
WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

*A SUMMARY OF
PARTICIPATIVE PLANNING WITH TWENTY-NINE
ELEMENTARY CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS (LSCs) AND
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEES (PPACs)*

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CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Planning Results	
	A. 1993 Practical Vision	3
	B. Present Strengths and Weaknesses	5
	C. Measurable Accomplishments	9
III.	Success Factors	11
IV.	Appendix	
	A. Chicago Public Schools Facilitated by ICA	13
	B. ICA Education History	14
	C. Letters from Educators Describing Their Experience with Participative Planning	15
	D. ICA Program Opportunities	17

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the Illinois State Legislature enacted the Chicago Public School Reform Act which mandated the creation of a Local School Council (LSC) and Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) for each of the 564 public schools. These structures were to empower the decentralization of Chicago's public school system, making it possible to have local school-based management. The LSC includes eleven elected members: six parents, two teachers, two community representatives and the principal. The PPAC is comprised of teachers only with no stated limit to size. The legislation was lobbied heavily by parents and agencies which championed the cause of local management of the public schools.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), a private, non-profit organization, has spent thirty years empowering individuals in their lifelong learning within communities and organizations. In 1989 in support of Chicago's school reform, the ICA began to research new directions for effectively supporting the reform. This was done in two ways. First the ICA operated on the premise that shifting the image of Chicago as the worst educational system in the nation to being among the best can be done by emphasizing success in education. Therefore twenty-five principals were interviewed in Rogers Park, Edgewater, Uptown, Lincoln Square and West Ridge neighborhoods. ICA documented what is working successfully in each of the schools interviewed. These successes will be shared in an upcoming "Spotlight on Success in Education" conference.

Second the ICA offered participatory planning methods to the reform efforts of schools for a minimum fee. ICA facilitated two days of planning with the Chicago Principals Association, after which some principals decided to use the participatory planning methods in their School Improvement Planning. As other schools heard and saw the results of the process, requests for planning facilitation came from throughout the city, demonstrating that these schools were open to broad participation, consensus making and an effective change process.

In 1990 the ICA worked with five hundred thirty-five people in twenty-nine elementary schools facilitating the development of their school improvement plans. School planning workshops were facilitated in nine of Chicago's eleven school districts. Most workshops were nine hours in length. They ranged in attendance from five to fifty-five participants, averaging twenty-five participants. Twelve programs included representatives of the LSC only, two were primarily the PPAC, and fifteen were the combined LSC and PPAC plus other volunteers. All the planning sessions were ethnically diverse although a few of the school student populations were almost entirely of one ethnic group. From these programs the ICA is encouraged by the energy, hard work, and positive action produced by the newly elected LSCs and PPACs.

The facilitation process employed depended on the results each school requested. Each workshop included individuals generating a brainstorm of ideas, small teams refining and prioritizing individual ideas, and the entire group listening to each team and creating a consensus on the overall areas of common agreement. The progression of the workshops was from three year practical visioning to a present analysis of strengths and weaknesses to measurable actions phased by semesters over three years. These programs generally produced a fifteen page planning document summarizing the workshop conclusions.

From twenty-nine school documents, the ICA analyzed the results of three workshops (see Section II: Planning Results). Section III: Success Factors is an interpretation of what these results may indicate for the whole school system. Twelve members of the ICA reviewed all the documents and compiled the basic summary that is contained in this report. For further information, contact Robert Shropshire or Karen Troxel at (312) 769-6363.

II. PLANNING RESULTS

A. 1993 Vision

The first step in the ICA's workshop facilitation is the creation of a shared three year vision of the school, addressing the questions, "What are your hopes and dreams for this school? What do you want to see in place by 1993?" Six major themes of the vision emerged from the twenty-nine schools from which the following was derived.

1. Building Parent and Child Partnerships In Education

Participants express the desire to see parents operating as full partners in their children's education. There is a consensus about the ***necessity for parents to assume primary responsibility for their child's performance and academic achievement and to be more closely linked to and active in their community and school.*** In order to monitor and support the educational effort, participants state the need for parents to know what skills and capacities students are expected to master and both immediate and long-term curriculum goals. It is repeatedly pointed out that increased two-way communication between home and school is key. It is seen as particularly critical for the teachers to have a regular, effective mechanism for discussing student progress and development with parents.

2. Involving the Community in the Education Enterprise

Planning groups envision schools operating in ***partnership with the broader community as a potential source of money, role models, expertise and program volunteers.*** At the same time the ***schools see themselves as a community education resource:*** as a node for continuing education for adults, providing homework help and tutoring for students, and a cultural center for staging community events and celebrations. Generally, the schools see improving communications with the community and improving the school image in the community as keys to strengthening the school and community partnership.

3. Offering Curriculum Which Prepares Students for the Future

Groups identify academic excellence as a major priority. There is a deeply held desire that the ***curriculum emphasize preparation of students to function in the 21st century:*** a world increasingly informational versus industrial, multi-cultural versus homogeneous, competitive on a global basis versus a national basis and demanding a greater capacity to learn and adapt. Many are concerned that the curriculum needs to have as its aim the ***development of the whole child*** while being responsive to students' individual needs through instructional methods and tools which promote active learning. There is a strong push that curriculum content move towards a ***greater multi-cultural appreciation, technological skills training and solid basic skills mastery.***

4 . Students Participating in Setting Performance and Achievement Standards

A key goal for students is a well-developed sense of self-worth based on academic achievement. There is an often repeated desire that ***students become actively involved in the learning process as partners in their own education*** rather than as passive recipients. One of the crucial aspects expressed in the vision is enabling the students to have a strong self-image which reflects a commitment to standards of excellence. In other words students will perform better if more rather than less is expected of them, especially when they participate in setting the standards and expectations. This includes developing high levels of self-confidence and becoming self-motivators, capable of sustained and quality effort due to mastered skills.

5. Ensuring a Learning Environment Which Promotes Educational Excellence

Safe, attractive, well-maintained, flexible and adaptable space is a major expectation. Multi-use rooms are frequently mentioned, especially in those schools that have seen their student population fluctuate in a major way. People desire an environment that fosters student and teacher self-esteem and school and community pride. ***A classroom ambience conducive to learning usually points to clean, well-lit rooms, carpeting, a cheerful color scheme and decor reflecting student learning and achievements.*** A redesigned time schedule that is student-centered, conducive to parent participation, and that allows for teacher interchange and more learning time for students and teachers is desired.

6. Developing Staff Competence

A team-oriented teaching and administrative approach is a major priority. Such an approach allows for staff input on critical administrative decisions and collegial reinforcement of commonly conceived performance standards for teachers. Increased support services are frequently mentioned (nurses, librarians, counselors, assessment and placement counselors, food service managers, etc.) to enhance curriculum goals. Ongoing training and development for all staff is a major feature of staff development, including training provided by corporations and volunteers. Flexible, innovative and individualized instructional methods need to be developed through regularly scheduled teacher interchange for idea-generation. More effective methods of conflict resolution and priority setting are also required.

B. Present Strengths and Weaknesses

The vision workshop is followed by an analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses in order to assess the current reality: "What are your school's current strengths that can be used as an advantage and what weaknesses do you need to address?" These are the primary questions in this step of the plan.

STRENGTHS

The strengths of the schools are seen, by the overwhelming majority of participants in this planning process, as the people: parents, students, teachers and staff.

1. Parent Commitment

Almost every school has a ***small core of active, involved, concerned parents*** who are engaged as volunteers, aides, PTA committee members and supporters of school programs. They are involved in all aspects of the school's life including classroom assistance, playground supervision, facility upkeep, fundraising and after-school program leadership. In most cases the number and intensity of parents involved are heaviest in the primary grades and tends to decrease in the intermediate and upper grades.

2. Student Learning Capacities

The students are seen as a strength primarily in their ***potential for learning***. It is very clear that the message that "every child can learn" is a general operating principle. Secondly the student body is recognized as a strength in its cultural, ethnic and social diversity. Though many schools express concern over their ability to honor and maintain ethnic and cultural identity, most schools see ethnic diversity as an asset rather than a liability because it serves as preparation for living and working in the real world. Less widely cited, but of great significance, is the recognition of specific student behavior or achievement, such as student attendance figures in the high nineties and the bulk of students attending class regularly.

3. Teacher and Staff Expertise

The teachers and support staff are seen as assets in their expertise and training. In most schools, the staff is perceived as ***well trained and experienced***. Another strong perception, though not nearly as widespread, is that the staff is ***committed, dedicated, hard working and innovative***. The principals are frequently described as strong, supportive, caring and professional. Some principals have built a functioning partnership with parents, community and teachers. In those cases it is obvious that they felt comfortable with the participative nature of the workshops and felt confident in providing input for the plan. In other cases it is clear that the partnerships are primarily with the teachers or primarily with parents and community. In a few cases the workshop itself helped initiate a partnership just beginning to take shape.

4. Curriculum Advantages

Most of the curriculum indicates ***equipment***, especially computers and curriculum software for computers, as a major strength. The next most often mentioned curriculum strength is the ***early childhood education and child-parent centers available in some schools***. Those that had ***special focused programs*** saw them as assets (Paideia or academy-status), as did those with particular programs like learning styles, bilingual classes and pilot programs in the fine arts and reading.

WEAKNESSES

In the analysis of the weaknesses one can see a mirror image of the strengths. At almost every school, at this point during the workshop someone would say, "This can't be right, we listed that as a strength." Often the same categories appear simultaneously as a strength and a weakness, a liability as well as an asset.

1. Limited Parent Involvement

Although every school has a small group of committed parents, the group is generally too small to respond effectively to many needs. While economic and domestic pressures do restrict parents in their participation, a closer look at the data reveals other factors that have an effect on building an educational partnership with parents. Often mentioned is poor and irregular communication between school and home. Many schools have newsletters and send home written notices, although they are often lost or unread. Parents and teachers report communication is mostly about problems with students or complaints about the treatment of children. Another factor is the timing and scheduling of events. It seems to parents to be more staff-centered than enabling of parent participation. Teachers complain that even long announced events held in the evening result in poor turnout of parents. Why is parent involvement so limited? Our analysis from the school plans indicates three fundamental causes.

- a. Many schools have ***no clear, consistent picture of what type of parent involvement is necessary and desirable***. Most teachers agree that homework help is one place where parent involvement is critical. Some say sex and drug abuse education is an area where parent involvement is necessary. Beyond that the picture becomes fragmented. Some teachers think the role of parents should be limited strictly to the home, while others see them as volunteers to help chaperone field trips and serve as classroom aides. Parents and teachers send and receive mixed signals about their roles in the education partnership and this tends to discourage and intimidate parents and frustrate teachers.
- b. Relations between parents and staff are often characterized by ***defensiveness and lack of trust***. The problem is that both groups have a tendency to operate out of broad generalizations about each other. Many staff tend to think of parents as uncaring, having little appreciation for the difficulties of education and having other things as higher priorities than their children's education. The image some parents have is that teachers are just "collecting a paycheck," have little appreciation for the economic, social and domestic pressures that the parents are under and have priorities that supersede the education of children. While these views may be accurate about a few particular parents and teachers, they are very inaccurate characterizations of the majority of parents and staff. They are, however, usual between groups who tend to have limited direct contact with each other and who come very often from different social, ethnic and generational sectors of society.
- c. A third root cause for limited parent participation is that ***some parents lack the confidence, experience and training to be of help to their children***. Parent involvement is heaviest in the primary grades and tends to drop off in the intermediate and upper grades. To be sure, there are many reasons for this phenomenon, but one obvious factor is that in the intermediate grades, students are dealing with operations and concepts that parents may have studied long ago (and now only dimly remember) or never mastered at all. Some parents commented during the workshop on how the experience of coming to the school was generally uncomfortable and sometimes intimidating. They didn't feel welcome or experience them-

selves as equal partners in the conversation. Most teachers don't see it as part of their job to help the parents gain these attributes. Many parents asked for more information on the curriculum so they could more effectively monitor their child's progress, while others called for training in the operations and concepts their children were learning so that they could provide homework help.

2. Inadequate Student Support System

Like the staff and parents, the students are considered both a prime asset as well as an area of major weakness. It is not that the students themselves are seen as a weakness, but that the school's ability to serve their individual needs is seen as weak.

A typical characterization of student behavior is a ***lack of discipline***. Examples given of this included: the high degree of oral aggression that escalates to physical violence happens between many students; high rates of absenteeism and tardiness; short attention spans; students who chronically come to school unprepared to learn and without books and other supplies, and students who don't do their homework.

Transient student populations make it difficult for the teacher to teach and students to learn. Some schools report a turnover rate that approaches 55% during the course of a year. When added to significant numbers of students who are bused out of their neighborhoods, it is difficult to achieve the stability necessary for learning to take place.

Unmet special needs form the third most discussed weakness. Schools often report poor placement decisions, poor identification of at-risk students and inadequate intervention strategies. There is also the need to upgrade and expand tutorial and counseling programs, especially after-school tutoring. Several schools mention difficulties in creating meaningful ways to celebrate and honor cultural and ethnic diversity.

Many schools have an emphasis on dealing with at-risk and below grade level students and see the need to expand ***options for gifted and at-grade level students***. Many of the programs aimed at enriching and expanding their education, such as math and reading pullout programs, have been dropped or scaled down due to budgetary decisions.

Finally, a number of schools report ***low student morale and motivation***. They comment that there is little peer approval or other incentives for achieving students, that many student chronic behavior problems are ineffectively dealt with by the staff and that "tracking" students (grouped by ability level) saps motivation and discourages students.

3. Isolation of Teachers and Administration

The primary deficit experienced by the staff is in the arena of time and scheduling. Teachers are isolated ***without adequate time to interchange and dialogue*** with other teachers, support staff, the principal, parents, students and community. This situation restricts the amount of planning, innovation, sharing of techniques, evaluation of teacher performance and communication with students and parents. The other element related to time focuses on the daily, semester and year schedule: the scheduling of IGAP and Iowa tests in the same month, unrealistic deadlines and goals from the central office and the shortness of the school day and school year. ***Unrealistic scheduling*** is often mentioned as greatly affecting staff stress.

A significant number of schools mention **low staff morale** which they attribute to negative attitudes, uneven or inconsistent enforcement of discipline policies, little or no teamwork between staff members and a lack of regular recognition and celebration of staff successes and accomplishments. Some schools cite inadequate numbers of support staff, especially placement or assessment counselors and aides, over-reliance on part-time support staff, lack of full time assistant principals and large concentrations of special needs students in the same classroom. Comments characterizing principals in particular include poor communication between principal and staff, absence of clear direction for the school, and unresolved conflicts and tensions between principal and some staff. While most schools list their LSC as a key asset, there are a number of comments voicing concern about the need for more training for LSC members especially in the areas of management and people skills.

4. Inadequate Learning Environment

Overcrowding tops the list as the most commonly discussed weakness related to the environment. A number of the schools are routinely required to hold classes in non-classroom spaces: auditorium balconies, stairwells and lunchrooms. Large numbers in the classroom, especially those with large percentages of students with special needs, tend to make it very difficult for a single teacher to give each student the kind of individualized attention so critical to academic progress. Most schools report concerns about **poor routine maintenance**, a **lack of cleanliness** and even in some cases **safety hazards** related to such problems as cracking pavements, flooding basements, and leaking roofs.

The community that is the setting for the schools is defined in these workshops as both the neighborhood that surrounds the school building and the social climate that surrounds students. By far the largest number of comments concern **gangs and drugs** and their debilitating effects on students' educational progress. Schools and the school system frequently have a **poor image in the community**. This is seen as blocking community participation in the life of the school. Most who commented in this area associated this poor image with inadequate communication of the successes and accomplishments that occur weekly and monthly while out-of-the-ordinary disasters receive media coverage as if they are the usual.

5. Fragmented Curriculum

While the numbers of comments made directly about the weaknesses in the curriculum are fewer, this area frequently caused more passionate comments than any other. These comments are usually characterized by words as stale, fragmented, and irrelevant. The basic weakness is that the curriculum has evolved into a "kitchen sink" of programs, units and modules that **lack a holistic education philosophy** as its basis. The curriculum needs to have a greater emphasis on mastery, more hands-on activities, more time on task, and a greater emphasis on involving the student as an active learner. Equipment, supplies, and materials to support the curriculum are generally perceived to be of poor quality and only minimal numbers for current needs. Computers top the list of crucial equipment needs, while textbooks lead the materials list with manipulative aids a close second.

C. Measurable Priorities to be Accomplished

After a group is clear on its vision and has done an analysis of its current situation, the planning turns to **actions** that are creative, effective, and catalytic. More than 5,000 actions were brainstormed and discussed in small teams. One thousand of these ideas were synthesized and related to common goals and objectives, full of creative and innovative possibilities. The workshop participants then projected 429 concrete actions that would move the school towards measurable accomplishments of their goals and objectives. These accomplishments had to be quantifiable, not so much in terms of numerical targets or percentages, but in the sense that at the end of three years a school would be able to say whether these accomplishments had been achieved, hence the term "measurable." It is not surprising that the following seven areas were projected as priorities for accomplishment.

Parent Involvement	Curriculum	Learning Environment	Staff Development	Community	Funding	Ethnic
37%	17%	17%	16%	4%	4%	2

1. Increasing Parent Involvement

Parent involvement represents 37% of the 429 projected actions by the schools for the next three years. The schools plan to initiate 128 of 160 actions in the first year. This represents a significant effort toward involving the parents more intensely in school programs. The specific programs fall into several broad categories. 1) Rescheduling events to hours more amenable to parent participation. 2) Enhancing parent teacher relationships through invitations to parents to observe in the classroom, "meet the staff" events and teacher in-service sessions on how to work with parents. 3) Developing parent training modules on topics like homework help and parent workshops on working with the schools. 4) Increasing the efficiency of school-home communications utilizing tactics like "telephone trees," "each one bring two" nights, bilingual newsletters, and parent-staff rap sessions. 5) Developing parent resource programs through the Read at Home-Study at Home Program and STEP program. 6) Creating parent recognition and incentive programs and 7) Planning cultural and ethnic socials focused on parents that honor and celebrate ethnic diversity.

2. Expanding the Curriculum Opportunities

Curriculum related activities accounted for 76 of 429 projected actions or 17%. The four main groups of suggested action are: 1) Basic skills form the foundation of all the schools emphasis on curriculum. Whole language approach, math and science enrichment, computer operations, and second language programs form the majority of these actions. 2) Life preparation activities such as Junior Achievement, field trips and speakers that are more closely linked to the curriculum. 3) Cultural awareness and appreciation activities. 4) After school enrichment activities such as the Great Books Series or "classics", reading groups, academic and interest clubs, expanded tutoring and summer school programs.

3. Upgrading the Learning Environment

Learning environment actions account for 73 of the 429 projected actions or about 17% of the total. These actions include four arenas of emphasis. The first centers on efforts for beautification and improving maintenance of the physical plant including planting trees and bulbs, clean-up, fix-up and paint-up tactics for classrooms, halls, and playground areas and roof repair. Second, upgrading the quality and increasing the amounts of supplies, materials, and equipment with more computers and computer software. In addition, many schools project forming text-book and supply committees, obtaining portable science labs, purchasing new playground equipment and furniture for the library. The third major stream of activities concerns space renovation, rehabilitation, and expansion including repaving parking lots, building new additions, and remodeling science, language arts and special education spaces. The fourth category concerns actions directed toward improving safety, discipline and morale. These actions are more concerned with the atmosphere that surrounds the learning process than the physical space as a critical ingredient in upgrading the learning environment. These actions include: developing school based student conduct codes, expanding counseling programs, revising time schedules, creating student handbooks, setting up peer mentoring programs and expanding security in and outside of the building.

4. Strengthening Staff Development

Activities related to staff development account for 70 of the 429 total actions or about 16%. A wide range of teacher in-services are planned including workshops on how to work with parents, innovative teaching techniques, new teacher orientation, computer literacy and classroom management seminars. There is a panorama of teacher recognition activities to improve morale. Many actions are aimed at increasing the number and effectiveness of support staff including counselors, aides, librarians and assessment/placement/intervention and remediation personnel.

5. Developing the School and Community Partnership

Developing a partnership between the community and the school is the focus of 21 or 4% of the projected activities for the next three years. Better public relations, improved information flow to the community, utilizing the school building for more community, cultural, and educational events and regular open houses characterize the projected efforts in this area.

6. Pursuing Fundraising Activities

Dramatically increased fundraising activities account for 4% of the projected actions. Most of the activities project utilizing the new partnerships developed: writing proposals to corporations and foundations, seeking "adoption" by a corporation and increasing support from community merchants.

7. Appreciating Ethnic Diversity

Two percent of the total actions are aimed at celebrating ethnic and cultural diversity. Many of these activities, including fairs, dinners, international days and curriculum modules, have as their intent educating the staff and students to the gifts of the various cultures represented in the school, removing stereotypes and discrimination and improving the student's self-image and morale.

III. SUCCESS FACTORS

Looking back on the programs facilitated, our overall impression is that the move towards school-based management has created an unprecedented opportunity for radical change in education. The question is whether school reform will be able to meet the needed changes. The negative publicity, the weariness of reformers, the complexity of the issues and the slow pace of change cause people to wonder how long it will take or whether the LSCs and PPACs have the capacity to move toward quality education.

The most encouraging element is that *the key players are in place* to make a difference. New partnerships are being created among the schools, community and businesses. Without exception people with whom we worked are committed to increasing the effectiveness of their schools. Participants express deep pride in their schools and an urgency to find solutions for the issues facing their school. This is dramatically demonstrated by the LSCs' and PPACs' willingness to schedule whatever amount of time is necessary to complete their responsibilities. They make many efforts to set meeting times to enable broadest participation. Clearly LSCs and PPACs should be lauded for their investment in the process of school reform this past year.

The following points are vital in order for school reform to succeed:

1. **School-based management requires not only an operational plan but needs to include continuous evaluation and refinement.** Little is being said about the necessity for evaluating what has been done, celebrating it and then refining the plan for the next quarter. This is essential for reform to become an ongoing reality. The human propensity to forget is a given; regular reviews keep people motivated and accelerate change.
2. **The successes achieved need to be broadly recognized in order to sustain further progress.** New ways to share knowledge of what is working must be created. While there is a degree of success in every school, negative publicity most often makes the news. A major effort needs to be made to provide events that allow people to share what is working effectively. One possibility for replicating success is district-wide workshops that highlight what is working effectively within the district. Success should be documented and made accessible to the general public. This public relations work is an excellent opportunity for parent volunteers to get involved in a key dimension of reform.

At the same time new definitions of success need to be developed. For example, in District 2 where ICA facilitated 12 schools, 84 languages are spoken by the students. It is a port of entry area for immigrants from around the world. Many students arrive with little or no school background. Many do not know English. Cultural differences often cause misunderstandings. In response, schools make heroic efforts to meet the diversity of needs arising from cultural differences, language barriers and the literacy gap. Many programs are provided to address these needs. Teachers can point to a year's development if the student actually is in school for a full year to benefit from the resources and programs available. How is student progress measured when that student is only in

school for six months? There are few ways to acknowledge achievements of such transient students and the teachers who work with them. This is an opportunity for foundations and corporations to fund practical research to develop such measures.

3. **Educational leadership needs to assume a new role:** administrators, teachers and LSC members need to become *facilitators of change*. Clearly the principal plays an instrumental role in shaping the learning environment and faces the shift from the authoritarian administrator to becoming the facilitator of decisions. Many principals are skilled at this so their councils are operating in a participatory decision-making mode; others are looking for direction on how to make such a process work. Teachers and LSC members who lead teams or committees also need to learn team building methods to release the creativity and response of the people they lead. Participative methods can be instrumental in making a radical difference in the effectiveness of a group.

4. **The partnership between the LSC and the PPAC needs to be focused on the curriculum.** The extensive learning research of the past decade has not yet affected teaching in many schools. Earmarking staff funding and time for ongoing interchange, curriculum research and training is essential to develop the most effective curriculum approaches.

The LSC and PPAC need to work closely together in partnership. The most productive planning ICA experienced with the schools occurred when both the LSC and PPAC created the plan together. In those sessions, participants appreciated the way a participative process allowed a larger perspective to be created that honored the variety of contributions and enabled wise choices to be made on priorities. In a couple of sessions it became apparent that distrust or animosity existed between the teachers and Local School Councils. When they worked together, however, the LSCs experienced the dedication and commitment of teachers. Teachers, in turn, said they were planning to share with the rest of the staff their respect for the role LSCs were beginning to play.

SUMMARY

The initiatives for reform have taken many shapes, are all long term and should be free to develop. The problems are complex. Trying to affix blame for the problems of education is a misuse of time and energy. Yes, there are a few poor administrators, some burned out teachers, uninvolved parents (but few can be found that don't care about their children's future) and a central administration in crisis. But none of these are THE problem. Nor is there one problem. Newspapers highlight the immediate and the sensational. What has been demonstrated in the past year is that the reform process has thousands of people actively in support of its purposes. What is needed now is everyone's ongoing effort to create a social atmosphere that is supportive, positive and willing to continue the investment of time, money and energy needed for change. There are few areas that so clearly and dramatically affect all of our lives in the next century more than our capacity to win the challenge of school reform!

APPENDIX A

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACILITATED BY ICA

Addams Elementary School LSC
Agassiz Elementary School LSC
Alcott Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Armstrong Elementary School LSC: Vision Workshop
Audubon Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Brenneman Elementary School LSC: Vision Workshop
Burley Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Carver Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Chappell Elementary School LSC
Darwin Elementary School LSC
Dixon Elementary School LSC
Douglass Middle School LSC and PPAC
Gary Elementary School LSC
Grissom Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Hawthorne Elementary School LSC
Healy Elementary School LSC and PPA
Higgins Community Academy LSC
Kilmer Elementary School LSC
Kohn Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Lincoln Elementary School LSC and PPAC
McPherson Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Mitchell Elementary School LSC
Murray Language Academy LSC & PPAC Roles Workshop
Parker Community Academy LSC
Sabin Elementary School Curriculum Committees
Scanlan Elementary School LSC & PPAC
Trumbull Elementary School LSC: Vision Workshop
Van Vlissingen Elementary School LSC and PPAC
Wacker Elementary School LSC and PPAC

APPENDIX B

ICA HISTORY IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Education has always been a priority of the ICA. Some of the ICA's educational innovations include:

In the 1960's -- the focus was on wholistic community development in which education programs were created from "womb-to-tomb": preschool, elementary, high school, adult and senior citizens programs in Chicago's neighborhood of Fifth City.

A teaching philosophy and method was developed in this period. **Imaginal Education** focused on the power of images to influence and change behavior. The Global Academy, an eight week training program, used Imaginal Education as the basis of its curriculum. More than 2,000 graduates from over 40 countries have been trained in this program.

The **Fifth City Preschool** opened on Chicago's West Side in 1965, also based on the Imaginal Education model. Involving parents and the community, it has been recognized as one of the ten top Headstart programs in the nation. This preschool has served as a model for many programs like it around the world.

In the 1970's -- the focus was on global expansion, demonstrating programs in twenty-four time zones around the world, resulting in education programs replicated in many nations.

Lifelong learning programs were initiated by ICA in villages and cities in 30 nations, e.g., preschools, literacy programs, wholistic health training, business education. A six-week **Human Development Training School (HDTs)** trained village leaders in the essentials of people-centered development at the community level. In the state of Maharashtra, India, leaders from 232 villages have participated in the Training School. This program has been held in Africa, Latin America, North America, Southeast Asia and India.

Training, Inc., a job training and placement program designed by the ICA, began in 1975 in partnership with the Greater Chicago YMCA and the Oakbrook Association of Commerce and Industry. This program is now also available in Boston, Indianapolis, Newark, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC and Guatemala City, Guatemala. Training Inc. was named one of the top ten training programs in the United States by the Department of Labor.

In the 1980's -- ICA decentralized and Chicago shifted its function as a global training center to become a regional training center offering programs in Chicago and the Midwest to private, public and educational institutions.

The ICA facilitated departmental Strategic Planning and Training Programs for the 250 teachers at **Chicago Vocational High School**.

ICA has provided **District-Wide Planning** in Bremen and Schaumburg, three Educational Service Centers, and education-business partnerships in 30 school districts in the state of Wisconsin.

And now the 1990's -- the ICA is working to create effective partnerships between the public, private and education sectors, offering its services as a serious partner in Chicago's School reform.

APPENDIX C

EDUCATORS DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH ICA FACILITATED PARTICIPATIVE PLANNING

On behalf of the Governing Board of the Chicago Principals Association I wish to thank you for leading us through an excellent Strategic Planning process. I never experienced planning sessions so well organized and so well handled. You and your staff members elicited the thoughts and opinions of 22 strong willed administrators. Their opinions were frequently very strongly felt and expressed and sometimes diametrically opposed. Somehow you involved everyone and developed consensus for a long range plan for the Association.

I can recommend the process and the ability of the Institute of Cultural Affairs to help organizations move ahead with clear and well formulated plans.

- *Bruce Berndt, President, Chicago Principals Association*

Thank you for the great help you gave the Alcott Local School Council in planning for the coming years. I think the number of people who attended the sessions is an indication of how valuable the meetings were. Through your efforts we were able to produce a School Improvement Plan using the input from all segments of our school community, and therefore, it is a plan of which everyone can feel proud and have a sense of ownership.

- *Seymour Rabens, Principal, Louisa May Alcott Elementary School, District 2*

The Carver Primary/Wheatley School Improvement Planning Team want to thank you for making our workshop meaningful. The two day workshop provided by you was invaluable. It provided the needed unity of purpose and camaraderie among faculty, staff, parents, and community. As a result, new motivation and commitment for making reform a success is evident.

We look forward to similar interaction with you at another time in the future.

- *Alma Jones, Principal, George W. Carver Primary School, District 10*

Thank you for the prompt receipt of the document, Chappell School Improvement Plan. It was really a "painless" way of producing such a document. You and your staff certainly knew how to let us relax and enjoy the experience and yet, at the same time, keep us on task all the way. What a talent!

We chose to use your Institute because of your fine reputation. It is well deserved. I know that I would certainly recommend to my colleagues that they hire your team for this project and others that may be further down the road. Thanks again for the superb job.

- *Marsha Santelli, Principal, Eliza Chappell Elementary School, District 2*

Although I was unable to attend the retreat with the Frederick Douglass Local School Council on March 17, 1990, I understand that your presentation was outstanding and very well received. On behalf of the Council and the entire staff at Frederick Douglass School, we thank you sincerely for your services and would like to solicit your services again in the future.

- *John Rogers, School Facilitator, Frederick A. Douglass Middle School, District 4*

Thank you and your staff for the excellent presentation that you conducted for our Local School Improvement Plan Workshop held March 30 through March 31, 1990. From the comments I have received it is evident that everyone profited from the experience. The participatory process was marvelous and highly structured.

I am certain that the Local School Council, faculty, parents and community must be as appreciative as I am. Again thanks for the job well done.

- Mary N. Hudson, Principal, Virgil Grissom Elementary School, District 10

On behalf of the Murray Local School Council members, I would like to thank you for facilitating the formation of our Local School Improvement Plan. Though we left Saturday's session completely exhausted, it was an exhaustion caused by hours of productive labor and overlaid with a feeling of accomplishment.

Each member of the Council expressed positive feelings about the two day process. Each felt that s/he had contributed valuable input into the formation of our School Improvement Plan and each feels committed to successfully implementing it. We are looking forward to presenting it to our community on April 18, 1990.

What strikes me as particular strengths of the process are the value placed on each person's ideas and the continual involvement of each person in every activity. You have a wonderful way of using everyone's ideas in a positive way, quickly building the group's self confidence to come up with creative and practical ideas to improve our school. You helped us clarify our ideas in a supportive, friendly, professional manner and moved us along whenever we seemed "bogged down." We are proud of our School Improvement Plan and feel that it addresses the unique needs of our school.

We look forward to an ongoing relationship with the Institute and look forward to our next workshop.

- Virginia L. Vaske, Principal, Murray Language Academy, District 6

I received the complete copy of the Mitchell School Improvement Plan. Thanks to you I was able to submit it to the Board on schedule.

We really enjoyed the procedures you developed that resulted in the publication of this important document. Your facilitation methods allowed every member of the team to contribute their ideas, fully understand the process of development and be proud of what they accomplished.

Thank you so much for all your help. I know we will be contacting you in the future.

- DD Rattner, Principal, Ellen Mitchell Elementary School, District 3

I am certainly happy to have had the opportunity to participate with your group as a member of the Executive Board of the Chicago Principal's Association. It was because of that involvement that I suggested to our Local School Council that we hire the ICA to assist us in completing the school improvement planning process. The thirty persons who participated gave the workshop rave reviews.

I have recommended your organization to a number of other school Principals and Local School Council members. They too have had favorable responses to their association with the ICA.

I look forward to future workshops.

- Jacqueline Carothers, Principal, Van Vlissingen Elementary School, District 10

APPENDIX D

ICA PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

The programs of the Institute of Cultural Affairs include strategic planning, problem solving, creative thinking skills, consensus-based decision-making and team building. The methods employed are highly participatory and honor the cultural traditions of those involved. They have been used extensively in self-help community development, organizational transformation and innovative educational ventures.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING: The strategic planning process ICA has designed for School Improvement Planning consists of four workshops. First, using a consensus method, participants discuss and design their **practical vision**: a realistic picture of their school and the services it needs to provide in the next three years. Then an analytical discussion by the participants focuses on the school's **current reality, its strengths and weaknesses**. In the third workshop the participants design the overall **goals and objectives** of the plan in light of the vision and current reality analysis. The last workshop consists of prioritizing the most creative, catalytic and effective **measurable actions** that are then phased over the four quarters of the first year.

ACTION PLANNING: As a follow-up to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) to insure its implementation, ICA does action planning workshops that phase the SIP into measurable accomplishments over the first year and create an implementation timeline for the first quarter. We strongly recommend quarterly follow-up sessions to celebrate the accomplishments and adjust the plan as needed.

TEAM BUILDING: To facilitate consensus building ICA does training in:

Problem Solving: This module provides a method for organizing diverse ideas into an integrated picture for building a group consensus. The problem solving skills taught enable a leader to weave everyone's wisdom into a model for team action.

Guided Discussion Method: This module provides a method that elicits a creative atmosphere for daily conversation encounters as well as topical discussions. The guided discussion method enables group decisions to happen in a conflict-free approach.

Presentation Skills: With the use of a process that allows focus and organizing thoughts for a talk, this module gives immediate practice in creating effective presentations with major holding images.

SPECIAL FOCUS WORKSHOPS: ICA designs workshops to meet your specific needs around such subjects as:

Conflict Resolution	Multi-Cultural Awareness
Curriculum Building	Needs Assessment
Fund-raising Plan	Parent Training
Imaginal Education	Reflective Listening
Leadership Styles	School Documentation
Meetings that Matter	Sharing Approaches that Work
Mission Statement Formation	Social Styles

*For further information
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