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## The 1995 Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act and the Cps Ceo: A Historical Examination of the Adminstration of Ceos Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan

Leviis Haney  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE 1995 CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM AMENDATORY ACT  
AND THE CPS CEO: A HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF CEOS PAUL VALLAS AND ARNE DUNCAN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

LEVIIS A. HANEY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2011

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## ABSTRACT

This study provides a historical analysis of the 1995 Chicago School Reform Act, as well as an analysis of the tenures of Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officers Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan. It provides an analysis of words and actions of the two CEOs through the interpretive framework of Thomas Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority*. The sources of authority are *bureaucratic*, *psychological*, *technical-rational*, *professional* and *moral*. Each source of authority represents certain assumptions that are dominant if the particular source is primarily utilized.

This dissertation will answer six questions through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority: What were the skills, knowledge and dispositions that Mayor Daley sought from the CEO position for Paul Vallas; what were the skills knowledge and dispositions that the mayor sought for the CEO position for Arne Duncan; how did Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan respectively fulfill the CEO role, how did the leadership styles of the two CEOs compare; and what implications does the CEO model have for school governance and school leadership.

Newspaper sources such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* provided a rich source of data for the purposes of analyzing the words and actions of the CEOs related to how they fulfilled their roles. Board reports and proceedings gathered from the Harold Washington Library as well as the Chicago Public School website were greatly utilized, along with primary documents held at the Chicago Public Schools

archives located at the CPS Central Offices located in downtown Chicago.

**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**Purpose of the Study**

This dissertation will examine the tenures of two Chicago Public School (hereby referred to as CPS) Chief Executive Officers (hereby referred to as CEO): Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan. The purpose of this examination is to define the role of “Chief Executive Officer” as it applied to the new leadership structure of the Chicago Public Schools, and to provide evidence of how well the role of CEO was carried out by Vallas and Duncan. The researcher will use documents to examine the policies and practices of the two CEOs. Paul Vallas’ administration spanned from 1995 to 2001, while Arne Duncan’s administration spanned from 2001 until 2008, when he was nominated to be Secretary of Education by then president-elect Barack Obama. The researcher will provide a synopsis of the characteristics of a CEO in the private sector, as well as a synopsis of the district’s priorities as recommended by Governor Jim Edgar which influenced characteristics that Mayor Richard M. Daley required of the position and use those to determine the degree by which the two CEOs fulfilled the CEO role.

In order to define the CEO position for CPS, a comprehensive examination of each of the tenures of Vallas and Duncan will be provided. In examining the tenures of the two CEOs, the researcher will specifically review their backgrounds and professional

experience, major programs and initiatives that were implemented, problems that occurred during their tenure as well as inherited problems, along with their words and actions as well as Mayor Daley's words and actions related to educational decision making during each of their tenures. Statements issued by Governor Edgar leading up to the signing of the Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act will be provided to serve as a framework as for the expectations of how the new governance structure was to be utilized to improve the district as far as the State was concerned. The researcher will also provide a synopsis of how each CEO handled the change in authority vested into the school system, examining the manner by which Paul Vallas led as CPS' first CEO, and reviewing how Arne Duncan functioned with those duties in comparison how Vallas did.

The words and actions of Daley, Edgar, Vallas and Duncan will be examined through the lens of Thomas Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority*. The five sources and their characteristics are as follows:

1. Bureaucratic Authority: Micromanaging, teachers are subordinates, do what I say or else, expect and inspect, teacher performance is narrowed - who should I follow
2. Psychological Authority: Teachers have needs, and if they are met at work, the work gets done as required, what is rewarded gets done, congenial climate, teachers don't respond without rewards, performance is narrowed, why should I follow
3. Technical Authority: Evidence defined by logic and scientific research, use research to identify best practice, standardize the work of teaching, performance is narrowed, what and how I should do something
4. Professional Authority: Teachers respond in light of common socialization, professional values, accepted tenets of practice and internalized expertise, purpose of scientific knowledge is to inform not prescribe practice, give teachers as much discretion as they need, require teachers to hold one another

accountable for meeting practice standards, performance is expansive, what is rewarding gets done

5. Moral Authority: Communities are defined by shared values, beliefs and commitments, people are motivated by emotions, felt obligation and duties derived from widely shared community values, ideas, and ideals, use of purposing and local school autonomy leads to covenantal communities and the source of authority changes from bureaucratic to moral, from secular to sacred, grounded in what is best for kids, performance is enhanced and sustained, what is good gets done

Using the *Five Sources of Authority* as an interpretative framework provides a basis by which the researcher can compare the words and actions of the mayor as well as the two CEOs and determine the values that are used in decision-making processes. Traditional leadership theory as related to the management and administration of educational organizations tend to endorse technical-rational expertise, bureaucratic authority and utilitarian motivational techniques as a basis for organizational decision-making.

For the purposes of this dissertation, CEO decisions will be judged based on the source of authority that the CEO utilized to ensure the compliance of CPS employees regarding the decision. The decisions will fall into a particular source of authority based on “why” they should follow the directive. The researcher will also use all available documentation to provide background information which led to the particular decision that was made by each CEO.

Sergiovanni argues that the moral dimension of leadership is often ignored and needs to be placed at the forefront. Although bureaucratic principles have their place, Sergiovanni contends that when the bureaucratic source of authority is emphasized, leaders prefer that the led do not question why they are doing things – they are supposed to just do them. The reason behind following orders lies in the leader’s bureaucratic

position in the organization. When the bureaucratic source of authority is emphasized along with psychological authority, the leader must micromanage to get things done. The organization then reflects a “top to bottom, bottom to top” hierarchy that keeps people in their respective places within the organization. In schools, teachers rely on leaders to dictate which tasks are to be done as well as how and when to get them done. This reliance causes teachers to fall into a subordinate role rather than one of followership, which consists of individuals who are committed to the professional ideal and who are motivated by what is good. Leadership that is based in professional and moral authority encourages self-management that reduces the need for direct leadership.<sup>1</sup> In examining the tenures of the two CEOs appointed after the 1995 Chicago Amendatory Act, this dissertation will illustrate the sources of authority emphasized by Mayor Daley as well as Vallas and Duncan to determine the framework that Daley believed was best in managing the Chicago Public School District.

### **Background to the Study**

In 1987, U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett, called Chicago’s schools the worst in the nation: “If it isn’t the last, I don’t know who is. There can’t be very many cities that are worse. Chicago is pretty much it.”<sup>2</sup> The complex mix of machine politics, deindustrialization, “white flight,” business influence, financial troubles, ineffective board governance, failed desegregation attempts and teacher union influence makes it difficult to ascertain the predominant causes of the status of the Chicago Public

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>Casey Banas and Devonda Byers, “Chicago’s Schools Hit as Worst,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1987.

Schools at that time. In 1988 and 2005, the city would experience two important reform efforts that greatly affected the governing structure of the school system. The first reform effort would dramatically change the school governance structure of the Chicago Public School System, decentralizing authority from the central office into neighborhood schools. The second reform act would amend the first set of reform efforts, keeping a great deal of community control while centralizing a great deal of authority at the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy.

In 1988, the Illinois State Legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act as a result of the efforts of grassroots school activists, public school advocacy groups, business leaders and legislators.<sup>3</sup> The goal of this legislature was to decentralize central office authority and place power in the hands of individual school councils at each of the district's schools. The Local School Councils (LSCs) consisted of eleven members, which comprised of six parents, two community members, two teacher representatives, and the principal of the school. LSCs were granted the power to hire and fire the principal, to set school policy, made budgetary decisions, as well as other key educational decisions. Principals were taken off the tenure track and issued four-year performance contracts that LSCs monitored. They were also given greater autonomy in hiring staff as well as allocating school funds.

The 1988 law also created professional personnel advisory committees at each school that were made up of teachers. The purpose of those committees was to deliver input regarding educational programming. Sub districts would consist of a cluster of

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<sup>3</sup>Illinois State General Assembly, *Chicago School Reform Act*, Public Act 85-1418, 1988.

schools separated by neighborhood boundary lines. Each sub district was led by a sub district superintendent who was hired and fired by a group of representatives comprised of individuals from the various LSCs. Another important change that the law implemented was an expansion of the central school board from 11 to 15 members, and a nominating commission that was created to select board members. The nominating commission consisted of 22 parent and/or community members elected from each of the district's sub district councils and five members appointed from the mayor. The mayor selected the board members from a pool of three candidates nominated by the commission per school board position.

The 1988 reform measures marked an attempt to share decision-making and accountability within the Chicago Public Schools. Failed efforts at reform at the sub district level influenced reform advocates in Chicago to focus decision making at the school, instead of the sub district level.<sup>4</sup> Alfred G. Hess Jr., one of the architects of the 1988 reform act who had studied Chicago schools for over 25 years as a post-doctoral fellow at Northwestern University and later as executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, argued that the vision of the process was one of collaboration. Professional personnel advisory committees gave input on academic related items. Principals had greater autonomy to make most important day-to-day decisions regarding the management of the school. LSC members hired and fired principals and were a part of the school's financial decision-making process. Community

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<sup>4</sup>A. G. Hess, Jr., "Community Participation or Control? From New York to Chicago," *Theory into Practice* 38, no. 4, The Politics of Participation in School Reform (Autumn 1999): 220.



members facilitated the hiring and firing of sub district superintendents. It was geared to be the perfect blend of local decision-making.

After seven years decentralized decision-making, the mayor, along with state policy makers and various groups of stakeholders grew very frustrated with the decentralization structure.<sup>5</sup> Wong and others argued that the dissatisfaction came from a number of sources. First, student performance did not show significant improvement. Second, the formation of LSCs did not bring about a significant increase in parental involvement in school-related matters. Third, a budgetary crisis ensued, causing the opening of school on time in September of 1995 to be in question. Fourth, the school board was unable to restore public confidence in the system, and the aptitude of its top administrators was questionable. Finally, Mayor Daley was frustrated because of the limitations placed on his ability to select board members.<sup>6</sup>

In 1995, the Republican-controlled legislature passed a series of amendments to the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act. This legislature was named the Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act.<sup>7</sup> Among the major features of this reform was an attempt to institute a more effective set of checks and balances to the governance system, while ultimately centralizing the main governance functions. The Amendatory Act changed

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<sup>5</sup>Kenneth K. Wong and Gail L. Sunderman, "How Bureaucratic Are Big-City School Systems?," *Peabody Journal of Education* 76, no. 3/4, Global Issues in Education (2001): 18.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Illinois State General Assembly, *Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act*, Public Act 89-0015, 1995.

four major areas in CPS governance: the management structure, fiscal areas, the Board's relationship with the Chicago Teachers Union, and school board governance.

The management structure of the CPS was transformed into one that closely resembled a corporate-style management system. The top positions within CPS were eliminated, and were replaced with corporate titles. The superintendent position was eliminated, and replaced with the "CEO" distinction. Daley was given the complete authority to appoint the CPS CEO. In addition, the system would now be managed by a chief financial officer, a chief educational officer, a chief operating officer, and a chief purchasing officer, none of which were required to have educational credentials.

Fiscally, the Board was not given additional funding, but was granted greater financial flexibility by streamlining state funding for the district by creating two block grants, one to pay for general education and one for educational services. Also, sixteen of the district's property tax categories were collapsed into a single operating levy. The law also removed restrictions on outsourcing, allowing the district to accept bids for outside services. The School Finance Authority was suspended, giving the Board of Trustees and Mayor Daley sole control over the management of finances.

In regards to CPS relations with the Chicago Teachers Union, the law effectively limited the items on the table during contract discussions and placed a moratorium on strikes for eighteen months. Important items taken off of the bargaining table were class size and teacher assignments. Daley knew that those restrictions would lead to strained

relations between him and the union, and called them together to ask them not to fight the law. In return, he would rescind most of those restrictions.<sup>8</sup>

The school board would also experience a makeover. The fifteen member board would be converted into a five member corporate-style board. The nominating commission was abolished, and Daley was granted the authority to appoint all board members of his choosing. Daley's chief of staff Gerry Chico would be installed as the president of the new Reform Board of Trustees. To the surprise of many, Local School Councils remained in tact.

### **Significance of the Study**

In naming the former Chicago Transit Authority President Ron Huberman to run the Chicago Public School system in 2009, Mayor Richard M. Daley passed over Chief Education Officer Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, who was widely credited with sparking some of the system's biggest improvements. Eason-Watkins was the favorite candidate of U.S. Education Secretary and former CPS CEO Arne Duncan. Huberman praised Eason-Watkins as "an unsung hero of the Chicago Public Schools." Many were not happy with the mayor's decision. In a prepared statement, Chicago Teacher's Union President Marilyn Steward expressed disappointment that he did not appoint someone with a strong background in education. "He has to understand that we are working with children with emotional and social issues coming into the classroom" Steward said. "You cannot manage something that you do not understand." Reverend Jesse Jackson

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<sup>8</sup>Dorothy Shipps, "Updating Tradition: The Institutional Underpinnings of Modern Mayoral Control in Chicago Public Schools." In *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City*, edited by Joseph Viteritti (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 124.

said that Daley should have selected Eason-Watkins and called his selection “political.” Julie Woestehoff, executive director of Parents United for Responsible Education, called the move “a disservice to the city of Chicago.”

Mayor Daley’s decision revived a long-running debate in urban education over who makes the better leader: the lifelong teacher-turned-administrator, or the super-business manager that has never set foot in the classroom. Daley has been clear about his preference: “The system repeatedly failed our children. It is only after we separated the two—skilled educator and strong manager—that we started to see real reform.”<sup>9</sup> Daley first executed this philosophy in 1995 when he was given complete control over managing the Chicago Public Schools. The 1995 Illinois legislation allowed the Democratic mayor to select a “Chief Executive Officer” for the schools and appoint a powerful five-member board of education.<sup>10</sup>

In light of the “Superintendent versus CEO” debate, this study will examine CPS CEOs Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan through the lens of Sergiovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority* to assist in answering the question regarding why Daley chose non-educators to run the district after the 1995 Amendatory Act. While the Amendatory Act changed CPS’s governance structure and created the CEO title, Mayor Daley selected individuals to fill the roles that he believed were able to formulate solutions for the problems plaguing the district up to the 1995 Amendatory Act. The words and actions of Daley

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<sup>9</sup>Quotes from Huberman, Jackson, Woestehoff, and Daley taken from Sadovi, Carlos, and Dan Mihalopoulos. “Daley Standing by School Chief Choice - Huberman Appointment Called Political,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 2009.

<sup>10</sup>Ann Bradley, “Chicago Mayor Poised to Take District’s Reins,” *Education Week* 14, no. 39 (1995): 1-2.

and the two CEO's as related to their educational philosophies, political agendas, policies and practices during their tenures will be utilized to reveal the definition of an "Education CEO" according to CPS.

After the 1995 Amendatory Act, Mayor Daley appointed individuals that did not have educational backgrounds to the CEO position.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after former budget director Paul Vallas was appointed to the CPS CEO position in 1995, he stated: "There will be some headaches; there will also be improvements in what happens in the classroom. First, we'll be reaching out to all these interests, and then we'll have to have a meeting of the minds. But whatever the case, the mayor has put Gery and me over here to bring financial stability to the system and improve education. And we don't expect to fail."<sup>12</sup> Clearly, the goal of the mayor was to ensure that the Chicago Public Schools was run by an individual that could cut costs and balance the budget. This would require an individual that could manage the massive CPS bureaucracy. Wong and Sunderman argued that the word "bureaucracy" has gathered negative connotations over time, and it is simply seen as central control that exists to frustrate individuals whose charge is to carry out orders.<sup>13</sup> In analyzing the Chicago Public School System, they argue that bureaucratic organization facilitates effective management by making it possible to create

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<sup>11</sup>Paul Vallas claimed that he taught elementary school for a short period of time, but an investigation questioned if that was truly the case. For the purposes of this dissertation, the researcher will classify him as a non-educator.

<sup>12</sup>John Kass, "City Schools Get Chief Who Rejects Failure," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>13</sup>Wong and Sunderman, 20.

efficient systems to carry out financial and management tasks, and enhances the ability of the central office to tend to the interests of the district as a whole.

Additionally, this study intends to provide educational leaders with information to help them determine why educational reformers that backed the 1995 Chicago School Reform Act determined that the district should run like a business instead of utilizing a more traditional approach in line with school districts headed by an educational leader. Examining leadership decisions, the types of initiatives implemented by each leader, and the manner in which initiatives were executed through the lens of Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority* will help educational leaders to understand how the educational governance philosophy of the district affects the leadership philosophy throughout the district, all the way down to the classroom.

### **Research Questions**

This study will answer the following research questions:

1. Through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, what were the skills, knowledge and dispositions that Mayor Daley sought from the CEO position for Paul Vallas during the years of 1995-2001
2. Through the Lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, what were the skills, knowledge and dispositions that Mayor Daley sought from the CEO position for Arne Duncan during the years of 2001-2008?
3. Through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, how did Paul Vallas fulfill the CEO role based on Mayor Daley's criteria for the CPS CEO position?

4. Through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, how did Arne Duncan fulfill the CEO role based on Mayor Daley's criteria for the CPS CEO position?
5. How did the leadership styles of the Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan compare through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority?
6. What implications does the CEO model have for school governance and school leadership?

### **Proposed Methodology**

Gary McCulloch, in his book *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences* argues that documents can provide potent evidence of continuity and change in ideals and in practices in private and in the public arena.<sup>14</sup> In the spirit of that argument, the methodology utilized for this study will be historical documentary research. Primary and secondary sources will be used to gather words and actions of various individuals and applied to Sergiovanni's framework to conduct the analysis.

There are important distinctions between primary and secondary sources. A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time under study. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event. Some types of primary sources include:

- Original Documents: Diaries, speeches, manuscripts, newspapers, letters, interviews, news film footage, autobiographies, official records

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<sup>14</sup>Gary McCulloch, *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences* (Social Research and Educational Studies Series, 22) (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004).

- Creative Works: Poetry, drama, novels, music, art
- Relics or Artifacts: Pottery, furniture, clothing, buildings

A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them. Some types of secondary sources include:

- Publications: Textbooks, magazine articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, encyclopedias

Examples of secondary sources include:

- A journal/magazine article which interprets or reviews previous findings
- A history textbook
- A book about the effects of WWI

Through this study, the researcher will utilize public records from the Chicago Public Schools Archive located at 100 S. Clark Street in Chicago, and the Harold Washington Public Library in Chicago, including memos from Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan, and Board of Education Proceedings. Other sources utilized will be doctoral dissertations related to CPS school leadership, educational journal articles, Chicago Sun Times and Chicago Tribune newspaper articles, Chicago Teacher's Union publications, and televised speeches and presentations. Documents such as Board Proceedings, state legislative documents, and other related documents will provide the evidence necessary to outline policies and procedures while newspaper accounts and other related sources are utilized to give readers a feel for how individuals responded to certain situations at that time. Direct quotes are utilized often as a rich source of evidence to illustrate how the mayors and CEOs utilized media savvy to promote their agendas.



In analyzing historical documents, issues of reliability, bias and authenticity become relevant. The researcher of this study must take those issues into consideration when using particular documents to tell a story. Newspaper articles that may describe particular initiatives implemented by a CPS CEO may not be objective in its reporting of a story. An article in a Chicago Teacher's Union journal may not accurately reflect unbiased information. However, the usage of such documents is critical in examining the reaction of the public when certain initiatives were implemented and also in gauging who was involved in the implementation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher acknowledges that this study is subject to certain limitations. In researching the words and actions of Governor Jim Edgar, Mayor Richard M. Daley, Paul Vallas, and Arne Duncan, the researcher is limited to available documentation that may not always completely illustrate the true feelings of the speaker. With newspaper articles as a primary means of capturing the statements of individuals regarding particular events and actions, the speaker will usually utilize caution in revealing information, which may limit the perspective that is presented concerning the individuals that are examined in this study.

Another limitation of this study includes the failure to include direct interviews from the individuals examined in this study. Although the researcher contends that this study will provide sufficient perspectives through available documentation, it would have been interesting to include interviews from the individuals examined in this study if it were feasible to do so. This study is designed to utilize documents to present an account

of the individual's words and actions at that time, as opposed to their current perspective in retrospect.

Finally, this study is limited to the words and actions of individuals examined in this study to determine the definition of the educational CEO in Chicago. Although similar circumstances exist in other major cities, Chicago's public school history is unique and therefore resulted in a different approach to their educational governance structure. Therefore, this study provides a historical background of mayoral control in the public school systems of several major cities, but does not intend to present a framework as to how major public school systems should be run.

### **Biases of Researcher**

The researcher acknowledges personal biases that could potentially affect the presentation of information within this study. In order to maintain the integrity of this study, the researcher has identified all potential biases and maintains a personal journal for the purposes of recording personal reactions and opinions formed throughout the collection and presentation of data.

The researcher acknowledges that he is African-American male, who personally attended a Chicago Public School from grades kindergarten through fourth grade. The researcher did not have a particularly positive experience in general, and was removed and placed into parochial schools after completing the fourth grade. This negative opinion of public schooling could skew the presentation of information presented.

The researcher acknowledges that he is an educational leader in a Chicago Public School under the current educational governance structure that is examined in this study.

He has personally been affected by decisions made as a result of the current governance structure. He has participated in conversations with other CPS administrators that have questioned the effectiveness of a non-educator leading our school system. The researcher acknowledges that in order to maintain the integrity of this study, it is vital that his personal opinions regarding the governance structure of CPS do not affect his research or presentation of information.

### **Proposed Chapters**

Chapter II, A Historical Perspective of Mayoral Control of Schools in the United States, will provide a historical summation of state takeovers of school districts, as well as cities that have instituted varying degrees of mayoral control. This historical review will give readers a background of problems and issues that have plagued other major urban school districts as well as a framework for how they have elected to repair their schools with increased mayoral control. Major cities that experienced significant mayoral control included Boston, who would begin the charge in 1991, followed by Chicago in 1995, Baltimore in 1997, Cleveland in 1998, New York City in 2002, and the District of Columbia in 2007 (partial in 2002). The chapter ends with an in-depth examination of the history of mayoral control in 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago, events leading up to the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act, followed by an examination of the Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act, which were major revisions that were implemented in 1995. The major revisions included an abolishment of the 15 member board of education to allow for the mayor to appoint a five member School Reform Board of Trustees, the elimination of the “General Superintendent” position in favor of a “Chief Executive

Officer,” increased authority for principals, a reversal of previous decentralization efforts, a decrease in the Chicago Teachers Union bargaining rights, and increased flexibility in the use of state and local funds for the school board. This chapter will also illustrate the rationale for the implementation of the two acts. Finally, this chapter will analyze the words and actions of Governor Edgar as well as Mayor Daley leading up to his selection of the first CPS CEO to determine the skills, knowledge and dispositions that he sought from the CEO as well as compare those traits to the traits of a corporate CEO.

Chapter III will examine the tenure of CEO Paul Vallas and analyze his words and actions through the lens of Sergiovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority*. Vallas was the first to function under the title “CEO.” Preceding this title change was a perception that the system was prone to all sorts of problems stemming from a lack of focus on learning and effective fiscal management. The State of Illinois, after years of providing considerable resources and emergency funding worked with the city to develop a plan to bring better management into the Chicago Public Schools. In 1995, a reform movement passed by the State and supported by the City of Chicago led to the mayor’s appointment of a new oversight Reform Board of Trustees. With that change, a new management team was formed to lead the Chicago Public Schools. Along with the new management team, the law eliminated the title of “General Superintendent” and replaced it with “Chief Executive Officer.” The CEO title came with increased flexibility across certain funding categories, and broader powers of remediation to intervene in failing schools. This allowed the CEO to hold schools more accountable for results, which made

“accountability” a major theme of Vallas’ tenure.

Chapter IV will examine the tenure of CEO Arne Duncan and also analyze his words and actions through the lens of Sergiovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority*. In 2001, Mayor Daley showed displeasure in the decrease in student achievement test scores and shortly thereafter, the school board president resigned, followed by CEO Paul Vallas. Mayor Daley then turned to the former Deputy Chief of Staff to Paul Vallas, Arne Duncan. Duncan’s tenure would be marked by his management of the district in light of the No Child Left Behind Act, signed by former president George W. Bush in 2002.

The final chapter will contain an analysis of the words and actions of the two CEOs as compared to the words and actions of Governor Edgar and Mayor Daley in regards to what type of leader he wanted for the purposes of running the school system, as well as initiatives that came directly from the mayor. This chapter will also contain a comparison between the leadership styles of the two CEOs to analyze similarities and differences in how they ran the district during their tenures. The researcher will use the comparison to determine if there are trends and patterns of decision making that are exclusive to each leader according to the *Five Sources of Authority*. Additionally, this study will apply the arguments of Wong and Sergiovanni in regards to their views on effective school leadership. Wong argues that when power and authority are decentralized and dispersed throughout the system, it leaves room for organized groups to emphasize their own agendas.<sup>15</sup> Sergiovanni argues that individuals inherently work best when the work is satisfying and meaningful. In this instance, individuals work for the

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<sup>15</sup>Wong and Sunderman, 25.

professional ideal and for what is good. A top down bureaucracy will not cultivate followership, which is necessary to transform organizations. For the school leader, this dissertation will provide an examination into the tenures of Vallas and Duncan to highlight policies and reform efforts designed to improve the state of the Chicago Public Schools. Although the focus of this dissertation is not to judge the effectiveness of their leadership styles on student achievement, school leaders will be able to draw some conclusions regarding the usage of the CEO model to run a school system and its effect on producing effective school governance outcomes. This chapter will also contain implications for leadership as well as implications for further research.

### **Key Terms**

**Bureaucracy** – A way of organizing work through an administrative structure that defines authority and specifies the actions of those who occupy hierarchically arranged offices. Authority is exercised through the hierarchical ordering of relationships and systems of communication. Central to bureaucratic management is the specialized professional knowledge possessed by the person holding a particular office. Impersonal relationships are assumed to assure the detachment necessary for efficiency to govern administrative decisions.<sup>16</sup>

**Busing** – Mandatory busing plans were implemented to transport students from all black schools to all white schools. The objectives for mandatory busing included relieving overcrowding in sending schools, the promotion of stabilization in the communities involved, increase the desegregation in the areas involved, and to improve

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 19.

the educational experiences for all students involved.<sup>17</sup> It is widely argued that mandatory busing led to “white flight.”

**Chief Executive Officer** – Top executive responsible for a firm’s overall operations and performance. He or she is the leader of the firm, serves as the main link between the board of directors and the firm’s various parts or levels, and is held solely responsible for the firm’s success or failure. CEO implements and maintains corporate policy as established by the board and may also function as the chairman of the board.<sup>18</sup>

**Decentralization** – In regards to school reform, there are two perspectives related to decentralization. The managerial view refers to the transfer of authority from a higher level of a bureaucracy to a lower one in order to give local officials more flexibility in responding to particular needs. The second view is termed local mandate representation, which states that a representative should respond to the individual’s best interest so that the individual is pleased. In order to properly respond to community needs, extensive community involvement in decision-making is necessary to ensure that administrative decentralization is not an empty gesture. In other words, managerial decentralization can take place without citizens playing any role, and thus comes a failure to implement community wishes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Dionne Danna, "Racial Ideology and the Sanctity of the Neighborhood School in Chicago," *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education* 40, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 66.

<sup>18</sup>[www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com), BusinessDictionary.com, 2010.

<sup>19</sup>James G. Cibulka, *Obstacles to School Decentralization: The Chicago Case* (1974), 2, 7-8.

**Desegregation** – The term “desegregation” literally means to cease to be segregated. In regards to school enrollment patterns and the racial composition of students in public schools, the landmark *Brown v. Board* case dealt only with de jure segregation, which is intentional segregation. Since then, a great deal of attention has been placed on de facto segregation, which is segregation that occurs as a result of the racial segregation that occurs as a result of neighborhood settlement patterns.<sup>20</sup>

Inequalities between schools with a majority white student enrollment and schools with a majority black student enrollment were found in the 1950’s, and schools in major urban areas would soon have to implement mandatory desegregation plans. Resistance to desegregation efforts would ultimately render court ordered mandatory desegregation meaningless because there were so few whites left in the public school system by the 1980’s.<sup>21</sup>

**Deindustrialization** – This term is generally used to refer to the structural change in the economy that occurs as a result of the shift from a goods-producing manufacturing industrial economy to a more high-technology service-producing economy. A direct impact of this structural change is the loss of manufacturing jobs in the inner cities, and an increase in the demand for service-producing workers who typically need a relatively

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<sup>20</sup>Advisory Panel on Integration of the Public Schools, *Integration of the Public Schools--Chicago; Report to the Board of Education, City of Chicago*, 1964.

<sup>21</sup>John L. Rury, “Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago's Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (06/01/1999): 138.



high level of education. Those trends suggest a link in the formation of poverty areas in major metropolitan areas.<sup>22</sup>

**Educational Crisis** – CPS schools that met the criteria to of a school in the midst of an educational crisis would receive intervention from central office, the principal could be fired and the LSC members could be removed. Examples of the criteria that could be used were: The failure of the principal to develop or implement a school improvement plan, the failure of the principal to provide a safe building for students and staff, and a non-functional LSC.<sup>23</sup>

**Intervention** – Different from *reconstitution*, a school that was determined to be in intervention status were placed under the direct control of the CEO who could dismiss teachers directly for non-performance.<sup>24</sup>

**LSC** – Elected bodies which consist of six parents, two community members, two teachers, and the principal. The LSC chairperson must be a parent representative. LSC's major responsibilities are to approve the school budget and school improvement plan, evaluate the principal every year and to decide on the renewal of a principal's contract every four years.

**Patronage** – Political patronage is a form of constituency service that serves the electoral needs of incumbent politicians. Chicago political machines regained control of

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<sup>22</sup>Julian Chun-Chung Chow, "The Changing Structure of Neighborhood Social Conditions in Cleveland, Ohio, 1979-1989," PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1992, 30, 92.

<sup>23</sup>Chicago Public Schools. Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, September, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, 15-17.

<sup>24</sup>Chicago Public Schools. Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, June, 2000. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, 79-84.

the public schools in part through the issuance of patronage appointments in the non-teaching positions.<sup>25</sup>

**Political Machines** – A political machine is a political organization where the boss gains the support of followers who receive rewards for their efforts. In Chicago, machine politics were infused in the schools by the use of the expanding school system to reward business and machine supporters with custodial jobs and building projects. Black Chicago was eventually brought into the machine through the building of additional schools in black neighborhoods.<sup>26</sup> This practice inadvertently reinforced the segregation of students in neighborhood schools.

**Primary Source** – Refers to basic raw materials (such as government papers, diaries, and newspapers) which were created within the period of time that is studied.<sup>27</sup>

**Reconstitution** – The process of reconstitution involves the re-staffing of all employees in a school. Each employee of the school would have to interview for their positions. If not hired, they would be put into a reserve pool where they would be paid until they found another job. The decision to utilize reconstitution was determined by the CEO.

**School Board** – Local school boards exercise responsibility for the decision and policymaking for individual school districts. Local school boards of education are

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<sup>25</sup>Jim Carl, "Good Politics Is Good Government: The Troubling History of Mayoral Control of the Public Schools in Twentieth-Century Chicago," *American Journal of Education* 115, no. 2 (02/01/2009): 316.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 315.

<sup>27</sup>McCulloch, 30.

charged with creating the conditions within their school districts that will foster student achievement and for engaging the community in support of this central mission. Primary duties include establishing specific priorities for improving student learning and school performance, ensuring staff and resource allocations meet district goals, aligning programs and initiatives with student achievement priorities, and leveraging resources to address the needs of all students.<sup>28</sup>

**Secondary Source** – The books and articles produced later by historians studying a particular period of time, making use of primary documents within.<sup>29</sup>

**White Flight** – Refers to the change in school enrollment patterns due to the loss of middle class white students in the Chicago Public School system due to suburbanization, and enrollment of white students in to private and parochial schools. This loss is argued to be due to onset of desegregation efforts.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>National Association of State Boards of Education, <http://www.nasbe.org/index.php/section-table/32-faq-sbe/376-sb-different-local-sb>.

<sup>29</sup>McCulloch, 30.

<sup>30</sup>Rury, “Race, Space and the Politics,” 140.

**CHAPTER II**  
**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MAYORAL CONTROL OF**  
**SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Introduction**

Historically, the management of American schools was treated as other city municipalities, and was the direct responsibility of the city mayor.<sup>1</sup> Progressive era reformers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not approve of that arrangement, determining that mayors were subject to the political machines that often dominated local politics.<sup>2</sup> Progressive reformers fought to separate the educational system from other governmental departments by creating separate school districts with dedicated revenue streams.<sup>3</sup> As of late, city and state takeover of public school systems has gained prominence as a school reform strategy. This has been a manifestation of the growing concern of policymakers, educators and parents regarding the state of the nation's public schools. The 1990's in particular saw the emergence of a "new style" of mayor interested in taking a strong

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<sup>1</sup>Edelstein Fritz, *Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success* (Washington, DC: U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2006).

<sup>2</sup>Jeffery Henig, "Mayoral Control: What We Can and Cannot Learn From Other Cities," In *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City*, edited by Joseph Viteritti (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

leadership role in their city's school system.<sup>4</sup> Major cities that experienced significant mayoral control included Boston, who would begin the charge in 1991, followed by Chicago in 1995, Baltimore in 1997, Cleveland in 1998, New York City in 2002, and the District of Columbia in 2007 (partial in 2002).<sup>5</sup>

Mayor-appointed school districts are often the manifestation of the state takeover of school districts. As of 2002, 24 states had enacted policies that allowed them to take over a school district if it was experiencing academic difficulties. States could also take over a school district due to financial mismanagement, corrupt governance and failing infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> In a policy brief for the Educational Commission of the States, Todd Ziebarth outlined many opposing perspectives on the state takeover of schools. He argued that according to proponents of the approach, state takeovers are a necessary extension of a state's constitutional responsibilities, they provide a good opportunity for state and local decision makers to combine resources and knowledge to improve children's learning, allow a competent executive staff to guide the effective implementation of improvement efforts, and use achievement data collected from school districts and schools to bolster accountability efforts. He also argues that opponents of this approach assert that state takeovers imply that the community has the problems and

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<sup>4</sup>Kenneth K. Wong, Francis X. Shen, Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, and Stacey Rutledge, *The Education Mayor: Improving America's Schools* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup>Michael Kirst, "Mayoral Control of Schools: Politics, Trade-offs, and Outcomes." In *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City*, edited by Joseph Viteritti (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 46.

<sup>6</sup>T. Ziebarth, *State Takeovers and Reconstitutions Policy Brief*. Prepared for the Education Commission of the States, 2002.

the states have the answers, place poorly prepared state-selected officials in charge, use narrow learning methods, focus on cleaning up incompetent administration and fail to go to the root of the social problems facing disadvantaged students in urban school districts, and foster negative connotations and impressions that hinder the self-esteem of school board members, administrators, teachers, students and parents.<sup>7</sup>

### **Extent of Mayoral Control**

For school districts that have been turned over to the mayor for reform, the amount of mayoral control varies by the city. Kenneth Wong and Francis Shen have done extensive work regarding the research of mayoral control of school districts and the effects that mayoral takeover have on school performance. In an essay written for education week, they outlined the powers of mayors in regards to the selection of school boards<sup>8</sup>, and in their book, *The Education Mayor: Improving America's Schools*, they provided a chart of characteristics of school districts with mayor-led integrated governance.<sup>9</sup> A summary of that research is provided to illustrate some of those characteristics for major cities that have elected to utilize various degrees of mayoral control.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Kenneth Wong and Francis Shen, "Mayors Can Be Prime Movers' of Urban School Improvement," *Education Week* 14, no. 7 (2009): S11-S13.

<sup>9</sup>Wong, Shen et al., *The Education Mayor*.

### **Major Cities With a Significant Extent of Mayoral Control of Schools**

In Boston, Massachusetts as of 1992, the mayor picks a seven-member school committee from a list of names nominated by a screening panel and then the committee chooses the superintendent. The mayor selects the majority of the school board but does not have full appointment power. In Chicago, Illinois as of 1995, the mayor directly appoints a Chief Executive Officer, and also selects the seven members of the board of education. He appoints all of the board members and has full appointment power. In Baltimore, Maryland as of 1997, the mayor and governor jointly appoint the nine members of the school board from a list of qualified individuals submitted by the state board of education. This means that the mayor does not have full appointment power. In Cleveland, Ohio as of 1998, the mayor appoints the nine members of the school board from a slate of nominees selected by a local nominating panel. In this instance, the mayor appoints all of the board but does not have full appointment power. In New York City, New York as of 2002, the mayor has the authority to appoint the chancellor of schools (equivalent of traditional superintendent), and 8 of 13 members of what is called the Panel for Educational Policy. The mayor has full appointment power. In Washington, D.C. as of 2007, the mayor has governance authority previously held by the D.C. board of education but city council retains budgetary oversight.

### **Smaller Cities With a Significant Extent of Mayoral Control of Schools**

In New Haven, Connecticut, since 1990, the mayor actually serves on the board of education, and appoints the seven additional members of the board with full appointment power. In Providence, Rhode Island beginning before 1990, the mayor appoints the nine-

member school board from a slate of candidates developed by the Providence School Board Nominating Commission. In Trenton, New Jersey, beginning previously to 1990, the mayor appoints the nine-member board of education with full appointment power. In Yonkers, New York, since previously to 1990, the mayor appoints the nine-member board of education. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as of 2000, the mayor appoints all five members of the board of education and has full appointment power.

### **Cities With Lesser Degrees of Mayoral Control**

In Oakland, California from 2000-2004, the school board was expanded from seven to ten, which the three new board members appointed by the mayor. The mayor has full appointment power for the three board members. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the mayor appoints two of the five members of what is called the School Reform Commission, and the governor appoints the other three. Unlike in Baltimore, the mayor and governor's selections are separate instead of jointly done. In Hartford, Connecticut, as of 2005, the mayor appoints five of nine board of education members, including the president of the board. Before 2005, the school board was appointed by a mix of mayoral and state authorities, but currently, the mayor has full appointment power. In Detroit, Michigan from 1999-2004, the mayor appointed six of seven school board members. The seventh member was the state superintendent of public instruction. The mayor had full appointment power. In 2004, Detroit residents voted in a 2004 referendum to return to an elected school board for five years, and then the mayor would appoint all seven members.



## Cities in Which Mayoral Control Has Largely Taken Hold

### Boston

In the 1970's Boston, like many cities in the country, struggled with the integration of African Americans into public schools. Boston's racial issues were so highly publicized that business and political leaders vowed that their city would never again be "dragged through the mud."<sup>10</sup> Usdan and Cuban argue that the backlash against the racial conflict and the national embarrassment that took place as a result of their struggles with integration led to the early efforts of the city reformers to press for restructuring the way Boston schools were governed. The 1970's through the 1980's saw the Boston schools become political battlegrounds. In addition to desegregation issues, the separation of the school department from the general government created fragmentation and limited accountability. Infighting between departments made desegregation efforts even more difficult. Although reform efforts surfaced starting in the early 1970's, those efforts were overshadowed by the fact that between 1974 and the late 1980's, the U.S. District Court had issued more than four hundred court orders involving school closings, personnel decisions, textbook adoption and community partnerships.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Michael Usdan and Larry Cuban, "Boston: The Stars Finally in Alignment." In *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots: Improving America's Urban Schools*, edited by Michael Usdan and Larry Cuban (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003).

<sup>11</sup>John Portz and Robert Schwartz, "Governing the Boston Public Schools: Lessons in Mayoral Control." In *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City* edited by Joseph Viteritti (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009).

Typically, Boston's mayor did not involve himself in school administration. However, in the early 1970's, it was becoming increasingly clear to Boston Mayor Kevin White that if changes were not made, court ordered desegregation would occur and he would be forced to deal with them. This would prompt White to attempt to gain control of Boston's schools. That attempt was unsuccessful. In October of 1980, after racial tensions led to fighting between black and white students at South Boston High School, White was asked if the Boston Schools were in "crisis." He replied: "Yes, I think the schools are traumatized, but that is not the fault of the mayor. The Mayor had nothing to do with South Boston High School..."<sup>12</sup>

In the 1980's, criticisms of Boston's education system continued, and in 1983, the school committee grew from five members to thirteen. In 1984, the newly elected Raymond Flynn would declare his wishes for control of the Boston Public School system:

For the longest period of time there has been aggravation and hostility (in relations between the city and the school committee).<sup>13</sup> I think it's real important to send a real positive message. I hope to see, in the near future, public education returned to the city. We have to build up confidence that we are, in fact, serious about moving public education forward.<sup>14</sup>

In his first year, Mayor Flynn was invited to serve on the school board as an ex-officio member without voting privileges. He never fully assumed the seat, but attended some committee meetings. He would later find out that his unofficial status meant that he had

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<sup>12</sup>John Yang, "White's View on the Schools: Not my fault," *Boston Globe*, 1980.

<sup>13</sup>Boston referred to their "school board" as "school committee."

<sup>14</sup>Anonymous, "Flynn Speech to Education Panel: A Signal," *Boston Globe*, 1984.

very little leverage with the school board. In January of 1985, the school board hired nine individuals and promoted three, despite the mayor's educational advisor's recommendation not to do so.<sup>15</sup> For the next few years, Flynn hesitated to involve himself heavily with school politics.

By 1989, public education in Boston was the target of widespread criticism. Flynn then began to push education reform to the top of his agenda. In September of 1988, Flynn appointed an eleven member advisory committee to examine Boston school governance and other problematic issues. John Portz cites that the study declared that "frustration with school performance (in Boston) has reached an all time high."<sup>16</sup> The advisory committee reached a consensus in favor of turning the 13 member school committee into a panel appointed to the mayor, citing that the current structure made critical decision making difficult. When Flynn was directly asked if he was ready to campaign for an appointive school committee, Flynn's response was "I'm going to play it on the basis of what I think will work. If I see it, we'll go for it. We have to find out what has the confidence of the people of the city."<sup>17</sup> However, Flynn was clearly expressed frustrated with the current school governance structure of Boston Schools:

Being mayor, if the parks of this city aren't working, or the swings are broken, or the benches are broken, I know what I'll do. I'll get on the phone to the parks commissioner and growl, and they'll get fixed. But calling the School Department with such a request is to confront a system

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<sup>15</sup>Anonymous, "School Board Hires 9 Despite Flynn Advice," *Boston Globe*, 1985.

<sup>16</sup>John Portz, "Problem Definitions and Policy Agendas: Shaping the Educational Agenda in Boston," *Policy Studies Journal* 24, no. 3 (October 1, 1996): 371.

<sup>17</sup>Peter Howe, "Flynn Group Favoring Appointed School Panel," *Boston Globe*, 1989.

that some up with 59 different answers... a central bureaucracy that goes around in circles at Court Street without ever making a decision.<sup>18</sup>

The Flynn administration would seek three important changes in the Boston School System: A new student assignment plan to make busing more efficient, more authority and accountability for school leaders and teachers, as well as changes in how the schools were governed.

In November of 1989, a citywide advisory referendum on the issue would take place. Leading up to the nonbinding referendum, Flynn spent approximately \$65,000 on a last minute advertising campaign. Flynn urged voters to give Boston school children “a new school board that will stop wasting time and tax dollars.”<sup>19</sup> Flynn would continue to openly criticize the school governance structure and the Boston School System:

Right now everyone has the right to vote and look at what they’re voting for. It’s a terrible school system. Individually, they’re fine people but it’s the structure that’s inherently flawed. No matter who is on the committee, the first thing they have to worry about is getting reelected. I think that if you want to get into politics, then run for City Council. Politics does not belong in the schools.<sup>20</sup>

Later in the year, Flynn would even solicit parent support, sending letters to 100 parents. Despite strong efforts to sway voters, the referendum yielded mixed results. An equal number of committee members supported an appointed committee as well as opposed it. This would temporarily freeze efforts to convert to an appointed committee until efforts resumed in 1990, and in April of 1991, the city council voted to forward a petition to the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Diego Ribadeneira, “Flynn’s Referendum on School Committee: A Clear Test of his Popularity,” *Boston Globe*, 1989.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

state to create a seven-member committee appointed by the mayor. Under the new system, a thirteen-member nominating committee would be appointed by the mayor to review applications and recommend three individuals for each open committee position. Black members of city council continued to strongly debate the decision to change the governance structure, arguing that an appointed board would not represent and address the concerns of the black community. Despite criticism, Flynn appointed seven individuals out of the people recommended from the nominating committee to begin their terms in January of 1992.

This significant shift to mayoral control in Boston would begin an era of change which changed many roles and left questions as to how leadership would function with the new control issued to the mayor. Superintendent Lois Harrison-Jones, who was hired by the previous board who was elected, would now have to answer to the new mayor-elected board. Mayor Flynn and Harrison-Jones began to have disagreements which would often become news stories in the Boston Globe. In addition to that, Flynn appointed his top aide, Robert Consalvo, as executive secretary of the committee. This was a position that did not exist previous to Flynn gaining control. Questions would arise concerning his appointment, where board members as well as community members openly criticized the appointment because of the cost of his position, as well as the possibility that he was there to ensure that the mayor controlled the board. Controversies would continue as the newly appointed school board made decisions in an attempt to improve the Boston School system. Many accused the new board of being the mayor's "rubber stamp." The controversies would subside some when Mayor Flynn resigned to

join the Clinton administration as the ambassador to the Vatican in mid-1993. Thomas Menino, the city council president, became acting mayor, and later won the special election held that November.

Menino would immediately begin the process of change by demanding the resignations of all of Boston's city department heads—all but the superintendent of schools, Lois Harrison-Jones. "I look forward to working with Lois Harrison-Jones to improve the quality of education for all the students of Boston," says Menino. "As far as I'm concerned, her job is secure."<sup>21</sup> Many of Boston's public was surprised by his decision not to ask for her resignation. Although the school superintendent and the heads of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Health and Hospitals could not be fired by the mayor because they were appointed by the boards that run those agencies, that did not stop Menino from asking everyone except Harrison-Jones to resign anyway.

Intent on taking an active role in the decision making process within Boston Schools, Menino did not take long to assume an active role in school governance. A little over a month after becoming the mayor, he would unveil plans to create a year-long boot camp for fifty of Boston's most troubled students. Menino stated: "It's an alternate program for these kids to get them back into the mainstream. It's better to do this than spend \$50,000 on putting them in jail."<sup>22</sup> This plan would soon draw criticism from the

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<sup>21</sup>Adrian Walker, "The Menino Agenda Job of Schools Chief Safe, Menino Says," *Boston Globe*, 1993.

<sup>22</sup>Peter Canellos, "Student Boot Camp Proposed Menino Targets Troubled Youths," *Boston Globe*, 1993.

NAACP, and supposedly drew disappointment from Harrison-Jones, who reportedly wondered why she was not included in the planning of the boot camp.<sup>23</sup> This would serve as the beginning of a series of disagreements that ultimately ended with Menino asking Harrison-Jones to resign.

Menino continued to exert direct influence on educational affairs, setting a deadline on plans for improving schools for the Boston Compact, which was a partnership of businesses, higher education, parents and community agencies. Menino stated:

The goals we put forth today are the right goals. I am now challenging everyone who pursues partnerships and collaborative efforts in our schools to develop a strategic plan...that will detail how these efforts fit together. And I want this strategic plan on my desk by June 15.<sup>24</sup>

In a move that was done to help improve his working relationship with Boston's Superintendent, Menino invited Harrison-Jones to serve on his cabinet. "Lois Harrison-Jones will be the person who sits on the Cabinet," Menino said. "This is my way of reaching out. The schools are so important to me. If we don't do something in the next two years, they are gone."<sup>25</sup> However, this truce would only last a short time. By the end of the year in 1994, the Boston Globe put out several reports indicating that board members and the mayor encouraged Superintendent Harrison-Jones to step down from her post. In January of 1995, she delivered the following quote:

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<sup>23</sup>Peter Canellos, "Boot Camp Idea Draws Criticism From Two Fronts," *Boston Globe*, 1993.

<sup>24</sup>Jordana Hart, "Menino Sets a Deadline on Plans for Improving City's Public Schools," *Boston Globe*, 1994.

<sup>25</sup>Chris Black, "Menino Asks Harrison-Jones to Join Cabinet," *Boston Globe*, 1994.

The superintendent is the leader, the person who should set the pace. The difference between Boston and other places is that Boston will not respect the agenda or the plan or the vision put forth by the superintendent. It has happened here for the past two decades...I am very serious about my work and I work hard at what I do. I have very little time or inclination for politicizing children's lives and education. If Boston is to take its schools seriously, it has to get politics out of schools.<sup>26</sup>

Harrison-Jones stood strong and did not step down from the superintendent position.

However, she was later informed that her contract which would expire in July would not be renewed. After a broad search process, Thomas Payzant, assistant secretary in the United States Department of Education, and former superintendent, was offered Boston's superintendent position and assumed the post in September of 1995.

Portz and Schwartz argued that at this point in Boston School history, the key ingredients for the governance of school reform were now in place.<sup>27</sup> At this point, the mayor had been responsible in directly appointing five of the seven board members, as well as the superintendent. Payzant remained superintendent for nearly eleven years, which broke a trend in Boston (as well as other major urban school districts) which saw a new superintendent about every five years or less. Mayor Thomas Menino, since elected in 1993, continues as mayor as of this writing. The chair of the school committee would maintain her post for ten years. The president of the Boston Teacher's Union served at his post for twenty years, until 2003, when he would be replaced by a long-time Boston teacher and union member. Portz and Schwartz would contend that this alignment of

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<sup>26</sup>Jordana Hart, "Harrison-Jones Sees a Lack of Respect for Role," *Boston Globe*, 1995.

<sup>27</sup>Portz and Schwartz, 96.



individuals played an important role in fostering communication and cooperation around school improvement.<sup>28</sup>

In January of 1996, Mayor Menino would make a statement that solidified his stance on the improvement of the Boston School system and informed the public as to who to blame if it failed:

I want to be judged as your mayor by what happens now in the Boston public schools. If I fail to bring about these specific reforms by the year 2001, then judge me harshly.<sup>29</sup>

The Boston public was behind him, and the current school governance structure continued to earn support as well, as evidenced by the results when the issue was put on the ballot for voters in November of 1996. The ballot issue gave voters the choice of keeping the seven-member mayor-appointed committee, or reverting back to the thirteen-member elected committee. The appointed committee won 53 percent of the votes while returning to an elected committee got 23 percent of the vote (23 percent of the ballots were blank on this issue).<sup>30</sup>

With public support behind him, Mayor Menino would launch a number of major educational reforms during his tenure. In 1996, he proposed a five-year reform plan for Boston schools called Focus on Children. This plan had an emphasis on instructional improvement, and highlighted six areas: literacy and mathematics instruction, applying student work and data, professional development, replicating best practices, aligning

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid, 97.

<sup>29</sup>Geeta Anand, "Menino Pledges Better Schools Tells City: 'Judge Me Harshly' if I Fail – Sidebar Mayor Menino's Goals," *Boston Globe*, 1996.

<sup>30</sup>Portz and Schwartz, 97-98.

resources with an instructional focus, and community engagement. Other important reform initiatives would include the adoption of citywide learning standards, a rigorous promotion policy, a restructuring of large high schools into smaller learning communities, a full day program for all five year old students, a plan to reduce class sizes, and a technology initiative that increased the number of computers available in the classroom.<sup>31</sup> Those reforms had resulted in a general increase in student academic achievement as evidenced by Boston standardized test scores. However, Menino's "judge me harshly" statement would be used against him in a 2001 mayoral debate. When asked about student performance by a member of the national board of directors of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, Menino responded with the following:

Well, we have made progress...The long slide in the schools is over, and you have to continue to work with us on the improvement of the school system. It is unfortunate that we had a system where education wasn't the important issue and we just continued to promote kids. Now that has stopped. We have mandatory summer school for kids and we are also starting this very extensive after school program. But education in urban areas is not as easy as some people think it is.<sup>32</sup>

The debate over if mayoral control in Boston has truly brought about positive increases in student achievement continues, but Boston would serve as the first of many cities to utilize mayoral control as an educational reform. Chicago would be the next city to place the governance of the school system in the hands of the mayor, which will be discussed in detail at the end of this chapter. Baltimore would follow Chicago in 1997.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>32</sup>Scott Lehigh, "The Mayoral Debate We Ought to Have," *Boston Globe*, 2001.

## Baltimore

Historically, Baltimore already had a school structure that was mayor dominated. Baltimore's 1899 City Charter provided that the mayor appoint all nine members of the Board of School Commissioners, which gave the mayor considerable power over school affairs.<sup>33</sup> Baltimore's school superintendent officially reported to the school board, but in reality, depended on a large amount of mayoral support. The mayor also had considerable budgetary authority, with spending over \$300 requiring the approval of a five-member Board of Estimates, which the mayor controlled by holding a seat and appointing two of its members.<sup>34</sup> Frustrated with reform efforts, Maryland state officials would succeed in reversing a great amount of mayoral control and took on a considerable amount themselves, creating a city-state partnership.<sup>35</sup> Cibulka argues that the partial state takeover was a result of poor student performance and mismanagement that can be traced back to the policies of former mayor Donald Schaefer, who held office from 1971 until 1986.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board*, Baltimore would desegregate quickly without the conflict that was typical in other major cities.<sup>37</sup> In

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<sup>33</sup>Marion Orr, "Baltimore: The Limits of Mayoral Control." In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* edited by Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 27.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>James G. Cibulka, "Old Wine, New Bottles," *Education Next* 1, no. 4 (12-01-2001): 32.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Robert L. Crain, *The Politics of School Desegregation; Comparative Case Studies of Community Structure and Policy-Making* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1968), 72.

1963, school board president Eli Frank would appoint an ad hoc committee to prepare a report regarding desegregation efforts. The report was called *Seven Years of Desegregation in the Baltimore Public Schools: A Report*. The report charged the system with purposely segregating schools and overcrowding schools attended by African Americans by not building enough schools in the inner city, “districting” white schools to keep African Americans from enrolling, and refusing to issue transfers to African American students who attempted to enroll in predominately white schools.<sup>38</sup> The school system would ultimately purchase enough school buses to transfer five thousand students to bus African-American students into many all-white schools. This integration would be met with little opposition, which was an extremely liberal transformation.

By the time Mayor Schaefer took office in 1971, Baltimore’s white population would begin to shift to the suburbs, and by the late 1970’s, black residents made up the majority of Baltimore’s population. Naturally, these trends would be reflected in school enrollment patterns. By 1980, only 20 percent of Baltimore’s school population composed of whites. As percentage of black students grew, the black community wanted the demographics of school administration, teachers, and other school personnel to change with this shift.<sup>39</sup> In July of 1971, the school board would appoint the city’s first African-American superintendent, Roland Patterson. Superintendent Patterson and the mayor would clash often. Patterson immediately made significant changes to the

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>39</sup>Marion Orr, “The Challenge of School Reform in Baltimore: Race, Jobs, and Politics.” In *Changing Urban Education*, edited by Clarence N. Stone (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 98.

administrative staff in Baltimore, reassigning white administrators and replacing them with blacks. Patterson's hiring, which was supposed to help relieve racial tension in Baltimore ended up creating additional racial tensions.<sup>40</sup> Wong contends that initially, Schaefer and Patterson worked together without incident. But Patterson's assertive style and association with black community leaders began to cause a rift between the two. Wong provided a quote from the state superintendent: "In conducting school business, it is difficult to know who is in charge. Is it the president of the school board, the superintendent, the mayor, the city council, or some combination of some or all of them?"<sup>41</sup> In 1975, Mayor Schaefer did not reappoint three school board members who had been previously loyal to Patterson, and brought in his own board members. With this influence of the school board, Patterson was removed from his post that July.

The 1970's and 1980's would see the building of relationships between Baltimore administrators, city hall, and the school system.<sup>42</sup> Mayor Schaefer would reach an agreement with black leaders about how the school system would be controlled. Schaefer would select John Crew, a former deputy under former superintendent Roland Patterson as the city's second black superintendent. Black representation would remain constant, as two out of four deputy superintendents, thirteen of sixteen assistant superintendents,

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<sup>40</sup>Kenneth K. Wong, *City Choices: Education and Housing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>42</sup>Orr, "The Challenge of School Reform," 100.

and three of six regional superintendents were black. Along with this, several principals along with two thirds of the Baltimore teaching staff were black.<sup>43</sup>

Marion Orr argued that public education was not the main concern of Schaefer during his administration. As a result of this, educational spending was sparse. Schools operated with a shortage of books and low staffing levels in school support positions. The system had little room for enrichment programs, and low teacher pay restricted the system's ability to recruit good teachers.<sup>44</sup> Demographic shifts continued, and the white population that remained in the city attended private and parochial schools. But as long as Schaefer tended to the material needs of the black community, he continued to receive the majority of black votes.<sup>45</sup>

By 1987, it was evident that Baltimore was ready to elect a black mayor. Cibulka contended that a "new breed of urban mayor was emerging, people who saw the improvement of their city's schools as inextricably linked to the fate of the cities themselves."<sup>46</sup> Kurt Schmoke was to represent this type of mayor and new generation of African American leaders. Schmoke was the son of college educated parents, was a high school and college sports star, and a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, as well as a Rhodes Scholar. During his mayoral campaign, we would express

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<sup>43</sup>Wong, *City Choices*, 88.

<sup>44</sup>Orr, "The Challenge of School Reform," 101.

<sup>45</sup>Orr, "Baltimore: The Limits of Mayoral Control," 33.

<sup>46</sup>Cibulka, 33.

that the economic goals of Baltimore did not include neighborhood improvement.<sup>47</sup>

He promised Baltimore that he would focus on public education.

Schmoke was elected mayor in 1987. By 1989, he would reject the school board's majority choice to replace retiring superintendent Alice Pinderhughes, and instead endorsed his own candidate, Richard Hunter. Hunter would not last long, because of a difference in fundamental educational administration philosophy between him and the mayor. Schmoke would ask the school board not to renew his contract.<sup>48</sup> Walter Amprey would be hired to replace Hunter. By this time, Schmoke would begin to express some frustration with the Baltimore School system. His commitment began to be questioned when he reportedly considered taking his daughter out of the school system in 1992. Schmoke would be asked about the possible public reaction to that decision, and he answered:

Both of my children have had experiences in public and private schools. Different people will draw different conclusions. I think most people understand that I have responsibilities as a father and that is to do what is in the best interest of my child.<sup>49</sup>

Orr cites a report that was released in 1992 called *A Report on the Management of the Baltimore City Public Schools*, which reported that many of the systems' school based and central office administrators were incompetent and a culture existed that did

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<sup>47</sup>Orr, "Baltimore: The Limits of Mayoral Control," 37.

<sup>48</sup>Orr, "The Challenge of Reform in Baltimore," 105.

<sup>49</sup>Micheal Fletcher, "Mayor May Transfer Daughter - Private School for 6th-grader Mulled," *The Sun (Baltimore, MD)*, 1992.

not allow for effective management.<sup>50</sup> Few reform efforts were in place and Baltimore's students performed poorly academically.

However, Schmoke would demonstrate that he would be directly involved with school affairs. He would take advantage of his control of the Board of Estimates to increase the amount of local revenues that would be used for education. The amount of funds allocated for educational purposes increased each year during his first term.<sup>51</sup> In 1992, he would hire a private firm, Educational Alternatives, Incorporated, to run nine Baltimore Public Schools. Schmoke believed that the company could illustrate that giving schools more autonomy and utilizing private management techniques could improve performance.<sup>52</sup> The Sun ran a report calling the move "a courageous step to improve the schools."<sup>53</sup> This partnership would end in 1995 when the company failed to show significant improvements. Schmoke would also formulate a committee that consisted of central office administrators, teachers and representatives from BUILD (Baltimoreans United for Leadership Development) to develop a site-based management (SBM) plan. The plan would gain little support from Baltimore's schools.

Despite failed reform attempts, Schmoke won a third term in 1995. Leading up to his victory, the state of Maryland would be among the first in the nation to adopt high stakes testing, accountability reporting, and a program of intervention in low-performing

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<sup>50</sup>Orr, "The Challenge of Reform in Baltimore," 105.

<sup>51</sup>Orr, "Baltimore: The Limits of Mayoral Control," 40.

<sup>52</sup>Orr, "The Challenge of Reform in Baltimore," 106.

<sup>53</sup>Tim Baker, "A Courageous Step to Improve the Schools," *The Sun (Baltimore, MD)*, 1992.



schools. The state of Maryland declared that low-performing schools could be “reconstitution eligible” if it were not making adequate progress.<sup>54</sup> “Reconstitution eligible” was another term for state takeover. The state would require that schools meet an array of standards that include improved standardized test scores, attendance rates, lower dropout rates, and higher promotion rates to avoid state takeover. State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick, in a letter to *The Sun*, defined what the state’s intentions were:

I am concerned that there has been a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about what reconstitution is and what we are trying to achieve. Let me be absolutely clear. Reconstitution is not immediate state “takeover” or “seizure” of a school. It is a process of identifying a school in need of serious change and determining the appropriate actions for turning that school around. More importantly, it is about rejecting that time honored myth that some children are incapable of learning and that we should therefore consign them to failing schools.<sup>55</sup>

She would go on to assert that the state was not interested in being in the business of operating or contracting out the operation of individual schools, citing the importance of cooperation between the state, local school systems and individual school communities.

Although the state superintendent claimed that the state was not in the business of operating Baltimore schools, it would find that many were reconstitution eligible. The state would ultimately determine that the district itself was the problem. An ongoing lawsuit that was brought against Baltimore by a disability rights organization led to loss of control to operate special education programs through the orders of a federal judge.

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<sup>54</sup>Cibulka, 34.

<sup>55</sup>Nancy Grasmick, “‘Reconstitution:’ State’s Goal is Better Schools,” *The Sun (Baltimore, MD)*, 1994.

As a result of this, the state superintendent requested that an oversight team be put in place to review the all appointments of Superintendent Amprey above the rank of teacher.<sup>56</sup> As more lawsuits were brought, and the relationship between the state and the city continued to worsen, the state and city would reach an agreement that placed the state in charge of major management and educational reforms in 1997. Kurt Schmoke would decide that he would not run for reelection.

### **Cleveland**

In the decades leading up to 1998, Cleveland mayors, just as Boston mayors, did not make public school reform a priority. Mirroring issues similar to other urban school districts, Cleveland also experienced changes in the ethnic and racial background of its students as they complied with mandatory desegregation orders. Because Cleveland was so racially segregated, busing would be implemented in an attempt to desegregate its schools. Galster argued that this would cause a chain reaction called “white flight,” where white families moved to the suburbs, causing the schools to become even more segregated.<sup>57</sup> Student performance in Cleveland was generally poor. Rich and Chambers argued that the concerns of Clevelanders became manifested in mistrust and unwillingness on the part of many citizens, politicians and businesses to invest more

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<sup>56</sup>Cibulka, 34.

<sup>57</sup>George C. Galster, *White Flight from Racially Integrated Neighborhoods in the 1970s: The Cleveland Experience* (Berkeley: Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics, University of California, Berkeley, 1987).

funding into a system that was so broken.<sup>58</sup> A fiscal crisis would soon develop, leaving the city with an educational debt that would cause the state to have to put the district in receivership for three years in 1981.<sup>59</sup> Cleveland's high dropout rates, low achievement scores, and fiscal mismanagement would cause the city to begin the process of reforming its public schools.

Unlike Boston mayors, Cleveland Mayor Michael White would at least attempt to endorse a more collaborative approach to reforming Cleveland's schools. White would begin to respond to the city's concerns by launching the Cleveland Summit on Education in May of 1990. Participants of this summit would give recommendations that would target nine key areas for reform. The summit would convene again in 1991, and review prior recommendations as well as discuss securing the funding to implement additional reforms. White told summit participants that they must be the driving force to initiate change:

We must work like never before to ensure they (recommendations) are implemented. We cannot relax. We cannot sit down. We cannot leave this building today and say the work is done. All of us must dig in, roll up our sleeves and work like never before.<sup>60</sup>

White would also provide support to what was known as the "Four L-Slate Reform Coalition." Those would be school board candidates whose names started with the letter

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<sup>58</sup>Wilbur Rich and Stephanie Chambers, "Cleveland: Takeovers and Makeovers Are Not the Same." In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* edited by Jeffrey Henig and Wilbur C. Rich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 162.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Laura Yee, "Plain, Dealer R. School Summit Leaders Sign Pact," *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1991.

“L.” His support would help them land school board election victories and characterize the school board as being a “reform board.”<sup>61</sup>

Despite White’s efforts, Cleveland’s governor, George Voinovich, would begin to intervene in Cleveland school reform efforts. He would publicly announce that he was considering a plan that would replace the Cleveland Board of Education and superintendent for up to three years. School board members spoke out against this plan. Board member Martha Smith was quoted as saying that “he (Governor Voinovich) has not been a friend of the Cleveland Public Schools. I have not seen him exhibit any sensitivity or understanding of the district.” Board member Stanley Tolliver claims: “He doesn’t discuss what he’s going to do about poverty, high unemployment, the drug problem, and all the other societal ills that our kids face, but he thinks that changing the governance will help the school.”<sup>62</sup> Mayor White would claim to be shocked that the governor was considering a state takeover. He would openly oppose:

I’m not looking for a confrontation and I don’t think bickering solves anything, but I think his plan is premature. A state takeover will not cleanse the schools. I am more concerned about getting citizens involved from all segments to improve the schools...There is no quick fix. It takes the involvement of all sectors of the community and a commitment to bring about change. It will never happen with an edict from the governor.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Rich and Chambers, 163.

<sup>62</sup>Mary Beth Lane, “Plain, Dealer Bureau. Voinovich Plan Would Let Voters Replace School Board,” *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1991.

<sup>63</sup>Mark Russell, “Plain, Dealer R. Schools Takeover Should Be ‘Last Resort,’ White Says,” *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1991.

White would continue to build public support and consensus for school reform.

Governor Voinovich would later claim that he was prepared to be patient regarding a school-takeover bill.

Towards the middle to late months of 1991, Mayor White would begin to exhibit a loss of confidence in the Cleveland school board. As he continued to endorse his own candidates for school board seats, he would openly criticize the incumbents:

I want the people of this city to make the decision. If they don't make the decision to get rid of these incumbents – the people who have destroyed this system for their own gain, to maintain their own political bases – then we're going to deal with it on November 6, and the call will be loud and clear and will be from all parts of this community for the state to take this school system.<sup>64</sup>

While warning Cleveland of the possible consequences of not electing reform-minded school board members, White continued to sharply criticize board members:

Today we have children who for weeks have eaten baloney sandwiches. They try to learn in schools where the roofs are leaking. They sit in classrooms where there are not enough books. They sit in classes where there are not enough materials. And all we get from the school board is more talk about politics more talk about the court order and more attempts to divide this community, black against white.<sup>65</sup>

White reasoned that a new group of board members who shared his views would make necessary fundamental changes to public policy.<sup>66</sup>

In 1993, Cleveland would have its third educational summit, which focused on the implementation of Superintendent Sammie Parrish's Vision 21 plan. The Vision 21 plan

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<sup>64</sup>Steve Luttner, "Politics W. White Rips School Board Incumbents," *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1991.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Rich and Chambers, 168.

was presented by Parrish in late 1992, which was a reform plan that included developing a long range education strategy, forging consensus in modifying the desegregation order, developing a cost-cutting and overall financial plan, and creating a building-use plan. This plan was extremely important in that reforms contained in this plan was ultimately utilize to cause Judge Battisti to give preliminary approval to end federal court supervision. The plan itself predicted that by the year 2000, the Cleveland Public Schools would be recognized nationally for academic excellence. The vision of the plan would encompass three main components:

- A Comprehensive Core, created by work teams comprising the major stakeholders in the education process and addressing the educational foundation for all students by outlining steps required to “raise the floor;”
- Enhancements to the Comprehensive Core, designed primarily to provide equitable learning opportunities for African-American students but benefiting all of our students by going beyond the core requirements;
- Parental Choice, providing a dramatically improved magnet school program and a new system of community school choices.<sup>67</sup>

The Vision 21 plan would not survive Superintendent Parrish’s tenure, which would end in her resigning in 1995.

Leading up to 1994, Cleveland would again experience a fiscal crisis. Voters rejected a 12.9 million dollar operating levy in 1994, and for the 1994-1995 school year, the district overspent its \$500 million dollar budget and was \$125 million dollars in debt. Superintendent Parrish would resign in February of 1995. Rich and Chambers argue that the Parrish resignation, along with the failed levy attempts and new debt led to added

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<sup>67</sup>Public S. Cleveland, *Vision 21: An Action Plan for the 21st Century*, 1993.

uncertainty to the ongoing fiscal situation going on in the district.<sup>68</sup> In March of 1995, Judge Robert P. Krupansky would order the state to takeover the Cleveland Public School System.

Rich and Chambers contend that by 1994, Mayor White began taking a less visible role in the educational summits.<sup>69</sup> Mayor White was away on business and did not attend the 1996 summit. This summit drew a record two thousand attendees, including many parents, who complained about Cleveland teachers, the lack of books and computers in schools, the condition of school buildings, the lack of parental involvement, and threats to student safety.<sup>70</sup> Mayoral control was also a topic discussed during the summit. Activists began to monitor progress being made in Chicago, who converted to full mayoral control in 1995. Westside-Eastside Congregations Acting Now, a coalition of churches and activists, endorsed the idea of the mayor taking control of Cleveland's schools: "The question being asked is, who is the most natural person to run the schools? The conversation always comes back to the mayor."<sup>71</sup> Rich and Chambers pointed out that support for mayoral control is typically not common within the African American communities. They argue that the support shown here was likely related to Mayor

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<sup>68</sup>Rich and Chambers, 171.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>70</sup>Patrice M. Jones, "Summit On School Woes Draws 2,000 City Parents, Students, Others look for Ways to Fix System," *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1996.

<sup>71</sup>Scott Stephens, "Plain, Dealer R. More Mayors Taking Control of Schools," *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1995.

White's prior use of cooperative reform strategies.<sup>72</sup> They were also of the opinion that Mayor White became more convinced that an appointed school board would be more effective than an elected one. In his 1996 State of the City Address, Mayor White would call for a law that would grant him the authority to appoint all members of the school board.

In September of 1997, the state legislature passed House Bill 269 which granted the mayor control of the schools. Specifically, the bill gave the mayor the authority to appoint the school board, transfers control of the district to the appointed school board once the federal court order releases the district from state control, schedules the referendum on the mayor's authority to appoint board members for the general election in the first even numbered year occurring at least four years after the federal court releases the district from state control (2002), and requires that the mayor alone appoint and dismiss a chief executive officer (CEO) of the district during the first thirty months after the appointed board initially assumes control. After thirty months, the mayor is to confer with the school board.

In a letter to Cleveland newspaper *The Plain Dealer*, White would explain that the new proposal did not mean that the mayor would run the schools:

First, contrary to what its opponents say, the governance proposal does provide for a public vote before any permanent change is made in the current system...Second, the proposal does not call for the mayor to run the schools. That is the job of the CEO. The proposal calls for the mayor to make sure that the schools are being run by people who have the best

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<sup>72</sup>Rich and Chambers, 172.



interests of children in mind and who are willing to make difficult decisions to improve conditions in schools.<sup>73</sup>

However, certain groups were not convinced that the mayoral takeover was right for Cleveland. The mayoral takeover was met with many lawsuits. Former school board president Stanley Tolliver filed suit, claiming that the takeover violated the city charter. The Cleveland Teachers Unions and the Service Employees International Union Local 47 filed suit, as well as the NAACP. All lost their cases.

In 1998, White appointed Reverend Hilton Smith as chair of the newly created nine-member school board. The mayor also appointed Barbara Byrd-Bennett, from New York City, as the new CEO. Seemingly, the new CEO and Mayor White had a positive working relationship. The school board was usually unanimous on decisions made. During a telephone interview with Wilbur Rich, school board chair Hilton Smith would claim that there were “no politics on the board. It is like any other board...(except) no one is running for office.”<sup>74</sup> In his 2000 State of the Union address, White would go so far as to claim the board was the best board of education that Cleveland has had in the past thirty years.

Everyone was not quite sold on the new governance structure. A poll conducted by the *Plain Dealer* would reveal that the majority of Clevelanders wanted to return to the previous governance structure, where the school board was elected.<sup>75</sup> Many would

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<sup>73</sup>Michael R. White, “Appointed CEO Will Focus on Children, Improvements,” *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)*, 1997.

<sup>74</sup>Rich and Chambers, 174.

<sup>75</sup>Stephens and Frolik.

point to the fact that fiscally, the district continued to struggle. Cleveland's continual struggles can be connected to how it uses property taxes as a primary source of revenue. Chow has done extensive research on neighborhood social conditions in Cleveland. His research points out that in the 1980's, one third of the city's population would become "family breakout areas." These areas would be saturated with African-American, single parent families with female-headed households, with low income levels. He would go on to describe outlier areas, where residents typically had not completed high school, and relied on public assistance as income levels were extremely low. Public housing was the major housing stock in that area. Chow argued that as the economic structure of Cleveland continued to change with deindustrialization, working class blacks became victimized by this trend.<sup>76</sup> With these trends became more intense in the 1990's, the declining tax base left school budgets in deficit. Although an operating levy that generated \$67 million dollars per year had been passed in 1996, giving the district much needed stability, the district still had many areas where improvements in schools has not been addressed.<sup>77</sup>

Currently, the district is facing a \$53 million dollar deficit for the 2010-2011 school year has a high school dropout rate of about 54 percent, severely declining enrollment, and close to 75 percent of its schools are listed under academic emergency or watch status. Overall, the district is in "academic watch" status, since in all elementary

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<sup>76</sup>Chow, 92.

<sup>77</sup>Rich and Chambers, 182.

grade levels, student math and reading scores are well below state averages.<sup>78</sup> Rich and Chambers wonder whether Cleveland schools' future policy options will lead to improved academic performance. This was supposed to be the purpose of their reform efforts.<sup>79</sup>

## **New York**

The New York Public School System is the largest in the world, educating more than one million students in over 1,500 public schools. It is over twice as large as the next largest district that will be examined in this chapter, Chicago Public School District 299. Historically, the physical size of the school district made governing a difficult task. In April of 1842, the legislature allowed for a board of education to be formed in New York City. The board consisted of thirty four people, and schools were broken up into seventeen wards. Each ward was to function as if it were a separate town under state law.<sup>80</sup> School reformers would begin to push for governance changes in 1867. They wanted to replace the elected board with a smaller, appointed one. By 1873, legislature would pass a law that reduced the size of the board and gave the mayor the power to appoint the new twenty-one member board. Control of schools would be centralized under this board. This system would remain until reformers complained that board

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<sup>78</sup>Ohio State Report Card 2008-2009.

<sup>79</sup>Rich and Chambers, 186.

<sup>80</sup>Diane Ravitch, "A History of Public School Governance in New York City." In *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City* edited by Joseph Viteritti (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 174.

members were too political and successfully convinced the state legislature to further consolidate the school board.<sup>81</sup>

As New York City solidified its boundaries in 1898, and established its five boroughs, each borough would have its own school board. After complaints of disunity between the boroughs in regards to uniformity in educational practices, William Henry Maxwell would be chosen as the superintendent for the entire city of New York. Criticism of the borough system would result in the state legislature eradicating the borough boards and establishing a single board of education again in 1901.<sup>82</sup> This time, the board would be expanded to 46 members, with varying numbers of representatives from each of the five boroughs. The city was split into 46 districts, and each of the districts had a seven-member local school board. In 1917, at the urging of New York Mayor John Mitchel, the legislature reduced the size of the board from forty-six all the way down to seven. This system of governance featuring a central board appointed by the mayor, with local school boards would last until 1969.

In January of 1968, Mayor John Lindsay sent a letter to New York Governor, as well as the state legislature, supporting decentralization. Within the letter, he explained that “The goal of decentralization is the improvement of the quality of education in the New York City public school system, to be achieved by liberating the system from the constraints that have smothered it and by reconnecting the parties concerned with public

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 179.

education in a constructive, creative effort.”<sup>83</sup> In 1969, the decentralization issue would heat up as public hearings on the topic took place. During one hearing that took place in Brooklyn in the month of January, a speaker had to be removed from the hearing by the police because he refused to give up the microphone after his five minutes elapsed.<sup>84</sup> Minority communities demanded racial integration or community control. Protestors argued that to improve the condition and quality of the schools, it was important that the individual communities had a voice in school governance. A report by Marilyn Gittell would report that decentralization was necessary because of the new reform board and the fact that its troubles over integration, decentralization and other issues led to a great deal of turnover amongst them. The positions were held by twenty persons at various times.<sup>85</sup> In another document, Gittell acknowledged that the need for greater community involvement was evident, but an effective decentralization plan must outline (1) the procedure for the selection of the board; (2) the method of appointment of the local superintendent; (3) the control of the budget plan; (4) the determination of the deployment of personnel; and (5) the setting of boundaries for local districts.<sup>86</sup> The difficulty in agreeing to terms prolonged the development of the decentralization plan.

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<sup>83</sup>John V. Lindsay and New York City Office of the Mayor, *Letter to New York State Officials Discussing Decentralization in the New York City School System*, 1968.

<sup>84</sup>Leonard Buder, "Speaker Ousted by Police in Brooklyn Debate on School Decentralization," *New York Times* (1923-Current file), January 4, 1969.

<sup>85</sup>Marilyn Gittell, City University of New York, Flushing, NY, Institute for Community Studies, and Others. *School Decentralization and School Policy in New York City*, 1971, 10.

<sup>86</sup>Marilyn Gittell, *Problems of School Decentralization in New York City*, 1967.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1969, the state senate came up with a resolution after working for ten straight days, resulting in the drafting of the decentralization law.

The new law would drastically change the structure of New York school governance once again. A summary would be prepared by the Office of Education Affairs outlining the many changes that were to take place.<sup>87</sup> The new law required that there would be between 30 and 33 community districts, none fewer than 20,000 students in average daily attendance. Each community school district was to have a community of board of between seven and fifteen members. Each member would be elected into their positions. The city board would consist of seven members, five paid by the city council, and two appointed by the mayor. Generally, the community boards were to have same powers previously possessed by the city board, except for those reserved for the chancellor. The chancellor would be appointed by the city board with a general authority as the chief administrator, as outlined in the law. The community boards had the authority to select the superintendent of the community district.

Ravitch argued that criticism of decentralization would emerge as community school boards would occasionally become enmeshed in political scandals, such as selling jobs, taking kickbacks, and buying school services from friends and family.<sup>88</sup> She also contended that decentralization affected student achievement in that more affluent districts produced better achievement results than impoverished ones. The school board, according to Ravitch, seemed unable to set a clear agenda for the improvement of

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<sup>87</sup>New York City Office of Education Affairs, *A Summary of the 1969 School Decentralization Law for New York City (as passed by the New York Legislature April 30, 1969)*, 1969.

<sup>88</sup>Ravitch, "A History of Public School Governance in New York City," 182.

schools. Some mayors complained of the inability to take over school boards. The decentralization debate would continue behind the scene for over thirty years until Rudolph Giuliani became mayor in 1994.

Ramon Cortines was selected as New York's Chancellor in August of 1993, and Giuliani was inaugurated as mayor of New York City in January of 1994. In February of that year, Giuliani would unveil the financial plan, which called for \$291 million dollars in school cuts. After this was proposed in a meeting between the mayor and the chancellor, Cortines questioned the mayor's authority to order the cuts that he proposed. Giuliani asked for a "bureaucratic head count" of all eligible workers. Cortines would turn in a figure that was less than half the actual amount. After another count revealed that those numbers were off, Giuliani announced that we would appoint a fiscal monitor to watch over the board of education. A midnight meeting between the chancellor and the mayor's office resulted in an agreement for the chancellor to cut 2500 positions over two years. Giuliani also demanded that he dismiss two aides or he would appoint the fiscal monitor. After the chancellor missed the deadline to dismiss the aides, Mayor Giuliani announced the appointment of Herman Badillo as fiscal monitor, and Cortines resigned an hour later. In response to the resignation of the chancellor, Giuliani would remark:

I'm sorry he did this, but we really have to move on and reform this system. There are some people who are capable of doing it, and some people who maybe won't make personnel changes for one reason or another. You can't reform the system by magic or all by yourself...He's had months to make internal changes. He's made no changes. He's

sitting there with the same bureaucracy that brought you the bloat in the first place.<sup>89</sup>

The New York governor, Mario Cuomo, would remediate. As a result of remediation, the chancellor decided to return after his aides were allowed to stay, and he would accept Badillo as counsel to the mayor on education.

Although the two sides reached an agreement on that issue, the school budget issue would remain a point of contention. Chancellor Cortines, acting as an advocate for schools, demanded additional school funding. Mayor Giuliani would be viewed as the “bully,” denying those requests. Schools were overcrowded, and Cortines asked for additional capital improvement funding to build additional room. Giuliani denied the request. Cortines endorsed an agreement between the Board of Education, and the school custodians. Giuliani rejected the tentative agreement. The mayor would begin to openly back reform plans designed to eliminate the central administration of the New York City Board of Education. He would be in favor of redistributing the central board’s power to the local boards. In September of 1994, Giuliani would outright denounce the New York Board of Education:

We are spending \$8.5 billion on our schools, so when you don’t see money getting into your classroom and your schoolroom, it’s because of the bureaucracy. It’s because of decisions that they make, and it’s because we have this system that allegedly is independent, and I can’t revise the budgeting of it...I would cut out, massively cut our and crush the bureaucracy of the school system at a level that the bureaucracy of the school system isn’t ready for yet.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Excerpts of remarks by the Mayor, *New York Times* (1923-Current file), April 9, 1994.

<sup>90</sup>Alison Mitchell, "Giuliani Denounces Board of Education," *New York Times* (1923-Current file), September 13, 1994.



Giuliani would continue to demand cuts that sparked talks of a shortened school day or school year. Clashes between Giuliani and Cortines continued, and the board backed Cortines who was the seventh New York City chancellor in ten years, and Giuliani wanted to have input on selecting a new chancellor.

In regards to the state of educational affairs in New York at that time, Diane Ravitch, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, wrote an article for the *New York Times*, stating that the New York City's public school system needed to be "reinvented from the ground up."<sup>91</sup> She argued that the system became a "bureaucratic monster" that mismanages funds that should be allocated for instruction. She provided statistics from the State Commissioner of Education which reported that 63 of the state's worst 77 schools were in New York City. Fewer than half of the ninth graders graduate within four years. She went on to contend that although Chancellor Cortines was energetic and hands-on, he lacked the tools to bring about the changes that were desperately needed to renovate bad schools.<sup>92</sup> She called for a drastic altering of the system's governance structure. Giuliani wanted the power to appoint all board members, but this would not be granted to him during his tenure. However, in 1996, the decentralization-centralization "see-saw" would produce another change in the way the schools would be governed. In December, the New York State Legislature passed a new statute that weakened the authority of the community school boards, giving the

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<sup>91</sup>Diane Ravitch, "First, Save the Schools," *New York Times* (1923-Current file), June 27, 1994.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

chancellor broader powers to hire and fire community superintendents, and remove individual board members.<sup>93</sup>

Michael Bloomberg would become the next mayor of New York City in 2001. He declared that the New York City schools were in a “state of emergency,” and previous to his election, he revealed his plans to push for the abolishment of the Board of Education and to be allowed to directly select the chancellor.<sup>94</sup> Bloomberg would be successful in convincing the legislature to pass legislation in 2002 that abolished the board of education and the elected local school boards. The legislature granted the mayor the sole authority to appoint the school chancellor. The statute also created an education panel in the place of the school board, which would be comprised of eight members which would be appointed by the mayor. This panel would later be perceived as a rubber stamp for decisions made by the chancellor and the mayor.<sup>95</sup> This mayoral takeover would serve as one of the most comprehensive of the major cities that have adopted this model as a means of school reform.

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<sup>93</sup>David C. Bloomfield, Bruce S. Cooper, and Columbia University, New York, Teachers College, *Recentralization or Strategic Management? A New Governance Model for the New York City Public Schools. Occasional Paper No. 1* (1998): 4.

<sup>94</sup>Abby Goodnough, "On Education, Plentiful Plans, Much Caution: The Schools on Education, Plentiful Plans From Candidates, and a Big Dose of Caution," *New York Times* (1923-Current file), September 10, 2001.

<sup>95</sup>Ravitch, "A History of Public School Governance in New York City," 184.

### **Washington, D.C.**

In the 1840's, Washington's City Council voted to establish a public school system. Initially, it was open to just whites. In the 1860's, schools were opened for black students. As educational appropriations increased, the Washington City Council passed an act that created the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The mayor vetoed the act, stating that the superintendent should be appointed by the mayor. In 1858, the Council passed a law which granted the mayor the authority to appoint the school trustees. In 1869, the Council passed legislation that granted the mayor to appoint a Superintendent of Schools to oversee the schools under the guidance of the board of trustees.<sup>96</sup>

In 1871, Congress would merge the separate cities of Washington City and Georgetown City, along with some surrounding rural county area under a single government called the District of Columbia. The President appointed a Governor, who assumed the responsibility for appointing superintendents for the three separate areas. The governor would appoint one superintendent that would be responsible for the three school boards that ran each school system. Black schools had their own board of trustees and superintendent. That structure would be later abolished, and the governor would be replaced by a three person commission, a Board of Trustees, and two superintendents.

In 1900, conflict regarding the governance of the school system would resurface. The superintendent of the white schools was released, and the Senate District Committee

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<sup>96</sup>Steven J. Diner, District of Columbia University, Washington, DC: Department of Urban Studies, and District of Columbia University, *The Governance of Education in the District of Columbia: An Historical Analysis of Current Issues. Studies in D.C. History and Public Policy Paper No. 2* (1982): 7.

would examine the system of school management in Washington to determine that the Board of Trustees authority was too indistinct and easy to control by the Commissioners.<sup>97</sup> This would lead to a restructuring of the school system by Congress. They would create a seven member Board of Education, who was appointed by the Commissioners, which had the authority over all administrative matters in the public schools, including the power to appoint a single superintendent and assistant superintendents over all of the schools, as well as other employees including teachers.

In the decades to pass, Washington D.C. experienced many problems with the school governance structure. The Board of Trustees constantly battled with the Commissioners over school financial needs. The Organic Act of 1906 would be established, which shifted the responsibility for the selection of the school board from the Commissioners to the courts. The act would also give the superintendent the authority to appoint and dismiss all of his or her subordinates. This system would remain in place for the next 62 years.

In the wake of the landmark *Brown v. Board* case that legally ended segregation in schools, Washington, D.C. would experience case law unique to their location. Decided alongside the *Brown* case, *Bolling v. Sharpe* was a case that was relevant to D.C. because a difference in the law. The petitioners were refused admission to a public school attended by whites because of their race. After appealing to the courts for admission, their case was dismissed. The Equal Protection Clause of the fourteenth amendment disallows states from exercising racial segregation in public schools.

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 12.

However, the Fifth Amendment, which is applicable in the District of Columbia, does not contain an equal protection clause as the fourteenth amendment, which applies only to the states.<sup>98</sup> The Supreme Court would ultimately decide

In view of our decision that the Constitution prohibits the states from maintaining racially segregated public schools, it would be unthinkable that the same Constitution would impose a lesser duty on the Federal Government. We hold that racial segregation in the public schools in the District of Columbia is a denial of the due process of law guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.<sup>99</sup>

Washington D.C. would respond quickly to the decision of the court, and ended the dual school system. Eight days after *Bolling v. Sharpe*, the school board developed a desegregation policy. By November of 1954, three quarters of the district's white students attended schools with black students.<sup>100</sup>

The next important discrimination case would take place thirteen years later. The 1967 *Hobson v. Hanson* case would examine substandard education of the poor:

It is regrettable, of course, that in deciding this case the court must act in an area so alien to its expertise. It would be far better indeed for these great social and political problems to be resolved in the political arena by other branches of government. But these are social and political problems which seem at times to defy such resolution. In such situations, under our system, the judiciary must bear a hand and accept its responsibility to assist in the solution where constitutional rights hang in the balance.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Congress of the U.S., Washington, DC House Committee on the Judiciary, *Leading Court Decision Pertinent to Public School Desegregation* (1972), 8.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>100</sup>Jeffrey R. Henig, "Patterns of School-Level Racial Change in D.C. in the Wake of Brown: Perceptual Legacies of Desegregation," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, no. 3 (09/01/1997): 448.

<sup>101</sup>Inger, Morton, and others, and Center for Urban E., *Hobson v. Hansen--What is Law For*, 1967.

Judge Wright, in delivering his decision, delivered these words as he accused Washington D.C. schools of practicing “criminal” discrimination against poor black students. Judge Wright held that the substandard education of the poor was discriminatory, regardless of race, and ordered the busing of blacks to predominately white schools, teacher integration, and the ending of academic tracking. He also ordered a bar against economic discrimination, holding that the annual per pupil expenditure in black schools was \$100 less than in white schools. This case was significant because it would begin to outline what equity in education truly meant.

Washington D.C. implemented an elected school board in 1969, and Congress established an elected mayor and council in 1973. The school board structure that was implemented consisted of eight members elected by ward and three elected at-large. Henig argued that during the late 1960’s and into the 1970’s, the school board became the focal point for individuals and groups to build political power because it was the only major elected local office in the district.<sup>102</sup> He went on to characterize the period of time following the elected school board as one where “few thought that the schools were working as well as they should be during this period, but neither was there a sense that matters were wildly out-of-control.”<sup>103</sup>

The 1990’s would bring about major problems in the Washington D.C. public school system. Unsatisfactory student academic performance as a whole led to the hiring

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<sup>102</sup>Jeffrey Henig, “Washington, DC: Race, Issue Definition, and School Board Restructuring.” In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* edited by Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 198.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 199.

of Frank Smith as superintendent, who had success in Dayton, Ohio. Conditions would not significantly improve during his tenure. The structure of the school board was brought into question. There was a notion that the different entities that raised school revenue versus spent the funds for school education would not ever reconcile the feeling that either enough money was allocated for the schools, or on the other end, the money was not used wisely enough. Second, the ward based membership of the school board created members who provided constituent service rather than broad policy setting.<sup>104</sup>

In 1995, Congress passed a law creating a Presidentially-appointed District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Board (Control Board), and a Chief Financial Officer appointed by the mayor. The mayor was granted the power to appoint a seven-member board from a list of fifteen nominees selected by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The Washington Post reported that the control board produced a report that blamed the superintendent for spending heavily on office operations while teachers lacked the necessary materials to adequately educate the city's students. During Smith's tenure, the report stated, student test scores declined, the district has a high dropout rate, and buildings are crumbling and abysmal financial, personnel and contracting practices took place.<sup>105</sup> John Hill Jr., the control board's executive director, said the superintendent and school board deserve "An absolute F." The report stated:

The deplorable record of the District's public schools by every important educational and management measure has left one of the city's most important public responsibilities in a state of crisis, creating an emergency

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 200.

<sup>105</sup>David A. Vise, "D.C. Control Board Takes Charge of Public Schools," *Washington Post*, 1996.

that can no longer be excused or ignored. In virtually every area, and for every grade level, the system has failed to provide our children with a quality education and safe environment in which to learn. This failure is the result of not the students—for all students can succeed—but of the educationally and managerially bankrupt school system.<sup>106</sup>

Superintendent Smith claimed that the report was filled with outdated information that painted an unfairly grim picture: “All of us know this school system is not where it should be. We haven’t made the progress we should have made. You don’t need to put stuff out to make it look worse than it is. It is already bad enough as it is.”<sup>107</sup>

In 1996, shortly after the Control Board report was released, the control board took drastic measures. They fired the superintendent, and stripped the elected school board of most of its authority until June of 2000, and gave oversight of the system to an appointed nine-member Board of Trustees. A reform group named the DC Appleseed Center began in late 1997, to examine the Control Board’s operations to make a determination if the system would be in adequate shape for local control. In September of 1999, they would release a report entitled *Reforming the D.C. Board of Education: A Building Block for Better Public Schools*. In this report, they recommended that the school board’s size should be reduced from the then current number of eleven members, with their rationale being smaller bodies work better as a unit.<sup>108</sup> They also discussed advantages and disadvantages associated with a fully or partially appointed board. They acknowledged that mayoral control would centralize accountability, but also came with

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Appleseed Center, *Reforming the D.C. Board of Education: A Building Block for Better Public Schools* (Washington DC: DC Appleseed Center, 1999).



risks, if the mayor did not appoint school board members who represent the concerns of the entire city.

As a result, Kevin Chavous, Chair of the Committee on Education Libraries and Recreation introduced the School Governance Act of 1999 and the School Governance Companion Act of 1999, which recommended some important changes, including the reduction of the Board of Education from eleven members to nine, required that the members be elected by D.C. residents, and the president be elected at large. D.C. mayor Anthony Williams would take those recommendations a step forward, and asked for an even smaller board and argued that he should select all board members as well as the school superintendent.<sup>109</sup> A compromise would ultimately be reached, and as part of a referendum that took place in June of 2000, the school board was reduced to nine members, general election voters would select five of nine members, and the mayor with the advice and consent of the Council, would select the other four members.

Mayor Williams would not end his efforts of gaining direct control of the troubled D.C. public school system. In 2003, he lobbied to strip the Board of Education of most of its power and take direct control of the system: “The schools ought to be under mayor and the council. I’m ultimately accountable for what happens to the students.”<sup>110</sup> In February of 2004, he would release a school governance reform proposal. The purpose of the reform according to the report was to centralize accountability to ensure greater

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<sup>109</sup>Henig, “Washington, DC: Race, Issue Definition, and School Board Restructuring,” 203.

<sup>110</sup>Craig Timberg and Justin B. Williams, “Seeks School Takeover – Reform Efforts Unsuccessful, D.C. Mayor Says,” *Washington Post*, 2003.

programmatic and fiscal oversight, strengthen the role of the superintendent, increase opportunities for improved coordination of district services in support of student achievement, and maintain the Board of Education as an “important avenue for citizen input.”<sup>111</sup> Mayor Williams proposed that the structure of the board remain intact, but the board would be reestablished as an advisory board, and all current policy, oversight and rule making authority would be transferred to the mayor, who would determine what would be delegated to the Chancellor which the mayor appointed. Adrian Fenty would be elected mayor and assume office in 2007. Fenty would continue to push for mayoral control, leading to the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007. This act gave the mayor the authority to govern the public schools in D.C., as well as over all curricula, operations, functions, budget, personnel, labor negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, facilities, and other education matters. The mayor is to decide which of those responsibilities to delegate to a designee as he or she determines is warranted. The act also eliminated the position of “Superintendent of Schools”, and replaced that with the position of “Chancellor.”

### **Chicago**

In October of 1996, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley discussed the topic of educational reform in a room full of area educators, business leaders, parents and community activists. Boston mayor Thomas Menino, who was given school board appointment power in 1992, was also in attendance. Daley told the group that “Because of Mayor Menino’s dedication to school reform, I’ve asked him to chair a U.S.

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<sup>111</sup>Fact Sheet: Mayor Williams’ School Governance Reform Proposal, February 2004.

Conference of Mayors task force on education. That task force will work to put the education agendas of cities at the top of the national education agenda.”<sup>112</sup> Daley discussed various reforms such as a back-to-basics curriculum, mandatory homework, performance contracts for school principals, an academic probation period for schools which are failing their students, and a zero-tolerance policy on weapons. “Mayors need to set the standards for the community, to give people direction so that they can make a difference. That is why it is important for mayors to be accountable.”<sup>113</sup>

In 1995, Illinois Governor Jim Edgar signed a Republican-drafted bill that put Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in charge of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The governor claimed “This bold, innovative approach should bring more accountability, better fiscal management and a higher quality of education to a system that desperately needs an overhaul.”<sup>114</sup> The bill would follow the footsteps of reform efforts implemented in Boston in 1992, and would prompt several cities to adopt some form of mayoral control for its schools. Major features of this bill included the authority for the mayor to select a “Chief Executive Officer” and appoint a powerful five member “corporate style” board of education. Kirst and Bulkey contend that Chicago has the most extreme form of mayor impact.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Mike Brown, Boston: Menino Says Mayors Key to Better Public Schools, Press Release, United States Conferences of Mayors.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Lonnie Harp, Governor Signs Bill Putting Mayor in Control of Chicago Schools. *Education Week* 14, no. 37 (06/07/1995): 11.

<sup>115</sup>Michael W. Kirst and Katrina E. Bulkeley, *Mayoral Takeover: The Different Directions Taken in Different Cities*, 2001.

Jim Carl argues that Chicago has had a long tradition of varying levels of mayoral school control. Before the 1995 reform, Chicago school reformers have “all encountered Chicago’s mayors at the top of the school bureaucracy.”<sup>116</sup> Chicago, as one of few cities that have never had an elected school board, has always experienced mayoral-appointed school boards. Until 1979, mayors were directly in charge of school budgets. The varying degree of mayoral control was highly depended upon the mayor’s style and political aims. Most Chicago mayors supported the governance of schools by educational experts. Few mayors endorsed any major reform efforts related to the governance structure, including Richard M. Daley.

Chicago’s first schools were established in the 1830’s. Funds for early schools were sparse, and one teacher would often supervise classes of 100 or more students. As the student population grew, Chicago’s first superintendent would be hired in 1854. John Dore was appointed by the city council, and worked for higher quality for teachers, improved facilities, and separation of grade levels. After the school population grew to more than 27,000 students, the state legislature created a Board of Education, which consisted of members appointed by the mayor to oversee school governance throughout Chicago. The school system grew steadily, and the Board of Education responded by publishing curriculum guides and sponsoring teacher institutes for the purposes of improving instruction. By 1897, the Chicago Teachers Federation was formed to help improve the working conditions for the expanding teacher population that grew to over 5,000.

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<sup>116</sup>Carl, “Good Politics is Good Government,” 308.

The first major attempt at reform would take place in 1897, when Mayor Carter Harrison II, encouraged by University of Chicago President William Harper, sought approval to appoint a commission to investigate the Chicago Public School system. In 1898, the committee would finish its work and produced a comprehensive report that would become known as the “Harper Report.” The beginning of the report contained communication from the mayor that was presented to the City Council of Chicago that outlined the rationale for the work of the commission:

With the continual growth of the city, additional burdens keep coming to the door of the board of education, which is seriously handicapped by having to deal with new conditions and difficult developments in the harness of antiquated methods. A change is needed, a change is essential in regard to the educational and business conduct of the school system, and to that end, I request power to appoint a commission to consist of nine, two to be members of the city council, two to be members of the board of education, and five to be outside citizens. The objective of this appointment of the commission is to utilize all that is good in the present system, to discard all that is defective and apply new methods where needed.<sup>117</sup>

The major recommendations outlined in the report were a mayor-appointed board with a reduction in the number of board of education members, more power for the general superintendent of schools, a business manager that was left free to exclusively handle executive work, and an increase in the qualifications needed to become a CPS teacher. The Chicago Teacher’s Federation did not embrace those recommendations because of a

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<sup>117</sup>Educational Commission, *Report of the Educational Commission of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1898).

perception that its members would be left out of decision making processes.<sup>118</sup> They were ultimately able to block the passage of the Harper Bill.

Carl would describe the next mayor, William “Big Bill” Thompson as a machine politician who used schools to galvanize voters.<sup>119</sup> Urban political machines were built fundamentally on the votes of various immigrant populations. Successful machines provided jobs, political appointments and welfare benefits in exchange for political loyalty. Carl argues that the expanding school system allowed Thompson to dole out building projects and patronage appointments to reward his business and machine supporters. Thompson would take an anti-labor position and was instrumental in dismantling the Chicago Teachers Federation.

Thompson successfully convinced the city council to investigate the state of Chicago Public Schools in 1916. The committee published a report entitled *Recommendations for Reorganization of the Public School System of the City of Chicago*. The recommendations were similar to those published in the Harper Report. By 1917, the Otis Law was passed by the Illinois Legislature. This law would include provisions that dramatically changed the structure of Chicago school governance. Main features of the law begins with an strengthening of the superintendent position, extending the term from one to four years, allowing the superintendent to hire and fire teachers, and clearly defined the superintendents responsibilities. The school board experienced an expansion of its power, which included more separation from the city council, the authority to buy

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<sup>118</sup>Johnnie J. Turner, Jr., “A Review of Selected Reform Initiatives in the Chicago Public Schools, 1895-1995,” PhD diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 2003.

<sup>119</sup>Carl, “Good Politics is Good Government,” 309.

and sell school property, as well as the ability to borrow up to 75 percent of the taxes for the following school year. Teachers would receive better job security with tenure after three years, and dismissal only when formally charged and a board investigation took place.<sup>120</sup>

Mayor Thompson would also directly influence educational policy after he determined that textbooks used in many Chicago Public Schools were “unpatriotic.” Supposedly, materials used by the teachers in painted American colonists in a negative light. One of the books was used by school teachers in a course at the University of Chicago as part of the coursework necessary to become a history teacher. Thompson claimed “If public school teachers studied and believed this book ‘New Viewpoints in American History,’ they would not be human if they did not pass on seditious viewpoints to their students.”<sup>121</sup> Thompson would ultimately use this to launch a campaign to appoint a “patriotic” school board and drive out the superintendent, William McAndrew.

Anton Cermak would become the next mayor of Chicago and took office in 1931. Cermak was considered the first of a democratic machine that lasted for decades. The school district at that time was in the middle of a financial windfall. He asked the school board to consider deep cuts, but was assassinated before any changes were implemented. Edward Kelly would announce that he planned to follow Cermak’s plan for the Chicago

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<sup>120</sup>Paul E. Peterson, “Research C. National Opinion, and Others,” *Organizing Schools in Pluralist America, 1870-1940. Final Report*, 1983, 265.

<sup>121</sup>Anonymous, “Bill Points Out 'Unfit' Passages in School Books,” *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, April 18, 1927.

Public Schools.<sup>122</sup> In 1933, the terms of five board members ended, and he appointed individuals that would carry out his wishes in regards to school cuts. Kelly was able to bring the schools more fully under machine control, and developed a relationship with President Roosevelt that helped to create more federally funded jobs that he doled out as patronage jobs.<sup>123</sup> Carl noted that Kelly would ultimately be taken to task by the National Education Association (NEA) who questioned how the school system cut, demoted and transferred teachers while disproportionate amounts of money was put into maintenance and other non-education related services. Pressure related to NEA reports resulted in the establishment of a nominating committee which appointed new board members. Along with this, the state legislature gave the responsibility of hiring a general superintendent of schools whose educational requirements were defined by the law and who would be in charge of business and legal departments to the school boards.<sup>124</sup> Carl argued these changes only gave the mere appearance that public school governance was detached from mayoral interference.

As the Democratic county chairman and nominee for mayor in 1955, Richard J. Daley spoke in support of a wider use of city schools, a sales tax hike to aid schools, and pay increases for teachers. Known as a “family man,” he spoke positively of teachers: “Parents should teach their children to have full respect for their teachers, policemen, and

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<sup>122</sup>Carl, “Good Politics is Good Government,” 314.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Dorothy Shipp, “Chicago: The National ‘Model’ Reexamined.” In *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* edited by Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 65.



other adults.”<sup>125</sup> During Daley’s tenure as Mayor, he believed that a good government management style kept teachers together as well as other patronage workers. He practiced partisan politics and rewarded friends and punished enemies, and also managed the budgetary and city planning aspects of being mayor.<sup>126</sup> Daley supported neighborhood construction projects and advocated for sufficient school facilities. Other than that, he maintained a distance from school affairs.<sup>127</sup>

As Daley endorsed the building of schools, racial politics would become a focus. The schools were used to support the machine as contracts for the building of schools went to his loyal constituency. Dorothy Shipps argued that “patronage was re-instituted with a vengeance” under Daley’s mayoralty.<sup>128</sup> During the 1950’s and early 1960’s, more schools were built in areas that were predominately black than any other area, as a reward for their vote. But those same building patterns would lead to keeping black students in what Carl described as “densely populated ghettos.”<sup>129</sup> Surprisingly enough, Daley was able to capture the black vote without initially responding to desegregation expectations set forth from the *Brown* decisions of 1954 and 1955.

Mirel noted that through the 1960’s and 1970’s, Mayor Daley’s aim was stopping white flight by maintaining the current composition of the neighborhood structure rather

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<sup>125</sup>Anonymous, “Dad’ Daley Offers Lots of Good Advice,” *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, July 6, 1955.

<sup>126</sup>Carl, “Good Politics is Good Government,” 317.

<sup>127</sup>Rury, “Race, Space, and Politics,” 134.

<sup>128</sup>Dorothy Shipps, “Big Business and School Reform: The Case of Chicago, 1988,” PhD diss., Stanford University, 1995, 187.

<sup>129</sup>Carl, “Good Politics is Good Government,” 318.

than racial integration of the schools.<sup>130</sup> The fear of neighborhood integration prompted small white demonstrations regarding school integration or housing reform in the early 1960's. A group of demonstrators at Bogan High School located on the southwest side of Chicago successfully convinced the superintendent, Benjamin Willis, to remove Bogan from a list of schools that was supposed to receive voluntary transfer applications from black students which was designed to relieve school overcrowding.<sup>131</sup> Rury argued that the fear of losing white support caused the mayor not to care the state of the city's schools, but instead, the protection of his power of the Democratic political machine, and protecting the existing distribution of status and privilege in Chicago.<sup>132</sup> The prevailing thought was that the white vote could be lost, but blacks would continue to vote for Daley. So instead of working to desegregate schools, Superintendent Willis did the opposite. He addressed the problem of school overcrowding in predominately black neighborhoods by ordering the erection of temporary mobile classroom units that would be situated near the main school building on vacant lots. These buildings would be referred to as "Willis Wagons." Willis would ultimately assist Daley in keeping the status quo in the city, and Mayor Daley allowed Willis to take the heat with any community displeasure.

Richard J. Daley's management of political machines and silence on matters of desegregation set the stage for a collapse in the governance of the Chicago Public

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<sup>130</sup>Jeffrey Mirel, "School Reform, Chicago Style: Educational Innovation in a Changing Urban Context, 1976-1991," *Urban Education* 28, no. 2 (07/01/1993): 124.

<sup>131</sup>Rury, "Race, Space, and Politics," 133.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 135.

Schools. The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) was empowered by Mayor Daley leading into the 1970's and several teacher strikes took place. In order to maintain order, Daley settled strikes by negotiating in the favor of the teacher's union, but the city did not have the money that he promised. He was able to convince state legislators to alter state aid formulas and lessen limitations on school borrowing, and utilized shady accounting practices to keep the districts' bonds unrealistically high.<sup>133</sup> This fiscal mismanagement would lead to the formation of the School Finance Authority which was controlled by Chicago's bankers. They would be in charge of managing CPS financial issues. Daley's death in 1976 would weaken machine politics and set the stage for the anti-machine Democrat to take over as mayor in 1983, Harold Washington.

In summary, the years after Richard J. Daley's death would bring a shakeup of the political machine, and more involvement in school governance by business leaders. One organization that would become heavily involved was the Commercial Club of Chicago, founded in 1877. The Commercial Club was a social club for some of Chicago's commercial and industrial giants. The purpose of the club, as Shipps notes, was to "insure the success of their own businesses while building the prestige of Chicago in the eyes of the more established Easterners who had invested in their city."<sup>134</sup> The club publicly attempted to reduce corruption in the city government and to spend educational funds more efficiently during the 1930's. The most frequent meeting topics would be

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<sup>133</sup>Shipps, "Updating Tradition," 120.

<sup>134</sup>Shipps, "Big Business and School Reform," 130.

infrastructure, municipal reform and education.<sup>135</sup> In the early 1900's, they would attempt to influence school policy by advocating for vocational education. They would ultimately lobby for an independent system of public vocational schools. Although the club repeatedly brought their proposal to the state government, this system would not ever be instituted. They were successful in helping to centralize the Chicago Public School System. They believed that principles of business efficiency would work in the schools as it had in their businesses.<sup>136</sup> They would also attempt to take control of the Chicago's worsening school financial situation in 1930.<sup>137</sup>

Another entity that would become more involved in educational policy was Chicago United. The formation of Chicago United would arise as a result of civil unrest with the city's black leaders. In 1966, Martin Luther King came to Chicago to assist in eliminating slums in Chicago's ghettos. After a giant rally at Soldier field, King taped a list of demands regarding open housing on the door of city hall. Non-violent marches on white working class communities ensued. Although they were not successful in changing the racially segregated housing patterns in Chicago, their efforts led to a mayoral summit which included a prominent Commercial Club member. Summit meetings would result in the formation of the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, which was to monitor compliance to open housing, educate the public about the effects of

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<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>137</sup>Dorothy Shipps goes into more detail about the Commercial Club and its influence on Chicago politics and educational policy, as well as their relationship with Mayor Daley in her dissertation.

housing discrimination and seek federal injunctions against those who discriminated.<sup>138</sup>

The Leadership Council would not be able to stifle the resentment and anger in the black communities however. Neighborhoods were torched in frustration after King's assassination. Some of the leaders of the Commercial Club were victims of arson as well, including Carson Pirie Scott department store and Montgomery Ward. Jesse Jackson insisted that the mayor call a conference of the leading businessmen in order to be made aware of the problems in black ghettos. Chicago United was formed by Commercial Club leaders as an avenue to facilitate communications between black leaders and white businessmen.<sup>139</sup> Ultimately, Chicago United would work with Chicago Superintendents and members of the school board in an attempt to decentralize the board's responsibilities in order for the board to deal with policy, and for the schools to be accountable for student performance.<sup>140</sup>

After years of working behind the scenes, the Commercial Club as well as Chicago United would look to take a more significant role in public educational policy making. The two organizations, along with the newly formed Civic Committee of the Commercial Club would be authorized to serve as decision makers in the policy making process by a governor and two mayors.<sup>141</sup> As a result, the organizations formulated the School Finance Authority, which would have an oversight role in school financing, and

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 205.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>140</sup>Shipp goes into more detail about Chicago United in her dissertation.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 234.

selected an entire school board. Their growing authority and influence led to the school reform act of 1988.

Harold Washington took office as Chicago's mayor in 1983. Carl contends that Washington helped define and implement an approach to urban school reform that emphasized grass roots initiatives and stressed equitable levels of funding in the context of the city's racial segregation.<sup>142</sup> The black population of Chicago grew, but more importantly, the percentage of the city's black population grew between 1950 and 1980 as a result of large percentage of whites that moved to Chicago's suburbs. As a result of those migration patterns, and because of minority poverty rates, the rate of low income student enrollment increased while white enrollment decreased. In 1950, whites consisted of 62 percent of CPS student enrollment. By 1983, white enrollment was less than 17 percent.<sup>143</sup> Washington did not focus on desegregation because he did not believe that it was realistic to expect equitable desegregation with the number of white students in the district. Furthermore, Washington attended predominately black schools while enrolled in Chicago schools himself and believed in excellent black schools.

Washington solicited the advice of the Commercial Club and Chicago United business leaders and gave them authority in the policy formation process in the CPS. Washington would select Chicago United to select a new school board and they were to be heavily involved in a city wide summit to address the high dropout rate as well as poor

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<sup>142</sup>Jim Carl, "Harold Washington and Chicago's Schools between Civil Rights and the Decline of the New Deal Consensus, 1955-1987," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 313.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, 315.

achievement status. In 1985, an attempt would be made to convince the Illinois General Assembly to approve an elected school board that failed.<sup>144</sup> But demands for school improvement increased, and it was becoming evident that governance changes would have to take place. Washington would find himself in a precarious position when it came to school reform. Washington advocated for fairness in educational opportunities and equality in the quality of education and educational funding. Grass roots community leaders who helped him get into office were hoping for drastic school improvement measures. However, many of Washington's supporters worked for the Board of Education. Many of the calls for a change in governance could greatly impact the teachers, administrators, and central office workers who also supported Washington.<sup>145</sup> He would begin planning an educational summit to address the high school dropout rate, and the lack of jobs available for CPS graduates by working with the business community, which he did not build his platform with. His sudden death in 1987 would cause the summit to lose momentum.

In 1987, U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett, called Chicago's schools the worst in the nation: "If it isn't the last, I don't know who is. There can't be very many cities that are worse. Chicago is pretty much it. How can anyone who feels about children not feel terrible about Chicago schools? You have an educational meltdown."<sup>146</sup> Bennett went on to contend that a first step in solving the problem is reducing the systems

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<sup>144</sup>Mirel, 131.

<sup>145</sup>Carl, "Harold Washington and Chicago's Schools," 329.

<sup>146</sup>Banas and Byers.

bureaucracy, and to create a program of school-based accountability. Without Washington's guidance, the grassroots school activists, public school advocacy groups, business leaders and legislators that he brought together were responsible for advocating for the 1988 legislation that would be known as the Chicago School Reform Act. This act would create school-based accountability measures that Bennett spoke of. Three major provisions of the act were:

- Goals were established for the school system in areas such as reading, writing, and math. The law also set specific graduation, attendance, promotions, and achievement test levels that schools would have to meet by the 1993-1994 school year.
- The allocation of resources to reduce the size of the central bureaucracy, placing a cap on administrative costs and transitioning funds from central office to the schools.
- An eleven member local school council (LSC) was established, consisting of six parents, two community members, two teachers, and the principal who together would set policy and make important educational and budgetary decisions in the city's individual schools.<sup>147</sup>

The local school council's parent and community members would be elected by the geographical area that the school served, and the teacher members would be elected by teachers in the school building. Also, the new law required the formation of a Professional Personnel Advisory Committee in every school, which consisted of teachers and the principal, who were responsible for formulating a school improvement for the LSC to approve. The law also created sub district (broken up by geographic boundaries) councils which were composed of parent and/or community representatives in each LSC in the sub district that had the authority to hire and fire sub district superintendents. The

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<sup>147</sup>Mirel, 137.



law also created a school board nominating committee consisting of five mayoral appointees and eighteen additional people that were elected from the sub district councils that recommended prospective school board members to the mayor.<sup>148</sup>

The elements that were unique about the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 centered on its success in decentralizing the district. The law truly reduced the size of the central bureaucracy. It shifted a great deal of power to the individual schools, and put it in the hands of the community. Principals, who normally accrued tenure in the position, were stripped of tenure and performance contracts were put in place. However, principals were given increased abilities to remove teachers, as well as more control in other areas. There were important aspects to the Chicago Public School System that did not change as a result of the law. One element that remained unchanged was educational funding. Although the need for additional funds existed, the individual schools would have to function under the same financial constraints. Also, the School Finance Authority remained in charge of finances, but with increased authority. Third, the nominating committee was created to limit the mayor's choices for school board members, but the mayor still retained the right to appoint all of the school board members. The new law expanded the number of board members from 11 to 15. Finally, the teacher's union still had to negotiate with the central board rather than LSC's.

The late Richard J. Daley's son, Richard M. Daley would take office in April of 1989, inheriting the new reform act. By 1995, dissatisfaction with the reform act would result in major amendments to the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988. Wong and

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 138.

others, and Ziebarth outlined sources of dissatisfaction with the act. Among them was the fact there was not any improvement regarding student achievement. Second, the LSCs did not encourage an increase in parental involvement in schools. Third, another budgetary crisis ensued, putting the opening of schools on time in 1995 in jeopardy. Fourth, the school board and top administrators failed to restore public confidence in the system. Lastly, Mayor Richard M. Daley was frustrated by constraints over the appointment of school board members.<sup>149,150</sup>

The Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act of 1995 would dramatically shift power over the school district back to the mayor. Ziebarth outlined the major features of this act:

- Gave the mayor the authority to appoint all school members and top administrators, and decreased the number of central board members to five
- Created “corporate style” positions in regard to the top administrative offices and replaced the “general superintendent” position to “chief executive officer”
- Eliminated the School Board Nominating Commission and the School Finance Authority
- Expanded the financial authority of the board
- Restricted the bargaining power of the Chicago Teachers Union
- Gave school board the power to hold LSCs accountable to system-wide standards
- Gave district flexibility in utilizing private agencies to provide certain services

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<sup>149</sup>Kenneth K. Wong, Robert Dreeben, Laurence E. Lynn Jr., and Gail L. Sunderman, “Student S. Mid-Atlantic Lab for, and National Research Center on Education in the Inner Cities,” *Integrated Governance as a Reform Strategy in the Chicago Public Schools. Publication Series No. 10* (1997): 6.

<sup>150</sup>Todd Ziebarth, “The States Education Commission of 1999,” *The Changing Landscape of Education Governance*, 19.

- Gave the CEO the authority to place poorly performing schools on remediation, probation, reconstitute or close them<sup>151</sup>

The new law also placed a moratorium on teacher strikes for eighteen months following the passing of the bill. Also, managerial employees would not be able to join the union. The bill did not change the structure of LSCs, nor limit their power. Individual school governing would still be in the hands of the local school councils, as long as the school was not on academic probation.

### **Jim Edgar, Mayor Daley and the Corporate CEO**

#### **Why a CEO for Schools?**

The new CEO position for the Chicago Public Schools did not require candidates to have educational credentials to take the position, but that individual was granted all of the control that the general superintendent had, including over the district's curriculum.<sup>152</sup> After the Amendatory Act was passed, Mayor Daley would subsequently appoint two CEOs without an educational background: Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan. Shipps argued that Daley did not trust educators to run the school system, and demanded loyalty to him. She quoted one of Daley's former aides who claimed that Daley thought that it "isn't realistic" to ask an educator to "run a \$3 billion operation."<sup>153</sup> In terms of direct quotes, Mayor Daley did not outwardly discuss credentials that he looked for in selecting a CEO to run the Chicago Public School District. However, there were statements made by Governor Edgar and Mayor Daley that revealed which school related issues would be

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<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

<sup>152</sup>Shipps, "Updating Tradition," 122.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 123.

made a priority which illustrates why he selected non-educators to assume the CEO position.

### **The Corporate CEO**

There is a plethora of research related to leadership and CEO's. However, in regards to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a CEO, the research was relatively sparse. Rock (1977) outlined the nature and scope of the accountabilities reserved to chief executive positions. He described those accountabilities as:

- Goal Setting – Setting the fundamental goals of the company and establishing priorities
- Strategy – Formulating the overall direction, including guidelines and long-range plans
- Character – Setting the standards regarding how the company is to conduct business
- Resource Allocation – Establishing a strategic framework for the allocation of the resources of the corporation
- Acquisitions and Mergers
- Organizational Structure – Developing the grand design of the corporate structure, assigning functions
- Human Resource Management – Selection, development, assessment, motivation, and rewarding of top executives
- Review and control – Reviewing short and long term strategies related to the attainment of company objectives
- Tactical Supervision – Ensuring the execution of operating plans
- Finance – Ensuring the soundness of the organization's financial structure, monitoring indications of company's financial health, determining the company's present and future capital requirements, arranging for outside financing

- Key success factors – Making certain key decisions such as product pricing, sourcing or design that impact corporate performance
- Relations with board of directors – Ensures board's full understanding, constructive review, or final approval of management policies, direction and objectives
- External relations – develops and maintains key external relationships<sup>154</sup>

Upon reviewing several job descriptions seeking an individual to fill the CEO position for several companies in Illinois, there were several CEO descriptions that were common among the many companies. Common CEO responsibilities, skills, knowledge, and dispositions included:

- Developing a strategic plan to advance the company's mission and objectives
- Promote revenue, profitability and organizational growth
- Insure production efficiency, quality, service and cost-effective management of resources
- Implementing strategies for generating resources and/or revenues for the company
- Review financial statements to determine progress and status in attaining objectives
- Building a fundraising network
- Working knowledge of public relation techniques
- Strong written and communication skills
- Strong or strategic leadership skills; superior management skills

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<sup>154</sup>Robert H. Rock, *The Chief Executive Officer: Managing the Human Resources of the Large Diversified Industrial Company* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1977), 9-12.

There were several references to “leadership” and “management” skills. Many times, those terms were used in the same line. The job descriptions did not contain a definition of leadership or management.

### **The CPS CEO**

In passing the 1995 Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act, Illinois lawmakers purposely ensured that the law included specific language that shifted the governance structure of the Chicago Public School System. In addition to the corporate-style positions of chief financial officer, chief educational officer, chief operating officer, and chief purchasing officer, the law eliminated the previous position of “General Superintendent” and replaced it with “Chief Executive Officer.” Some of the words and actions of former Governor Jim Edgar, and Mayor Richard M. Daley reveal some of the reasons why this specific change in governance took place.

In January of 1995, Edgar warned CPS that the state would not bail them out of the system’s anticipated budget deficit which threatened the opening of classrooms that fall: “It is up to the Chicago schools to look internally at ways to cut costs. If they expect to be bailed out by the state, it isn’t going to happen. The day of reckoning is coming.”<sup>155</sup> As plans to overhaul the CPS system of governance were unveiled in April of 1995, Mayor Daley expressed reservations about it. Although the reform law contained elements that Daley asked for, including the authority to abolish the current management structure, appoint board members, and give him more flexibility in spending state funds,

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<sup>155</sup>Thomas Hardy and Robert Davis, “Edgar Won’t Bail Out City Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

money was still Daley's bottom line: "There has to be an understanding that, if this all takes place ... then they are going to help us with (funding)," Daley said. "To me, there has to be an understanding that you don't reform something in structure without having accountability, without having some new money going into the system."<sup>156</sup>

After the school reform law was signed on May 30<sup>th</sup> of 1995, Edgar provided a written statement describing the reform effort: "This bold, innovative approach should bring more accountability, better fiscal management and a higher quality of education to a system that desperately needs an overhaul."<sup>157</sup> As Daley and other critics complained about the lack of provisions for additional funding for schools, Edgar added: "As all of us recognize, money alone will not improve education."<sup>158</sup> After Mayor Daley installed Paul Vallas as CEO, he acknowledged that changes needed to be made at central office: "You have to change management," Daley said. "There's a lot of management problems there."<sup>159</sup> One of Daley's senior aides made a statement regarding how the change in management might look in terms of structure: "The board and the senior staff will be doing most of the work. The mayor won't be imposing his education vision on the schools in a formal way. The idea is to bring in the budget people and the educators and

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<sup>156</sup>Dion Haynes and Joseph Kirby, "Edgar's School Critics Focus on Money," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>157</sup>Rick Pearson, "School Reform Law Signed- Mayor Daley Gets 4-Year Challenge," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>Jorge Oclander and Fran Spielman, "Budget Chief Vallas to Be School Board CEO," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 1995.

get out of the way and let them do their jobs.”<sup>160</sup> When asked how he would erase the funding deficit at a June meeting at Healy Elementary School, Daley was still unsure: “I’d be a miracle worker if I could (answer) that.”<sup>161</sup>

After officially naming his new five member team and senior management team at the end of June of 1995, Mayor Daley revealed a bit more of his educational agenda. He quickly announced his position regarding the priority of the district: “Today, we begin a new era in the history of public education in Chicago by putting children first. From every neighborhood school in Chicago to every office in Pershing Road, people will be held accountable for the quality of the students we produce and the money we spend.”<sup>162</sup> He later announced his position on special interest groups including unions, politically connected contractors, and Democratic Party patronage bureaucrats: “Business as usual is over. The special interests will move to the back of the line. The bureaucrats who stand in the way of change will be removed and their powers dissolved.”<sup>163</sup> CPS was facing a 150 million dollar school funding deficit and a budget gap double for the next year. Daley spoke of how costs had to be cut to balance the budget for long-term financial stability: “We must continue to fight for every dollar in Springfield, because the state has

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<sup>160</sup>John Kass and Jacquelyn Heard, “Daley Woos Parents in School Push,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>John Kass, “Daley Names School Team – Now Comes The Difficult Part: Turning Everything Around,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.



not met its (funding) responsibility. But clearly we must also make progress here in controlling costs before expecting any further help from the state.”<sup>164</sup>

The words and actions of Governor Edgar and Mayor Daley leading up to the Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act and shortly thereafter reveal that there was a conflict regarding the need for school funding between the mayor and the governor. Mayor Daley voiced the city’s need for additional school funding on several occasions. Governor Edgar made it clear that the state would not provide additional funding and pointed out that if the state covered Chicago’s shortfall and treated every other school district equally, it would cost one billion dollars: “Well, there isn’t a billion, I have to tell you, in the budget for new money.”<sup>165</sup> Common themes in the language of the governor and mayor leading to the selection of the new CEO were *accountability, fiscal management, management problems, controlling costs, and money*. Mayor Daley ultimately selected Paul Vallas as the first CPS CEO. Vallas was a former Chicago city budget director who reformed the city Revenue Department and was the former executive director of the Illinois Economic and Fiscal Commission. Upon taking the position of CEO, Vallas revealed the focus of his new position according to the mayor: “But whatever the case, the mayor has put Gery and me over here to bring financial stability to the system and improve education. And we don’t expect to fail.”<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>Hardy and Davis, “Edgar Won’t Bail Out City Schools.”

<sup>166</sup>Kass, “City Schools Get Chief Who Rejects Failure.”

The next chapter will examine the words and actions of Paul Vallas to provide evidence regarding how he carried out the role of CPS CEO according to the expectations of Mayor Daley and later analyze those words and actions according to Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority*. The researcher will also provide an analysis explaining similarities and/or differences in how Vallas carried out the role of CEO as compared with the characteristics of a corporate CEO as defined in this chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### PAUL VALLAS: CPS' FIRST CEO

#### Background

Illinois Legislative Public Act 89-15 would become known as the 1995 Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act because of alterations to the original 1988 School Reform Act that dramatically changed the governance structure for the Chicago Public Schools. The term *Board of Education* was struck, and replaced by *Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees*. Specific language was in place specifying that the direct appointment of their positions would be made by the mayor, without the need for the consent of the city council. Following that language was the creation of a “full-time compensated chief executive officer” appointed at the mayor’s discretion.<sup>1</sup> The language embedded in the Amendatory Act clearly outlined the purpose for the changes:

Sec. 34-3.3. Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees; powers and duties; chief operating, fiscal, educational and purchasing officers. The General Assembly finds that an education emergency exists in the Chicago Public Schools and that a 5-member Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees shall be established for a 4 year period to bring educational and financial stability to the system.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Illinois State General Assembly, *Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act*, Public Act 89-0015, 1995.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

As outlined in the Amendatory Act, the Reform Board of Trustees and the CEO were empowered and directed to:

- Increase the quality of educational services in the Chicago Public Schools
- Reduce the Cost of non-educational services and implement cost-saving measures including the privatization of services where deemed appropriate
- Develop a long-term financial plan that to the maximum extent possible reflects a balanced budget for each year
- Streamline and strengthen the management for the system
- Ensure ongoing academic improvement in schools through the establishment of an Academic Accountability Council
- Enact policies that ensure the system runs in an ethical as well as efficient manner
- Establish within 60 days after the effective date of the Amendatory Act, develop, and implement a process for the selection of a local school council advisory board for the trustees
- Establish any organizational structures, including regional offices
- Provide for such other local school council advisory bodies as the Trustees deem necessary<sup>3</sup>

The Amendatory Act also defined the position of chief executive officer and stated that “The mayor shall appoint a chief executive officer who shall be a person of recognized administrative ability and management experience, who shall be responsible for the management of the system, and who shall have all other powers of the general

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

superintendent...”<sup>4</sup> Mayor Daley originally offered the CEO position to former chief of staff member Gery Chico, who reportedly declined the position in order to further his law career. He did accept the post of President of the Reform Board of Trustees, which was even more powerful. Daley next asked Paul Vallas, the former Chicago budget director with a reputation of cutting costs. Daley claimed that he chose Vallas because of “his analysis of managers and the whole idea of management performance and accountability.”<sup>5</sup>

The 43-year-old Paul Vallas began his career as a teacher in the 1970’s, who briefly taught in elementary school and college. He then served as Director of Policy for the president of the Illinois State Senate, and next as executive director of the Illinois Economic and Fiscal Commission where he was responsible for reviewing, analyzing and assessing the legislative impact of state finances on state and local taxes. In the 1990’s, he worked for the city of Chicago as revenue director, and later as budget director, and was able to close Chicago’s then \$125 million dollar budget gap. He received the first unanimous city council vote for the passage of a city budget in over 40 years. City hall insiders claimed that Vallas did this by working around the clock. Then City Hall Spokesman Jim Williams stated that “In all my many years of working, I have never met anyone who has the determination, the intellect or the level of energy that Paul Vallas

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “Tough Love – Paul Vallas’ Job is to Teach the Chicago Public Schools a Lesson in Discipline [Part 1 of 2],” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

has.”<sup>6</sup> Vallas claimed that his combination of experience with education, policy and finance helps to explain why Mayor Daley selected him for the CEO position: “You cannot work for the Illinois legislature and not get a least some sense of politics. And you cannot survive as an effective staff person and not understand at least some of the fundamentals of consensus and coalition building.”<sup>7</sup>

The language embedded in the Amendatory Act called for a non-traditional approach in the selection of the new CEO position, and Paul Vallas possessed experience regarding the new priorities for the district as outlined by the Amendatory Act. Vallas summed up his intentions for his role in the district in a 1999 quote:

I'm in a great position. I don't want to be a lifetime school superintendent. I don't want to be an education consultant when I'm done here. I'm not setting the stage for a political office. If I physically survive this job and accomplish what I hope to accomplish and what the mayor hopes to accomplish, then my ticket is written: I'm going to heaven. I can go back and become a normal person and try to raise my kids and spend time with my family.<sup>8</sup>

In order to accomplish what the mayor wanted him to accomplish, his first order of business would be to change the philosophy of the structure of the district, which is illustrated with the following Vallas quote: “This district has got to evolve and become more like a corporation. This is essentially a \$3 billion dollar business, and we have got

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Paul Vallas, *Saving Public Schools. Civic Bulletin Number 16* (New York: Manhattan Institute, Center for Civic Innovation, 1999), 1.

<sup>8</sup>Jay Mathews, “Nontraditional Thinking in the Central Office,” *School Administrator* 58, no. 6 (06/01/2001): 6-11.

to learn how to leverage our buying power.”<sup>9</sup> Vallas would set about making the necessary changes without apologizing for any perceived lack of experience in working in an urban school district: “If having that kind of experience was important, how come there hasn’t been more success before now?”<sup>10</sup>

### **Early Cost Cutting Measures**

Vallas immediately set about developing plans to improve the district, beginning with communicating the new priorities of the district: “The mayor has said that improving education in city schools is the top priority. Everything else takes a back seat. What you’ll see as we develop our plans over the next few weeks are changes that will help us accomplish that.”<sup>11</sup> In a memo to all Chicago Public School employees, Vallas communicated goals in greater detail:

The goal of the Chicago Public Schools is to educate our children and prepare them for the challenges of the next century. To do this, we must improve performance in the classrooms and the schools. We must also become an efficient, cost-effective organization that gets maximum public benefit for the taxpayers’ dollars. This means changes have to be made. We are beginning to make these changes to succeed in meeting this goal.<sup>12</sup>

The first changes to be made immediately surrounded Vallas at CPS’ central office. In July of 1995, Vallas confronted two top district administrators- the chief education officer and the chief accountability officer, for upgrading their offices. He then banned

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<sup>9</sup>Heard, “Tough Love.”

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “New School Officials Plan Coordinated Effort,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 4, 1995.

<sup>12</sup>Paul Vallas, Memo to Chicago Public Schools Staff, August, 1995, Chicago Public Schools Archives.

all travel by central office managers, placed a halt on catered meals and demanded that any orders for new furniture be cancelled: “No one. No one is to order anything new unless it is specifically authorized by me.”<sup>13</sup> Vallas also decided to retain the taxpayer-funded car, but rid himself of the personal driver and other amenities: “I don’t need anyone to pick me up and drop me off at home. There will be no more coffee and rolls paid for out of the schools budget. And there is plenty of furniture here. We don’t need any desks or cabinets built. We don’t need anything new.”<sup>14</sup> Vallas also cited that as of July of 1995, the old school administration spent at least \$90,000 since January on catered food for meetings. Vallas put an immediate end to that practice: “The next time we have a meeting, the coffee and rolls will be bought by me, out of my pocket.”<sup>15</sup> A food and refreshments policy soon followed.<sup>16</sup>

Vallas continued to identify cost saving measures at the central office level. He determined that a shop facility at the central office headquarters, then located at 1819 W. Pershing Road, was an unnecessary expense to the district and shut it down: “We have people here whose main job has basically been to build furniture for administrators....We ask them for a new lock, they bring us a whole new door....It’s ridiculous. Those

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<sup>13</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “School Execs Get a Lesson in Austerity – Vallas Pulls Rug on Remodeling,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, July, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 5420.



workers should be in the schools fixing and building things.”<sup>17</sup> He then instructed school board painters and carpenters that were based at headquarters to be sent to local schools. Many services would now be assigned to private companies.<sup>18</sup>

Upon inspecting one of the districts’ warehouses, school leaders found loads of unused equipment that was covered with thick dust. Among materials found were nine new pianos, two rowing machines, a Jacuzzi, several thousand student desks and chairs, copier machines, vacuum cleaners and air conditioners still in boxes. Vallas stated: “This reminds me of a warehouse you might see in the Kremlin. It’s centralized management at its worst.”<sup>19</sup> The chief operations manager immediately ordered all the equipment to be dispersed to the schools that needed them, redeployed the majority of the custodial workers that were stationed at the facility, and ordered the warehouse to be shuttered.

Vallas also ordered an end to the heating of the main garage at the central office, and banned district-financed cellular phones for central office administrators: “We want to make sure that we send the right message. This is not a perk-laden school district,” Vallas stated. He later stated: “Image means a lot, and if you have catered meals and you’re wining and dining people and spending money on conferences, working men and

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, August, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 5703-5706.

<sup>19</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “City Schools Find Embarrassment of Riches,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

women see that, and it creates an atmosphere of public cynicism.<sup>20</sup> Vallas also adopted a travel policy to curtail travel expenses incurred by district administrators.<sup>21</sup>

Administrators also found that the district wasted a great deal of money on telecommunications. They found that too many calls were made to 411, and in some instances, to 900 numbers. The district paid 2.3 million dollars per year for stationary telephone equipment while the City of Chicago (City Hall) paid \$450,000. Chief operating officer Ben Reyes and Vallas said they would use the administrative practices of city government as a model for city schools. Vallas called the method “a sound approach to cost management.”<sup>22</sup> Vallas would quickly adopt a policy for telecommunications.<sup>23</sup>

In November of 1995, Vallas found another instance of wasteful spending. After auditing a commission that monitored the district’s desegregation program, it was determined that the group spent \$213,885 of their \$325,800 budget on excessive items. The audit uncovered over \$6000 in cellular phone calls, over \$600 for flowers and Christmas cards, and almost \$10,000 in meals at expensive steak houses, as well as bills for massages, alcoholic drinks and theater tickets. The audit was released in response to a lawsuit that the commission brought against the board for allegedly failing to provide

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, July, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 5419.

<sup>22</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “Schools Seen Wasting Millions on Phones,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>23</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, September, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 96-98.

the commission with additional finances and data. An outraged Vallas retorted: “How dare they file a lawsuit against us! This audit speaks for itself. These people were wining and dining at taxpayers’ expense.”<sup>24</sup> Vallas was then accused by a commission member of attempting to discredit black leadership and embarrass African Americans. Vallas responded “Hogwash. They got their noses out of joint because we refused to give them carte blanche to spend taxpayer money on frills and thrills. The fact is there was a lot of wasteful spending here and we’re not going to put up with it.”<sup>25</sup> Vallas moved to downsize the commission to seven members and subjected the new commission to the school board’s ethics guidelines.<sup>26</sup>

### **Balancing the Budget**

After the initial cost-saving measures installed at the central office, the real work of balancing the budget would begin. An important issue that loomed on the horizon was the need to settle a new teacher’s contract. Within three weeks of officially taking over as CEO, Vallas and his new management team announced that they had already eliminated the \$150 million dollar school funding deficit and were ready to offer a four-year contract to teachers which included three percent pay raises over the duration of the contract. Vallas stated: “We anticipate we’ll have a teacher’s contract before the budget is introduced. We’ve been talking with the teacher’s union. We’ve developed a good

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<sup>24</sup>V. Dion Haynes, “Vallas to Oust School Bias Panel, Cites Funds Audit,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>25</sup>V. Dion Haynes, “City School CEO Warns Watchdog – Vallas Threatens to Replace Panel,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>26</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, November, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 455.

working relationship with them; it's a collaborative effort. It's not confrontational to look at the issues, narrow them down and get them resolved."<sup>27</sup> Vallas began to explain what to expect in the upcoming CPS budget report:

I think there's a consensus out there that central office needs to be downsized, not shifting people around. A number of years ago they so-called cut the bureaucracy, and they ended up as subdistrict bureaucrats or principals found them on their budgets, or they were hired back on vouchers. Central office is going to be downsized. The public expects that. The schools expect it. The principals expect it. The taxpayers demand it. And in Springfield, the expectation is there."<sup>28</sup>

Republicans in Springfield, Illinois were impressed with Vallas' ability to control spending. The Chicago Teachers Union president was pleased and announced that the union had reached a tentative agreement with the new school board. Initially, Vallas kept the details of how the budget was balanced under wraps.

In August of 1995, details of the new budget would slowly begin to spread around the district. A major component of the trimmed deficit called for the cutting of over 1700 positions ranging from janitors to department heads. Vallas initially was vague with the details of the cuts, but claimed: "The cuts are very tough, but that's just the way it's going to be. We have to get serious. In the past, (school leaders) haven't cut, they just moved around the furniture."<sup>29</sup> Reportedly, Vallas had also freed up 35 million dollars to fund new education programs including tutoring, mentoring, drop-out prevention, job

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<sup>27</sup>John Kass, "Schools Slate 3% Pay Hike for Teachers – New Team Says Huge Deficit has Been Eliminated," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, "Tough Decisions Yield a School Spending Plan – To Trim Deficit, Budget Calls for Loss of 1,700 Jobs," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

training services, and alternative schools for troubled students. The new budget also included a 13.2 percent pay increase for all of the principals in the district. In addition to the job cuts, Vallas came up with additional revenue by proposing to:

- Contribute less to the teacher's pension fund
- Keep some of the discretionary funds CPS schools got for low-income students (Chapter 1 funds)
- Putting 20 surplus properties up for sale
- Shifting monies that financed after-school programs at field houses to the general fund

The bulk of the money was to be used to maintain the balanced budget over time, and also fund an extended class day and year, move violent students from regular classrooms into alternative schools, fund tutors and mentors, and establish apprenticeship programs for high school students in danger of dropping out of school. Vallas stated: "Student performance improves when schools are better organized, when you have a longer school year and when you get violent students out of the schools. Failure is not an option for us; we have to deliver."<sup>30</sup>

The mood at CPS headquarters grew extremely dismal following the announcements of administrative cuts. Before central office cuts were officially announced, extra security forces and metal detectors were put in place at central office in preparation for potential actions that could have been taken by disgruntled employees. Some administrators turned in their resignations in fear of their positions being cut.

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<sup>30</sup>V. Dion Haynes, "Proposed Budget Has Pupil Focus – Schools Chief Plans to Spend Surplus on Longer Days, Tutors," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

Many of those administrators had spent their entire career with CPS. At a budget hearing, a parent would take Vallas to task about the layoffs and ask him why he cut so many positions, as well as why he didn't put more pressure on the state legislature to come up with additional funding for the district's schools. Vallas lost his usual patience: "Look, you're living in a fool's paradise if you think we're going to get more money from Springfield," he shouted. "We've got to take Chicago schools out of the headlines and off the radar screen Downstate.... We've got to get our (stuff) together."<sup>31</sup> Despite the growing criticisms regarding his hard line approach, he received praise from Illinois governor Jim Edgar: "I can't think of anything that has been more enjoyable to watch. They've gone in and done a lot of things that many people expected could have been done long ago." Governor Edgar continued to state: "Now that the Chicago Public Schools have proven that they can help themselves, I think there will be more willingness on the part of a lot of people to help them, not necessarily with more money, but with more flexibility."<sup>32</sup>

### **Early Initiatives**

#### **CPS Sports**

After balancing the budget, CEO Paul Vallas began to turn his attention on initiatives to improve the district. Surprisingly enough, one of earliest initiatives that Vallas focused his efforts on was related to the improvement of the sports program.

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<sup>31</sup>Heard, "Tough Love."

<sup>32</sup>Jacquelyn Heard and V. Dion Haynes, "Edgar Gets Behind New City Schools Team – Mandate Waivers May Be Granted," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

Vallas promoted J.W. Smith to oversee the sports programs for CPS high schools, with the title of Director of Bureau of Health.<sup>33</sup> Vallas stated:

Some of the finest athletes in sports have come out of the Chicago Public league. But there have been too many instances of talented students being denied the opportunity to participate. The three components of our plan are to attack the issue of promoting more athletics, provide the facilities and provide financial incentives for more teachers to become coaches and role models. Money will be set aside to restore the depleted coaching ranks.”<sup>34</sup>

Vallas went on to discuss his desire to renovate fields and build campuses with soccer, baseball and football fields that “compare favorably with the nicest suburban schools.”<sup>35</sup> The funding for this would come from a 600 million dollar capital bond program that had not been approved yet. Vallas would give his reasoning for the importance of investing in the sports program:

Take a drive now and you’ll see high schools surrounded by abandoned buildings, vacant lots with weeds 3 feet high, or maybe a few bars and garbage dumps. We will either buy the property or access to the property and build fields for interscholastic and intramural sports. We’d rather have the students involved in after-school programs rather than running the streets....We realize sports and recreational activities are a crucial supplement to what we do in the classrooms. It is a way to learn how to achieve goals, build teamwork and expend energy in a positive fashion.”<sup>36</sup>

Vallas would soon back up his words regarding his commitment to improving CPS sports by supporting the creation of a freshman only sports league, and team sports for

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<sup>33</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, July, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 5696.

<sup>30</sup>Bob Sakamoto, “Smith, Plan Bring Public Optimism,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

elementary schools. Vallas explained: “What we’re trying to do is give our kids some incentives, and offer them some of the same resources suburban students get. Research has already shown that this type of thing helps.”<sup>37</sup>

Vallas’ support for the improvement of CPS sport programs also came with tough decision making. In February of 1996, Vallas issued a verdict regarding the eligibility of Farragut High School senior Larry Jackson. Jackson had recently transferred to Farragut from Oak Park High School, a nearby suburban school. Jackson played basketball at Oak Park until he was charged with misdemeanor battery for assaulting the Oak Park basketball coach. Typically, central office did not involve itself in eligibility decisions. After receiving a recommendation from a committee that examined the issue, Vallas gave his verdict:

J.W. and the principals’ committee gave me no reason to decide otherwise. This was not a question of eligibility; it was a question of ethics. We cannot allow someone to violate school policy at one place and then escape to another school. There was never any doubt in my mind that he wouldn’t play. You can’t be afraid to make the right decision....It’s the ethical thing to do. This would have set a bad precedent if we had decided any other way. It is important to send a message to the whole school system.<sup>38</sup>

Jackson’s family would file a federal lawsuit in an attempt to restore his ability to play. The federal lawsuit argued that school officials had violated Jackson’s constitutional due process rights in ruling him ineligible to play without a hearing. CPS’ decision was upheld.

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<sup>37</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “Chicago Schools Get Sports Aid – Freshmen to Benefit,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>38</sup>Bob Sakamoto, “Farragut Transfer is Rules Ineligible – Schools CEO: It was a Question of Ethics,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.



On the morning of February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1996, Ronnie Fields was involved in a car crash that left him with three fractured vertebrae and ended his basketball season, and some would argue, ruined his professional basketball career prospects. Fields was a 6-3 senior who previously played alongside current NBA star Kevin Garnett at Farragut High School. Fields often “wowed” crowds with high-flying slam dunk shots and was one of the top basketball prospects in the country. Fields was in a rental car that was given to him by Farragut assistant coach Ron Eskridge. The story of the accident caught fire immediately, and sparked debates regarding the preferential treatment of student-athletes. Vallas spoke on the issue: “Teachers and coaches should not be giving students, especially star athletes, things such as money, rental cars or tickets to a Bulls game.”<sup>39</sup> After surgery, Fields had to wear a large contraption around his neck and head for stabilization.

As Chicagoans who followed high school sports got over their shock regarding the catastrophic event, Vallas offered a different perspective: “This is a defining moment for our system, a golden opportunity to drive home that we are about education. We need to send a message that our mission is to educate children. Athletics should complement that.”<sup>40</sup> Soon after the accident, Vallas enacted what would be considered the most dramatic change in Chicago Public Schools athletics in over thirty years. A revamped ethics policy for sports would be approved by the Reform Board of Trustees. Some of the most significant changes included:

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<sup>39</sup>Michael Hirsley, “A Driving Force – Farragut Star Ronnie Fields’ Auto Accident is a Catalyst for Change in the Public Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

- Students transferring from within or outside of the school district are ineligible for sports for one year unless their petition for eligibility is approved by the director of sports
- Transferring student-athletes deemed not “in good standing” are ineligible
- Coaches and CPS personnel are prohibited from providing gifts exceeding \$20.<sup>41</sup>

Vallas explained his rationale for the strict ethics policy:

The whole episode with Ronnie Fields raises questions about the preferential treatment of star athletes. We all realize from time to time, teachers take money out of their own pockets to buy a child clothes or food when that individual is lacking some of the basic necessities of life. But teachers and coaches should not be giving students, especially star athletes, things such as money, rental cars or tickets to a Bulls game.<sup>42</sup>

Vallas further clarified his stance and defined his flexibility regarding the new policies:

Until now, there had been a lot of gray area where things weren't expressly prohibited. Once this policy goes into effect, no one will be confused on what's right and wrong. Also in this ethics policy, any student being disciplined or penalized in another school district who transfers into the Chicago Public Schools will not be able to compete. Period. End of story. No debate. No lawsuits.<sup>43</sup>

The Farragut assistant coach, Eskridge, was eventually banned from coaching in the Chicago Public Schools system under the new ethics policy.

Next on Vallas' agenda would be high school powerhouse King High School.

King was one of the top basketball schools in the state in the late 1980's into the 1990's.

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<sup>41</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, March, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 1033.

<sup>42</sup>Bob Sakamoto, “Schools’ Get-Tough Policies Near OK,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

King featured basketball stars such as former NBA players Marcus Liberty and the 7 foot 3 inch Thomas Hamilton, as well as the 7 foot 2 inch former professional basketball player Rashard Griffith who predominately played in European leagues. King won multiple state championships during that time period, coached by Landon “Sonny” Cox. It was common knowledge in Chicago that King players allegedly received “perks” on a regular basis, such as shoes, clothes, and money by King coaches. None of this was ever proven, and Cox was informally considered untouchable.

However, in April of 1996, charges surfaced alleging that Cox attempted to get grades changed for all-city guard Larry Allaway, and when he was unsuccessful, he played Allaway anyway, despite the fact that he was ineligible. After the investigation, Cox was found to be at fault for playing the ineligible player, and he was suspended from coaching and assistant principal duties for 10 days. Vallas stated: “I’m putting all the coaches on warning. This has to be cleaned up once and for all. The first time they mess up, it’s a suspension. The second time, they get fired as coaches and could lose their teaching jobs.”<sup>44</sup> A few years after this ruling, King fell from the ranks of basketball sports powerhouse.

### **School Overcrowding**

Before the opening of the school year in 1995, a major issue confronting Vallas and his staff centered around the issue of school overcrowding. The long-range solution was a tentative plan to borrow 600 million dollars to construct additional schools and

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<sup>44</sup>Bob Sakamoto, “Cox Handed 10-Day Suspension – King Coach Disciplined for Using Ineligible Player,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

repair dozens of decrepit buildings between 1996 and 1999. Initially for the short term, the team developed a busing plan. This plan was met with heavy criticism and resistance from parents, causing Vallas to back away from the plan to explore alternatives: “There is a big problem with busing. People don’t like it, and it causes confusion. I’m not comfortable implementing it. What I want to do is meet Monday and assess overcrowding school by school and come up with alternatives that will minimize the need to bus.”<sup>45</sup> Vallas and his team located twenty mobile units and bought them for one-sixth of the cost, which cost them half of the cost of carrying out the busing plan.

After implementing several cost-cutting measures to balance the budget, including massive layoffs, resolving contract negotiations, putting a plan in place to temporarily relieve overcrowding, and ensuring that the first day of school went off with few hitches, Vallas was ready to begin making a case for additional funding: “The fact is that we’re not going to be able to attack problems such as class sizes and other major issues without more money from Springfield. We know what we want and need to do, and we’ll make a good start without more money.”<sup>46</sup> Following those comments, a spokesman for Governor Edgar praised Vallas and his team but stated that it was premature to start talking about new funds. Without prospects for additional funding, Vallas and his team began to push their educational agenda which included intense intervening in failing schools, ending social promotion, decreasing the number of truant students, increasing

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<sup>45</sup>V. Dion Haynes, “Schools Put Brake on Anti-Crowding Plan – Officials Hope to Prevent Forced Busing of Students,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>46</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “City School Leaders Say Improvements Won’t Come Cheaply,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

the qualifications for prospective principals, and the requirement for low-achieving students to attend summer school.

### **School Remediation**

A controversial policy implemented by Vallas and his team was related to the classification of whether a school was in an “educational crisis.” Schools that met the criteria to of a school in the midst of an educational crisis would receive intervention from central office, the principal could be fired and the LSC members could be removed if Vallas deemed it necessary. Critics contended that Vallas was attempting to overturn previous school reform efforts with the policy. Vallas defended the plan: “What if a school principal is absent and a gang is taking over the third floor of a school? We can’t just sit around and wait for 20-some (parent) groups to reach consensus. We’re not trying to be vindictive or dictatorial. We’re not trying to undermine school reform. But we can’t sit around fiddling while Rome burns.”<sup>47</sup> Despite the complaints of critics, the policy was unanimously passed.<sup>48</sup>

The plan featured 16 criteria that could be considered in determining if a school is in educational crisis. Examples of the criteria were:

- Principal fails to develop or implement a school improvement plan
- Principal is unable to develop an effective working relationship with teachers, staff and/or the local school council
- Principal fails to provide a safe building for students and staff

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<sup>47</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, “Schools Crisis Plan Gets Unruly Welcome – Move That Would Let Top Officials Intervene to Oust Principals and Councils is Criticized,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

<sup>48</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, September, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 15-17.

- Local school council is non-functional and/or deadlocked on key issues affecting the educational process of the school
- Other factors which in the Chief Executive Officer's judgment cause the school to meet the definition of educational crisis<sup>49</sup>

Vallas retained the right to determine how many of the criteria had to exist in one school for it to be determined that the school was in educational crisis.

Swiftly after the school crisis plan was approved, Vallas began to intervene in failing schools, prompting a flurry of complaints and criticisms from school employees, school reform groups, parents and community members. A week after the approval of the school crisis plan, Vallas and his team declared Prosser Vocational High School "in crisis" and quickly moved in to replace its principal, assistant principal and local school council. Prosser reportedly had a number of issues, including reports of teachers getting paid overtime to teach classes that did not exist, charges of grade fixing, complaints of the failure of school administrators to report allegations of student abuse by a teacher, and bullying tactics against teachers by administrators and LSC members. Vallas commented on the importance of being able to take swift action rather than clearing bureaucratic red tape:

It was important for us to move quickly (to replace) these irresponsible adults who do not know how to put the interest of children before their own. This will send a signal through the system that we won't tolerate a LSC, a principal, assistant principal or teacher abusing their positions like this. No longer will pupils or employees have to put up with nonsense in schools while (district leaders) sit around saying 'I don't have the authority to do anything.'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>50</sup>V. Dion Haynes, "Reform Team Moves to Save School 'In Crisis'," *Chicago Tribune*, 1995.

This move attracted a tremendous amount of attention from school reform groups, who charged that the administration moved too quickly in adopting the policies and failed to include due process guidelines to allow for councils to review allegations and appeal decisions. Two months later, the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees revised the policy and required that Vallas must state in writing all the allegations and reasons for declaring a particular school in crisis and outline how other measures failed to resolve issues.<sup>51</sup>

In January of 1996, Vallas and his team announced that the city's lowest achieving schools would receive intensive intervention, and disbanded the LSC's at those schools and removed two principals. Vallas claimed that it should serve as a wake-up call for the district: "People have said that we're taking action against LSCs because we have a problem with LSCs. Well, we're taking action against principals, teachers, custodians and security personnel too. The bottom line is we've got to put away the nonsense and focus on the primary goal of educating children."<sup>52</sup> Reform groups were outraged, and wondered if the decision made against those schools had any legal foundation. Vallas explained: "You can call it whatever you want, but we have the

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<sup>51</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, December, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 501-503.

<sup>52</sup>Jacquelyn Heard, "Chicago School Officials Issue Loud 'Wake-Up' Call - 23 Low-Achieving and Troubled Schools Cited," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

authority to take action when schools are not functioning for whatever reason and that's what we're going to do."<sup>53</sup>

Vallas and his team suffered a setback to their intervention plans when a federal court ordered the reinstatement of Tilton School Principal Debrona Banks, citing that the school board did not have the final authority over a LSCs contract with a principal. The ruling stated that the board could not remove a principal without putting the school on probation and holding a hearing, as opposed to merely putting them into remediation. Vallas simply stated: "It just means I'm going to use the powers of probation. We are contemplating putting a few on probation anyway."<sup>54</sup>

In September of 1996, the district would find out what Vallas meant when he claimed that they were contemplating putting a "few" on probation. The board announced that they were placing 109 out of Chicago's 557 schools on academic probation. A school on probation would receive assistance with the supervision of intervention efforts such as a back-to-basics curriculum, more classroom time on core subjects, after-school programs and summer school. Probation teams were to consist of the current principal, other active or retired principals, central office administrators with principal experience, a local school council member and an outside representative from a university or professional education organization. At high schools placed on probation, a business manager would be employed to focus on day-to-day operations in order to free

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<sup>53</sup>V. Dion Haynes and Jacquelyn Heard, "Schools' `Wake-Up Call' Gets Groans – Some Moves Viewed as Step into the Past," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>54</sup>Steve Kloehn and Michael Martinez, "Principal Ruling to Echo in Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.



principals to focus on academics. The board retained the power to replace principals, LSCs, or reconstitute the entire school if improvements were not made in a timely manner. Vallas commented on the potential to fire principals and teachers: “We will do what’s necessary to move the school forward. But we’re not going to go in and say ‘You’re fired, you’re fired, you’re fired.’ It’s hard to say how many we’re going to remove.”<sup>55</sup>

In October of 1996, Vallas moved to reassign the principal of Marshall High School, one of the 109 schools on probation. After a six-month audit of the school, the audit uncovered evidence of the misuse of funds and personnel, failure to complete accurate financial records over a five-year period, plans that were contrary to the school improvement plan, and reportedly, the principal installed a \$14,000 toilet and a shower in his office. Vallas weighed in on the situation at Marshall: “If there was ever a school that justified being put in educational crisis, it’s Marshall. There’s basically a meltdown. There are things that are happening that are jeopardizing the education of the children.”<sup>56</sup>

Vallas found himself in federal court once again as the principal of Marshall, Steve Newton Jr., challenged his dismissal as principal. During the hearing, the judge asked the school board attorneys why Newton had to be removed before an educational crisis hearing took place:

You’re in an area where there’s been no finding of a school in crisis. My trouble is...you’ve got a lot of things that you say he hasn’t done well, but

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<sup>55</sup>Michael Martinez and Janita Poe, “109 City Schools Placed on Academic Probation - 85% of Students Scored Below Norms, Vallas, Chico Report,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>56</sup>Michael Martinez, “Vallas Reassigns Principal of Troubled Marshall High,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

none of them seem to me to be the sort or nature to support your assertion that if this guy's in the school, our (probation) team can't get in there. There's 109 of these places on probation. Why is it so disastrous to have him there?"<sup>57</sup>

A frustrated Vallas was interviewed after the November hearing, and he asked: "Can you imagine a system where you cannot remove an employee while you're conducting an investigation, an employee that represents a threat to not only the education process but the people in the school?"<sup>58</sup> The School Board's decision was ultimately upheld.

Newton was allowed to enter the school between the hours of 4:30 and 6:30 each day to gather necessary documents to defend himself at the upcoming educational crisis hearing. By December of 1996, Vallas recommended that Newton be permanently removed from his post of principal at Marshall High School.<sup>59</sup>

### **Changing the Principal Selection Process**

Vallas also fought to set tougher employment standards for principals. Vallas argued that the improvement of schools was highly dependent on the quality of the principal: "These principals are brain surgeons—they are molding the minds of our children. If you have a bad principal, you are going to have problems no matter how good a local school council is."<sup>60</sup> Despite dissent from reform groups who called the move a step backward in the effort to decentralize governance, legislation was passed

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<sup>57</sup>Michael Martinez, "Controversial Principal to Have his Day in Court," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, December, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 446-448.

<sup>60</sup>Stacey Singer, "Board's Voice in Hiring of Principals May Grow," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

giving the School Board the authority to establish higher standards for selecting new principals and renewing the contracts of current ones. The School Board collaborated with the Chicago Principal and Administrators Association (CPAA) to create an academy for leadership training. The goal of the CPAA was to “deliver services to develop a leadership academy that will engage school leaders in learning activities that build individual and organizational capacity skills necessary to increase leadership skills.”<sup>61</sup> Prospective principals would have to go through the academy training in order to be qualified to be placed on the “principal’s list.” LSCs were only allowed to interview and hire individuals who were on that list.

### **Ending Social Promotion**

Under the tenure of former CPS Superintendent Argie Johnson, a policy was put in place mandating that a student would not be retained more than once in grades kindergarten through eighth.<sup>62</sup> The rationale behind this centered on the premise that the traumatic social effects that retention had on students outweighed any benefits in having the student to repeat the grade. Vallas disagreed:

Social promotion was a disaster, and we can see it with the dropout rate, which is 42 percent. When you’re talking about social promotion, there’s no pressure on the child or the school to reach the standards you much reach before you go to the next level. So what social promotion did was take away the incentive for the kid and the system to ensure what the kids should be doing, and it also devalued our diplomas.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, February, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 908.

<sup>62</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, September, 1990. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 2170.

<sup>63</sup>Michael Martinez, “Schools May Get Tough on Promotions,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

In March, 1996, the Board approved a policy for elementary school promotion. Effective with the 1996-1997 school year, the following students would have to attend mandatory summer school:

- Third grade students who scored more than 1 year below grade level in reading or math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
- Sixth grade students who scored more than 1 ½ years below grade level in reading or math
- Eighth grade students who scored more than two years below grade level in reading or math<sup>64</sup>

Failure to successfully complete summer school meant that the student would be retained in the grade, with the exception of eighth grade students who would turn fifteen years old prior to December 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.

By June of 2006, a reported number of over 72,000 students would have to attend summer school. In addition to the 40,000 or so students who were expected to attend Mayor Daley's sport and recreational programs in Chicago schools that summer, almost one-fourth of the districts' students would be in some sort of summer program. Vallas stated: "The mayor has always talked about year-round schools and this is kind of a concept of a year-round school...all designed to get the kids off the streets into meaningful (recreational) programs and academic programs. That's a very, very positive thing."<sup>65</sup> However, some teachers questioned the effectiveness of the summer school

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<sup>64</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, March, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 1079.

<sup>65</sup>Michael Martinez, "School Officials Heartened by Summer Class Enrollment," *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

academic program, asking how would they be able to bring students up to standards in such a short period of time. Vallas responded: “Are we going to be able to close the gap in seven weeks? Not as much as we’d like. If, on the average, we close it by a year, we can consider ourselves successful.”<sup>66</sup>

### **Truancy Program**

In September of 1996, a new truancy plan was approved in order to help improve student attendance. Vallas explained the need for the plan: “Ultimately, what’s going to really make a dent in the area of truancy will be the ending of social promotions, summer school, and a better education program. That said and done, you still need special intervention programs.”<sup>67</sup> As part of a plan designed to help improve student attendance, the Student Attendance Improvement Policy included school based initiatives, which involved the development of alternatives to out of school suspension, programs for at risk students, and programs for chronic truants. The program also included system wide initiatives, such as computerized attendance and automated calling. The Board also created a 24-hour truancy hotline number to give businesses and residents a means by which to report truant students. To hold schools accountable, a central office staff member would conduct school attendance audits.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Michael Martinez, “Mandatory Summer School Classes Beset by Problems,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>67</sup>Michael Martinez, “Schools OK Crackdown on Truants – Tougher Policy is Part of Reforms, Vallas Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>68</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, September, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 28.

### **First School Year, Progress Made, More Progress Needed**

After a full school year as CEO, Vallas and his team experienced significant gains in elementary ITBS scores, but high schools posted some of the lowest scores of the decade. Vallas restated the expectations: “The bottom line is the whole system has to move forward. We realize that’s going to take time with the high schools, but nevertheless the high schools have got to show the same progress as the elementary schools are showing.”<sup>69</sup> Many arguments involving the causes for the failure of the high schools surfaced, including the previous policy of social promotion. In August of 1996, the school board moved to end the automatic promotion policy for eighth graders that turned fifteen before December 1<sup>st</sup> who did not pass summer school.<sup>70</sup> Instead of being automatically promoted, those eighth graders instead would have to attend a transition center that provided intensive instruction.

Vallas would implement more intensive intervention measures to address failing high schools. Vallas would use a process called *reconstitution* to intervene in several failing high schools as well as some elementary schools. The process of reconstitution involves re-staffing all of the employees in a school. Each employee would have to interview for their positions. If there were not rehired, they were displaced from that school. Initially, teachers who were displaced during that process were put into a reserve pool where they were given twenty months to find another job in the district. They were

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<sup>69</sup>Michael Martinez and Janita Poe, “Chicago Grade Schools Pull Off Test Turnaround – High Schools Perform Poorly,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1996.

<sup>70</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, August, 1996. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 1880.

paid their full salary during that time period. Vallas explained his decision for using such a drastic measure: “This is a pretty bold step, but we have schools that are not showing progress and not improving and we have to use every instrument at our disposal. Sometimes you just have to start over.”<sup>71</sup>

By the end of the 1996-1997 school year, seven high schools would be identified as schools that would be reconstituted.<sup>72</sup> Reasons given for the utilization of this measure were low test scores, poor attendance, high dropout rates, and failure to follow improvement plans. During the school board meeting, Vallas stated: “The bottom line is we are trying to fix things. We’re into kids, not job security.”<sup>73</sup> Also as a result of that board meeting, the 20-month time period given to reserve teachers was reduced to 10 months. This infuriated Chicago Teacher’s Union representatives. Vallas explained: “There is not lifetime job security. We cannot financially afford to guarantee that. Most of the teachers who move into the reserve teachers’ pool probably will find other employment opportunities quite easily (in the system).”<sup>74</sup> Out of those seven high schools, one third of the teachers lost their assignments.

Tommye Brown, principal of Englewood High School, which was one of the seven high schools that was reconstituted, was promoted to the post of director of

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<sup>71</sup>Michael Martinez and Janita Poe, “Ultimate School Reform: Start Over – 6-7 Schools may be Affected; Teachers’ Union Sure Jobs Safe,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>72</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, June, 1997. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 1402-1414.

<sup>73</sup>Janita Poe, “Board Votes to Restaff 7 Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>74</sup>Michael Martinez and Janita Poe, “CTU, Board at War Over Teacher Reserves – Revised Policy Allows 10 Months to Find a Job,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

alternative schools previous to the announcement that Englewood would be reconstituted. Englewood was considered one of the worst high schools in the state, and had a slew of gang problems. Brown was considered a savior for the school; working around the clock and with a disregard for his own personal health as evidenced with his swift return to work after a mild heart attack. When the move was made, it sparked questions concerning if Englewood was already identified as a school that would be reconstituted. Vallas was criticized for his plans to move Brown who helped the school get rid of a great deal of gang activity and made positive academic gains in the school. Vallas claimed that the move was made because Brown had asked for a less stressful assignment and a promotion: “He had heart surgery, and he wanted a promotion, and he wanted to take over the alternative schools, and I’m not going to deny it to him. He’s earned it.”<sup>75</sup>

### **School Safety Concerns**

The 1996-1997 school year also experienced a host of school safety issues. One of those issues took place at Clemente High School. Reportedly, the dean of students at Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Jerry Anderson, turned down an offer for the principalship at Clemente extended to her by the LSC because of death threats that she received. Supposedly, the threats came from a violent Puerto Rican gang who supported another candidate for principal. Vallas responded: “I’m taking over the school. The bottom line is that Clemente has brought this on themselves. We have been very patient

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<sup>75</sup>Michael Martinez and Jerry Thomas, “Englewood High’s ‘Savior’ Principal Steps Aside,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.



with Clemente. Clemente is going to have its independence of politics. The political exploitation of Clemente students is over.”<sup>76</sup>

In April of 1997, students at Jenner Elementary School, located in the heart of the Cabrini-Green Chicago Housing Authority high rises, were moved into the hallways of the school several times because of gunfire outside of the school. Cabrini-Green was considered one of the most dangerous housing projects in the city. An outraged Vallas stated: “When do these actions begin to undermine the education process? When children are at school, they should be focusing on school work. They shouldn’t have to be going through emergency drills to avoid gunfire.”<sup>77</sup> Vallas met with parents, teachers and the principal of Jenner to offer them a temporary space, but they refused over concerns of interrupting the school year and disrupting the learning process with busing students.

In October of 1997, students at Jenner Elementary School witnessed a man getting shot outside a school window. Vallas reopened the conversation regarding moving the school:

If the local school council and the school leadership give us the word, the kids could be out in a week. If they don’t give us the green light, we still reserve the right to move kids if the situation does not immediately improve. We’re not going to go through a school year worrying about Jenner. Those kids should not have to be going to school in a war zone.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Michael Martinez and Gary Marx, “Vallas Takes Control at Troubled Clemente,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>77</sup>Annie Sweeney, “Cabrini School to Remain Open Despite Gun Battles,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>78</sup>Michael Martinez, “Return of Cabrini Gunfire Brings Call to Move School,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

After meeting with about one hundred parents from Jenner, Vallas continued to persuade them to reconsider their position:

We do not want to go through another year of distractions at Jenner. The only thing that would keep us from moving is commitments from the Chicago Housing Authority, the police department and community leaders that will permanently change the status quo around the neighborhood. It is my decision to make, but I want community support. If about 125 parents want to move, we would operate a small school at Mulligan and leave the rest at Jenner. However, I would prefer we move all the students before we lose a life.<sup>79</sup>

Vallas backed off of the plans to move Jenner after the Chicago Housing Authority promised to close down the high-rise buildings.

In December of 1997, a random search conducted at Foreman High School turned up a large number of banned items such as pagers, knives and marijuana. Ninety students were arrested as a result of the search. Vallas made the following statement regarding the random search: “This is one of the larger ones but the point is we do them very often. If you are going to have a zero tolerance policy...you’ve got to enforce that policy. So we have random sweeps, and students can find themselves in big trouble if they bring them (unauthorized items) to school.”<sup>80</sup>

### **Character Education and Service Learning**

Vallas assembled a team of educators along with religious and community members to develop a character education program that would be implemented in all Chicago City Schools. The goal was to train teachers over the summer in order to

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<sup>79</sup>Sheryl Kennedy and Nancy Ryan, “Vallas Seeks to Move Cabrini Kids – Schools’ Chief Cites Threat of Violence,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>80</sup>Anonymous, “90 Students Arrested in Sweep at Foreman High,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

implement the program in September of 1997. Vallas issued his opinion regarding the need for character education:

I've had a religious upbringing where values and ethics and morals were being reinforced. The most dynamic personality outside my father was our parish priest. He's an institution. He's kind of our moral guiding light. There are so many individuals like that in our communities who have for all practical purposes been barred from our schools.<sup>81</sup>

Vallas' plan was supported by the CTU, who felt that some of the responsibilities regarding the teaching of morals and values that may not be taught at the homes of some CPS students would have to be taught by teachers and coaches.

In addition to the character education program, CPS officials announced that sixty hours of community service would be a prerequisite for high school graduation. To fulfill this requirement, CPS students would need to work as tutors for younger students, or volunteer in schools, churches, nursing homes or institutions serving the disabled. Vallas spoke on the addition of the service learning requirement: "We are focusing on academics, but it is important children learn ethics and develop a sense of community. Getting kids involved is great. It also helps the community become more comfortable with the school."<sup>82</sup> This plan received some criticism from education experts who argued that the value of providing service is severely lessened when it is forced onto teenagers.

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<sup>81</sup>Meg McSherry Breslin, "Moral Lessons Come to Class – Teaching Values May Join 3 R'S," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>82</sup>Gary Washburn and Michael Martinez, "Chicago's Schools Add S to 3 R'S – High School Students Will Have to Do Service," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

### **Modified Magnet School Plan**

In October of 1997, Vallas proposed a plan that would require for all CPS magnet schools to reserve 30 percent of the enrollment for neighborhood children.<sup>83</sup> Magnet schools were a manifestation of efforts to desegregate schools in the early 1980's and encourage middle-class families to stay in Chicago. Magnet schools offer a variety of different specialty curriculum choices and have citywide enrollment patterns. There are a variety of procedures to gain admittance in to a magnet school, but most involved a lottery and an application process.

Opponents to that plan felt that by reserving that space for neighborhood children, it would defeat the purpose of the existence and purpose for magnet schools. Vallas argued that it would promote neighborhood involvement and decrease transportation costs. Vallas stated: "People across the city have felt for years that only the elite get into magnet schools. What we are trying to do here is demystify the magnet school program."<sup>84</sup> Part of the mystery surrounding magnet schools was a general belief that a high percentage of white students attended the city's magnet schools. In actuality, the magnet schools all had a majority minority student population. The opponents to this plan caused school officials to restructure the plan some, and decide to cut the 30 percent number in half. After the first year, if the program was successful, the district could vote to increase the percentage.

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<sup>83</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, October, 1997. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 609-614.

<sup>84</sup>Janita Poe, "Reactions Mixed to Magnet School Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

### **Victory at Springfield**

In December of 1997, Vallas and the Chicago Reform Board of Trustees experienced a major victory in regards to school funding. Despite heavy lobbying efforts from tobacco and gambling companies, the state approved a \$485 million dollar funding increase for the state's poorest school districts. The revenue would come from raising taxes on telecommunications, cigarettes and casinos. The funding issue had been raised several times during Vallas' tenure, and in November of 1997, the same funding plan had been rejected by the House. But after Mayor Daley and Vallas urged Chicago residents to call and email state House representatives, they decided to reconvene for a special session. An elated Vallas proclaimed: "The children's lobby has let their presence be felt in Springfield...Any time the community can become organized, any time the community can become mobilized, any time common people turn out in mass numbers on an important issue, they're going to overcome the special interests each and every time."<sup>85</sup>

In a *Chicago Tribune* news article authored by Board of Trustee President Gery Chico and Paul Vallas, they explained that the bill did not solve all the problems with educational funding for schools in Illinois, but it allowed for the expansion and continuance of several educational programs, including:

- The adding of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to the mandatory summer school program
- The after school Lighthouse program
- Reducing class sizes
- Expansion of preschool programs

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<sup>85</sup>Rick Pearson, "Legislators Get Message, Pass School-Fund Bill," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

- Parents as Teachers First program
- Cradle to Classroom program
- The building of new schools and renovations to older buildings<sup>86</sup>

Vallas and Chico warned that the debate on educational funding had not ended, but the increased funding would provide immense benefits for CPS.

### **Business as Usual**

Over the next months after Vallas' first two years at the helm of CPS CEO, many of the initial controversies that surrounded the district were reduced as he continued to push for initiatives that he believed would improve the district. In late 1997, criticism of the district's inability to fire displaced teachers surfaced. Vallas contended: "I've never suggested that it's easy to get rid of bad teachers. Removal of ineffective teachers remains a difficult process and it will remain that way until state laws change."<sup>87</sup> Soon after this, beginning in early 1998, Vallas explored options for an alternative step between probation and reconstitution. Vallas explained the move: "The board is not giving up its right to reconstitute, but the board is open to a union proposal to establish an alternative step or an interim step between probation and reconstitution."<sup>88</sup>

In October of 1997, Vallas and the Chicago Public Schools received high praise from President William Clinton. During a visit to Chicago, Clinton stated: "You've strengthened curriculum, renovated buildings, expanded pre-school education, kept

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<sup>86</sup>Gery Chico and Paul Vallas, "Real Benefits From New School Funds," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>87</sup>Michael Martinez, "Schools Still Slow to Fire Inept Teachers – City Principals Hire Many Rated Unqualified," *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>88</sup>Michael Martinez, "Teachers Ousted by Reforms Still in System," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

schools open longer and in summertime to give children who need it extra help.”<sup>89</sup>

Vallas admitted that he and his team felt an adrenaline rush after those statements, and early in the following year, he took advantage of the positive statements to remind the federal government of its responsibility to education: “I think the federal government should play a larger role in providing assistance to local school systems. Education is a national security issue. If you don’t invest in education, you’re not going to be able to compete internationally.”<sup>90</sup>

In response to violent outbursts in areas surrounding the Robert Taylor Homes leading up to the December holiday break, a Chicago low-income housing area, Vallas and the CPS leadership team launched a program which kept some schools open during the winter holiday break so that students could participate in recreational camps. The board also planned to hire parent workers to help escort children from the Robert Taylor Homes to school. Vallas’s stated his rationale: “I’m not suggesting here that what we’re offering is going to solve all the problems. We’re making a contribution. If the kids aren’t in school, they’re not going to get educated. If we have to go out and get them escorted, then that’s what we’re going to do.”<sup>91</sup>

When school resumed in January, Vallas kicked started the efforts to escort students to school by personally assisting. Vallas climbed the stairwells of the dangerous Robert Taylor Homes that Monday several times to assist kids to and from school. Vallas

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<sup>89</sup>Bonnie Miller Rubin, “A Clintons Praise Effort in Education,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

<sup>90</sup>Janita Poe, “School Board Finalizes \$24 Million Spending Plan – Officials Still Beaming Over Kudos From President,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>91</sup>Michael Martinez, “Schools to Serve as Havens on Break,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1997.

described the conditions at the Taylor Homes: “Does it affect their education?

You’re darn right it does. It’s all the more reason to have after-school programs. It’s going to take time but you’ve got to have school-based all-day programs. Do I feel safe? I don’t even think about it.”<sup>92</sup> By the following week, the program was expanded to include additional schools near the Robert Taylor Homes and a shuttle bus program began, which transported students to the nearby Phillips High School through gang territory.

Also in the month of January, Vallas launched a Saturday detention program for students that were found to be in violation of serious first time non-violent offenses. The Saturday Morning Alternative Reach-out and Teach (SMART) program was staffed by off-duty police officers, counselors and ministers. Vallas described what the program would not be, as well as his vision:

This is not going to be ‘The Breakfast Club.’ The kids are going to have vision and hearing tests, and they are going to have drug counseling if they need it. There’s going to be someone there to evaluate their academic record and school prospects and career options and then they are going to get a dose of character education and drug education. So this is going to be pretty thorough.<sup>93</sup>

In April of 1998, Vallas was presented an award during the Chicago Business Opportunity Fair for what was described as his unprecedented support and commitment to minority and women owned businesses. This was in response to his selection of a high

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<sup>92</sup>Sheryl Kennedy and Michael Martinez, “Volunteer Shield Stands up for Taylor Homes’ Children,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>93</sup>Michael Martinez, “Tough Detention Could Replace Jail – Plan Aims to Ease Backlogged Juvenile Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.



percentage of minority business for school construction business and other service contracts.

### **Daley and Vallas Display First Signs of Public Disagreement**

The triumvirate of Mayor Daley, CEO Paul Vallas and Board President Gery Chico led a slew of reform efforts in a harmonious fashion during the first years of the reform effort. Vallas was in the forefront, handling the day-to-day operations while Chico mainly dealt with policy issues. While Chico and Vallas did not always agree, they maintained a public respect for one another. Mayor Daley supported the team, and publicly praised their efforts and mostly stayed out of affairs. However, when asked if students who fail the Iowa test for a second time would be held back for a second year, Mayor Daley said yes: “I will not socially promote children to high school, to allow them to drop out and go on...You want to promote them? You go promote them. And then you’ll see them in the criminal justice system and you’ll be complaining about your taxes.”<sup>94</sup>

Vallas’ opinion on the matter was not as definitive. By that time, the board had altered the promotions policy; giving principals and regional officers input on a case-by-case basis as to if it would be advantageous to hold a particular student back. Vallas stated: “After the first retention, the social aspects of the retention are less of a concern. But when you are talking about flunking for a second consecutive time, then obviously

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<sup>94</sup>Michael Martinez and Janita Poe, “Kids Who Flunk Twice Give City Schools Big Test – Daley Would Deny Promotions, But Vallas has 2nd Thoughts,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

the social aspects have a much greater impact.<sup>95</sup> Later, when asked about a possible difference in philosophy between him and the mayor, Vallas was reluctant to acknowledge a disagreement:

I was pretty clear over and over again that I did not feel that the mayor's statement was in any way inconsistent with the policy. But you can take the mayor's strongest statement and take our weakest statement and imply that there is some sort of contradiction...I've had conversations with the mayor and we're very consistent. We would like to think that (the student promotion) policy is tough, but yet the policy does have the needed flexibility so that we can make decisions in the best interests of the child.<sup>96</sup>

Although the minor disagreement between the men was downplayed by Vallas, it would serve as the first sign of tension to come between him and the mayor.

### **Vallas Continues to Speak**

The outspoken Vallas continued to speak on issues related to CPS and its students. After the athletic shoe company Puma featured a CPS basketball player on a commercial, Vallas weighed in on possible consequences: "The promotion, or over promotion, of sports can shift students' attention away from investing time and effort in things of greater importance. Some students have a greater chance of being struck by a meteorite than of making the NBA."<sup>97</sup> The commercial prompted a policy that banned CPS students from promoting athletic products.

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Michael Martinez, "Vallas Says He, Daley Agree on Flunking Kids," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>97</sup>Barry Temkin, "Puma's Footprints Helping to Soil Fabric of Sports," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

## Notable Events to Follow

After learning that three of Chicago's seven charter schools scored poorly on the Iowa test, Vallas stated: "We have enough poor-performing schools so their charters will be revoked if they don't make gains."<sup>98</sup>

- In May of 1998, Vallas installed a busing plan that was designed to save money by requiring that two schools share one school bus. The plan affected several magnet schools, which resulted in parent complaints. Vallas stated "The basic policy is, in effect, done. If people want to communicate their displeasure about the busing policy (at public hearings on the budget) they can. But this is already our policy."<sup>99</sup>
- In June of 1998, CPS announced that ten new day-care centers for teen mothers would be opened. Critics wondered if the centers would encourage teens to have sex and have babies. Vallas believed that: "Rather than losing two generations of children, this is an opportunity to save two generations of children."<sup>100</sup>
- Paul Vallas, along with other officials were appointed by Governor Edgar to examine the problem related to educational funding in the south suburbs of Chicago.

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<sup>98</sup>Janita Poe, "3 City Charter Schools Fail First Big Test – Vallas Says They Must Show Improvement or be Shut," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>99</sup>Janita Poe, "Controversial Busing Plan a Done Deal, Parents Told," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>100</sup>Melita Marie Garza and Julie Deardorff, "More School Day-Care Set for Students' Kids," *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

- A special advisory council recommended that 15 CPS schools be reconstituted. Although Vallas stated that he wanted to ensure that the board did not make the same mistakes as they had with previous reconstitutions, he would claim that he planned to rid the school of teachers and principals: “Will there be staffing changes? Absolutely. The issue is if you are not going to reconstitute, how are you going to get at ineffective teachers? Could there be personnel changes? Yeah, there could be.”<sup>101</sup>
- During an interview with *Chicago Tribune* education reporter Michael Martinez, he was asked about his formula for success in the district, and about his critics. One of his responses was:  
  
When I came in, everybody made excuses why the kids couldn’t learn. Now they are making excuses why the kids are learning. Really, that’s an important issue: For example, supposedly we’re scaring the hell out of everybody. Is fear a factor? Well, if fear is synonymous with accountability, then I’ll take fear anytime.<sup>102</sup>
- Vallas was given the authority to choose an interim principal when the LSC has reached an impasse.<sup>103</sup>
- In August of 1998, the CPS central office moved from Pershing Road to 125 S. Clark St. in Chicago’s downtown loop.

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<sup>101</sup>Michael Martinez, “Panel to Push Case for Reconstituting 15 Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>102</sup>Michael Martinez, “A Painful Steady Climb – With the Regular Year Not Even A Memory and the Summer Session Set to Begin, Paul Vallas, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, has no Time for Doublers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>103</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, July, 1998. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 30-31.

- A large number of students would be retained for a second time in 1998.

Vallas stated: “The point is we’re hanging tough. We’re not compromising on our standards. Overall, I’m pleased with the progress, but we’re not satisfied because we have a long way to go. The next year, you will ask the question, will kids be triple retained? Ask me that next year.”<sup>104</sup>

- As of October of 1998, the number of CPS schools on the Illinois State Board of Education’s academic early warning list was significantly reduced. Along with that, the district’s enrollment was up, and improvements were made in attendance, dropout, truancy, and mobility rates. Vallas stated:

What’s making a difference is, first of all, labor peace and financial stability. What’s making a difference is that we now have a system that holds everyone accountable for the performance of the students. And now we have more support programs such as extension of the school day and after-school and summer school programs. I think it’s a combination of things.<sup>105</sup>

### **Vallas Seeks Final Approval in Firing Principals**

Vallas had made no secret of his wishes to have more input regarding the selection and retention of CPS principals. In March of 1999, Vallas backed a bill that was introduced in the Senate Education Committee to amend the 1995 Amendatory Act to give central administration the final say in firing a principal. Advocates for the LSCs created by the original 1988 Chicago School Reform Act were outraged, arguing that this takes the LSCs most important power away from them. Vallas ultimately wanted LSCs

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<sup>104</sup>Michael Martinez, “Schools Hold Firm as 1,300 Fail Twice – Pupils Must Repeat Grade for Third Time,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

<sup>105</sup>Janita Poe, “35 City Schools Escape State Early Warning List – District Attendance Climbs; Truancy, Dropout Rates Fall,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1998.

to have the authority to renew a principal's contract only if they receive a satisfactory rating from central office, and cripple their ability to fire principals without their approval: "I'm trying to reduce the selection of bad principals and prevent good principals from being intimidated or influenced by overzealous members of LSCs. This isn't anything new, because I've been talking about this for four years."<sup>106</sup>

### **Tension With Board President Emerges**

Behind closed doors, it was common knowledge that CEO Paul Vallas and Board President Gery Chico did not always see eye-to-eye on every issue, and tension would build from time to time. Both men always publicly respected one another and played down any difference of opinion. However, in May of 1999, their difference would be made more public. During a three day educational conference headed by the mayor, Vallas became upset when a video played at the conference labeled him as "deputy superintendent." City Hall, who produced the video, called it a production film error, but it was reportedly the subject of jokes at the conference. A glossy brochure for the conference reportedly included Chico's name but omitted Vallas. Those behind-the-scenes gaffes as well as other tension regarding personnel issues caused reporters to ask Vallas about the tension and his future with CPS. This time, Vallas acknowledged that there was tension, but claimed that he wanted to stay: "It's really up to the mayor whether or not he's going to keep the team together. And he also has to make a decision regarding the board too....So I'm not the only person whose fate is yet to be determined.

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<sup>106</sup>Ray Quintanilla, "Vallas Vies for Control Over Principals' Fates," *Chicago Tribune*, 1999.

If I was asked to stay, I would. I would be inclined to keep the management team intact.”<sup>107</sup>

### **Other Notable Events 1999–2000**

- CPS decided that it would not retain students in the same grade for a third time in a row.<sup>108</sup> Vallas stated: “Let’s be realistic, this is not backing off (the policy against social promotions). All policies have to be flexible. Look, our retention policy is probably the toughest in the nation. It would be more of an issue if we had more triple retainees.”<sup>109</sup>
- CPS posted the fifth straight year of gains on the Iowa tests
- When asked about his future, Vallas stated: “I personally feel that I need two more years to institutionalize the changes and after the two years, we’ll see. In two years, the system will probably have had enough of me.”<sup>110</sup>
- CPS students posted low scores on the newly administered Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in 1999, which contrasted the improvements made on the national Iowa test. This trend continued in the year 2000 as well.

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<sup>107</sup>Michael Martinez and Ray Quintanilla, “Vallas Talks of ‘Tension’ with School Board Chief – Job Future in Doubt Amid Rift with Chico,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1999.

<sup>108</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, August, 1999. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 61-64.

<sup>109</sup>Michael Martinez, “Schools Won’t Hold Back Pupils Flunking 3rd Time – Chicago Officials Likely to Place Many in Special Education,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1999.

<sup>110</sup>Michael Martinez and Ray Quintanilla, “Gains in City School Test Scores Clouded – Most Students Below Nationwide Norms,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1999.

- In May of 2000, Vallas introduced a “parent report card” which would be implemented during the following school year. Vallas gave specifics concerning the program:

I am referring to it as a check list. Every five weeks, we’ll send a check-off list home to parents: is your child bringing his eyeglasses to school? A lot of our kids have health problems like asthma: Do kids have their inhalers? Have kids been vaccinated? Are kids bringing books to school? Are kids dressed appropriately?<sup>111</sup>

- Fewer students required summer school after the 1999-2000 school year than in previous years based on Iowa test results.
- CPS received the highest rating that it had experienced in over forty years from Standard and Poor’s, an A-plus. This would allow the board to save money on borrowing for school construction.
- CPS placed six schools under their direct control, implementing a measure called *intervention*.<sup>112</sup> Vallas described the intervention process:
 

“Intervention may prove to be the most controversial because intervention allows you to go in and selectively remove staff for non-performance. After you do the evaluation, you can dismiss individual teachers based on the evaluation.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Michael Martinez, “School Parents Will Receive Reports on Own Progress,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

<sup>112</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, June, 2000. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 79-84.

<sup>113</sup>Michael Martinez, “City Schools Put Hammer Down on 6 of the Worst,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.



- In July of 2000, CPS announced a change to the promotions policy, adding an element that allowed teachers to evaluate a student's classroom grades, classroom reading and math tests, attendance, homework completion percentage and conduct in determining a final decision regarding a student's promotion status. Vallas explained: "This is the natural progression of our rising standards. This is something we have wanted to do for a long time."<sup>114</sup>

### **Vallas and Daley Bump Heads Again**

Despite a major back-to-school campaign for the 2000-2001 school year publicized by Mayor Daley, a record number of students were absent on the first day – over 100,000 students. CPS officials believed that the reason for the low turnout was related to a possible backlash to the back-to-school rally, which asked that parents walk their children to school for the first day. The result was a higher than normal turnout of parents to go along with the low turnout of students. Vallas believed that the rally may have been a factor, but blamed the low turnout on the earlier than normal start: "While I think those are factors, I think the major factor is the very early start. We have to figure out a way to have a three-week break instead of a two-week break."<sup>115</sup>

Mayor Daley did not quite agree with Vallas' rationale for the low first day attendance. Daley commented: "It's like saying, 'Do I have to go to work at 9 o'clock?' I mean, ridiculous. I mean we know school's going to start. They can't keep making

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<sup>114</sup>Ray Quintanilla and Michael Martinez, "Teachers May Get Say in Kids' Promotions," *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

<sup>115</sup>Michael Martinez, "First Day Push to go to School Comes Up Short - 100,000 Absences Reported," *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

excuses now ‘Well, it started too early.’ ‘Well, we should start Oct. 1.’”<sup>116</sup> Vallas continued to publicly disagree and stated that he would start school later the next year.

### **The End of the Tenure of Paul Vallas**

Leading up to the end of the tenure of Paul Vallas as CPS CEO, reports of a flattening of test scores surfaced, as well as reports of continued poor performance by CPS students on the state’s new ISAT test. One particular *Tribune* newspaper article written in November of 2000, which title began: *Another Bad Year for City Schools* highlighted the districts’ failure to produce positive ISAT test scores.<sup>117</sup> Vallas took exception to the article, and in particular the headline. He did not think that it was fair to judge the success of the school year according to ISAT test results, as evidenced by an article that he wrote for the Chicago Tribune a week later. He argued that the following facts did not constitute a “bad year” for CPS (in his words):

- This is the fifth consecutive year that Chicago Public Schools elementary school students have improved their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills
- This is the fourth consecutive year that Chicago Public Schools high school students have improved the scores they earned on the Test of Achievement and Proficiency
- This is the third consecutive year that the number of Chicago Public Schools students taking and passing the advanced placement tests has increased
- This is the third consecutive year that our dropout rate has declined

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<sup>116</sup>Michael Martinez and Diana Strzalka, “Daley Not Taking Any Excuses for First-Day Truancy,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

<sup>117</sup>Michael Martinez, “Another Bad Year for City Schools – More Fail Than in '99 But not all Lost,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

- This year's increase in the graduation rate puts it as a 15-year high
- This is the third time in the last four years that ACT scores have risen while the national composite scores have remained the same.<sup>118</sup>

Vallas went on to state: "Our students, teachers, principals and administrators have worked too long and too hard to achieve the positive results as listed above to be labeled as failures, based on the results of a single test administered before the standards could be covered. This is neither responsible nor fair."<sup>119</sup>

Mayor Daley did not seem satisfied with the state of affairs for CPS. At his annual State of the City speech in February of 2001, he expressed frustration with the slow progress in CPS student reading abilities and claimed that schools would need to utilize non-traditional ideas and think "outside of the box" to help students improve:

When you go into a school, you see kids who deal with technology faster than any of us, who can sing a rap song better than anyone else, but they have a problem reading... With every child there is ability. How do we get it out of them? ... I think we have to go outside of the box.<sup>120</sup>

Vallas claimed that he was planning three initiatives that would enhance performance. He revealed that one of his proposals would include a standardized curriculum from central office: "The studies have indicated that the schools where we go in and dictate curriculum are the schools that seem to be doing the best."<sup>121</sup> He also took a shot at 1988 decentralization efforts: "This whole concept of having 600 schools doing 600 different

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<sup>118</sup>Paul Vallas, "School Success Stories," *Chicago Tribune*, 2000.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Gary Washburn, "Schools Told to Think 'Outside of Box' – Daley Calling for Non-Traditional Ideas; Vallas Says He Has 3 Plans," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

things, the whole premise of the first school reform movement in 1987—what we are learning is that the probationary schools, the schools where we intervene and go in and dictate models, are the ones making the most significant gains.”<sup>122</sup>

At this point, speculation regarding Vallas’s future with CPS increased. In addition, there were several rumors regarding Vallas’s possible interest in running for governor of Illinois. Vallas dispelled those rumors on several occasions, which did not stop the speculation. A supposed reconciliation between Vallas and Daley took place after a couple of weeks of comments between the two after the mayor’s statement regarding the direction that the reform efforts should be focused. Vallas stated: “We’re frustrated too. The mayor’s call for new ideas and new innovations, we don’t shy away from those things. My response was to be defensive about what we’ve accomplished and the gains we have made, but to also acknowledge that we need to do more. So the mayor and I are in full agreement.”<sup>123</sup> However, the speculation continued.

Adding to the speculation was the surprise resignation of CPS Board President Gery Chico. Chico stated:

Six years is actually a lengthy period of service in this position. Of the 80 prior presidents of this board, only three have served longer continuously...This is a natural break point. You would like to leave when there is sufficient time to find a successor, prepare that successor to go and start the next school year as smoothly as possible.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Michael Martinez and Gary Washburn, “Vallas, Daley Practice the 4th `R’ – Schools Chief, Mayor Reconcile After Dispute,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>124</sup>Michael Martinez and Gary Washburn, “Chico Resigns School Post in Surprise Move,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

Daley praised Chico for his dedicated service and stated that his departure meant that other people would have the opportunity to serve. Questions directed towards Mayor Daley regarding Vallas' immediate future surrounded Chico's resignation. Daley was asked by reporters if Vallas had done a good job and he stated: "I think they have all done a good job. Like anything else, we can do a better job." The mayor was then asked if he wanted Vallas to stay. He said "Yes." A reporter then commented that his answer was not a glowing endorsement, and he commented: "I am glowing. What do you want me to do, put a moon face on?"<sup>125</sup>

Two weeks later, after weeks of speculation and rumors, Vallas announced that it would be the end: "Am I going? Yeah, I'm going, OK? Simple as that. I don't want to play these games for another year. ... I've tried not to respond to the anonymous this and the anonymous that or the high-level sources close to the mayor this and the close to the mayor that..."<sup>126</sup> Vallas continued: "So you want to know if I'm leaving? Yeah. I'm leaving. Yeah, I'm gonna be gone. End of story. So put it in the paper tomorrow."<sup>127</sup>

Soon after his comments, Daley hinted that the leadership team may have grown complacent:

When you committed to change, you risk failing. But unless we're willing to change, we'll never succeed. I also hope no one has fallen into the trap of believing we've already done the best that we can. If you believe that,

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>John Kass, "Vallas Stuck Neck Out For Schools, Only to Get Axed," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

then you've given up on our children. And I, for one, will never give up on any child in Chicago.<sup>128</sup>

Many people believed that Vallas got a raw deal, and praised his efforts. In summary, he was praised for “living, eating, and breathing” the job he was given, achieving six consecutive balanced budgets, a 2.65 billion dollar construction program, achieving net gains in reading and math standardized test scores over his tenure, banning social promotions, creating after-school and summer programs and improving the athletic program. Daley added to the public praise, stating: “Teachers, students and principals will tell you there's a new spirit in the Chicago Public Schools. The old sense of defeatism and failure is a thing of the past.”<sup>129</sup> Several letters surfaced in Chicago's newspapers thanking and praising Vallas and many contained statements that the mayor should have retained him and warned him that he had “big shoes to fill.”

The future of CPS was highly discussed in Chicago in June of 2001. Who would take over the helm of CPS CEO to lead the next wave of reforms? With a balanced budget, labor peace with CPS teachers, improved accountability, but stagnated standardized test scores, who would be the right individual to develop programs designed to produce the reading gains that Daley was looking for? Who would be willing to utilize non-traditional methods and “think outside of the box?” Daley did not take long to make his decision. He would select an obscure, unassuming, 36-year-old former chief of staff to Vallas, Arne Duncan.

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<sup>128</sup>Michael Martinez and Ray Quintanilla, “Vallas: `It's Time to Go' - Exit Signals Daley's Desire for Clean Sweep of Reformers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>129</sup>Ray Quintanilla and Gary Washburn, “Vallas Gets Positive Sendoff - Daley Hails CEO for Bringing New Spirit to System,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

## CHAPTER IV

### ARNE DUNCAN AND THE NEW WAVE OF REFORM

#### Background

In June of 2001, Mayor Daley selected Arne Duncan, who functioned as Chief of Staff under Paul Vallas, to replace him as CPS' next CEO. Duncan was primarily in charge of aligning elementary and high schools into clusters and ensuring that each cluster had a magnet program. The magnet cluster program was created primarily to attract middle class families to enroll their children in the district who would opt for private or parochial schools, and to help reduce the cost of busing by featuring high quality magnet programs closer to their homes. Duncan was also an administrator of the service learning program. Duncan revealed his motivation behind taking on the responsibility of CEO after a few months into the job:

This is it for me; I don't want any other job. It's a big responsibility, making sure kids who deserve an education really get one. For a long time I looked at the public schools as the enemy because they weren't doing the job. That's why I am passionate about this job and come to work to make sure every child receives an education they deserve.<sup>1</sup>

The mayor's choice surprised many, including individuals within the district office. One top official reportedly stated: "A lot of us didn't find out about the appointment until a few minutes before the mayor held his news conference. People

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<sup>1</sup>Ray Quintanilla, "Real Tests Ahead for City's Chief of Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

around here were very surprised. Arne has a lot to learn.”<sup>2</sup> Daley explained his selection, describing Duncan as “someone who starts with an understanding of how to get things done,” and praised his ability to “work with people and groups with different views to find the common ground that puts our children first.”<sup>3</sup> During a news conference with Mayor Daley, Duncan claimed that he was ready to improve the academic progress of the students in the system: “I am optimistic that the public schools can offer every child a good education. I don’t accept this responsibility lightly. I want to be an advocate for every child and provide every child with a good education.”<sup>4</sup>

Arne Duncan graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 1987 with a major in sociology. He played for Harvard’s basketball team where he also functioned as co-captain. After college, Duncan played professional basketball in Australia for four years. After his professional basketball career, Duncan ran the Ariel Education Initiative, which was a non for-profit organization. He was also was part of a team that founded a public elementary school which was named the Ariel Community Academy.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the selection of Arne Duncan as CEO, Mayor Daley selected Michael Scott as CPS Board President to replace Gery Chico. Scott was previously a top executive with AT&T and the board president of the Chicago Park District. Also joining the fold would be the newly elected CTU president Deborah Lynch-Walsh. Her victory

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<sup>2</sup>Ray Quintanilla and Gary Washburn, “Surprise for Vallas Job - Obscure Deputy was Daley's Second Choice,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup><http://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/duncan.html>



came after two unsuccessful attempts to unseat the incumbent Thomas Reece. While Reese enjoyed a seven-year run as president and helped facilitate a period of labor peace between the union and the Board, Lynch-Walsh announced that there was dissatisfaction with the old guard: "It's a new day for the Chicago Teachers Union. ... Many of our members felt there was not respect, that reforms were being done to them instead of with them."<sup>6</sup> The new triumvirate of Duncan, Scott and Lynch-Walsh would direct the next wave of CPS reforms.

Duncan's tenure as CPS CEO would be marked mainly by his handling of five major issues: Improvement of student performance in reading, the closing and consolidating of schools, funding issues, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Renaissance 2010 plan launched by Mayor Daley. While Paul Vallas took the office of CEO aggressively from the very beginning, Duncan worked behind the scenes and did not provide a high volume of media statements as his predecessor. This style would immediately draw some criticism from local media outlets, who wondered if Duncan was operating with a sense of urgency. Duncan answered those criticisms in a written statement published in the December 21<sup>st</sup> issue of the Chicago Tribune, in which he took a shot at Paul Vallas by stating that self-promotion was not his principal concern:

Perhaps some would say that I have erred by concentrating on substance over style, and on making headway rather than headlines. Informing the public of our many initiatives surely is an important task, and one on which I will work even harder in the months to come...But ultimately, our

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<sup>6</sup>Michael Martinez, "Teachers Toss Out Union's Old Guard - New Chief Says Vote `Was About Respect'," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

success or failure will be measured on the basis of the ongoing progress we make, starting with student performance.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his tenure, Duncan would utilize written communications as a primary means of informing the public of his opinions regarding decisions and policies.

Duncan called the post of chief education officer the most important in his cabinet. In August of 2001, he appointed Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins to the position.<sup>8</sup> Eason-Watkins was the principal of McCosh Elementary school, who led her school to standardized test scores that were double what they were when she began. Duncan stated: “That is exactly the model I’m looking for. I’m passionate about incremental change over time.”<sup>9</sup> Duncan claimed that Eason-Watkins was an authority in reading and stated that he planned to utilize her to help him produce the innovative reading programs that the mayor asked for. During his tenure, Eason-Watkins would serve as a catalyst behind the educational initiatives at CPS.

### **The End of Interventions**

One of Duncan’s first attention-grabbing decisions came with the announcement that CPS would end the practice of intervention, a practice that Vallas implemented towards the end of his tenure.<sup>10</sup> A school slated for intervention would undergo a process where central office performed an evaluation of all teachers and unilaterally determined if

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<sup>7</sup>Arne Duncan, “School Reform is Well Under Way,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>8</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 01-0822-EX21. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2001\\_08.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2001_08.aspx)

<sup>9</sup>Michael Martinez, “Duncan Adds to Schools Team - McCosh Principal Replaces Buckney,” *Chicago Tribune*. 2001.

<sup>10</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 01-0822-PO1. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2001\\_08.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2001_08.aspx)

a teacher would be dismissed for non-performance. Duncan disassembled Vallas' intervention teams, stating: "Last year, it wasn't always clear who was on first base. I want to find the best ways to use our scarce resources and support our teachers, principals and students."<sup>11</sup> Duncan held meetings with CTU president Deborah Lynch, before announcing the decision.

### **Early Education Initiatives**

#### **The Implementation of CPS Reading Specialists**

The first major academic initiative of Duncan's tenure would be implemented to address a problem that Mayor Daley wanted central administration to fix immediately: the fact that only one-third of CPS students could read at grade level. The new plan required that every elementary school spent two hours per day teaching reading, and high school students with low reading scores would also have two hours of reading classes per day. In addition, reading specialists would be sent to the schools to work directly with school staff as well as students. Duncan commented on the individuals that he planned to send to the schools: "The people we are going to send are not going to be the principal's best friend or some Joe Blow either. This is going to be an elite corps of people focused on one subject."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ray Quintanilla and Michael Martinez, "School Chief Ends Vallas Crackdown - Duncan Halting Teacher Firings," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>12</sup>Ray Quintanilla, "City Schools to Put Reading Before All - 2 Hours Devoted to Subject Daily," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

### **Small Schools Initiative**

An initiative that began before the tenures of Vallas and Duncan, the creation of “small schools” was intended to provide students with smaller class sizes, more attention from school staff, and a safer school environment. At the beginning of Vallas’ tenure, small schools were more specifically characterized, stating that no more than 200-350 students would occupy an elementary school and no more than 500 in a high school.<sup>13</sup> The small schools would also feature a self-selected faculty, have a great deal of autonomy concerning curriculum, budget, organization, and personnel, possess a coherent curricular focus which provided continuity across the grade levels, and an admissions policy which required student and parental commitments to the school mission. Under those guidelines, a small number of small schools were opened under Vallas’ tenure without much scrutiny from Vallas.

In August of 2001, Mayor Daley and CPS announced that they would begin taking larger, failing high schools and splitting them up into smaller schools. Daley provided an explanation for the initiative: “Despite all of our efforts, many children in our high schools are not prepared. We won’t be building new school buildings, we will be creating smaller, independent schools within existing buildings.”<sup>14</sup> Duncan also

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<sup>13</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board of Education Proceedings. Board of Education, City of Chicago, August, 1995. Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois, p. 5713.

<sup>14</sup>Ray Quintanilla, “Schools Thinking Small - Chicago to Divide Troubled Sites into Separate Centers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

weighed in: “We want to take the successes we have had with small schools and duplicate that success across the system.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Expanded Report Card**

Shortly after Duncan took over the CPS CEO post, Mayor Daley and Duncan attempted to downplay the significance of the high-stakes test scores that was a hallmark during Vallas’ tenure. Daley stated: “Test scores may not improve as much as we would like.” Duncan agreed that testing should be “a piece of the equation, not the entire equation.”<sup>16</sup> In November of 2001, Duncan announced that CPS would use a new “accountability report card” which would continue to post state test results, and also other information such as school dropout rates and teacher qualifications. Duncan described the purpose of the new report cards: “This is not an attempt to divert attention from test scores, but to put tests in perspective. You don’t buy a car or a house and just look at the door. This will give a 360-degree view of a school.”<sup>17</sup> Duncan went on to state that he wanted his success or failure to be measured by the newer wider accountability scale: “Do I want to be judged on this? Absolutely.”<sup>18</sup> Duncan believed that the new report cards would allow for the tracking of the results of individual student growth which he hoped would be considered when the state determined the criteria for probation. Duncan stated: “Schools may look good in terms of the percentage of students who are

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Quintanilla and Washburn, ‘Surprise for Vallas’ Job.’

<sup>17</sup>Lori Olszewski, “Duncan Expands Report Card - Chicago Schools to be Judged on More Than Scores,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

performing at national norms or meeting standards, but are their individual students really gaining? If a teacher can take a bunch of third graders all reading at the first-grade level and move them up two grade levels, now that's an enormous thing to do."<sup>19</sup> Duncan and Board President Michael Scott also spoke of using incentives to help motivate students to improve.

### **Duncan Eliminates Jobs**

At a meeting located at the Illinois governor's mansion in November of 2001, educators, business leaders, legislators and higher education officials gathered to develop strategies to discuss how to improve the quality of the state's teachers. When the topic of additional pay for teachers arose, Governor George Ryan challenged the group to come up with plans that involved more than just money: "We can talk all we want about putting more money into our classrooms, but a classroom full of eager students will not succeed without a good teacher. The harsh reality is we face limitations in the coming years, there won't be a lot of new money. Real education reform involves more than money."<sup>20</sup>

Duncan would soon have to adapt to that thinking. In December of 2001, Duncan announced that the Department of Learning Technologies would be eliminated. The department was responsible for helping schools integrate computers and the Internet into curriculum. Duncan stated: "We are trying to streamline the bureaucracy in the central

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, "State Hopes to Boost Teaching - Summit Focuses on Improvements at Head of Class," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

office, and we are not done. The duties of Learning Technologies can be handled in other departments, across our entire system.”<sup>21</sup>

The next round of cuts was soon to follow. In February of 2002, Duncan announced plans to cut approximately 80 non-teaching positions. Duncan stated: “This is more streamlining of the bureaucracy that I have been talking about...I take saving the taxpayers money very seriously.”<sup>22</sup> Daley praised Duncan’s decision regarding the cuts. However, Shirley Woodward, a former principal who was removed from her school and reassigned to duties at central office, claimed that the system wasted funds in other administrative areas. She claimed: “I just sit around all day and read the newspapers and I get paid...And I’m not the only one out there like me either. There’s at least three teachers at Austin (High School) who don’t do anything.”<sup>23</sup> Duncan denied that the system was wasting money on administrative salaries and did not comment publicly on Woodward’s statements.

In April of the same year, Duncan froze the hiring of what was called “non-essential” employees in central office, as well as spending on consultants, travel and advertising for the rest of that school year. Duncan explained that the freeze was done in preparation for a lack of funding from the state. Duncan made it clear that he did not want funding issues to directly affect classrooms:

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<sup>21</sup>Ray Quintanilla, “70 May Lose Jobs in School Cuts - Duncan to Close Tech Department in Streamlining,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>22</sup>Ray Quintanilla, “Chicago Schools Cutting Jobs - Administrators, Clerks Targeted,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

None of this impacts the schools. This is all central office. We're preparing for the worst, although we're absolutely committed to that not happening. We're doing everything we can to streamline the central office so nothing we do impacts what's most important, our classrooms.<sup>24</sup>

Duncan explained that the freeze was the result of a lack of property tax revenues received from the state, which was a result of the federal government's economic stimulus act. He also cited a reduction of investment returns, as well as an increase in health care costs.

Within a month, Duncan announced deeper cuts to fill a 170 million dollar gap in funding. The cuts would be made in the central and regional offices in a variety of different departments. Duncan claimed that even if the state continued to fund Chicago at the current levels (at that time), there would still be a funding gap because of rising costs. CPS leadership began to wonder out loud why one of the richer states in the country was almost dead last in educational funding. Duncan expressed his disgust: "It's not just embarrassing. It's shameful. We cannot absorb deep cuts without affecting our core educational program."<sup>25</sup>

By the end of the month, Governor Ryan announced that he had no choice but to cut education funding, due to a reduction in state revenues of over one billion dollars. Duncan responded: "Academically and morally, this is the wrong thing to do. Any decrease in state education funding will be extraordinarily difficult for us to absorb, and

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<sup>24</sup>Ana Beatriz Cholo and Michael Martinez, "Duncan Freezes Schools Office Hiring," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>25</sup>Lori Olszewski, "City Schools Bracing for More Cuts - Budget May Find \$200 Million Less in State Funding," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.



will negatively impact teaching and learning across the state.”<sup>26</sup> Despite the funding gap, CPS approved a 4.6 billion dollar budget, which was slightly higher than the budget allotted for the previous year. The new budget included the creation of Area Instructional Officers (AIO) whose task would be to directly supervise academic instruction in schools. Along with the AIO positions, additional reading “coaches” were added to serve all schools, and would be directly supervised by AIO’s.

### **CPS Sports**

Just as his predecessor, Duncan was passionate about being involved in the district’s sports program. Also, just as Vallas, Duncan expressed a desire for CPS sports to be equal to sport programs in affluent districts: “I want to compete with the New Triers and Evanstons of the world. I really want participation in the Public League to be a tremendous source of pride for all our students that they are a part of something special, something different.”<sup>27</sup> Duncan continued to express his passion about the importance of extracurricular activities:

Playing sports and being part of a team absolutely shaped who I am, my character and sense of values. You learn leadership, hard work, unselfishness and teamwork. If we are really serious about young people being productive citizens, those are skills they need to learn, and they are not easy to teach in the classroom...I want to understand what our competition looks like, how we can be more competitive with them—and not just in basketball. I want to be very, very competitive with them in the range of opportunities and teams and number of participants, and most of all in the quality of experiences we offer.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, “Ryan Proposes \$170 Million Less for Education,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>27</sup>Barry Tempkin, “CPS Chief Sees Sports as More Than Just Hoops,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

He would exhibit his passion in a proposal sent to the Illinois High School Sports Association (IHSA). He proposed that public league schools play in the regional and sectional postseason tournaments rather than its own qualifying tournament. The significance of the proposal was its financial implications. By hosting its own qualifying tournament, CPS avoided having to pay ISHA's tournament qualifying fees. The league would then have to pay tens of thousands of dollars for each team in the district to enter the tournament. Also, CPS would lose revenues generated by hosting tournament games at Chicago's United Center, the home stadium of Chicago's professional basketball and hockey teams. Duncan defended the use of additional resources: "If we are doing the right things, that's an investment we're happy to make. If we're providing more quality opportunities for our kids, it's a tremendous use of our resources."<sup>29</sup> Duncan argued that although the fierce state competition would initially overwhelm CPS athletes, student athletes would become more competitive through the process.

### **Duncan's Collaborative Approach**

Before sending the sports proposal to IHSA, Duncan announced that he would seek input from others before making a final decision: "After that (making a presentation to the IHSA board) I will make a final determination on whether to make a formal proposal to the IHSA. Before then I will be talking to principals, athletic directors and coaches to get their feedback on the idea..."<sup>30</sup> Duncan displayed evidence of several instances of collaborative decision making from the very beginning of his tenure. One of

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<sup>29</sup>Marlen Garcia, "Public League Change Could be Costly - IHSA Playoff Fees May Pile up Fast," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>30</sup>Bob Sakamoto, "Decision Likely to Come on Day of Class AA Final," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

the first major instances of collaborative decision making took place before making a decision regarding the disbanding of intervention teams. Duncan met with CTU president Lynch to gather her input before making a decision. He also agreed to hold meetings at each of the five schools that were in intervention status to discuss alternatives to improve instruction.

Duncan's collaborative approach would also be extended to Local School Council members. In February of 2002, Duncan advocated for parent participation on LSC's before elections: "Now, more than ever, we need parents and the community to step to the plate. Our children's future relies on your involvement. This is where the important decisions are made."<sup>31</sup> Duncan's statements were in direct contrast with Vallas' treatment of LSC's, who did not show evidence of involving them in decision making and fought to take some of their powers away during his tenure. When the filing deadline for LSC elections approached, and the turnout proved to be low, Duncan extended the deadline. He rationalized: "Since the election is still so far out, there was no reason not to give everyone more time so we can get more people involved. We have to have strong local involvement to create strong schools."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ray Quintanilla and Rick Hepp, "Local School Panel Push - Duncan Seeking 10,000 to Run For Council Seats," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>32</sup>Lori Olszeweki, "Break for School Council Races - Deadline Extended for Candidate Filing," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

## Teacher Retention

Teacher retention in the Chicago Public Schools would be an issue during Duncan's tenure. For the 2001-2002 school year, CPS had to fill approximately 3,000 teaching positions. One of the issues that would be raised on several occasions was the residency requirement for teachers. As a part of CPS policy, the residency rule required CPS teachers to live in the district in order to teach in the district.<sup>33</sup> It was argued that the residency requirement effectively limited the teacher hiring pool by excluding top quality teachers that did not reside in Chicago. Duncan initially did not believe that the residency requirement had to be altered.

Another issue contributing to the teacher shortage was the tightening of the certification policy. Uncertified teachers would typically be utilized in hard to staff content areas, special education, and in hard to staff schools where teacher turnover was rampant. Duncan proposed a two-year limit for the city's uncertified teachers to pass state teacher examinations.<sup>34</sup> Duncan contended: "The bottom line is in all of this is there is simply no room in our system for teachers who are not fully qualified to teach in their respective subject areas."<sup>35</sup> Substitute teachers made up a large percentage of the unlicensed teachers, who did not have an education degree at all, but still functioned as regular teachers.

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<sup>33</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 01-0822-PO2. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2001\\_08.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2001_08.aspx)

<sup>34</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 01-1024-PO3. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2001\\_10.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2001_10.aspx)

<sup>35</sup>Michael Martinez and Stephanie Banchemo, "Uncertified Teachers Tabbed - School Boss Wants 2-year Deadline for Them to Pass Test," *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

In December of 2001, Duncan proposed that in areas where there are teacher shortages, teachers should be allowed to apply for a one-year exemption from the residency requirement. Duncan stated: “This is one of a series of innovative strategies we plan to bring the best teachers to Chicago.”<sup>36</sup> He also stated: “At the end of the day, I want the best teachers in front of our students. That’s the most important thing.”<sup>37</sup> Union President Lynch was critical of the proposal, arguing that suburban teachers who took a position in CPS could lose their exemption if the teacher shortage no longer existed. She contended: “If they were being serious about addressing the shortage of teachers, they would just lift the requirements altogether. That would be the best thing.”<sup>38</sup> The policy was approved without debate.<sup>39</sup>

### **Food Safety**

In December of 2001, the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper published a report alleging that rodents and bugs infested CPS kitchens and cafeterias, and food was routinely mishandled causing student illnesses.<sup>40</sup> The in-depth report alleged that incidents that were suspected as being food poisoning instances were not reported to state or federal officials. It also alleged that least affluent students were more at risk for contamination.

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<sup>36</sup>Anonymous, “Chicago Schools Ease Teacher Rule,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>37</sup>Ray Quintanilla, “Teacher Residency Rule May Be Eased,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 01-1219-RS23. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2001\\_12.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2001_12.aspx)

<sup>40</sup>David Jackson, “Schools Flunk Food Safety – One in Four City Schools Cited for Rodent Infestation in Food Storage Areas. – When Food-Handling Problems are Found, a Report is Filed But Follow-Up is Race,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

The report also contained statements from parents that alleged that their children were diagnosed with food poisoning but the principal failed to act on allegations.

The report continued to cite that CPS was the largest school district in America to privatize its meal program, but it caused a situation where the individuals who were in charge of training staff to keep the lunchroom facilities in sanitary condition and maintain proper food temperature did not have authority over the lunchroom staff. In addition, another private firm handled the rodent problems. Also, school overcrowding was cited as a problem related to food safety. Some schools had to convert their lunchrooms into classroom spaces, causing them to prepare their food off-site, and have it delivered to the school. In many instances, the transport vehicle did not provide proper warming temperatures for the food, and the food was not properly covered.

The report claimed that there were many instances of food poisoning that sickened students, but school authorities claimed that they were not able to link any illnesses to school meals. Part of the problem was related to the fact that such a small amount of students at any given time would display signs of illness while the vast majority of the school's students would eat the same meal without signs of illness. That pattern would cause inspectors to note that they could not determine if a complaint was justified in those instances.

The *Tribune* report caused a public relations nightmare, and Duncan would have to act swiftly. The next day following the report, Duncan announced a series of reforms that would address the issues raised by the report. The reforms included more inspections of school kitchens and cafeterias, better training for food staff, and a thorough

examination of the food service contracts by CPS top management. Duncan stated: “Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our children. We are absolutely committed to doing what is necessary to ensure that.”<sup>41</sup> Duncan and team members met with the Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner John Wilhelm, and determined that school officials would get immediate access to data related to suspected food-borne illnesses. Duncan stated: “In the past, we would get these reports in batches and we were not hearing of problems in a timely manner. The communication has to be immediate.”<sup>42</sup> Duncan also stated that he would launch a wholesale review of the city’s meal plan program and look “at the best practices around the country to evaluate what we need to do.”<sup>43</sup> He also stated that his staff would hold mandatory meeting with principals to discuss food service procedures and would require that principals directly supervise their kitchen workers and ensure that they adhered to proper procedures.

### **Duncan Closes Three Schools**

Although Duncan ended the practice of *intervention*, the less-severe *reconstitution* reform measure would be utilized a great deal. This practice would begin with the closings of the worst performing elementary schools in the city—Terrell, Williams, and Dodge.<sup>44</sup> All three schools were chronically low ISAT test performers. Although Vallas utilized reconstitution on a number of occasions when he determined that a school was in

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<sup>41</sup>Lori Olszewski and David Jackson, “Duncan Vows Food Safety,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Actions 02-0522-EX02-02-0522-EX04. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2002\\_05.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2002_05.aspx)

educational crisis, this would mark the first time in CPS history that schools would be closed for poor academic performance. Duncan stated: “We don’t believe these schools as they currently exist, will ever measure up. There are better education alternatives within walking distance.”<sup>45</sup> The decision invoked instant praise from the United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige: “Schools exist for one reason: student achievement. This is a model that people should pay attention to. For too long and in too many communities, we’ve subsidized failure.”<sup>46</sup>

Union president Lynch felt that Duncan went against his word that he would not close schools that school year. She retorted: “This is no partnership. They want to look like they are doing something instead of the years of hard work that it takes to turn around a school.”<sup>47</sup> Within a month, she led CTU efforts in a proposal to take responsibility for the improvement of the three schools slated to close. The union intervention plan would be for the purpose of stalling the closure of the schools while the union implements programs to raise academic achievement. Duncan commented on their efforts: “I’m interested and open to the union’s idea. The key for me is that I want them to show me that they have the necessary support of the staff at the schools.”<sup>48</sup> Duncan would not rescind his decision to close the three aforementioned schools but claimed that

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<sup>45</sup>Lori Olszewski and Ana Cholo Beatriz, “Toughest Reform: 3 Schools to Close,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Lori Olszewski, “Teachers Union Seeks to Overhaul 2 Schools - Effort to Improve Instead of Closing,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.



he would be open to the union helping to overhaul schools that would be considered for closing in the future.

### **No Child Left Behind**

Representing the largest change in federal education policy in over 35 years, and the subject of great debate and controversy, the Senate passed a bill that included educational reforms that would drastically affect school performance accountability by implementing mandatory testing requirements and harsh sanctions for poor performance. The short title of the bill would be named “The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.”<sup>49</sup> Its acronym, NCLB, would be often used to reference the act. Education reform was on U.S. former President George Bush’s campaign agenda when running for office. Bush described NCLB: “These historic reforms will improve our public schools by creating an environment in which every child can learn through real accountability, unprecedented flexibility for states and school districts, greater local control, more options for parents and more funding for what works.”<sup>50</sup>

The hallmark of the No Child Left Behind Act was that it was originally designed for the stated purpose of “improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged.” In section 1001 of the act, the statement of purpose is outlined:

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at

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<sup>49</sup>Public Law 107-110.

<sup>50</sup>Jill Zuchman (Washington Bureau), “Congress Approves Education Overhaul - Bush Initiative Provides for National Testing,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2001.

minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.<sup>51</sup>

According to NCLB, this purpose would be accomplished by:

- Ensuring that high quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum and instructional materials are aligned with state academic standards
- Meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in the nation's highest poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance
- Closing the achievement gap between high and low performing children, particularly between minority and non minority children and advantaged and disadvantaged students
- Holding schools, local educational agencies and states accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools while providing alternatives to students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high quality education
- Distributing and targeting resources sufficiently
- Improving and strengthening accountability, teaching and learning by using State assessment systems
- Providing greater decision making authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance
- Providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including the use of school-wide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time
- Promoting school-wide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content

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<sup>51</sup>Public Law 107-110, sec. 1001.

- Elevating the quality of instruction by providing school staff with substantial opportunities for professional development
- Coordinating services with other educational services, and other agencies providing services to youth, children and families
- Affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children<sup>52</sup>

Initially, Duncan stated that he was generally pleased with the bill because it provided a major increase in funding for Title I funds, whose purpose was to help local education agencies provide a quality education to disadvantaged students. However, Duncan would soon find himself frustrated with the execution of the various provisions of the act, including the provision to provide students in failing schools with alternative placements and the provisions which stipulated how Title I funds were to be spent.

### **Problems with Student Transfers from Failing Schools**

In July of 2002, Chicago would begin its struggle with the NCLB provision which required that upon request, students be allowed to transfer out of a failing school to a higher performing school. The obvious problem was approximately two-thirds of all CPS schools posted failing scores on the previous year's ISAT examination. This would severely limit the choices for parents who opted to apply for a transfer. Duncan spoke out: "You could give every kid a bus and bus them all over the city, but that's not going to improve the quality of education in Chicago. Our goal here is to continue to

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

strengthen neighborhood schools.”<sup>53</sup> CPS would take advantage of loopholes in the law, which put caps on transportation spending and allowed for district to exempt some school from transfers. CPS convinced state legislators to pass a bill that effectively barred students from transferring into schools that were crowded, and exempted the majority of the city’s magnet and selective enrollment schools from taking students. These loopholes ultimately narrowed the “student choice” provision to schools that only performed slightly better than their home school.

Reform groups such as Designs for Change admonished CPS officials, claiming that Duncan was not following the spirit of the law by failing to provide a wider number of options. Don Moore, director of Designs for Change argued: “This plan falls short of honoring the federal commitment to leave no child left behind. Most troubling, this plan makes it impossible for students to attend many of the best schools located on the city’s North, Northwest and Southwest Sides.”<sup>54</sup> Duncan justified Chicago’s plan:

We fully support the spirit of the law, but there is a practical reality here that we have to deal with. If every student in every school exercised choice, there would be a great deal of chaos in the system. We simply don’t have enough space for the students, and we do not think busing kids across the city is the answer for better schools. Our goal is to help every neighborhood school become one of choice.<sup>55</sup>

For students that were not offered choice, Duncan planned to spend federal funds on tutoring programs, reading initiatives and professional development for teachers.

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<sup>53</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, Diane Rado, and Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Options to Failing Schools Limited - Law Allows Moves, But Choices Few,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>54</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Diane Rado, “Chicago Restricts Transfer Options - Choice Program Limited to Pupils in 50 Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

In August of 2002, it was determined that roughly seven percent of all eligible CPS students requested transfers. Duncan stated that the number of applicants was about what the board expected: “The number of families who have applied so far is right in line with what we anticipated. I think it wasn’t larger because fully one-third of our students are already exercising choice. Chicago already has the most extensive choice options of any major urban district in America.”<sup>56</sup> Observers noted that the relatively small turnout was a result of Chicago’s restriction of the school choices for students. Chicago School Board President Michael Scott gave a different viewpoint: “Sometimes stability is more important than mobility.”<sup>57</sup>

Just prior to the start of the 2003-2004 school year, the scramble to find spots for student transfers continued. Superintendents across the country complained that NCLB provisions provided nice goals, but unrealistic. Duncan began to take shots at federal funding: “If the federal government is now going to suggest that we provide enhanced services, I’d like to see enhanced funding. While I agree with the idea in theory, it is unrealistic because there are not enough resources.”<sup>58</sup> The district experienced similar issues with figuring out how to accommodate transfer requests. For that school year, there were roughly 19 applicants for every available seat in a better performing school. Duncan continued to promise to improve neighborhood schools: “We will work as hard

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<sup>56</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Only 7% Seek to Transfer to a Better School - Despite U.S. Plan, Most City Pupils Not About to Move,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, “U.S. Stands Firm on School Law - Crowding Called No Excuse Not To Provide ‘Options,’” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

as we can to make all those schools better.”<sup>59</sup> Mayor Daley also expressed frustration with the requirements of NCLB: “Don’t give us more legislation. Just give us some money.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Issues With Tutoring**

An additional component of NCLB required that schools that received Title I funds must offer extra tutoring in addition to opportunities to transfer.<sup>61</sup> In September of 2003, CPS officials claimed that they could only afford to provide tutoring for roughly one-fifth of all eligible students. Duncan argued that CPS did not receive enough federal money to provide the tutoring: “The reality is, this is an underfunded mandate.”<sup>62</sup> The expectation from the state superintendent was to use other federal monies to help pay for tutoring. Duncan claimed that federal monies were being spent on existing programs to help children such as reading and math specialists and after school programs. He commented: “It’s not like it’s money sitting around not being spent. Every single dollar we have is going into providing the additional support our children need.”<sup>63</sup>

Another issue related to the required tutoring component of NCLB would be the low number of students that would initially sign up for the extra help. CPS officials

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<sup>59</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Lori Olszewski, “19,000 Kids Seek New Schools - Chicago System Has Spaces for Only 1,035 to Transfer,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>60</sup>Lori Olszewski and Diane Rado, “Some Hard Knocks Greet School Year - Transfer Denials Mar 1st Day of Class,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>61</sup>Public Law 107-110, 115 Stat. 1539.

<sup>62</sup>Diane Rado and Lori Olszewski, “Most in Failing Schools Will Be Denied Tutors,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

argued that they aggressively recruited parents with fairs, radio ads as well as collaboration with churches and community groups. Parents claimed that they were given a very short amount of time to fill out complicated paperwork. Non-English speaking parents were not given paperwork in their native language. Duncan decided that he would set up district sponsored tutoring programs for those students: “We can’t wait any longer for parents to come to us.”<sup>64</sup>

By the end of October of 2003, during the 47<sup>th</sup> annual fall conference of the Council of Great City Schools, Mayor Daley expressed frustration with the No Child Left Behind Act, making several inflammatory statements against it. He argued that the lawmakers did not formulate the law from the proper perspective:

The law is not written into concrete. I firmly believe this law has to be looked at from the eyes of the students and those that are out here in our school system... When it come to Washington D.C., talking about school reform, they didn’t have to talk to anybody in the country with the exception of Washington D.C. They could’ve walked about eight blocks and went to a local school and asked the principal and asked the administrators asked the teachers: what about education? How can we improve education?”<sup>65</sup>

Representative John Boehner, chairman of the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee had a response: “No Child Left Behind focuses federal resources on ensuring that disadvantaged students are learning. Congress will not amend the law to leave these

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<sup>64</sup>Stephanie Banchero and Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Schools Blamed in Tutor Plan - Not Enough Notice Given About Free Effort, Parents Say,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>65</sup>Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Daley Urges School Law Change - Federal ‘No Child’ Act An Unfunded Mandate, He Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

students behind. The federal government promised to dramatically increase federal spending for education and we are meeting that promise.”<sup>66</sup>

By December of 2004, CPS learned that the federal government demanded that they cease to provide their own tutoring programs and utilize outside tutors or risk losing federal funding. Their rationale was that Chicago had failed to show sufficient improvement in using their own teachers and staff to provide tutoring services. Previous to the federal government’s directive, a frustrated Duncan stated:

It infuriates me when bureaucrats in Washington make laws and set rules that make no sense and, in the end, harm kids. The way the law is being implemented creates disincentives and discourages those who are trying to do the right thing. It is wrong morally and intellectually, and it harms public education.<sup>67</sup>

Duncan initially refused to comply with the upcoming directive. Duncan refuted the demands and stated:

Halfway through the school year, to deny children who most need help is staggering to me. It shows how disconnected the federal bureaucrats are from the reality of teaching kids in urban areas. I plan to continue to serve these children and work with the feds to help them come to their senses.<sup>68</sup>

By the time that U.S. Government ruled that CPS would have to outsource their tutoring program, Duncan became so infuriated with the barring of the usage of federal funds that he threatened to sue the U.S. Department of Education. At a news conference, he stated:

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Darnell Little, “Schools Pass, But Law Fails Districts - More Than Half the State’s Systems Could Face Sanctions, Such as Losing Tutoring Programs, Under Changes Related to No Child Left Behind Act,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>68</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, “Schools Told to Outsource Tutoring - Duncan Calls U.S. Ruling ‘Ludicrous,’” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.



“We’re not backing down because this tutoring program is so important to our children. We hope we can sit down and talk with them and that cooler heads will prevail.”<sup>69</sup>

Duncan argued that the deadline of replacing its own tutoring programs with private ones would not be feasible because outside agencies would not be prepared enough to send enough qualified individuals to provide proper tutoring services. In addition, private tutoring would cost between double and triple the amount that it had currently cost the district. Duncan stated: “We are providing the most cost-effective, efficient and popular tutoring program. Now, they are telling us that we’re not qualified to provide tutoring to our own students...I cannot believe that this is the law that promises to leave no child behind.”<sup>70</sup> Eugene Hickok, a U.S. undersecretary of education, responded: “The first thing Arne needs to do is take a deep breath and calm down. His statements really attempt to play to the concern and fear of parents, saying they are going to lose services, there are going to be kids on the street. Arne is better than that, and these kinds of statements are not necessary.”<sup>71</sup>

Duncan and his team decided that they would forego the federal funding and continue to provide their own tutoring services. The Illinois Board of Education agreed to give Chicago grant monies to help offset some of the cost. But the Board would have to dig deep to find money to pay for the tutoring program. Duncan argued that it would

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<sup>69</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, “Duncan May Sue U.S. Over Tutoring - Schools Chief Riled Over Loss of Federal Funds,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

be best to run the program without the interruption that would be associated with finding private companies, and they would not have to pay the additional cost that would be associated with the change.

By September of 2005, the U.S. Department of Education would have a change of heart. They reversed the decision and allowed CPS to use federal funding to run its own tutoring program.<sup>72</sup> This allowed CPS to continue to provide tutoring help from private vendors as well as the district-run program. An elated Duncan claimed that it was a victory for CPS students: “This is a major victory for students both in Chicago and around the country. This is the most significant change in policy since No Child Left Behind was enacted, and it is the right thing to do for kids.”<sup>73</sup> The “victory” would come with stipulations. After one year, CPS would have to allow an independent group to analyze CPS’ tutoring program to determine its effectiveness, and enroll more students in the program. Initially, the analysis conducted in 2005 determined that students who did not enroll in tutoring services outperformed students that did.<sup>74</sup> However, the data showed that the sample size of students who did not enroll in tutoring programs had higher ISAT scores to begin with. An analysis done in 2009 determined that students

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<sup>72</sup>[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/board/meetings/2005-2006/sept05meeting/ses\\_info.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/board/meetings/2005-2006/sept05meeting/ses_info.pdf)

<sup>73</sup>Stephanie Banchemo, “U.S. Will Let City Schools Run Tutoring,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

<sup>74</sup>Susan Ryan and Serah Fatani, “SES Tutoring Programs: An Evaluation of the Second Year, 2005 (retrieved from <https://research.cps.k12.il.us/resweb/PageServlet?page=evaluation&class=pe.ProgramEvaluation>)

tutored in CPS's Aim High program outperformed students tutored by private providers.<sup>75</sup>

### **Every Child, Every School**

At the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, Duncan unveiled an education plan that would illustrate the new goals of the district during the new wave of reform. This plan was developed as a result of numerous discussion groups with administrators, principals, teachers, LSC members, parents, students, members of community groups and social service organizations, and members of foundation, education and civic communities.<sup>76</sup> The plan was called *Every Child, Every School: An Education Plan for the Chicago Public Schools*. "Every Child, Every School" would become the district's motto, and it emphasized that teaching and learning in all CPS schools would become the new priorities of the district. Chief Education Officer Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins oversaw the development of the document.

The process of developing the plan was described within the document, along with members of the planning and development advisory committee. According to the document, over fifty discussion groups were held for two hours per session. Participants were asked their opinions regarding the most important challenges that schools in the district faced. They were also asked where the district should place their priorities, barriers to progress, and how to develop sustained school improvement. Discussion

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<sup>75</sup>Curtis Jones, "The 2008 Supplemental Educational Services Program: Year 5 Summative Evaluation, 2009" (retrieved from <https://research.cps.k12.il.us/resweb/ageServlet?age=evaluation&class=pe.ProgramEvaluation>)

<sup>76</sup>Chicago, Public Schools, 2002, *Every Child, Every School: An Education Plan for the Chicago Public Schools*.

groups also conducted site visits to various schools to solicit parent, community and local school staff input. One of the members of the committee was listed as “The Honorable Senator Barak Obama.” Seven years later, this member would make a decision that changed the course of Arne Duncan’s career, and altered the educational leadership for CPS as well as the entire country.

The districts’ new education plan emphasized teaching and learning strategies, and clearly was a break from the priorities emphasized during the Vallas administration. Duncan articulated the difference: “From day one, I have not thrown lots of sexy bells and whistles that sound nice but do not help kids learn. My goal is to be the best urban school district in America. Nothing easy is going to get you there.”<sup>77</sup> The districts new goals, according to the plan, included the following:

1. Building instructional capacity
2. High quality teaching and leadership
3. Learning communities and professional development
4. Support for student development and postsecondary training and education
5. Schools as centers of communities in partnership with families
6. Strengthening existing high school programs
7. Expanded choice within neighborhoods
8. Accountability to support improvement in all schools<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Anonymous, “Schools Take No-Frills Line on Reforms - Duncan: ‘Bells, Whistles Do Not Help Kids Learn,’” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>78</sup>*Every Child, Every School*, 7.

Accountability, a hallmark during Vallas' tenure, was posted last on the list of new goals. The district's goals as outlined in the new educational plan remained consistent during Duncan's tenure.

One of the key initiatives of the plan was listed under Year 2 (2002–2003) of the Chicago Public Schools Reading Initiative. Listed as just one of many key initiatives, the creation of Instructional Areas would dramatically alter the structure of CPS leadership and accountability within the individual schools. Previous to the 2002–2003 school year, CPS schools were split up under the supervision of six regional offices. Each region contained approximately one hundred schools, and provided support on administrative matters such as bus schedules, disciplinary matters and facilities management. The new structure would split schools among twenty-four “areas,” and would be led by an “area instructional officer” (AIO).<sup>79</sup> The AIO was to concentrate on issues related to teaching and learning, and day-to-day operations that were unrelated to instruction were to be handled by a management support director (MSD) who reported directly to the AIO.

Each AIO would be in charge of an instructional support team. Members of that team were to have a diverse collection of content experience in reading, math, science and technology. According to the plan, the instructional support team was to provide:

- Assistance in implementing initiatives within the reading and mathematics framework

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 21.

- Assistance in implementing the goals and strategies outlined in the education plan
- Instructional coaching and mentoring
- Support for building professional learning communities at the school level
- Organizing study groups for common problems and providing common professional development activities
- Analyzing student data and monitoring of school improvement plans
- Planning and monitoring of the implementation of district level initiatives<sup>80</sup>

In addition to those supports, AIOs and their teams were to conduct instructional “walkthroughs” in schools and meet with school leadership teams to discuss progress and analyze goals. During a “walkthrough,” the team of individuals from the area office would enter into individual classrooms within a school, and analyze items such as how instruction was delivered, the instructional goals, how technology was used during a lesson, student engagement, and student work that was posted. Area walkthroughs caused a great deal of trepidation among teachers, administrators and parent groups. Teachers and administrators argued that the board was “micromanaging” them. Parent groups were fearful that local control of LSCs would be altered by the presence of area teams. Despite those fears, Area teams remained and reported to the chief education officer, Dr. Eason-Watkins.

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

### **The Commercial Club Strikes Again**

In July of 2003, the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago published a report that summarized the ISAT test scores for the CPS in 2002, and argued that the district “had a long way to go” to meet the standards as dictated by NCLB. The report, entitled *Left Behind: Student Achievement in Chicago’s Public School*, argued the following: “Chicago’s system of public schools is radically dysfunctional. The problems lie in the system, and the system must be changed.”<sup>81</sup> The report also contained disaggregated data related to impoverished students, and argued that the data exhibited high correlations between poverty, ethnicity and test scores.

There was an argument within the report that correlation did not lead to causation. The authors argued that there was not credible evidence that proves that children from families of low socioeconomic status or from particular ethnic groups have a lower capacity to learn. The authors pointed out that evidence existed that all children can learn when they are exposed to high-quality teaching consistently. They contended that Chicago’s schools did not have a high number of quality teachers, as evidenced by the high percentages of teachers without proper certification. One important factor contributing to the lack of quality teachers was a poor evaluation system, according to the report. Teachers were not given incentives for great performance, nor were they paid less for weak performance.

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<sup>81</sup>Commercial Club of Chicago, *Left Behind: Student Achievement in Chicago's Public Schools* (Chicago, IL: The Committee, 2003), 51.

The authors of the report noted that the problems with the system were not the fault of Duncan or the Reform Board of Trustees. The authors described Duncan as a talented and dedicated CEO, and the Board as intelligent, conscientious volunteers. They attributed the problem to the system itself:

The problem lies in the system, which lacks competitive pressures pushing it to achieve desired results. It responds more to politics and pressures from the school unions than to community or parental demands for quality. Schools, principals and teachers are largely insulated from accountability or responsibility for results. The system is largely decentralized with limited ability or willingness on the part of the central administration to intervene in failing schools.<sup>82</sup>

To solve the problem, parents would need choice in schools to create effective alternatives for their children's education. The authors argued that choice would put pressure on schools to perform better. Although parents could send their children to private schools or move to the suburbs, most did not have the financial means to exercise those choices. To remedy that problem, they proposed that CPS open at least 100 charter schools in Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods.

### **Renaissance 2010**

In June of 2004, Mayor Daley and Arne Duncan unveiled *Renaissance 2010*, which was a plan which would create a combination of 100 charter schools, independently operated contract schools, and CPS-run small schools. Mayor Daley articulated the reason for the overhaul: "Despite our best efforts and the hard work of teachers, principals, parents and students, some schools have consistently underperformed. We must face the reality that—for schools that have consistently

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 3.



underperformed—it’s time to start over.”<sup>83</sup> Julie Woestehoff, director of school reform group Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) immediately criticized the plan: “This is a wholesale experimentation on poor children. The problem is the mayor and the Chicago Public Schools have been doing one initiative after another, and they’ve been leaving shambles in their wake. Private industry has no proven track record for fixing schools.”<sup>84</sup> R. Eden Martin, president of the Civic Committee, who played a key role in selling the initiative to Daley and Duncan, was thrilled: “We think it’s the best development to come along for Chicago—ever—and puts Chicago in the forefront of school improvement in major American cities. This will offer real choices to families in Chicago. And in the long term, having these schools will create examples of success and create pressure on the rest of the system to improve.”<sup>85</sup>

According to the description of the basic principle surrounding the Renaissance 2010 plan, the goal is “autonomy for accountability.” The schools created under the initiative would be held accountable for performance by the usage of five-year contracts, while being given autonomy to create their own unique learning environments.<sup>86</sup> According to the Renaissance 2010 website, the basic principles and the goals of the initiative were that:

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<sup>83</sup>Tracy Dell’Angela and Gary Washburn, “Daley Set to Remake Troubled Schools - Shut them Down, Start Over, He Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>[www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us/overren.shtml](http://www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us/overren.shtml)

- Every new school is held accountable to a 5-year performance plan or agreement
- Every school's achievement is measured by a standard set of metrics, beyond test scores
- Schools enjoy freedom over: curriculum, length of school day and school year and budget

#### Goals

- Strong test scores
- Active parent involvement
- High attendance
- Low mobility rate
- Low teacher turnover
- High graduation rate
- High college attendance<sup>87</sup>

In order to create the schools under the Renaissance 2010 program, CPS would have to close some underperforming schools. One of the first areas slated for the closure of schools was on Chicago's south side. In July of 2004, plans were unveiled to close 20 of 22 schools in the area, and replace them with Renaissance 2010 schools with expanded programs in buildings with state of the art equipment. The area had recently consisted of high-rise housing-project buildings, but was transforming into an integrated, mixed-income neighborhood that was not far from downtown Chicago. Some community

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

advocates and planners claimed that CPS was moving ahead without gathering the input of the community residents. John Ayers, executive director of Leadership for Quality Education, a Chicago school reform organization, argued: "I don't think they would have done it this way in Lincoln Park. It's just a mistake not to engage the community ... instead of handing it to them and saying 'Hey, we've figured this out downtown, now give us your blessing.'"<sup>88</sup> Duncan's called the plan a work in progress that could change based on the community needs: "This is a historic opportunity to rebuild the community from the ground up. There is always going to be fear. But we really have the luxury of time here. We can be thoughtful and deliberate, learn from our mistakes and make mid-course adjustments."<sup>89</sup>

In August of 2004, CPS announced that they would use nine million dollars of federal grant money to create five new magnet schools under the Renaissance 2010 plan. Duncan stated: "We want to make every neighborhood school a school choice. We have some good schools here, but we want them to be great schools. We need to invest in schools across the board."<sup>90</sup> Critics again contended that the Board was moving without gathering input from the communities about the process. Critics also argued that the initiative claimed that its objectives were to offer choice in inner-city neighborhoods with

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<sup>88</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "South Side Faces School Shake-Up - Residents Skeptical of City's Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "City to Add 5 Magnet Schools - U.S. Funds to be Used to Attract Middle-Class Students," *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

impoverished children, but the two of the magnet schools in the latest plan were located in more affluent areas of the city.

Many critics of the reform continued to ask questions about the process, leading the Duncan and the Board to ask for public feedback regarding future decisions. Duncan stated: “There are hard choices to make, and there will always be differences of opinion. There’s no single formula for getting there, but as long as we all have an open mind and a commitment to work together, I’m confident we will achieve that goal.” Marilyn Steward, president of the Chicago Teachers Union, announced that she would not offer ideas: “The plan is moving forward so they are asking us to be a rubber stamp on something they have already decided to do. We’ll dialogue about improving schools. That should be our focus.”<sup>91</sup>

CPS officials quickly realized that funding the Renaissance 2010 project would be inconsistent. Although the schools received funding from the Board, there were a number of initiatives featured at the schools that would require additional funding, such as the longer school day and school year. Renaissance 2010 schools were free from Union intervention because they were free to hire non-unionized teachers, but that also meant that they would have to use non-unionized maintenance staff members, which needed to be paid additional funds to cover a longer school day and school year. The new schools would also need additional funding for staff development, math and science programs, reading initiatives, summer school, tutoring, and early childhood programs.

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<sup>91</sup>Tracy Dell’Angela, “Officials Want Ideas on Closing Schools; Foes not About to Help,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

All of these programs would cost the independent schools more money, which caused those schools to have to raise a substantial amount of their funding from the private sector. This practice worried individuals in charge of Renaissance 2010 schools, because it was not a sustainable model for funding.

A non-profit organization, New Schools for Chicago, came to the aid of the Renaissance schools. By February of 2005, they raised 24 million dollars to be used exclusively by the new schools. Arne Duncan praised the efforts: “There are no other cities where the business community is stepping up with this level of support.”<sup>92</sup> The group promised that they would raise \$50 million to help fund Mayor Daley’s vision of creating the 100 new schools by 2010. Funds were to be used for teacher and principal salaries, educational materials and professional development costs, and not capital or rehabbing costs.

### **Problems with the Small School Initiative**

In June of 2006, a report was published entitled *Small High Schools on a Larger Scale: The First Three Years of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative*. The study was a quantitative analysis of how small schools compared with the rest of CPS schools. The researchers examined student experiences, teacher experiences, and student outcomes, such as student absences, on-track to graduate data, dropout rates, and scores

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<sup>92</sup>Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Businesses Help New Schools - \$3.7 Million in Grants for Renaissance 2010,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

on the Prairie State Achievement Examination.<sup>93</sup> The analysis provided a background on previous studies concerning small schools, and argues that not all findings are positive.

The authors of the study argued that characteristics consistent with successful small schools, such as personalization, interactive and authentic instruction, challenging curriculum, and equitable student learning opportunities are difficult to promote. In the case of Chicago, they argue, communal change took place but not a change in instructional focus. Communal change brought about a decrease in the dropout rate and student absences, due to a more personalized environment. The lack of a change in instructional practices was the culprit for the lack of improvement of standardized test scores in the small schools environment. Duncan expressed encouragement regarding the improved attendance and dropout rate and promised better academic results: "First you have to change the culture. Students have to want to come to school and stay in school, and that is happening. I'm confident the academic achievement will follow."<sup>94</sup>

### **Technology Magnet Schools**

In October of 2007, CPS announced that they would utilize \$22 million dollars in grant monies to turn another ten elementary schools into new magnet schools. Five of them would be converted into new technology magnet schools, and the remaining five

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<sup>93</sup>Joseph E. Kahne et al., "Small High Schools on a Larger Scale: The First Three Years of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative. Research Report," *Consortium on Chicago School Research* (June 1, 2006).

<sup>94</sup>Lori Olszewski, "City's Small High Schools Don't Test Better - Study Finds Fewer Absences, Dropouts but not Higher Scores," *Chicago Tribune*, 2006.

would be converted into various magnet schools of varying themes. The technology magnet schools would be different than traditional magnet schools. Instead of creating selective enrollment schools, the schools would either accept students citywide or function as a “neighborhood school,” where they would accept all students within the schools’ neighborhood attendance boundary. To gain entry, parents would have to enter a lottery to be selected. Mayor Daley described the plan: “The magnet makeover plan is our latest strategy aimed at creating high-quality options for all students across Chicago. These schools are part of a bigger picture that includes turnaround schools, high school transformation schools and accelerated programs within schools designed to get more students ready for the workplace and college.”<sup>95</sup>

The distinction of becoming a technology academy would bring a vast assortment of technological enhancements, designed to help teachers infuse technology throughout the school’s curriculum. Teachers would receive enhancements such as laptop computers; schools would receive projectors, Apple iPods, and classrooms with sound enhancements. Another important distinction of the technology academy would be controversial. Technology academies would fall under the category of a school that was redefined, which meant that all of the teaching positions within those schools would be redefined to technology academy teaching positions. With the new distinction, teachers at those schools would have to reapply for their positions. This reform initiative was

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<sup>95</sup>Johnathon Briggs, “10 Selected as Magnets - \$22 Million Targets Lowest-Performing Schools in City,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

unique in that it allowed a principal to “handpick” his or her staff, which normally took place only after a school has been closed and reopened.

Despite teacher resistance, the schools would open in the fall along with 30 other new schools for the 2008-2009 school year. The district would move rapidly in opening the new schools under the Renaissance 2010 plan. The new goal would become 150 new schools by 2010. In addition to the five technology magnet academies, CPS would announce the conversion of five additional schools into technology academies. These schools would be a part of the “CPS Technology Magnet Cluster.” The schools that would be included in the cluster would have to apply for the opportunity to gain that status with CPS’s Office of Academic Enhancement. These schools would receive technological enhancements, position redefinitions, and a change in the educational focus, but would have to continue to serve students currently attending the schools. The schools that were selected were Dunne, Dvorak, Nicholson, Dumas, and Spencer.<sup>96</sup>

### **Notable Events and Decisions**

During his tenure, Duncan spent a great deal of time opening new schools and reorganizing old ones under the Renaissance 2010 initiative, complying with NCLB provisions and guidelines, and implementing strategies to improve reading performance across the board. Besides those major issues, Duncan made several other decisions that reflected his decision making processes:

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<sup>96</sup>Chicago Public Schools. Board Action 08-0423- Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2008\\_04.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2008_04.aspx)



- A Harvard college mate of Duncan, Steven Levitt, developed a computerized model that detected patterns that helped identify if certain teachers provided assistance to students during ISAT testing. The patterns were discussed in Levitt's book *Freakonomics*.<sup>97</sup> Duncan launched an aggressive investigation which determined that there was cheating at seven schools. The teachers would face firing by Duncan: "We need to stand for something, to teach values to our students. The overwhelming majority of teachers do a fantastic job. These are isolated incidents, but we will deal with them aggressively and honestly."<sup>98</sup>
- In October of 2002, CPS officials announced that the 60 schools that exhibited the most improved ISAT scores from the prior year would receive \$10,000.

Duncan stated his rationale for implementing the incentive:

For years, people have asked how you can compare a Whitney Young High School (which admits only high achieving students) to a Harper High School (a neighborhood school)? They are right. But you can absolutely compare Harper to itself, and that is what this new system will do. It is a much more comprehensive approach.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (New York: William Morrow, 2005).

<sup>98</sup>Lori Olszewski and Michael Martinez, "Skills-Test Cheating Found at 7 Schools - Teachers Face Firing in Probe," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>99</sup>Lori Olszewski, "Improving Schools get Bonus - 60 in City will Receive \$10,000 for Better Test Scores," *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

- In October of 2002, Duncan recommended that the board remove five high schools from intervention status.<sup>100</sup> An evaluation of the schools determined that all achieved “significant educational progress.” Three of those schools, Bowen, Orr, and South Shore, were converted into small schools. Duncan asked that substantial improvement still be made at each of the schools.
- In January of 2003, after a fight in the stands among the spectators at a basketball game hosted at Crane High School, Duncan suggested that principals limit admission to students with CPS identification and their relatives. He stated his rationale: “Unfortunately, you have some people coming in...who are there to cause trouble. We have to eliminate that element so the vast majority can enjoy the game in a safe and secure environment.”<sup>101</sup> Duncan’s suggestion did not become a mandate.
- In June of 2003, district-wide ISAT scores showed a decline in reading. In a statement, Daley expressed confidence in the CPS team and explained the scores: “Of course we’d like to see every single score increase in every school, year after year, but we know that’s not realistic. We’ve said all along

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<sup>100</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 02-1023-EX02, *Removal of Five High Schools from Intervention Status*. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2002\\_10.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2002_10.aspx)

<sup>101</sup>Marlen Garcia, “Setting Screen on Trouble - Fight at Crane Makes Schools Mull Barring Fans,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

that there would be ups and downs along the way, and this year's scores showed exactly that: some ups and some downs."<sup>102</sup>

- In June of 2003, Duncan eliminated several jobs in a department that he created when he took over the post of CEO, the accountability office and research division. All would have to reapply for their positions, and some would not be rehired. Another 12 would be moved from central office to area regional offices. Duncan claimed that this move was designed to fit in with the philosophy of moving resources closer to the schools.

### **Duncan Removes Principals for Poor Performance**

In August of 2003, Duncan decided to remove three elementary school principals because of poor performance. The schools were Cather, Sojourner Truth and Bethune elementary schools. Duncan placed these schools on probation in 2002 because fewer than 25 percent of the students in those schools were reading at or above national norms on the Iowa test, and have exhibited low student achievement in the recent past.<sup>103</sup>

Removing a principal for lack of performance was a seldom-used intervention that was granted to the CPS Board of Education by the Illinois School Code. A principal who was subject to removal was entitled to a hearing before an independent officer appointed by

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<sup>102</sup>Lori Olszewski and Darnell Little, "City School Scores Don't Add Up - Reading Dips, but Math at New High," *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>103</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Actions 03-0827-EX13,03-0827-EX14,03-0827-EX15 Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2003\\_08.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2003_08.aspx)

the CEO. Duncan stated: “We’re taking a very hard look at performance. We’re holding ourselves and them accountable.”<sup>104</sup>

### **A Break in Labor Peace**

In September of 2002, CPS and CTU leaders announced a deal which would alter the 1995 Amendatory Act by allowing teachers to bargain issues that were taken away such as class size, layoffs, and teacher schedules. Duncan stated that the proposal would ensure that “important labor issues will not get in the way of the more important issue of educating our children.”<sup>105</sup> After the bill was signed into law in April of 2003, CPS schools opened in September without a teachers’ contract in place. Supposedly, teachers were not happy with the last contract that was negotiated by former CTU president Thomas Reece. CPS and CTU agreed not to discuss the issue in the media. CPS had not had a teacher’s strike since 1987, and had not even been close since Mayor Daley took over CPS in 1995.

By September, CPS and CTU reached a tentative contract agreement, which included a four percent salary increase, longer school days, higher health care costs and duration of five years. Duncan stated: “This means five more years of school opening on time, five more years of progress in the classroom.”<sup>106</sup> However, CPS teachers voted to reject the tentative contract, and after a lack of progress during mediation discussions,

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<sup>104</sup>Lori Olszewski, “5 City Principals Out, 2 Others Suspended,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>105</sup>Anonymous, “Plan to Relax School Reform Law Opens Teacher Bargaining Door,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2002.

<sup>106</sup>Lori Olszewski, “City Teachers to Get 4% Raises for 5 Years,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

teachers authorized CTU delegates to authorize a teacher strike. Duncan felt that teachers did not understand the settlement offer, which he felt was fair given the economic conditions: “There would be very few people in the public or private sector who would turn that kind of deal down. We think it is a good deal, very fair, very reasonable. But we will continue to negotiate and try to bring this to a good resolution.”<sup>107</sup> Mayor Daley was concerned about a possible break in stability: “If there is crisis after crisis like we had before 1995, people lose confidence.”<sup>108</sup>

One of the issues raised was respect, or the lack there of for teachers. Mayor Daley scoffed at that notion. He argued that taxpayers show respect by paying the bulk of teacher salaries through property taxes: “If they didn’t have respect, they would tear it up.”<sup>109</sup> Duncan, however, would address the notion directly. Through an article in the *Voice of the People* section of the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, Duncan attempted to sway teachers to accept the contract offer while expressing appreciation for their work:

I understand that many teachers feel unappreciated. They work hard and have tough jobs and face everyday challenges that can never be appreciated by anyone who has not stood in front of a classroom. Every day I see the extraordinary hard work teachers do under challenging conditions. Both Mayor Richard Daley and I know that they deserve credit for our success over the last eight years.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Lori Olszewski, “Way Cleared for Teachers to Walk Out - Chicago Union Will Vote Nov. 18 Whether to Strike,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup>Arne Duncan, “Giving Teachers the Appreciation They Deserve,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

Duncan expressed that there was too much at stake to allow frustrations to interrupt the educational process, including breaking the confidence that was built in the system.

As the weeks progressed, the NAACP would get involved, urging the CTU and CPS to try arbitration to avoid a teacher strike. CTU would file an unfair labor practice complaint against school officials because of letters that had been sent to teachers by central office designed to sway a strike vote. Finally, with a shortened contract length, a freeze on health insurance premiums, class size reductions, and the addition of a fourth “prep” period (a free period for teachers designed for them to prepare lessons, grade student work or meet with colleagues), a close vote resulted in the approval of a four-year contract which would mean that a teacher strike would not occur.

### **Principal Portfolios**

During his tenure, Paul Vallas changed the principal selection process, making it tougher to become a CPS principal. Prospective principals would have to complete academy training created by the Chicago Principal and Administrators Association to be qualified for placement on a “principal’s list.” Once placed on that list, the individual was eligible to be considered for a school principal position by a local LSC. Duncan would add additional requirements for the purposes of narrowing principal candidates. Duncan’s rationale: “My goal is not to send dozens of resumes, many of which are mediocre, and make (local school councils’) already tough job more difficult. I want to

send extraordinary candidates so they do not have to spend tons of time weighing through masses of paperwork.”<sup>111</sup>

The new policy would require that eligible candidates submit a portfolio that demonstrated various aspects of the individual’s instructional leadership and managerial experience. Their experience would be judged by a scoring rubric that was developed by the Office of Principal Preparation (OPPD) and the CPAA.<sup>112</sup> The requirements to become a CPS principal now included the following:

The candidate must:

1. Pre-register with OPPD of intent to apply for a principalship in the Chicago Public Schools
2. Pass a candidate background check
3. Possess a master’s degree in addition to an Illinois Type 75 certificate
4. Successfully complete a writing sample
5. Successfully complete a rigorous program of study approved by CPS that relates directly to school leadership and the principalship
6. Successfully demonstrate relevant instructional and managerial leadership experience<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Ana Beatriz Cholo, “Future Principals Soon May Need Portfolios for Job,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>112</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 04-0225-P01 Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2004\\_02.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2004_02.aspx)

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

Principal candidates who were originally on the “principal’s list” were not “grandfathered” in, so if they did not complete the requirements, they were taken off of the list.

Principal candidates who had previously worked as assistant principals, lead teachers, reading specialists, and area instructional coaches would easily have the instructional and managerial leadership experience necessary to remain eligible. However, the change in the principal selection process made it more difficult for teacher candidates to become principals because of the requirement related to managerial experience. According to the new policy, individuals who did not gain that necessary experience would be provided to gain the experience in a performance based internship program at a Chicago Public School. The internship program had a very limited number of seats in comparison to the number of candidates.

### **Changes to the Student Promotion Policy**

In March of 2004, Duncan proposed a new promotion policy that reduced the requirements necessary for student promotion to the next grade. The new policy would automatically promote students in benchmark grades (3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>) whose scores were at or above the 35<sup>th</sup> national percentile ranking in reading, had passing grades, and fewer than twenty unexcused absences.<sup>114</sup> Students would no longer have to post passing ISAT test scores in math. Another wrinkle to the policy would apply to students who were not automatically promoted. If students posted ITBS scores ranging from the 24<sup>th</sup> through

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<sup>114</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 04-0324-PO3 Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2004\\_03.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2004_03.aspx)



the 34<sup>th</sup> percentile, they could be promoted to the next grade if they posted classroom grades of “B” or better, passing reading unit test scores, completion of their homework assignments during the school year, posted at least a 90 percent attendance percentage, and exhibited satisfactory conduct during the school year.<sup>115</sup> Those promotion decisions would be made by the Chief Education Officer. The new policy would also end “double retentions,” which occurred when a student repeated the same grade multiple times.

The change in policy reignited a controversy surrounding the effectiveness of retaining students for poor academic performance that started soon after Vallas implemented the retention policy. The change in the policy significantly lowered the number of students who would have to attend summer school. Duncan stated: “Our goal is to reduce the number of retentions in schools with high rates. But obviously, where children aren’t ready to go on, we absolutely will be retaining them. But we also want to support them and create more learning opportunities for them.”<sup>116</sup> Those who supported retention wondered if CPS was lowering the expectations for students in regards to math performance. Duncan stated his position: “I think it is the thing to do educationally. Reading is the foundation, the skill you need to do everything else. If they can read, they can make it in the next grade. They can improve in math if we continue to work with them.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>116</sup>Lori Olszewski, “City Schools to Ease Guidelines on Flunking,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>117</sup>Lori Olszewski, “City Relaxes Policy, Flunks Fewer Kids,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2003.

### **Other Notable Events and Decisions**

- In June of 2004, Marilyn Steward was narrowly elected president of the Chicago Teacher's Union. Upon winning, Steward proclaimed that CTU was a labor union, not a university, referring to the many school reform efforts promoted by Lynch.
- In 2004, Duncan donated \$5,000 in scholarship money from his own personal funds for two high school seniors. Duncan called it a gift from him and his wife that would be given each year for their commitment to the community.
- In October of 2004, CPS toughened the teacher residency policy, despite the fact that there was a teacher shortage. The new policy required that school administrators would have to verify that new employees lived in the city.<sup>118</sup> Employees that were found to live in other areas were subject to being fired. Opponents to the teacher residency policy argued that it made it difficult for CPS to attract and retain high quality teachers, and new teachers couldn't afford to live in Chicago. Duncan defended the residency policy in a letter published in the Chicago Tribune in November of 2004:

Since 1996, we have required our teachers to live in Chicago, a policy some see as an obstacle in recruiting and retaining the best teachers. The facts, however, suggest otherwise. Every year our schools are performing better, the stacks of resumes grow and our teacher-vacancy rate drops. We received a record number – 15,000 – teacher applications this year, up 67 percent from two years ago, and our

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<sup>118</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 04-0825-PO2 Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2004\\_10.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2004_10.aspx)

teacher-vacancy rate is less than 5 percent, a significant accomplishment for a system of 26,000 teachers.<sup>119</sup>

- In late 2004, CPS unrolled a new screening tool called DIBELS to screen kindergarten students that may be at risk for reading difficulties. Chief Education Officer Barbara Eason-Watkins proclaimed that the tool would provide a uniform method of collecting data on primary aged children in order to trigger intensive attention for those students.
- A program for pregnant teens and teen parents, “Cradle to Classroom,” implemented by Paul Vallas, was ended by Duncan, despite the fact that it was considered successful and its cost was mostly reimbursed by the state. The program provided care for the infants of teen mothers and boasted that the vast majority of the participants of the program did not get pregnant again before graduation. Duncan did not believe that the school system was equipped to handle the responsibility of providing that service: “When a girl gets pregnant, that’s a symptom of 98 things that are going wrong in that kid’s life. CPS is not a pro at dealing with all those issues.”<sup>120</sup>
- In April of 2005, Duncan would consider cutting 800 teacher positions in preparation for massive cuts in educational funding. Duncan empathized with other districts in the state:

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<sup>119</sup>Arne Duncan, “Teacher Residency is an Important Requirement,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>120</sup>Anonymous, “Rocking the Cradle ... Over,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

The pain we're feeling in Chicago mirrors that of other schools statewide. The horror stories we're hearing out there are chilling. That's infuriating to me given all the progress we've made. It's simply not good enough for [the state] to say 'We tried.' Our children can't afford to wait no longer.<sup>121</sup>

- In 2005, standardized test scores revealed that nearly 44 percent of all Chicago Public School students were meeting national norms for reading, the highest percentage in the district's history.
- Also in 2005, CPS decided to stop issuing the Iowa tests. Instead, the district implemented three short reading assessments called Standard Learning First. Duncan gave his rationale: "These assessments are a tool for teachers, not a punitive measure. Testing is important, but we want to test ... in a way that gives our teachers and our principals useful information about their students."<sup>122</sup>
- For the beginning of the 2005 school year, Duncan implemented an incentive plan designed to encourage better attendance. CPS students could win prizes such as iPods, computers, concert tickets or movie passes for improving their attendance. Duncan gave his rationale for this plan: "I'm a firm believer in rewarding hard work. We want to do everything we can to encourage families

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<sup>121</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "City Schools Brace for Cuts - 800 Teaching Jobs, Programs Targeted," *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

<sup>122</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "Chicago Schools to Ditch Iowa Test - Instead, Pupils Will Take 3 Reading Exams," *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

to do the right thing. The reality of it is that not everyone has the mentality (that school is an obligation).”<sup>123</sup>

- A *Chicago Tribune* article written on May 20<sup>th</sup> of 2006 alleged that high schools that had accepted students from schools that had closed under the Renaissance 2010 initiative struggled with violence issues as a result of the meshing of the different students from different areas. The article alleged that CPS had not properly prepared the teens to transition into their new schools. Duncan responded to the article by defending the decision to close the high schools in a letter published in the June 2nd issue of the *Chicago Tribune*:

The process of closing and phasing out high schools has been a tough one. Drastic changes such as these, which impact so many families, are always difficult. We have been and will continue to be thoughtful and careful in planning the transition to new schools for the affected families, and we have committed to limited the number of freshman going to any single new high school... But we will continue to close and phase out schools that have become schools of last resort for their communities...<sup>124</sup>

- Board President Michael Scott resigned after five years of service. Rufus Williams, then head of a financial consulting agency that catered to athletes and entertainers, and former chief financial officer for HARPO Entertainment Group, a production company owned by Oprah Winfrey, was selected to replace him.

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<sup>123</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "Show Up at School, Win Cash and Prizes," *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

<sup>124</sup>Arne Duncan, "Making Schools Ones of Choice," *Chicago Tribune*, 2006.

- On July 12, 2006, the Chicago Tribune reported that 62 percent of CPS students “passed” the ISAT examinations.<sup>125</sup> However, the article pointed out that city and school officials allegedly attributed the gains to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) making the test easier to pass, and because students were given more time to take the exam. Duncan took exception to the comments and wrote a letter to the *Chicago Tribune* which detailed his view of how progress was made:

The fact that the percentage of kids meeting these standards rose by an unprecedented 15 points clearly shows that the strategies we have diligently pursued for several years now are working—a back-to-basics curriculum through the reading initiative, an end to social promotions, an expansion of pre-school and after-school programs, and better recruiting and training of teachers and principals.<sup>126</sup>

### **Principal Firing – Duncan Takes Side**

When Duncan first assumed the position of CPS CEO, he spoke about the importance of community involvement, and displayed outward support for local school councils. Vallas, on the other hand, challenged the power of LSCs and attempted to assume veto power on some of their decision-making powers, particularly related to the retaining or dismissal of school principals. However, after the contract of Curie Metro High School principal, Jerryelyn Jones was not renewed after a 6-2 LSC vote in March of 2007, Duncan would take the side of the ousted principal, which sent a message that he was against the decision of the Curie LSC.

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<sup>125</sup>Diane Rado, “City Schools Hail Test Score News - Majority Pass Exam for the 1st Time Ever,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2006.

<sup>126</sup>Arne Duncan, “Welcome School Test Gains,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2006.

Duncan told a group of individuals who were protesting the decision that he wanted to “clone her” in order to have effective principals such as Jones at more schools. Duncan stated: “This is one we’re losing a lot of sleep over. Curie is a great school with a great principal. This is very, very troubling to us. But I don’t have any easy answers.”<sup>127</sup> At that time, Curie functioned as an “autonomous” school, meaning that the principal was able to exhibit more freedom in decision making because of the school’s success. Curie sustained improved student attendance, higher test scores and lower dropout rates under Jones’ tenure as principal. With all of the school’s accolades, advocates for Jones wondered why her contract was not being renewed. Tom Ramos, the LSC chair at Curie gave a vague answer: “I think she’s a fine lady. I don’t have a problem with her. And I don’t think she’s a bad principal. Just because they are a very good principal doesn’t mean you have to retain them.”<sup>128</sup>

Mayor Daley even weighed in on the issue, showing support for the ousted principal and questioning the absolute power of local school councils when it came to terminating principals. Daley remarked that Jones was one of the best principals in the school system, and stated that she “has done a tremendous job” (at Curie) and called Curie a “great, great school. Every year, attendance is up, academic performance is

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<sup>127</sup>Tracy Dell’Angela, “Students Decry Principal’s Ouster - Racial, Bribery Claims hit Curie Council Vote,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*

up.”<sup>129</sup> Julie Woestehoff, executive director of PURE felt that Daley was using this situation to advance an already existing agenda to destroy LSCs.

Duncan personally met with the Curie LSC chairman Ramos to attempt to mediate the situation. As a result, Ramos announced that he planned to reconsider his vote to replace Principal Jones. Duncan gave his rationale for taking sides: “This is not about personality. I’m not doing this because I like Jerryelyn. I’m doing this because she’s doing a great job of making an effective school better.”<sup>130</sup> Ultimately, Ramos was removed from his post of LSC chair after being found guilty of soliciting commissions from a Curie contractor. Duncan promoted Jerryelyn Jones to serve as a regional high school official who oversaw 15 to 20 CPS high schools.

### **More Notable Events and Decisions**

- Duncan and the CPS leadership team decided to close two additional schools under the Renaissance 2010 reform plan, LeMoyne Elementary and Harvard Elementary Schools.<sup>131</sup> LeMoyne Elementary would be closed for good, and Harvard would be turned over to a private management company who would “turnaround” the school – replacing all teachers and administrators with new staff members, but keeping the children in place. Duncan stated: “This truly is a day of celebration and a new beginning for the students and families at

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<sup>129</sup>Tracy Dell’Angela and Gary Washburn, “Daley Takes Side of Principal - Mayor Questions Decision, Authority of Curie’s Council,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

<sup>130</sup>Tracy Dell’Angela, “Curie Council May Flip on Ouster of Principal,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

<sup>131</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Actions 07-0425-EX2 and 07-0425EX3. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2007\\_04.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2007_04.aspx)



Harvard. This school is in desperate need of a fundamental change. We owe it to the students to do better.”<sup>132</sup>

- In May of 2007, Duncan recommended that the Board of Education adopt a new policy on the closing of schools.<sup>133</sup> The policy outlined reasons for school closings due to non-academic reasons, academic reasons, and a need for a change in educational focus. There were two notable changes to the policy on closing schools. One would be the closing of schools due to a need for change in educational focus, which allowed for the extensive reassignment of school faculty and staff which would allow a principal to rehire her or his entire staff. The second would be a provision that prevented the closure of a school if that school had a new principal who had been in place for two years or less.
- CPS teachers agreed to a five-year labor contract that included a four percent wage increase.
- In September of 2007, CPS reported a figure of 93 percent attendance for the first day of school, the highest ever for the district. Duncan and school board president Rufus Williams visited homes of students who did not attend.
- In February of 2008, CPS would vote to close or consolidate eighteen schools due to low enrollment or low performance, causing the need for hundreds of

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<sup>132</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, “City Will Close One School, Give an Overhaul to Second,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

<sup>133</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Action 07-0523-PO2. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2007\\_05.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2007_05.aspx)

students to be relocated and hundreds of teachers would have to reapply for their jobs or find new ones.<sup>134</sup> Supporters of the schools were not happy, feeling that the Board of Education did not consider the community in their decision making. One supporter stated: “We need to fire all of you and get an elected school board. CPS, you are not God...”<sup>135</sup> Duncan stated: “We set out to do what was best for children and would be the least disruptive. What we got in return was a much stronger plan.”<sup>136</sup>

- As a reward for her strong school attendance record, a CPS student won an automobile, prompting a debate on the usage of rewards to encourage children to come to school. Opponents of the usage of incentive for attendance argued that students should want to come to school because they love learning, not because of rewards. Duncan responded to those opponents: “We’re never going to apologize for that. It’s really important for kids to be in school every day. You could have the best teachers in the world, the greatest curriculum, but if they’re not in school, it doesn’t matter.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Board Actions 08-0227-EX3 through 08-0227-EX20. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Pages/Actions2008\\_02.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Pages/Actions2008_02.aspx)

<sup>135</sup>Carlos Sadovi and Kayce T. Ataiyero, “City School Board OKs Reorganization - Students, Parents Decry Closing, Merger,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>Karl Stampfl, Bonnie Miller Rubin, and Kristen Kridel, “Too Young to Drive, She Wins a Car - 12-Year-Old City Student Gets the Big Prize, but Many Question Such Incentives for Perfect Attendance,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.

- CPS also developed a pilot program to pay the freshmen at twenty CPS high schools cash for “good” grades. As a part of the program, a student could receive \$50 per grade of “A,” \$35 per grade of “B,” and \$20 per grade of “C.” Students would receive half of the money immediately, and the other half upon graduation. Duncan stated the reasoning behind the program: “The majority of our students don’t come from families with a lot of economic wealth. I’m always trying to level the playing field. This is the kind of incentive that middle-class families have had for decades.”<sup>138</sup>

### **Senator James Meeks Proposes CPS Student Boycott**

Throughout his tenure as CPS CEO, Duncan lobbied the state of Illinois for additional funding for the district on several occasions. In April of 2003, Duncan joined forces with several suburban superintendents to lobby state legislators for more funding, including Harry Rossi of the Northbrook-Glenview district, Jim Steyskal of Central Stickney and Jon Mink of West Chicago. Duncan also has several quotes on record that illustrated his passion regarding his opinion regarding funding inequities.

In August of 2004, Duncan spoke on the state government’s unwillingness to ease the school funding system’s reliance on property taxes: “Unfortunately, as everyone here knows, the state system for funding education is seriously and fundamentally flawed.

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<sup>138</sup>Carlos Sadovi, “Earn an A? Here’s \$50. - (Eke out a C? That’s still good for \$20.) - A Chicago Public Schools Pilot Program will Pay up to 5,000 Freshmen for Good Grades. Is That a Smart Idea?,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.

Until the legislature fixes that, we'll have to turn to our taxpayers."<sup>139</sup> In February of 2005, Duncan discussed funding issues: Every year, we talk about the problem. Every year, we sweep it under the rug and balance the budget on the backs of children. It can't go on forever."<sup>140</sup> In February of 2006, Duncan wrote a letter to the *Chicago Tribune* in which he related school funding issues to equity for children:

Our children are being hurt because Illinois underfunds education, forcing schools to rely on local property taxes. As a result, the poorest districts in Illinois spend less than \$5000 per child while the wealthiest districts spend up to \$23,000. At \$6500 per child for basic education, Chicago is near the bottom, forcing tax hikes each year since the mayor took control of the schools in 1995.<sup>141</sup>

In May of 2007, Duncan optimism regarding increased funding for schools that year would vanish after believing that the state was close to providing additional funding: "Every year, we face rising costs and deep uncertainty over what dollars will be coming from Springfield. And every year that's meant patchwork budgets and program cuts and property tax hikes. Our schools, our taxpayers and our children deserve better."<sup>142</sup> In February of 2008, Duncan again gave his opinion about school funding in Illinois: "Our

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<sup>139</sup>Ana Beatriz Cholo, "School Budget Has 2.4% Tax Hike - City System Plans to Spend Record \$5 Billion," *Chicago Tribune*, 2004.

<sup>140</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "Schools Threaten to Start Slashing - Deep Cuts Ahead if State Doesn't Help," *Chicago Tribune*, 2005.

<sup>141</sup>Arne Duncan, "Avoiding Classroom Cuts and Teacher Layoffs," *Chicago Tribune*, 2006.

<sup>142</sup>Tracy Dell'Angela, "More Cash Sought for Schools - Officials Criticize Legislative 'Impasse'," *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

schools are desperately underfunded around the state, and every child is not getting the education they need to compete and succeed in life.”<sup>143</sup>

In August of 2008, Duncan would gain a powerful ally in his battle for educational funding. Illinois State Senator James Meeks, one of Chicago’s most influential pastors and head of Illinois’ legislative black caucus, proposed that families of CPS students should keep their students from attending CPS schools and instead to attempt to register their children in schools in a nearby wealthy north suburban district. Although Meeks and Duncan were united in their belief that inequities were evident in the funding formula for the district, Duncan did not want the boycott to undermine CPS’ efforts to improve attendance: “I am very grateful for the attention [Meeks] has brought to this issue. But I think we can fight his battle and win this battle without doing anything that puts students on a course of behavior that is self-destructive.”<sup>144</sup>

Over a thousand students and parents met outside New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois to participate in the protest. A sign was posted in the windows of the school in anticipation for the boycott: “Welcome to New Trier CPS Students.” Students were provided with water and cookies and were allowed to attempt to register, though the effort was purely symbolic given the fact that students had to live in the district to be allowed to attend. Many parents and students at New Trier made comments in support of the efforts to bring attention to educational inequities, and some spoke about the question

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<sup>143</sup>Carlos Sadovi, “Schools ask State’s Help on \$180 Million Shortage - \$90 Million in Cuts Proposed by Duncan,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.

<sup>144</sup>Monique Garcia, “Duncan Wants Kids in Class From Day 1,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.

of culture. One parent was quoted in speaking about a culture of wanting to learn and wanting to be in school as being just as important as money in a school district.

The debate regarding the antidote for schools that serve a high number of students of low socio-economic status is a long-standing one. The debate sparked by the boycott proposed by Meeks brought up the issue of funding versus culture. While many individuals who spoke or wrote about the issue were in agreement with the need for additional funding for CPS schools, some individuals were of the opinion that money wasn't the only issue that plagued CPS students. Richard D. Kahlenberg, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation, immediately weighed in on the issue. Kahlenberg wrote a book prior to the boycott called *All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice*, which discussed this very issue. At the beginning of his book, he argued that:

...all schoolchildren in America have a right to attend a solidly middle-class public “common school.” They may not have a right to middle class parents, or a right to live in a middle-class neighborhood, or a right to a middle-class income or life-style. But every child in the United States—whether rich or poor, white or black, Latino or Asian—should have access to the good education that is best guaranteed by the presence of a majority middle-class student body.<sup>145</sup>

After Meeks announced plans of the boycott, Kahlenburg made the argument that Chicago students needed middle class environments more than higher per capita spending: “It’s an advantage to have peers who are academically engaged and expect to go to college; parents who actively volunteer in the classroom and hold school officials

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<sup>145</sup>Richard D. Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools Through Public School Choice* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 1.

accountable; and highly qualified teachers who have high expectations.” Despite the differing opinions on the matter, the boycott lasted two days, and ended on the promise that Governor Rod Blagojevich would meet with Senator Meeks. Governor Blagojevich ultimately argued that he did not have the power to re-write the school funding formula and that the state legislature had to be convinced to do it.

### **The Nation’s New President Chooses a New Secretary of Education**

In 2008, a young charismatic Illinois senator named Barack Obama would be elected to become the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. Obama would make history in becoming the first African-American president of the United States. After he won the election, speculation began to surface regarding his plans for the post of Secretary of Education. Duncan was a friend to Obama and played basketball with him on occasion, and he served as an adviser to the Obama campaign on educational issues. Duncan was considered a less controversial choice of all candidates considered by Obama because they saw eye to eye on many important educational issues. Both felt that teachers should be paid more, and should earn more for better performance. Both also felt that teachers should be held accountable for their performance, and school districts should have the ability to get rid of ineffective teachers.<sup>146</sup> In December of 2008, President-elect Obama selected Duncan as his pick for Secretary of Education.

Paul Vallas immediately weighed in on Obama’s selection:

He has the brains, courage, creativity, and temperament for the job. And he’s very close to the president [-elect], which is an important thing,

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<sup>146</sup><http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1862445,00.html>

too...I told him to go for it. He's got an opportunity to really impact millions of lives in a really positive way. Arne has the capacity to bring people together—he's always demonstrated that skill—but he's a reformer."<sup>147</sup>

So who was this, Arne Duncan? Outside of Illinois, Duncan was a very little known figure. Duncan's tenure as CPS CEO would soon be summarized for the rest of Americans, and included the following:

- Improved CPS first day attendance levels from 76 percent to 93 percent
- Led the district to steady incremental gains on state standardized tests, with 65 percent of CPS's elementary students meeting or exceeding standards by 2008
- Closed, consolidated or turned around 61 schools while opening 75 new schools under the Renaissance 2010 initiative
- Improved the high school graduation rate by six percentage points
- Consistently lobbied for additional educational funding; spoke out against NCLB mandates
- Launched a program to pay students for good grades
- Implemented an incentive plan for students with improved attendance
- Discontinued the popular Iowa test, using the ISAT test as a sole indicator of student academic achievement.
- Added additional rigor to the principal eligibility process, requiring portfolios

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<sup>147</sup>James Janega and Carlos Sadovi, "Duncan to Join Obama Cabinet - Chicago Schools Chief is His Pick for Education Secretary," *Chicago Tribune*, 2008.



- Split the district into smaller academic “areas,” placing area officers in charge of smaller clusters of schools and sent reading specialists to schools to help teachers improve student reading performance
- Implemented an “accountability report card,” which reported student performance in greater detail
- Implemented a system rewarding schools with additional funding for improved student academic performance

In 2009, Duncan while being asked about his plan for the improvement of the academic achievement of students in the nation, Duncan was asked about mayoral control. Duncan was asked to describe the connection between mayoral control and improving student learning. Duncan’s response included the following:

It’s not always the right answer. It’s a piece of an answer. It’s not a magic bullet. In some places, it might be the wrong answer. But I would argue that in large urban cities with a history of fairly dysfunctional school systems, the work is so hard and the challenges are so intractable that you have to have strong leadership at the top to give you a chance to get there...The best person I can think of to rally all those different sectors together to achieve that is the mayor.<sup>148</sup>

In regards to the No Child Left Behind Act, which Duncan has been on record for criticizing, there has not been a reauthorization as of this writing. However, Duncan has promised that the nation would “get accountability right” and eliminate prescriptive interventions, measuring academic growth instead of current performance levels, and how schools are closing the achievement gap.

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<sup>148</sup>Joan Richardson, "Quality Education is Our Moon Shot: An Interview with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan," *Phi Delta Kappan* 91, no. 1 (2009): 27.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS

This chapter will analyze the words and actions of CEOs Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan through the lens of Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority*. This analysis section will not argue for or against any particular source of authority; instead, this analysis will utilize the framework to organize the words and actions of the two CEOs to determine if they are in congruence with what was intended for the CEO model for CPS leadership. This analysis will make certain assumptions that will be listed here in preparation for the analysis:

- Major decisions made and described in the previous chapters are the under the leadership of each CEO, and are therefore treated as decisions made by the CEO themselves. Even if a top official made the decision and the CEO merely signed off on it, it will be treated as a decision made by the CEO himself.
- The Board and the CEO will be considered unilateral for the purposes of the analysis. Beginning with the Amendatory Act of 1995, the Board was reduced to five members, and the Mayor gained the ability to handpick each of them as well as the CEO. This did not mean that they were always in agreement when it came to decision making. However, the unique unity

forged between the Board and the CEOs as a result of all being selected by the mayor created a unified decision making entity. Decisions will be considered collaborative when outside entities are included.

- Decisions will be judged based on the source of authority that the CEO utilized to ensure the compliance of CPS employees regarding the decision. The decisions will fall into a particular source of authority based on “why” they should follow the directive. For example, if a CEO unilaterally created and implemented a homeless education program without input from stakeholders, and it requires that teachers and administrators work an additional hour each school day, this would be considered a bureaucratic decision, but requires that people follow it because of their moral obligations to the school/district. This decision would fall under the moral source of authority.

### **Paul Vallas: Words and Actions**

Words/Action(s) - “No one. No one is to order anything new unless it is specifically authorized by me.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis - Upon taking over as CEO, Vallas knew that he had inherited a fiscal mess, and CPS would have to gain credibility as a fiscally responsible district in order to gain additional funding. Lifting the autonomy of the manner in which Chief Officials could spend money would set the precedence for belt-tightening in all aspects of the

district. It also sent a message to taxpayers that Vallas would take the spending of taxpayer dollars seriously.

Words/Action(s) - “There will be no more coffee and rolls paid for out of the schools budget. And there is plenty of furniture here. We don’t need any desks or cabinets built. We don’t need anything new.” A food and beverage policy followed.

Source of Authority - Bureaucratic

Analysis - After learning that almost \$100,000 was spent on refreshments for meetings in half a year’s time in central office in 1995, Vallas unilaterally put an end to that practice, and set guidelines regarding when Board money could be used for food.

Words/Action(s) – Shuttered CPS’s main shop facility located at Central Office

Source of Authority - Bureaucratic

Analysis - Before Vallas took office, CPS provided full time employment for laborers such as carpenters and painters. Vallas found that they charged a premium for services rendered to schools. He decided to exercise an authority granted to him by the new laws embedded in the amendatory act which allowed him to privatize those services. This would mean that services were put up for bid, which would result in savings for the district.

Words/Action(s) – Ended heating of main garage at central office, instituted travel policy, instituted telecommunications policy

Source of Authority - Bureaucratic

Analysis - Vallas found more instances of wasteful spending and instituted policies which provided a check and balances system of spending funds.

Words/Action(s) – Downsized Desegregation Commission to seven members and subjected the new commission to the school board’s ethics guidelines

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Vallas found additional instances of wasteful spending after auditing the Desegregation Commission. Vallas found that he would need to closely monitor special interest groups which had gone unmonitored in the past to ensure that funds were spent in accordance to Board guidelines.

Words/Action(s) – Cutting of over 1700 positions

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Within weeks of assuming the post of CPS CEO, Paul Vallas balanced the budget, constructed a teacher’s contract which included high salary increases, and freed up additional funding for additional programming. This would require a careful analysis of the non-teaching personnel by Vallas and his team. Vallas found that by trimming the bureaucracy, he could accomplish two important feats: freeing up additional monies, and repairing the public’s confidence of how CPS spent monies.

Words/Action(s) – The promotion of J.W. Smith to oversee the sports program for CPS high schools

Source of Authority – Psychological, Moral

Analysis – It would have been easy to ignore the CPS sports program amidst the financial crisis that CPS was embedded in upon Vallas’s assumption of the CPS CEO post. Vallas argued that CPS students should have quality sports programs like their

affluent suburban peers, and they would serve as incentives for students to stay off the streets.

Words/Action(s) – Declaring Larry Jackson ineligible to play basketball upon transferring to a CPS high school from another district

Source of Authority – Professional, Moral

Analysis – With this decision, Vallas utilized a committee to examine this issue and used their recommendation to influence his decision: “J.W. and the principals’ committee gave me no reason to decide otherwise. This was not a question of eligibility; it was a question of ethics.” This decision was designed to send a message to the entire district that if a student is to be involved in CPS Sports, they are to follow a strict code of rules and guidelines. This also sent a message that star athletes would not receive preferential treatment.

Words/Action(s) – Ten day suspension of Landon Cox from coaching and assistant principal duties at King High School: “I’m putting all the coaches on warning. This has to be cleaned up once and for all. The first time they mess up, it’s a suspension. The second time, they get fired as coaches and could lose their teaching jobs.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Vallas utilized the bureaucratic source of authority to address Cox’s failure to follow policy. Cox received consequences for his non-compliance of the rules. The suspension of Cox would serve as an example to the district that no one would be able to break rules with impunity.

Words/Action(s) – “There is a big problem with busing. People don’t like it, and it causes confusion. I’m not comfortable implementing it. What I want to do is meet Monday and assess overcrowding school by school and come up with alternatives that will minimize the need to bus.” The purchase of 20 mobile units to help relieve overcrowding soon followed

Source of Authority – Professional

Analysis – Vallas and his team initially decided that busing would be the easier approach to alleviating the overcrowding that was taking place in schools. Instead of sticking to their decision upon hearing criticism from parents, the team would come back to the table and use the criticism to take a double look at the problem from a school by school basis and decide on a solution that was best for the communities involved.

Words/Action(s) – “What if a school principal is absent and a gang is taking over the third floor of a school? We can’t just sit around and wait for 20-some (parent) groups to reach consensus. We’re not trying to be vindictive or dictatorial. We’re not trying to undermine school reform. But we can’t sit around fiddling while Rome burns.” This statement was made in defense of the passing of a policy related to how a school would be determined of being in “educational crisis.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – With the approval of the educational crisis policy, Vallas would gain the power to decide if a school would receive intensive intervention from central office, the principal fired and the LSC members removed if certain conditions existed as outlined in the policy.

Words/Action(s) – In 1996, Vallas determined that several of Chicago’s lowest achieving schools were in educational crisis. “You can call it whatever you want, but we have the authority to take action when schools are not functioning for whatever reason and that’s what we’re going to do.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Reform groups and community members were outraged about the changes that were taking place at schools that were determined to be in educational crisis. Vallas exercised his right to make those decisions and placed probation teams in those schools that were to help the schools produce positive student outcomes.

Words/Action(s) – Changing the principal selection process: “These principals are brain surgeons—they are molding the minds of our children. If you have a bad principal, you are going to have problems no matter how good a local school council is.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic, Professional

Analysis – The decision to revamp the principal selection process in itself was bureaucratic in nature. Vallas had made many public statements against LSCs, and this decision was considered a move that was made to limit the powers of LSCs in regards to principal selection. The process of developing the new principal selection process was rooted in professional authority. Vallas and his team collaborated with the CPAA to create an academy for leadership training.

Words/Action(s) – Ending social promotion: “Social promotion was a disaster, and we can see it with the dropout rate, which is 42 percent. When you’re talking about social promotion, there’s no pressure on the child or the school to reach the standards you



much reach before you go to the next level. So what social promotion did was take away the incentive for the kid and the system to ensure what the kids should be doing, and it also devalued our diplomas.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Considered one of the hallmarks of Vallas’s tenure, he determined that additional accountability was necessary on the student level. He determined that the advancement to the next grade should be based on student academic readiness, rather than the student’s age. Students who did not have the test scores and grades to advance would be required to attend mandatory summer school, and the penalty for not successfully completing summer school would be retention in the grade.

Words/Action(s) – Implementation of reconstitution: “This is a pretty bold step, but we have schools that are not showing progress and not improving and we have to use every instrument at our disposal. Sometimes you just have to start over.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – This was another measure that was utilized to intervene in failing schools. Vallas used this measure to combat low test scores, poor attendance, high dropout rates, and when he determined that a school did not follow improvement plans. Reconstitution was controversial because the utilization of this measure sent a message that the lack of performance for teachers within a school contributed to the school’s failing status.

Words/Action(s) – Promotion of Englewood Principal Tommye Brown to post of director of alternative schools: “He had heart surgery, and he wanted a promotion, and he

wanted to take over the alternative schools, and I'm not going to deny it to him. He's earned it."

Source of Authority – Psychological

Analysis – Vallas's decision to promote Tommye Brown after he requested a less stressful job was a reward for his hard work for the district.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas takes over Clemente High School for safety reasons:

"I'm taking over the school. The bottom line is that Clemente has brought this on themselves. We have been very patient with Clemente. Clemente is going to have its independence of politics. The political exploitation of Clemente students is over."

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – After a potential principal candidate turned down the position because of death threats from a violent Puerto Rican gang, Vallas acted swiftly by taking over the school and inserting his own interim principal. The goal was to rid the school of the political exploitation of students by special interest groups.

Words/Action(s) – The development of a character education program: "I've had

a religious upbringing where values and ethics and morals were being reinforced. The most dynamic personality outside my father was our parish priest. He's an institution. He's kind of our moral guiding light. There are so many individuals like that in our communities who have for all practical purposes been barred from our schools."

Source of Authority – Moral

Analysis – Vallas had made references to his religious upbringing on a number of occasions, and freely spoke about partnering with parochial schools. Vallas felt that there

was not enough emphasis placed on the teaching of ethics, values and morals in CPS schools.

Words/Action(s) – Modification of the magnet school program: “People across the city have felt for years that only the elite get into magnet schools. What we are trying to do here is demystify the magnet school program.”

Source of Authority – Moral

Analysis – Vallas proposed a plan that would mandate that magnet schools would have to reserve 30 percent of the enrollment for students who lived in the neighborhood. Opponents were outraged, contending that it defeated the purpose for magnet schools. Vallas would ultimately have to compromise, and the number of reserved slots was reduced to 15 percent. Vallas provided neighborhood students with the opportunity to attend school with higher performing students that they may not have gotten otherwise.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas launches program which kept some schools open during the winter holiday break (1997) and hired parent workers to help escort children from Robert Taylor Homes to school: “I’m not suggesting here that what we’re offering is going to solve all the problems. We’re making a contribution. If the kids aren’t in school, they’re not going to get educated. If we have to go out and get them escorted, then that’s what we’re going to do.”

Source of Authority – Moral

Analysis – In response to violent outbreaks in the communities surrounding the Robert Taylor Homes, Vallas implemented programs in schools over the winter break to help keep students safe. He also hired parent workers to escort children to school when

school resumed after the winter break. Vallas personally assisted in the efforts, which prompted many other community volunteers to join.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas implements the SMART program

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The SMART program served as an interim intervention for first time offenders of serious student disciplinary violations. The SMART program was a necessary intervention that was to function as a punitive measure without expelling the student or putting them into alternative schools which were overcrowded.

Words/Action(s) – Altered promotions policy to give principals and regional officers input regarding the retention of a particular student.

Source of Authority – Professional

Analysis – The previous promotions policy dictated that test scores, grades and attendance were the sole indicators of a student’s promotion status. After altering the policy, an exception could be made for a student who was on the borderline by principals and regional officers.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas installs new busing plan for certain magnet schools to save money: “The basic policy is, in effect, done. If people want to communicate their displeasure about the busing policy (at public hearings on the budget) they can. But this is already our policy.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Despite parental disagreement with the new busing policy, Vallas unilaterally decided to install a newer plan that saved the district millions.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas was given the authority to choose an interim principal when a school’s LSC is deadlocked in reaching a decision.

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Vallas publicly vocalized that he was not in favor of the selection process of principals: “I’m trying to reduce the selection of bad principals and prevent good principals from being intimidated or influenced by overzealous members of LSCs. This isn’t anything new, because I’ve been talking about this for four years.” This policy gave him another manner in which he could influence the selection of principals.

Words/Action(s) – Vallas places six schools under his direct supervision, with the implementation of a measure called intervention: “Intervention may prove to be the most controversial because intervention allows you to go in and selectively remove staff for non-performance. After you do the evaluation, you can dismiss individual teachers based on the evaluation.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The intervention process differed from reconstitution in that Vallas and his team could individually evaluate teachers and dismiss for non-performance based on their determination. They did not have to conduct interviews with teachers.

Words/Action(s) – Proposed that the Board adopt a standardized curriculum created at central office: “The studies have indicated that the schools where we go in and dictate curriculum are the schools that seem to be doing the best.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – After Mayor Daley express dissatisfaction with stagnant test score improvement and continued poor student performance in reading, Vallas suggested a top-down solution which would require that central office create and dictate the curriculum for all CPS schools. His argument was that the probationary schools were making gains, but the other schools are all doing different things, which was the cause of inconsistent performance.

### **Arne Duncan: Words and Actions**

Words/Action(s) – Duncan sent reading specialists to schools to work with teachers to improve instructional practices in reading: “The people we are going to send are not going to be the principal’s best friend or some Joe Blow either. This is going to be an elite corps of people focused on one subject.”

Source of Authority – Professional

Analysis – This decision was intended to utilize the professional source of authority. Duncan’s initial remedy for the improvement of reading was to utilize individuals who were specialists in reading to help teachers to improve instructional practices. However, many teachers felt that the implementation of reading specialists was a bureaucratic move, because some felt that they did not need additional assistance to teach reading, some felt that specialists reviewed strategies that they had already learned in previous professional development sessions, and some felt that central office sent reading specialists to evaluate their teaching strategies, creating a relationship of mistrust between teachers and reading specialists.

Words/Action(s) – Elimination of the Department of Learning Technologies:

“We are trying to streamline the bureaucracy in the central office, and we are not done. The duties of Learning Technologies can be handled in other departments, across our entire system.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Duncan began the process of trimming positions at central office in order to “save taxpayer’s money.”

Words/Action(s) – Duncan froze the hiring of non-essential employees, as well as spending on consultants, travel and advertising: “None of this impacts the schools. This is all central office. We’re preparing for the worst, although we’re absolutely committed to that not happening. We’re doing everything we can to streamline the central office so nothing we do impacts what’s most important, our classrooms”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Duncan continued to make cuts in preparation for a reduction of funding from the state. Duncan characterized the positions that were cut as non-essential. The argument was that none of the cuts would impact the schools.

Words/Action(s) – Seeking input before making a final decision regarding the submittal of a sports proposal to the ISHA: “After that (making a presentation to the IHSA board) I will make a final determination on whether to make a formal proposal to the IHSA. Before then I will be talking to principals, athletic directors and coaches to get their feedback on the idea...”

Source of Authority – Professional

Analysis – In this instance, Duncan displayed that he was willing to utilize a collaborative approach when it came to making certain decisions. In talking with principals, athletic directors and coaches before making a sports-related decision, Duncan solicited the input of the professionals who were experts in athletics.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan imposed a two year limit for uncertified teachers to pass state teacher examinations: “The bottom line is in all of this is there is simply no room in our system for teachers who are not fully qualified to teach in their respective subject areas.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Upon taking the helm of CPS CEO, one of the major problems for the district was teacher retention. Hard-to-staff schools regularly had to staff classrooms with uncertified teachers, subs and aides. By tightening the certification policy, Duncan ultimately exacerbated the teacher shortage issue by creating additional shortages.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan proposed that teachers in areas of teacher shortage be allowed to apply for a one-year exemption from the residency policy. “This is one of a series of innovative strategies we plan to bring the best teachers to Chicago.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Opponents of this proposal argued that a one-year exemption would not attract teachers from other areas because they would be forced to move to the city. Some potential teacher candidates did not want to move to Chicago. CTU president Lynch wanted the requirements lifted altogether.



Words/Action(s) – Duncan’s response to allegations of CPS’s lack of food safety by the Chicago Tribune: “Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our children. We are absolutely committed to doing what is necessary to ensure that.”

Source of Authority – Technical rational, Professional, Bureaucratic, Moral

Analysis – Duncan took a multifaceted approach to developing solutions for the food safety issue that arose as a result of a series of investigations by the Chicago Tribune. Among the solutions, he and team members met with the Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner to identify solutions and determined that better communication between the department and central office was necessary. He also planned to launch a review of the city’s meal plan and look at the best practices around the country to determine how they would make necessary changes. Also, he required that central office meet with principals to discuss food service procedures and required that principals directly supervise kitchen workers.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan closes three schools: “We don’t believe these schools as they currently exist, will ever measure up. There are better education alternatives within walking distance.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – For the first time in CPS history, schools would be closed strictly for poor academic performance. When Duncan announced that he would end the practice of reconstitution, many believed that he would not close schools. However, the district would quickly learn that Duncan would ultimately reconstitute more schools than his predecessor.

Words/Action(s) – Implementation of the *Every Child, Every School*

education plan: “From day one, I have not thrown lots of sexy bells and whistles that sound nice but do not help kids learn. My goal is to be the best urban school district in America. Nothing easy is going to get you there.”

Source of Authority – Professional

Analysis – Duncan’s education plan was the result of the collaboration between central office and numerous stakeholders. The new plan placed teaching and learning at the forefront of reform efforts. Duncan remarked that his approach would not include lots of “sexy bells and whistles,” but strategies that would help kids learn. One key initiative would be the creation of instructional areas. Schools would be split among 24 instructional areas, and each would be led by an AIO. The creation of the AIO ultimately increased accountability to a degree that CPS had not ever experienced. For the first time, there would be the systematic and consistent monitoring of schools by the area offices. Principals would be directly supervised by AIOs, which was another aspect that school based administrators had to adapt to. Some principals considered the area office as watchdogs for central office. The creation of instructional areas provided a new layer of accountability for neighborhood schools.

Words/Action(s) – Mayor Daley’s statement regarding the implementation of the Renaissance 2010 plan: “Despite our best efforts and the hard work of teachers, principals, parents and students, some schools have consistently underperformed. We must face the reality that—for schools that have consistently underperformed—it’s time to start over.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The Renaissance 2010 plan was a plan that would create 100 Renaissance schools which would operate differently from existing CPS schools. The schools would function as charter schools, independently operated contract schools, and CPS-run small schools. The major difference between Renaissance schools and existing schools was that Renaissance schools would be granted additional autonomy in exchange for increased accountability. The creation of the small schools would involve the closing of many underperforming CPS schools. Opponents to the Renaissance 2010 plan contended that Mayor Daley was behind the plan, intending to close traditional neighborhood schools in order to create elite privately run schools that would attract middle class whites back to Chicago.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan launched an investigation to determine if there was cheating on ISAT tests at seven schools: “We need to stand for something, to teach values to our students. The overwhelming majority of teachers do a fantastic job. These are isolated incidents, but we will deal with them aggressively and honestly.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – This is an example of the motto: “What isn’t inspected isn’t respected.” With school closure decisions based on ISAT test performance, the district found that it would have to closely monitor standardized testing for cheating by teachers in fear of losing their jobs.

Words/Action(s) – CPS awarded the 60 schools that exhibited the most improved ISAT scores \$10,000: “For years, people have asked how you can compare a Whitney

Young High School (which admits only high achieving students) to a Harper High School (a neighborhood school)? They are right. But you can absolutely compare Harper to itself, and that is what this new system will do. It is a much more comprehensive approach.”

Source of Authority – Psychological

Analysis – In order to facilitate improvement efforts, Duncan utilized a utilitarian method of motivating schools to improve.

Words/Action(s) – Elimination of several jobs in the accountability office and research division. All would have to reapply for their positions, and many were not hired back.

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – Duncan’s rationale for this move was to move resources closer to the schools

Words/Action(s) – Duncan removed three elementary school principals because of poor performance: “We’re taking a very hard look at performance. We’re holding ourselves and them accountable.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The removal of principals because their schools performed poorly was a very controversial and seldom used intervention strategy. Once a principal was subject to removal, he or she was entitled to a hearing before an independent officer appointed by the CEO. This almost ensured that the process was a unilateral decision by the CEO.

Words/Action(s) – The requirement of portfolios for principal candidates:

“My goal is not to send dozens of resumes, many of which are mediocre, and make (local school councils’) already tough job more difficult. I want to send extraordinary candidates so they do not have to spend tons of time weighing through masses of paperwork.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – With this decision, Duncan argued that he wanted to send more qualified candidates for LSC consideration in the selection of school principals. Vallas used a similar rationale when he changed the principal selection process. Ultimately, this decision gave provided the CPAA with the ability to screen and provide LSCs with the potential candidates that they would be able to select from, which reduced their input into the process. Additionally, several potential candidates became ineligible for principal consideration because it became harder to gain the necessary administrative experience that the portfolios required.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan donated \$5,000 in scholarship money for two high school seniors

Source of Authority – Moral

Analysis – In this instance, Duncan is modeling a core value to employees in the district, which is related to his belief that all students should have the opportunity to learn.

Words/Action(s) – In 2004, CPS toughened the teacher residency policy: “Since 1996, we have required our teachers to live in Chicago, a policy some see as an obstacle

in recruiting and retaining the best teachers. The facts, however, suggest otherwise. Every year our schools are performing better, the stacks of resumes grow and our teacher-vacancy rate drops.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – With the new residency policy, school administrators would have to verify that new employees lived in Chicago. Opponents argued that the residency policy was not appropriate for CPS, but Mayor Daley did not want to adjust the policy for CPS employees because he would have to adjust it for other city departments, which could cause an exodus of middle class city workers from the city to the more affordable suburbs.

Words/Action(s) – Implementation of DIBELS screening assessment tool

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – For the purposes of uniformity, the district implemented this assessment tool in order to collect data regarding the reading levels of primary aged students. Teachers were initially resistant to the tool because many used their own assessment instruments to assess student reading levels, and felt that DIBELS did not sufficiently assess all areas.

Words/Action(s) – Duncan ended a program for pregnant teens and teen parents implemented by Vallas: “When a girl gets pregnant, that’s a symptom of 98 things that are going wrong in that kid’s life. CPS is not a pro at dealing with all those issues.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The “Cradle to the Classroom” program was considered successful as well as cost-efficient.

Words/Action(s) – In 2005, Duncan implemented an incentive plan designed to encourage better attendance for students: “I’m a firm believer in rewarding hard work. We want to do everything we can to encourage families to do the right thing. The reality of it is that not everyone has the mentality (that school is an obligation).”

Source of Authority – Psychological

Analysis – Opponents of the usage of incentives argued that CPS was sending a bad message by “bribing” kids to come to school. Duncan argued that “hard work” should be rewarded.

Words/Action(s) – In 2005, CPS stopped using the IOWA test as a form of student assessment and replaced it with three shorter reading assessments called Standard Learning First: “These assessments are a tool for teachers, not a punitive measure. Testing is important, but we want to test ... in a way that gives our teachers and our principals, useful information about their students.”

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – The state mandated ISAT test lessened the need for the district to utilize two major standardized assessment tests. However, the need for additional data prompted Duncan to adopt the Learning First assessment tests.

Words/Action(s) – In 2007, Duncan changed the policy on the closing of schools by specifically outlining reasons why a school could be closed.

Source of Authority – Bureaucratic

Analysis – One important change to the policy on the closing of schools was the need for change in educational focus. A school slated to undergo a change in educational focus would allow for the principal of that school to re-interview and rehire his or her entire staff. This created a situation where the principal could circumvent the normal process of removing a teacher. This is an example of bureaucratic decision making on the school level.

Words/Action(s) – CPS implemented a pilot program which would pay the freshmen at 20 CPS high schools a sum of money for “good” grades “The majority of our students don’t come from families with a lot of economic wealth. I’m always trying to level the playing field. This is the kind of incentive that middle-class families have had for decades.”

Source of Authority – Psychological

Analysis – This serves as another example of Duncan’s usage of rewards to motivate students to perform.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

### **Research Questions**

In examining the CEO model under the leadership of Paul Vallas through the framework of Serviovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority*, Vallas utilized Sergiovanni’s five sources in decision making analyzed in this dissertation at the following rates:

Bureaucratic: 60 percent; Psychological: 7 percent; Technical rational: 0 percent; Professional: 13 percent; and Moral: 17 percent.



**Research Question 1:** Through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, what were the skills, knowledge and dispositions that Mayor Daley sought from the CEO position for Paul Vallas during the years of 1995-2001

Upon taking over the leadership helm of CPS under the new revamped CEO title, Paul Vallas was expected to perform the duties of the new position under guidelines that were outlined in the Amendatory Act. The 1995 Amendatory Act directed the CEO to increase the quality of educational services, reduce the cost of non-educational services, develop a long-term financial plan which would balance the budget, streamline the bureaucracy, and enact policies that ensured that the system ran in an ethical as well as efficient manner.

Mayor Daley made statements which revealed the characteristics that he would expect from the CPS CEO. First, the CPS CEO would have to address the overall management of the district, as well as central office: "You have to change management," Daley said. "There's a lot of management problems there."<sup>1</sup> He also revealed that how he wanted the CEO to address special interests groups surrounding the district: "Business as usual is over. The special interests will move to the back of the line. The bureaucrats who stand in the way of change will be removed and their powers dissolved."<sup>2</sup> Daley also vocalized the importance of cutting costs in order to balance the budget: "We must continue to fight for every dollar in Springfield, because the state has not met its (funding) responsibility. But clearly we must also make progress here in controlling

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<sup>1</sup>Oclander and Spielman.

<sup>2</sup>Kass, "Daley Names School Team."

costs before expecting any further help from the state.”<sup>3</sup> Daley would also lend his opinion regarding the retention policy during Vallas’ tenure. After being asked if students would be retained for a second year in a row, Daley responded: “I will not socially promote children to high school, to allow them to drop out and go on... You want to promote them? You go promote them. And then you’ll see them in the criminal justice system and you’ll be complaining about your taxes.”

Through the lens of Sergiovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority*, all of the characteristics that were revealed by the Mayor fell under the bureaucratic source of authority in that they were all related to finance, resource allocation, and management. Furthermore, his opinion regarding the manner in how to deal with students who would be retained for a second time called for a bureaucratic approach in regards to making promotion determinations.

In examining the CEO model under the leadership of Arne Duncan through the framework of Serviovanni’s *Five Sources of Authority*, Duncan utilized Sergiovanni’s five sources in decision making analyzed in this dissertation at the following rates: Bureaucratic: 69 percent; Psychological: 12 percent; Technical rational: 3 percent; Professional: 15 percent; and Moral: 0 percent.

**Research Question 2:** Through the Lens of Sergiovanni’s Five Sources of Authority, what were the skills, knowledge and dispositions that Mayor Daley sought from the CEO position for Arne Duncan during the years of 2001-2008?

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Upon taking the helm of CPS CEO, the district experienced a state of financial stability, due to the work of Vallas. Mayor Daley was ready for the district to go in another direction in relation to student performance. At the end of Vallas' term as CEO, reading scores had not improved at the same rate as they had during the first years of his administration. Daley stated that schools would need to utilize non-traditional ideas and think "outside the box" to help improve student performance:

When you go into a school, you see kids who deal with technology faster than any of us, who can sing a rap song better than anyone else, but they have a problem reading...With every child there is ability. How do we get it out of them?... I think we have to go outside of the box.<sup>4</sup>

Daley would also reveal his opinion regarding how the district should address failing schools. After unveiling the plans surrounding the Renaissance 2010 initiative, Daley stated: "Despite our best efforts and the hard work of teachers, principals, parents and students, some schools have consistently underperformed. We must face the reality that—for schools that have consistently underperformed—it's time to start over."<sup>5</sup> Daley also endorsed the magnet makeover plan, which would transform neighborhood schools into "magnet-style" school options: "The magnet makeover plan is our latest strategy aimed at creating high-quality options for all students across Chicago. These schools are part of a bigger picture that includes turnaround schools, high school transformation

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<sup>4</sup>Washburn, "Schools Told to Think 'Outside of Box'."

<sup>5</sup>Dell'Angela and Washburn, "Daley Set to Remake Troubled Schools."

schools and accelerated programs within schools designed to get more students ready for the workplace and college.”<sup>6</sup>

Daley’s expectations of the CPS CEO position for the time period of 2001-2008 were from both the professional and bureaucratic sources of authority. In regards to “thinking out of the box” when it came to the improvement of teaching and learning strategies, Daley wanted for the leadership team to utilize non-traditional thinking to help bolster student achievement. Duncan would enlist the assistance of several different individuals to help him accomplish that sort of thinking and to implement those ideas. From a bureaucratic standpoint, Daley endorsed the closing and reorganization of schools.

**Research Question 3:** Through the lens of Sergiovanni’s Five Sources of Authority, how did Paul Vallas fulfill the CEO role based on Mayor Daley’s criteria for the CPS CEO position?

Based on Mayor Daley’s criteria for the CPS CEO position, which was formulated by stipulations in the 1995 Amendatory Act, Paul Vallas experienced great success in fulfilling the role of CPS CEO, but hit a wall when it came to formulating teaching and learning strategies. He accomplished this by first restoring public confidence in the district by displaying financial prudence and responsibility. He quickly identified instances of wasteful spending and discontinued those practices. He fired union laborers and established systems which required that CPS solicit bids from private

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<sup>6</sup>Briggs, “10 Selected as Magnets.”

companies in order to retain services in a cost-efficient manner. He led by example by demonstrating that he would not waste taxpayer dollars with expensive drivers and food budgets for meetings. He distributed equipment that was collecting dust in warehouses that CPS had to rent, which saved the district some money.

Vallas made tough personnel decisions in order to free up money to settle the teacher's contract and to create necessary programs to support student learning. He realized that he could trim positions at central office to accomplish that goal. By cutting positions at central office, Vallas fulfilled two expectations outlined by the Amendatory Act: Streamlining the bureaucracy, and balancing the budget. This move also helped to restore the public's confidence in the district, as evidenced by the increased credit rating awarded to the district as a result of Vallas' efforts. Vallas knew that CPS would not be able to ask for additional funding until it illustrated that the district would spend the money that it was allotted responsibly.

Vallas made decisions that reflected that the district would operate in an ethical and efficient manner in a number of ways. Vallas enacted revamped ethics policies for LSC members, sport coaches and players, as well as special interest groups who worked with CPS. Vallas ran the district in an efficient manner with decisions such as the sharing of school buses, the allocation of resources, and his monitoring of the district's finances.

Vallas believed that improvement would be realized through accountability. Vallas demanded accountability from everyone, including students and parents. Vallas' ending of social promotions was considered one of the hallmarks of his administration, as

well as controversial. Opponents of retention cited research that indicated that students who were retained were not likely to improve performance and were more likely to drop out of school.

The majority of decisions made by Vallas that were analyzed in this dissertation were made from the *bureaucratic* source of authority. Given the stipulations identified for the CEO position in the Amendatory Act, bureaucratic decision making was inevitable. To properly manage a bureaucracy, there must be tough, bureaucratic decision making. The closing and reorganization of schools reflected bureaucratic decision making designed to strike fear in individuals to influence them to perform better. Vallas admitted that he was not opposed to utilizing fear to stimulate performance: “Is fear a factor? Well, if fear is synonymous with accountability, then I’ll take fear anytime.”<sup>7</sup> The usage of fear to motivate performance meant that there was a fundamental belief that the goals of the supervisor and the subordinate were not the same. If teachers “do their jobs,” then their school would not be closed. The usage of reconstitution and intervention struck fear throughout the district, and impacted school-based decision making as a consequence. Fear of sanctions became the “stick” by which all employees would follow. Performance would be stimulated through the use of fear. If schools fail, teachers could lose their jobs. Tenured teachers who were historically protected by the CTU would also be subject to losing their positions.

At the end of Vallas’ tenure, student performance results became stagnant. This reflected that improvements in teaching and learning involved the bulk of the CPS

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<sup>7</sup>Martinez, “A Painful Steady Climb.”

workforce: teachers. Fear of sanctions had reached its limit. Paul Vallas had not effectively developed programs which affected how teachers taught and how students learned.

**Research Question 4:** Through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority, how did Arne Duncan fulfill the CEO role based on Mayor Daley's criteria for the CPS CEO position?

Based on the combination of expectations for the CEO role outlined in the Amendatory Act and new expectations for the role as dictated by Mayor Daley, Arne Duncan also experienced great success in the fulfillment of the role of CPS CEO. Duncan was charged with moving the district forward by focusing on teaching and learning strategies. Duncan relied on the professional source of authority to accomplish this. He began by hiring Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins to function as his Chief Educational Officer. Eason-Watkins was the former principal of McCosh Elementary School, who was known as a dynamic leader that led her school to great gains on their standardized tests. Duncan would use her expertise to help shape the educational reforms that were put in place during his tenure.

Duncan's *Every Child, Every School* education plan was also an example of his usage of the professional source of authority. Mayor Daley demanded improvement in student reading performance, and this plan was designed to meet that challenge. The plan was formulated with the assistance of LSC members, parents, students, community members, social service organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Eason-Watkins oversaw the development of the plan. The development of instructional areas was a

major component of the plan. With instructional areas, the Area Instructional Officer was created, which provided another layer of instructional leadership for schools. The new instructional area model required that AIOs report directly to Eason-Watkins, which provided her with an increased influence on instructional practices of individual schools.

Overall, 69 percent of decisions made by Duncan that were analyzed in this study were made from the bureaucratic source of authority. The No Child Left Behind Act brought stipulations and sanctions that greatly affected decision-making, particularly in struggling urban districts. The fear of sanctions that could be imposed by the district was used to motivate teachers and administrators to improve student performance just as the fear of sanctions that could be imposed by the federal government were designed to do the same. The fear of school closure would become even greater under the tenure of Arne Duncan due to the implementation of Renaissance 2010.

With the implementation of Renaissance 2010 coupled with the powers given to the CPS CEO as outlined in the 1995 Amendatory Act, the district utilized the bureaucratic source of authority to provide sanctions that were supposed to motivate employees within the district to increase student outcomes. CPS schools that were poor performers were constantly made aware of the fact that their school could be closed. Teachers learned that there were several ways that they could lose their jobs, through reconstitution, a change in educational focus, and school closings. Some CPS employees wondered if Mayor Daley was truly trying to improve schools, or increase the middle class population in Chicago by creating schools populated with higher performing students, for the purposes of promoting gentrification.



Mayor Daley demanded that CPS leadership think “outside the box” to develop programs that would increase student performance. During his tenure, Duncan displayed several instances of non-traditional programming and ideas while implementing programs for CPS students. Beginning with the small schools initiative, the school within a school concept was utilized to help individualize the educational program for high school students in the district. Small schools would normally feature a special area of interest, such as communication, technology, entrepreneurship or college prep. The schools featured a smaller student body (500 students or fewer), and lower student to specialty staff ratios than traditional schools. Students in small schools often wore uniforms, which further strengthened the unifying themes of the schools. The small school concept was designed to give students a more personalized educational experience in high school, where some students get lost in the shuffle.

The specialty magnet schools, as well as magnet cluster schools were further examples of non-traditional thinking in the management of the district. Daley stated that students dealt with technology faster than adults, and the technology magnet cluster schools provided students with the opportunity to utilize technological enhancements during their learning experiences. Schools within the technology magnet cluster emphasized the integration of technology within the curriculum. Teachers at technology academies were to receive a minimum of 90 hours of professional development related to technology integration. Those schools were allotted smart boards, projectors, enhanced classroom sound systems, laptop carts, teacher laptops, as well as Elmo® devices. Principals at those academies would also spend their own discretionary funds to provide

their students with additional technological enhancements. Spencer Technology Academy, located on Chicago's west side, even has a virtual gymnasium, featuring 15 Nintendo Wii® video game systems. Teachers who wanted to utilize the virtual gymnasium would work with a technology coordinator, who would help them to develop lesson plans designed to use the game systems to enhance their lesson.

Despite receiving criticism, Duncan utilized the usage of incentives as an additional means to exhibit “out of the box” thinking. His usage of incentives supported the overall usage of the psychological source of authority. Schools received incentives for growth on ISAT results. Students received cash for grades, and one student even won a car as a reward for her attendance, even though she was not old enough to drive at that time. Duncan argued that students could not learn if they were not in school. Despite the criticism, Duncan continued to utilize incentives, and attendance climbed to the highest that it had ever been in the history of the district.

**Research Question 5:** How did the leadership styles of the Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan compare through the lens of Sergiovanni's Five Sources of Authority?

In terms of leadership styles, the two CEOs were different in approach but similar in function. Vallas took the office of CPS CEO with a brash, direct style and implemented aggressive changes from the beginning of his tenure. Duncan, on the other hand, took a more laid back approach, preferring to work behind the scenes during his first months. Vallas was extremely transparent with his decision making and the changes that he implemented during his tenure, and was extremely media-friendly, providing the media with several interesting quotes. Duncan was not as transparent with the rationale

behind decision making, and was not as media-friendly. Duncan only provided media outlets with short responses to questions, and preferred to communicate through writing.

Vallas exhibited the characteristics of a very decisive decision maker. When faced with situations which required a solution, Vallas delivered quickly and efficiently. Vallas displayed this by quickly balancing the district's budget and ensuring that the district would experience labor peace with the quick settlement of the teacher's contract. As situations and circumstances presented themselves, Vallas developed policies designed to solve the problems that were presented as a result.

Although Vallas showed some instances of utilizing the professional, psychological and moral sources of authority, he mainly led under the bureaucratic source of authority. Vallas did not display many instances of collaboration when it came to decision-making for major issues experienced by the district. The decisions that were made by Vallas that had the greatest impact on the district were made without the input of other stakeholders in the district. Some of Vallas' quick decisions would have to be restructured after being challenged.

Duncan displayed a sharp contrast in style from Vallas. Duncan admitted that he needed to work on being more transparent regarding the direction that he planned to take the district, but he never really seemed comfortable with being vocal about the districts' plans and his decision-making. Duncan claimed that he did not throw "lots of sexy bells and whistles that sound nice but do not help kids learn,"<sup>8</sup> This implied that he believed

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<sup>8</sup>Anonymous, "Schools Take No-Frills Line on Reforms."

that Vallas' approach to running the district was to implement programs that "looked good on paper," but lacked substance and quality.

Duncan was more adept with utilizing "specialists" to help advance his educational agenda. Beginning with the hiring of Eason-Watkins to the post of Chief Educational Officer, and the role he defined for the position, Duncan exhibited that he was willing to share decision-making responsibilities regarding educational initiatives. Duncan also utilized reading specialists to help teachers learn new strategies to improve reading instruction. The creation of instructional areas led by the newly-created AIOs provided another layer of instructional leadership which displayed Duncan's willingness to utilize specialists. Before the creation of instructional areas, the district was divided into six regions, each of which contained close to 100 schools. The regional officers provided support on management issues such as the scheduling of buses, disciplinary issues and facilities management. The new structure split schools among 24 areas, which would provide an AIO for instructional matters, and a management support director who took care of all management related matters and reported to the AIO. The AIO was empowered to make decisions for the purposes of improving instruction in their areas.

Duncan was very active in closing and reorganizing schools. Although he was more willing to listen to supporters of the particular school who fought to keep the school open, and allowed CTU to get involved with the improvement of schools before closure, Duncan ultimately closed more schools during his tenure than Vallas did. The bureaucratic source of authority utilized in these instances was very powerful. The decision to close individual schools was bureaucratic, and the impact of their closures

sent a strong message to the district that no one was safe and no one was untouchable. Vallas would remove principals and LSCs mainly if he determined that improvement efforts were not being followed. Duncan closed schools for non-performance, which was a first in the history of the district. For the first time, teachers and administrators would not be able to say “Well, we tried, but our kids can’t learn.” Teachers and administrators would be held accountable for student performance, regardless of their socioeconomic status, their environment, or their past performance. This was extremely frustrating for district employees who did not quite know how to address those issues.

The Renaissance 2010 plan exacerbated the already existent fear among district employees by setting a preemptive plan for the closing and reorganization of schools. Not only would schools face sanctions for poor performance, but there was now an ambitious plan in place to restructure schools and displace teachers. Teachers and administrators felt even more insecure regarding their careers with CPS, and also felt that the improvement effort placed the total blame of poor student performance solely on teachers. The bureaucratic decision to close schools for poor performance coupled with the psychological impact that the fear of school closure had across the district contributed to the lowering of the morale of teachers and administrators district-wide.

**Research Question 6:** What implications does the CEO model have for school governance and school leadership?

This study has illustrated how the CEO model implemented by CPS has affected school governance and school leadership outcomes both explicitly and implicitly. From a school governance standpoint, the CEO was granted powers by the business-influenced

1995 Amendatory Act that granted the two CEOs the authority to make decisions that previous superintendents were not able to make. The new CPS CEO was given a bit more latitude to make decisions affecting the district similar to CEOs in the private industry. Three important similarities were related to resource allocation, finance and relation with the board of directors. In chapter two, the nature and scope of the accountabilities reserved to CEO positions in private industries were summarized. The accountability of the CEO to resource allocation required that the CEO establish a strategic framework for the allocation of the resources of the corporation. The finance accountability required that the CEO ensured the soundness of the organization's financial structure, monitored indications of the company's financial health, determined the company's present and future capital requirements, and arranged for outside financing. The relations with the board of director's accountability required that the CEO gained the board's full understanding, constructive review, or final approval of management policies, direction and objectives. Beginning with the tenure of Paul Vallas, the CEO model would affect how those three areas would be managed after the 1995 Amendatory Act.

The CEO affected resource allocation by ensuring that the district's limited resources were efficiently allocated. Vallas determined that the best way to allocate resources was to protect teaching positions as best as possible while reducing the higher paid administrative positions within central office. Vallas also allocated resources efficiently by using the powers outlined in the Amendatory Act to privatize non-educational services. This required that Vallas fire union workers who traditionally held

careers with CPS for decades. From then on, services rendered would require that private companies bid for the contract, which saved the district millions of dollars.

From a financial perspective, the CEO was required by the Amendatory Act to develop a long-term financial plan that reflected a balanced budget for each year. Previous to the Amendatory Act, the district's finances were in a constant state of flux. The district employed poor financial practices which consistently left the district in debt, and put the district in a situation where it could not always make ends meet, causing many teacher strikes. During the tenure of the two CEOs, the district has enjoyed an unprecedented period of labor peace as a result of sound financial practices. During Vallas' tenure, the credit rating of the district was increased, which saved the district a great deal of money by allowing the district to borrow more money at a reduced rate. Although the Amendatory Act did not grant the district additional funding, it allowed the CEO more flexibility in how to allocate and spend funds. Displaying prudence in handling the finances of the district helped the district gain additional funds in 1997, and set the stage for future outside financing because of the district's new reputation for sound financial decision-making.

In regards to board relations with the CEO, the CEO model included a board that was reduced and handpicked by the mayor just as the CEO, which helped to reduce friction and increased the amount of productivity in regards to decision making among the board. Although critics of the new governance structure argued that board merely functioned as a rubber stamp for the CEOs decisions, it undeniably allowed for quicker decision making which allowed for the quicker implementation of initiatives. Now, when

there were problems in the district, the CEO could quickly implement a solution instead of waiting for a massive board to come to a resolution.

In private industry, the CEO can fire an employee for poor performance. In the CPS bureaucracy, it was not as easy to dismiss a poor performing teacher. The process for teacher dismissal was often long, and extremely costly to the district. However, school closures for poor performance gave the CEO some semblance of the ability to influence the contents of the workforce just as CEOs in private industry. As outlined in the Amendatory Act, the CEO was granted the power to close schools for a number of reasons, including poor student academic performance. The fear of school closure did help to raise the level of accountability on teachers and administrators. However, higher performing teachers that taught at a school that could close were not as likely to stay or apply to teach at those particular schools. Teachers did not want the stigma that would be attached to them if their school closed. Research shows that the need for great teachers increases in schools with students who are performing below standards. The unintended effect of school closures contributed to a large number of unfilled positions in schools with struggling students.

The CEO model also implicitly affected school leadership outcomes. The major actions of the CPS CEO that had the greatest impact on school leadership was the increased emphasis on test scores, the fear of school closure, the implementation of the AIO and area offices, and the changing of the principal selection process.

Beginning with the tenure of Paul Vallas, the increased emphasis on student test performance created a sense of urgency never before felt across the district. On one



hand, teachers would be held accountable for ensuring that their students learned. Teachers could no longer make “excuses” for why students were not performing, and teachers could not lower the bar in regards to student expectations. On the other hand, the increased emphasis on standardized testing caused principals to change how they led teachers. Standardized testing, which was previously utilized to provide educators with consistent data regarding student mastery of content, now became high-stakes tests. Normally, a test is considered “high-stakes” based on the consequences for the test taker. However, in this instance, poor test results would carry serious consequences for the schools. Those negative consequences may have been a factor in causing principals and local education agencies to cut back programs in the arts, cut recess, social studies, and science courses in order to make the time for high-stakes test preparation. The emphasis on high-stakes test scores also may have caused principals to endorse direct instructional techniques in some instances which included an endless amount of practice tests. The fear of negative consequences that arose from high-stakes testing that were emphasized by central office were now emphasized by principals, which greatly affected teaching and learning by deemphasizing teaching methods that fostered genuine student understanding. Student circumstances were also deemphasized. Teachers in low-income areas who have students with real barriers to learning such as poverty, crime-ridden neighborhoods, inadequate living situations, language barriers and special needs would now be required to teach with little support to address those barriers. This caused teachers to rely on “drill and kill” methods, and drove good teachers who entered the field to help students, out of the profession.

The increased emphasis on high-stakes test scores also greatly affected the instructional focus of the principal because of the conversion of the principal's contract to a performance-based contract which took place as a result of the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988. Previously, principals were a part of the teacher's union, and gained tenure just as teachers did. Under the performance-based contract, principals now were issued four year contracts. The principal's performance was mainly tied in to standardized test results. If a principal did not adequately raise test scores, their contract may not be renewed.

The fear of school closure also affected school leadership outcomes by using the power of fear as motivation for performance. Principals now constantly warned their staff that their schools could close if students did not perform well on their tests. Professional development opportunities for teachers would be related to increasing test scores. In many cases, principals would look the other way if teachers "helped" students while taking standardized tests. New ideas, collaborative teaching methods, project-based learning, real-life experiences for students, and differentiated learning were all deemphasized because of the fear of school closures.

The implementation of the AIO and the area office support personnel also affected school leadership outcomes. The AIO was the instructional leader for a cluster of schools in their area. To ensure that Board of Education mandates were being followed, area teams led by the AIO performed school walkthroughs at least twice per year. The walkthrough process was a very uncomfortable process for many teachers. Teachers felt that the process was designed to catch them doing something wrong. The

process involved a team of up to nine area team members who would walk into a teacher's room and record several aspects of the classroom including the objectives of the lesson, technology usage, the amount of student work displayed in the classroom, student engagement, student behavior and many other items. After conducting several walkthroughs within a school, the AIO would compile all recorded data and give it to the principal, with a deadline as to when corrections should take place. Failure to correct areas of need within the timeframe would result in sanctions imposed on the principal.

With the principal faced with sanctions for the improvement of teacher areas of need, in many cases, the principal would utilize the same method to motivate teachers to correct areas of need. If the teacher did not correct areas of need, then they faced sanctions. This created a model which encouraged the usage of the bureaucratic source of authority to motivate teacher performance. This also caused a great deal of resistance between teacher and area teams, as well as teacher and principal. It was "us" (the teacher) versus "them" (the area teams, school administration). The general feeling in most instances, was that the principal and the area teams were "out to get them." This caused teachers to be very defensive towards suggestions for improvement. Many teachers did not feel that supervisors wanted them to improve in their craft, but rather, supervisors only wanted to catch them doing something wrong so that they could dismiss them. This affected teacher creativity in the classroom, made teachers extremely afraid of making mistakes, and caused teachers stay within their comfort zones. The area teams that were intended to support instruction were seen as Board watchdogs by administrators and teachers.

The changing of the principal selection process ultimately gave principals power to allow teachers to gain the necessary experience to become eligible for consideration in regards to principal positions. In Illinois, a principal candidate must have a valid Type 75 certificate issued by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). In addition to this, CPS required that principals who are interested in becoming a principal were on the “principal’s list.” During Duncan’s tenure, he required that prospective principals complete a portfolio process prior to being considered for the list. As part of the requirements for the portfolio, prospective principals needed administrative experience documented in their portfolios. Some teachers found it difficult to gain the necessary experience if their principals did not give them the opportunity. In some instances, principals would not allow prospective principals to gain administrative experience for personal or political reasons. This greatly reduced the pool of eligible principal candidates.

In some instances, the pool of candidates was so small that LSCs would be deadlocked in making a decision. Vallas gained the authority to insert interim principals in those instances. Many times, area coaches were selected to serve as interim principals. This caused a greater amount of distrust between area teams and principals. Many area coaches were aspiring school administrators, but yet, as area coaches, they maintained of supervisory authority over school administrators. The changing of the principal selection process caused it to become highly political and directly affected the type of leaders that led CPS schools.

## Conclusions

This study examined the tenures of CEOs Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan to determine the skills, knowledge and dispositions required of the CPS CEO position, and examined the sources of authority utilized in decision-making for the CPS CEO model. Both CEOs primarily utilized the bureaucratic source of authority for decision-making as well as to motivate the employees of the district. Wong and Sunderman, who performed an analysis of the CPS system, argues that bureaucratic organization can facilitate effective management by creating an efficient means to perform financial and management related tasks, and gives top administration the ability to address the collective interests of the system as a whole. In this analysis of the CPS CEOs, bureaucratic decision-making contributed to the success of the district in regards to improving the way in which resources were allocated and the improvement of the financial health of the district. Wong and Sunderman also argue that the exclusive focus on bureaucratic aspects of administration causes a tendency to equate the size of the organization with efficiency.<sup>9</sup> This tendency could be the cause of the utilization of downsizing by both CEOs.

Wong and Sunderman also contend that bureaucratic organization is the proper structure in regards to the completion of financial and managerial functions that are required in order to run a school system as large as CPS. A system as large as CPS requires a system by which to monitor the activities of the various departments

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<sup>9</sup>Wong and Sunderman, 21.

throughout the district. An example of the lack of sufficient supervision was the Desegregation Commission that Paul Vallas downsized. The commission spent taxpayer dollars on expensive dinners, massages, and other extravagant items. Without a system to monitor those departments, Vallas found that the members of the commission spent funds without displaying fiscal responsibility. Utilizing the bureaucratic source of authority seemed appropriate for management and financially intensive tasks for the district.

However, when it came to teaching and learning, the bureaucratic source of authority utilized to motivate district employees was only somewhat effective. Ultimately, if district success was primarily judged by standardized test scores, then the decision-making models that were utilized was largely effective in increasing test scores. However, if district success was judged by high school readiness, ACT test scores, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary figures, then the district would not be considered very successful. Under the CEO model, student learning outcomes have improved, but the achievement gap has not been sufficiently closed.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the research and the findings of this study, other recommended areas of research were identified. One area for further research is to compare the CPS CEO model with the Chancellor model utilized in New York City since 2002. The New York City school system has been credited for making a dramatic turnaround, and has been hailed as a national model for big city urban school districts.

Another possibility for further research is to examine 90/90/90 schools (90 percent minority, 90 percent on free and reduced lunch, and 90 percent of students who are reading at or above grade level), and examine the leadership model through the lens of an interpretive framework such as Sergiovanni's *Five Sources of Authority*. Is there more of a tendency to utilize professional and moral as primary sources of authority in those systems?

Another possibility for further research is to conduct interviews of CPS principals during the tenures of Paul Vallas and Arne Duncan to analyze how the CEO model affected their decision-making practices on the school level. Did they utilize bureaucratic, psychological and technical-rational sources of authority primarily, or were they able to utilize professional and moral authority? If it was the latter, how did they do it?

A final recommended area for further research is to examine CEO Ron Huberman and the performance management model. How does the model affect student learning outcomes? How does the model affect the practices of teachers and administrators within CPS? What sources of authority were emphasized during his tenure? Does the emphasis of data collection and analysis help to improve student high school readiness and lower high school dropout percentages?

## **Epilogue: The Future of CPS**

### **Ron Huberman**

At his first board meeting in January of 2009, Ron Huberman, the new CPS CEO, was booed by a packed audience at his first board meeting. The audience called him an

educational novice and a political appointee of Mayor Daley. Huberman graduated from the University of Wisconsin, after which he entered the Chicago Police Academy and was quickly promoted to Assistant Deputy Superintendent, making him one of the youngest officers to reach that rank. While working as a Chicago Police Officer, Huberman obtained master's degrees in Business Administration and Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago.

In 2004, Mayor Daley appointed Huberman as Executive Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Communication. In 2005, Mayor Daley appointed Huberman to serve as his Chief of Staff. In that role, Huberman implemented a system of performance management which accentuated results and accountability. In 2007, Huberman was appointed as President of the Chicago Transit Authority before accepting the post of CPS CEO in 2009. In February of 2009, Michael Scott returned to serve another stint as Board President, after Rufus Williams resigned.

### **Performance Management**

Upon taking the post of CEO, Huberman told teachers and administrators on a number of occasions that he was not a professional educator, nor would he attempt to figure out how to become one. In meetings with administrators upon taking over as CEO, he explained that the overarching goal of the district is to aspire to be the best urban education system and to prepare Chicago's students to compete locally, nationally and globally in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Efficient and effective management of the organization is the cornerstone of creating an effective learning environment according to Huberman. The framework for effective school management begins with building an infrastructure to



support a performance-based educational system that is focused on developing and incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century world-class standards, he stated.

Before the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, Huberman explained the performance management process to all CPS administrators, and how he planned to implement it.<sup>10</sup> He explained that a culture of excellence is attainable at all levels when there is support for innovation, decision making is based on evidence, the organization is willing to face the brutal facts, there is a general belief that the organization could do better, and a process and the tools are in place to support those items. He believes that those principles can work in a variety of different organizational settings, including the Chicago Public Schools.

Huberman's goal is to employ a top to bottom performance management system that encompasses central office and schools. His "top down bottom up" framework places executives at the top of the chain, then officers, then principals, and finally teachers. Huberman, using principles from Jim Collins's book *Good to Great*, stated that the right people need to be on the bus, the wrong people need to be off, and the right people need to be in the right seat in order for the organization to move in the right direction. Though the performance management process, individuals in the organization are to focus on student achievement primarily, by utilizing real-time information to remain focused on outcomes, and efficiently use resources.

Huberman argues that although there is a plethora of data available, school leaders need organized data that is immediately usable. Huberman has implemented a

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<sup>10</sup>Ron Huberman, "The Future of CPS," Powerpoint, August 20, 2009.

color system to help organize data into problem performance, average performance, and excellent performance. To indicate the level of student performance, red indicates poor, yellow for average, and green for excellent. Performance goals are broken down by student achievement, high school readiness, school climate, and staff quality and development. Under each subcategory, there are several items that indicate how the school is performing, such as the percentage of students retained in grades 3, 6, and 8 for student achievement, the percentage of graduates enrolled in high school for high school readiness, the number of suspensions and expulsions per 100 students for school climate, and the percentages related to teacher attendance for staff quality and development. The goals for each school are to perform in the “green” for all subcategories.

In order to improve performance, school teams must meet regularly to review data. Upon reviewing data, teams are to address issues presented by the data, address previous action items, look at trends, remedy obstacles, and make decisions about future goals. Performance management meetings feature the executive staff on one side of a large table, the department who is reviewing relevant data to the left of the executive staff, the support departments to the right of the executive staff, and relevant data is displayed in front of everyone. On the area level (area district offices), the Chief Area Officers (CAO) are on one side, principals are to the left, support departments to the right, and data in front. On the school level, the principal is on one side, the grade level team is to the left, support departments (reading and math coaches, technology team) is to the right, the data is in the front. During the meetings, the executives present problematic data, and the review department answer questions related to the data. The review

department must be prepared to explain why poor performance is taking place.

Support departments can be called upon as well if a support service did not take place, or was ineffective. The goal is to make decisions about improving student achievement based on data. If a practice is deemed ineffective, it should end immediately.

To uncover the root of causes for poor performance, Huberman implemented a practice called “deep dive.” Deep dives, much like peeling layers of an onion, he explained, is designed to look deeply into an issue to find the root of poor performance. To accomplish this, missing information is to be identified by answering five “why” questions. Asking five “why” questions generally makes the respondent extremely uncomfortable, because it requires that the respondent thinks well beyond the surface regarding problem areas. It can seem as if the respondent is being singled out. However, in order to face the “brutal facts,” the deep dive is designed to ensure that the respondent is aware of all of the factors that are behind poor performance.

CEO Ron Huberman believes that school based performance management sessions will aid schools in using data to improve student outcomes. In order for schools to conduct school based performance management, resources needed to be provided for schools. Huberman noted that schools lag behind other industries in the use of technology, so to correct this, a school-by-school technology audit would be conducted and laptop carts as well as wireless technology would be allocated for all schools. Also, central office provided funding for extended day meeting time and area offices received data coaches and analysts to support schools.

### **Suicide of Board President Michael Scott**

In November of 2009, the body of Michael Scott was found with a single gunshot wound to the head along the North Branch of the Chicago River. The Cook County medical examiner ruled it a suicide and the Chicago Police Department reported that Scott died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Questions surfaced regarding how such a public man with no signs of depression would kill himself. Scott is survived by his wife and their two children.

### **Mayor Daley Announces That He Will Retire**

On Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Daley announced that he would not run for a seventh term. Many speculated why the popular mayor decided to call it quits. Daley stated:

Its time, everybody is replaceable in life, no one is here forever. I knew it was my time. I was not afraid of any election...I don't work on an election, I work on what to accomplish as an incumbent and I've done that for years. You know like anything else, it's time, it's personal, there wasn't one reason at all and it's hard for people to understand that and this was the best kept secret in Chicago.<sup>11</sup>

Daley's announcement sent a shock throughout the city of Chicago. CPS employees began to speculate about the future of CPS. A little over a month after his announcement, local newspapers reported that CEO Ron Huberman planned to step down as CPS CEO before the 2010-2011 school year is over. Huberman has since denied that he had such plans. One thing is for certain: the future of CPS is uncertain.

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<sup>11</sup>Stephanie Banchemo and Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, "Daley Stunner," *Chicago Tribune*, 2007.

### **Researcher Opinion on the Effectiveness of CPS CEO Model**

An argument regarding the CEO model and its ability to produce positive student outcomes would not be fair without discussing student barriers to success. An overwhelming majority of Chicago Public School students are born to families of a low socioeconomic status. These families lack some or all of the financial, social, environmental and educational supports that children in families of a high socioeconomic status have. Crnic and Lamberty discussed the impact of socioeconomic status on a child's readiness for school:

The segregating nature of social class, ethnicity, and race may well reduce the variety of enriching experiences thought to be prerequisite for creating readiness to learn among children. Social class, ethnicity, and race entail a set of 'contextual givens' that dictate neighborhood, housing, and access to resources that affect enrichment or deprivation as well as the acquisition of specific value systems.<sup>12</sup>

Parents may not have the ability to read or do simple math computations, which disallows them to help their children with their lessons. Some parents are considered “homeless,” which means that they may live in a shelter, or they may live with other family members. The living quarters for some of those children are not conducive for the completion of homework assignments. The living arrangements of homeless families often change, and with each change, the student is transferred to another school where he or she has to make new friends, meet new teachers, and make up for lost instructional time. Parents may also lack information about childhood immunizations and proper nutrition. Some students come to school after eating a bag of potato chips for breakfast.

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<sup>12</sup>Keith Crnic and Gontran Lamberty, “Reconsidering School Readiness: Conceptual and Applied Perspectives,” *Early Education and Development* 5, no. 2 (1994): 99-105.

CPS students of a low socioeconomic status may not have acquired the value systems that students of a higher socioeconomic status have. Kalenberg argues that students need middle class environments more than higher per capita spending. If this is true, then the improvement of schools is a social justice issue. In order for all students to experience middle class environments, the families would need to adopt middle class values. This proposition is a very complex one. Elements of the CEO model are necessary when managing urban schools if there is not an emphasis on achieving social justice. Social justice is not just a school issue, it is a societal issue. Without the additional supports necessary to properly address social justice issues, the CPS CEO has to effectively manage a large bureaucracy which serves a highly disadvantaged population with limited resources.

To improve teaching and learning outcomes, leadership should aspire to transition from the bureaucratic and psychological sources of authority to the professional and moral sources of authority. While the bureaucratic source of authority is effective in establishing hierarchy, rules and regulations, communicating mandates and outlining role expectations, it is ineffective in inspiring the kind of commitment that is necessary of teachers to counteract the barriers that exist for students of low socioeconomic status. With limited resources, the district cannot pay teachers for all the time that is spent working with students before and after hours. After 15 years of bureaucratic decision-making and the fear of school closure as a motivational tool, the data shows that CPS students are rarely successful after high school. Teachers and administrators, with the threat of losing their jobs, are still struggling to close the achievement gap.

The CEO model has brought about a sense of accountability that has not been experienced in the past in the CPS district. However, until social justice is achieved, CPS teachers will need to perform above and beyond the call of duty in order to help bridge the achievement gap. To inspire individuals to perform at that level, motivational techniques must advance past the “comply or face consequences” level. Sergiovanni argues that if we were to add professional and moral authority as primary sources of authority to the others, then what people follow, and why they are to follow it would change.<sup>13</sup> Based on the current CEO model, what teachers follow are bureaucratic mandates from central office and the area office. The answer to why they follow them is “because the CEO said so” (fear of losing job, school closure). If people are to be inspired to a level of deep commitment that is necessary for the production of positive student outcomes, then the “what” and the “why” needs to change. According to Sergiovanni, adding the professional and moral sources of authority means that people follow shared values and beliefs that define us as a community, and it is done because it is morally right to do so. In this instance, who is followed, changes from the CEO (management) to the individual members of the collective community.

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<sup>13</sup>Sergiovanni, 32.

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## VITA

LeViis Andres Haney was born in Chicago, Illinois on January 19, 1977, and was raised by his mother, Lark A. Haney. LeViis spent the first six years of his formal education in the Chicago Public Schools before being transferred to parochial schools through high school. He graduated from Northeastern Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in History in 2000. He completed a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration and Supervision in 2006, and earned his Type 75 certificate. LeViis was accepted in the Doctoral Program at Loyola University in 2007.

LeViis began his professional career as a substitute teacher in 2000, and taught middle school Language Arts and Social Studies. He then took on the post of High School Dean of Students, where he also functioned as summer school history teacher, head basketball coach, athletic director, and Avid Coordinator. In 2008, LeViis assumed the post of assistant principal at Spencer Technology Academy. He is currently serving in his third year in that capacity.

## **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

The Dissertation submitted by LeViis A. Haney has been read and approved by the following committee:

Janis Fine, Ph.D., Director  
Associate Professor, School of Education  
Loyola University Chicago

Marla Israel, Ed.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Education  
Loyola University Chicago

Shawn Jackson, Ph.D.  
Principal, Spencer Technology Academy  
Chicago Public Schools