

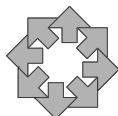
2005 Consortium Survey Reports

Autumn 2005

Sample Elementary 2005

Improving Chicago's Schools

A report specially prepared
to assist in self-assessment
and long-term planning



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Acceptance of this report implies endorsement of the conditions listed below.

The Consortium on Chicago School Research has promised to maintain the confidentiality of all schools and survey participants. This report is the property of Sample Elementary 2005, and will not be distributed to anyone outside of your school without the written permission of your principal. Anyone accepting a copy of this report promises to adhere to this agreement as well.

Sample Elementary
2005

Improving Chicago's Schools

2005 Survey Report

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Acknowledgments

In the spring of 2005, more than 130,000 students, teachers, and principals participated in the Consortium on Chicago School Research's biannual survey of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Without the time and support teachers and principals gave to this effort, this massive undertaking would never have been possible. We are also grateful to the area instructional officers for their unflagging efforts in encouraging their schools to participate.

Questionnaires for this year's survey were improved and refined by a large team at the Consortium: Elaine Allensworth, Vanessa Coca, Macarena Correa, David Kerbow, Eliza Moeller, Jenny Nagaoka, Sue Sporte, William David Stevens, and Ginger Stoker.

We are grateful to members of the CPS leadership-Arne Duncan, Barbara Eason Watkins, Peter Cunningham, and Daniel Bugler-for their support. The CPS staff was also very helpful to the survey effort, especially Chris Copeland, Joyce Copeland, Miguel Cortes, John Delmonte, Bill Galante, Roy Humphrey, John Jablonski, Andrea Ross, and Ian Thomson.

The Consortium also owes many thanks to our own Survey Data Manager, Loretta Morris, for investing her considerable talent and energy in facilitating all efforts from content to collection. We are also very grateful to our survey staff: Sandra Dantzler, Tanisha Ell, Veronica Gibbs, Johnny Humphrey, Curtis Lewis, Courtney Martin, Darnell Morris, Darrell Morris, Nichole Taylor, and Zackery Wilcoxson.

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About the Consortium

The Consortium on Chicago School Research possesses the nation's largest collection of data on any single city's public school system and its students. Our archive includes data provided by the school system, information from a variety of other public sources, and original data collected by us. In 1991, the Consortium began to survey regularly all Chicago public school principals, teachers, and students to learn their views on the state of our public schools and their experiences in them.

About the Improving Chicago's Schools Surveys

This past year, more than 132,000 students, teachers, and principals across the Chicago public school system participated in the Consortium's 2005 *Improving Chicago's Schools* survey. Students told us about their school experiences, attitudes, and activities. Teachers and principals told us about instruction in their classrooms and their professional development experiences, and answered our questions about the conditions under which they work.

Data from the *Improving Chicago's Schools* survey are used in many ways. One of the most important is the individualized reports that the Consortium prepares for every school in which a sufficient response rate is achieved.¹ This year, 454 elementary and high schools met the response rate criteria. Over the summer the Consortium prepared thousands of pages of school profiles, collected into 454 school-specific, confidential reports for those schools' principals, teachers, and Local School Councils.

These reports paint a picture of the type of learning climate, quality of instructional program, nature of student-teacher relationships, and kind of leadership that exists in each school. They also say something about the professional environment within the school, and the nature of the school's relationships with parents and others in the community. Because Chicago public schools have participated in the Consortium's surveys for the past ten years, the individual school reports also show how these things have changed over time. Taken together, this information about where a school is and how it is developing can help the school assess its progress and plan for the future. Among other things, this information can prove invaluable in carrying out an internal program review as part of the preparations for the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA).

Survey data are used in many other ways as well. Teacher, principal, and student reports supplement the Consortium's analyses of student test scores and other performance indicators (like graduation and attendance rates) to provide a comprehensive picture of Chicago public school improvement. Along with extensive field work and other research, surveys help identify the classroom practices and school organizational characteristics that are most effective in enhancing student engagement and improving learning. As a result, the public reports prepared from analyses of these data help us to describe the current conditions in schools, the challenges schools face, and the impact of different improvement initiatives and reforms.

¹At least 42 percent of teachers or 50 percent of students must respond in order for a school to receive a report. If the Consortium receives responses from only one group at a school (i.e., teachers, but not students), only that group's measures are reported.

Survey Response Rates

In all, there were 207 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students at Sample Elementary 2005. Of these, **179 students returned surveys** for a **response rate of 86.4 percent**. The following table breaks down student survey responses according to gender, race, and achievement for all students and for the students who responded to the survey. This tells you how representative of your school were the students who responded to the survey. Achievement is given by percentage of students in each quartile, where Quartile 1 is the lowest quartile and Quartile 4 is the highest. Quartiles are determined by the May 2005 ITBS national percentile ranks for elementary school students, and by class rank for high school students.

		All Students	Students Who Responded
Gender	Male	49.5	47.7
	Female	50.5	52.3
Race/Ethnicity	White	4.7	5.2
	African-American	12.9	11.8
	Native American	0.0	0.0
	Asian	0.5	0.7
	Latino	82.8	82.3
Achievement	Quartile 1	23.4	23.1
	Quartile 2	43.3	43.4
	Quartile 3	23.4	23.8
	Quartile 4	9.9	9.8

It is more difficult for us to calculate a perfectly accurate teacher response rate, because we do not have exact counts of the number of teachers in each school. (This is especially difficult in schools with both elementary and high school grades, since we make separate reports for elementary and high schools.) According to CPS, Sample Elementary 2005 had 50 full-time teacher positions last winter. We received **45 surveys**, resulting in an approximate **teacher response rate of 90** percent for your school.

Understanding Your Report

Creating Measures from Item Responses

The 470 items on the teachers' surveys and the 384 items on the students' survey offer reports of *how often something happens* (e.g., how often a teacher has conversations with colleagues about what helps students learn best), *how someone feels* (e.g., to what extent teachers feel respected by their students' parents), or *someone's perceptions* (e.g., the extent to which teachers think their principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers).

Sometimes several questions ask about the same thing in different ways (e.g., are teachers involved in making important decisions in their school? do they have a lot of informal opportunities to influence what happens there?). We ask similar questions to reach a more accurate understanding of, for example, teachers' views of their school as a workplace. So, while it can be interesting to analyze responses to individual survey questions (items) independently, it is often more useful to consider multiple responses to sets of related items.

We are able to do this by constructing *measures* that combine information obtained from several items that are conceptually related. So, for example, the measure of Program Coherence, described on page 12, combines information we obtained from teachers in response to questions about the extent to which curriculum and instruction are well coordinated across grades, the extent to which they are consistent among teachers in the same grade, reports of whether the focus of instruction has changed for the better in the last two years, and other related issues. The Program Coherence measure assesses the overall extent to which the school's instructional programs are coordinated and consistent both within and across grade levels.

Each question on the 2005 *Improving Chicago's Schools* survey is linked to such a measure. Your school is described in terms of how high or low it scores on 34 different measures.

Please note: while in most instances being on the high end of a scale is most desirable, on one measure, Incidence of Disciplinary Action (on page 18), being on the low end is desirable.

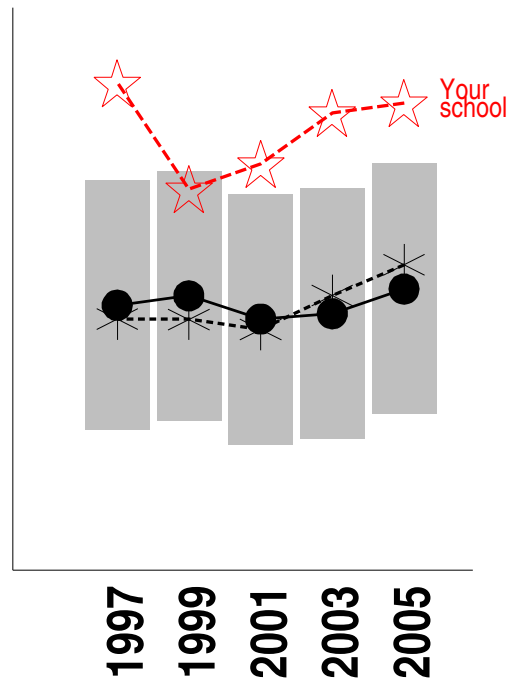
How to Read the Display for Each Measure

The following figure illustrates the basic reporting format developed by the Consortium for presenting a school's data on each measure. It compares your school both to other schools that are demographically similar to yours, and to the Chicago public school system as a whole.² In most instances, the profiles also include time-trend information about your school based on its responses to previous Consortium surveys.³ In addition to providing information about your school's standing in 2005, this trend data can provide useful information about the overall direction of your reform efforts. Has there been improvement or not?

²The Consortium relies on test scores, enrollment, mobility, racial composition, neighborhood characteristics, and other indicators from 2004 to identify schools that are demographically comparable to your school.

³A year's data may be missing on some of the profiles. This is because either the questions that comprised these particular measures were not included on the Consortium's surveys that year, or your school did not complete surveys that year.

Program Coherence



The illustrative display above charts teachers' perceptions of their school's instructional program coherence at five different points in time. (Your school's actual score on this measure can be found on page 12). Three report trends appear here:

- your school (in red),
- schools like yours (the dashed line), and
- the Chicago public school system as a whole (the solid black line).

The points connected by the solid black lines represent the systemwide average on a measure over time. The gray box represents the range of reports each year from the middle two-thirds of CPS schools on this measure. A star located above the black line within the gray box means "somewhat above average"; correspondingly, a star located below the black line within the box means a "somewhat below average" report. Reports on the measure from the top one-sixth of schools are charted in the area above the gray box. Such a report is "substantially above average." Similarly, reports from the bottom one-sixth of the schools on the measure appear below the box. Such reports are "substantially below average."⁴

Looking at the figure then, we see that in 1997 the teachers in this school rated the coherence of their instructional program substantially above average as compared to the school

⁴Please note that there is some unavoidable imprecision in locating the star that represents your school's value, so you should not read too much into small differences between your school and the system or schools like yours.

system overall. Their level decreased in 1999; they were still above the average of all schools but below the 75th percentile. In subsequent years, the level of Program Coherence increased steadily until 2003 and 2005 when it was again in the top sixth of all schools. During the period from 2001 to 2005, the overall level of Program Coherence increased in the system as well; the level in schools demographically similar to this one increased at a slightly higher rate.

Please note: Even though a school as a whole may have met the criteria for receiving a specially prepared report, it is possible that some measures are not reported. At least seven students or seven teachers need to respond to all of the survey items that comprise a measure in order to get a valid reading of that measure. If fewer than seven respond, only the system mean and the “schools like yours” trend appear on the profile.⁵ Also, if your school did not complete surveys in a previous year, no star will appear on the red trend line for that year.

How Your Report is Organized: A Set of Profiles

The Consortium has conducted extensive, in-depth studies of Chicago’s public schools since 1990. This research provides compelling evidence demonstrating the importance of school leadership, parent and community partnerships, a student-centered learning climate, professional development and collaboration, and the quality of the instructional program.⁶ These five domains are frequently referred to as the Essential Supports for Student Learning in improving student achievement. Consortium studies show that schools that are strong in these essential supports are more likely to improve academically. Studies also show that schools that are weak are more likely to be academically stagnant.

Because these supports have been shown to have powerful effects on student outcomes, we use them to provide a framework for organizing the profiles presented in this report. Each profile consists of a set of measures. For example, the School Leadership profile is described in terms of a set of four related measures:

- Teacher-Principal Trust
- Teacher Influence
- Principal Instructional Leadership
- Program Coherence

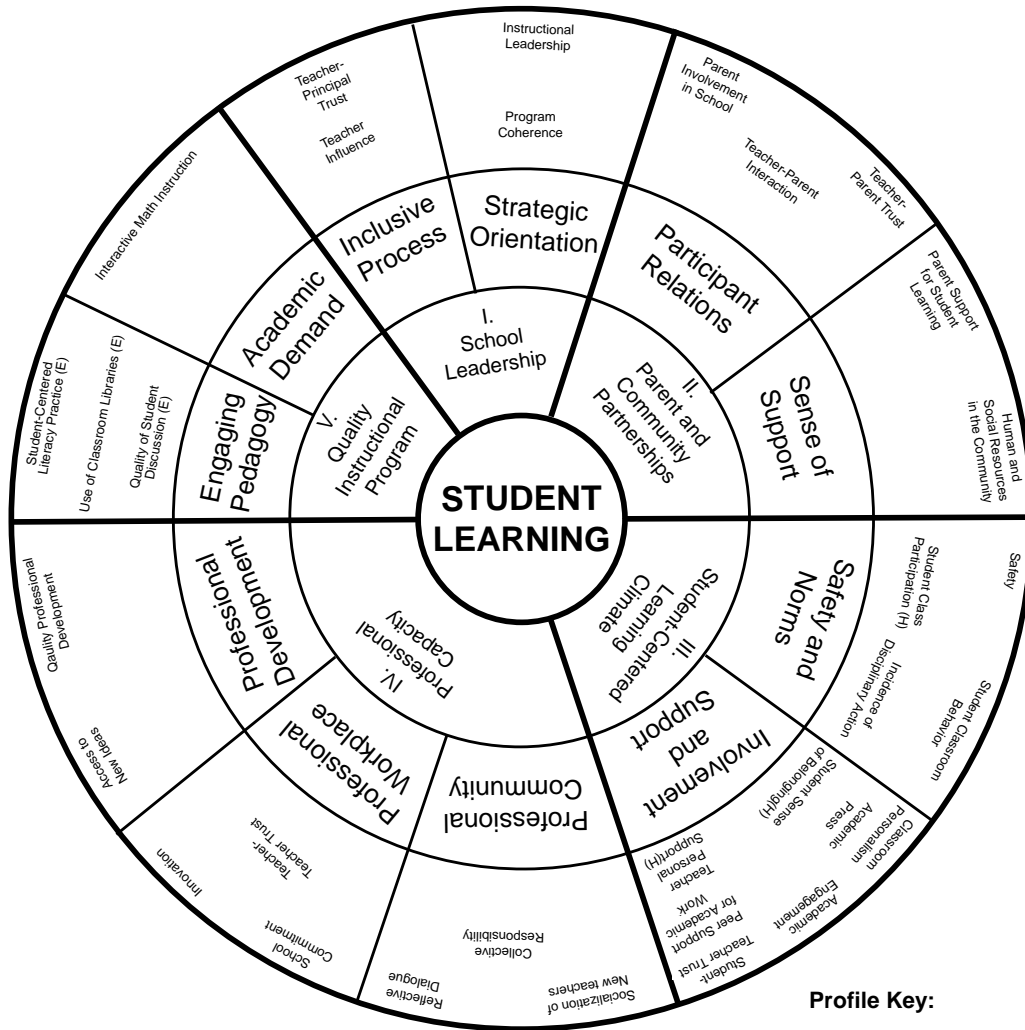
Not surprisingly, while each support is important in its own way, it is the systemic blending of initiatives that makes a material difference in student learning.⁷ For that reason, it is often beneficial to consider a school’s profile on each Essential Support for Student Learning in relation to its performance on others.

⁵If *no* students or teachers in your school responded, then only the system trend will appear.

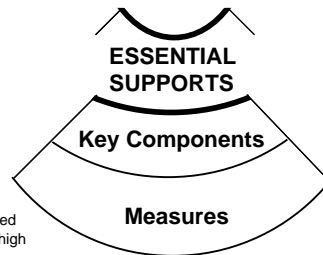
⁶Many of these studies are cited on the pages that follow; most can be downloaded at no charge, and all can be ordered from the Consortium’s website at www.consortium-chicago.org.

⁷See the Consortium’s report, *Development of Chicago Annenberg Schools: 1996-1999* (2001).

Overview of the Five Essential Supports and Corresponding Consortium Profiles and Measures



Profile Key:



Note: Measures marked with an "E" apply to elementary school teachers and students; measures marked with an "H" apply to high school teachers and students. All other measures are for both elementary and high school teachers and students.

New for 2005

In 2005, we continued to refine the survey's instruction and literacy sections. After a major reworking for the 2003 survey and subsequent analyses of data from that survey we have again revised these sections for the 2005 survey to include measures with the highest validity and reliability. These data will provide the foundation for future analyses of instruction-related outcomes. The biggest change to this section is the exclusive focus on literacy instruction. To make room for the expanded literacy section, we removed items from the elementary teacher survey that focus on instruction in subject areas other than reading and language arts.

A central focus for the Consortium in 2005 is students' post-secondary preparation and planning. Items were added to both high school student and teacher surveys to inform this research. In addition, 11th and 12th grade questionnaires were created which focused primarily on the ways in which schools were preparing students for life after high school. In previous years only 6-10th grade students were included in the survey. Individual school reports will continue to contain only data from ninth and tenth graders, so that trends are reflective of students in the same grades across years. Data from the eleventh and twelfth grade surveys will be used for a second individual school report for high schools which describes the post-secondary preparation of their students.

Finally, we also added a section on new teacher induction which will be the focus of a special research project for the Joyce Foundation.

Since there are now a number of schools that serve elementary as well as high school grades, for a few schools we are providing two different reports. This elementary grades report presents the results from your students in grades six through eight. This report has the school name on the front page (and on other parts) printed in **red**. The high school report, with the school name (and the other parts) printed in **purple**, presents the results from your students in ninth and 10th grades. If the majority of your teachers teach in grades K through eight, their results will be in this report. If, on the other hand, most of your teachers teach in the higher grades, their results will be in the high school report.

Using this Report

The information presented in this report can be used in a variety of ways. It is intended to supplement your assessments of test-score data and other performance indicators on the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement. It will identify areas that are becoming stronger over time or have always been strong. And it may identify areas that are weak or getting weaker. The definitions of the measures that comprise each profile describe in detail what high levels signify, including if they report teacher or student responses, if they are positive or negative measures, and what their questions on the surveys addressed. Measures constructed from teacher responses are marked with a “(T)” after the measure title; measures from student responses are marked with an “(S).”

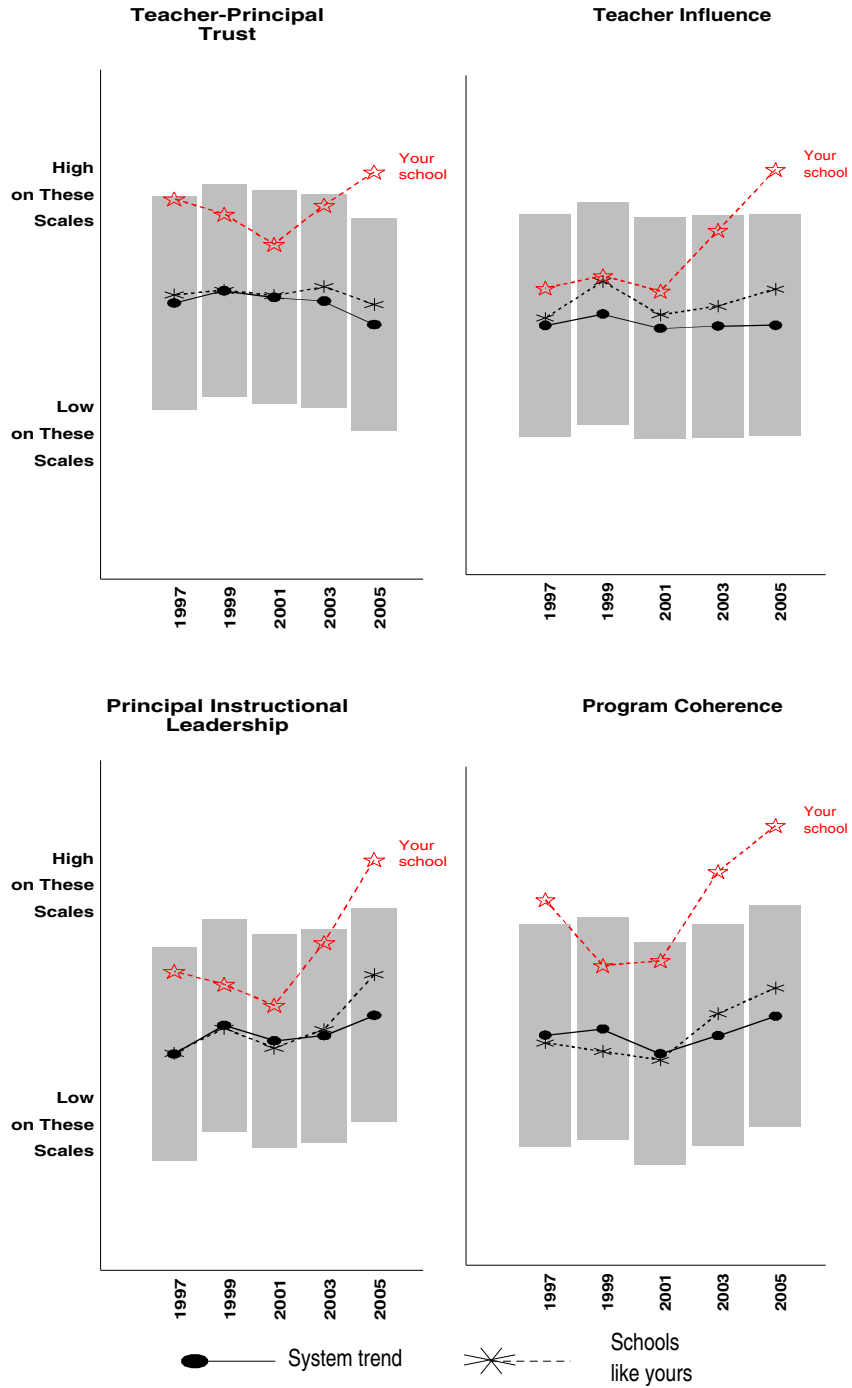
The information provided in this report can stimulate discussion among your school’s principal, teachers, and members of your Local School Council about setting priorities. It may help you decide which external partnerships are most likely to benefit your school, how much more effort you should devote to integrating community resources in your programs of instruction, or whether you should focus more attention on increasing students’ personal safety inside and outside the school building.

In the pages that follow, we explain your school data through figures, descriptions of measures, and questions you might like to ask about your school’s position on these measures. These are by no means exhaustive lists of the issues you may wish to consider as you use this report in your SIPAAA planning or for other purposes. But we hope they give you a feeling for the many ways this information can help you assess your school’s accomplishments and plan for your future.

You will also receive one copy of a report giving item-level results for each measure. This supplemental report provides your school’s specific responses to each of the survey items that make up the measures compared to the systemwide average, and to high- and low-rated schools.

Summary Profiles for Sample Elementary 2005

School Leadership Inclusive Process and Strategic Orientation



Teacher-Principal Trust (T) The extent to which teachers feel their principal respects and supports them. Questions ask teachers if the principal looks out for their welfare, has confidence in their expertise, and if they respect the principal as an educator. *High levels indicate that teachers share deep mutual trust and respect with the principal.*

Teacher Influence (T) Measures the extent of teachers' involvement in school decision making. It assesses teachers' influence on the selection of instructional materials, setting of school policy, in-service program planning, discretionary funds spending, and hiring of professional staff. *High levels indicate that teachers have influence on a broad range of issues at the school.*

Principal Instructional Leadership (T) Teachers' perception of their principal as an instructional leader with respect to the teaching and learning standards, communication of a clear vision for the school, and tracking of academic progress. *High levels indicate that teachers view their principal as very involved in classroom instruction.*

Program Coherence (T) The degree to which teachers feel the programs at their school are coordinated with each other and with the school's mission. Questions ask teachers if instructional materials are consistent within and across grades and if there is sustained attention to quality program implementation. *High levels indicate that the school's programs are coordinated and consistent with its goals for student learning.*

TO CONSIDER: Previous Consortium studies have documented that principals in improving schools actively reach out to teachers, parents, and local community leaders to engage them in the tasks of strengthening teaching and learning at the school.⁸ Effective processes are established for involving local actors in school improvement planning. Moreover, in these schools there is a strong strategic orientation toward and concern about program coordination and the quality of implementation.

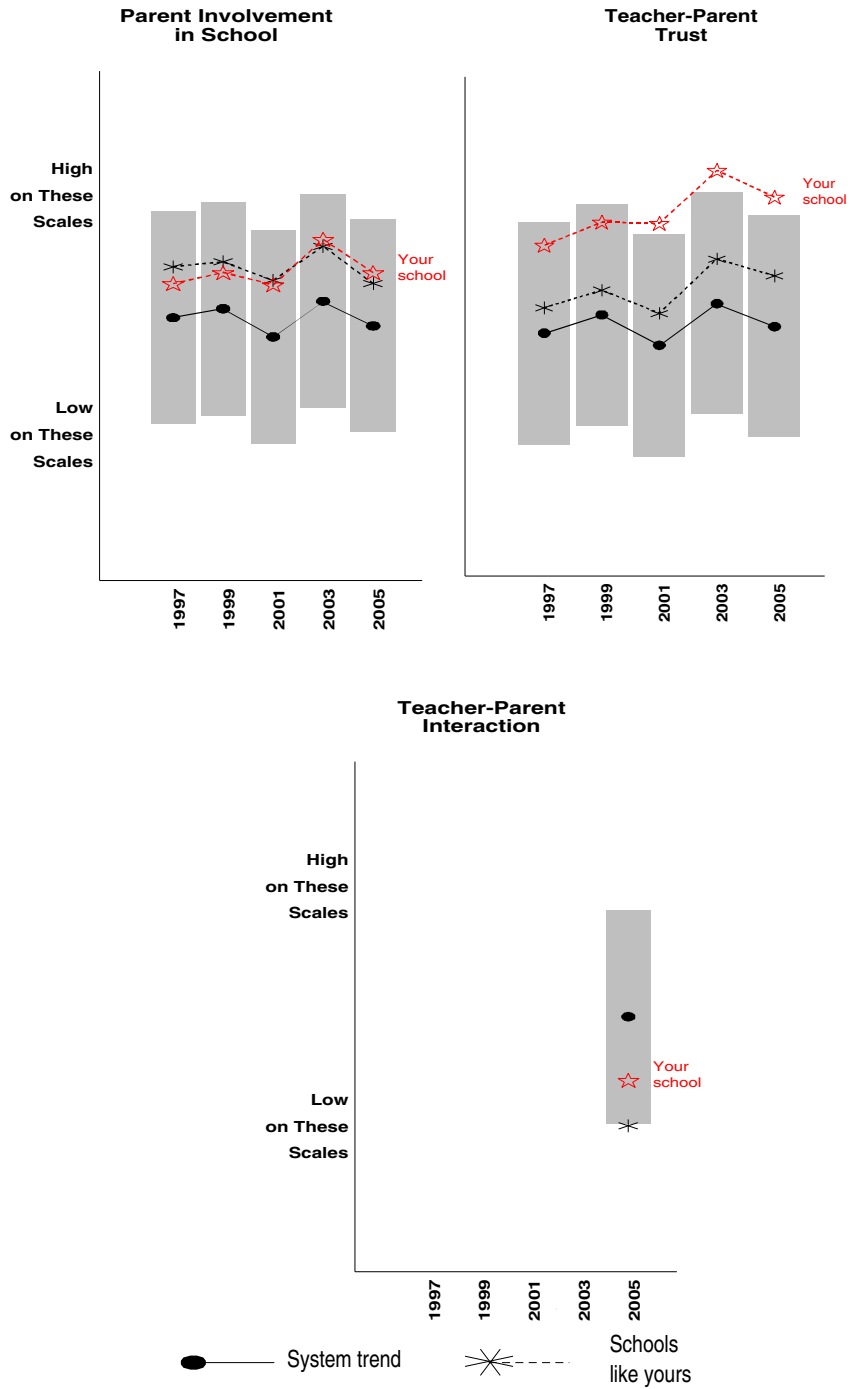
A recent Consortium report showed that instructional program coherence greatly facilitates school improvement initiatives.⁹ Although a school may have many different and exciting programs, a lack of coordination among them may thwart their positive impact.

- Is your school's report on the program coherence measure what you expected?
- As you think about all of your school's efforts to improve over the last two years, do they reflect a coordinated plan?
- Has there been real attention to quality implementation of each initiative?
- Is there a coherent instructional framework that teachers share for each subject, or are there competing goals and programs?

⁸See *Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change* (Westview Press, 1998) and the Consortium report *School Leadership and the Bottom Line in Chicago* (2000).

⁹See the Consortium report *School Instructional Program Coherence* (2001).

Parent and Community Partnerships: Participant Relations



Parent Involvement in School (T) Teachers' reports on the level of parent involvement and support for the school. Questions ask teachers how often parents pick up report cards, attend parent-teacher conferences and school events, volunteer to help in the classroom, and participate in fundraising events. *High levels indicate that many parents are actively engaged with the school.*

Teacher-Parent Trust (T) Teachers' perceptions of the degree of mutual respect between themselves and parents, and their support of each other's efforts to improve student learning. Questions ask teachers if they consider themselves partners with parents in educating children, if they receive strong parental support, and if the school staff works hard to build trust with parents. *High levels indicate mutually supportive relationships among parents and teachers.*

Teacher-Parent Interaction (T) Teachers' reports of the frequency of their interactions with parents about what their students are studying and whether there are any academic or behavior problems. *High levels indicate frequent interaction with parents about how their students are doing in school.*

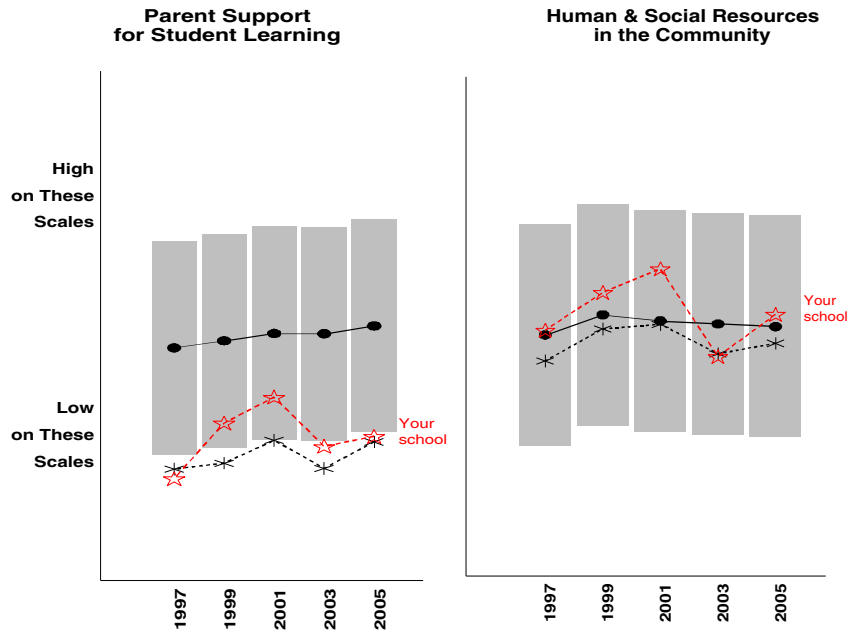
TO CONSIDER: A major issue for urban school reform involves reconnecting local school professionals to the parents and communities they are intended to serve. Unless this occurs, major improvements in student learning remain unlikely. It is incumbent on principals and teachers to reach out to parents, to seek to establish trusting relationships, and to engage parents in the tasks of enhancing student learning. For schools in low-income and immigrant communities, teachers often need to learn more about their distinctive local context and how they can use this knowledge to promote their students' interest in school and actual learning.

- How do your school's levels of Teacher-Parent Trust compare to Teacher-Principal Trust on the previous page?
- Should your school be doing more outreach to increase parent involvement?

Look at Parent Support for Student Learning on the next page.

- Are your results on that profile what you expected given teachers' outreach to parents?
- What else could your school do to encourage parents' involvement and support?

Parent and Community Partnerships: Students' Sense of Support



● — System trend * - - - Schools like yours

Parent Support for Student Learning (S) Students' perceptions of their parents' support for their school performance. Questions ask students how often their parents or other adults encourage them to work hard, do their homework, and take responsibility for their actions. *High levels indicate strong parental support.*

Human and Social Resources in the Community (S) Students' assessment of the level of their trust in and reliance upon neighbors and community members, and whether they feel adults in the community know and care about them and each other. Questions ask students if adults know who the local children are, make sure they are safe, and can be trusted. *High levels indicate that many students can turn to community resources for support.*

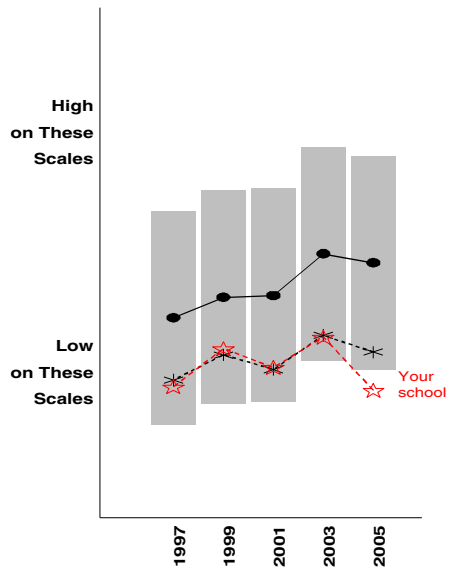
TO CONSIDER: Compare students' perception of their parents' support to teachers' reports about parent and school relations.

- What else could your school do to make it easier for parents to contact the school with their concerns and questions?
- What are some promising ideas for improving communication with parents about your school's goals?
- How can you draw on organizations and agencies in the community to support students more? Could the LSC help with this?

Student-Centered Learning Climate: Safety and Norms of Behavior



Incidence of Disciplinary Action



● System trend * Schools like yours

Safety (S) A reflection of students' sense of personal safety inside the school, outside the school, and traveling to and from school. *High levels indicate that students feel very safe in all these areas.*

Student Classroom Behavior (S) Students' assessment of their peers' classroom behavior with regard to how they treat each other, how often they disrupt class, if they have respect for each other, and if they help each other learn. *High levels indicate that positive behaviors are more prevalent and problem behaviors are less so.*

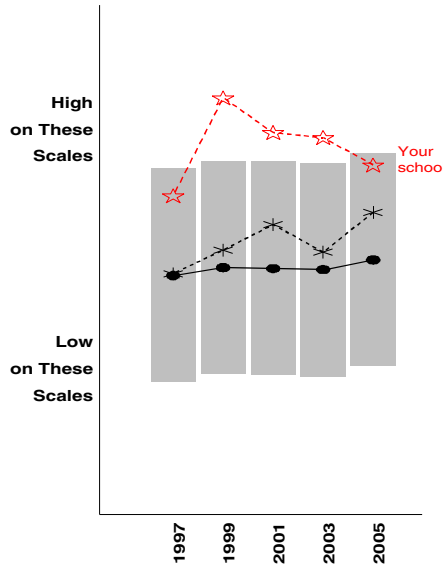
Incidence of Disciplinary Action (S) A measure of how often students get into trouble and are disciplined. Questions ask students how many times they have been sent to the office or suspended, and how often their parents have been contacted about discipline problems. *High levels indicate that students get into trouble frequently and often receive disciplinary action.* This is a negative scale; low levels are more desirable than high ones.

TO CONSIDER: Good schools have a strong student-centered learning climate. Such schools are safe and orderly environments—an absolute prerequisite for student learning. Such schools are also very personal environments. Teachers know students by name. While teachers press students toward ambitious academic work, they also provide considerable personal support to help all students attain these high goals. Similarly, students generally support each other in their academic work.

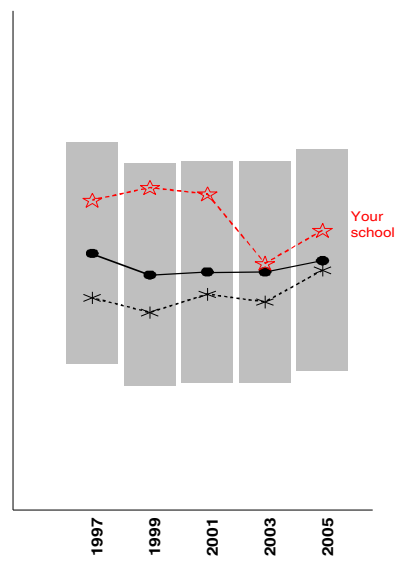
- Is there consensus among the faculty about standards for student behavior and are these communicated consistently with students?
- Consider your school's Academic Engagement measure (page 20). How does it compare with the measures on this page?

Student-Centered Learning Climate: Involvement and Support

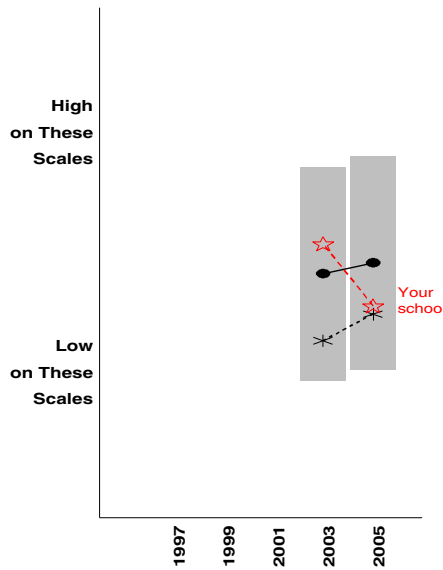
Student-Teacher Trust



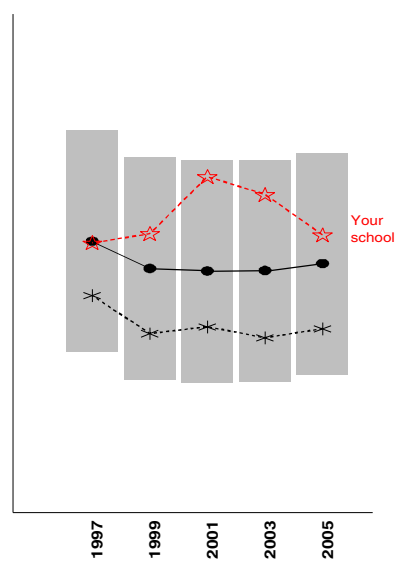
Academic Engagement



Academic Press



Peer Support for Academic Work



● — System trend

* - - - Schools like yours

Student-Teacher Trust (S) Students' perceptions about the quality of their relationships with teachers. Questions ask students if teachers care about them, keep promises, listen to their ideas, and try to be fair. *High levels indicate that there is trust and open communication between students and teachers.*

Academic Engagement (S) Students' reports about their interest and engagement in learning. Questions ask about students' interest in the topics they are studying and their engagement in the classroom in general. *High levels indicate that students are highly engaged in learning.*

Academic Press (S) Students' views of their teachers' efforts to push students to higher levels of academic performance. Students also report on teachers' expectations of student effort and participation. *High levels indicate that most teachers press all students toward academic achievement.*

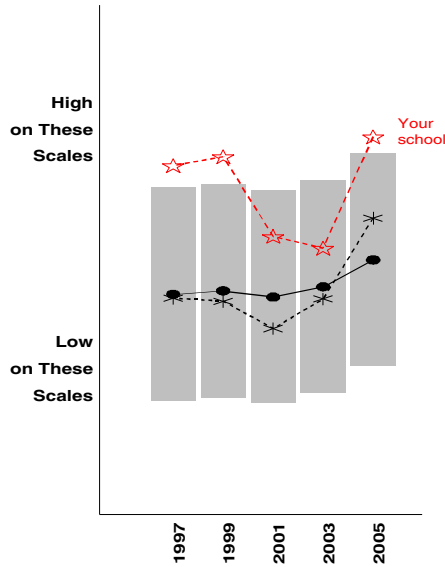
Peer Support for Academic Work (S) The norms among students with regard to their peers' support of academic work. Questions ask students how many of their peers try hard to get good grades, do homework regularly, pay attention in class, and follow school rules. *High levels indicate that students support each other academically.*

TO CONSIDER: Student-Teacher Trust (page 20), Teacher-Parent Trust (page 14), Teacher-Principal Trust (page 12) and Teacher-Teacher Trust (page 24) are the social foundations for meaningful school development.¹⁰ How does your school measure up?

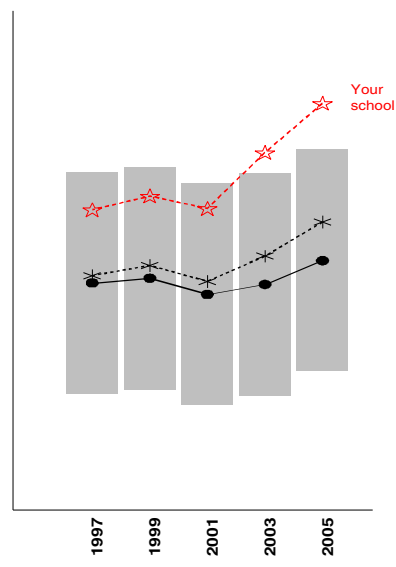
¹⁰See the Consortium report *Social Trust: A Moral Resource for School Improvement* (1996). and Bryk and Schneider (2002) *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*.

Professional Capacity: Professional Community

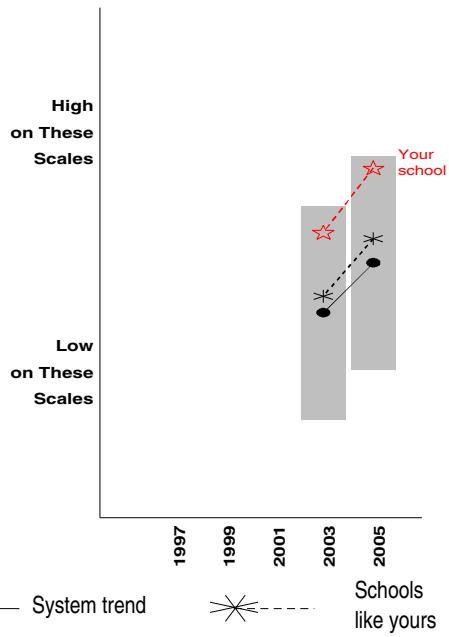
Reflective Dialogue



Collective Responsibility



Socialization of New Teachers



Reflective Dialogue (T) Teachers' assessment of how often they talk with one another about instruction and student learning. Questions ask teachers about their discussion of curriculum and instruction, the school's goals, and the best ways to help students learn and manage classroom behavior. *High levels indicate that teachers frequently discuss instruction and student learning.*

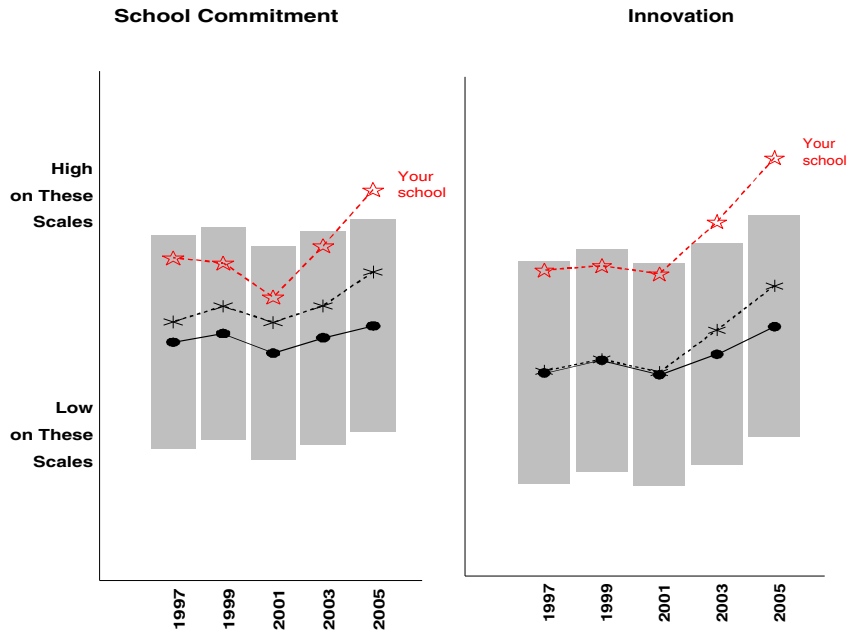
Collective Responsibility (T) Teachers' assessment of the strength of their shared commitment to improve the school so that all students learn. Questions ask teachers how many colleagues feel responsible for students' academic and social development, set high standards for professional practice, and take responsibility for school improvement. *High levels indicate a strong sense of shared responsibility among faculty.*

Socialization of New Teachers (T) Teachers' reports of the extent to which teachers are made to feel welcome and are given helpful feedback on their instructional practices. *High levels indicate strong, positive efforts to include new teachers in the professional community of the school.*

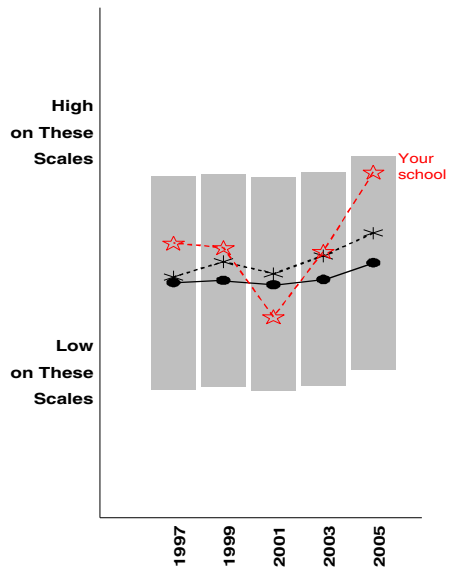
TO CONSIDER: Teachers need support from colleagues in order to improve their practice. When a school is organized as a professional community, many opportunities exist for teachers to learn from one another, to plan and implement instructional initiatives together, and to support each other in the hard tasks of school improvement. At base, teachers in such schools share a collective responsibility for the learning of all students.

- When and how does your school make time for teachers to collaborate and talk with each other about teaching and learning?
- What structures exist within grades, across grades, and schoolwide to promote such conversations?
- Would increased professional community improve your school's program coherence (page 12), and/or deepen the trust among school community members?

Professional Capacity: Professional Workplace



Teacher-Teacher Trust



● System trend * Schools like yours

School Commitment (T) The extent to which teachers feel loyal and committed to the school. Questions ask teachers if they look forward to going to work, would rather work somewhere else, and if they would recommend the school to parents. *High levels indicate teachers are deeply committed to the school.*

Innovation (T) Teachers' perceptions of whether or not they are continually learning and seeking new ideas, have a "can do" attitude, and are encouraged to try new ideas in their teaching. *High levels indicate that there is a strong orientation toward improvement and a willingness to be part of an active learning environment.*

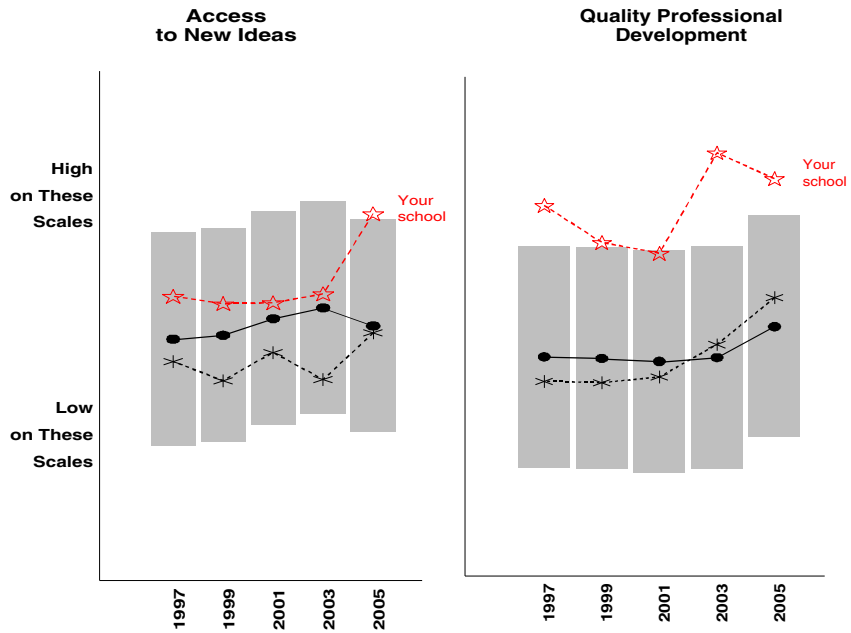
Teacher-Teacher Trust (T) The extent to which teachers feel they have mutual respect for each other, for those who lead school improvement efforts, and for those who are experts at their craft. Questions also ask teachers if they feel comfortable discussing their feelings and worries and really care about each other. *High levels indicate teachers trust and respect each other.*

TO CONSIDER: The nature of teachers' underlying beliefs and values plays a key role in instructional improvement. In improving schools, teachers maintain a "can do" attitude. They believe that changes in their practice can result in enhanced student learning, and they share a commitment with colleagues to promote such changes.

Taken with the measures under Professional Community on page 22, use the measures on this page to consider the following questions:

- Do the teachers here consider themselves a team?
- Are the teachers ready/willing to improve the school?
- Are there circumstances that undermine trust? And, if so, how can teachers resolve these?

Professional Capacity: Professional Development



● — System trend * - - - Schools like yours

Access to New Ideas (T) The extent to which teachers participate in professional development. Questions ask teachers how often they attend professional development activities sponsored by the school, district, or union; take continuing education courses at a college or university; and network with teachers from other schools. *High levels indicate that teachers are actively involved in professional development activities.*

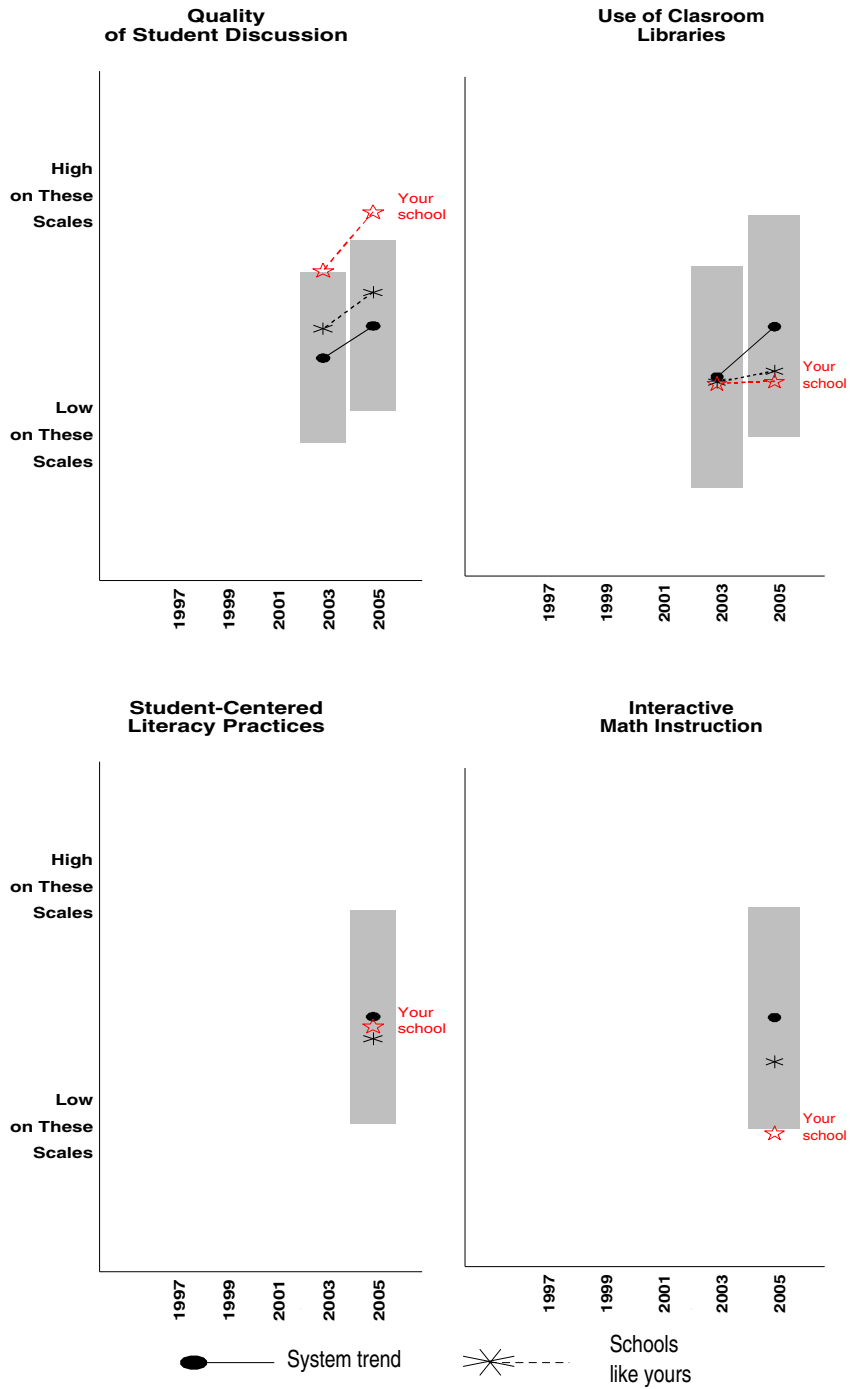
Quality Professional Development (T) Teachers' assessment of the degree to which professional development has influenced their teaching, helped them understand students better, and provided them with opportunities to work with colleagues and teachers from other schools. *High levels indicate that teachers are involved in sustained professional development focused on important school goals.*

TO CONSIDER: Enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills is arguably the single most important initiative schools can undertake to improve student learning.¹¹

If your staff is poised to make real improvements in instruction, the necessary learning opportunities must be in place for teachers. The measures on this page will help you assess if new instruction initiatives have a greater likelihood of being implemented well.

¹¹See the Consortium's report *Teacher Professional Development in Chicago: Supporting Professional Practice* (2001).

Quality Instructional Program Engaging Pedagogy and Academic Demand



Quality of Student Discussion (T) Teachers' reports of how well students interact with each other about what they have read. *High levels indicate that students build on each other's ideas and provide constructive feedback during discussions.*

Use of Classroom Libraries (T) How much teachers use classroom libraries in their instruction. *In classrooms where teachers report high levels of this measure, students regularly read for more than 20 minutes in the classroom, and teachers conference with the students about what they are reading.*

Student-Centered Literacy Practice (T) Teachers' reports of how often they use student-centered literacy practices such as Reading Workshop, having students read in small groups based on level, and having students write and revise on a topic of their own choosing. *High levels indicate the teachers are using student-centered literacy practices frequently.*

Interactive Math Instruction (S) Student reports of the frequency that they are made to practice higher-order math activities such as writing problems for other students to solve, applying math to situations outside the classroom, and explaining to the class how they solved a problem. *High levels indicate that the teacher frequently has the students perform activities that require higher-order math skills.*

TO CONSIDER: Student interaction and engagement with the learning process is crucial for developing self-motivated learners. Central to this is the quality of student discussion about challenging books and higher-order academic topics. The measures on this page provide evidence about instructional practices which promote this process. You may want to consider how your instruction and curriculum scaffolds deep discussion across content areas.

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Consortium on Chicago School Research

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The Consortium on Chicago School Research aims to conduct research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. By broadly engaging local leadership in our work, and presenting our findings to diverse audiences, we seek to expand communication between researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. The Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action, but does not argue for particular policies or programs. Rather, we believe that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained.

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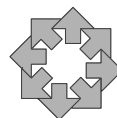
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