum or coordination, initial improvement declined (Group 3).

Why would a school be more likely to develop by targeting multiple supports? As discussed earlier, and as other Consortium research suggests, the Essential Supports are not discrete, independent elements.⁴³ Rather, they operate as related parts of a system. The Supports that represent key organizational capacities—school leadership, professional community, and parent and community support—are crucial for

⁴³ Bryk et al. (forthcoming).

developing and supporting school practices—student learning climate and quality instruction—that in turn are instrumental for promoting student learning. This logic is consistent with the discussion in the next section about the Challenge’s overall reform strategies and with other literature showing that school development requires long, steady work not focused solely on the implementation of specific programs and policies, but on the broader, coherent development of school organization and practices.⁴⁴

Field research documenting the first three years of the Chicago Challenge suggested that the success of efforts to develop learning climate and instruction is contingent on previous or concurrent development of school organizational capacity.⁴⁵ For example, strong leadership is necessary to create and sustain a well-paced, challenging, and coherent instructional program.⁴⁶ There must be a strong professional community of teachers who work together to coordinate the curriculum, achieve consistency in expectations for student learning, develop intellectually rigorous tasks, and engage students in those tasks. It is unlikely that such a professional community can thrive over time if school leadership does not help develop it and provide enough time and resources to get its work done. Overall then, focusing on one Essential Support may promote development of that particular support, but development is likely to be limited and difficult to sustain if there are weaknesses in others.

Two field research schools illustrate these points. School J’s failure to develop other Essential Supports undermined its efforts to develop its instructional program. When this school began working with its Annenberg partner in 1997, it focused on raising the quality of reading instruction. Even though initial efforts were promising, weak school leadership and teacher professional community soon compromised them. School H made concerted efforts to develop multiple Essential Supports, albeit without much coordination or a clear overarching vision. Its Annenberg External

⁴⁴ For example Elmore and McLaughlin (1988); Fullan (2001); and Louis and Miles (1990).

⁴⁵ Wenzel et al. (2001).

⁴⁶ See Newmann et al. (2001b).

Partner organized a group of teachers to develop professional community, promote professional development, and improve student learning climate and instruction. At the same time, the principal focused his energy on increasing student test scores, improving student discipline and safety, and promoting small group instruction. Although the Annenberg teachers and the principal focused on different areas of school development, their work converged around the promotion of small group instruction. These efforts helped School H develop between 1997 and 1999 but progress began to disintegrate between 1999 and 2001 as development efforts began to diverge and conflict. Teachers working to promote more small group instruction faced a principal who began to assert student discipline as the school's first priority. The principal quashed teacher efforts to develop smaller, more flexible instructional groups because those efforts required that students move among self-contained classrooms. The principal believed that such movement provided too great a chance for disruption and student misconduct.

School H's regress was also related to a shift toward reliance on one change mechanism. Initially working to achieve change through teacher professional development and student test score accountability, test-score accountability began to take precedence. In addition when its External Partner began to withdraw from the school it lost a key resource for its development efforts. Finally, where teachers once shared in leadership for school development, the principal began to consolidate his control over school decisions.

Employing Multiple, Reinforcing Strategies

The second finding is consistent with the literature on educational change that concludes that there are no "quick fixes" or "cookbook solutions" for school development.⁴⁷ Like the literature, our field research indicates that successful school development is achieved not just from the "top down" or "bottom up," but also from the "inside out" through a combination of strategies that most effectively develop

⁴⁷ For example, Fullan (2001) and Maecher and Midgley (1996).

teachers' "will" and "skill."⁴⁸ There was no single program or initiative that provided any of the field research schools with everything they needed to develop; instead of reliance on a single solution, school development was associated with employing idiosyncratic combinations of complementary, mutually reinforcing strategies.

As will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this report, literature on education reform identifies three types of mechanisms that may promote change at the school and classroom levels.⁴⁹ The first consists of bureaucratic and normative controls and sanctions that seek to compel individuals and schools to take specific actions. The second consists of incentives to prompt voluntary action. The third consists of learning opportunities that develop new knowledge and skills and, from that development, evoke new action.

Across the field research schools, there were many examples of these mechanisms in effect. Some principals and External Partners offered teachers incentives to adopt and develop commitment to new teaching practices. These came in the form of monetary stipends, public praise and encouragement, time to work with colleagues or pursue professional development, consultations with experts, increased classroom autonomy, and opportunities to exercise greater influence in decision making. Numerous opportunities for learning and development were available to teachers, principals, and other school staff in our study schools. These included workshops and conferences, collaborative planning and work groups, networking with teachers from other schools, working with in-house curriculum coordinators, new mentoring relationships, access to professional journals, and increased opportunities for collegial interaction. There were also a number of controls at work. In most of the field research schools, CPS student retention and school probation policies were highly influential sources of accountability and control for both principals and teachers. A number of principals created additional monitoring and accountability systems. Several developed and enforced their own set of expectations for staff and student performance. At one school, the External Partner instituted a formal review process

⁴⁸ Newmann and Wehlage (1995); Sarason (1990); and Tyack and Cuban (1995).

⁴⁹ Hannaway (1993) and Smylie and Perry (1998).

that made staff members publicly accountable to the Partner and each other. In several others, the growth of teamwork and collaboration, along with the expansion of teachers' leadership, reinforced collegial accountability and control.

Both the literature and the project's field research indicate that no mechanism alone is likely to promote and sustain school development over an extended period of time.⁵⁰ In the field research sample, continuously developing schools and schools that were initially strong and steady in their development (Groups 1 and 2) were more likely than nondeveloping schools (Group 4) to use a variety of strategies to trigger development, but they did not use them in any common combination or order. Different mechanisms were instrumental in sparking development activity in each of the schools. Some were motivated to act by the threat of administrative sanction; others were prompted by the adoption of a promising new approach to teaching. In no instance were the mechanisms that initiated activity adequate to sustain development over an extended period of time without the introduction of others. For example, School D accelerated its development between 1999 and 2001 in large part because it introduced a broader range of change mechanisms. On the other hand, loss of progress among all but one school in Group 3 was associated with movement away from a coordinated combination of change mechanisms and increased reliance on one—bureaucratic accountability through high-stakes student testing.

Although no patterns were detected in the specific strategies that developing schools used, it is likely that a school's particular situation may call for specific combinations or for certain mechanisms to be used before others. For some, the most effective means to initiate change might be the introduction of a new accountability system or the replacement of the principal or members of the teaching staff. For others, this strategy could be completely ineffective. Likewise, professional development might motivate teachers at one school to adopt new practices, but be largely ignored at another. The apparent context-specific, idiosyncratic nature of effective strategies requires additional investigation. For now, it seems that evocation of effective combinations of strategies depends on understanding the strengths and

⁵⁰ See Smylie and Perry (1998).

weaknesses of a particular school and the needs and interests of the people who work there.⁵¹ At the micro-level, these observations are consistent with our earlier discussion about the alignment of reforms with schools' capacity to implement them well.

Securing External Resources

As will be discussed in more detail in Part Three, school development requires many different types of resources. These include people, time, money, and materials. They also include ideas and expertise, leadership, political support, beliefs and values, and social trust. Which new external resources a school may need is dependent upon the areas it seeks to develop, the strength of its internal resources, and the external resources it has already accumulated.

External resources for school development may come from a variety of places—the central administration, groups working with the school, community organizations, and parents. Underresourced and underdeveloped schools may depend a great deal on external resources to promote development. Indeed, as we argued earlier, failure to secure and sustain adequate external resources may thwart development efforts.⁵²

Schools in the field research sample drew from several different sources of support. Although many worked with multiple outside organizations and other service providers, CPS and the Chicago Challenge stood out as the most predominant sources of external support. Beyond supporting basic school operations, CPS provided several of the field research schools with budget directors, instructional consultants, and probation managers. Moreover, the system's capital improvement initiative funded badly needed repairs, renovations, and new construction at several schools.

The Chicago Challenge linked schools with new human and intellectual resources and provided modest financial support for school development. External

⁵¹ Evans (1996); Hargreaves (2003).

⁵² Fullan (2001).

Partners brought ideas and expertise, focus, and impetus to promote school development.⁵³ Partners could also expand the intellectual and social resources that were available to schools by linking them with other schools engaged in similar development activity. Annenberg grants, while averaging little more than 1 percent of a school's operating budget, were used to purchase important resources for school development such as in-house curriculum coordinators, teacher professional development, classroom libraries, and new instructional materials. The Challenge also provided some professional support in the form of workshops, conferences, and consultations with its staff. Finally, participation in the Challenge helped some schools lever additional resources. Such was the case among several schools that were working with their External Partners to increase parent involvement and cultivate stronger, more supportive relationships with organizations in their communities.

The field research reveals a more complicated story about the relationship between securing additional resources and school development, however. Continuously developing and more highly developed schools (Groups 1 and 2) were generally more effective than nondeveloping schools (Group 4) at searching for, securing, and taking full advantage of external resources. At the same time, what distinguished Groups 1 and 2 from Group 4 was not simply entrepreneurial capability. Some nondeveloping schools were quite accomplished at obtaining external resources. Rather, it was the ability of Groups 1 and 2 to secure resources aligned with a particular development agenda and to employ those resources in an efficient and strategic manner that differentiated them from Group 4. Group 3 illustrates these points well. In those schools the loss and fragmentation of key resources was associated with regress.

Two of the nondeveloping schools in Group 4 had relatively few resources and it was apparent that this constrained their efforts to develop. On the other hand, two schools in that group had substantial resources, but these were acquired in an indiscriminate manner and were not coordinated with their schools' development agendas. These schools did not always use their resources to their full potential.

⁵³ Newmann and Sconzert (2000).

Distributing Leadership for School Development

The first three findings from the field research focused on aims, strategies, and resources for school development. The fourth focuses on the individuals who led development efforts. When the field study schools were examined closely, it was apparent that the strength and breadth of leadership distinguished more highly developed and developing schools (Groups 1 and 2) from nondeveloping ones (Group 4). Schools that made the greatest progress were those that cultivated strong, distributive leadership. Poorly developed and nondeveloping schools were likely to have a single source of consolidated leadership or simply have weak overall leadership. In schools that regressed after initial development (Group 3), leadership (usually the principal's) that was once strong and distributed grew weaker or became more authoritarian and consolidated. These findings are consistent with other studies of distributive leadership and the implementation and institutionalization of complex educational change.⁵⁴

In all of the field research schools, development was more likely to occur when key leadership tasks were performed in a coordinated manner by multiple actors in a school community, including the principal, teachers, outside organizations working with the school, coordinators, and parents. These tasks include: (a) creating and sustaining a vision for school development across multiple Essential Supports; (b) engaging others in school development initiatives; (c) promoting coherence among those initiatives; (d) providing incentives and opportunities to develop staff knowledge and skills; (e) developing curriculum and student assessments; (f) monitoring, providing encouragement, and holding staff members accountable for progress made toward school development; (g) obtaining external resources to support the school's development agenda; and (h) managing external influences in ways that support development. Most of these tasks relate to the first three findings.

⁵⁴ For example, Heller and Firestone (1995); Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999); and Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001). See also Sebring, Hallman, and Smylie (2003) for further analysis of schools where distributed leadership was reconsolidated in the principal.

While this analysis points to the importance of the distributive performance of such tasks to school development, it also highlights the “make-or-break” role that principals play in school development.⁵⁵ In the field research schools, principals were often at the heart of successful development activity. The most effective principals performed a number of common leadership tasks. They may not have performed them alone, but they performed them nonetheless. They articulated a clear, coherent vision of strong instructional practice and effective school organization. They communicated high expectations for teachers as both instructors and leaders of development, and they pressed teachers to meet those expectations. These principals persistently promoted the development of professional competence and leadership capacity among staff members and could be counted on to provide resources to support that development. Principals of developing schools distributed leadership among others and managed their “leadership work.” At the same time, they could be forceful and directive to ensure that the school stayed focused and that work was completed.

Principals in more highly developed and continuously developing schools managed external resources effectively. They obtained the human, intellectual, and material resources needed to support development efforts. They established strong, productive relationships with their External Partners and with CPS administrative staff. These principals effectively protected their schools from external distractions and interference. And, when distraction and interference did intrude, they worked to minimize any disruptive effect. Principals were also among the first in the school community to feel the sparks of external pressure and opportunities for school development. Because they had the opportunity to marshal external support, principals could couple the initiation of development activity with new resources to fuel it. Finally, because of their position of authority within the school and between the school and its environment, principals could bring coherence among school development goals, strategies, and internal and external resources.

⁵⁵ The importance of the role of principals is echoed by Chicago Annenberg External Partners in the report Sconzert, Wenzel, and Smylie (2003).

The experiences of the field research schools also suggest that teacher leaders can be powerful change agents for school development when they work with their principals. In developing schools, teachers contributed expertise, skills, and perspectives on problems. They helped to create and sustain a vision for school development, and their assistance was crucial in promoting and engaging other teachers in development initiatives. Teacher leaders led professional development activities, monitored and held staff accountable for improving their practice, and helped the school obtain external resources.

One particularly notable example of distributed leadership was the creation of full-time in-house coordinator positions that focused primarily on the development of classroom curriculum and instruction. Half of the field research schools had at least one in-house coordinator. These coordinators were usually teachers at the school who were released from their classroom duties to help their colleagues develop classroom practice. Selected because of their teaching ability and their ability to work well with others, the coordinators were usually trained by Annenberg External Partners to lead professional development activities and mentor teachers as they implemented the Partners' curricular and instructional programs and practices at the classroom level.

The specific work the in-house coordinators performed varied, but the creation of these positions usually led to growth in overall school leadership. Coordinators held workshops, worked individually with teachers, observed classroom practice, and obtained new curricular and instructional materials. They became focal points for professional development. Teachers in some schools began to turn more often to them than to their principals for instructional expertise and assistance. Coordinators served as liaisons between teachers and principals and they facilitated communication between their schools, External Partners, and other schools in their Annenberg networks. Coordinators performed these roles particularly well in several of the more highly developed and continuously developing schools. Indeed, in several schools the loss of effective in-house coordinators was a primary cause for their regress.

Implications

These findings raise several important implications for promoting school development. First, principal leadership matters in promoting school development and it matters a lot. It is not simply any form of principal leadership that is effective; it should be inclusive, distributive, and visionary. Even though it is important that other members of a school community become involved in “leadership work,” the principal occupies a unique position in school organizations to initiate, manage, and sustain development. The principal is crucial in developing leadership capacity among staff and in distributing and managing the performance of leadership tasks by others. While strong principal leadership alone may not be sufficient to promote and sustain school development over time, it is clearly necessary. There is some debate in the literature about the importance of the principal in the context of distributed leadership for implementing and institutionalizing complex innovation.⁵⁶ In this study, however, there is no debate. Principals played a “make or break” role in promoting and achieving school development.

Second, these findings point to the need for school leadership to think systemically about school organization and development. The most successful schools in the field research were those that targeted for development multiple, mutually-reinforcing aspects of school organization and practice. In order to set and pursue such an agenda, leadership must see school organizations in terms of their dynamic interdependent parts.⁵⁷ Leadership must understand how these parts work and change together and how they can support each other in promoting effective teaching and student learning. Leadership must understand the dynamic quality of school organizations and how change in one aspect can have positive or negative consequences in others.

Third, these findings point to the importance of organizing development efforts around strong maps or theories of school development and change. In addition, it

⁵⁶ For example, Heller and Firestone (1995) and Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999).

⁵⁷ See Bolman and Deal (1997) and Bryk et al. (forthcoming).

should evoke a complementary array of strategically chosen change mechanisms tailored to the school's particular organizational strengths and weaknesses, its development goals, and the needs and interests of its community. Strategies to develop individual and collective capacity—the “will” and the “skill”—for leadership, for organizational development, and for improved classroom practice appear vital to successful development efforts. The findings indicate, however, that strategies to develop capacity may not be sufficient to promote development over time without complementary incentives and systems of accountability that reinforce efforts to develop and enact new capacity. Likewise, the findings suggest that leadership would be ill advised to rely exclusively on accountability mechanisms to achieve much school development. Although development in some schools may need a “kick-start” from a high-stakes accountability system, it is unlikely that such an incentive will have long-lasting effects without the introduction of other strategies.

Fourth, these findings point to the importance of coherence and to leadership's role in achieving it. Leadership, particularly principal leadership, is crucial in the alignment of development goals, strategies, and internal and external resources around a strong, robust vision of a good school, good teaching, a learned student, and a sound theory of change. As mentioned earlier, by virtue of the authority of their roles and their access to and control of resources, principals are in a unique position in the school organization to promote such coherence. The alternative is fragmentation that, according to our study and other research, can become a serious impediment to school development.⁵⁸

Finally, as will be discussed further in Part Three, these findings indicate that school development takes time and requires long steady work. Progress is fragile and initial gains can be lost, sometimes easily. Beyond patience and persistence, sustainable school development requires a stable base of resources, ongoing monitoring and assessment of development goals, progress toward achieving those goals, and effective development strategies. Development may also require flexibility and adjustment of goals, strategies, and resources as conditions change inside and

⁵⁸ See Fullan (2001) and Newmann et al. (2001b).

outside the school. Without a base of human and social resources—leadership, professional community, parent and community involvement, and relational trust—it is difficult to imagine that local school development efforts will get very far or last very long.