ANNENBERG
INSTITUTE
for **SCHOOL**
REFORM

Tools for Accountability Project

Using Data
for School
Improvement

Report on the Second Practitioners' Conference
for Annenberg Challenge Sites

Houston – May 1998

Prepared by
LORRAINE KEENEY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Susan C. Fisher
Director of Publications

Tricia J. McGough
Publications Coordinator

Contents

APPENDICES

SECTION 1

Introduction

IN ANNOUNCING HIS $500-million Challenge to the Nation, Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg stated that he intended the money to be concentrated where the problems of public schools were most serious; that is, in the country's large and medium-sized cities. In these schools, where close to a quarter of all America's children – including 35 percent of America's poor children and nearly half of America's children of color – are being educated, the problems are daunting. In the five years since the announcement, eighteen Challenge site grants have been awarded, all of them in districts serving the nation's urban and rural poor.

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF CHALLENGE SITES

The national office of the Annenberg Challenge, housed at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, supports the work in the Challenge sites in a number of ways. These include overseeing the research component of the Challenge, providing technical assistance, and publishing various accounts of what is happening in Challenge sites. But chief among its activities is to promote sharing and learning across Challenge sites.

As part of its effort to reach practitioners with information and support, the Annenberg Challenge national office sponsored a "practitioners' conference" in 1997 that brought together teachers, principals, and administrators from Challenge sites and approximately twenty national groups involved in the reform of math and science education. The success of this gathering led to the decision to invite practitioners from Challenge sites to come together annually around an issue of shared concern.

With so many of the schools in Challenge sites wrestling with how best to improve instruction, school-level accountability readily emerged as a compelling focus for a second annual conference. This focus on accountability fit well with one of the three areas of work at the Annenberg Institute: the Tools for Accountability project in the Institute's Accountability Strand gathers and disseminates strategies and practices that schools can use to reflect upon, measure, and communicate their change efforts.

Thus, the Annenberg Challenge national office and the Annenberg Institute began the planning for a second practitioners' conference for Challenge sites that would convene participants from schools interested in examining the issue of accountability in new and deeper ways. The conference took place in May 1998 in Houston, Texas.

RETHINKING ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE ANNENBERG INSTITUTE

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform encourages a view of accountability that goes far beyond simply testing students and reporting scores. Over the past year, the Institute's Accountability Strand staff has formulated a "Framework for Accountability." This framework underlay the design for the Houston conference.

A synopsis of the Institute's Framework for Accountability is given here; the full text appears in Appendix A.

A Framework for Accountability

Accountability focuses on what we expect all children to know and be able to do. The Institute believes that a good accountability system entails an on-going, comprehensive process that examines many factors and uses many alternative approaches.

A good accountability system helps answer questions about whether all students are learning at expected levels of achievement. Such a system helps determine what needs to be done if all or some students are not meeting these expectations. Such determinations require looking not only at test scores and other outcomes, but also at the resources allocated to schools and at the approaches to teaching and learning which those schools employ.

The Framework begins with high standards. This critical component of accountability offers direction to curriculum and instruction, provides benchmarks against which to measure student progress, and makes explicit the goal of reducing disparities in expectations among groups of students.

But experience and research show that high standards and rigorous assessment alone will not guarantee success for all students. The Institute therefore asserts that, in addition to setting standards and assessing performance, sound systems of accountability must accomplish three things:

1. Distribute responsibility for who is accountable, for what, and to whom.

2. Optimize the conditions and resources schools need to enable students to achieve high standards.

3. Promote the ongoing and reflective use of data to meet school and community expectations.

ACCOUNTABILITY BY WHOM, FOR WHAT, AND TO WHOM?

The notion of accountability, at its core, poses three questions:

1. Who is going to be accountable?
The Institute believes that everyone who has an interest in high-quality education for our children must share some responsibility for it. That "partnership" includes teachers, administrators, school boards, students, families, community members, the business community, state and federal policy makers and legislators, and others.

2. For what are they going to be accountable?
The Institute holds that stakeholders' responsibilities must be identified explicitly. Schools, together with these partners, are accountable for: establishing high standards; agreeing on what outcomes will look like; ensuring the capacity to meet the outcomes; and using the data from multiple assessments to improve student learning.

3. To whom will they be accountable?
The Institute contends that the partners are accountable to each other. Depending on the responsibility, each may be accountable to different partners: schools to parents, local businesses to districts, administrators to school boards, and so on.

Because these three questions are so fundamental, it is easy and tempting to skip over them. But the specific and local answers to these questions determine the direction an accountability system will take.

OPTIMAL CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

For all actors within the school community to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, certain conditions and resources need to exist. An effective accountability system grows out of and at the same time fosters:

- widespread belief that all children can succeed, and the commitment to make that happen;
- strong leadership in the school community;
- skills in instruction and professional collaboration;
- financial resources to ensure a sound education to all students;
- adequate time for problem solving and implementing creative solutions;

- school climate where skills, people, and ideas are acknowledged and valued;
- public engagement that enables schools to benefit from the input and experience of families and other community members.

CONTINUOUS, REFLECTIVE USE OF DATA

The continuous and reflective use of data undergirds the fundamental work of accountability. Schools with effective accountability systems examine their practices – with each other and with the broader community – routinely, explicitly, publicly, and collectively. The people who work inside such schools are committed to their own learning as well as that of their students. Guided by an ethic of continuous improvement, these schools seek out and use information to improve performance.

Such "accountability-minded schools" come to engage naturally in what we call the "Cycle of Inquiry," six interrelated and interactive steps:

- Establish desired outcomes.
- Define the question(s) and set criteria related to outcomes.
- Collect and organize data.
- Make meaning of the data.
- Take action.
- Assess and evaluate actions.

These six activities constitute an ongoing, nonlinear process that involves both reflection and action. Each activity is essential, none may be omitted. Once begun, the process becomes "recursive": any of the activities can be revisited at any point in the cycle. Equally important, the work of accountability is not finished after one completed cycle. The process is always being reactivated at the appropriate point in the cycle.

Resources for Accountability

The Tools for Accountability project collects, evaluates, and disseminates information about a wide variety of "tools" that help teachers, principals, families, school board members, school support networks, policy makers and others in schools, districts, and communities account for and improve teaching and learning. In its "toolbox" are such items as:

- sensible ways of analyzing standardized test scores to improve instruction and monitor quality;
- instructive guides that help teachers and parents to critically examine samples of student work;
- innovative ways to map vital community resources;
- practical activities that help parents better understand their children's progress in learning.

More information about the work of the Tools project is available at the "Tools for Accountability" web page at www.aisr.brown.edu/tools/. The site offers descriptions of a wide variety of tools; a featured "Accountability Tool"; a useful matrix for analyzing the value of a specific tool; a "reading room" with an annotated listing of articles, books, and tapes; a glossary of terms; descriptions of agencies assisting schools and doing research in accountability; and other useful resources. These pages are updated frequently.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

"Using Data for School Improvement" has been produced as part of the Institute's efforts to share information and experiences about how schools are using data to improve student performance. The next section describes the format of the Houston conference and some lessons learned by the organizers, which may prove useful to others interested in sponsoring or organizing similar activities. Section 3 presents a synthesis of some broad learnings that surfaced during the two-day colloquium. The fourth section describes the Challenge sites in which the participating schools are located and presents information provided by the schools about the issues of data collection and analysis that they brought to the colloquium.

A Colloquium on Using Data for School Improvement

I N MAY 1998, the Annenberg Challenge national office and the Annenberg Institute's Account-ability strand co-hosted "Using Data for School Improve-ment," a two-day colloquium for teams of practitioners from Challenge sites. In addition, the Institute's professional development group – its Building Capacity strand, which has extensive experi-ence in bringing together teachers to share and get feedback on their practice – provided assistance in designing and facilitating the conference.

The colloquium had four purposes:

- to develop a deeper understanding of the role of data in school improvement;
- to learn from and about promising practices for collecting, analyzing, and using data at the school level;
- to give participating practitioners feedback on their current data-gathering efforts; and
- to make available the promising practices and advice collected at the conference.

Twenty schools in nine Challenge sites were invit-ed to participate in the colloquium. (Two of the schools were unable to attend.) Invitees were identi-fied by local Challenge leaders as schools that were actively interested in generating, analyzing, and acting on data that address whole-school change and that focus on student performance. At the conference each of the eighteen participating schools made a visual and an oral presentation about its assessment activities and received feedback and suggestions about its future work.

THE COLLOQUIUM FORMAT

The colloquium began early on Friday, May 1, 1998, at the Warwick Hotel in Houston, Texas, and adjourned late in the afternoon of the next day. On Friday morning, eighteen schools set up a gallery of displays showing how they used data in their schools. Participants moved between displays, talking with one another about their work with data, about questions, dilemmas, and possible solutions. "Critical Friends,"

specialists in accountability added their perceptions. These specialists also gave two whole-group presenta-tions.

On Friday afternoon and all day Saturday, partici-pants met in small groups to focus on the work of each school in data collection and analysis. Over the day and a half, groups focused on presentations by individual schools and group problem-solving around questions of concern to the presenters.

The Gallery Walk

By 9:00 on Friday morning, principals, teachers, par-ents, and students from the eighteen schools had set up colorful displays that demonstrated how their school had been collecting and using data. Some schools had developed systematic ways of analyzing samples of student work and of using the information to inform their practice. Others had devised methods to track the progress of their graduates and to incor-porate that information into their planning.

✎ **Parkside Elementary School** in San Mateo, California, post-ed a timeline mural that began with their earliest formulat-ing questions:

- What can we do about the fact that our test scores are the lowest in the district?
- Who is not achieving?

The timeline showed a progression of test scores and stu-dent achievement information – and an ever-spiraling series of questions and answers.

✎ Houston's **Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School** showcased assessments of its literacy projects. Samples of *The Poe Literary Review* lay open to articles contributed by teachers, parents, and staff. Colorful student journals sat on the table; dried flowers and drawings had been carefully insert-ed between the pages of one journal. A chart described the school's literacy plan, including assessment data collected for each area of the curriculum – from teacher and parent observation sheets, reading records, standardized tests, portfolios, attendance records, and so forth.

✎ Teachers and students from **Edcouch-Elsa** and **La Villa** high schools just north of the Texas-Mexico border, stood near a display that brought their oral history curriculum and sense of place to life. They talked about the past in their rural

communities and told stories gleaned from interviews with local elders. Surrounded by photos of the towns (including a high school graduation in the 1950s), students described with pride how they teach the towns' histories to second graders. The schools had come to Houston to find additional ways to evaluate a program that has received high marks in anecdotal assessments.

Throughout the morning, school teams rotated between staffing their own display and touring those of the other schools. Also moving among the displays were four special colloquium participants, four "Critical Friends" who specialize in the area of accountabilty:

Kate Jamentz of the Western Assessment Collaborative and WestEd in California,

Paul LeMahieu of Delaware Education Research,

Olivia Lynch of the School for Academic and Athletic Excellence in New York City, and

Norman Newberg of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

These Critical Friends would later offer their reactions to the schools' efforts in evaluation.

Also attending the Colloquium were invited guests with an interest in school assessment from research organizations, from organizations offering support to schools, from colleges and universities, from Challenge site offices, and from the Annenberg Institute. (A complete list of participants appears in Appendix B.)

Moving from room to room and display to display, the 112 participants sought to understand the complexities of data presented by each team. They tried to tease out the similarities and differences among the schools, and they looked for pieces that would inform their own situations. The din kept rising as people asked the host schools more and more questions, questions about how they incorporated standardized test data, questions about Running Records and other assessment approaches. How did Manual Arts and North Hollywood in Los Angeles keep track of students who move a lot, and how did they evaluate students whose attendance was erratic? How should EdCouch-Elsa and La Villa high schools assess a program that was difficult to measure with standardized tests?

Small-Group Discussions

After lunch, participants divided into six groups of about eighteen participants. The work each school had been doing in data collection and analysis, portrayed in the Gallery Walk, now became the centerpiece of discussion in these small groups. Each group had teams from three schools, as well as a facilitator

and a recorder. Assign-ments had been made with geographical diversity and similarity of research questions in mind.

The four Critical Friends sat in on some school presentations and offered their reactions. Six or seven of the invited guests also sat in with each of the groups and contributed to the discussions.

RESPONSE TO THE GALLERY WALK
The participants first reacted to the Gallery presentations, responding to the following prompts:

What questions are schools asking?
What data are being collected, and how are the data being used?

This focus was to be the heart of their work together over the next day and a half.

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS AND FEEDBACK
After the Gallery discussion, the groups turned their attention to the specific assessment plans, data, and focusing questions of their three school teams. Presentations were structured, using a modified "Tuning Protocol" originally developed by the Coalition of Essential Schools to help teachers examine student work. (For an outline of the protocol used at the colloquium, see Appendix C.)

Each school was the focus of a separate, two-hour "tuning" session. Each team shared its school's assessment strategies and responded to questions about its approach to data collection, then listened to "warm" (supportive) and "cool" (critical) feedback. Finally, the team had an opportunity to reflect aloud on the group's comments, their own work, and the possible impact of the tuning on their activities.

Here, by way of example, is what happened when Roberto Clemente Middle School in Philadelphia had its accountability approach "tuned" by San Jose Middle School in Novato, California, and the North Hollywood (California) School Family.

Presentation by the School Team
The Tuning Protocol begins with a presentation by the school team, while the rest of the group listens and takes notes, holding their questions and comments until the team has completed its presentation.

The team described how, in 1994, Roberto Clemente had been at the bottom of the ranking of Philadelphia's forty-three middle schools. Eighty-three percent of the students could not read English at grade level. Ninety-five percent of the kids lived in poverty, many in single- or no-parent homes. There was a long history of negative school climate, low student achievement, low literacy rates, high suspension rates, high numbers of behavior problems, and high absenteeism. There was also a high staff turnover; more than a third of the teachers were new every year.

The school first decided to focus on why kids weren't coming to school, why they were getting suspended, and who was getting suspended. They decided to collect data and look at trends so they could make informed decisions about intervention programs. The main question became: How can the school deal with behavioral issues so that learning occurs and kids get what they need?

Second, they decided that it would be necessary to overcome the negative perceptions of the school held by the neighborhood, the school community itself, and the city. Issues of race and socio-economics kept coming up again and again. They decided they would look for patterns in the data around race, gender, and teachers.

An essential step would be to gather data so that students who needed additional support to improve their behavior could be identified early. In building the support structure for students, decisions had to be made about what type of support would come from the school staff. Staff would need to decide what classroom placements would be appropriate, how teachers should intervene and what kind of professional development would be helpful. It was clear that teachers would have to be part of the process and that they would need support rather than punishment for low-performing students.

Baseline data was now kept in Filemaker Pro software. Data could be sorted by individual teacher, type of offense, number of offenses, and types by student. The teacher-facilitator in charge of this program could disaggregate data immediately in a variety of ways to look at an individual student's suspension patterns as well as suspension trends in the school. It had proved very useful to have the person who continuously updated the database and trained teachers and facilitators to use the program also available to respond to their questions.

Learnings thus far were that students needed extensive supervision because they were not coming to school with knowledge of how to behave appropriately. The team reported: "Some teachers had not wanted to provide students with constant supervision, but with clear data, they realized that increased supervision had a direct impact on reducing behavioral infractions. Collecting data helped us make decisions based on knowledge, not on what we assumed was happening. We realized that the same kids were getting into trouble over and over again. Working with a target population of eighteen students, the school started a skills academy to work with these students on appropriate ways to express emotions, on values, and attitudes. In two months, we reduced inappropriate behavior incidents over 95 percent."

Questions and Feedback

The group has an opportunity to ask questions of the presenters to clarify their understanding of the presentation. The group then reviews materials and documents provided by the team about their work. After the review, the group members discuss the school's work among themselves, asking probing questions and offering feedback. The presenting team listens and takes notes but does not participate in the discussion.

The group commented on the impressive way data had been used to influence activities in the school. They encouraged the group to think about ways to make the data even more a part of the everyday culture so that teachers could have immediate access to the data for their own reflection.

They discussed what supports could be provided to help teachers analyze data and incorporate information into their classroom and instruction. They wondered whether it would be possible to look at best practices and why there were some classrooms that showed low incidences. Was there something that could be replicated in other classrooms?

Participants talked about the student perspective and parent voice and asked how both were being included in the process. The group considered the feasibility of tracking data over time and whether positive data could be reported publicly. They also wondered whether social skills could be embedded into the curriculum.

From the presentation, it was apparent that the school was becoming "data-driven." Their belief that data helps prove or disprove theories and assumptions about programs and students supported their commitment to use data to influence all parts of the program.

The Team Response

After listening to the conversation among the other members of the small group, the presenting team has an opportunity to reflect on the feedback they have received from the group.

The team thanked the group for their careful consideration of the program at Roberto Clemente. They reiterated several of the group's ideas that they felt were particularly helpful and brainstormed changes the school might make. For example, they might consider dropping the suspension room if data showed that it was ineffective. It might also be valuable to develop a network of computers throughout the school so that any teacher could immediately have data about suspension, plans, and other information.

Feedback from the Critical Friends

At the colloquium's conclusion, the four Critical Friends shared observations and perceptions drawn from the Gallery exhibits, small-group presentations, and even hallway conversations.

Addressing the reassembled colloquium on Saturday afternoon, they encouraged participants to be thoughtful about focusing questions, about using multiple sources of data, and about gaining multiple perspectives by involving students and community. They encouraged the schools to use "home-grown" sources of data developed by practitioners in schools and to seek support from others, including universities, school-partner organizations, and peers. Some of their specific comments are quoted in the themes or "lessons" delineated in Section 3.

LESSONS LEARNED

About the Colloquium Format

The colloquium format received high marks from all conference participants. The format encouraged and was successful in providing a forum for sharing of information and problem solving among schools and between school personnel and researchers in universities and school partner organizations. It helped foster closer relationships among a small group of schools, building an informal support network for those attending the colloquium.

This approach appears to hold promise for individual districts and larger organizations looking for ways to encourage serious consideration and effective uses of accountability measures in schools. And, because of the success of the conference format, the Institute hopes to host other such events to promote continued sharing and support of techniques, thoughts, and insights among Challenge sites.

About the Accountability Framework

Conversations among the participants repeatedly focused on the enormous amounts of data that schools are *required* to collect as well as the additional data they *want* to collect in response to their own questions. Having stepped back from the day-to-day pressures of their schools, and prompted by comments of the Critical Friends and inquiries from peers, participants became aware of their need to put their work with data into some perspective.

In retrospect, it would have been helpful for participants to have had the Institute staff describe the accountability framework it had developed, even though at that point it was in draft form (see Section 1). Making explicit the framework that the colloquium organizers had in mind would have provided a shared "perspective" through which participants could have viewed their own and each other's work.

The Institute's accountability framework was, however, significantly enriched by the deliberations and suggestions of the participants at the colloquium. It will continue to evolve as more is learned from practitioners and researchers.

Some Lessons about Using Data for School Improvement

THE WORK AND IDEAS presented at the colloquium – dozens of hours of dialogue captured in hundreds of pages of notes – have been distilled into five "lessons" on using data. Each lesson is illustrated by brief examples from displays in the Gallery Walk and presentations in the small groups. Fuller descriptions of the work by each school (description, data focus, and next steps) is presented in Section 4.

1. **Two elements are essential to an effective accountability effort:**
   - **a belief that principals, teachers, and community people can improve teaching and learning, and**
   - **effective use of data in support of that effort to improve.**

Effective accountability efforts are accomplished by people who believe that they can improve teaching and learning. Many of the schools at the colloquium clearly demonstrated a powerful belief that they could make a difference. This sense of efficacy was evident in Mary Russo's work at **Samuel Mason Elementary School** in Boston: in 1991 *The Boston Herald* cited Mason as "the least chosen elementary school in Boston." There were no parents involved in the school, reading scores were very low, and the paint was falling off the walls. Principal Russo and the Mason staff were determined to improve teaching and learning at the school. Today it is the most over-chosen school in the city and test scores are in the top quartile. Samuel Mason and other schools are resourceful in finding ways to change their schools into places where all students learn to high standards.

Such determined educators are resourceful in finding ways to change their schools into places where all students learn to high standards. Critical Friend **Olivia Lynch** remarked on this positive attitude and the will to make a difference among the participants at the colloquium, "Here I feel a sense of urgency and the belief that we can make a difference."

✎ In 1994, **Roberto Clemente Middle School** in Philadelphia ranked at the bottom of schools in the city. There was a long history of negative school climate, low student achievement, high suspension rates, low literacy rates, high numbers of behavior problems and high absenteeism. By 1998, Roberto Clemente was on the district honor role, surpassing its target goals by 228 percent. A conscious decision by the faculty to engage students in teaching and learning, says the school's principal, Pat Mazzuca, is one of the primary elements that changed the school.

✎ Ten years ago, **Parkside Elementary School**, in a suburb of San Francisco, was identified as a distinguished school. Test scores were good. Three years later, the school had plummeted to the lowest in the district. The drastic plunge was attributed to several factors, including staff turnover and diminished morale based on staff and parent conflicts. With hard work on the part of staff and help from outside facilitators and providers, test scores have taken an upswing.

Most of the schools represented at the colloquium use a variety of data sources to build a picture of their school and to support efforts to improve. At **Bayard Taylor Elementary School**, staff, parents, teachers and administrators look not only at SAT 9 scores, but also teacher-developed assessments including a writing rubric and Running Records. In addition to monitoring standardized test data from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Illinois Goal Assessment Program, **Arthur Dixon Elementary School** in Chicago also began to assess student portfolios, projects, and work samples. Because they realized that other factors also contribute to academic performance, they started to collect and organize data around attendance, attitude, effort, and parent involvement.

The belief that they can make a difference is bolstered by their effective use of data. The Critical Friends noted that schools making headway in use of data for improvement realized that data can be a powerful tool moving people toward meaningful action; data can convince others that they can make a difference. **Kate Jamentz** of Wested recommended:

Structure the use of data such that it builds a sense of efficacy. Teaching has, in a lot of ways, lost its

sense of efficacy, lost the sense that teachers can make a difference. If a teacher has a strong sense of efficacy, she knows that what she does in the classroom tomorrow affects what kids produce in class that day. If she doesn't like what they produce, then she can do something in another way and they'll produce something different.

We can use our look at data to build that sense of efficacy. How are we bringing data to the table so that it ends in action? We shouldn't sit around and ask questions of data that don't end with something like "Okay, what should we try tomorrow that might make a difference?"

Believing you can make a difference is indispensable considering the schools and communities where these Annenberg Challenge educators, community members, and students work and go to school. Many are in our biggest cities and poor rural areas where factors such as nutrition, safety, and economics influence achievement as much as, or more than, what happens in the classroom. Effective educators evidence a will to work with all children; they confront the inequities in opportunity that many of the students face and they work to make a difference, building their efforts on the effective use of data.

2. A clearly stated purpose and well-planned data collection and analysis are the cornerstones of an effective accountability effort.

School teams talked about stages of data collection and analysis that many schools seem to go through. Initally, many tended to collect huge volumes and varieties of data – standardized test scores, teacher-developed test scores, portfolios of student work, attendance data, discipline reports, survey information, library records, Running Records. They began collecting without first articulating a clear purpose and defining a plan. Such collection is often done in response to outside mandates or funding requirements.

Many participants at the colloquium seemed comfortable with this approach: "Spending many hours swimming around in the data allows the important issues and questions to float to the surface," one participant noted. These data – and the unanticipated results they sometimes reveal – can serve as a "wake-up call": the information in the data can be so startling that it leads to a review and change in the school. For example, some schools were brought up short by discipline data or attendance data, leading to changes in supervision policies, teaching social skills, or initiating contacts with parents to emphasize the importance of attendance.

While important answers and unanticipated ques-

tions do often grow out of looking at lots of data, participants and Critical Friends thought that more emphasis should be placed on having a purpose and developing a plan for data collection. In the Gallery Walk response, participants noted that the schools' focusing questions were not always apparent. It was not always clear why schools were gathering the data they were. And sometimes there seemed to be a complete disconnect between the questions that were being asked and the data that were being collected.

The importance of purpose has been cogently presented by the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) in its *inDepth* newsletter:

> BASRC asks schools to link data collection and reporting to key questions about the impact of their reform efforts on students' learning and experience of school. We believe that by formulating key questions about their goals, collecting data based on those questions, using the data to adjust their work, and then revising and refining the questions over time, schools can "close the loop" and make accountability not just an exercise but an important part of the improvement process. So in a practical sense . . . accountability means engaging in a cycle of inquiry that always leads back to the shared vision. Equally crucial, the cycle of inquiry needs to focus on students and learning, asking not only "Are students learning more?" but also asking "Which students are learning" – and "What are we going to do about the ones who are not?" (Summer 1998)

Having a purpose helps people narrow their focus and leads to greater involvement and commitment. When faculty, parents, community, and students hold a common purpose, teachers and principals say it is easier to buy into the process. Especially when data-collection approaches are time-consuming and intrusive in classrooms, teachers need to feel that they are going to produce specific information that will be helpful in teaching and learning.

✎ At Houston's **Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School**, a well-thought-out approach to literacy has been one key to better reading achievement. A chart from Poe describes the complex school plan for each area of the literacy curriculum: resident staff developers; literacy lab; writers workshop; guided reading and literature circles; and parents as partners. The chart describes the program, key activities, what one would see as evidence of the program and how Poe measures progress. Multiple sources of data evidence progress – standardized tests as well as attendance records, reading records, visitor observation sheets, student portfolios, teacher observations, logs of parent volunteer hours, and other items.

✎ As an Accelerated School, Boston's **Samuel Mason Elementary School** went through a process called "getting from here to there," which includes forging a vision and setting priorities.

Among the priorities that emerged was that teachers wanted to restructure the reading program. The school now collects student achievement data in reading (as well as math and technology) and conducts two types of action research, individual and team. Team action research involves all teachers, focuses on goals for instruction in core subjects (reading, writing, and math) and has three stages of measurement: base-line, mid-year and end of year. Two times a year results are reported to the school which allows for mid-course corrections and supports. Through team research, professional development needs are identified. The process creates a culture of accountability and helps provide a sense of efficacy.

✎ To assess the effectiveness of the school's cluster plan, **Concord High School** in the Bay Area is collecting data from students (see a sample survey in Appendix D-1) and from teachers and parents as well. They are examining discipline records, grades, standardized test data. They have developed a teacher survey. They are collecting comments on parents' night and at a community dialogue and an open dialogue between teachers and eighty students. They are hosting and collecting data from parent focus groups responding to the question, "What kind of data gives the best information on how kids are doing?"

Teachers and administrators are asking questions about their efforts: Have clusters fostered a sense of community in the school? Do students feel more connected academically, socially, and emotionally? If there is in fact a better sense of community, will more kids stay? Is the retention rate better in the freshman year now that we teach in clusters? To what extent are community-building activities within the school effecting change?

Purpose helps people refine questions and integrate multiple sources of data in search of answers to important concerns. Critical Friend **Norm Newberg** stressed the importance of using multiple sources of data, cautioning about the need to integrate data elements.

Our education system has tended to look at individual data elements, each in turn, in serial fashion. And school systems had to have an achievement event followed by two weeks of talking about achievement and then a drop-out event followed by two weeks of talking about drop-outs. And then the average daily attendance event, followed by two weeks of talking about average daily attendance. As though any one of those things makes any sense absent the others.

And there's very little integration of these data elements. And as a consequence, it is nearly impossible to have a truly sophisticated, a truly systemic discussion about what's happening, why, and what best can be done for it that's driven by data. Because that

would of course require integrating that information. It would require stopping our thinking about these data "elements" in this sort of episodic or serial fashion.

Developing a purpose helps ameliorate the sense of being overwhelmed. Participants noted how much time all the data collection and analysis took. "I realize that there is an overload of data," said one. "The question then becomes, how do we make sense of all this data?" Another remarked, "I learned a great deal about the importance of data collection and the importance of identifying what data are important to collect and will be helpful in reforming schools and what data are simply busy work which cannot be used to institute whole-school change."

3. Assessment tools should be carefully chosen, appropriate to the task at hand, and aligned with purpose.

A wide variety of "tools," or strategies for demonstrating success in teaching and learning is being developed and used by the schools that attended the colloquium. Some of these tools, such as standardized tests, are readily identifiable and common; others, such as teacher journals, may be common but are not usually thought of as tools. A third category is "home-grown" tools, developed by local schools to meet their own specific documentation needs. No one tool will work for all assessment needs. It is important to have, gather, and invent a variety of assessment tools for the assessment "toolbox."

Critical Friend **Norm Newberg** observed:

There is a tendency in districts to draw attention to standardized data and therefore marginalize inventive, creative locally developed assessments. We want to be able to put everything into computers but we're only going to learn *part of the story* through those traditional assessments. I've heard people tell stories and not think that was data. *Good stories richly told in detail, and with a sense of artistic concern, are data.* They will tell us a lot. I wouldn't discount those forms of data. If anything I would encourage them. The logs, the diaries, that you keep, those are important sources of data.

We should look at teachers' work with students as research. How teachers observe them, the conclusions they make based on their writing and other work is a gathering of data, we just never stopped to think of it in that way. How can we support schools and classrooms in beginning to gather that data? It can't be either/or. There is a real need to keep alive these home-grown forms of assessments. So I would recommend we get away from *either/or* and try *both/and*."

Traditional and homegrown "tools," and data defined not just as numbers but also stories, are included in the widened definition of tools and data for accountability. Critical Friend **Olivia Lynch** noted:

> Conclusions we make on a daily basis about students as learners based on the writing they did that day, based on an answer to a question, all of that is a gathering of data. We just never stop and think of it that way. That's absolutely a part of evaluation that we don't touch on a level we should.

✎ At rural **Edcouch-Elsa High School** in south Texas, strong relationships between students, teachers, and members of the community are being created through place-based research and learning. The program has been "measured" anecdotally by the teachers, who see its value firsthand. One commented that students have become active, involved readers because of their research for the project. "It is transformational," she says. Students and their teachers report that students feel empowered by being able to shape their own curriculum and teach younger kids. Teachers believe that most students are doing as well or better on the Texas state exams and feel that if they teach effectively across disciplines and build students' capacities, test scores will continue to go up.

The challenge for the school is to figure out a way to confirm the impressions that teachers, parents, students, and community have about both the academic and the affective components of the program. This may require thinking of data in new ways and educating the community to think about including measures in addition to standardized tests.

✎ **Park Manor Elementary School** in Chicago has created a "home-grown tool" to help track progress in reading: Teachers fill out an assessment sheet each time a student completes a step. Those sheets are put into a portfolio for each child. In addition, a display of student progress is posted on an "Assessment Wall" in the reading resource teachers' office. Each index card on the Wall has the name of a child, when they started attending the school, dates of support service, and when they passed each step. On the front of each card there is a room number, support service code, dates for each time the student moves a step and an indication of whether they transferred into the school. The Wall helps provide a whole-school perspective on student reading gains. (A description of the Wall appears in Appendix D-2.)

✎ **Culter Ridge Middle School** in Miami, Florida, believes that teachers, students, and parents need data – in addition to standardized tests – and that they need it quickly. The school has been working for a little over a year to remove the barriers to the timely gathering, analyzing, and reporting of data.

The school created a database for teachers that makes data available right away for the kids teachers have before them in class. The database can score tests and analyze the results; charts rank skills by number of student errors. The school is able to chart the error rate by skill across the school, by teacher, and by individual student. Students receive reports in homeroom, along with names of peer tutors and a list of resources on the topic. (A description of Cutler Ridge's computer-based data report appears in Appendix D-3).

This information is repackaged with reports to parents. Parents learn what their children can and can't do and receive support materials to help them at home. In addition, parents can log in to the school's home page to get their children's attendance record and grades. Parent Link enables parents to access messages through a phone system.

✎ Examining mobility and transition is a large part of the work being done at the **North Hollywood** and **Manual Arts School Families** at the Los Angeles Challenge site. They are trying to complete a student database within their "family" of schools and across Los Angeles so that students can be monitored throughout their school experience. While the schools have large attrition rates, the students generally stay in the Los Angeles area, often within the School Family. The literacy team – approximately fifteen elementary, middle school, and high school parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators – want to create a measurable, consistent, quantifiable way to track students and literacy levels throughout K–12. They are especially concerned with the transition of students from non–English- to English-speaking classrooms.

✎ At **Edwin Vare Middle School** in Philadelphia, the staff has created some home-grown approaches for measuring student progress. In the Gallery there were a variety of standard and alternative data presented: standardized test data; attendance records; school-created rubrics; oral histories; photographs; children's art work; digital portfolios; student exhibitions; surveys.

Vare staff has developed reading and math assessment strategies to meet both the local and federal requirements. Vare's reading assessment (an example appears in Appendix D-4) gauges a student's ability at three points – before (generating prior knowledge), during (questions, predictions), and after (retelling). Effective readers are aware of what they bring to the text, what the text brings to them, and what purposes and expectations are implied in a reading task.

The district is able to correlate the Title I math and reading assessments with district standards. They can demonstrate how students performed by class, by grade, and as a school. Vare does this assessment twice a year. Results are reported to teachers, clusters, and the district office and students get individualized feedback.

The Tools for Accountability project at the Annenberg Institute is one source for a variety of tools. Other groups, such as WestEd and CRESST, can provide direct technical support. (See Appendix E for a sampling of some of these organizations.)

Individual schools are also useful sources of assessment tools and are often willing to share them with colleagues, as did the conference participants.

4. Accountability efforts are very difficult for schools to accomplish on their own. Schools need to be creative in finding resources to help with planning, coordination, collection, interpretation, and reporting of data.

Resources to help with the accountability process come in many forms. Working with someone knowledgeable about accountability from the outset can save time and other valuable resources. Typically, such support has been provided by consultants from universities, state departments of education, or educational support groups. Critical Friend **Paul LeMahieu** observed:

> There needs to be recognition that the school is the unit of change and that teachers are the most important players. But the school being in the center of change shouldn't be translated to mean that the school should be responsible for doing it all.

Sometimes schools need someone from outside who can, because of their perspective, help schools frame the right questions, noted Critical Friend **Kate Jamentz**.

> There are some questions that are simply better than other questions. For example, questions that ask "Which" are better than those that ask "How many?" Asking which students are *not* meeting standards in reading is better than asking how many students are meeting standards. It is important to look at the types of questions we're asking because the nature of a question determines next steps in data collection and analysis.

Outside support is very helpful when schools are taking on new data-collection approaches. Organization and interpretation of data is another area in which schools have also sought outside expertise. One participant asked, "How do you organize and display data so that it facilitates analysis? We're quite good at collecting data, but the insight into what it means is sometimes limited by not being able to marshal the information to answer our questions. This issue has a technical component (graphics, computers) as well as an analytic one (how to best organize the information). Often this capacity doesn't reside within the school. What partnerships could be developed? How are these relationships maintained over time?"

✎ The staff at **Parkside Elementary School** near San Francisco were perplexed about systematizing data collection across all areas: they wanted data that would look at performance over time and at several levels – individual students, class-

es, and schoolwide. But how would they use that data to improve? For the past several years, the school has worked with the WestEd/Western Assessment Collaborative to develop a coordinated approach to evaluation. They got a WestEd grant and help from Kate Jamentz to systematize their data analysis and use and ultimately developed a plan with five strategies for alternative assessment.

✎ The Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago helped create a systematic method to evaluate students' development as young readers and writers for the **Park Manor Elementary School** in Chicago. David Kerbow, who worked with Chicago schools in creating the STEP Reading Assessment that Park Manor is using, says, "First we clarified for ourselves where we wanted to be, then we clarified for parents. We created early flags for students who were not making strong progress, so that we could provide additional supports early in the school year. We wanted meaningful information that could help teachers plan next instructional steps for all students." Kerbow also worked with the school's staff to develop a way to keep everyone informed about student progress.

✎ The School Change and Inquiry (SCI) Program, administered by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University is working with the **Chicago Vocational Career Academy** to create new assessment tools. SCI is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to help schools examine the quality of their teaching and learning. Since SCI is particularly interested in uses for technology, they are helping the Academy and twenty-four other schools in Chicago create a "Digital School Portfolio." (Information on this digital portfolio is available on line at www.edc.org/CCT/SCRP_II)

Kate Jamentz suggested that schools might also play the support role for one another. A participant described finding this support from peers at the Houston conference as part of the "tuning" process: "I learned that people can hear our story, understand what we're doing, and offer us insight as to how to do it better without it being considered 'critical.'" Another participant noted: "Data collection is fascinating and complicated. It intrigues me and I would like to do more with how I use it. It was very beneficial for me to hear about the situations the schools in Miami and Philadelphia are dealing with. I think there has to be more effort put into establishing working support groups locally so people can share ideas and avoid isolation."

As schools engage in the cycle of inquiry and look closely at student learning, those outside the school – in district offices of evaluation and assessment, in regional laboratories, in colleges and universities – have valuable support to offer schools. And as the colloquium illustrated, schools may also be able to serve as "critical friends" for one another in the evaluation process.

5. Effective accountability efforts recognize the need to engage the larger school community – district and school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community.

Increasingly, community members are becoming active school leaders, accepting more and more responsibility for effective teaching and learning at the school. Critical Friend **Paul LeMahieu** argued:

> There is a value in multiple perspectives, bring multiple voices and multiple perspectives to bear as a source of information and of meaningful questions. We need multiple examinations of an issue and in the interpretation of data. We need both internal and external viewpoints. Without the internal viewpoints you lack compassion, you lack the ability to really understand what those data are really saying to you. But without the external view you lack perspective. You lack the wherewithal to see important interpretations and questions that don't occur to people who are working too close to the situation.
>
> My point is not that either of those viewpoints should presuppose over the other, but that both of them should be brought to bear when we interpret information.

✎ **E. J. Scott Elementary School** in Houston is creating an environment where parents are comfortable. A handout from the school states: "A school alone cannot ensure a child's success. Parents and the entire community must support the work of the school to make sure that a child has every opportunity to succeed."

To promote parental and public involvement in education, Scott established a Project Reconnect Center, where parents can meet, get information about educational activities, and interact with teachers. The center has a parent educator who organizes and conducts activities, makes home visits and presentations, and works to get more parents involved.

The school is creating an environment where parents are comfortable. An article in *Education Week* notes, "Educators here say the commitment to parent involvement extends not only to students' academic needs, but their social requirements as well. 'Parents come to us with problems, and we try to find resources,' Principal Artice Hedgemond says. 'We find clothing, help parents register to vote, work to get abandoned homes knocked down if they are dangerous to kids, and pester the city government to cut weeds down in lots where they've grown too high.'"

✎ **Roosevelt Elementary School** in San Leandro, California, is concerned about providing convincing presentations of data to families and community audiences. Sixty-eight percent of students are at or above grade level in reading. Despite this overall success, many children of color are not reaching the same benchmarks as their white peers. There is a perception that institutionalized racism (conscious or unconscious) may be contributing to the discrepancy in achievement.

Realizing that measuring student learning in reading across ethnic groups is not a simple matter, the Roosevelt School began a coordinated effort, first by setting standards and assessing how they were doing. They set benchmark levels for reading fluency using Celebrations Press's Diagnostic Reading Assessment. Fluency and comprehension rubrics were developed. Class data collection on reading levels, fluency, and comprehension are now standardized for data analysis. Each teacher has input their class information on computer which allows the school to disaggregate data. Data also includes SAT 9 scores and district standardized tests. The school is keeping close tabs on scores and working to improve those of all children, especially those below grade level.

The school has also opened the school library to the community after school hours, staffed by the Key Club and PTA. Concerned that racism may be contributing to lower scores for children of color, the school is working to improve conversations between parents and the school.

One approach to involving community is the "accountability event." These events, as noted in BASRC's newsletter, *inDepth*, help schools to "engage in a dialogue with their community about the work of school reform, and to help build a role for community members in the ongoing cycle of inquiry. . . . By developing partnerships with parents, a reciprocal sense of accountability starts to take shape, with schools responsible to their communities and communities responsible to their schools." (Summer 1998)

✎ **Roosevelt Elementary School** hosted an accountability event that gave them the opportunity to hear the voices of parents, community members, students, school board members, and teachers regarding standards. The participants held affinity groups by race to discuss what parents think of school and what kinds of things they can do together to improve the school. "It was another step toward increased two-way communication," a member of the Roosevelt team noted. Teachers and parents now feel they need more training and support to deal with the concerns raised at the event.

Another important ingredient in successful accountability efforts is making on-going connections with parents about their children's progress.

✎ At **San Jose Middle School** in Novato, California, the parents' voice is also added to the evaluation package. Parents were invited to an evening meeting where students showed them portfolios of their work and explained what they had learned during an archeological dig. Results of 110 parent surveys from the event show that there was overwhelming agreement that parents valued this approach to learning about what was going on in the classroom. All agreed that the presentation was worth the time, the quality of information about the children's achievement was helpful, and the work samples identified areas of growth.

✎ When **Cabot School** principal Marge Sable met with parents over coffee one afternoon in 1989, the parents, especially those from the small Vermont town's business community, expressed concern that their children weren't being prepared adequately with job skills they would need for the future. The school responded by applying for a grant to restructure and was one of three schools that received funding for school improvement. That was the beginning of reforms that have been on-going. About a third of the community of 1,000 residents were involved in committees suggesting new ideas, revising goals, coming up with standards. Over the years further support has been supplied by New American Schools and Apple. Teachers have been active in redefining the curriculum to meet the Vermont standards. In 1997-98 the assessment focus was on mathematics and reading. Specific math skills are assessed each quarter in grades 4,5 and 6. Reading is evaluated in grades 1,2,3,7 and 9. Math and writing portfolios are also developed. The portfolios are locally scored. Science, math and language arts tests are scored by the state. Cabot held two meetings open to the public to discuss the results of the assessments and the school presents a school report card to everyone in the community every year.

Multiple voices and perspectives can help develop better schools for all children. Families and communities, teachers, district and school administrators, parents, all play a part in successful accountability efforts. Support for children's learning can only be ensured when the school and community work together. Some schools at the colloquium had hosted "accountability events" to help engage the public in discussion of student progress. Others had set up parent centers in the school, opened libraries in the evenings for parents and children, shared samples of student work in evening programs, and developed ways to report the work of the school to the community.

• • • • •

This colloquium on "Using Data for School Improvement" was a valuable opportunity for practitioners to learn about using data from one another and from critical friends. The schools represented many educators with a strong belief that they can improve student achievement and that data can support those efforts. Although participants began by talking about the importance of "messing around with data," they soon moved to the realization of the importance of having a well-organized plan for integrating various data elements. They noted the importance of carefully chosen data-collection tools, appropriate to the specific purpose. And they understand that using data to improve student achievement is not a solitary endeavor: districts and partner organizations have a vital role, as do parents and community members.

The Institute hopes that the insights these schools shared and developed will be valuable to others as they examine the role of data in their own school improvement efforts.

SECTION 4

Using Data in Challenge-Site Schools

EIGHTEEN SCHOOLS FROM eight Challenge sites attended the conference. This section presents descriptions of those eight sites along with information provided by the schools about their efforts to use data for school improvement (a brief description of the school and its programs, the focus of its data-collection and analysis efforts, and its intended next steps).

CHALLENGE SITES/SCHOOLS	FOCUS AREAS FOR DATA USE
Bay Area School Reform Challenge	
Concord High School Concord, CA	Surveys on effectiveness of personalization
Parkside Elementary School San Mateo, CA	K–3 literacy program: using data to help all students read by grade 3
Roosevelt Elementary School San Leandro, CA	Ways to use data with parents and community
San Jose Middle School Novato, CA	Scoring gains on multidisciplinary project-based learning
The Boston Challenge	
Samuel Mason Elementary School Roxbury, MA	Inquiry process that involves continual assessment throughout the year in several subjects
The Chicago Annenberg Challenge	
Arthur Dixon Elementary School Chicago, IL	Standardized test data, portfolios, internal tests
Chicago Vocational Career Academy Chicago, IL	Digital portfolio
Park Manor Elementary School Chicago, IL	K–2 primary literacy program, assessment is centerpiece
The Houston Challenge	
Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School Houston, TX	Early literacy model/critical inquiry as culture of school
E. J. Scott Elementary School Houston, TX	Community-in-school program and academic performance reviews

Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project

Manual Arts Family	Longitudinal database
North Hollywood Family	K–12 literacy standardized tests

The Philadelphia–Children Achieving Challenge

Bayard Taylor Elementary School Philadelphia, PA	Multi-age classrooms
Edwin H. Vare Middle School Philadelphia, PA	Assessing reading and math in grades 5–8 with pre- and post-test rubrics
Roberto Clemente Middle School Philadelphia, PA	Action research model using Filemaker Pro software

The South Florida Annenberg Challenge

Cutler Ridge Middle School Miami, FL	Software that gives teachers up-to-the-minute data on where students are in relation to standards

The Rural Challenge

Cabot School Cabot, VT	Community data, portfolios, follow-up studies and how they fit together
Edcouch-Elsa High School Edcouch, TX La Villa High School La Villa, TX	Assessing oral history projects

BAY AREA SCHOOL REFORM COLLABORATIVE

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) has two main objectives: to support and encourage a core group of eighty-seven schools and their districts to take a leadership role in whole-school reform; and to create a formal Learning Collaborative comprising 208 schools, fifty-seven districts, twenty-seven support providers, and two county offices of education.

In order to qualify for BASRC "leadership" funding, schools and their districts must become members of the Collaborative. Applicants submitted a portfolio that documents both a vision of reform consistent with BASRC's and the concrete steps already taken toward that vision.

Panels of peer reviewers evaluated admission portfolios using criteria developed collaboratively by teachers, administrators, and local school reformers. The Collaborative offers a unique structure – one in which schools, districts, county offices of education, universities, reform organizations, and other agencies identify together the crucial issues faced by a large number of schools. The Collaborative also provides significant resources to research these issues on behalf of the region as a whole. If in the process the Collaborative succeeds in creating a regional culture of in-depth, professional conversation and inquiry, learning communities will be institutionalized at all levels of the education system, ensuring that reform will endure beyond the five-year life of the Challenge grant.

BASRC is governed by a twenty-three-member board of trustees and administered by a staff of twenty-five. It is supported by $25 million from William R. Hewlett and the Hewlett Foundation, $25 million from the Annenberg Challenge, and an additional $50 million in matching funds.

Concord High School
Concord, California

Fifteen hundred students attend Concord High School in a middle-class suburban district northeast of San Francisco. About a third are at-risk students, most of whom attend a decade-old career academy which uses a five-teacher team. Concord, one of six alternative schools in an open enrollment district, had noticed a pattern of declining enrollment and low graduation rates among non-academy students.

Because of the success of the academy in retaining students for all four years, the school decided to create clusters schoolwide to replicate the factors that they assumed led to the success of the career academy model. There are now clusters in grades 9 and 10,

with three teachers and seventy-five students in each. Concord has moved in two years from being a school with declining enrollment to one with a waiting list of over 100 for next year's ninth-grade class. In two more years, the cluster model will have grown school-wide.

Data Focus: Teachers and administrators are asking questions and collecting data to test their assumption that a personalized education offered in strong, small learning communities (clusters) will improve the sense of community, encourage students to stay in school, and raise graduation rates. They are asking: Have clusters fostered a sense of community in the school? Do students feel more connected academically, socially and emotionally? If there is in fact a better sense of community, will more kids stay? Is the retention rate better in the Freshman year now that we teach in clusters? To what extent are community building activities within the school effecting change?

Data are being collected from students, parents, teachers. Student survey questions were put together by a team consisting of a teacher, the student-services coordinator and a researcher from the district. The student survey addresses three areas: cognitive, affective, and social. Through the survey, they hope to answer three questions about community: How do kids feel about the administration? How do kids feel about the high school? Do clusters foster a sense of community? (A sample survey appears in Appendix D-1.)

Other data are being collected through a teacher survey, parent comments on parent night, comments offered at a community dialogue, and an open dialogue between teachers and eighty students, as well as the more traditional discipline records, grades, and standardized test data. A parent focus group was asked to respond to the question, What kind of data gives the best information on how kids are doing?

Next Steps: Concord plans to convene meetings internally within clusters and across clusters to look at the data and plan next steps.

Parkside Elementary School
San Mateo, California

Parkside School, on the east side of San Mateo, operates on a single-track, year-round calendar. The current enrollment is 548 K–5 students. The student population is diverse: 63 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Pacific Islander, 5 percent Black, and 1 percent Native American. Students speak twenty-one languages other than English. There is an extended-day kindergarten program, as well as a restructured program for second-language learners.

Class size averages twenty-three for grades K–2 and twenty-five for grades 3–5.

Parkside also houses a Montessori alternative program from kindergarten through fifth grade. Parkside's staff comprises twenty-four teachers (several with over twenty years of experience and several with less than five), including five Montessori teachers, two special-day-class teachers, one resource-specialist teacher, and one full-time and one half-time Reading Recovery teacher. The staff is supported by three instructional aides in the special-education program, a PE assistant, library assistant, secretary, custodian, and clerical aide. Parkside works with the Western Assessment Collaborative to develop an effective approach to evaluation.

Data Focus: Ten years ago, Parkside's test scores were good, and it was identified as a distinguished school. Three years later, the school plummeted to the lowest in the district. School staff started asking what was happening and how they could restructure for improved learning.

Data suggesting that students in the Montessori program were doing better than the regular group led the faculty to look into to multi-age grouping, a developmental approach, individualized instruction, and choices. Now all classes are multi-aged. Standardized tests were not capturing the growth students were making, so the staff explored other instruments: portfolios, student-led conferences, alternative ways to assess writing.

One teacher recalls:

It was a powerful process to go through, to ask ourselves things like, "What is good writing?" and "What do we want kids to know?" Eventually we narrowed our focus to literacy. The test scores were climbing and still some kids were struggling. We wondered whether some elements of the program were having an impact. Staff had additional training. We looked at the Northwest Regional Lab's assessment of six writing traits and talked a lot about what 'good enough' is and what it looks like.

Determining and monitoring consequences, balancing the use of information for public accountability, and monitoring appropriate use of data were essential parts of the process.

One concern was systematizing data collection across all areas. They wanted to collect data that would look at performance over time and at several levels – individual students, classes, and schoolwide – but were unsure how they would use that data to improve. With a grant from WestEd and help from researcher Kate Jamentz, they worked to systematize analysis and use. In 1992, the staff produced a strate-gic plan with five strategies for alternative assessment. In 1996 they became part of a reform team, and in 1997, they held their first accountability dialogues.

Next Steps: Given the amount of rich data they are collecting, the staff are asking how they can systematize the analysis and use of this data to improve the quality of student performance, within the context of the school's continuous learning process. Are students learning to read and write at a rate that is developmentally appropriate as determined by established standards and benchmarks? What data will we collect to give us useful information about student progress? How often will we collect data? And how will we gather and organize schoolwide data in a systematic and standardized fashion? Is the time line for collecting data appropriate for instructional purposes? How will the analysis of data be used to inform instruction? And what new questions arise from our analysis? How can we use the data to identify successful strategies for teaching targeted groups of children?

Roosevelt Elementary School
San Leandro, California

Roosevelt is a K–5 school not far from San Francisco. About half of the students are white; the other large groups are Black, Hispanic, and Asian. Sixty-eight percent of students are at or above grade level in reading. Despite such success, children of color are not reaching the same benchmarks as their white peers. There is a perception that racism (conscious or unconscious) may be contributing to the discrepancy in achievement. The staff began asking how to address these questions: What strategies can Roosevelt School use to collect data on how race, ethnicity, and language impact teaching and learning (specifically in reading) at Roosevelt School? What kind of data presentations would be most convincing to family and community audiences?

Data Focus: Realizing that measuring student learning in reading across ethnic groups is not a simple matter, the Roosevelt School began a coordinated effort. They began by setting standards and assessing how they were doing. They set benchmark levels for reading fluency using Celebrations Press's Diagnostic Reading Assessment. Fluency and comprehension rubrics were developed. Class data collection on reading levels, fluency, and comprehension are now standardized for data analysis. Data also includes SAT 9 scores and district standardized tests. Each teacher has input their class information on computer which allows the school to disaggregate data by ethnic group.

Roosevelt has also hosted two accountability events. "These events gave us the opportunity to hear the voices of parents, community members, students, school board members, and teachers regarding standards. It was another step toward increased two-way communication," a member of the school faculty notes.

The school has also conducted racially and ethnically centered, parent-only focus groups, called affinity groups. Parents submitted suggestions to the administration; these and lists of commitments made by parents were documented in a report to all parents. The report also included a list of questions for parents to ask teachers. "The separate parent focus groups culminated in a joint parent-only focus group that was truly reflective of our population," the principal says.

After sharing the data collected at these meetings with the staff, the next step was to hold a teacher-only focus group around the central question, "In relation to your classroom, what do you want parents to know about you and what you do?" A list of things teachers wanted students' families to know about the school and classroom went home to the parents. Each grade level made a commitment to collect, analyze, and refine their grade-level data. During a half-day of release time, the grade levels met to collaboratively discuss the work, reflect, and implement the plan. "The time has really allowed us to reflect on our literacy work in fluency and comprehension," one teacher says.

The school has also developed a site-intervention team, which has come up with suggested interventions, resources, and a method of reviewing student's performance by looking at their work, making suggestions for possible solutions, and allocating school resources such as tutors."

Thirteen teachers and eight parents attended an eight-day seminar entitled, "Beyond Diversity: Deinstitutionalizing Racism" and started a parent/teacher discussion group whose focus is racism. The study group has shared autobiographies and read and discussed books and articles about people of diverse backgrounds. Plans are for the entire staff and some parents to attend training and for all of them to read and share these recommended books.

Next Steps: Although the school has come a long way in involving parents, the teachers and administrative staff have found what many conscientious people involved in school change note. "I feel that our staff is generally very supportive of more parent involvement when we're talking about more volunteers in the classroom, more field trip drivers, etc.," says Roosevelt's reform coordinator. "However, I'm not yet overly confident that their positive feelings extend to the

more substantive parental involvement issues like curriculum planning and definitions of standards. Additionally, I think some training has to take place which will give teachers skills in dealing with parents in general and, specifically, with a diverse parent population. We need to find external partners who can help with interpretation of data and can talk out issues."

The school plans to involve parents and students in the analysis of data and in defining what "quality comprehension" really is. Additionally, the school community recognized the need for discussion to reach consensus on roles for parents, teachers, community members, and district administration in decision-making situations.

San Jose Middle School
Novato, California

San Jose Middle School is a small and suburban school with 460 students and 20 staff. Most students consistently score in the upper 70th percentile on standardized tests. Autodesk, a computer software company, works with the schools and has provided technological tools for project-based learning.

Data Focus: Each grade level has developed goals, called "Learning Targets," for their students. The staff are developing rubrics for judging students' degrees of competence in various areas. Actively involved in the development of the rubrics, faculty are reflecting on the assessment data and asking questions about what the results mean for their teaching. For example, this year's reflection led them to the conclusion that some research skills need to be taught earlier, that pre- and post-tests need to be given by the same teacher, and that the research should be longitudinal. Examination of the data also led to new concerns; for example, What to do with a student whose assessment level goes down?

Each teacher completes a written assessment of each unit. Topics include: growth in student learning in relationship to the project rubrics, elements in the unit that best enhanced student learning and best met the needs of all students, suggestions for next year. Parents' voices are also added to the evaluation package.

Next Steps: The challenge for San Jose Middle is to refine what they are already doing, to reflect on what they want to get out of data collection, to think about audience and about the need to disaggregate by groups. Ultimately, the challenge is to think about what the data means for teaching practice. How can the collecting of data become more purposeful and be reported so that it is easy to read and understand?

THE BOSTON CHALLENGE

Boston's $10-million, two-for-one Challenge grant supports four programs associated with Superintendent Thomas W. Payzant's five-year reform plan, Focus on Children. Specifically, the Challenge supports the Center for Leadership Development, a professional development organization for teachers, administrators, and parents established jointly by the Boston Teachers Union and the City of Boston, as well as three groups of reforming schools: the Pilot Schools, a group of nine in-district charter schools freed from both teacher contract work rules and central office regulations; a cohort of 21st Century Schools, established in 1996 by the Boston Plan for Excellence (the city's public education fund); and a second cohort of schools selected in 1997 by Boston's Annenberg working group. All told, the three groups include sixty-two, or approximately half, of Boston's public schools.

The common goal of each of Boston's four Annenberg initiatives is for all students to meet the city's new (and more rigorous) learning standards. The critical step in this process requires schools to identify a single, schoolwide instructional focus, one that drives all decision making. Having this single focus – be it literacy, technology, or bilingual education – is designed to eliminate what Superintendent Payzant has dubbed "projectitis," the fragmented approach to reform by which one new program is heaped upon another in a piecemeal, incoherent fashion. The emphasis on focus – on setting and achieving teaching and learning goals, on meeting new standards, and above all on addressing children's needs – is everywhere in Boston, from its permeation of the district's mission statement, list of goals, and other public literature to the names of both the 21st Century Schools' newsletter ("Focus") and the superintendent's reform package itself.

The Boston Annenberg Challenge has institutionalized this notion of focus in an another way, by organizing a Fund for Nonprofits, a new collaborative effort of local foundations to pool their resources for schools to create a single source of additional funding. Rather than schools tailoring grant applications to fit a variety of funders' agendas, under the Fund for Nonprofits, schools and nonprofits apply jointly for grants that further a school's teaching and learning goals. Since any school in the city of Boston (not just those currently involved in an Annenberg program) may apply with a nonprofit partner, the Challenge hopes in this small way to spread its whole-school change efforts to the remaining half of the district.

The Boston Annenberg Challenge is governed by a twenty-three–member governing board and administered by a staff of three.

Samuel Mason Elementary School
Boston, Massachusetts

Samuel Mason is a K–5 school located in the Roxbury section of Boston. Over 90 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch. About a quarter speak no English at home. There is a substantial Cape Verdean community represented at the school; 55 percent are African American, 15 percent Asian American, and 30 percent are white. Class size ranges from sixteen to twenty-two students.

In 1991, *The Boston Herald* cited Mason as "the least chosen elementary school" after the first round of the controlled-choice student assignment plan. Only 130 students attended Mason, less than half the suggested enrollment. Most came from the surrounding community and the nearby Orchard Park Housing Project, known for its high crime rate.

Jonna Sullivan-Casey of ERRN Action Research wrote in a report on the school:

> Light bulbs hung from the ceiling by wires, and floors looked as if they had not been swept in years. The building was in disrepair and it was difficult to imagine the color of the paint that once covered the walls. Reading scores were in the bottom 25 percent. Attendance was down and parent involvement was nonexistent. The writing was on the wall. No one imagined that the Mason School could be saved.

But in 1991, Mary Russo became principal at Mason and, together with the staff, began to turn things around. In 1992, the school decided to adopt the Accelerated School model. As an Accelerated School, they went through a process called "getting from here to there," which asks the school to take stock, forge a vision, set priorities, and create a governance structure.

Earlier that year, the Massachusetts Department of Education had issued a Request for Proposals to create pilot schools that would undertake one of several nationally recognized school reform approaches. Mason applied and was accepted.

Data Focus: During the Taking Stock procedure, the faculty noted:

Test Scores	Test scores were in the bottom 25 percent of all Boston public schools.
School-Choice Statistics	Mason was least chosen (79 out of 79 in 1991).

Suspension Rates	The rate was in double-digit numbers.
Referrals for Special Education	Students were referred to other programs that could better meet their needs.
Retention	In 1991, nine children were recommended to spend another year in Grade One. Overall, one in three students was recommended for retention.

The school has collected student-achievement data in reading, math, and technology and conducts two types of action research, individual and team. Team action research involves all teachers, focuses on goals for instruction in core subjects (reading, writing, and math) and has three stages of measurement: base-line, mid-year, and end of year. Results are reported to the school twice a year, which allows for mid-course corrections. Through team research, professional development needs are identified. The process has helped create a "culture of accountability."

Three years ago the school began to focus on literacy development; there is a feeling that only limited progress is being made. The school is working with Wheelock College professors on the project. As a result of the research, several assessments have been implemented: Reading Recovery (through Lesley College), text-reading evaluation, Running Record, and Writing Record. Teachers and paraprofessionals have been paired in several classes. More students are being mainstreamed, and Family Literacy workshops have been offered.

Data is being collected, but limited types of assessment measures have been used. The school is using an in-school coach who works part-time to support faculty in their reform efforts. "Today, Mason is the most over-chosen school in the city," reports Sullivan-Casey. "Children test in the top quartile. Waiting lists are extensive at each grade level."

After two years:

Teachers are using assessment as objective data and analyzing data for qualitative information on student progress.

Teachers have a deeper understanding of the reading process.

Students below grade level are targeted for extra resources and monitored more closely.

Resources have been re-examined and reallocated according to need.

Coaching conversations utilize assessments to improve instruction.

Assessment instruments are used daily, quarterly, and semi-annually.

Next Steps: The school wants to further explore how to move from simply collecting and analyzing data to having it influence teaching.

THE CHICAGO ANNENBERG CHALLENGE

Growing out of Chicago's long tradition of strong, vital neighborhoods, the Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) features schools and community groups working together to improve teaching and learning for all students. The $49.2-million, two-for-one Annenberg matching grant funds networks of three or more schools and an external partner (a community group, nonprofit organization, cultural institution, or university) collaborating to address three key obstacles to reform: size, time, and isolation. In practice, this includes creating small learning communities where all students are well known, providing more opportunities for teachers' planning and professional development, making the most effective use of teaching time, and forging close relationships with the community. To date, CAC has awarded over $21 million to 250 schools in sixty-one networks.

In Chicago, the strategy for improving schools rests on the belief that small, intimate learning communities best promote the academic, social, and psychological development of all students. In small settings with low adult-to-student ratios, teachers know their students – their strengths, weaknesses, interests, learning styles – and use that knowledge to shape their instruction. Since small learning communities also allow for more flexible allocations of time; they enable teachers to plan, train, reflect, and then work collaboratively to improve teaching practices.

Breaking down the isolation of schools by including the community is another element of the CAC strategy. Grouping schools together in networks with an external partner is a way of connecting schools to each other and to their larger communities, and it encourages the sharing and dissemination of outside resources and support. Ideally, schools become actors in community life, and the culture of parents and neighborhood residents remains essential to the education of young people.

The Chicago Annenberg Challenge is governed by a ten-member board of directors and advised by the democratically elected Chicago School Reform Collaborative. CAC is administered by a staff of nine.

Arthur Dixon Elementary School
Chicago, Illinois

Arthur Dixon is a magnet school. All students are African American; 63 percent receive free lunch. The school is in a neighborhood that is "graying": the number of elementary-age children is low. This low number has created vacancies in the school, allowing it to accommodate students from outside the neighborhood. About half of the student body is bussed. The attendance rate is good – 96 percent a day. Average class size is thirty to thirty-five students in grades K through 8.

Data Focus: The process of school improvement at Arthur Dixon has taken place over eight or nine years and focuses on:

What do we want kids to know?

Is the curriculum aligned with what we want kids to know?

What do standardized tests expect students to know and do?

Included in the strategy is scheduling teachers so that they have common free time by grade and course-concentration area.

Standardized test data is monitored by grade level for all students over time. The standardized-test-score monitoring is complemented by portfolios, projects, and student work samples. In addition, the school asked the question, What contributes to student academic performance outside of teaching? and concluded: attendance, attitude, effort, and parental involvement.

Next Steps: The school has implemented new programs and is making constant progress as measured against the state's reading standards. In two new programs, education majors from Chicago State work with individual or small groups of students on reading skills, and teachers hold after-school sessions in reading and math four days a week. The school continues to ask: How can we enhance our students' interest in reading and further improve their performance on standardized tests? (If 15 percent or more of any Chicago school's students are not meeting the national norm, then the school will be placed on probation or remediation. A student not on grade level at the conclusion of the year will have to take summer school. After summer school, if the student is "not doing well," the student will be retained.)

Chicago Vocational Career Academy
Chicago, Illinois

Chicago Vocational has 2,500 students; nearly all are African American. Of the 185 staff members, about half are white. Seventy-one percent of graduates go on to further education; a third go directly into jobs.

Nine years ago the school was broken up into small learning communities (called academies) taught by interdisciplinary teams of teachers. The Junior Academy is composed of freshmen and sophomores; each team has eighty to ninety students who remain together for two years. Two core subjects are taught per semester. Freshmen have 100-minute classes and a thirty-minute advisory each day. Each year students create a portfolio and individual education plan. In addition, the staff has developed rubrics and keeps learning logs.

The Senior Academy is divided into nine career clusters focused around vocation areas. Learning is project-based. Final exhibitions are required to graduate. Each cluster has an advisory board, including students who sit on a schoolwide senate.

Data Focus: The Chicago Vocational Career Academy is partnered with the School Change and Inquiry Program at New York University. Through the program, they have a digital-portfolio software program. They are in the process of collecting the data to fit the software, which has key question areas that are filled in by the school. Responding to the questions asked by the software program is very time consuming; everyone is involved in the process of data collection and input. The audience for the digital portfolio is the school, stakeholders, parents, external partners, school quality review teams, and the district.

Next Steps: The school is examining whether the guiding questions of the software program fit the school's particular accountability needs. It is also considering whether it is using the appropriate data-collection methods to determine the effectiveness of its programs.

Park Manor Elementary School
Chicago, Illinois

Park Manor's 700 pre-K through eighth-grade students are all African American. Parents are active in the school, volunteering in classrooms and serving as hall monitors.

Data Focus: The school's Primary Literacy Assessment is a systematic method to evaluate reading. The assessment program provides information that supports decisions about instruction. As described in the narrative overview of the Primary Literacy Assessment, "teachers gain insight into students' approach to reading, how they process words and texts, and how the class might be organized to support all students' learning. Because it is woven into the

classroom, assessment becomes an integrated part of the literacy framework, rather than a separate component that is external to instruction."

There are specific instructional strategies and sample lesson plans for each step. David Kerbow of the University of Chicago says, "We [researchers, teachers, and parents] met to talk about assessment to develop a common language and tools to communicate with each other. We came up with developmental steps – clear descriptions of what the students can do at each step. We started a literacy initiative and did a lot of shared reading."

For each step there is an assessment sheet; those sheets become a portfolio for each child. In addition, a display of student progress on an "Assessment Wall" (see Appendix D-2) provides a whole-school perspective on student reading gains. Index cards with student name, transfer date, and codes that indicate levels of advancement enable people to see at a glance how a class or grade is doing.

"We wanted something simple to administer and score," Kerbow notes. "We chose Reading Recovery books because we knew how students [in other schools] performed on them; we had a research base. Eventually we'd like to substitute other books."

Next Steps: How can we continue to assess student reading in systematic, simple ways that provide information to influence practice?

THE HOUSTON CHALLENGE

Supported by a $20-million, two-for-one matching grant, the Houston Annenberg Challenge works with the six school districts that have a majority of their students living within the Houston city limits, a student population totaling nearly 400,000. Its mission is to promote an academically rich and purposeful education for increasing numbers of students and to demonstrate that such an education is possible for all the city's youth. Reform efforts focus on improving three fundamental areas: student learning (by personalizing the learning environment), teacher learning (through professional development and training), and community involvement (by partnering schools with local businesses and/or community-based organizations).

Through a competitive request-for-proposal process, the Houston Challenge funds four types of grants to two categories of schools. Beacon schools, with proven track records of improving student achievement, making positive changes to school culture, connecting to their community, and acting as

mentors to other educators, are eligible for development grants of between $100,000 to $200,000 a year. Copernican schools, those making their way toward Beacon school status, are teamed with a mentor school and two community-based organizations as they move through a process of exploration, planning, and implementation grants. During the first funding cycle, grants totaling $1.4 million were awarded to eleven Beacon schools.

In addition to grants, the Houston Annenberg Challenge provides programmatic assistance in areas such as planning, budgeting, staff development, and evaluation and will serve as a resource for disseminating information on school reform activities to educators, policy makers, and the public throughout the Houston area. Plans also call for the establishment of the Houston Annenberg Affiliates (a membership organization for schools), a twenty-member Community Council to serve as a communications link and advisory body, and a program to link schools and universities.

The Houston Annenberg Challenge is governed by a ten-member board of trustees and supported by a six-member team of professionals.

Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School
Houston, Texas

Edgar Allan Poe is an inner-city arts-and-science magnet with 715 students. There are enrichment programs in art, dance, music, Suzuki Strings, physical education, Spanish, computer, and science. A third of the students are Hispanic, a quarter African American, and the rest white; about half of the students are on free or reduced lunch. The attendance rate is 97.6 percent. Scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) are all above the 97th percentile and the SAT 9 scores are one to three years above grade level. The school has received an array of awards and grants including Outstanding Recognition for the parent volunteers program and the "Mentors with a Mission" program.

Data Focus: Literacy has been a special focus at the school for several years. The principal reduced the number of aides in order to create part-time positions for resident staff developers. The school developed a literacy lab, writer's workshop, guided reading and literature circles, and parents as partners components to the program. Standardized testing data – including TAAS, SAT 9, and the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test – are collected in addition to other measures; for example, visitors to the school complete observation sheets, daily running reading records are kept, as are logs of library materials checked out and attendance

records. In the writers' workshop, samples of work, portfolios, and the writers' notebooks serve as assessment instruments.

Next Steps: When the school has a wealth of data (being assembled by students themselves, by teachers, and by parent volunteers), how does one combine all of the information into a coherent picture that tells the past story of the effort and at the same time informs people in the school and community so they can make adjustments in the school program? How does the school bring new students, teachers, and community into the process?

E. J. Scott Elementary School
Houston, Texas

Four hundred and fifty students attend Scott in pre–K through sixth grade. The student body is 46 percent African American and 54 percent Hispanic; 98 percent receive free or reduced lunch; 35 percent have limited English proficiency. Through Project Reconnect, the majority of parents – 57 percent – are involved in the school. A law firm has a serious commitment to the school; workers volunteer as tutors for students and parents and provide funds for drug-awareness programs, clothes, and lunches. The law firm monitors the number of volunteer hours served and the number of participants involved and wants to know whether the time and money make a difference.

Data Focus: The major question being addressed is, Does community involvement make a difference? The school operates under the assumption that the students who have parents or guardians involved in the school do better in school, but they have not yet collected enough data to show the cause-effect relationship.

Next Steps: Scott is asking, "What type of data needs to be collected to develop an effective strategy to motivate the marginally involved parents to become more involved in the school?" Finding the reasons that parents are or are not involved might provide valuable information on how to involve other people. Scott has an impressive record of serving parents and students and is in an excellent position to document and access the influence of these types of efforts. They are considering look at how teachers relate to parents; how parents feel when they come to school; what helps parents feel welcome in the school; whether setting aside space in the school for parents to gather is useful; and how the school communicates to parents about school activities.

THE LOS ANGELES ANNENBERG METROPOLITAN CHALLENGE

Los Angeles' $53-million, one-for-one matching Challenge grant supports the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP), which includes both the LA Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest in the country, and the eighty-one districts in surrounding Los Angeles County. LAAMP's goal is to foster high levels of student achievement for all the region's children through the creation of stable learning communities.

Schools participating in LAAMP are required to form "School Families" – a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools – that design and implement "learning plans" focused on one or more critical areas such as assuring K–12 literacy, working with students with limited English proficiency, or establishing coherent standards and assessments. LAAMP then helps each School Family develop a clear vision, a professional school climate, an inclusive and effective decision-making structure, and a set of strategies for regular, public accountability that all relate to the Family's chosen area of focus. Having completed its grant making, LAAMP supports a total of twenty-eight School Families – fourteen within the LAUSD and fourteen from districts in Los Angeles County, representing nearly 200,000 students in 247 schools.

In a region of extraordinary and debilitating mobility among students and their families, the creation of School Families aims to promote a degree of stability and continuity – at the very least from grade to grade and from school to school – through resource sharing, improved communications, and greater coherence among teachers' expectations, curriculum, and instructional practice. Implicit in this strategy is a reliance on teachers, with a corresponding emphasis on initial preservice preparation and ongoing professional development. To improve and better coordinate such training, LAAMP has partnered with the LAUSD's School Reform Office, the Long Beach USD, the Pasadena USD, and the California State University (CSU) system to introduce a new professional development initiative called DELTA (Design for Excellence: Linking Teaching and Achievement). Plans include the establishment of a CSU Professional Development Academy and professional development centers in participating LAAMP School Families.

The centrality of School Families in the LAAMP program also reflects an attempt to deepen existing reform and disseminate it regionally. Hoping to acquire strength through numbers, School Families

represent an effort to gain a more powerful voice for member schools vis-à-vis their districts. LAAMP negotiates a memorandum of understanding with each School Family's sponsoring district to ensure that it will support the schools' restructuring efforts. Using memoranda of understanding as a way to influence district practices, LAAMP hopes to provoke systemwide change within the LAUSD and other districts across the county so that all schools – not just those funded by LAAMP – will benefit from its efforts.

LAAMP is overseen by a twenty-one-member board of governors and is run by fifteen professional and support staff.

Manual Arts Family
Los Angeles, California

The Manual Arts School Family is a cluster of fourteen schools and children's centers in south-central Los Angeles. A key school in the cluster is the Foshay Learning Center, a year-round, K–12 school serving 3,200 students. Foshay, which has been designated a California Distinguished School, is open extended hours on school days and for many Saturday activities; its campus includes a health clinic (serving whole families and the neighborhood) and a parent center. All parts of the school campus are technologically linked. The vision of the school is focused on literacy, technology, and parent involvement.

Data Focus: Foshay has developed a Longitudinal Student Database which allows it to track all its students, both from their sending schools and on to any school within the district to which they transfer. The database enables the school to investigate student achievement while taking into account other variables such as school programs.

Next Steps: The school is working on responding to these questions: What type of data should we collect? How can we coordinate requirements from different funding sources? What will be helpful for teachers and credible to parents, funding agencies, and the business community? How do we make sure that it follows the student each year?

North Hollywood Family
Los Angeles, California

Thirteen schools serving approximately 13,000 students in North Hollywood make up this LAAMP school family. North Hollywood High School recently placed tenth in the country in number of students enrolled in AP classes, but this doesn't tell all of the story. The AP classes do very well; but there are many

groups of students, largely separated along ethnic and socio-economic lines, that are falling between the cracks and failing.

The entire three-and-a-half-year LAAMP grant is based on literacy. A large part of the grant is for building the capacity of schools to sustain the work after the grant money is gone. The bulk of the money is going into teacher professional development, administration, and parent training. Recently each school hired literacy coaches; as they identify weaknesses, the coaches can help implement approaches and programs to improve reading programs.

Data Focus: Building awareness about the effects of ethnic and socio-economic differences is a key component of the data-collection effort. The question asked by this large urban literacy team is: How can we best collect/analyze/evaluate writing samples, using our familywide rubrics, to ensure consistency (horizontally and vertically) across the school family?

A huge challenge to this work is logistics: teams for literacy, technology, etc., all need to get together from different schools. They want to use data to identify strengths and weaknesses, inform inquiry groups, investigate budget concerns, identify best practices and pedagogies. They are taking a longitudinal stance. They want to track student progress over time to determine how well students perform after leaving the bilingual program and to determine student achievement after five years in the School Family.

Examining mobility and transition is a very large part of the work; while individual schools have large attrition rates, the students generally stay in the LA area, and often within North Hollywood school family. They are compiling a student database, not just in their own School Family but all across Los Angeles, so that students can be monitored throughout their school experience.

Next Steps: The literacy team – approximately fifteen people from the elementary, middle, and high schools: parents, teachers, classified staff, and administrators – has done a great deal of thinking about the audience that will use the data, and how the longitudinal, student-level database will be used. For teachers, administrators, parents, and community, they want to use the database to: identify strengths and weaknesses; design professional development; design Summerbridge and Saturday classes; inform Inquiry groups; clarify budgeting; and initiate investigations of best practices.

The literacy team wants to create a measurable, consistent, quantifiable way to track students and literacy levels throughout K–12. They are especially concerned with the transition of students from non-

English- to English-speaking classrooms. There is a big district and political push to get kids out of primary-language and bilingual classes and into all-English classes: This has led to rubrics development for the entire School Family. Subcommittees met to develop prompts for fifth grade to be used to create valid measures across schools. The subcommittees met as school teams by grade level to review the prompts and rubrics. Implementation at the classroom level has begun. Over the school year, teachers will use the rubric prompt three times and meet to discuss student achievement issues.

The big question is: How do you do data gathering within a School Family of over 600 teachers? How do you ensure that data collection and use get embedded in everyday teaching practices and is a part of everyday school culture?

THE PHILADELPHIA–CHILDREN ACHIEVING CHALLENGE

Philadelphia's $50-million, two-for-one Challenge grant supports an ambitious and comprehensive districtwide reform program. Launched in the fall of 1994 by the newly appointed superintendent, David Hornbeck, the Children Achieving agenda involves all segments of the community and addresses a host of issues, among them: school readiness, school-to-career needs, standards and assessments, improved classroom practice, professional accountability, local school governance, and technology. Improved student achievement for all children in the city is the ultimate goal.

Acting on the assumption that "smaller is better," the district has restructured both schools and the system in which they operate. The city's 267 schools have been broken down into hundreds of small learning communities (SLCs), independent units of no more than 400 students with a corresponding cadre of responsible teachers. The district, in turn, has been reorganized into twenty-two "clusters," groupings of neighborhood schools that include a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. Newly formed cluster offices coordinate resources and services to member schools. Teaching and Learning Networks, for example, offer individual coaching and professional development opportunities for teachers, while Family Resource Networks connect children and families to health and social services. Together, the cluster and SLC structures have helped reduce an inflated central bureaucracy and are more responsive to the needs, values, and concerns of students, parents, teachers, and community members.

Children Achieving qualifies at once as "top-down" and "bottom-up" reform – a standards-driven effort introduced by the district, with the means to implement the new standards determined by teachers in SLCs – and thus assigns new roles to the district and the schools. With a dual focus on equity and accountability, the district's major function is to set clear content, performance, and opportunity-to-learn standards, with an accompanying system of incentives and sanctions. At the same time, however, the district also speaks of getting out of schools' way, of giving SLCs significant autonomy to share resources and to shape teaching and learning across the K–12 continuum, allowing those closest to students – parents, teachers, principals – to make the decisions that most affect them. The novelty of these new roles for schools and the district alike demands significant relearning among teachers, administrators, and district leadership, a herculean task in and of itself. These changes also require widespread public understanding and support, a cause which the district, the Challenge, and their many partners in Philadelphia's business and foundation communities have embraced.

The eleven-member Oversight Committee of the Governing Board of the Philadelphia Public School/Business Partnership for Reform oversees the Children Achieving Challenge in conjunction with an eleven-member Coordination Committee. A staff of five administers the Challenge.

Bayard Taylor Elementary School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Bayard Taylor Elementary School is part of a cluster, or feeder pattern, of a high school, three middle schools, and eight elementary schools. It has 35 percent mobility and heterogeneous grouping. In 1998, Taylor School surpassed the district performance index based on SAT 9s and promotion rate. In September 1998, the school initiated a program which encourages every student to read 100 chapters or books a year. The principal, Wendy Shapiro, facilitates a group of principals who meet to examine and interpret accountability measures.

Data Focus: Numerous assessment tools are being used by the school, including teacher observations, student presentations, SAT 9, Running Records, and writing rubrics. Individual teachers collect data, review results, and then send the information to a leadership team. Results are pooled by grade and classroom and then presented to the whole staff.

The school has developed a system that provides support to individual students and to the school itself. Teachers are encouraged to bring student work to team meetings for consultations.

Next Steps: Taylor asks, How do we make the required Title I reading assessment useful for our needs? How do we, at the same time, make provisions for students who are not functioning at grade level? How can the school both respond to regulations and support the principles of the school?

Edwin H. Vare Middle School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Vare Middle School, an inner-city school in South Philadelphia, serves 860 students, of whom 70 percent are African American, 20 percent Asian, and 10 percent white. Ninety percent of the students are from low-income families, and many live in nearby housing projects. The rise of Asian gangs in the neighborhood has recently become a concern. The school's population has dwindled since the closing of a nearby base. When the base closed, many businesses left the area. Most parents are not working. Parent participation is a problem; the school can't maintain parent representation on its governance council.

Data Focus: Revised 1994–95 Title I regulations require schools to "generate data that can be linked to ongoing instructional decisions, school improvement planning, and implementation." The regulations required that Title I students achieve the same high standards as other students. In Philadelphia, the interpretation requires that each school "select or develop performance assessments, select or develop scoring rubrics, and administer and score the assessments."

The Vare staff has developed reading and math assessment strategies to meet the requirements. The staff-created reading assessment gauges a student's ability in three areas: before (prior knowledge), during (questions, predictions), and after (retelling). Teachers generated scoring guides and trained others to use the assessments. Over two days, they worked together to develop consensus: teachers used the same instrument to evaluate what they each saw, then they scored the test together to insure reliability across teachers.

Students get a set of directions to accompany a story they are going to read. The students guess the story line based on the title. After reading the opening passages, they make predictions about the content. Those two response forms are collected, and the students are then given the entire text of the story to read. Students read the story twice, or as many times as need be. They then retell the story on a separate sheet of paper.

Teachers assess the student's retelling according to a rubric (see example in Appendix D-4). That rubric examines student responses in four stages: pre-read-

ing, meaning, story structure, and conventions of written language. Teachers base their assessment on four levels of proficiency (non-proficient; partially proficient; proficient; advanced). Two teachers read each student's work. If the inter-score agreement is way off, a third reader is called upon to resolve the discrepancy in the grading.

The district is able to correlate the Title I assessment with district standards and can demonstrate how students performed by class, grade, and as a school.

Vare does this assessment twice a year. Reports are provided to teachers, clusters, and the district office. Students get individualized feedback.

Next Steps: How does the school both respond to federal, state, and district mandates and produce an assessment that teachers and students see as meaningful? How does the faculty create useful assessments that impact on teaching and learning?

Roberto Clemente Middle School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Roberto Clemente Middle School has a number of dubious distinctions: In past years, it ranked 43 out of 43 middle schools in Philadelphia. Eighty-three percent of the students do not read English at grade level. There is a long history of negative school climate, low student achievement, high suspension rates, low literacy rates, high numbers of behavior problems and high absenteeism. Not surprisingly, there is also a high staff turnover: more than a third of the teachers are new every year.

The school was faced with so many problems that it had to decide what to fix first. Teachers and administrators agreed that students had to be in school to learn what was being taught. So they decided to focus first on finding out why kids weren't coming to school, why they were getting suspended, and who was getting suspended. They decided to collect data and look at trends so they could make informed decisions about intervention programs. The main question became: How can the school deal with behavioral issues so that learning occurs and kids get what they need?

Second, they decided that it would be necessary to overcome the negative perceptions of the school held by the neighborhood, the school itself, and the city. Issues of race and socio-economics came up again and again. They would look for patterns in their data around race, gender, and teachers.

The school's goals were to:

- Support classroom teachers
- Reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practices

- Gain a better understanding of the link between instructional strategies and student behaviors.

Data Focus: The first step was to gather data so that students who needed additional support to improve their behavior could be identified early. In building the support structure for students, decisions had to be made about what type of support would come from the school staff. Staff would need to decide what classroom placements would be appropriate, how teachers should intervene, and what kind of professional development would be helpful. It was clear that teachers would have to be part of the process, and that they would need support rather than punishment for low-performing students.

Baseline data is kept in Filemaker Pro software. Data can be sorted by individual teacher, type of offense, number of offenses, and types by student. The teacher-facilitator in charge of this program can disaggregate data immediately in a variety of ways to look at an individual student's suspension patterns as well as suspension trends in the school. It has been very useful to have someone who continuously updates the database and trains teachers and facilitators to use the program to respond to their questions.

Results thus far have shown that students needed extensive supervision because they were not coming to school knowing how to behave appropriately. "Some teachers had not wanted to provide students with constant supervision, but with clear data, they realized that increased supervision had a direct impact on reducing behavioral infractions. Collecting data helped us make decisions based on knowledge, not on what we assumed was happening. We realized that the same kids were [always] getting into trouble. We started a social skills academy for these kids. Data showed a dramatic improvement for this group."

Next Steps: The school is now thinking about ways to make the data a part of the culture every day. Is there a way teachers can have access to the data for their own reflection? What supports can be provided to help teachers analyze data and incorporate information into their classroom and instruction? Is it possible to look at best practices – why there are some classrooms showing low incidences of poor behavior? Is it something that can be replicated in other classrooms?

THE SOUTH FLORIDA ANNENBERG CHALLENGE

Supported by a $33.4-million, two-for-one matching Challenge grant, the South Florida Annenberg Challenge (SFAC) is a three-county regional initiative designed to improve student achievement and career readiness for the 680,000 students in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. By linking the three counties, SFAC hopes to create a regional identity characterized by community involvement and commitment to quality education for all students.

To foster increased participation in schools, the Challenge funds "partnerships for public education." These partnerships involve three or more schools, a local business, and a parent or community organization that work together to develop innovative approaches to issues such as school readiness, technology, teacher training, and parent involvement. To help the reforms endure, SFAC requires participating schools to devise plans for sustaining their reform efforts beyond the period of the grant.

Challenge staff have designed three levels of grant opportunities that acknowledge both the difficulty and the amount of time required to establish viable relationships and to develop imaginative approaches for improving schools. Exploratory grants of $2,500 provide new partners an opportunity to begin building the necessary trust for working together productively. Planning grants, of up to $25,000, allow partnerships ample time to devise, test, and revise proposals that are truly innovative. Implementation grants of up to $450,000 over two years provide significant resources to carry out bold innovations. To date, SFAC has awarded more than $123,000 in exploratory grants to fifty-three partnerships and $650,000 in planning and implementation grants.

The South Florida Annenberg Challenge is governed by an eleven-member regional Annenberg board, with additional local boards in each of the three counties. A staff of six administers the Challenge in South Florida.

Cutler Ridge Middle School
Miami, Florida

Cutler Ridge Middle School in Dade County has 1,300 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Between 65 and 70 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches. The school has three ethnic groups – white, Hispanic, and African American. Classes range in size from 15 to 50, with the low 30s being the norm. After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, many older

residents left the area. As homes were rebuilt, younger families moved in, causing a steady growth in the school's population.

Data Focus: How could the school collect data, package it, and quickly put it back into the hands of teachers? The school uses a software program to create tests, score them, analyze the data, and develop charts that rank skills by number of student errors. The school is able to chart the error-rate by skill across the school, by teacher, and by individual student.

Teachers can develop tests to assess a student's mastery of a narrow slice of skills (fractions, for instance). The school can use these tests when needed to examine a slice of the curriculum, in order to identify, fix, and remediate problems. Testing is a year-long process; the school can develop tests for whatever a teacher needs data on. The paper-and-pencil-test results are fed into a scanner; within forty minutes, the school receives published score reports.

A typical student report contains: the school's label; the student's name, identification number, and grade level; a list of suggestions for getting help; and the student's class schedule. (See an example at Appendix D-3). Scores are provided by error rate according to the particular skill tested. The higher the bar on the graph, the greater the percentage of questions the student missed. The final section connects the performance back to the student's learning goals.

Cutler Ridge can input all state standards in the software program. In turn, the school can see where the quiz tags into the state standards. For a lesson on fractions, for example, the school can examine each class's performance to see which lessons seem to have worked best. The school can then pull out the best lessons and connect them. The process also enables the school to disaggregate the information to look at how African American, white, and Hispanic students are performing as a group.

Students receive these reports from their own advisor during their homeroom period. Over a period of days, students talk to advisors and to their teachers. They can go to the library to look for worksheets to do supplemental work. The A+ software allows students to take self-tests. Students can log in, pick a lesson, and take a progress test. Those reports go directly to teachers, who can see whether students have mastered the skill. For students performing in the middle range, small-group strategies (peer coaching, independent study) can be employed to strengthen specific skills.

Students also receive a printed coaches list that identifies buddies they can talk to in order to get help on a specific issue. Test results enable administrators and teachers to look at the whole school, and make some real decisions on instruction.

This information is repackaged with reports to parents. Parents learn what their children can and can't do, and receive support materials to help them at home. In addition, parents can log into the school's home page to get their children's attendance records and grades. Parent Link enables parents to access messages through a phone system.

The software enables a class-by-class analysis of data. Teachers can target instruction according to who needs to improve on a particular skill. Teachers' conversations are now driven by the data. Information is provided to teachers, who are asked to consider two questions: Where do problems lie, and Are those whole-school problems?

Next Steps: The school will continue to develop tests and refine the system.

THE ANNENBERG RURAL CHALLENGE

The Rural Challenge, supported by a $50-million, one-for-one matching grant, represents the single largest private investment ever made for the reform of the nation's rural schools. Like their urban counterparts, schools participating in the Rural Challenge operate in networks with external partners experienced in promoting K–12 educational reform. By uniting schools with each other and with community organizations, the Rural Challenge aims to overcome the isolation and marginalization that characterize so much of rural education. So far, thirty-two projects, serving approximately 300 schools in thirty states, are involved in the Rural Challenge. It is hoped that more than 500 schools eventually will join the project and plant the seeds of a substantial and lasting rural school reform movement.

The Rural Challenge works with schools and communities to develop a "pedagogy of place"that promotes "genuinely good, genuinely rural" schools. These are schools in which learning experiences are grounded in the local culture and context; where students address real problems in an interdisciplinary fashion and create products useful to others; and where learning often takes place beyond the school walls, in the "laboratory" provided by the surrounding environment. Organizers also hope to reverse the recent trend that equates success with moving to an urban setting. Genuinely good rural schools, therefore, are expected to prepare students to stay, to leave, or to go for a while and later return to rural communities that they value and that value them.

Not coincidentally, the Rural Challenge has attracted allies from fields other than education: natural historians, anthropologists, environmentalists, ecologists, health workers, community developers, and others who share a common concern for the future of rural places. This affinity is most likely due to the Rural Challenge's belief that the boundaries between school and community are not only artificially drawn but also inevitably harmful. Instead, schools and communities need to be mutually engaged: schools (and students) should play an active role in community revitalization, while the entire community must participate in the education of its youth. The Rural Challenge promotes this reciprocity by searching out and supporting schools that serve and are served by their communities and, in so doing, contributes to the renewal of both schools and their communities.

The Rural Challenge is governed by a national Board of Directors and administered by a staff of four, with headquarters in Granby, Colorado. A cadre of eight stewards, based throughout the country, assists the national staff in identifying and supporting rural schools, communities, and organizations already operating in accordance with the Rural Challenge's vision or on the threshold of doing so.

Cabot School
Cabot, Vermont
Cabot, Vermont, has 1,100 people, one street, no stop light, a general store, a hardware store, a garage, and a school. Cabot's economy is based on agriculture, crafts, small home industries, and the Cabot Creamery, which produces the number-one blue-ribbon cheddar cheese in the world. There are sixty-five miles of gravel roads and fifteen miles of paved ones. Most residents work outside of Cabot; some travel half an hour to Montpelier, Vermont's capital. Others drive three hours round-trip to the IBM plant in Burlington. The median income per household is $27,000.

The Cabot School serves 270 students in pre-K–12. There are 125 students in the elementary grades, 39 in middle school, and 99 in high school. The town has resisted the push toward consolidation. It is a member of a supervisory union with one other pre-K–12 system.

Cabot's teaching corps numbers twenty-two. The school has a standards-based curriculum, a full-time technologist, and uses a team-based model. Two teaching co-principals lead the school, and team leaders are in place at each developmental level. Cabot's affiliations include the Annenberg Rural Challenge, the Foundation for Excellent Schools, and the Vermont Alliance.

Data Focus: In 1989, parents from the business community, concerned that their children were not being prepared with job skills, pressured the schools to change. After examining skills needed by students now and for future work lives, the community created the school's strategic action plan. Nine systemic goals were set and enacted.

1. The curriculum will be centered around two-year blocks with a focus of basic skills in pre-K–4, core subjects in grades 5–10, and higher-level thinking skills and the pursuit of personal interests in grades 11–12.

2. Students are to be assessed at the end of each two-year block, with less formal assessments done on a continuous basis.

3. Assistance will be provided to all students so each may progress in achieving standards of learning and excel to the best of his or her ability.

4. Programs will be established for parents to help them with parenting, assisting their children with school work, and working with the school to help their children learn.

5. Standards for teacher performance will be directly linked to student performance.

6. Teaching and administrative staff will be trained in teaching innovations, using technology, curriculum and standards development, and assessing learning so that student excellence is the result.

7. School program will include partnerships between Cabot School and local businesses.

8. Educational opportunities will be available to all Cabot residents.

9. A human and social services center to meet the needs of the school and the community will be developed.

The recent focus has been on mathematics and reading. Specific math skills are assessed each quarter in grades 4, 5, and 6. Reading is evaluated in grades 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9. Math and writing portfolios are also developed. The science, math, and language arts tests are scored by the state.

Cabot has community meetings to discuss assessment results, and the report card is also mailed to all residents.

Next Steps: The town and its school have posed several questions for themselves: How do we continue to design a comprehensive assessment system, including data collection and analysis, to measure effective progress on our strategic plan? How do we communicate the information to the entire community?

Edcouch-Elsa and La Villa High Schools
Edcouch and La Villa, Texas
Forty percent of the 1,200 students in these rural high school just north of the US-Mexican border are sons and daughters of migrant workers with annual incomes of $10,000.

Strong relationships between students, teachers, and members of the community are being created through oral history projects in which students in English and history classes interview elderly citizens and transcribe video or audio tapes. The students' curriculum comes from the project activities; they gain library-research and journal-writing skills, are involved in critical thinking and writing, and learn to develop questions and conduct interviews. The high school students also teach history to second-graders based on their own learnings.

Oral histories are place-based learning. "We study ourselves through the arts, the environment, events, and people. People are at the center of everything we do," says one student. Narratives are published in a journal and distributed throughout the community. In addition to the journals recording 100 oral histories, a 700-piece photo archive has been built from pictures collected from homes of the people who have been interviewed. The project helps to break down the barrier between the school and the community. When community members enter the school to view the photo exhibit, they learn about the educational program at the same time.

Data Focus: The oral history program has been measured anecdotally by the teachers who have noticed its value. One comments that students have become active, involved readers because of their research for the project. Another benefit of the program is the building of strong connections with the community. And both students and their teachers report that students feel empowered by being able to shape their own curriculum and teach younger kids.

Teachers believe that the students are doing as well or better on the Texas state exams, and are confident that if they teach effectively across disciplines and build students' capacities, the test scores will continue to rise.

As an example of the success of their student capacity building, they cite a successful grant application to the Kellogg Foundation. The community, students, and school collaborated to design a grant proposal for rural education which is now in the hands of students and community. Plans include a community radio station, community computer clusters, and activity centers. Kellogg was so impressed with their proposal process that they picked a teacher and a sev-

enteen-year-old student to read proposals and be part of the selection committee in the next round of Kellogg grants.

Another proof of the value of the program is that many of the students graduate and go on to college. Edcouch-Elsastudents are currently attending Brown, Columbia, Harvard, Stanford, and Yale. To measure the inspirational value of their teaching practice, they take current high school students on trips to visit the graduates in college to collect oral histories and document their individual stories.

Next Steps: The challenge is to figure out a way to measure what is happening in the oral history project in order to confirm the impressions that teachers, parents, students and community have about both the academic and the affective components of the program. How can we evaluate a nontraditional program such as an oral history project? What data can and should be collected? Are the oral histories, the journal, and videos what we should base an evaluation on? Is enough time being spent in teaching the content of state tests through the alternative history project? Is place-based learning supplementing or supplanting broad-based learning?

APPENDIX A
A Framework for Accountability

The annenberg institute's Framework for Accountability begins with high standards. Setting standards is a critical component of accountability. Without high standards for what we expect students to know and be able to do, we will not have the kinds of schools that we want. Agreed-upon high standards offer direction to curriculum and instruction, provide benchmarks against which to measure student progress, and make explicit the goal of reducing disparities in expectations among groups of students.

But experience and research tell us that high standards and rigorous assessment alone will not guarantee success for all students. Even with high standards, we will be unlikely to see the changes we seek if we fail to include all partners in the accountability process, fail to optimize conditions and resources in schools and communities so that students can meet the standards, or fail to treat accountability as a continuous reflective process.

We therefore assert that in addition to standards and assessment, sound systems of accountability accomplish three things:

1. Distribute responsibility for *who* is accountable, *for what*, and *to whom.*

2. Optimize the *conditions and resources* schools need to enable students to achieve high standards; and

3. Promote the *ongoing and reflective use of data* to meet school and community expectations.

1. Accountability by whom, for what, and to whom?
The notion of accountability, at its core, poses three fundamental questions:

Who is going to be accountable?

For what are they going to be accountable?

To whom will they be accountable?

Because these questions are so fundamental, it is easy and tempting to skip over them. But the answers to them determine the direction an accountability system will take.

For example, if too little attention is paid to deciding *who* should be held accountable, those designated may not have the power to meet the expectations. A system that holds schools alone accountable for student achievement may ignore whether taxpayers have

provided schools with adequate physical plants, whether policy makers have provided support for teachers to develop the necessary skills, or whether families are providing the involvement needed to support their children.

At the Annenberg Institute, we believe that *everyone* who has an interest in high-quality education for our children must share some responsibility for it. That includes students, teachers, administrators, school boards, families, community members, the business community, state and federal policy makers and legislators, and others. And those responsibilities must be identified explicitly.

Schools, together with these partners, are *accountable for*:

1. establishing the standards for what students should know and be able to do;

2. agreeing on what outcomes will look like;

3. strengthening the will and capacity to meet the outcomes; and

4. examining multiple indicators of their achievement and using these data to improve student learning.

We believe that these partners are *accountable to* each other; depending on the responsibility, each may be accountable to different partners. For example, schools may be accountable to parents for the high-quality education of their children and to businesses for providing skilled graduates. The district may be accountable to its schools for providing the necessary budgetary resources and decision-making authority.

2. Optimal conditions and resources
For all actors within the school community to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, certain conditions should exist. An effective accountability system fosters the presence of the following conditions:

Will – There must be a belief that all children can succeed, and a commitment to make that happen.

Leadership – The initiative to meet the needs of all children must be guided by strong leadership in the school community.

Skills – Teachers need skills for instruction. All members of the school community need skills in

collaboration and inquiry. Teachers, principals, district staff, and the community need support, time, and resources in their work to continually improve their abilities.

Money – Financial resources are required to provide a sound education to all students. Those financial resources should be spread equitably among students.

Time – Together with skills and money, adequate time promotes problem solving and creative solutions and encourages people to fully implement plans and to assess actions. School personnel can benefit from a school community which acknowledges that it takes time to recreate schools able to meet high standards.

Climate – Successful improvement efforts take place in a professional climate where skills, people, and their ideas are acknowledged and valued and where people work together and support one another.

Public Engagement – Schools can benefit from the skills of families, caregivers, and other community members, who can help provide a sound education for all children. Families and the community work to help improve student outcomes.

These conditions are built on the foundation of an accountability partnership described earlier. They, in turn, support the work of accountability in the same way that posts serve to hold up the structure of a house or pillars to support a temple. No one of these conditions is sufficient to support the structure alone; thus, strong leadership cannot replace the need for an engaged community or sufficient financial resources. At the same time, a weakness in one does not necessarily mean the structure will fall, though it may put additional pressure on one or more of the other supports.

3. Continuous, reflective use of data

All of the elements discussed so far – standards, assessment, shared responsibility, optimal conditions and resources – undergird the fundamental work of accountability, which is the continuous and reflective use of data.

As an integral part of their practice, schools with effective accountability systems examine their practices, explicitly, publicly, and collectively. Each school is guided by an ethic of continuous improvement so that it is proactive, willing to make changes based on the data. Continuous improvement becomes the school culture. Questioning, seeking data to inform those questions, reflection, and action are simply "the way things are done."

The people who work inside such schools are committed to learning, their own as well as that of students. They are experienced at seeking out and using information to improve performance. As part of their inquiry process, they define the "ideal" and use data to reveal the "actual." These schools use the actual to inform and reflect on practice and to adjust their actions.

Such "accountability-minded schools" come to engage naturally in what we call the **Inquiry Cycle**.
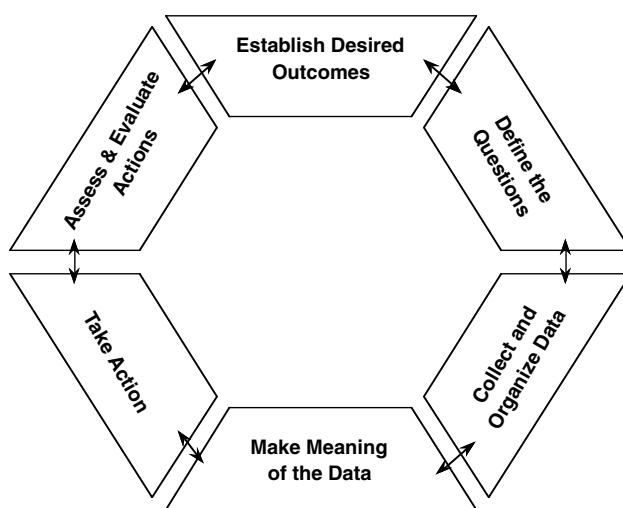
The Inquiry Cycle

The six activities presented here as a cycle are an attempt to capture on paper an ongoing, *nonlinear* process that involves the interaction of reflection and action. Each activity is essential, none may be omitted; but the process can begin with any one, and the activities can be ordered in any way. Equally important, the inquiry process is not over after completing one cycle. It is always starting again.

- **Establish outcomes for which stakeholders accept responsibility.**

This is one common entry point into the Inquiry Cycle. Here all participants discuss and define criteria for what constitute satisfactory outcomes. They set standards for judging the quality or degree of success toward these outcomes. They also affirm their obligation to be accountable for particular outcomes.

Common questions in this activity are:

What do we want children to know and be able to do?

What exactly are we saying we are responsible for, and what standards will we use to judge our success?

- **Define the questions.**

  During this part of the process, participants articulate the questions they have about the school. For example, a group of teachers might ask:

  > What do we want to know about our teaching? About our students?

  > Is something happening that pleases or bothers parents?

  > How will we know whether we are doing something well or poorly?

  Different parts of the school community may have different questions. The kinds of questions a school-board member asks about overall performance often differ from questions asked by middle school teachers. These, in turn, may differ from those posed by parents about graduation requirements. The state or district may question standardized scores. Taxpayers ask if programs are working.

  These are all legitimate questions that enrich the school's own internal questions and process. Instead of feeling bombarded by questions from the outside, the accountability-minded school community expands the boundary of what it considers "outside." It identifies the important questions, whoever may be asking them.

  While all questions are brought to the table, the school community must set priorities for what it can and must address at any given point. A significant part of this activity is determining a specific focus for the next steps in the inquiry.

  Focus questions frequently address outcomes (e.g., attendance or dropout rates). Or the questions may call for descriptions of behaviors that might lead to those outcomes (e.g., the types of assignments teachers give to students; the GPAs and standardized test scores of students who are absent more than 10 percent of the time; the correlation between the mathematics program and scores on the SAT 9).

  When the questions address outcomes, participants need to take the further step of deciding criteria to judge the level of success. For example, they might ask: What dropout rate would satisfy us that we are doing an adequate job?

- **Collect and organize data.**

  This is the process of accumulating the evidence needed to answer the focus questions. Much of the data may already exist in various forms. Some forms are externally mandated, some are already recorded routinely; sometimes participants just need to locate them and organize them for use. Participants may also choose to generate new data (e.g., surveys, work sam-

ples). To answer their focus questions, participants often need to consider multiple measures and to disaggregate the data by specific groups.

Some important questions to ask are:

> What kinds of evidence will suit our questions – e.g., tests scores? reports? portfolios? survey data? anecdotes? behaviors?

> Where can we find the data?

> Will we want to be able to disaggregate the data by groups?

> How can we collect the data?

> How can we store information so that it is easily accessible?

Accountability-minded schools recognize that they can only be sure about an outcome or perception if it is corroborated by multiple forms of evidence. So they seek multiple measures. This means, for example, supplementing data from multiple-choice standardized tests with performance assessments, the examination of student work samples, or observations.

Some of the needed data may reside outside the school, such as the answers to questions like:

> What access do students have to after-school activities?

> What tutoring resources are available in the community?

To help the school, parents might volunteer to assist in data collection, or businesses might lend support or resources. In this Framework, the collection of data goes far beyond standardized tests and often includes the entire range of school stakeholders.

Finally, the school makes decisions that facilitate the organization and management of data. They may decide to acquire software to store and analyze data.

- **Conduct mindful analyses of data in light of the school's purposes.**

  Raw data tell us little or nothing useful. They are simply bits and pieces – words and numbers – waiting to be organized into meaningful patterns.

  Participants in this activity conduct close readings of all materials, including both numbers and narrative data. They group data according to the focus questions in order to articulate relationships, categorize, or note patterns and rules. They interpret written as well as quantitative analyses. Participants look for unexpected outcomes and relevant models or theories that might clarify ambiguities. In sum, they seek to assign meaning to the data.

  During this process, data are transformed into information that may be used to improve practice:

how our students are doing in the reading curriculum; which students take advanced courses; which students are absent most often. Information – patterned data – is what accountability-minded schools use to make choices, guide decisions, and shape policy. The questions we ask about the data are the key to identifying patterns. It is the school's purposes and questions that turn data into meaningful information.

- **Take action, with meaningful consequences for success or failure.**

The challenge for a school in this activity is to take action to improve student learning based on what the data reveal. Schools may change goals, instruction, curriculum, technical structures, or materials. School districts may reallocate resources, create new programs, focus on a particular grade level and subject, like fourth-grade literacy for two years.

These actions must be directly related to the articulated goals of the school and the evidence gathered through the accountability process. The rest of the inquiry process is useless without such action.

- **Assess effects of actions.**

Here the cycle begins anew. Participants realize that any resulting actions or changes reflect their best guess – albeit a well-informed one – about what will bring about the desired improvements. So they find ways to analyze the effects of these changes.

Questions asked in this activity include:

What level of attainment will satisfy us that our changes have worked?

Who should be at the table in this investigation?

What are our questions?

What will constitute evidence?

How will we know that our changes have worked?

APPENDIX B

Conference Participants

Challenge Sites and Schools

BAY AREA SCHOOL REFORM COLLABORATIVE
c/o West Ed
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
415-565-3015

Center for Research on the Context of Teaching
School of Education
CERAS Building
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
973-746-7328
Becky Crowe (Facilitator)

Concord High School
4200 Concord Boulevard
Concord, CA 94521
510-687-2030
   Shirley Bhatt
   Carol Noble
   Don Paulsen
   Bonnie Warner

Parkside Elementary School
1685 Eisenhower Street
San Mateo, CA 94403
650-312-7575
   Joanne Day
   Gail Friedman-Beck
   Cheryl Milner
   Ira Standig

Roosevelt Elementary School
951 Dowling Boulevard
San Leandro, CA 94577
510-667-3584
   Mary Beth Barloga
   Jill Ehorn
   Patty Fishbaugh
   Beverly Siegel

San Jose Middle School
1000 Sunset Parkway
Novato, CA 94949
415-883-7831
   Carol Lusk
   Kate McDougal
   Don Zanini

THE BOSTON ANNENBERG CHALLENGE
c/o Boston Private Industry Council
Two Oliver Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
617-350-7600
   Sae Yun Lee
   Mary Russo

Samuel Mason Elementary School
150 Norfolk Avenue
Roxbury, MA 02119
617-635-8405
Jonna Casey

THE CHICAGO ANNENBERG CHALLENGE
115 South Sangamon Street, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60607
312-413-5869
   Lisa Moultrie

Arthur Dixon Elementary School
8158 S. Langley Avenue
Chicago, IL 60619
773-723-4797
   Carol J. Briggs
   Sharon Dale
   Joan Crisler
   Sheryl Walters

Chicago Vocational Career Academy
2100 E. 87th Street
Chicago, IL 60617
773-535-6095
  Lula Covington
  Betty Despenza-Green
  Gertrude Hannah
  Irving Nicholson

Park Manor Elementary School
7037 S. Rhodes Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
773-535-3070
  David Kerbow
  Kimberly McCoy
  Virginia Watson

THE HOUSTON ANNENBERG CHALLENGE
1001 Fannin, Suite 2210
Houston, TX 77002
713-658-1881
  Delia Quintanilla
  Joyce Ryan
  Andrea White

Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School
5100 Hazard Street
Houston, TX 77098
713-535-3780
  Anne McClellan
  Nanette Musters
  Anne Stuart
  Nancy Williams

E. J. Scott Elementary School
3300 Russell
Houston, TX 77026
713-535-4110
  Artice Hedgemon
  Linda Katz
  Ernest McGowen

LOS ANGELES ANNENBERG METROPOLITAN PROJECT
350 South Bixel Street, Suite 295
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213-580-8888
  Cynthia Lim

Center for the Study of Evaluation
University of California at Los Angeles
301 GSE & IS / Box 951522
Los Angeles, CA 90095
310-206-1532
  Barry Gribbons

Santa Monica–Malibu Unified School District
1651 16th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-450-8338
  Neil Schmidt

Manual Arts School Family
315 W. 9th Street, Suite 1110
Los Angeles, CA 90015
  Carol Fujita
  Cresie Page
  Cristina Sylvester
  Maria Thompson

North Hollywood School Family
17227 Midwood Drive
Granada Hills, CA 91344
  818-366-2241
  Heidi Brahms
  Susana Martinez
  Sue Shannon

THE PHILADELPHIA – CHILDREN ACHIEVING CHALLENGE
Greater Philadelphia First
1818 Market Street, Suite 3510
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-575-2200
  Stacy Galiatsos

Research for Action
3701 Chestnut Street, Suite 6W
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-823-2500
  Jolley Christman (Facilitator)

Philadelphia School District
Administration Building
21st Street South of the Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-299-7767
  Mitchell Chester
  Michael Schlesinger

Bayard Taylor Elementary School
Randolph Street and Erie Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-227-4435
Damaris Cortes
Diana Diaz
Julia Sanabria-Driban

Edwin H. Vare Middle School
24th Street and Snyder Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19145
215-952-8611
Carol Adams
John Dillelo
Lissa Johnson

Roberto Clemente Middle School
122 W. Erie Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19140
215-291-5400
Jim Douglas
Pat Mazzuca
Ron Walker

SOUTH FLORIDA ANNENBERG CHALLENGE
c/o Holland and Knight
One East Broward Boulevard, Suite 1300
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301
954-468-7927
David Shannon

Cutler Ridge Middle School
14221 S.W. 86th Avenue
Miami, FL 33158
305-235-4761
Carolyn Kaloostian
John Moore
Tony Smith
John Williams

THE ANNENBERG RURAL CHALLENGE
998 County Road 61
Granby, CO 80446
970-887-1064
Dennis Shirley

Annenberg Rural Challenge Regional Office
50 Main Street, Suite 258
Kennebunk, ME 04043
Marylyn Wentworth

Cabot School
PO Box 98
Cabot, VT 05647
802-563-2289
David Book
Linda Darrow
John McSweeney

Edcouch-Elsa and La Villa High Schools
PO Box 1290
Edcouch, TX 78538
956-262-4474
Orlando Castillo
Ricardo Gamez
Francisco Guajardo
Julian Miranda

THE DETROIT ANNENBERG CHALLENGE
Schools of the 21st Century
Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Boulevard, Suite 1125
Detroit, MI 48202
313-871-3515

Western Michigan University (SAMPI)
336 Moore Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
616-387-2418
Toni Woolfork-Barnes

Anna M. Joyce Elementary School
8411 Sylvester
Detroit, MI 48214
313-866-7545
Leslie Brown

NEW YORK NETWORKS FOR SCHOOL RENEWAL
1573 Madison Avenue, Room 318
New York, NY 10029
212-369-1288

NYNSR Outcomes Evaluation
NYU Institute for Education & Social Policy
285 Mercer Street FL10
New York, NY 10003
212-998-5627
    Jodi Paroff

Invited but unable to attend:

**Middle College High School at Fiorello
LaGuardia Community College**
31-10 Thomson Avenue, L101
Long Island, NY 11101

El Puente Academy of Peace and Justice
211 South 4th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11211

Critical Friends

Kate Jamentz
Western Assessment Collaborative
c/o WestEd, 730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-241-2710

Paul LeMahieu
State Department of Education, Hawaii
Room 309, Queen Lilioukalani Building
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
302-831-4433

Olivia Lynch
School for Academic and Athletic Excellence
c/o Joan of Arc Middle School
154 West 93rd Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10025
212-678-5831

Norman Newberg
University of Pennsylvania School of Education
Room C-22
3700 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-898-1819

Invited Guests

Lauren Allen (Facilitator)
Cross City Campaign
407 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60605

Theresa Fay-Bustillos
Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund
634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Anne Hallett
Cross City Campaign
407 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 1725
Chicago, IL 60605

Joe Higgs
The Metropolitan Organization
111 West 15th Street
Houston, TX 77008

Nancy Lomax
Parents for Public Schools of Houston
8518 Langdon
Houston, TX 77036

Judy Long
Parents for Public Schools
3734 Sun Valley
Houston, TX 77025

Linda McNeil
Rice University
Center for Education
6100 S. Main Street, MS-147
Houson, TX 77005

Jim Parsons
Humble ISD
P.O. Box 2000
Humble, TX 77347

Doris Rodgers-Robbins
Rice University
Center for Education
6100 S. Main Street, MS-147
Houson, TX 77005

Joel Shawn (Facilitator)
California Center for School Restructuring
9300 Imperial Highway #125
Los Angeles, CA 90242

Jeanne Wardford
North Area Association
8312 E. Outer Drive
Detroit, MI 48213

Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Brown University, Box 1985
Providence, RI 02912
401-863-7990
   David Allen
   Frank Barnes
   Ceronne Berkeley-Daly
   Barbara Cervone
   Jonathan Considine
   Deborah Elwell
   Lorraine Keeney
   Richard Landau
   Peggy MacMullen
   Anita Nester
   Amy Rittenhouse
   Gene Thompson-Grove

APPENDIX C

A Tuning Protocol for Data-Collection Processes

This protocol, used at the colloquium on "Using Data for School Improvement" in Houston, Texas, in May 1998, was adapted from *The Tuning Protocol: A Process of Reflection*, by David Allen, Series on Exhibitions No. 15 (Oakland, CA: Coalition of Essential Schools, 1995).

INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION   **20–30 minutes**
- The facilitator briefly reviews the protocol's goals, guidelines and schedule.
- The presenting team provides a context for looking at the work, which may include goals for data collection and analysis, significance of the question asked, scope, methods, etc.
- The presenting team articulates a focusing question for feedback from the participants.
- Participants are silent.

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS   **(5-10 minutes)**
- Participants ask the presenters questions so they can more fully understand the presenting team's question, context, and standards.
- The facilitator judges whether any of these questions more properly belong in the warm/cool feedback section.

EXAMINATION OF DATA AND CONTEXT MATERIALS/DOCUMENTS   **(15-20 minutes)**
- Presenting team may briefly orient participants to materials for examination.
- Participants look at the portfolio documents, keeping in mind the presenting team's focusing question.
- Participants may look together at the materials, describing what they see. Or, they may choose to look individually. In either case, participants will want to pause before the next section to reflect on what they would like to contribute to the feedback session.
- Presenters are silent during this section.

WARM AND COOL FEEDBACK   **(15-20 minutes)**
- Participants share feedback while presenters are silent.
- Group members share warm feedback (strengths, etc.), each taking a turn until all the warm feedback is shared (or for approximately 7-10 minutes).
- Group members then share cool feedback (areas for improvement, etc.) until all the cool feedback is shared (or for approximately 7-10 minutes).
- The group then may choose to pose a few probing questions for the presenters to consider. Probing questions are designed to help the presenters think more critically, creatively, and/or deeply about their work. They are intended to be helpful to the presenters.
- The facilitator may remind the participants along the way about the presenting team's focusing question.

REFLECTION   **(15 minutes)**
- The presenting team speaks to those comments/questions team members choose to, while participants are silent.
- The facilitator may intervene to focus, clarify, etc.
- Reflection may take the form of a conversation among presenters.

- This is not a time for the presenters to defend or to further explain the work, but instead, to talk briefly about what they heard that was interesting, surprising, etc. Some presenters like to use this time to articulate one or two key questions that arose for them, or to comment specifically on what they learned about their practice, or to talk a little bit about next steps they might take.

DEBRIEF   **(10 minutes)**

- The entire group, participants are presenters, discuss how the process worked – what went well, what could be improved. Individuals may also want to share what they learned about data collection and analysis, teaching and learning, or their school community.

APPENDIX D

Examples of Data Use

1:    **STUDENT SURVEY (CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL)**

2:    **SUGGESTIONS FOR AN "ASSESSMENT WALL" (PARK MANOR)**

3:    **COMPUTER-BASED DATA REPORTING (CUTLER RIDGE)**

4:    **RETELLING RUBRIC (WARE)**

APPENDIX D1: STUDENT SURVEY (CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL)

Concord High School
Student Survey
December 1997

Please respond to the following questions so Concord High School will have information that might help us provide the best education possible for you. Your answers to these questions will be anonymous. Neither your teachers nor your principal will grade or even see your answers. So feel free to express your true opinions on these questions.

Please mark only one of the choices. Mark it clearly on the scantron. Not all questions have A-E selections.

---

1. What grade are you in?   A. 9   B. 10   C. 11   D. 12

2. Are you in a cluster?   A. yes   B. no

3. Identify your cluster if you are
    in one of the following clusters: A. Purple   B. Yellow   C. Green   D. Sophomore 1

4. As things are now, how far do you think you will get in school?
    A. not graduate from high school
    B. high school graduation only
    C. two years of trade, technical or business school
    D. two year junior college degree
    E. college degree

5. What are your work plans after you graduate?
    A. Work   B. School   C. Work and School
    D. Military   E. Other

6. What is your sex?   A. Male   B. Female

Please answer only #7 or #8

7. To what racial or ethnic group do you belong?   A. Hispanic   B. African American
    C. White   D. Middle Eastern

8. To what racial or ethnic group do you belong?   A. Asian   B. Pacific Islander
    C. Native American   D. Other

For the following questions please select one of the following. Mark your answer clearly on
the scantron. The scale used will be: A. Agree
                                             B. Somewhat agree
                                             C. Somewhat disagree
                                             D. Disagree

---

9.   I feel like a real part of Concord High.
10. My teachers expect that students treat each other with respect.
11. My teachers usually help when I am practicing my classwork.

12. My parents are more aware of what's going on in my classes this year.
13. Teachers at this school are not interested in people like me.
14. My teachers usually take enough time to listen to me when I have a problem.
15. My teachers usually connect what I am learning to what I already know.
16. My parents have been invited to take part in class related events such as parent nights and field trips.
17. People here notice when I am good at something.
18. My teachers usually treat students fairly.
19. My teachers usually check to see if I understand something before going on to something else.
20. My parents and teachers communicate with each other.
21. I participate in activities at Concord High
22. My teachers give help in class when I ask for it.
23. I work hard in my classes.
24. There is at least one teacher or other adult at this school to whom I can talk if I have a problem.
25. My teachers usually talk to me in a friendly manner.
26. The tests in my classes are usually related to the work I am doing.
27. I wish I were in a different school.
28. Students in my classes help one another when they need it.
29. I usually finish my homework for my classes.
30. I am treated with as much respect as other students.
31. Students in my classes usually get along with each other.
32. My teachers keep me informed about my progress.
33. Teachers here respect me.
34. I know most the students in most of my classes.
35. I have noticed a clear connection between some of my subjects.
36. I can really be myself at this school.
37. I usually get along with other students in my classes.
38. None of the classes I am taking relate to each other.
39. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.
40. I feel comfortable sharing thoughts, opinions, feelings, and questions.
41. I feel I am learning more this year because the content of my classes is more connected.
42. I feel that I have many good qualities.
43. I feel administrators (principal, vice principals) in this school usually enforce the rules fairly.
44. I can tell some of my teachers have spent time talking with each other about how to make their courses connected.
45. I usually feel free to make suggestions to the administrators (principal, vice principals) at this school.
46. There is at least one adult in this school with whom I can talk about my problems.
47. My teachers usually communicate with each other about my work.
48. Usually I can count on the adults in this school to listen to my explanations/reasons for doing things.

APPENDIX D2: SUGGESTIONS FOR AN "ASSESSMENT WALL" (PARK MANOR)

Suggestions for an "Assessment Wall"

Materials

    cards for each student
        approximately 2 by 3 inches
        different colors for each grade level
    stick glue (this comes in a "posit" form that allows you to remove and restick)
    markers (various colors)
    "Dot" stickers (optional, dots could be made with a marker)

Organization

    Cards are arranged in rows by grade level with each column representing a Step. Students'
    cards are placed at their current Step. "Dots" are put on the front of the card whenever
    students move up a Step so that progress can be seen. An example of how the wall might look
    is on the back of this page.

Details for Recording Information on Cards

    Front of card
        room number
        code for support services (e.g., RR - reading recovery; SG - small group)
        "dots" for each time the student moves a step (with date)
        for kindergarten students, a P if they were in pre-kindergarten
        for transfer-in students, a T in the top right corner

    Back of card
        student name
        assessment dates and Step passed (some entries may show student not making progress)
        support services (beginning and ending date)
        date student transferred into the school (if applicable)

    Example
        The student represented below is in Room 101. She transferred into the school on
        9/10/97. On her first assessment, she was at Step 1. She was placed in a small group on
        9/24. She has moved up two Steps since the beginning of the year.

Front	Back

101   T
11/15/97 ●
SG   10/1/97 ●

Student Name	
Transfer in: 9/10/97	
Small Group	11/15/97 Step 3
Begin	10/1/97 Step 2
9/24/97	9/15/97 Step 1

Assessment Wall

	Before Pre-Read	Pre-Read	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8

APPENDIX D3: COMPUTER-BASED DATA REPORTING (CUTLER RIDGE)

Tuesday, February 17, 1998

Fraction Foundation-Skill Assessment
Individual Report

Report for:

, here are some suggestions for getting help:
1. Ask your teacher or parents for help.
2. Look on the "Coach List" for students in your class that know the skill.
3. Go to the media center and get a "self-help" sheet for the skill.
4. Use the A+ software program.

The following table lists skills that you need to improve.

Schedule

PERIOD	ROOM	TITLE
01	128	M/J ART/ART APP
02	216	M/J MATH 2
03	207	M/J LANG ARTS 2
04	214	M/J CIVICS
05	120	M/J COMP SCIENC
06	128	M/J ART/ART APP
HR	114	Advisement

Scores by ERROR. A high error rate percentage represents a possible problem.

Error Rate	Skill #	Skill Description
100.0 %	3	Finding equivalent fractions.
100.0 %	7	Changing decimals to fractions and fractions to decimals.
75.0 %	5	Finding the greatest common factor (GCF).
50.0 %	8	Understanding divisibility.
25.0 %	2	Reducing fractions to lowest terms.
25.0 %	6	Finding the least common multiple (LCM).
0.0 %	1	Changing improper fractions to mixed numbers.
0.0 %	4	Changing mixed numbers to improper fractions.
0.0 %	9	Recognizing different number formats.

How to Read the Chart

This is an error chart.
A high bar indicates a possible problem with this skill.

Test Results by ERROR

Error Rate — Skill #

(Bar chart showing error rates: Skill 3 = 100.0%, Skill 7 = 100.0%, Skill 5 = 75.0%, Skill 8 = 50.0%, Skill 2 = 25.0%, Skill 6 = 25.0%, Skill 1 = 0.0%, Skill 4 = 0.0%, Skill 9 = 0.0%)
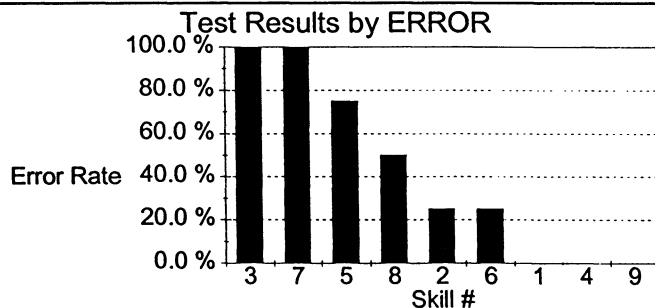
Personal Learning Goal

Please read these directions:
- Look at the table or graph above. Look at the error rates.
- A high error rate for a skill indicates a possible learning need.
- Choose a skill with an error rate greater than zero. This skill will be your "Personal Learning Goal".
- Work on this skill until you have gained mastery.
- You can get work sheets for all of the skills above from the media center (Library).

Which skill do you choose? (Write in the number of the skill here.) _____

APPENDIX D4: RETELLING RUBRIC (VARE)

Retelling Rubric *Assessment Fall 1996* Name _____Section_____

	1 Non- Proficient	2 Partially Proficient	3 Proficient	4 Advanced
Pre-reading (Task 1) **(Task 2)**	___Interpretation of title does not make sense ___Makes predictions that do not make sense or makes no attempt	___Interpretation of title may be fragmented and difficult to read ___Makes predictions which lack direct links to story	___Interpretation of title is logical and clear ___Makes logical predictions about the story	___ Interpretation of title is logical, clear and imaginative ___Makes logical, imaginative and well-stated predictions about the story
Meaning (overall idea)	___No story sense. Story is difficult or impossible to follow.	___Hints at conflict, theme or lesson or story Story may be somewhat fragmented.	___Describes conflict, theme or lesson of story. Story is coherent.	___Clearly articulates conflict, theme or lesson of story. Story flows and is easy to follow.
Story Structure (Details)	___Few or no elements of story included. Elements may be missing and are inadequately described.	___Some elements of story included. Elements are missing or inadequately described.	___Most elements of story are included. Elements may be missing, but descriptions are adequate.	___All four elements of the story are *thoroughly* described in the retelling: ___setting: (time/place) ___main characters with descriptions ___protagonist's problem/goal or conflict ___Plot presented clearly and concisely in sequence.
Conventions of Written Language	___More than ten (total) errors in punctuation and spelling	___Five to ten (total) errors in punctuation and spelling	___No more than five errors (total) in punctuation and spelling	___Has control of sentence format (Sentences vary in length and complexity) No errors in punctuation and spelling

Score

Pre-reading. . . . . . . ._____
Meaning. . . . . ._____
Story Structure. . . . . _____
Conventions of
Written Language. . . . ._____

TOTAL. . . . . . . ._____

Interpretation of Scores

16. . . . Advanced (A)
12-15. . Proficient (P)
8-11. . . Partially Proficient (PP)
4-7 . . . .Not Proficient (NP)

Overall Rating   _____

Scored by:

Scorer #1_____

Scorer #2_____

Now read the entire story twice. The first time, read to enjoy the story and to get the overall idea. The second time, pay attention to the details of the story. When you are finished do the assignment below.

3. Retelling

In a retelling we " shrink" the story. I know that sounds strange, but a retelling is a shorter version of a longer story. It is also your version of the story. It has to be the same story, but you get to tell it in your own words.

In a retelling, you have to make sure that you leave nothing important out. You can't tell all the details because a retelling is usually much shorter than the story, but you have to tell every part of the whole story. You want to make sure that you get all of the characters and all of the main actions into your retelling .

On the attached sheet of paper respond to the following:

Pretend that a friend asks you, "Tell me the story you just read." Retell the story in your own words. You can start with "Once upon a time" or something similar, but don't use "This story is about. . ."

Some Organizations That Provide Assessment Tools and/or Technical Support

The following organizations and networks work with schools and have particular expertise in the use of accountability tools.

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS AT STANFORD

A research project of the Stanford University School of Education, Accelerated schools use a variety of approaches in assessing students. A student's performance can be captured using standardized tests, portfolios of student work, student and staff attendance, parental participation, and reductions in student transfers. Look at their site for their assessment toolkit that includes documents, questionnaire, coach's journal, school data portfolio and benchmarks.

National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project
Stanford University
CERAS 109
Stanford, California 94305-3084
650-725-1676
http://www.stanford.edu/group/ASP/

ACCOUNTABILITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE CENTER

Part of the Illinois State Board of Education web site, this center provides support for the statewide accountability and quality assurance system; assists in matters relating to learning standards, especially those concerning the progress and achievement of students; focuses on organizational quality and improvement; and advises on teacher preparation, certification and licensing. Check out their site – it's a good model for how a state uses its web site to communicate about accountability.

Illinois State Board of Education
100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300
Chicago, IL 60601
312-814-2220
http://isbe.state.il.us/accountability/

THE ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

The Achievement Council works with schools and their communities in the use of data tools and strategies to help in the process of reform, as a means of building relationships and enhancing communication. They invite schools to use data as a lens through which to examine counterproductive and unequal school practices and remedy those inequalities. They guide schools and districts in developing the skills they need for reform that is focused on the creation of a culture of high standards and equity.

The Achievment Council
3460 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 420
Los Angeles, CA 90010
213-487-3194
http://www.achievementcouncil.com/index.html

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (ABCD)

Housed at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, ABCD is co-directed by John Kretzmann and John McKnight who have done extensive research on capacity-building community development. To this end, a major focus of the ABCD Institute has been the production of resources and tools for community builders involved in the process of capacity-based initiatives, helping them identify, nurture, and mobilize neighborhood assets. The ABCD Web site contains resources for assets mapping, including a training video, an electronic discussion, additional workbooks, and a contact person for consultants and training.

ABCD Institute
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208-4100
847-491-8711
http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html

ATLAS COMMUNITIES

Founded from a partnership of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Education Development Center, Inc., Project Zero, and the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program, the ATLAS school design includes innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction, school organization, and relationships between the schools and their communities. ATLAS Communities use "tools for implementation" based on the work of their partner organizations, to guide the redesigning of their schools. Check out their "Tool Box" for assets mapping and protocols for looking at student work. They also post some great stories and articles on their Web site under the section "Impact and Accountabilty."

ATLAS Communities
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158-1060
617-969-7100
http://www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS/

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING TIME FOR TEACHERS

This Web page is "dedicated to the idea that teachers need collaborative time with their peers and that this time already exists within the school day through creative scheduling." The Web site offers several educational links and print resources.

Levy Middle School
Fellows Ave. & Harvard Place
Syracuse, NY 13210
315-435-4444
http://www.scsd.k12.ny.us/levy/colab.html

CONSORTIUM FOR POLICY RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement and located in the Department of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, CPRE is conducting seventeen studies using various methodologies including analyses of large data sets, qualitative field studies, and state-of-the-art survey techniques. Check out CPRE's research project on "Accountability for Results" which studied how schools of different types and in different policy contexts developed a sense of accountability to produce high-quality instructional results.

Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
3440 Market Street, Suite 560
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325
215-573-0700
http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/

CRESST HOME PAGE

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) conducts research on important topics related to K–12 educational testing. CRESST is affiliated with the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. Look here for assessment information (searchable by audience), samples and guidebooks, and links to related assessment sites. Containing listings of over 300 developers of new assessments, the Alternative Assessments in Practice Database will be of special interest to teachers, school districts, and assessment developers who are looking for new methods to assess student growth. The database presents detailed information about assessment type and purpose, scoring and availability, subject matter, and skills measured.

CRESST/UCLA
301 GSE&IS
Box 951522
Los Angeles, California 90095-1522
310-206-1532
http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Delaware Education Research and Development Center has been established to provide the state with a development and inquiry capacity in support of efforts to reform educational policy and practice. The Educational Accountability web site is a resource for the Delaware Education community (and others) – teachers, students, parents and community, businesses, administrators, and so on – to discuss and share ideas on accountability models. Their site provides information and ongoing discussion about a public accountability forum, as well as models of school, district, and state-based accountability, and there are plans to include relevant literature and research about accountability on the site.

Delaware Education Research and Development
Center
University of Delaware
305 Willard Hall
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-4433
http://www.rdc.udel.edu/

EDUCATION WEEK'S ISSUES PAGE ON ASSESSMENT

The site, with an excellent overview of the current
issues surrounding assessment, is one of a series of
Issues Pages produced by Education Week on the
Web. It includes a glossary of terminology, links to
recent articles in Ed Week's archives, a bibliography,
and links to organizations and other web sites on
assessment. A "must see" for those working in the
area of assessment.

Education Week
6935 Arlington Road, Suite 100
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-280-3100
http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/assess.htm

ERIC ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION CLEARINGHOUSE

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and
Evaluation seeks to provide 1) balanced information
concerning educational assessment and 2) resources to
encourage responsible test use. A huge clearinghouse
of information and resources, research, test construc-
tion and results, etc.

ERIC® Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation
1129 Shriver Laboratory
College of Library and Information Services
University of Maryland, College Park
College Park, MD 20742
800-464-3742
http://ericae.net/

FAIRTEST

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
(FairTest) is an advocacy organization working to end
the abuses, misuses and flaws of standardized testing
and ensure that evaluation of students and workers is
fair, open, and educationally sound. They place special
emphasis on eliminating the racial, class, gender, and

cultural barriers to equal opportunity posed by stan-
dardized tests, and preventing their damage to the
quality of education. This site offers information,
technical assistance and advocacy on a broad range of
testing concerns, focusing on three areas: K–12, uni-
versity admissions and employment tests.

FairTest
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-864-4810
http://www.fairtest.org/

NATIONAL COALITION OF ADVOCATES FOR STUDENTS

NCAS is a national education advocacy organization
(with twenty-two member groups in fourteen states)
that works to achieve equal access to quality public
education for the most vulnerable students – those
who are poor, children of color, recently immigrated,
or children with disabilities. Focusing on kindergarten
through grade 12, NCAS informs and mobilizes par-
ents, concerned educators, and communities to help
resolve critical education issues. Check out the mobi-
lization of equity – training parents and communities
to bring equity to local schools – and the National
Coalition Members – a national listing of this volun-
tary network of education advocates, complete with
area of interest and contact information.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students
100 Boylston Street, Suite 737
Boston, MA 02116
617-357-8507
http://www.ncas1.org/

NORTHWEST REGIONAL LAB ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's
mission is to improve educational results for children,
youth, and adults by providing research and develop-
ment assistance in delivering equitable, high-quality
educational programs. Useful information on alterna-
tive assessment and accountability, including a bibli-
ography and toolkit, can be found on their Web site.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
503-275-9500
http://www.nwrel.org/

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Web site, a product of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory offers easy to find, concise, research-based information on school improvement. It presents several articles and sources on time through the professional development link. Within the assessment area you'll find excellent articles on critical issues in assessment, audio clips of interviews with assessment experts, a text linked glossary, case studies and links to related organizations.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60521
800-356-2735
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pathwayg.htm

PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of parents and volunteer citizens. Its mission is to provide a public voice advocating vastly improved education for all Kentuckians. Their site has lots of information on parent and community involvement. Check out their tools page, including the civic dictionary, manuals and guides, and teacher syllabi about democratic practices and civic work.

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
P.O. Box 1658
Lexington, KY 40592-1658
606-233-9849
http://www.cpn.org/prichard/

SOUTHERN MAINE PARTNERSHIP

Linking school renewal and teacher develoment, the Southern Maine Partnership is a school-university collaboration that links twenty-seven school districts, two independent schools, two colleges, and the University of Southern Maine. The Partnership's core activities are supported by member dues, while projects are supported by grants and gifts. Good publications on school quality review and learner-centered accountability.

Southern Maine Partnership
University of Southern Maine
37 College Avenue
Gorham, Maine 04038-1083
207-780-5670
http://www.usm.maine.edu/~coe/smp/

WESTED–WESTERN ASSESSMENT COLLABORATIVE

WestEd is a nonprofit research, development and service agency dedicated to improving education and other opportunities for children, youth and adults. Drawing on the best from research and practice, they work with practitioners and policymakers to address critical issues in education and other related areas: from early childhood intervention to school-to-work transition; from curriculum, instruction and assessment to safe schools and communities.

WestEd
730 Harrison St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-565-3031
http://www.wested.org/wested/about.html