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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVICE LEARNING INITIATIVE: THE ROLE OF TEACHER COACHES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BY

ELIZABETH F. CONLON

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2001

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# DEDICATION

For Ben and Erika

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## ABSTRACT

The growth of service learning during the past two decades is testimony to this method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in service experiences. Legislative initiatives have supported schools in their efforts to involve youth with their local communities through service linked to academic study. In 1984, 9 percent of all high schools offered some form of service learning. By 1999, 46 percent of public high schools alone were using service learning activities (Kleiner and Chapman 1999). At the same time, service learning studies are complicated by the subject's broad-based goals, the varying contexts and age groups employed, and outcomes often difficult to measure.

This dissertation examines the challenges facing Chicago's public high schools as they begin to implement a new service learning requirement. The role of service learning coach provides focus as implementation is examined at three levels of operation: the district, the local school, and the community service site. The Chicago experience offers important implications for creating high quality service learning in urban public schools.

Two themes in implementation literature were explored in examining the Chicago service learning initiative: first, how capacity and constraints at various levels within school districts can define resource allocation, and second, the impact of teacher belief systems on policy implementation.

These areas were chosen in an effort to understand the process in which service learning policy originates and the degree to which successful implementation is determined by commitment to that policy. This study combines quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to analyze the extent to which a small sample of three high schools implement the components of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) service learning requirement during the first year. In addition, surveys of coaches and students from a larger study, provide a measure of district-wide implementation.

The data analyzed for this study was designed to both capture what happened during the first year of the CPS service learning initiative and to identify strategies for strengthening similar initiatives. A discussion of policy implications includes several themes related to the role of service learning coach, including: impact of outside partners on local school programs; links between service experiences and academic goals; choices students make in selecting projects; monitoring quality control in varied service sites; collective good and private good in service projects; and the importance of context in assessing the impact of service learning programs.

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## *NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SERVICE LEARNING*

In 1997, when the Chicago Board of Education mandated the incorporation of service learning into the high school curriculum, the city became part of a growing national trend. In 1999, The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 64 percent of all public schools, including 83 percent of public high schools, had students participating in community service activities recognized by and/or arranged through the school (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Grounded in John Dewey's (1916,1938) work on experiential methods of education, service learning can be traced to Kilpatrick's (1918) "project method," which argued for educational settings outside the school and a curriculum that met real community needs. In the decades that following World War I, advocates of school-based community service or service learning met with varying degrees of success, reflecting the changing political climate and belief in the power of education to affect social change (Conrad and Hedin, 1991).

In the 1970's service learning re-emerged as a means of revitalizing life in the schools and engaging the country's youth, who were perceived as uninterested, if not hostile, toward politics and public issues (Boyte, 1991).

During the past decade, service learning has expanded as a result of legislative reforms beginning with the 1990 National and Community Service Act which

provided funding to encourage community service programs from kindergarten through college. The legislation mandated increasing federal appropriations from $62 million in 1991 to $95.5 million in 1992 and to $105 million in 1993. During this period, a number of programs were established to support community service, among them: The Points of Light Foundation, Teach for America, and Serve-America (Ridgell, 1994).

The 1993 National and Community Service Trust Act created separate funding streams for school and community-based programs, establishing an important distinction between community service and service learning. The new legislation established the Learn and Serve program, which modified and expanded the original Serve-America and put new emphasis on service learning. The primary purpose of Learn and Serve is to link service in the community by school-aged youth with a structured learning experience. Funding increased from approximately $16 million for Serve-America to $30 million for Learn and Serve. In 1994-95, the first year of the program, Learn and Serve supported over 2000 local efforts involving 750,000 school-aged youth compared to the 434,000 youth funded under Serve-America just one year earlier (Melchior et al., 1997).

The Chicago initiative represents the largest school system in the country to require service learning for all high school students and offers a significant opportunity to study implementation in a large urban school district. The service learning requirement applies to all students beginning with the freshman class of 1997. CPS launched the initiative with a mandate that pilot groups of 50 to 100 students in each high school begin to accumulate the 40 hours of service necessary to graduate. One teacher or staff member in each high school was selected by the principal as a service learning coach.

## *SCHOOL REFORM AND SERVICE LEARNING IN CHICAGO*

During a 1997 visit to Chicago, President Clinton directed national attention to the city's public school system by declaring, "I want what is happening in Chicago to happen all over America." Praising reform measures such as academic standards, mandatory summer school, and abolishment of social promotion, the president said, "What is working in Chicago must blow like a wind of change into every city in every school in America (Fornek 1997)." Chicago's school reform efforts can be traced to the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act which shifted decision-making authority from a central bureaucracy to the local school level.

With passage of this groundbreaking legislation, principals, teachers, parents, and community members gained greater control and more responsibility for what happened in their schools. Implementing school reform measures, however, proved to be a slow process. It was 1991 before all of Chicago's schools began improvement efforts, having chosen principals and elected Local School Councils. Early studies of school reform in Chicago centered upon the city's elementary schools. Organizations such as the Consortium on Chicago School Research tracked and helped shape school reform through studies and surveys of students and teachers.

System-wide restructuring of the city's 77 high schools began with the 1996 High School Redesign Project. Recommendations for transforming Chicago's public high schools were embodied in the document, *Chicago Public Schools Design for High Schools*, adopted by the Board of Education in 1997. Its basic framework consists of five key elements to be incorporated into individual high school improvement plans as illustrated in Table 1.1.

| Table 1.1 | |
|---|---|
| Basic Framework for High School Redesign | |
| *Key Element* | *Initiatives Related to Redesign* |
| Academic Accountability | Standards, curricular core and other graduation requirements, assessment system |
| Student Development | Student advisory system, community service learning, character development |
| Uplift Programs | Summer bridge, transition centers, school-based academic support |
| Advanced Academics | Advanced Placement (AP) courses, CPS Scholars programs, Prospective International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, magnet high schools, Project Excel, College Bridge |
| Paths to Success | Junior Academy—grades 9-10 (basic Foundation); Senior Academy—grades 11-12 (pathways options: college preparation, college placement plus, accelerated college education, career tech plus, school-to–career, or independent living skills); graduation |

Source: CPS, *Design for High Schools*, p.3

The service learning graduation requirement forms part of the design for Student Development. Originally named Community Service Learning, the new requirement is described as one:

> ...that couples academic learning in content areas with experiential learning through active participation in community activities and/or projects. Participation enhances students' intellectual growth, social and moral development, and sense of civic responsibility. While there are a number of ways to approach this initiative, good service learning programs meet a recognized need in the community, reinforce skills and knowledge learned in school, achieve curricular goals and objectives, provide opportunities for reflection and analysis, and develop student responsibility.
>
> When service learning works, teachers and students can transform the traditional classroom. Students take on new responsibilities in and out of school, and fruitful relationships grow between schools and communities. Most importantly, students begin to understand their roles as contributing and participating citizens of the community, the country, and the world (CPS, *Design for High Schools*, p. 54).

## *A MEASURE OF DISTRICT-WIDE CAPACITY: 1999 SURVEYS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS*

The Chicago School Reform Act generated enormous interest in local school improvement efforts. As a result, there was a need to gather valid and objective information about school reform and individual school communities. In 1991, representatives from a variety of educational organizations collaborated as the Consortium on Chicago School Research in developing a survey to measure teachers' views on school reform. *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* (1991) was the first in a series of surveys sponsored by the Consortium. The surveys would come to include teachers and students at both elementary and high school levels. The results are designed to provide CPS with useful information to guide improvement efforts and to offer relevant data to assess Chicago's progress .

During the 1998-99 academic year, the first year of the CPS service learning requirement, 350 elementary schools and 45 high schools participated in two Consortium sponsored surveys. The surveys, *Improving Chicago Schools: The Students Speak, 1999* and *Improving Chicago Schools: The Teachers Turn, 1999* were administered to sixth-, seventh-, eighth-, ninth-, and tenth-grade students and elementary and high school teachers during the spring of 1999[1]. According to the Consortium, "The purpose of the study was to collect reliable information on students' and teachers' views of the school environment, classroom learning, parent involvement, school governance, and the professional life of teachers."

The high school data targets the same group of students who participated in service learning pilot groups during the same period. Two of the scales included

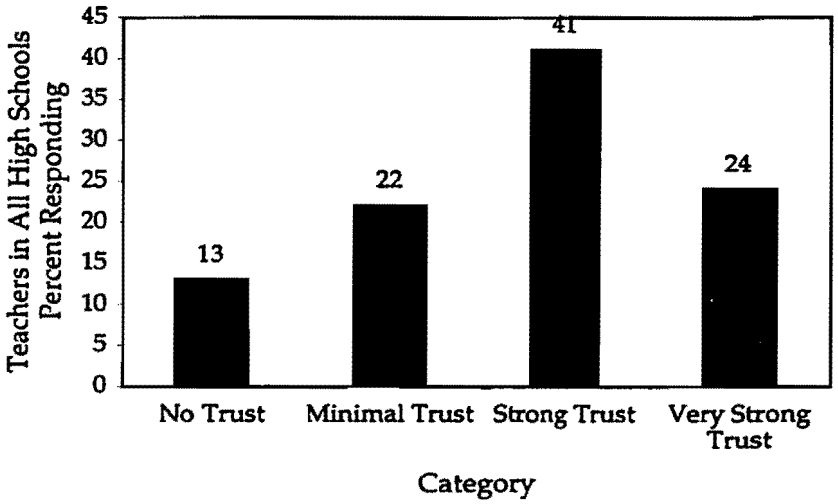
[1] Descriptions of survey scales, and the vertical bar figures included here, come from information included in the 1999 survey results compiled by the Consortium on Chicago School Research.

in the student survey, those dealing with social conscience and community resources, reflect similar themes in this study. The survey of high school teachers also incorporates various scales which relate to issues of service learning implementation discussed here, including: school leadership, parent and community partnerships, and professional development. A discussion of the citywide average response on those scales follows. This section concludes with a brief analysis of how the results offer insight into how contextual influences may have impacted service learning implementation in Chicago.

*School Leadership*

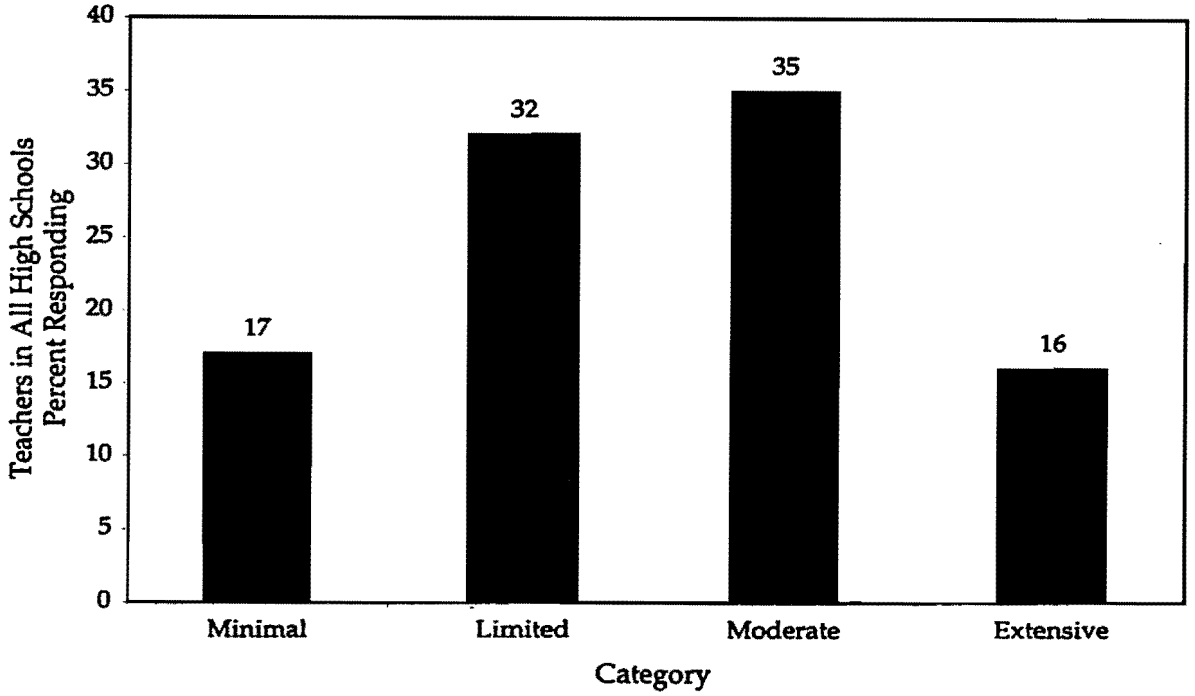
The Consortium's 1999 survey includes six scales that measure teachers' perceptions of school governance. Two of these scales, Teacher-Principal Trust and Teacher Influence, are discussed here. The first measures the extent to which teachers trust and respect the principal and feel reciprocal respect and support Teachers were asked if their principal looks out for the welfare of teachers and has confidence in their expertise, and if they respect the principal as an educator. A high score on this scale would indicate that teachers and the principal share a high level of mutual trust and respect. Figure 1.1 illustrates that more than half of the high school teachers surveyed feel good about the relationship between teachers and the principal with 24 percent noting very strong trust and another 41 percent describing strong trust. A little more than one third of high school teachers surveyed describe minimal or no trust between teachers and principals.

**Figure 1.1**
High School Teacher Responses on Teacher-Principal Trust Citywide, 1999




One could argue that the next scale, Teacher Influence, serves as a manifestation of teacher-principal trust. The items on this scale measure the extent to which teachers are involved in making decisions about a wide range of activities within schools. But, as Figure 1.2 illustrates, teachers are more evenly divided on this scale. Just over half of high school teachers feel that they have moderate or extensive influence over decision making in their school. Even then, 35 percent describe their influence as moderate rather than extensive. In high schools where teachers have less influence, the most common category is limited influence, but 17 percent of teachers feel they have minimal influence.

**Figure 1.2**
High School Teacher Responses on Teacher Influence Citywide, 1999




***Professional Development and Collaboration***

The Consortium's 1999 survey of teachers includes eleven different scales intended to measure various aspects of the professional life of teachers. The survey questions that make up these scales address issues of community, workplace, and professional development. These themes also feature prominently in service learning implementation. Incorporating service learning into the curriculum requires a cooperative effort by the local school community.

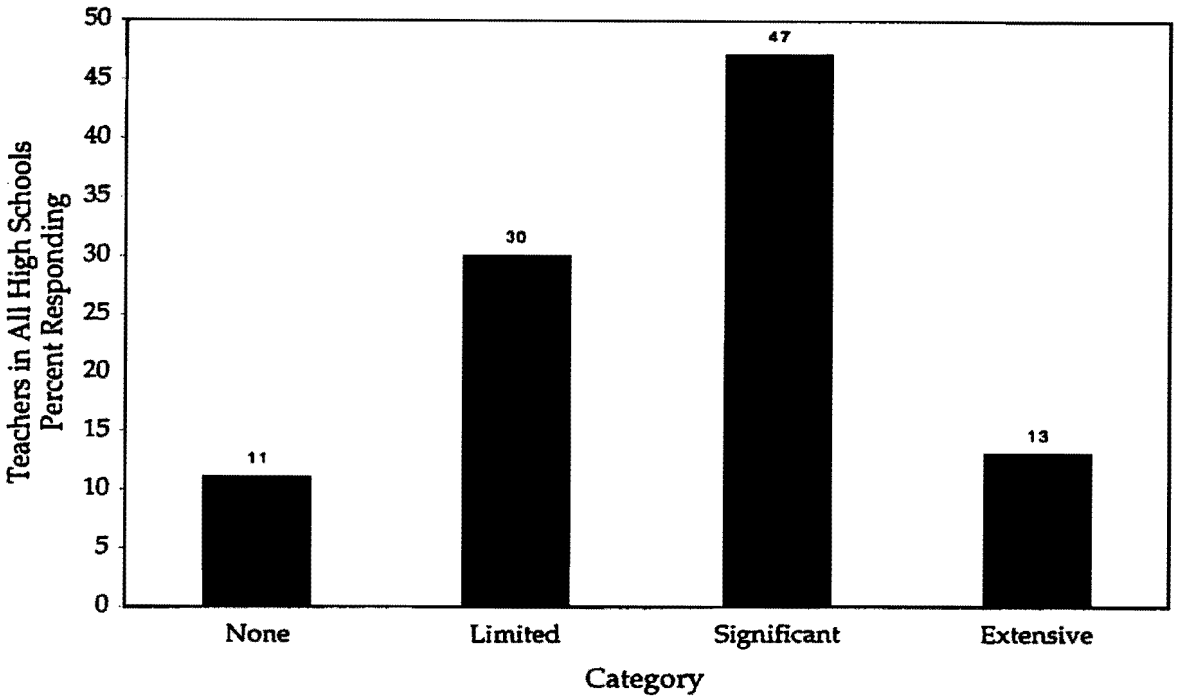
The scale measuring Peer Collaboration reflects the extent of a cooperative work ethic among staff. Teachers were asked about the quality of relations among the faculty, whether school staff coordinate teaching and learning across grades, and

whether they share efforts to design new instructional programs. A high score on this scale indicates that teachers move beyond just cordial relations to actively working together. Where there is a high degree of peer collaboration there is potential for teachers to develop deeper understandings of student, each other, and their profession.

As Figure 1.3 shows, over half of Chicago's high school teachers reported high levels of peer collaboration, with 60 percent noting extensive or significant levels. Still, a large number of teachers reported fewer collaborative efforts at their schools. Among the city's high school teachers that year, 30 percent reported limited peer collaboration and 11 percent reported that there was none at all.

The CPS service learning requirement was part of a 1996 plan to redesign the city's high schools. Teachers had been adjusting to various changes in the high schools for two years by the time the service learning requirement arrived in 1998. The implementation of service learning was facilitated in schools where change was supported. The scale which measures Support for Change assesses the support that teachers sense from their principal and colleagues for change in the school. Teachers were asked, for example, if their principal encourages them to take risks and try new methods of instruction, and the extent to which the whole faculty embraces change. A high score on this scale indicates a schoolwide environment supportive of change.

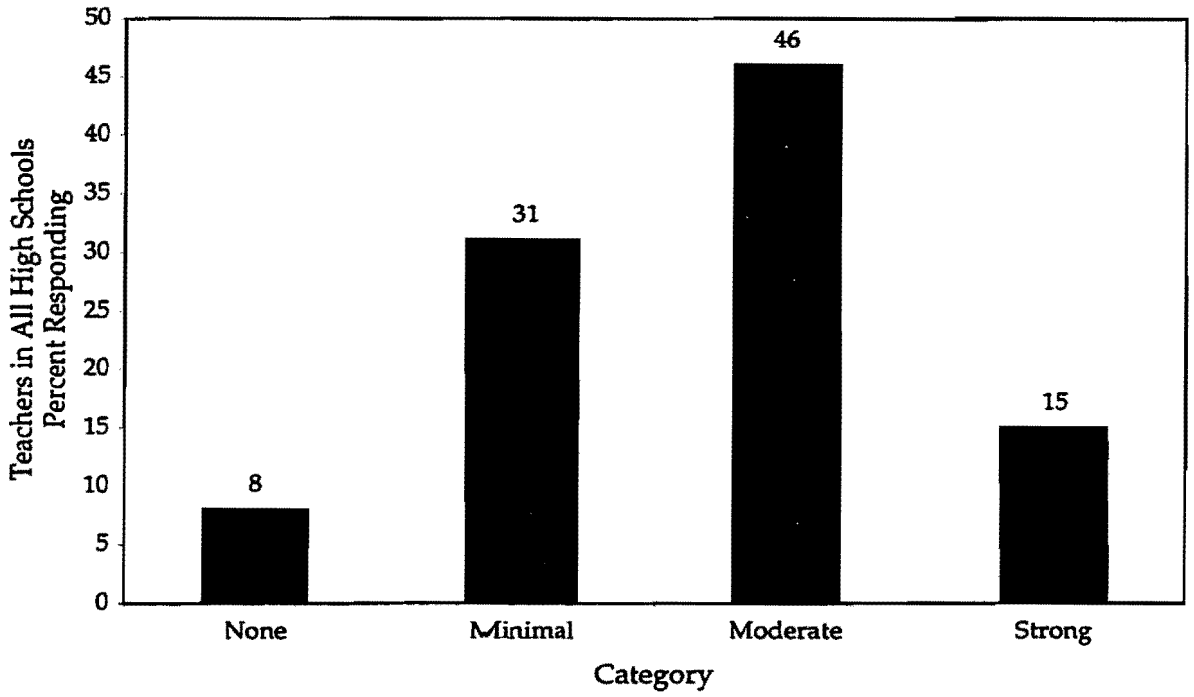
**Figure 1.3**
High School Teacher Responses on Peer Collaboration, Citywide, 1999




A majority (61 percent) of high school teachers, as depicted in Figure 1.4, reported feeling at least some support for change. But again, teachers' views on this important resource were mixed with 39 percent of teachers describing minimal or no support for change in their schools.

One of the key findings of this study is the impact of quality professional development on service learning implementation. Service learning coaches, unfamiliar with experiential methods, found it difficult to incorporate service learning into the curriculum. Classroom teachers received little, if any, professional development, connected to service learning. Findings from the Consortium's 1999 study continue to create controversy regarding the effectiveness of professional development for Chicago teachers (Martinez 2001).

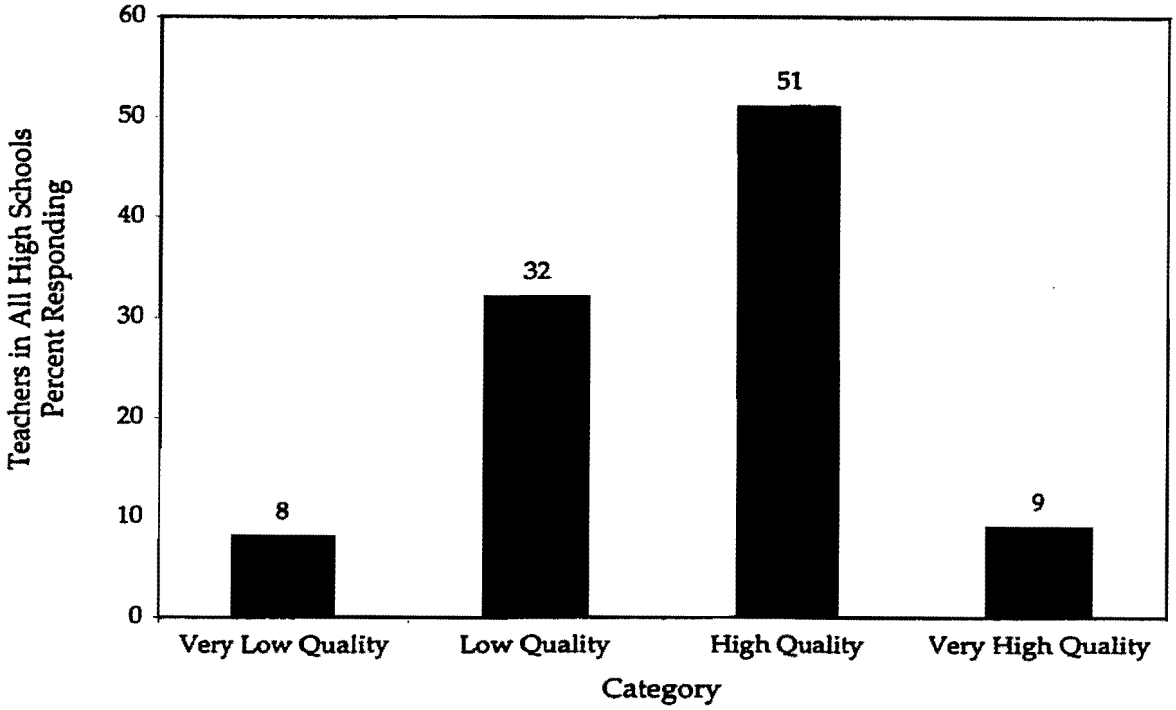
**Figure 1.4**
High School Teacher Responses on Support for Change Citywide, 1999




The survey's scale on Quality Professional Development asks a range of questions including whether their professional development experiences influenced their teaching practices, helped them understand their students better, and provided them opportunities to work with colleagues and teachers from other schools. Teachers involved in comprehensive professional development would score high on this measure.

Figure 1.5 shows that 60 percent of high school teachers gave positive ratings to professional development. But 51 percent rated their experiences in the high category, rather than very high quality. Of some concern, is the 40 percent of high school teachers who rated their professional development experiences as

**Figure 1.5**
High School Teacher Responses on Quality Professional Development Citywide, 1999




low quality or very low quality. A researcher involved with the study remarked, "We think the data is serious enough to warrant a very hard look at professional development in Chicago."

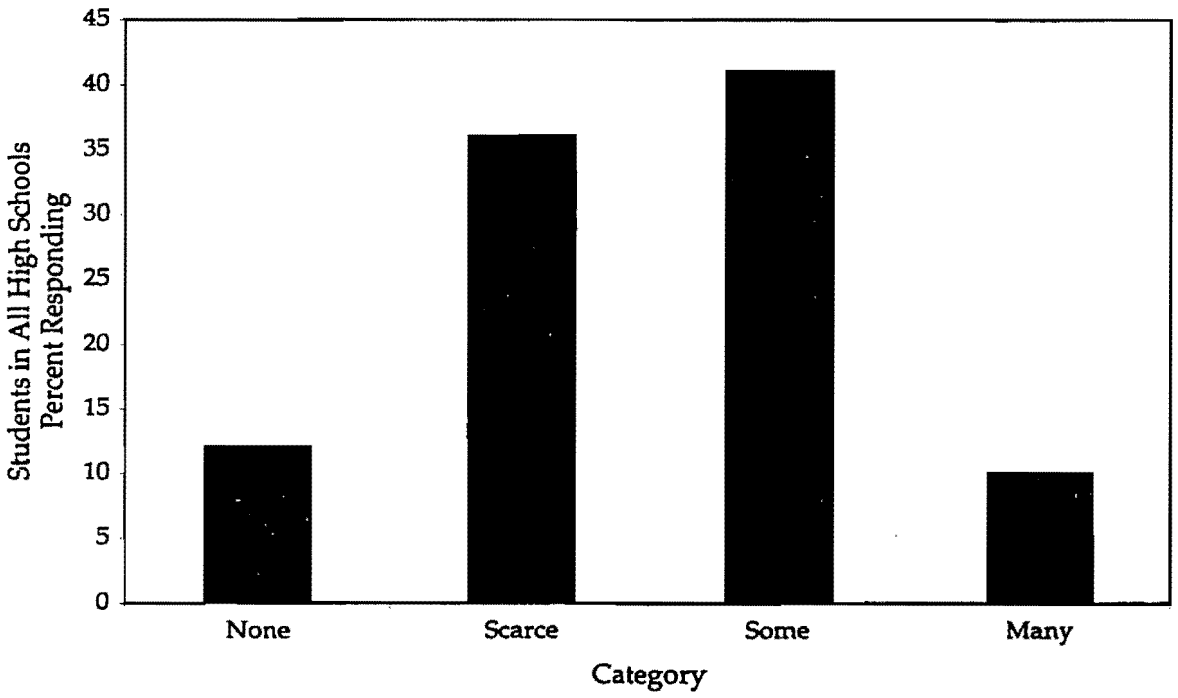
### *Student Views and Outcomes*

Student views form an essential part of the Consortium's 1999 study. The nineth- and tenth-graders involved in the high school portion of the study offer insight into organizational capacity as they began to participate in service learning activities. One of the goals of service learning is to integrate youth into the life of the community. The Chicago initiative was meant, "to foster the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of responsible citizenship." Student views of community were reflected in the scale which measures Human and Social Resources in the

Community. This scale assesses how much students trust and rely on neighbors and community members and whether the neighbors know and care about the students and each other.

Figure 1.6 depicts a somewhat dismal picture of how students view their communities. Barely half (51 percent) of the students say that human and social resources in the community are available with only 10 percent of those reporting in the category of many resources. Almost half (48 percent) of the students say human and social resources are scarce or absent.

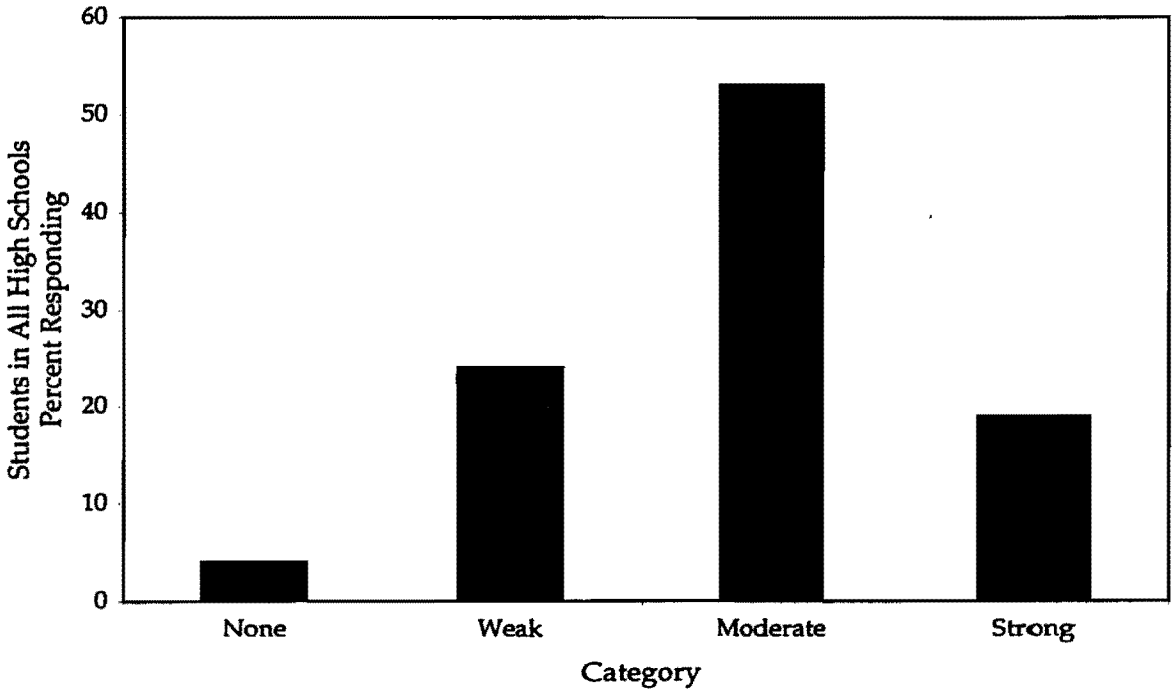
**Figure 1.6**
High School Student Responses on Human and Social Resources in the Community, Citywide in 1999




Part of the profile of Student Outcomes includes social attitudes and behavior. The scale of Social Competence examines whether students feel they can help people end arguments; listen carefully to what others say; and share, help, and

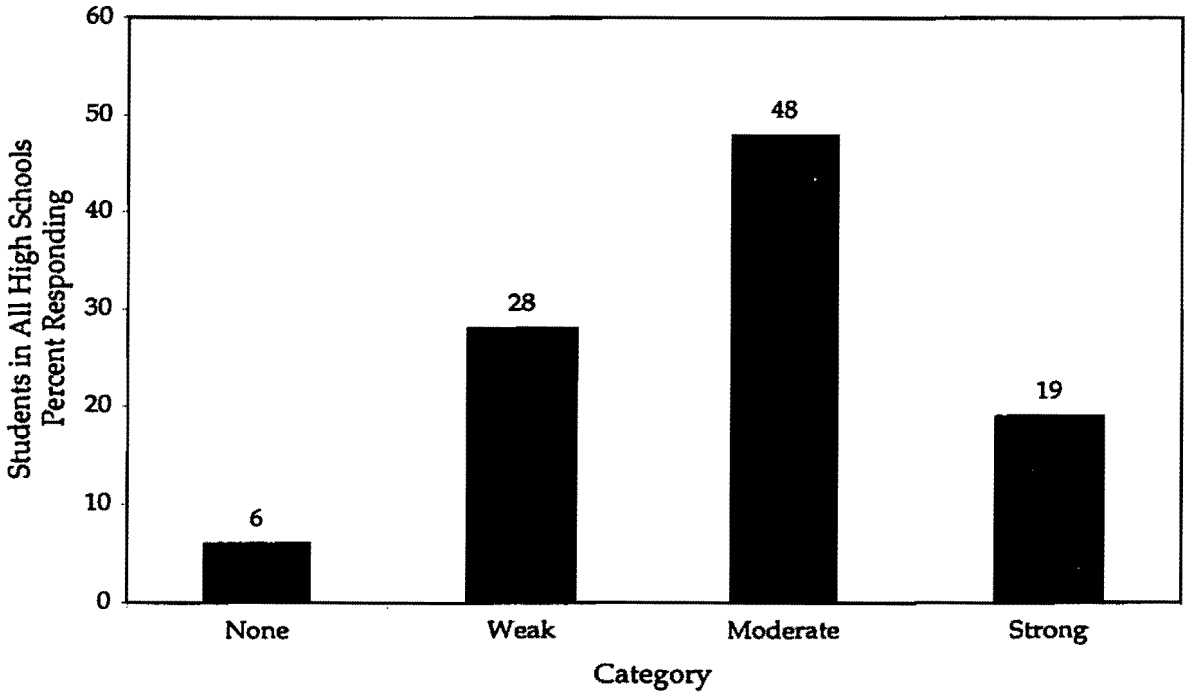
work well with other students. A high score means that students feel competent to deal with a wide range of social situations. The scale of Social Conscience gauges students' concern for others and their inclination to help solve others' problems. A high score means that students have a strong social commitment. On both of these scales, high school students showed little differentiation, as shown in Figures 1.7 and 1.8.

**Figure 1.7**
High School Student Response on Social Competence Citywide, 1999




The most prevalent category shows moderate levels of both social competence (53 percent) and social conscience (48 percent). The second largest group of students on both scales report weak levels of social competence (24 percent) and social conscience (28 percent). Student views of community and their social

**Figure 1.8**
High School Student Responses on Social Conscience Citywide, 1999




attitudes would be reflected in their initial resistance to the service learning requirement. Complaints about hostile neighborhoods and the involuntary nature of the requirement were commonplace among students during the first year of the initiative.

The results of the two surveys reported here, *Improving Chicago Schools: The Students Speak, 1999* and *Improving Chicago Schools: The Teachers Turn, 1999* suggested the following observations regarding organizational capacity. Both teachers and students brought various resources to the initiative. The levels of those resources would have a direct impact on service learning implementation during the same period. The scales discussed in this section suggest:

- The relatively high measures of teacher-principal trust are not reflected in the degree of influence that teachers wield in their schools. This study found similar support for principals but little evidence that such support was reciprocal.
- Support for change and peer collaboration would play important roles during the first year of service learning implementation. The primary complaint among service learning coaches was their inability to engage classroom teachers in working to integrate service learning into the curriculum. The survey, sponsored by the Consortium, shows limited peer collaboration and mixed support for change. District-wide capacity for these important resources would be reflected in limited implementation at the local school level.
- On the measure of quality professional development, Chicago high school teachers report tepid response to their professional development experiences. This study found varying levels of quality professional development present during the first year of the initiative. But the findings support survey results: high quality professional development was rare and often presented by agency partners outside CPS.
- At best, the measures of student social attitudes revealed moderate levels of both social competence and social conscience. Students' poor assessment of the human and social resources available to them in the community would prove another challenge as the district began implementing service learning. One could argue, that while the dismal results on the student scales present obstacles to service learning, they also justify the need for just such a requirement.

## *PROBLEM STATEMENT*

The role of the teacher coach is a major factor in the design of the CPS service learning initiative. The selection, training, and performance of service learning coach forms the essential framework for implementation during the first year. This dissertation examines how the role of coach develops and how it, combined with other contextual elements, leads to varying degrees of implementation within the district.

In 1997, the CPS Service Learning Task Force identified the following general duties for service learning coaches:

- Conducts a school and community needs and resource assessment, with assistance from staff, students, and community residents, for the purpose of developing local service learning projects.
- Coordinates service learning projects with community agencies and works directly with the agency contact person(s) to ensure a quality experience for the students.
- Builds partnerships with teachers to coordinate planning for cross-curricular projects and monitoring students' progress toward completion of their projects.
- Attends all service learning professional development activities as required.
- Maintains accurate, updated records on students' progress toward completion of the service learning requirement for graduation.
- Reports directly to the principal or assigned designee.

If the goal of CPS is to build a quality-based program of service learning, then service learning coaches should meet these outcomes. If coaches are unable to perform the duties expected of them, then students may miss opportunities for quality service learning experiences. A status report by the Chicago Panel on School Policy (1999) looked at 20 high schools midway into the first year of the initiative and reported that coaches were feeling overwhelmed by the addition of their new duties, schools were reporting insufficient funding to implement service learning, and a majority of coaches reported difficulty recruiting classroom teachers in efforts to integrate service learning into the curriculum.

Similar findings were reported by *Catalyst*, a journal which monitors school reform in Chicago. Coaches or administrators at 35 schools were interviewed

during the same period and only 10 said service learning was being integrated into the curriculum (Williams 1999). Yet, as the first year of the initiative came to a close, a system-wide survey of coaches found the majority of them still supportive of the imitative. Despite inadequate resources of time and collegial support, 87 percent of service learning coaches said they planned to continue in their role the following year. (Kahne 1999). This study analyzes the role of coach during the first year of the CPS initiative to better understand what appears to be a dichotomy between the challenges and the rewards in implementing the new service learning mandate.

## *RESEARCH AGENDA*

The conceptual framework presented in this study focuses on two compelling approaches to educational program implementation and school change processes. The first, a resource allocation model, examines how local and system-wide capacity impacts the development of the coach's role. The second, a belief system model, analyzes the psychic rewards intrinsic to teaching as a means of understanding how coaches influence the quality of students' experiences. With these two theoretical models guiding the analysis of the data, the following research questions were developed for this study:

- Does knowledge, skill, or motivation of the coach contribute to the degree of implementation?
- What connections exist between degrees of implementation and a coach's personal history in the school or his/her social role within the institution?
- What kinds of contextual resources are necessary to support effective action by a coach?
- What were coaches' attitudes and expectations regarding service learning?

- What were students' feelings about their service learning experiences?
- What factors contribute to the quality of service learning experiences?

On the methodological side, case studies of three Chicago high schools were developed based on classroom and service-site observations; observations of teachers' professional interactions and staff development activities; in-depth interviews of teachers, students, administrators, and community representatives; and archival and documentary data. In addition, data from a larger study commissioned by CPS provides a measure of district-wide implementation. That data includes a survey of service learning coaches and a student survey. The coaches' survey includes a wide array of measures such as descriptions of coaches and programs, sources of support, and outcomes for students. This survey, as well as a survey of 268 students who participated in service learning activities, expand the data and increase generalizability of the findings.

# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## *SERVICE LEARNING: AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION*

The amorphous nature of service learning reflects the many forms and settings in which it is found. While the terms "community service" and "service learning" are often used interchangeably, the distinction is an important one. Chapin (1999) views definition problems as one reason advocates of service learning lack an adequate research base to justify service learning. She maintains that service learning and community service differ in purpose or objective. The goal of community service is social responsibility or character development while service learning seeks to increase civic skills. For some, civic skills are as simple as the willingness to vote and participate in community organizations. Others, like Kahne and Westheimer (1996), view civic skills as a means to social reconstruction:

> Citizenship in a democratic community requires more than kindness and decency; it requires engagement in complex social and institutional endeavors. Acts of civic duty cannot replace government programs or forms of collective social action. Citizenship requires that individuals work to create, evaluate, criticize, and change public institutions and programs (p.597).

With this in mind, a service learning curriculum might include such tools of citizenry as: public speaking, recruiting other students, organizing meetings, analyzing problems, developing action plans, and conducting evaluations.

Chapin cites Niemi and Chapman (1998) as identifying five factors which constitute civic skills: levels of political knowledge, attention to politics, political participatory skills, degrees of political efficacy, and tolerance of diversity.

One of the most widely endorsed definitions views service learning as a method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform 1993). This definition, while being broad enough to satisfy the diverse needs of students and communities, creates another obstacle for researchers by allowing a wide range of activities under the rubric of service learning.

Efforts to establish service learning standards are increasing as emerging studies begin to focus on service learning implementation. Swanson (2000) compares the Chicago initiative with a similar program in Philadelphia using eleven elements developed in 1998 by the National Service-Learning Cooperative (NSLC). These elements, which Swanson cites as the most current regarding high-quality service learning, include the familiar litany of preparation, reflection, collaboration, and integrated learning. The standards established by NSLC also focus on other elements which have not received as much attention in the past including the need for clear educational goals, assessment, maximizing student voice, and the value of promoting diversity in service learning programs.

Faced with the lack of a single clear accepted definition of service learning, and for the purposes of this study, the following standards, established by CPS for its service learning initiative, provide an operational definition. In describing ways to integrate service and learning, schools were offered the following: "Projects

can be designed for individuals, small partnerships, classrooms, or entire schools. Each project should include preparation, action, and opportunities for reflection. Ideally, a project will:

- meet actual community needs
- be carefully coordinated between school and community
- provide structured time for students to think, talk, write, and make presentations about their experiences
- be integrated into the academic curriculum
- foster the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of responsible citizenship
- provide opportunities to use academic skills in real-life situations" (CPS, *Service Learning*, p.9)

## *CONCEPTUAL THEMES*

### Service Learning and the Informed Citizen

Service learning finds historic roots wherein democracy, growth, and education are interrelated. In addition to safeguarding liberty during the early years, education was also adapted to solve problems. Kaestle (1983) provides the example of the American Northeast, which saw tremendous growth in industry during the period 1830-1860. Commercial success was accompanied by the cultural and economic problems of the very immigration that fed it. Nineteenth century immigrants and native-born Americans alike looked to education for a solution. Through education would come assimilation, if not always equal opportunity (pp.64-72).

In the fledgling republic, liberty was intrinsically imbedded in social contexts. American barn raisings were more than acts of kindness but rather opportunities

to extend the neighborhood and enhance the public community, "The language of citizenship suggests that self-interests are always imbedded in communities of action and that in serving neighbors one also serves oneself (Barber, 1992 p. 249)."

During the Twentieth century, the work of John Dewey (1916,1938) formed the theoretical framework to understand how service can stimulate academic and social development through action which benefits others. Dewey's conviction that individuals should work together toward common goals and his belief that curriculum should reflect the needs of the community are recurrent themes in both historical and contemporary interpretations of service learning. Dewey (1916) believed that knowledge accrued as the individual experienced the world. He also maintained that change was inevitable in an unsettled world. In this world of change, the job of education would involve the interpretation and reconstruction of experience. As the Progressive movement took hold during the 1930's and 1940's educators like Ralph Tyler (1949) would support the value of analyzing contemporary life to identify learning objectives for the school.

Today, these theories seem perfectly matched to a world where information seems to grow exponentially. The call is for an informed citizen characterized by a capacity for critical analysis (Schudson, 1995 Brown, 1996). It includes action within a community, "... having a world view coherent enough to order the buzz of information around us, and having enough personal involvement with people, ideas, and issues beyond our private worlds to absorb and use information...(Schudson, p.169)." The discussion comes full circle when Fullan (1993) reminds us that education is the one institution with the potential for

contributing to this goal: a society equipped to deal with change because its citizens are critical thinkers and problem solvers (p.4).

## Service Learning and School Reform

As an educational program that seeks to promote students' learning through experiences associated with community service (Sheckley and Keeton 1997), service learning finds a comfortable niche within the current wave of school reform which is characterized by decentralization, moral purpose, and collaboration between school and community. Service learning represents an effort to engage youth in ways quite different from most academic learning. As Joan Shine explains in her forward to a collection of essays on the subject, "Definitions of 'Service Learning' vary widely but none of them draws on *A Nation at Risk* (The National Society for the Study of Education, 1997)."

She refers to the highly individualistic, competitive emphasis on learning which marked school reform during the 1980's and into the 1990's. The school reform movement today includes room for what Kahne (1996) calls the communitarian perspective, which stresses, "... the benefits of harmonious, cohesive, and supportive communities in which individuals share goals and obligations (p. 25)." Within this perspective, education has transformative potential to create individuals willing to invest in the public good, even when it might sometimes contradict personal preferences.

A Report from the Council of Chief State School Officers (1997) cites a number of reasons why service learning contributes to school improvement, including:

- Service learning is an adaptable process and not a curriculum; it does not compete with the standard curriculum. Rather, it

supports and deepens curricular improvement and involvement for all students.

- Service learning enhances school-community partnerships, one of the most productive education renewal strategies.
- Service learning presents students with issues and problems that cannot be neatly pigeonholed, thereby encouraging them to "think outside the boxes."
- Because service learning requires participants to think across the boundaries of traditional disciplines, students become more adept at integrating their learning and applying it concretely — a core learning goal.
- Service learning places students in real-world learning environments where the skills of cooperation and collaboration — highly prized in the world of work — are required for attacking problems and finding solutions.
- Service learning encourages students to operate effectively in learning environments marked by social and cultural diversity.

It is ironic then that the school reform movement itself can present barriers to service learning implementation. Bhaerman, Cordell, and Gomez (1998), in discussing obstacles to integrating service learning into the K-12 curriculum, point out that increasing emphasis within school reform on standardized tests and the achievement of academic standards leave little space in the curriculum for elective and exploratory classes. This certainly was the case in the implementation of the Chicago service learning initiative. Coaches, teachers, and administrators voiced frustration with competing duties to satisfy course requirements and service learning objectives while preparing students for annual standardized testing.

## Service Learning and Social Capital

Service learning taps into the American penchant for getting involved which Bellah and his colleagues (1985) have documented in *Habits of the Heart*. He records the community involvement of a group of diverse Americans which transforms them from volunteer to citizen. They share "a generosity of spirit" which enables them to acknowledge an interconnectedness that binds them to others in the community. This commitment to the public good is not necessarily a comfortable position. Bellah describes one individual's efforts with environmental issues:

> Like most Americans, she does not enjoy the conflict that ensues when she takes a strong stand. She does not even enjoy the task of persuading others of the rightness of her views, a routine aspect of her political work...in the end, it is her commitment to the longer run and wider vision that keeps her going (pp. 193-194).

Generosity of spirit and respect for the public good are attributes that some see lacking in our youth. Taking voter turnout as a measure of civic participation, Barber (1992) worries, "... less than one-fifth of the eighteen-to twenty-four-year old population voted in recent congressional elections, which is less than half of the 47 percent of the general population that voted (p.195)." Youniss and Yates (1997) suggest that age segregation, illustrated by separate spheres of school and work for youth and adults contributes to youth's distancing from the larger society. Population diversity, coupled with residential segregation, can also alienate youth. The children of recent immigrants, according to Massey and Denton (1993), interact most closely with minority youth who are least likely to espouse mainstream culture. By contrast, parents, both native and foreign-born want schools to teach about American values. Citing a recent survey, political journalist Georgie Anne Geyer (2000) reports, "... by 79 percent to 18 percent,

parents of all races and ethnicities favored emphasis on pride in and learning about America over focusing on pride in their own ethnic groups' identity and heritage (p. 27)." In an increasingly diverse America, service learning has the potential to placate those who embrace that diversity and the other side who fear the loss of an American culture.

One of the goals of service learning is to engage youth in the kind of vital and predominant civic culture that many remember from the recent past but which seems to elude us today. James Coleman's work on social capital offers the basis often used to support the role of service learning in revitalizing America's civic community. Coleman (1988) defines social capital by its function: "Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible (p. 598)."

Social capital is created through close ties, through family, community, and religious affiliation. Coleman provides the example of the Jewish wholesale diamond market in New York, where one merchant will hand over a bag of diamonds to be examined in private by the prospective buyer. The merchant is not worried that any diamonds will be stolen or substituted with inferior stones because both actors, merchant and buyer, are part of a closed community where such a crime would mean loss of family, religious, and community ties. Similarly, in his study of modern Italy, Putnam (1993) attributes the success of democratic institutions there to the accumulation of social capital, "The greater the level of trust within a community, the greater the likelihood of cooperation. And cooperation itself breeds trust (p. 717).

One of the challenges to the creation of civic community is this aspect of public good illustrated in *Habits of the Heart*. As Coleman points out, social capital lacks the direct benefits to the actor which accompanies other forms of capital. This leads to underinvestment in social capital. The challenge has never been greater for as Coleman reminds us:

> ...strong families and strong communities are much less often present now than in the past, and promise to be even less present in the future, we can expect that we confront a declining quantity of human capital embodied in each successive generation (p 118).

Service learning can provide the kind of formal organizations that Coleman refers to as a substitute for "the voluntary and spontaneous social organization that has in the past been the major source of social capital available to the young."

## *CHALLENGES TO SERVICE LEARNING*

Service learning is not without opponents. In 1993, Maryland adopted a statewide service learning graduation requirement which prompted some to accuse the state of involuntary servitude, warning that adolescents would be exploited by businesses. The *Wall Street Journal* declared the new Maryland requirement violated child labor laws. Other worried about a decline in productivity because students would take away from paid workers (Ridgell 1994). A *Chicago Sun-Times* telephone poll, responding to the first announcement of Chicago's service learning requirement, showed 45 percent in favor of the new policy and 55 percent opposed. Some arguments against service learning point out that time spent on service projects would be time otherwise available for a paid job or studying. Others complain that top-down mandated requirements

such as Maryland's and Chicago's fly in the face of prevalent reform policies calling for school-based management.

More measured concerns address the quality of service learning programs and the challenge to schools of preparing and guiding students during their service experiences. Boyte (1991) warns that service programs will not reengage students with citizenship until they are encouraged to distinguish between private life and the concept of a public realm; that is, a place where diverse individuals learn to work together to solve common problems. He calls for a service learning curriculum that includes opportunities for students to reflect on the often complex policy issues that lie behind their person-to-person efforts.

Kahne and Westheimer (1996) refer to the same need for critical analysis in order to move service beyond simple acts of charity. They offer educators a framework for analyzing a variety of goals associated with service learning activities. Practitioners are urged to sort through and clarify the desired goals in order to establish priorities and how these relate to the classroom. Without such efforts, service learning is subject to variations in the focus and quality of the projects such as this 12th-grade program, which according to the researchers, mirrors the design of most of the nation's large scale initiatives:

> Some students became an integral part of an organization; others performed busywork. One student's project was to do chores around the house for her grandmother. Some students spoke of new insights; others did not. There was no meaningful reflective component to this project, it required simply that students submit a one- or two-paragraph summary of their efforts. Their grade depended primarily on the number of hours they volunteered. Thirty hours for an A, 20 for a B, and 10 for a C (p. 598).

## *LINKS TO IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE: A RESOURCE MODEL*

This study uses an implementation perspective to examine the role of coach in the CPS service learning initiative during its first year, 1998-99. The emergence of a large body of implementation research began with studies of the 1960's War on Poverty programs. Odden (1991) describes three stages in the evolution of research on policy implementation. Stage one began with the expansion of intergovernmental grant programs. Research on several programs in the late 1960's and early 1970's addresses early implementation problems and the conflict with local programs that are initiated at federal or state levels. At stage two, which began a decade later, studies focused on program implementation after the initial start-up years and found that programs get implemented, but through a mutual adaptation process. Stage three began in the early 1980's and continues today as research focuses not only on how to get programs implemented but also on issues of program substance, quality, and impact. Two traditional approaches to the study of policy implementation using capacity (a resource model) and will (a belief system model), serve as starting points in examining the CPS service learning policy.

The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 focused national attention on the city and its efforts to create a more decentralized urban school district. And, while the CPS service learning initiative has the benefit of a period of adjustment during the ensuing years, it is likely that implementation will not be without some conflict. A study of the major institutional actors in educational policymaking in the city reveals a complex set of players with a variety of primary concerns, tools available to influence policy, and constraints their actions can impose on the policy process (Wong and Sunderman 1994). The

Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act of 1995 reduces the number of policy actors competing for decision making authority, but does not eliminate conflict. This is demonstrated in a study of implementation processes at play as two high schools struggled with the district's probation policy. Wong and Anagnostopoulos (1998) found accommodation and conflict across the multiple levels of school organization — and ultimately, only superficial change in curriculum and instruction.

Using these studies as reference points, Table 2.1 was constructed in an effort to map opportunities for the implementation of high quality service learning in a large urban district like Chicago. The service learning policy in Chicago does not easily fit a traditional model in which authority flows from higher to lower levels and there is shared interest in achieving agency objectives. Rather, it is complicated by varying degrees of knowledge and capacity at all levels of analyses. At the district level, the Board of Education has the power to mandate the new requirement and set the scope of implementation. It then falls to Central Office personnel, in this case a full-time coordinator, to direct activities and provide support. This study found that, despite budgetary and time constraints, the coordinator and his staff did a credible job of providing most of the support services outlined in the preliminary plan for implementation.

It is at the local school level that the service learning initiative faces the most critical challenges. Here, time constraints, conflicting curricular goals, inexperience with service learning methods, opposition to additional requirements, and conflicting student obligations, can present overwhelming obstacles. Several analysts, including McLaughlin (1991a), Fullan (1982), and Huberman

**Table 2.1**

Mapping Opportunities for Service Learning Implementation

| *Levels of Analyses* | *Characteristics of High Quality Service Learning* | *Capacity to Implement Standards* | *Constraints which Challenge Implementation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***(A) District Level*** | | | |
| *Board of Education* | Focus on service learning | Include service learning in comprehensive plan for high school reform | Perception as just another reform measure among many |
| | Formal authority to impose policy | Mandate service learning high school requirement | Public opposition |
| *Central Office* | Recruitment of committed personnel | Assist principals in staff selection for service learning coaches | Selection based on local school politics rather than qualifications |
| | Learning opportunities for key personnel | Conduct regular workshops for coaches | Coaches inexperienced with alternative methods |
| | Staff development at local school level | Offer leadership visibility and information through inservice workshops | Insufficient time and staff to service all high schools |
| | Integration of service learning into curriculum | Develop curriculum guide; lesson plans | Budgetary and time constraints |
| | Technical assistance to simplify record keeping | Develop program to log student service hours | Program not accessible in all schools |
| ***(B) Local School Level*** | | | |
| *Principal* | Leadership to assist compliance with mandate | Integrate service learning into SIP; inform LSC and parents | Time constraints; opposition to additional graduation requirements |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Support for service learning coaches | Provide time for inservice workshops | Conflicting curricular goals |
| *Coaches* | Shared goals | Complete school/community needs assessment | Time Constraints, inexperience with assessment tools |
| | Support for participating classroom teachers | Share expertise of service learning and experiential methods | Time constraints; conflicting curricular goals |
| | Meaningful relationships with service partners | Work with site supervisors to develop program criteria | Conflicting goals at service sites |
| *Participating Teachers* | Learning opportunities for students | Incorporate preparation and reflection into service learning plans | Inexperience with service learning methods; conflicting student obligations |
| | Opportunities for group work | Develop service learning projects as team efforts | Time constraints; inexperience with service learning methods |
| | Projects which reflect shared goals | Share student responses with service partners; integrate service projects into life of school | Conflicting goals at service sites; time constraints |
| ***(C) Community Level*** | | | |
| *Site Supervisor* | Meaningful service | Work with coaches and classroom teachers to develop service opportunities based on real needs | Time constraints; concern for service rather than service learning |
| *Site staff* | Interaction with norm-bearing adults | Model standards and values in interactions with youth | Inexperience; negative perception of youth |

and Miles (1984) argue that issues of program quality and impact are best analyzed at this local, micro-level. The 1978 Rand Study examined a sample of 293 federally funded local projects designed to promote innovative change. The study focused attention at the local level when it found that the outcome of federal policy depended primarily on local factors (Berman and McLaughlin 1978). Variation in capacity at the local school level can help to explain the different abilities of local schools to benefit from the support available at the district level.

How teachers and other public workers cope with varying levels of resources is the subject of the book, *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, by Michael Lipsky (1980). The author looked at the role of teachers, police officers, social workers, public lawyers, health workers, and other public service workers he refers to as street-level bureaucrats. Lipsky found that these workers operate under complex conditions which include a considerable degree of discretion in structuring policy choices. This discretionary judgment can result in noncompliance when street-level bureaucrats' interests differ from those of their superiors. For example, teachers coped with new policy mandates by restricting program objectives, personalizing goals, and controlling time and content of instruction.

The challenge to engage teachers in new policy implementation may be undermined by conflicting objectives on the part of administration and staff as well as the capacity to resist, which is characteristic of the policy making powers of classroom teachers. Lipsky argues that such conflict in inevitable given the differing positions which characterize street-level bureaucrat and managers:

> The role of the street-level bureaucrat is associated with client-processing goals and orientations directed toward maximizing autonomy. Managers'

> roles in this context are associated with worker-management goals directed toward aggregate achievement of the work unit and orientations directed toward minimizing autonomy. Second, it is a relationship of mutual dependence. Thus managers typically attempt to honor workers' preferences if they are rewarded by reciprocity in job performance. To a degree reciprocity will characterize all working relationships; in street-level bureaucracies, however, the resources of lower-level workers are greater than those often possessed by subordinates in other work contexts (p. 25).

The three schools in this study illustrate aspects of the resource model of policy implementation presented in *Street Level Bureaucracy*. They show how capacity at the local school level can affect a school's ability to respond to mandated initiatives. In a district as large as Chicago's, even well planned programs cannot anticipate the myriad characteristics that shape the local school environment. Instruments designed to measure the degree of implementation do not always reflect what is happening inside a school. Staff development does not always reach those most in need. And initiatives, grounded in sound theory of reasonable expectations, can leave participants feeling abandoned. In the stories of these case studies, there is support for a resource model in which service learning coaches cope with the new policy by restricting program objectives, personalizing goals, and controlling time and content of instruction. But findings from a system-wide survey, as well as examples from the case studies, suggest Chicago's service learning coaches were responding to more than resource allocation.

## *LINKS TO IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE: A BELIEF SYSTEM MODEL*

In Table 2.1, the role of service learning coach links implementation at all three levels of analyses. In this study, the impact of service learning coaches on local implementation in Chicago begins with an examination of capacity. On a system-

wide survey (Kahne 1999), 52 percent of service learning coaches reported problems finding sufficient time for implementation. In addition, 49 percent encountered problems in enlisting faculty to help link service learning to the curriculum. Despite these problems, the coaches remained supportive of the initiative. In fact, 89 percent said they considered the new requirement a good thing and 87 percent said they planned to continue as coach the following year.

A belief system model offers one approach to understanding the discrepancy between the demands of being a service learning coach and an individual's willingness to continue in it. According to this model, psychic rewards motivate teachers to take on tasks which hold little extrinsic rewards. Lortie (1975) explains it this way:

> The culture of teachers and the structure of rewards do not emphasize the acquisition of extrinsic rewards. The traditions of teaching make people who seek money, prestige, or power somewhat suspect; the characteristic style in public education is to mute personal ambition. The service ideal has extolled the virtue of giving more than one receives; the model teacher has been 'dedicated' (p.102).

Psychic rewards are subjective, consisting of valuations made by individuals in the context of their work. And contextual change over time can influence the way teachers' view their role. Tracing the evolution of the federal compensatory education program from its inception in 1965 to 1981 when the law was modified, Peterson, Rabe, and Wong (1986) establish three distinct programmatic phases. The initial phase begins with high expectations and vague requirements, leading to regulation and enforcement efforts in the middle phase, and ending with stable expectations and accommodation in the third phase. As programs grow and develop, so too does the role of teacher.

During the late 1970's, the researchers report, Dade County provided a noteworthy example of the effects of a program marked by committed and motivated teachers. The extended day program for elementary students offered additional instruction in reading and mathematics and was recognized as a model for national emulation. It also illustrates the kinds of psychic rewards that fuel teachers in their work:

> 'Instead of six hours a day, we went to eight hours a day of instruction,' explained an administrator active in the pilot program. 'Teachers who were selected had to be experienced, and they had to be believers in the program. Previously, we just hired extra staff and scattered them about.' Classes were kept relatively small, and participating teachers were rotated in and out of the program frequently to limit burnout. In addition to an extra stipend for their efforts they also received special training.
>
> To be asked to teach in the extended day program was considered a recognition of high ability because the program sought out only the district's best teachers to participate. In the earlier period, program personnel lacked prestige and often certification: 'Now, you must be tops to be a Title I teacher,' one leader of a local parent advisory council remarked (p. 48).

Recognition and reward for professional competence is also noted in a study of eight California middle schools, recognized for their accomplishments in implementing state sanctioned reform (Marsh and Crocker 1991). The study found "lead teachers" playing critical roles in implementing local program elements. While all of the schools in the sample had strong principal leadership, in most cases the principal relied upon these lead teachers to affect changes in curriculum and pedagogy within their content area.

The typical profile of these teachers and their professional development offer valuable information regarding local policy implementation. Each of the schools in the study included at least two teachers who were familiar with innovative

programs. They became highly competent through attendance at regional workshops which emphasized new approaches to their subject areas. These workshops, which continued for months, allowed teachers to develop networks with other effective teachers. At this point in their professional growth, the lead teachers begin to try out some of these new approaches and to share their ideas with colleagues. During this second, informal phase of staff development, which lasted from one to three years in the schools studied, the lead teachers convinced a small group of colleagues to try out some of the new instructional approaches. Finally, the role of lead teacher is formalized when they are asked to provide district staff development to teachers in other schools and to serve on district textbook committees.

Implementation analysts continue to focus on the importance of teachers at the local school level. The willingness to support a policy often reflects a teacher's assessment of its value as well as numerous local conditions which include environmental stability and competing priorities. Ten years after the 1978 Rand Study, one of its authors maintained that teacher commitment was still crucial to local policy implementation. However, commitment was now seen as a quality that could respond to mandated involvement at both the individual and system level (McLaughlin 1991b). The idea that belief can follow practice creates a new emphasis on the sustaining role of professional development in nurturing loyalty to policy initiatives. It also casts teachers as important agents in that process.

In the story of the CPS service learning initiative, capacity and teacher commitment are interwoven. Capacity forms part of the culture and surrounding structure at the local school level The degree of resources available afford some teachers the psychic rewards necessary to compensate for demands on time and

energy. Maximizing capacity and teacher commitment will be crucial to the success of the CPS initiative.

At the end of the first year, an evaluation of the new policy predicted that the system needs to increase yearly activity by a factor of 6 (3 times the number of students doing twice the number of hours) to ensure that all students complete the required 40 hours by the time they graduate (Kahne 1999). The Class of 2001 will be the first to grapple with the new requirement. With little room for delay, the Chicago initiative finds resonance in a seminal work on policy implementation.

In Pressman and Wildavsky's (1984) study of the federally funded Oakland Project, probability of the program's success decreased in proportion to the delay created by the multiplicity of participants and perspectives. While none of the participants objected to the goal of creating employment opportunities, a substantial number of delays prevented the program from realizing its potential. The authors argue that delay is partly a function of the intensity of a participant's commitment to a program. Participants intensely committed to a program and strong in resources lead to minimal delay. Those with the opposite characteristics lead to maximal obstruction.

## *IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE AND SERVICE LEARNING*

The research literature, chosen for review, offers few empirical studies that examine the implementation of service learning programs. Most studies such as the national evaluation of Learn and Serve programs (Melchior et al. 1997,) focus on fully implemented programs and often concentrate on measuring outcomes

for students. And, once again, variation in service learning programs complicates efforts to study it. In a national survey of service learning and community service in K-12 public schools Skinner and Chapman (1999) report that 79 percent of schools implement service learning in two or more ways based on instructional level. They also found differences in implementation based on whether the service learning was voluntary or mandatory.

One recent addition to the implementation literature is a study by Elizabeth Swanson (2000) comparing Chicago's service learning initiative with a similar one in Philadelphia. Swanson concludes, "Chicago Public Schools has designed and implemented a 'community service' requirement, rather than service learning. An hours-based requirement, which restricts service activities to out-of-school time, combined with little teacher training, has resulted in primarily community service projects"(p.90). According to Swanson, Philadelphia fares much better with its "teacher-driven movement." There, the requirement is project-based and uses in-school time for some of the service learning activities. The Philadelphia initiative also focused on teacher training for the first two years of implementation.

Swanson's study offers further evidence that the growth of service learning is accompanied by a need for support services to teachers interested in integrating service learning into the curriculum. Other studies that address the role of teachers in service learning programs indicate the need for more research in this area. In a study of the community service elective in Maryland high schools, Earle (1980) found that teachers needed additional support to learn new instructional strategies and new ways of working with students in community settings. While enthusiasm among teachers for service learning programs is

strong (Melchior et al. 1999, Kahne 1999), research on the prevalence of staff development is divided.

The growth of service learning has been accompanied by the need for support services to teachers interested in integrating service learning into the curriculum Those studies that do address the role of teachers in service learning programs indicate the need for more research in this area. In a study of the community service elective in Maryland high schools, Earle (1980) found that teachers needed additional support to learn new instructional strategies and new ways of working with students in community settings. While enthusiasm among teachers for service learning programs is strong (Melchior et al. 1999, Kahne 1999), the research on staff development is unclear.

Skinner and Chapman (1999) report that nationwide, 83 percent of public schools with service learning offered some type of support to teachers including training and mini-grants for service learning programs or curriculum development. At the same time, Melchior and his colleagues (1999) found that while there was widespread support for the concept of service learning, few of the schools in the study took formal steps to train or inform teachers about service learning. Only 27 percent of the teachers in the evaluation sites reported having participated in training or professional development related to service learning. Clearly, there is a need for additional research on the ways schools can structure their staff development efforts in order to support broader integration of service learning at the local level.

## *SUMMARY*

This chapter begins by acknowledging the amorphous nature of service learning and offering an operational definition based on the standards established by CPS for its service learning initiative. The chapter continues with the historical development of service learning programs, discussions on the place of service learning within the current school reform movement, and the challenges to service learning programs. Chapter II concludes with a discussion of the literature on policy implementation and offers two theoretical models which guided the analysis of the data. This study of the CPS service learning initiative is an effort to expand the current literature on service learning implementation by examining the role of service learning coach at the local school level.

# CHAPTER III

# DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study examines service learning implementation in Chicago's public high schools using multiple methods of data collection. More specifically, it uses survey and case study data to explore the role of service learning coach in driving implementation during the first year of the CPS service initiative. The study is imbedded in a large-scale evaluation instituted as part of the initiative. The survey of coaches used here was developed as part of this system-wide evaluation (Kahne 1999) conducted to assess the quality and quantity of service learning experienced by students during the 1998-99 school year.

Case studies of three Chicago high schools are meant to provide a detailed look inside schools in order to illustrate and provide a basis for meaningful interpretation of the results from the larger study. Each case study is meant to stand alone, allowing the reader to explore how each individual school dealt with the new service learning requirement described on its own terms. Later, the case studies are compared and contrasted in order to analyze how capacity and the motivation of the service learning coach might have contributed to the level of implementation. But initially, as Patton (1980) explains, "each case must be represented and understood as an idiosyncratic and unique phenomenon (p. 304)."

## *DATA COLLECTION*

In the Spring of 1999, as part of a one-year evaluation of the CPS service learning initiative, service learning coaches in each high school completed surveys distributed by the Central Office service learning coordinator. The "Service Learning Year End Report" (See Appendix A) was developed by Joseph Kahne, principal researcher for the evaluation, and this researcher in collaboration with CPS. The questions in the survey were meant to align with the main goals of the initiative during the first year. Those goals specify that each high school:

- include both preparation and reflection in service learning experiences
- forge meaningful links to the academic curriculum
- work with pilot groups of between fifty and one hundred students
- foster "the knowledge, orientation, and skills necessary for effective citizenship in a democratic society"

(CPS Board Resolution)

The survey provides basic demographic data on coaches as well as questions which addressed policies and support for the initiative in each high school. It includes data regarding the numbers of students involved in service learning activities, the duration of their involvement, the content of both service and learning activities, and the degree to which teachers and community organizations are involved in the initiative. The survey concluded with open-ended questions requesting the participants to describe the most significant successes and challenges they had experienced as coaches.

Part of this study also includes interviews with Central Office administrators and data from a focus group of 25 service learning coaches which formed part of the

larger systemwide evaluation. The open-ended interviews in this study followed a general interview guide approach (Patton 1980 and Lofland 1971) which involved outlining a set of issues before interviewing began. The interview guide served as a basic checklist to make sure relevant topics were covered. The following topics were examined during interviews with service learning coordinators from Central Office:

- priortities during the first year of the initiative
- progress and major issues for Central Office staff
- selection of coaches
- staff development
- issues of accountability and authority
- role of outside partners
- curriculum development

Even without prompts from the researcher, coaches in the focus group were eager to address many of the same topics addressed in the interviews with the Central Office coordinators. However, responses by coaches in the focus group were often in conflict with the assumptions of administrators responsible for the initiative. For example, Central Office was eager to produce curriculum guides tied to service learning while coaches complained, "Last year, curriculum incorporated character development. I mean each year it incorporates something else. What's next?"

Each audiotape of the interviews and the focus group with coaches was transcribed and relevant responses were highlighted to identify independent variables identified for the study (associated with quality service learning implementation). As Oberman found in her 1999 study of principal turnover,

many responses crossed variable labels. For example, some coaches perceived the need for principals to exercise their authority in enlisting cooperation from classroom teachers. Expanding the concept of professional development to include principals was seen as a means to accomplish this end. Some coaches felt that principals, as well as the teachers, needed inservicing: "The principals need to know how much we have to put into this. Then they can talk to staff. It's not our job really to involve the staff, you know." In this example two different variables (accountability and staff development) are combined in one response which now has multiple use as descriptive data.

Finally, an important part of the system-wide evaluation imbedded in this study involves conversations with service learning partners and observations at training sessions conducted by them. These partners included national organizations devoted to promoting civic participation by youth such as the *Constitutional Rights Foundation* and *Do Something*. Both organizations worked with teachers and students to support the Chicago initiative.

## *THE CASE STUDIES*

If forced to choose between implementation information and outcomes information, Patton (1978) suggests that in many instances implementation information would be of greater value. He states that where outcomes are evaluated without knowledge of implementation, decisionmakers lack vital information about what produced the observed outcomes or lack of outcomes. One important way to study program implementation is to gather detailed, descriptive information about local diversity within a district. Case study methodology was chosen for this analysis in an effort to capture the contextual

aspects of implementation in the Chicago initiative. Coding, interpreting, and analyzing case study data was facilitated by the work of the following researchers: Yin (1994,), Metz (1986), Lightfoot (1983), and Peternic (1999).

The qualitative methods of research used to study service learning implementation at three Chicago public high schools included observation, open-ended informal interviews, student focus groups, and analysis of documents. This researcher collected data from the three schools between December 1998 and June 1999 (See Appendix B).

Observation was conducted in classrooms, at service sites, and at citywide meetings for coaches. At each school informal interviews were conducted with principals and coaches at the start of implementation and in the spring of 1999. Conversations with teachers, students, and community representatives, involved in the initiative at each school were recorded in field notes. Focus groups of students who had participated in service learning projects were conducted in the case study schools during the spring of 1999. Documents used for analysis included SIP's, school handbooks, school newspapers, bulletins for students and parents, as well as curriculum materials when available. District level planning statements and materials generated by Central Office for the purpose of implementation were also collected. Training manuals and curriculum guides created by outside partners were included in the analysis.

### *SITE SELECTION AND POPULATION*

In November of 1998, Central Office administrators conducted a brief initial survey of service learning coaches in order to gauge the degree of

implementation at the local school level (See Appendix C). Coaches were asked to describe the status of the service learning program at their schools in terms of connections to the curriculum and to community agencies. Suggestions for future assistance from central office were also solicited.

The survey helped to identify the three high schools targeted for the case studies. In each of the three schools the population consisted of freshmen and/or sophomores as required by CPS for the first year of implementation. Central office administrators had suggested that 50-100 students be targeted in each high school. Exact numbers and selection strategies were left to the individual schools to decide. In addition to considering the degree of implementation, sites were chosen to represent variation in geographic location, ethnic characteristics of students, and type of school program. Two of the schools had been placed on academic probation for the 1998-1999 school year. The sample of three schools includes:

- Cody Academic Magnet High School, a magnet school where implementation was well established in terms of connections to outside partners and the curriculum.
- West Town Community Academy, a neighborhood high school with a career orientation, which started implementation late in the school year.
- Daniel Hale Williams High School, another neighborhood school, whose veteran coach had strong ties to the community and a definite plan for implementation.

While it is impossible for a sample of 3 high schools to be truly representative of a system of 75 high schools, the geographic, ethnic, and educational diversity of these sites should provide a reasonable snapshot of service learning implementation during the first year of the Chicago initiative.

## *FRAMING THE ANALYSIS*

Guided by research and the data sources described above, this study uses two theoretical models to organize an inquiry into the impact of teacher coaches on service learning implementation. The first, a resource allocation model, is based on five variables chosen as specific indicators of local and system-wide capacity. The second model, one of teacher engagement, is also based on five variables chosen as indicators of the kinds of psychic rewards which motivate teachers to take on demanding tasks, such as service learning coach. This second model reflects teacher preferences and strongly held beliefs. The two models depicted in Table 3.1, one dealing with organizational capacity and the other with cultural norms, guide the description, analysis, and interpretation of the data in this study. Together they are used to illustrate high quality service learning implementation.

| **Table 3.1** |
|---|
| Variables Related to High Quality Service Learning Implementation |
| ***Resource Allocation Model*** |
| Implementation based on clear objectives |
| Performance measures that monitor degrees of implementation |
| Staff development that contributes to professional growth |
| Service projects that reflect shared goals |
| Classroom time for preparation and reflection |
| ***Belief System Model*** |
| Respect for teacher competence |
| Projects based on meaningful activity |
| Opportunities for teacher collaboration |
| Projects that meld classroom learning with the "real world" |
| Opportunities to share innate moral purpose |

1. **Implementation based on clear objectives.** This variable concerns system-wide adoption and implementation of the policy objectives developed for the CPS service learning initiative. Based on the theory that implementation shapes policy (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984; Peterson, Rabe, and Wong, 1988), particular focus was on central office decisions as to which objectives were implemented, in what order, and with what proportion of resources.

2. **Performance measures that monitor degrees of implementation.** Performance measures play an important role as objectives are put into operation. They serve as a means of administrative control during policy implementation and may actually determine performance if teachers' behavior is modeled on how they perceive they are being evaluated (Blau, 1963). Particular attention was paid to mechanisms that permit teachers to obtain regular feedback about the effects of their efforts to provide high quality service learning opportunities (Newmann and Rutter, 1983; McLaughlin, 1991b).

3. **Staff development that contributes to professional growth.** A service learning curriculum contains instructional components unfamiliar to teachers grounded in more traditional methods. For instance, the process of reflection wherein students come to understand the nature of service, may be more important than the actual work performed (Boyte, 1991; Grundy, 1987; Kahne and Westheimer, 1996). This study focuses on staff development designed for coaches and that which occurred for classroom teachers. It also explores the impact of outside agencies working directly with teachers at the local school level. The study documents instances in which teachers (a) learn new instructional strategies; (b) use new methods of student evaluation; and (c) find new ways of working with students in community settings (Earle, 1980).

4. **Service projects that reflect shared goals.** Service learning includes action within a community. The basis for a service learning curriculum is a sense of shared values (Dewey, 1916; Kahne, 1996; Schudson, 1995). Group rather than individual action is a recognized way for students to establish a communal identity (Youniss and Yates, 1997). This study documents service projects which enable students to participate in group efforts.

5. **Classroom time for preparation and reflection.** Key to identifying shared goals is the amount of time spent in structured preparation and reflection on service activities (Conrad and Hedin, 1991). This study documents resource materials and staff development provided by the central office and outside partners which support preparation and reflection. At the local school level, focus was on reading, writing, and discussions that created links to the academic curriculum and helped students analyze service experiences.

6. **Respect for teacher competence.** In the CPS service learning initiative, recognition of teacher competence began with staff selection. This study examines what teacher characteristics determined principal selection of coaches and what role the central office played in that selection. Once implementation is underway, strong principal leadership at the local school level may include reliance on lead teachers to help implement policy changes (Marsh and Crocker, 1991). This study also documents principal support for the autonomy of service learning coaches.

7. **Projects based on meaningful activities.** Teachers are aware that a student's willingness to engage in service activities may depend on their perception that the work they perform is challenging and fulfills a real need (Rodriguez, 1998). This area of inquiry will focus on service projects which embody such standards of meaningful activity as (a) addresses a real social need (b) challenges students' ability to organize and take responsibility and (c) encourages students to engage in social interaction with diverse people (Corporation for National and Community Service, 1994; Newmann and Rutter, 1983; Youniss and Yates, 1997).

8. **Opportunities for teacher collaboration.** Traditionally, the teaching profession is one in which autonomy is the norm. At the same time, when teachers do get help, they often turn to fellow teachers as the most effective source (Lortie, 1975; Fullan, 1991, 1993). The CPS service learning initiative offers opportunities for collaboration in curriculum development and team teaching. This study documents the degree to which service learning coaches were able to engage colleagues at the local school level.

9. **Projects that meld classroom learning with the "real world."** Service learning gives students a chance to see the relevance of classroom studies. Involving students in issues outside the classroom, allows them to put together information they need to solve the problem. In the process, teachers find service learning not only an effective teaching tool but one that makes their job more satisfying (Education Commission of the States, 2000; Sizer, 1992; Gardner, 1991). In Chicago, service projects ran the gamut from in-school clean-up to those with potential to affect biodiversity at city and regional levels as well as service projects which reflected national concerns of gun safety and youth violence.

10. **Opportunities to share innate moral purpose.** Primary among the psychic rewards mentioned by teachers is the ability to make a difference in the lives of students. Many teachers enter the profession because they want to make a contribution (Lortie, 1975; Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves and Tucker, 1991; Goodlad, J., Soder, R., and Sirotnik, K.A., 1990). Service learning, with its links to broader social purpose, offers Chicago's coaches an opportunity to make their own moral purpose more explicit.

The two theoretical models identified above guide the analysis of the data in the following chapter. The role of service learning coach provides focus as data is presented at three levels of operation: the district, the local school, and the community service site. The study examines the extent of variability within the district and offers a closer look at implementation within three school sites. In studying implementation, both across the district and at the three school sites, analysis focuses on the research questions developed for this study. See Introduction and related Table 2.1, "Mapping Opportunities for Service Learning Implementation."

# CHAPTER IV

# DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

## *THE DISTRICT LEVEL: A WORK IN PROGRESS*

### Launching the Initiative: Authority to Mandate

The Chicago Board of Education passed a resolution in August, 1997 which required all high school students, beginning with the Class of 2001, to complete 40 hours of service learning in order to graduate. A Service Learning Task Force, comprised of educators, representatives of community institutions, and concerned citizens formed to make recommendations for defining and implementing the new requirement.

Once mandated by the Board of Education, implementation of the service learning requirement fell to Central Office administrators and staff. As anticipated, much of their time during the first year was taken up in activities directed at service learning coaches. According to the preliminary plan for service learning, distributed to those attending the first city-wide meeting of coaches, Central Office was to provide the following support:

- direct the activities of service learning coaches
- work with organizations providing significant service opportunities
- work with CPS communications on service learning publicity
- distribute appropriate curriculum

| Table 4.1 |
| --- |
| Summary of the Service Learning Mandate |
| • Chicago School Reform Board Policy #97-0827-PO2, established service learning as a requirement for high school graduation.<br>• Applies to all CPS students beginning with the graduating class of 2001.<br>• Students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of service learning activities prior to graduation.<br>• Students are strongly encouraged to participate in semester-long activities and to complete the 40 hour requirement in one semester.<br>• The service learning program requires students to spend time preparing for the activity and reflecting on the experience.<br>• School-based planning of service learning was scheduled to begin in Fall of 1998 and student participation was planned to begin in January, 1999. |

- create staff development opportunities
- produce and maintain an agency resource guide
- track student participation in service learning activities
- originate a project Idea Book for city-wide use

Clearly, in an undertaking as massive as the CPS initiative, Central Office staff would need to prioritize their efforts. During interviews with Central Office personnel in Spring, 1999, those close to the initiative reflected on major issues during the start-up year. The experiences and encounters described in these interviews do much to inform our understanding of the role of administrative leadership in service learning implementation.

Through open-ended discussion, researchers engaged Central Office staff in discussions of 45 minutes to one hour. Three main themes emerged from those interviews:

- Priorities during the first year
- Tensions between authority and flexibility
- The coach model

These concerns occupied Central Office personnel during the first year of the initiative and played a major role in the direction the initiative would take in the years to follow. The interviews and coach surveys shed light on the degree to which Central Office was instrumental in promoting service learning. Examining the experiences of Central Office staff during the first year may reveal the beginnings of policy which will follow in subsequent years of the initiative.

**Priorities** One individual from Central Office described the first priority as, "Simply trying to get our feet wet, trying to get it out there." He emphasized the district's decision, "... to implement it across the board." Asked why it was important to start at every school, that spokesperson replied, "Doing anything else, I think, would be somewhat misleading or dishonest and would not enable us to learn everything we need to learn. We know this first year is very much an evolving process, and to make sense, that was the only way to do it. It's our playing field." The implementation of curriculum, necessary to engage classroom teachers and move community service into the realm service learning, was not planned for the first year. However, the development of that curriculum would involve Central Office staff to a large degree.

**Curriculum.** Relating service learning experiences to academic instruction was not a primary focus for Central Office personnel nor for coaches during the first year of the initiative. However, a large part of Central Office energies were directed at developing curriculum as a way to integrate service learning into the classroom in the years to follow. One reason for the focus on linking service learning to the curriculum was based on worries about litigation. At the first city-wide meeting for coaches, a CPS administrator reported that in other places service learning had been challenged in the courts. An important means of ensuring the legality of the new requirement would be to integrate service learning into subject area curriculum.

A team of twelve teachers was enlisted to work on developing service learning curriculum guides for classroom teachers. Although Central Office was aware that materials were already available on the market, the decision was to go with locally driven curriculum. They emphasized the belief that curriculum would be stronger if built from within — from the bottom up.

The question was whether the teachers involved were prepared to create such curriculum and how could Central Office help prepare them for the task. According to one administrator the teachers involved in writing curriculum were veterans, with an average of fifteen years in the system. All, with the exception of one, had experience writing curriculum. Still, as she pointed out, "We've had to go through this learning process."

It was evident that nothing would reach the schools before the second year of the requirement. In April of 1999, the curriculum team was just beginning the actual writing process and the deadline for completion had been set for July. As Central

Office explained, "We're trying to be flexible to allow for really making it a good, solid product." Meanwhile, staff development centered entirely on the service learning coaches. There were no activities for classroom teachers offered by the Central Office during the first year.

**Table 4.2**

CENTRAL OFFICE'S VOICES

*On Priorities During the First Year*

- "We wanted to get the kinks out and see what works and what doesn't at many levels: coaches, students, teachers, and community partners."
- "The curriculum piece was a major priority, to get our own group working on it and see what they could come up with."
- "First, we had to manage the grant money and the paperwork that comes with it."
- "We've had to go through this learning process of how to put together lesson plans, how to put together activities, and how to make it easy for people to use."
- "I'm trying to be out visiting schools at least two or three days a week, mostly focusing on those that are struggling. It's very, very frustrating to go through that."
- "I could write up guidelines to standardize activities but then you are getting really specific and part of the beauty of the program is the ability to be flexible and tailor it to the school."
- "A big part for me was just bringing in the outside — the potential community partners. We wanted schools to be aware of opportunities and to spur their imaginations a little bit."

Another important aspect of curriculum development that preoccupied Central Office staff involved managing a $250,000 Learn and Serve grant from the Illinois State Board of Education. The funds were directed at curriculum development, program evaluation, and school mini-grants. The processing of the grant would

prove challenging. None of the individuals responsible for allocating the grant money were familiar with the steps involved in moving the money through the system. Some complained that they got no direction, "So we learned on our own and made mistakes on our own."

Local school mini-grants were awarded to all 46 schools that applied. Each school received the set limit of $3,000 which most had requested. But time constraints plagued administrators who struggled to encumber funds by June, 1999. Schools were given eight weeks to complete the grant but as the deadline approached, Central Office had received only one application.

In addition, schools had to have all monies spent by the end of the school year or lose it. With time closing in, administrators were frustrated that all schools had not applied for the grants. As one put it, "I'm constantly reminding people to apply and they're still not doing it, for whatever reason I don't know." As the end of the year approached, plans were being made to begin giving more money to the schools that had already applied in an effort to save the funding.

**Central Office as Support.** School visitations during the first year were primarily initiated by coaches requesting that Central Office personnel be present to clarify the requirement at staff meetings or to support them in their efforts to secure the principal's help when that was not forthcoming. On one such occasion in November 1998, Central Office staff were invited by a coach to attend a teacher inservice day at her school.

Service learning was only one topic on the agenda that day. The faculty was not very attentive as Central Office administrators summarized the basic elements of

the requirement. Often the message was lost as teachers talked among themselves. Although the coach had distributed copies of materials from Central Office on the new requirement, the teachers would voice the same questions throughout the first year. They concerned issues of liability, paperwork, service learning versus community service, and accountability, subjects not easily covered in the kinds of general information being disseminated. The faculty quieted as the principal moved in to answer questions.

While supportive of the coach, it became clear that he saw service learning as an extension of the community service required of students in the International Baccalaureate program already in place at the school. Teachers were told that activities like the school's Coat Drive and the Food Drive would all count. The majority of teachers were ready to move on to other things, reassured that they did not have to incorporate service learning into their lesson plans and that a small team of teachers was expected to form to begin working on curriculum.

Not surprisingly, as the year ended, the coach reported that no other faculty members had been involved in the initiative and there had been no efforts to connect service learning to any subject area curriculum. Instead, students worked with a community organization to collect funds for the homeless. Judging from the coach's comments on the end-of-year survey, the activity resembled community service much more than service learning. She reported that students, "... were quite satisfied because it gave them an opportunity to help others less fortunate than themselves."

One potential cost of not having a curriculum model available the first year would be the likelihood of seeing this kind of community service rather than

service learning. With little understanding of the nature of service learning, some coaches and principals reached for organizations already in place to deliver "service learning" at their schools. While keenly aware of the distinction, Central Office staff were optimistic. As one individual stated, "I think it's great to get kids doing community service. I think it's better than not doing anything. The vast majority of kids will have a better opportunity as this thing keeps getting tighter."

Agency Partners. Individuals with prior experience in the nonprofit sector were hired to supervise Central Office staff in implementing the initiative. One individual acknowledged that because they were not "traditional CPS people" there were times when they were "not on the same wavelength" with CPS administrators. But this individual also saw their outsider status as a plus, "We do have a more idealized vision of what teachers can do and what CPS can do, but we're also reality-based. We know that you can't just mandate something. It takes planning." In some instances, they felt the drawbacks of being new to the system, "You know how it is with office politics, you have to have the right person calling the right person. I'm not going to get any response if I call."

Clearly, one advantage was to have someone familiar with city and community agencies in order to engage them in working with students. When local news media announced word of the requirement, various organizations contacted CPS expressing interest in being part of the initiative. Central Office expressed pleasure at the the response from potential agency partners, "Both the number and the quality of the people who have come to the table in a relatively short period of time has been wonderful." One Central Office spokesperson estimated that in August 1998, the number of outside partners was 54. By April 1999, the

number had more than doubled to 120 organizations. The degree of positive response was a surprise, "I guess I thought is would be harder to involve these agencies and it would take longer."

Agency listings formed a large part of the Service Learning Resource Directory, referred to as "the coach's manual." One-page summaries of potential agencies were compiled and updated throughout the year and distributed to coaches by Central Office staff. In addition to location and contact information, the summaries included agency mission, neighborhoods served, number of student positions available, and requirements and responsibilities for students. Coaches were informed that a service learning site "should be a safe place where every student can engage in meaningful, educational, and creative learning." Every organization was to identify a site supervisor who was responsible for:

- communicating the expectations and rules of the site to the student
- ensuring student safety
- providing any ongoing training or support the student needs for the project
- keeping the service learning coach informed of the students' progress

One administrator at Central Office talked about qualities that he looked for in agency partners. He wanted student activities to be meaningful, "If they're shuffling paper or something, that to me is unacceptable." Rather, students should walk away at the end with a sense of having made a difference. Human interaction "was crucial." The goal was to expose students to a group they wouldn't ordinarily encounter, thereby broadening their life experience.

Agencies should also be able to help students process and articulate what they learned through their service experience.

When asked about collecting information to evaluate outside partners, this individual looked to the coaches for feedback, "There are just so many agencies involved and so much to look at. I have 10 full time people out doing it. But it's just not real. In the end we really have to trust the coaches on that."

**The Main Priority.** The primary goal for the Central Office during the first year was to begin implementation in every high school. Thus, rather than starting with a select group of schools, the goal was to engage a "manageable group" of 50 to 100 students in service learning in every high school during the 1998-99 school year. The goal did not state that these students complete the entire 40 hours required to graduate. As part of a one-year evaluation of the initiative, data from a survey of 65 service learning coaches was examined to assess the quantity and quality of service learning during the first year.[1]

Table 4.3 illustrates that the primary goal of introducing service learning into the city's high schools was largely achieved. The average school served 113 students. However, the study cautions that because the eleven schools that did not submit surveys likely served fewer students than average, this estimated average is probably slightly high.

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[1]Data used in this chapter also includes interviews with Central Office administrators, principals, and service learning coaches. Findings from focus groups of coaches and students, as well as observational data, also form part of the database.

| Table 4.3 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students Involved in Service Learning Activities 1998-99 | | | |
| *Number of Students* | *9th Grade* | *10th Grade* | *Total (9th and 10th)* |
| 0 Students | 8 Schools | 1 School | 0 Schools |
| 1-49 Students | 29 Schools | 27 Schools | 9 Schools |
| 50-100 Students | 19 Schools | 28 Schools | 29 Schools |
| 100+ Students | 10 Schools | 10 Schools | 28 Schools |
| No Data (Did not return survey or answer this question). | 11 Schools | 11 Schools | 11 Schools |

(Source: Kahne, 1999)

The Board's mandate demonstrated the strongest kind of support for the potential of service learning as a key element in school improvement. At the same time, the decision to involve the whole district in implementing the new requirement ran the risk of public opposition and resistance at the local school level. In a district as large as Chicago's, the task of providing the necessary quantity of service learning experiences for students, while at the same time ensuring the quality of those experiences, is daunting.

The numbers alone can appear staggering: ultimately, 24,000 students a year (roughly one quarter of the 95,456 CPS high school students) would need to complete 40 hours of service learning each year. In Chicago, that would translate to the need to increase yearly activity by a factor of 6 (3 times the number of students doing twice the number of hours) if students were to complete 40 hours by graduation (Kahne, 1999).

As expected, few schools during that start-up year had significant numbers of students who completed the requirement. Data from the coaches' survey showed that at least 7,300 students did at least some service learning during the first year.

The average student performed nineteen hours of service learning. Table 4.4 shows that only 8 high schools had more than 30 students who completed the entire 40 hours.

**Table 4.4**

Number of Students Completing 40 Hours of Service Learning

| *Number of Students* | *9th Grade* | *10th Grade* | *Total (9th and 10th)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Students | 26 Schools | 9 Schools | 7 Schools |
| 1-10 Students | 28 Schools | 31 Schools | 27 Schools |
| 11-30 students | 9 Schools | 18 Schools | 20 Schools |
| 30-50 Students | 0 Schools | 4 Schools | 3 Schools |
| 50+ Students | 1 School | 0 Schools | 5 Schools |
| No Data | 13 Schools | 15 Schools | 15 Schools |

(Source: Kahne, 1999)

**Tensions between Accountability and Flexibility.** In order to simplify city-wide implementation, CPS kept goals to a minimum and stressed local school flexibility. As CPS confronted the necessity of increasing the volume of yearly activity during the second and third years of the initiative, Central Office staff struggled with issues of authority and accountability. In keeping with the decision to allow as much leeway as possible at the local school level, Central Office staff were often hard pressed to find solutions for schools that were unresponsive or resistant to implementing the new requirement.

In interviews, Central Office staff often complained that they lacked the authority to make schools accountable for implementing the new requirement. One problem was trying to convince skeptical teachers and students that the requirement was really going to be enforced. Those at the local school level,

| Table 4.5 |
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| CENTRAL OFFICE'S VOICES |
| *On Authority and Accountability* |
| • "I think we've got to have a right to reprimand principals at some point." |
| • "I feel much more comfortable with the coaches. I've encountered a couple of principals but the interaction is not with them. Someone else is in charge." |
| • "I think I could do more if I knew more principals. Ninety-eight percent of my conversations are not with the principal." |
| • "In at least fifteen schools, I have no idea what's going on." |
| • "One coach never came to anything, hasn't responded to anything, and finally wrote me a letter saying he's no longer taking responsibility for the project. He resigned and no one's taken his place." |
| • "I don't feel comfortable just telling a principal, 'You have the wrong coach, you need to hire somebody else.'" |
| • "The schools that respond to us are the ones we've gotten to know. We've been able to build a relationship with them and it's a positive one." |
| • "I'm going to send a letter to the schools who have not attended coaches' meetings saying that we have some concerns. I doubt that I'll get a response to about 50% of those letters. They don't owe me anything." |
| • "I sent a questionnaire to the first 90 community organizations that signed on to the initiative and only about 4 returned it." |
| • "I want to be able to say to my boss that, if we continue on this path, maybe 75% of the seniors are not going to graduate because they haven't done enough service learning. I don't think that point has been made clear that's what this policy really means." |
| • "What can happen to schools that don't meet the requirement this year? We don't have the authority to do anything plus we try not to look at this program as punitive to anybody." |
| • "There are no performance standards for this. There's not a standardized test for this. We don't have the ability to do anything." |

perhaps having witnessed the failure of other policies and programs, were likely to take a wait-and-see approach. The chances of service learning surviving in Chicago were of special concern to the Central Office. Staff were aware of other large urban centers unable to keep service learning programs going. One staff member reported, "On average they keep it for three years and then drop it because they fail."

Some in the Central Office hoped that the initiative would receive back-up from the Office of Accountability which monitors compliance issues internal and external to the system. They believed the requirement would achieve legitimacy by being included in the quality reviews regularly conducted to ensure ongoing academic improvement. Review teams from the Office of Accountability regularly visit all schools to examine all aspects of the educational program, school operations, and fiscal management. Adding service learning to the checklist would lend muscle to the initiative.

Money was not seen as a means of control as Central Office struggled with issues of accountability. The stipends earned by coaches were based on school population. Stipends ranged from $1000 to $4000 in the first year and were not tied to any goals.

One key element to implementation, an informed and supportive principal, was often beyond the reach of Central Office staff responsible for the initiative. At one school, the service learning coach appealed to Central Office to help her. According to the coach, the principal would not give her time to visit classes nor had he mentioned the requirement to the staff at faculty meetings. When the principal failed to arrive at a scheduled meeting with the coach, Central Office

personnel found him in the school's hallway and were surprised when the principal seemed unsure about service learning being voluntary. Although Central Office administrators and staff had attended principals' meetings to discuss the requirement and "by and large all the principals understand this and they're on board," often it would take a "one on one, face to face meeting to really make it hit home." The principal in this case agreed to give the coach what was requested but Central Office staff complained about it being "a frustrating process and a long process because we do have a fair number of schools that are struggling."

The struggle to balance flexibility with accountability was amply illustrated during a city-wide focus meeting with coaches. In an effort to clarify what counted as service learning as opposed to community service, coaches presented numerous examples of service projects at their schools. It soon became obvious that what some coaches considered legitimate to count as service learning hours, others rejected as not meeting the standards as they understood them.

The coaches were obviously confused and frustrated at not having more definite guidelines. However, the researcher pointed out that, in seeking clarification from Central Office, they ran the risk of losing the flexibility to count things they perceived as meeting the standards. He then asked, "Do you want it more clarified?" Almost unanimously and in one voice, the coaches yelled, "No!"

**The Coach Model** From the beginning, the Board of Education envisioned the initiative, in the words of one administrator, as "a work in progress. " There were few large-scale service learning initiatives to serve as models. Although Maryland mandated a state-wide service learning requirement for high school

students in 1993, Chicago would be the largest school district to do so. Chicago's urban setting and history of school reform efforts made it especially noteworthy as the site for such a large initiative.

While the Board may have set the scope for wholesale implementation without a proven framework, some commonalities would exist throughout the district. In addition to a pilot group of 50-100 students, the Board stipulated that every high school be assigned a service learning coach chosen by the principal. According to one member of the Task Force, the term "coach" was chosen for its positive sporting connotations. It had also come into favor within academic circles as a way of perceiving classroom teachers as sources of support and real engaged learning for students. The coach would serve as the engine driving implementation forward during the first year.

Selection. Although Central Office administrators met with principals at monthly meetings, they did little to assist in the selection of coaches. When asked if principals were given guidance in staff selection, one administrator said simply, "We've talked to them about it." In interviews, Central Office staff had definite ideas of the qualities an effective coach should possess: prior service learning experience, ties to the community, and commitment were some of them.

Acknowledging that coach selection was arbitrary for the most part, one Central Office administrator reported that "a good handful" were the results of school politics, "Some principals always give it to a certain favorite person. Those are the people who don't come to meetings and who have no program, nothing at all going on." Adding insult to injury, "Several of these coaches are very surly."

| Table 4.6 |
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| CENTRAL OFFICE'S VOICES |
| *On the Coach Model* |
| • "For the most part, the coaches have been very reliable. I always know who to call and most have stayed in the position over the year." |
| • "The coach is just another teacher and they don't have any authority over anybody else at school. Their ability to get the job done depends a lot on the support they get from their principal and the rapport they have with their staff and that varies by school." |
| • "I would like to see coaches who either live in the community or have ties to the community. What are the odds of people who live out in the suburbs wanting to stay after school to monitor a program?" |
| • "A couple of schools changed coaches when the teacher found out what the job really entailed. I have no problem with that, if things aren't working let's be real about it." |
| • "Some coaches were chosen by principals because they were energetic and they've worked out quite well. They have energy and they like their students." |
| • "The only real staff development we've done have been the coach meetings. The smaller area meetings worked much better than the large city-wide meetings." |
| • "You can tell the difference with coaches who were selected because they had experience in service learning. You can tell when you meet them and when you look at the quality of the program at their schools." |

In the end, principals chose coaches for a variety of reasons. Interviews with case study principals revealed that their first consideration was that the coach has an appreciation for the benefits of service learning. As one principal described it, "They were a true believer." Other qualifications for coach included time to devote to the initiative, as well as ability to work with students and teachers, and ties to the community.

Staff Development. One important role for Central Office during the start-up year of the initiative was to increase motivation and capacity at the local level through staff development. Central Office personnel limited their activities to working primarily with service learning coaches the first year. At the same time they broadened the concept of staff development to include meetings with coaches, help developing mini-grants, providing resource materials, distributing a monthly newsletter, and offering frequent encouragement.

This kind of professional support helped individuals and schools define their own pedagogical vision and provided the structure necessary for implementation. In Chicago, where Central Office is often viewed with skepticism, service learning coordinators were appreciated as hard-working and supportive. The first year evaluation of the initiative reported:

> Consistently, coaches expressed appreciation for the responsiveness of the central office staff and for the usefulness of the materials and connections they provided. Perhaps the clearest sign of commitment, eighty-seven percent said they plan to continue as a service learning coach next year.

In interviews, when asked how they felt about the effectiveness of staff development, Central Office personnel spoke mostly of the coaches' meetings. Four city-wide meetings with coaches were conducted from May, 1998 through November, 1998. A number of smaller meetings followed in the four geographical areas which make up the district. As the first year ended, Central Office also helped to organize a city-wide service learning conference which brought coaches together with community partners and national service learning organizations to network and demonstrate successful programs. While expressing a preference for smaller meetings, one Central Office staff member

acknowledged that the larger "road shows" were the most efficient means of getting basic information to the most people in the early stages of the initiative and of monitoring degrees of implementation.

City-wide meetings provided an opportunity to collect attendance information and to distribute the instruments that coaches would use to define the programs at their schools. At the first city-wide meeting, coaches were given short forms to describe their school plans. Other forms were distributed that could be used to document preparation and reflection activities. These were attached to a brochure that attempted to give an overview of service learning in general and the specifics of the CPS initiative.

At the last city-wide meeting in November 1998, a questionnaire was distributed to coaches that asked them to describe the status of service learning at their school. It asked what connections had been made with other teachers at the school, what connections to the community were being developed, what support or frustration had they encountered at the local school level and from Central Office, and what kinds of assistance would be helpful. This one page questionnaire provided staff with vital information regarding implementation and helped guide their efforts throughout the second half of the year.

The more complete coach survey, distributed at the end of the school year was designed to document both the quantity and quality of service learning experiences. Central Office staff used the survey results to determine whether the initiative was moving in a productive direction and to plan for the next year.

One section of the Coaches' Survey provided space for coaches to express their opinion of Central Office support. To the credit of Central Office personnel, many coaches took time to praise staff members, often by name, for their responsiveness and encouragement. These positive responses were further reinforced by other coaches who expressed trust in Central Office to provide support in areas which would prove most troublesome during that first year: inadequate time, unclear standards, and lack of support from principals and staff.

Coaches' meetings also served as forums to introduce potential partners in the initiative. The second city-wide meeting offered a sampling of agencies anxious to work with coaches. Representatives from local and national organizations presented coaches with information about their agencies and their hopes for working with the initiative.

Meetings also provided a boost to morale for coaches who often expressed feelings of being overwhelmed. One Central Office staff member characterized the smaller coaches' meetings as, "support group meetings." They served as an important means of building a sense of collaboration among coaches and of lessening the impression that they were working in isolation.

Summary As the first year of the service learning initiative came to a close, the ultimate impact of the CPS mandate was impossible to assess. It was clear that both the numbers of students and the service learning hours they earned needed to increase dramatically. At the same time, it was clear that the initiative spurred a major increase in service learning activity in the city's public high schools.

| Table 4.7 |
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| COACHES' VOICES |
| *Responses to Central Office* |
| • "To succeed, service learning has to be high stakes like student testing. Otherwise, classroom teachers will not include it in the curriculum even if they are given lesson plans." |
| • "Reduce paperwork. Do we really need agency and student evaluations?" |
| • "Having meetings by region is extremely important to keep up with information related to agencies and projects." |
| • "We need assistance in clarifying the role and responsibilities of coach." |
| • "More publicity regarding this requirement needs to reach parents, students, and community residents and businesses." |
| • "Please be consistent in setting policy," |
| • "Organize the Resource Directory several ways: alphabetically, by activity, and by area." |
| • "I feel that I received excellent support. Whenever I had a problem or concern, staff was available with an answer.' |
| • "Make service learning coach a full-time position." |
| • "I would like to have Central Office come to my school to speak to the staff about the importance of this program." |
| • "We need additional service learning coaches in all the schools." |
| • "It would be extremely helpful if Central Office mandated to schools that the coach have a period to work with students on their preparation and reflection activities." |
| • "Directives should be given to principals to allow more time to coaches during the school day." |
| • "Inservice principals on the importance and possible longevity of the service learning program." |

Findings from the coaches' survey estimate that the volume of service learning in most schools either doubled or tripled when compared with the previous year. It was also reported that connections with the community either doubled or tripled at most schools when compared with the previous year.

The role of the District, especially within Central Office, to enable and promote high quality service learning implementation was admirably demonstrated. Despite limited staff, Central Office personnel offered leadership visibility and information to coaches through meetings, materials, and personal contact. The constraints which challenged implementation at the District level were significant: coaches inexperienced in service learning, resistance to the requirement by teachers and students, a policy which stressed flexibility and limited authority, as well as budgetary and time constraints. Central Office capacity was demonstrated in two very positive ways: first, in regular efforts to monitor the progress of implementation and secondly, in the willingness to respond to those closest to the initiative, the coaches.

## *THE LOCAL SCHOOL LEVEL: MAKING MAGIC*

Implementation of the CPS service learning initiative began in earnest at the local school level on May 13, 1998 with the first city-wide meeting of coaches. Here, newly appointed coaches would be introduced to the Central Office staff who would provide support as coaches began to develop service learning programs in local high schools. Coaches received materials that defined service learning and listed the goals and basics of the CPS initiative. Included were guidelines for school actions that included the assessment of school and community needs, identifying resources, and building collaborative partnerships with educational staff and community representatives.

The potential benefits for students deriving from their service learning experiences were listed and included academic and life skills, job skills, and citizenship skills. Coaches were informed of the general duties assigned to their position. These materials, which would be updated throughout the year and assembled as part of a service learning directory, served an important purpose as Central Office educated and guided coaches in the tasks of service learning implementation. For coaches, these materials provided necessary structure where the official stance was one of flexibility.

Later, a newsletter, also produced by Central Office staff, highlighted successful service learning programs within the city and served as the beginning of a developing service learning network. It informed coaches of the availability of funding through small service learning grants and provided ideas on how to use the money. It provided a forum, albeit always under the auspices of Central

Office, where the efforts and success stories of coaches were made accessible to other coaches.

Appreciation for the usefulness of these tools and the connections they provided is apparent in the ratings assigned to them by coaches on the end of year survey. Table 4.8 shows how various resources were perceived as helpful by teachers in their jobs as coaches during the 1998-99 school year.

**Table 4.8**

Coach Ratings of Supports Available During 1998-99 School Year

| *Supports* | *Extremely Helpful* % | *Somewhat Helpful* % | *Not Helpful* % | *Did not Occur* % | *No Response* % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service Learning Grant | 72 | 5 | 2 | 18 | 3 |
| Service Learning Resource Directory | 69 | 28 | 2 | 2 | |
| Principal Support | 68 | 23 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Partnership with Sites for Service | 68 | 19 | 0 | 5 | 9 |
| Coach Meetings | 52 | 38 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Newsletter | 45 | 48 | 5 | 3 | |
| Partnership with Sites that Support Coaches | 43 | 8 | 2 | 42 | 6 |
| Teacher Involvement | 41 | 48 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| Reduced Teaching Load | 17 | 3 | 0 | 71 | 9 |
| Presentations at School | 15 | 9 | 2 | 65 | 9 |

(Source: Kahne, 1999)

Principals would be vital to successful implementation at the local school level. The flexibility afforded principals by Central Office benefited those schools

where the principal was knowledgeable and supportive of service learning. In schools where principals lacked enthusiasm for the initiative, coaches often found themselves without the time or support necessary to develop strong programs.

## The Role of Principal

CPS policy allowing flexibility at the local school level was good news for some principals and coaches. As service learning implementation reached high schools in Spring of 1998, each school was expected to develop a plan for working with 50-100 students based on the needs of the community. At the first city-wide meeting in May, coaches were directed to design a 2-3 page plan describing their project and how it would benefit the community.

The service learning coach, working with 2-4 class teachers and community partners, was responsible for developing a plan during fall of the next school year. A plan was expected to be completed in each high school by November, in order to be ready as students began their service learning projects in January 1999. Some coaches were to take on the responsibility of creating a service learning program tailored to fit local criteria. One coach expressed her enthusiasm to take on this new role, "Central Office has provided enough support to enable us to get our programs up and running. The 'magic' of service learning must be derived locally."

The directive to begin local planning was also welcomed by some principals like the one who said, "I think Central Office has been very supportive because they

set a good framework for us. I always believed that it's up to the administrators in the school to take that framework and stretch it out, expand it."

Perhaps the most important step toward implementing the initiative at the local level began earlier with the selection of service learning coach. Central Office administrators and staff reported that they had discussed the qualities of an effective coach with principals at monthly meetings. But the important step of recruiting committed personnel was left to principal discretion.

Background of Coaches. A survey of 66 service learning coaches completed at the end of the first year of the initiative, as well as interviews with case study principals, provide information which sheds light on the factors which influenced principals in their selection of coaches. This data also offers a look at the kinds of support that principals lent to the initiative during the first year. Table 4.8 shows the primary role held by service learning coaches within local high schools.

**Table 4.9**

| Primary Role of Service Learning Coaches | |
|---|---|
| **Teacher** | **32** |
| **Counselor** | **21** |
| **Administrator** | **2** |
| **Other** | **11** |
| **Total Number of Coaches Surveyed** | **66** |

Nonclassroom personnel made up 52% of the coaches surveyed. The group of coaches who identified themselves as "Other" included a wide spectrum of duties within the school. School assistant, work coordinator, programmer,

internship coordinator, even a retired teacher assigned as day-to-day substitute were among the jobs identified. This may suggest that principals were aware of the need for coaches to have a flexible schedule. As one principal put it, " I felt I had to choose a free person, somebody who was not bound to a classroom, because otherwise it just would be too time-consuming. They had to be mobile so their schedule had to be flexible."

However, the demands of the coach position, in terms of the time and energy required, affected nonteaching staff in much the same way as it did classroom teachers. One coach speaking on behalf of counselors like herself, expressed the opinion that the service learning coach should be funded as a full-time position:

> You don't give this to people who already have full-time jobs. We each have a caseload of 19 homerooms in addition to service learning. When you do service learning you cannot do guidance and counseling. Our students have many other needs that have to be met. My job is to serve students so they earn the 24 credits they need to graduate — to support them in passing classes. Adding to that requirement is unfair to kids who already are having a hard time.

Even those principals who did choose classroom teachers often selected ones in subject areas other than the traditional ones. As Table 4.10 illustrates, principals felt free to choose teachers who did not represent the core curriculum. The impact of having coaches outside traditional classrooms could impede efforts to tie service learning to the curriculum.

As the first year ended, Central Office campaigned for additional funding for more coaches in each high school. When asked to talk more about a multiple coaching model in subsequent years, one administrator described the "ideal world" of having as coaches an English teacher, a math teacher, and a social studies teacher working as a team. Having a coaches with connections to the core

curriculum was seen as an advantage as Central Office planned to move service learning into the classroom by incorporating it across the curriculum.

**Table 4.10**

Subject Areas Taught by Teacher Coaches

| *Core Curriculum* | |
|---|---|
| Social Studies | 7 |
| English | 6 |
| Science | 1 |
| Mathematics | 1 |
| Total Number of Core Curriculum Teachers | 15 |
| *Non-Core Curriculum* | |
| Business Education | 4 |
| Special Education | 4 |
| ROTC | 1 |
| Vocational Education | 1 |
| Total Number of Non-Core Curriculum Teachers | 10 |
| No Response | 7 |
| *Total Number of Teacher Coaches* | 32 |

Another factor that seems to have influenced coach selection is the number of years each worked for CPS. The largest number of coaches, 48% of them, were drawn from the ranks of veteran teachers who reported having worked at least 20 years for the Chicago Board of Education. The survey of coaches did not include a question regarding years at that particular high school. Therefore, it is impossible to estimate the nature of their connections with the community or the colleagueship they might enjoy with the rest of the staff. Both ties to the community and influence with other teachers were qualities stressed by Central Office in discussions with principals regarding coach selection.

In any case, veteran teachers would be knowledgeable of the structure of the district and the way it functioned. One potential disadvantage in hiring veteran teachers might be the tendency to greet new policy with some degree of skepticism. Having witnessed the demise of other programs, these long-time observers might be unwilling to invest too much time or energy in an unproven enterprise. In a coaches' forum conducted at the end of the first year, one veteran teacher asked about the requirement, "Is the Board really going to do this?"

**Table 4.11**

Number of Years Coaches Worked in the District

| *Years* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 1 year or less | 2 |
| 2-5 years | 17 |
| 6-10 years | 17 |
| 10-15 years | 9 |
| 16-20 years | 6 |
| 20 years or more | 48 |

By contrast, the number of years experience in service learning was at the other end of the spectrum. Table 4.12 shows a significant majority of service learning coaches, 77% of those surveyed, reported having 1 year or less experience working with service learning. This finding supports the need to increase opportunities for teachers in the area of staff development and teacher education.

Currently, it is unlikely for teacher candidates to encounter service learning included in their college programs. For those graduating twenty years ago, it would seem even more rare. The staff development offered by Central Office was the first introduction to service learning for *many* of the coaches. Only 5 percent

of CPS service learning coaches reported having had any formal coursework related to service learning.

| Table 4.12 | |
|---|---|
| Number of Years Experience in Service Learning | |
| *Years* | *% of Coaches* |
| 1 year or less | 77 |
| 2-5 years | 12 |
| 6-10 years | 3 |
| 10-15 years | 2 |
| 16-20 years | 2 |
| 20 years or more | 3 |
| No response | 1 |

It appears then that principals did not use experience in service learning as a priority in selecting coaches. In an effort to determine whether principals used any particular protocol in selecting the most qualified candidate, coaches were asked to respond to how they were selected.

The four options they were given suggest the amount of time the principal spent in making his/her selection. Table 4.13 shows that most of the coaches were asked by the principal to assume the role or were simply assigned to it. Some coaches volunteered for the position, which indicates that the principal may have been open to considering a more flexible selection process.

The most time-consuming selection process involved asking prospective candidates to apply for the position and/or be interviewed for it. Coaches reported that only 5% of them were selected through this kind of procedure. Of course, this means of selection is more than time-consuming. Such a process

assumes some knowledge of service learning on the part of principals. If CPS teachers were unlikely to be skilled in service learning, it is probable that few principals encountered opportunities to know the elements of good service learning programming.

**Table 4.13**

Protocol Used to Select Service Learning Coaches

| *Process* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| Asked by the principal | 56 |
| Volunteered for the position | 17 |
| Asked to apply/interview | 5 |
| Assigned by principal | 23 |

By spring of the first year, most of the coaches had been in place for the entire year. In May 1999, the survey of coaches found that 79% of service learning coaches had been actively working 8-12 months on the service learning program at their school. Coaches experienced at least some staff development in service learning, mainly in the form of meetings conducted by Central Office. These began in May, 1998 with the first city-wide meeting for coaches. Three additional city-wide meetings were scheduled, as were smaller regional meetings throughout the first year.

Although most coaches report being in the position during the 1998-99 school year, their attendance at staff development meetings during that same period is irregular. Despite the fact that Central Office required attendance, Table 4.14 illustrates that few coaches were present at all four city-wide meetings.

| Table 4.14 | |
|---|---|
| Number of City-Wide Meetings Attended by Coaches | |
| *Meetings* | *% of Coaches* |
| 0 | 5 |
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 20 |
| 3 | 21 |
| 4 | 38 |

Although attendance at CPS sponsored staff development meetings improved within the first year it is obvious that not all coaches benefited. However, other forms of professional development took place during the first year of the initiative as well. Over one third of the 66 coaches who were surveyed reported that agency partners had offered staff development for them and for other members of the school staff.

Their descriptions of this "imported" staff development indicate a wide range of activities. Some coaches report that staff development consisted of a tour of the site and an explanation of the organization and its mission. Other agency partners discussed the rules and regulations students would be expected to follow or the opportunities available to students through the organization.

Some partners, notably national organizations such as The Constitutional Rights Foundation and Do Something, offered intensive leadership training for teachers and students. These agencies worked with coaches on a regular basis throughout the first year. They often assisted with project planning and even mentored students at the service learning site.

Local universities also offered quality staff development to schools providing their own faculty members who worked with coaches and other staff at the local school level. One local environmental group supplied learning materials, teacher training, transportation, and equipment to complete the service learning project. However, the coaches and schools fortunate enough to have the latter kind of quality support were very much in the minority.

**Table 4.15**

Total Number of Hours Coaches Were Involved in Professional Development Related to Service Learning

| *Hours* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 5 hours or less | 18 |
| 6-10 hours | 21 |
| 11-20 hours | 29 |
| 21-30 hours | 14 |
| 31-40 hours | 3 |
| 40 hours or more | 15 |

Most of the coaches began the year unfamiliar with service learning as a teaching tool. This, combined with a reluctance to avail themselves of opportunities for professional development, put coaches into a potentially stressful position. But it was the time required to implement service learning, which depleted coaches all over the city. On the coach survey, in discussion with coaches, in a forum of coaches, and in case study interviews, the universal complaint was that of feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the job.

Few coaches, it seems, were prepared for the number of hours that would be required to develop a service learning program in their school. Table 4.16 shows

the average number of hours a week that coaches expended on service learning activities.

Table 4.16 shows that many coaches spent at least two extra hours a day working on their service learning duties. While this may not seem unreasonable, it would, in fact, affect the majority of coaches in the performance of their regular duties at the local school. Asked to what degree their work as service learning coach lessened the time put into their other duties at school, 78% of the coaches reported that service learning interfered with their regular work. 51% described the amount as some and 27% described it as a great deal.

**Table 4.16**

Hours a Week Coaches Worked on Service Learning

| *Hours* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 5 hours or less | 15 |
| 6-10 hours | 47 |
| 11-15 hours | 20 |
| 15-20 hours | 10 |
| 20 hours or more | 7 |

The fact that service learning coaches were so affected by the additional duties becomes more understandable in the context of their typical workday. As one teacher explained, "With five classes, a division, and an advisory, and no help, its overwhelming." In fact, very few coaches received release time from any of their regular duties that year. On the coach survey, 71% of them said a reduced load did not occur.

Adding to an already overloaded day, the survey revealed that 61 out of 66 coaches held additional extracurricular positions as well. Amazingly, 47% of these coaches held three, four, and even five added jobs. Table 4.17 shows the distribution of extracurricular responsibilities among coaches.

**Table 4.17**

Number of Additional Responsibilities Reported by Coaches

| *Responsibilities/Jobs* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 0 | 5 |
| 1 | 20 |
| 2 | 26 |
| 3 | 15 |
| 4 | 20 |
| 5 | 12 |

In describing the responsibilities they had in addition to their primary job, coaches listed a number of extracurricular positions. While varied in nature, none of these jobs appear insignificant in terms of the potential hours they might demand. Included were sponsors of clubs, coaches of team sports and of cheerleaders, homebound teachers, night school teachers, test coordinators, truancy prevention advisor, department chairs, yearbook advisor, curriculum advisor, Local School Council representative, and the list goes on.

Support from Principals. It would appear that principals chose as coaches, individuals with proven track records as doers and achievers. Principals showed support for implementation in recruiting capable individuals as service learning coaches. Acknowledgement of their abilities alone, however, was not enough to

compensate for the demands of the role. And unfortunately, few coaches received much additional support from principals.

Initially, service learning coaches listed principal support as one of the factors most helpful to them. It was then assumed that this support would be illustrated when coaches were asked to describe the ways principals demonstrated their support. The survey listed nine different means by which principals could lend support to coaches at the local school level. Table 4.18 provides an indication of the kinds and levels of support that coaches actually received.

**Table 4.18**

Ways Principals Demonstrated Support for Coaches

| *Support Shown to Coaches* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| Supported staff development related to service learning | 53 |
| Included service learning on the agenda at staff meetings | 48 |
| Met with coach to discuss status of service learning | 48 |
| Provided phone and voice mail | 45 |
| Encouraged linking service learning to the curriculum | 38 |
| Discussed service learning at LSC meetings | 33 |
| Provided time to visit service sites | 32 |
| Provided release time to develop service learning program | 27 |
| Reduced course load | 11 |

Looking at Table 4.18, one is hard-pressed to account for the 68% of coaches who reported principal support as extremely helpful. Less than half of the coaches could report that they received support in the most basic of categories such as principals scheduling meetings to discuss the status of the program with them. Release time, even from the more routine duties of division or advisory occurred for only 27% of coaches. Only 11% experienced a reduction in actual course load.

Less than one-third of coaches were provided time to visit service sites or other schools to observe their service learning programs. 53% of coaches report that their principal supported opportunities for other staff members to receive professional development related to service learning. And yet only 38% report that their principal encouraged linking service to the curriculum in meetings with department chairs.

Perhaps most alarming is that only one-third of the coaches reported that their principal devoted time during Local School Council meetings to discuss the initiative. With service learning a new requirement to graduation, it would seem logical to broadcast that information in an important forum where parents and community are likely to hear about it.

How to explain then, this perception of support among coaches where there is little evidence for it. Anonymity was clearly guaranteed when coaches completed the survey, so one assumes they did not fear retribution from principals. It may speak to the role of principal and the degree of authority inherent in the position. Coaches may have perceived their appointment as coach as a form of recognition. And even the slightest suggestion of support from a principal can be considered noteworthy.

Perhaps coaches were unsure of the ways in which principals could be of help to them. And to be fair, having been given little direction from Central Office, principals may have been equally unsure of the appropriate support to extend to coaches. In any case, principals did very little in the two areas that proved most troublesome for coaches: the first was time and the second was in getting classroom teachers involved in the initiative.

**Getting Teachers Involved.** If coaches were ambiguous in their perceptions of principal support they were not so in reporting their inability to get other teachers involved in the initiative. Whether owing to a lack of support from the principal or hesitance on the part of coaches, the fact is that only 38% of coaches said they participated in department meetings related to service learning. In interviews and in an end-of-year forum several coaches spoke of the reluctance

of classroom teachers to participate. One coach summarized the feelings of many, "The teachers are aware of the requirement, but they don't see it as their responsibility to implement it." For some teachers, the small stipend that coaches received was proof that the job belonged to the one being compensated.

From the beginning, coaches expressed concern that they lacked the authority to enlist the help of classroom teachers. At the first city-wide meeting, coaches received materials which stated that one of their general duties was to, "Build partnerships with teachers to coordinate planning for cross-curricular projects and monitoring students' progress toward completion of their projects." At that same meeting one coach asked a Central Office administrator "Will principals back us up?" The administrator replied, "They know about this policy."

Evidently coaches needed more support from principals or from Central Office. One coach said, "There's got to be a directive from Central Office. When a directive is given, the rest of the staff is going to follow through."

As the year ended, coaches expressed the sense of being on their own, "The administrators, as well as teachers, need inservicing. The administrators need to know how much we have to put into this. Then they can talk to staff. It's not our

job to involve the staff." But, in fact, it was their job to involve not only other teachers but students, parents, and community residents as well. This was stated clearly on materials coaches received from Central Office.

One of their first jobs was to conduct a needs assessment in the neighborhood around their schools. This was to be a collaborative process, as was identifying the resources of school and community. Very little of this kind of consensus building took place, however. Only 23% of coaches reported that they participated in Local School Council meetings related to service learning. And only 29% said they participated in community meetings related to service learning.

Staff development for classroom teachers was clearly identified as a necessity by coaches. One coach complained, "More than half of them don't even know what this is. They've had no inservice, no training, no formal anything." As coaches themselves began to become familiar with the difficulties of implementing service learning, the more they realized their colleagues' need for professional development. As one coach said, "You've got to retrain them. Teachers have to refocus their way of teaching to make sure they are incorporating service learning into the lesson."

As Central Office worked to develop curriculum guides for Year Two, coaches were responsible for "training and supporting teachers in the instructional use of Service Learning." Clearly, most first year coaches felt they had neither the expertise nor the authority to do so. Table 4.19 list the most common factors identified as problems by coaches. Heading the list is time. The next three factors relate to involving other teachers in the initiative.

| Table 4.19 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factors Identified by Coaches as Problems | | | | |
| | *Coaches ' Responses* | | | |
| *Factor* | *Yes* % | *Somewhat* % | *No* % | *No Response* % |
| Time for Implementation | 52 | 31 | 15 | 2 |
| Getting Teachers Involved | 49 | 35 | 14 | 2 |
| Staff Development for Teachers | 38 | 32 | 14 | 3 |
| Links to the Curriculum | 37 | 38 | 23 | 2 |
| Recruiting Students | 32 | 31 | 34 | 3 |
| Student Transportation | 32 | 28 | 37 | 3 |
| Record Keeping | 26 | 37 | 35 | 2 |
| Finding Placements | 9 | 15 | 71 | 5 |
| Student Safety | 8 | 20 | 66 | 6 |
| Principal Support | 8 | 12 | 74 | + |
| Parent Complaints | 5 | 12 | 80 | 3 |
| Discipline Problems | 2 | 11 | 83 | 4 |

(Source: Kahne, 1999)

Statistical Analysis of Factors Related to Participation. In addition to asking coaches to identify factors that promoted and impeded implementation, the surveys were examined to determine features of coaches, schools, and programs that appeared to influence the total hours of service learning recorded for each school. Regression analysis was used to determine factors related to rates of participation. The following factors were included in the analysis:

- The number of teachers involved at each school
- Whether the school received a service learning grant
- Whether the principal was judged "supportive" by the service learning coach

- Whether an outside partner helped with program design and implementation
- Whether the service learning coach was released from a class or a division

The analysis showed that a significantly greater amount of service learning took place in schools where more teachers were involved and in schools where the service learning coach received release time from classes or division. The results, depicted in Table 4.20, show how these factors affected the average number of hours of service learning at schools.

These findings would appear to confirm the need to support coaches by increasing the amount of time they can devote to service learning implementation. Additionally, there is evidence for the need to involve more teachers in service learning at the local school level. The analysis failed to show a statistically significant relationship between the other factors and the number of service learning hours performed.

**Table 4.20**

Factors Related to the Number of Service Learning Hours Occurring at the Local School Level

| *Factor* | *Number of Schools* | *Average Number of Per School* |
|---|---|---|
| No Reduced Load (From Class or Division) | 46 Schools | 1,561 Hours/School |
| Reduced Load | 13 Schools | 3,662 Hours/School |
| No Other Teachers Involved | 6 Schools | 1,094 Hours/School |
| 1-3 Other Teachers Involved | 26 Schools | 1,481 Hours/School |
| 4-10 Other Teachers Involved | 24 Schools | 2,078 Hours/School |
| 10+ Teachers Involved | 6 Schools | 5,016 Hours/School |

(Source: Kahne, 1999)

**The Practice of Service Learning at the Local School Level.** As Central Office staff indicated, the main priority for the first year was to make a start by getting service learning into every high school. Coaches were responsible for maintaining accurate records of students' progress toward completion of the required 40 hours of service learning. While Central Office did not indicate the specific number of hours each student should acquire the first year, it strongly recommended that students complete the required hours by the end of either the 10th or 11th Grade. Coach surveys show the average student performed 19 hours of service learning within the 1998-99 school year. That number includes time spent in preparation and reflection activities.

In addition to monitoring the quantity of service learning at the local school level, coaches were also responsible for maintaining the quality of the program. The coach surveys shed light on some fundamental issues of service learning such as the importance and impact of preparation and reflection, the structure of programs and the types of service activities as these elements emerged during the first year of implementation.

Coaches were informed of the criteria for service learning projects at meetings and through materials distributed by Central Office. One of the first tasks awaiting coaches was to conduct a needs assessment. In order to satisfy one of the elements of high quality service learning, that of meeting actual community needs, coaches were told at the first city-wide meeting to assess those needs in the neighborhood around the school. Assessment could take various forms, "... .a survey, interviews with residents, community meetings, or other means determined by the school."

In an effort to build into the initiative another element of high quality service learning, that of collaboration among stakeholders, coaches were encouraged to enlist the support of "... fellow staff members, students, parents, and community residents to complete this assessment." At the end of the first year, 59% of the coaches reported having done a needs assessment before developing service learning projects. And a number of the 49% who said they had conducted needs assessments qualified their responses by writing "informal" and "unofficially" on the survey.

Preparation and Reflection. The Task Force emphasized the importance of structured preparation and reflection activities for students when it required that 10 hours (or 10 class periods) of the required 40 hours be spent on project preparation and project reflection. This requirement, part of the original draft for implementation, was later dropped. However, preparation and reflection continued to be part of the language used by CPS in defining service learning and coaches were given materials and forms that offered suggestions for preparation and reflection activities. At year's end coaches reported that most students engaged in some type of preparation prior to beginning their service projects. Table 4.21 illustrates the percentage of students and numbers of coaches in ten categories.

Coaches reported that students spent an average of 3 hours engaged in preparation activities. A variety of activities, as shown in Table 4.22, were used in preparing students. The percentage of coaches represents those who reported the use of these activities in the school. Discussion groups and site visits by students were the most commonly cited preparation activities.

**Table 4.21**

Percentage of Students Engaged in Preparation Activities as Identified by Service Learning Coaches

| *% of Students* | *Number of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 10% or less | 4 |
| About 20% | 8 |
| About 30% | 9 |
| About 40% | 1 |
| About 50% | 6 |
| About 60% | 2 |
| About 70% | 6 |
| About 80% | 6 |
| About 90% | 11 |
| 100% | 11 |
| Total Number of Coaches Who Responded | 64 |

Reflection activities, as outlined by CPS, should "explore and analyze student experiences and create links to the academic curriculum." Listing classroom discussions and writing assignments as possible avenues to reflection, coaches were reassured that they would be provided with resource materials and staff development to ensure high quality preparation and reflection activities.

The survey of service learning coaches again shows at least some reflection activities for most of the students in pilot groups. Table 4.23 shows the distribution of students who participated in the reflection phase.

**Table 4.22**

Activities Used in Preparation Phase for Service Learning Projects

| *Activity* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| Community mapping | 38 |
| Leadership activities/workshops | 50 |
| Site visits by the students | 62 |
| Discussion groups (small group/whole class) | 80 |
| Outside speakers | 56 |
| Research by students (reading materials/watching videos related to the issue) | 53 |
| Preparation activities that were fully integrated into course curriculum | 45 |
| Preparation was not part of most students' service learning activities | 8 |
| Other | 8 |

**Table 4.23**

Percentage of Students Engaged in Reflection Activities as Identified by Service Learning Coaches

| *% of Students* | *Number of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| 10% or less | 12 |
| About 20% | 6 |
| About 30% | 7 |
| About 40% | 3 |
| About 50% | 4 |
| About 60% | 3 |
| About 70% | 5 |
| About 80% | 5 |
| About 90% | 8 |
| 100% | 11 |
| Total Number of Coaches Who Responded | 64 |

The findings for the average number of hours spent in reflection activities were similar for those spent on preparing students for service learning. Coaches reported that students spent an average of 3 hours in activities designed to analyze their service experiences. Table 4.24 shows various reflection activities and their use in schools as reported by coaches. Discussion, in small groups and individually with coaches and teachers, appear to have been used frequently. Oral presentations were also used extensively in schools.

**Table 4.24**

Activities Used in Reflections Phase of Service Learning

| *Activities* | *% of Coaches* |
|---|---|
| Journal writing | 48 |
| Essay/paper writing | 43 |
| Oral presentations | 62 |
| Dramatic presentations/readings | 5 |
| Video presentations/documentaries | 17 |
| Small discussion groups | 68 |
| Whole class discussions | 48 |
| Artistic expressions (photography, posters, art projects) | 38 |
| One-on-One discussion between the student and coach or with another teacher | 63 |
| Reflection activities that were fully integrated into course curriculum | 32 |
| Reflection was not part of most students' service activities | 13 |

Students confirmed the number of hours spent in preparation and reflection activities as reported by coaches. Surveys of 268 students who were part of the pilot groups involved in service learning implementation report 1-3 hours spent for preparation and 1-3 hours for reflection. Data from student surveys (See Appendix D) was analyzed using regression analysis to measure the impact of preparation and reflection on students' judgments regarding civic commitment

and academic goals. The time spent in these activities did not prove to be related to either variable.

The fact that opportunities for preparation and reflection were not related to the primary goals of increasing students' civic commitment and academic interest, was reason for concern. The evaluation of the initiative's first year recommended using preparation and reflection, "... in ways that build interest, challenge students, develop their knowledge of social problems, connect with classroom curriculum, and foster a sense of agency." The report warns that service learning activities must be related to a deeper sense of understanding or accomplishments than merely logging hours.

The Structure of Service Learning Programs. One of the ways coaches were encouraged to include preparation and reflection was through whole class projects. At city-wide meetings, Central Office staff and outside consultants spoke of the advantage of moving students *en masse* through service learning projects. If, as one Task Force member noted, a student's academic, social, and civic development were tied to preparation and reflection then whole class projects provided the most opportune way to include these basic elements. In addition, the coaches' burden of maintaining records would be lessened if students were kept in one block.

However, the structure of most service learning programs during the first year as described by coaches, did not adhere to this formula. Rather, most students participated in several service learning activities making it difficult to keep track of their hours and increasing the time spent by coaches maintaining contact with a variety of agencies. Of the 64 coaches who responded:

- 52% described the structure of service activities at their schools as "several short service projects" such as walk-a-thons and clean-up projects.

- 64% reported that the average student participated in 2-4 service projects.
- 67% responded that there was no predominant type of activity at the school; that "students participated in a variety of activities."

Without established links to the curriculum coaches relied upon students working independently or in small groups to satisfy the requirement. About one-third of the coaches described students being directly involved with service recipients through tutoring, working at shelters, or helping senior citizens. Without the help of classroom teachers, coaches found it difficult to involve large numbers of students in one project. And it becomes increasingly difficult to guide students in preparation and reflection activities when students are involved in various and often diverse projects.

Other problems arose for coaches as students went out individually, or in small numbers, to do service. One particularly urban problem, that of gang territory and affiliation, plagued some coaches who met with student and sometimes parent resistance. Students refused to visit service sites in hostile neighborhoods or ones whose location involved traveling across hostile gang territory.

Some service sites had special requirements that neither coaches nor Central Office could have anticipated. For example, one nursing home expected students to have passed a tuberculosis screening before arriving. Such testing was available through city clinics but involved additional time and paperwork that further complicated the coach's job.

Recruiting students was a major problem at the local level. Coaches who depended upon volunteers often found students waiting to see if the requirement would stick. Some students who were convinced of the need to

complete the requirement still felt they had plenty of time to do so in the next two or three years before graduating.

Other students resented the mandated nature of something they understood was supposed to be voluntary. As one student put it, "You shouldn't be doing something without wanting to 'cause then you're going to do it with an attitude, in a bad mood, or something like that." Such sentiments run counter to the goals of the initiative and are echoed in a cautionary statement from the first year evaluation, which warns, "... the program might promote cynicism and make students reluctant to volunteer in the future."

One means of eliciting student cooperation would have been to involve them in planning service learning activities. However, 60% of the coaches reported that someone other than the students planned most service activities. This understandable given the constraints of time pressure and paucity of classroom connections confronting coaches. In any case, the problems of recruiting students and transporting them across the city became serious hardships for many coaches (see Table 4.17).

**Summary.** If, as the one coach suggested, magic was made at the local school level, it was in the degree to which implementation occurred during the first year of the initiative. Despite the constraints of time pressure, service learning programs that were often fragmented, and resistance from colleagues and students alike, coaches in 66 of the districts 77 high schools reported the beginnings of service learning implementation in their schools.

Where service learning took place as a whole school or whole class project, preparation, reflection, and momentum were built in. But few service learning programs used this kind of model.

## *COMMUNITY LEVEL: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL SERVICE*

In some cases, the needed support for coaches came from the community. Neighborhood groups and service organizations across the city offered a wide range of opportunities for schools. Some schools were fortunate in receiving a broad array of support services from agency partners including staff development and student mentoring. These organizations, while not numerous, offer valuable lessons and models to emulate.

**Defining Community**. Planning for the initiative included the active involvement of students in service learning projects by the second semester of the 1998-99 school year. The CPS policy of maintaining flexibility during the first year of the requirement allowed coaches a considerable amount of leeway in devising a school plan. At the second city-wide meeting in June 1998, coaches were introduced to a variety of potential partners. The following September they would a complete list of community groups willing to work with the initiative. This list, which was updated throughout the year, made up a large part of the coaches' Resource Directory.

In order to place students with appropriate agency partners, coaches were encouraged to conduct a needs assessment of the community. In defining "community," Central Office allowed coaches a wide berth. Community could refer to "the neighborhood around the school," it could be restricted to the school itself, or the idea of community could be expanded to include the city and even beyond. Listed below are some of the ways suggested to coaches to generate projects at various levels of community:

- School: Multiple classrooms or grade levels identify a school need, prepare and execute activity. Example: social studies classes create a peer mediation program to decrease school suspension rate.
- Neighborhood: One or more classrooms and a neighborhood organization identify a community need, prepare and execute an activity to meet that need. Example: business math class devises a neighborhood recycling plan to decrease litter, increase recycling, and organize a monthly neighborhood clean up.
- City: Agency representatives, teachers, and students work together to identify a project that builds upon the strength and interests of the agency and the subject area. Example: Historical Society helps a history class preserve historical property.

Although coaches were not asked the method used to determine community, 88% of them reported the primary site of service activities to be in the neighborhood and city. Only 12% reported service activities within the school building or grounds.

From the first city-wide meeting, Central Office had urged coaches to use a needs assessment as a tool in planning service learning activities. A needs assessment can be a collaborative, systematic, and organized method used by schools as a base for program planning and implementation. As a process, the needs assessment follows in the problem-solving and decision-making tradition of John Dewey.

The cooperation and input of community members, earmarks of both needs assessments and high quality service learning, made it a natural choice for coaches. However, only 41% of the coaches said that they conducted a needs assessment in determining service learning activities. Inexperience with

assessment tools and time constraints are both likely reasons for coaches to sidestep the process.

In an effort to better understand the types of service learning activities occurring within the first year of the initiative, coaches were asked to describe the characteristics of "the most common service experience." This was identified as the one activity where most student service hours were logged.

**The Role of Agency Partners.** The majority of coaches, 82% of them, reported that an agency partner or service site partner was involved in the placement identified as the most common service learning experience. These community partners often supplemented the support offered coaches and their schools through the usual Central Office channels. The resources of agency partners varied, as did the activities they offered.

In describing the most common service learning experience, coaches report that the most support from agency partners occurred in areas which directly benefited students.

- 66% of service learning coaches reported the agency partner or site offered training for students.
- 87% of the coaches working with agency partners said students were involved in preparation activities as part of the project either at school or at the site.
- 89% of coaches working with agency partners reported that students were involved in reflection activities.

In preparing students, the most common methods of training students involved verbal instruction, video presentations, and printed materials. Students were reminded of how important their work was to the people served by the agencies.

Discussions about social issues, such as hunger, homelessness, or drug abuse, addressed by these agencies were the foundation of typical preparation activities. Reflection activities included videotaping student experiences, photographic displays, preparation of speeches for use in classrooms, and maintaining portfolios of activities.

The degree to which agency partners were involved often depended on their experience working with student volunteers. A food depository serving the homeless or the Salvation Army offered a broader prospective for students than city agencies such as the Park District or Housing Authority. Municipal agencies seemed less equipped to deal with students; support here often took the form of supplying materials to use in clean-up activities, for example, or to paint senior housing.

In the area of staff development, partnering with an agency or community organization did not offer much for coaches or for other members of the school's staff:

- 35% of coaches who worked with agency partners on the most common service learning project reported support in the area of staff development.

Even where staff development did take place, it was often limited to informing coaches and other staff members of the agency's mission or the rules and regulations students were expected to follow. Few agencies were equipped to offer assistance in pedagogical methods relating service to classroom activities.

The overall effect of coaches working with agency partners was a positive one. In describing their most common service learning project these coaches reported:

- The average number of students involved was 45.
- The average number of hours each student earned was 22.
- 69% of these coaches reported that the project connected to a subject area.

An average of 45 students in one project is very good. However, the average of 22 hours earned by students in these projects is not much higher than the average of 19 earned systemwide during the initiative. Some projects such as walk-a-thons may account for this. Such projects can involve large numbers of students but can be limited if students experiences do not include preparation, reflection, and other activities besides the actual walk itself.

**Agency Partner as Liaison.** The exceptions among agencies working with CPS to support the service learning initiative were those designed to enhance youth leadership. These agencies, most notably *Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago and Chicago Do Something* offered full support for coaches and schools. Their assistance continued throughout the entire 1998-99 school year. Those schools fortunate enough to be selected by these organizations reaped the benefits of leadership training for coaches and students, assistance working with classroom teachers to incorporate service learning into the curriculum, mentoring of students in service projects, and even cash rewards, up to $2,500, in the form of school grants.

*Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago*: Linking Service Learning to the Curriculum. Based in Los Angeles, the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is a national organization promoting service learning. Through the social studies and law-related educational programs, CRF works to provide youth the knowledge and skills effective citizenship. *Constitutional Rights Foundation*

*Chicago* (CRFC), the local branch of CRF worked closely with the Chicago initiative to link service learning to the classroom. The goal of CRFC for the first year was to work with three CPS high schools to create a replicable model of best practices suitable for dissemination in CPS and in other school systems nationwide. As part of this partnership CRFC offered the following support:

- Training and release time for participating teachers
- Materials and resources for teachers and students
- Service project stipends for each school
- Curriculum-based service model (1999 Illinois Youth Summit)
- Extracurricular service models for Student Council or student service clubs

The Illinois Youth Summit was already in its fifth year when CPS launched its service learning requirement. The Youth Summit originated under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice and is also supported by Learn and Serve America. The program, as described by CRFC, "... combines in-class policy analysis with community service to address issues of public safety for high school students in our state. More than 1,000 students at over 20 Illinois high schools annually take part in this program."

During year-long activities, students work with teachers, community leaders, and representatives of government to select, research, and respond to a theme chosen by the Student Advisory Committee. "Creating Safer Communities" was the topic of the 1999 Illinois Youth Summit which included projects dealing with date rape, gun violence, and hate crimes. The program culminates in a day-long conference where student delegates from participating high schools gather in Chicago to discuss the issues and exhibit their service learning projects.

CRFC showed direct support for the new service learning requirement by working with CPS to allow students to earn service learning hours through these projects. Seven CPS high schools, one-third of those participating, were present at the 1999 Illinois Youth Summit.

The basis of the CRFC program is a five-unit curriculum designed to infuse service learning into the classroom. This approach, Active Citizenship Today, uses the acronym ACT and can be used in many different classroom settings. However, CRFC recognizes a powerful connection between service learning and the goals of social studies and works primarily within that particular subject area. The ACT model provides a framework wherein students are given structured opportunities to practice the skills of active citizenship. The five steps of ACT include many of the elements of high quality service learning:

- Students define and focus on their community.
- Students research community problems, select one, and research it more fully.
- Students analyze and evaluate public policies related to the problem.
- Students design and implement a service project to address the problem.
- Students reflect upon and evaluate the process.

In addition to working with social studies teachers through the Illinois Youth Summit, CRFC expanded its efforts to link service learning to classrooms by joining with CPS and Learn and Serve America in sponsoring the first Annual CPS High School Service Learning Conference. This event gave service learning coaches from every high school an opportunity to network with community organizations and share best practice projects. In three workshops CPS coaches

demonstrated for their colleagues successful service learning projects integrated into a number subject areas including science, English, art, vocational educational, special education, as well as social studies.

The conference was especially meaningful in promoting implementation of the requirement. Coaches gained valuable service learning information and insight into integrating service across the curriculum. But, perhaps even more importantly, CPS sent the message that coaches were part of an initiative that was going to stay. Moreover, by scheduling the all-day conference on a regular school day and in presenting a rostrum of speakers, which included Central Office administrators and the National Director of Learn and Serve America, the message to coaches was that they were part of something important. The

conference served to legitimize the initiative while recognizing the efforts of service learning coaches. CRFC, served as a vital link in bringing all of these elements together.

*Chicago Do Something*: A Model for Urban Implementation. Another agency working in tandem with the initiative offered a broad array of resources for coaches and their schools. At the second city-wide meeting *Chicago Do Something* announced its intention of working with ten partner schools. The selection process to work with this agency was not complicated. Partner schools were required to meet the following criteria:

- School has completed application signed by applicant and principal
- Service Learning Coach is prepared to participate in Coach Training

- Service Learning Coach is prepared to facilitate Student Leadership Course
- School demonstrates commitment to preparation and reflection components of community service learning
- Service Learning Coach demonstrates interest in networking opportunities

The core components of *Chicago Do Something*'s work with partner schools are the 20-hour training course for coaches and the 15-week leadership development course that prepares students for service learning. The ultimate goal for this organization is to lay the groundwork for students' "present and future active engagement in the life of their communities." Preparation and reflection are key components of service learning and carry the greatest value, as set forth in the *Chicago Do Something* Coach's Manual:

> It is when students begin to raise important social questions that lie behind service experience that the transformative educational experience begins to take place.

The themes which are interwoven throughout the student leadership curriculum are particularly relevant for students in urban settings. In tackling social issues, students are urged to confront new ideas and strategies. At the same time, students are encouraged to look at their communities and themselves "... as people and places with strengths to contribute and gifts to offer." This aspect of the program has special appeal for inner city youth who are often presented with the negative aspects of their communities.

Collaborative activities which ask students to pool their ideas and experiences are likened to the way successful communities act. Finally, students have three opportunities to make a public presentation to the class. This last requirement is

designed to increase student confidence while incorporating one of the important skills of citizenship.

Coaches, especially in large mandated initiatives, often feel overwhelmed. Agencies such as *Chicago Do Something* are designed to support "... in building an infrastructure that can sustain a local service learning initiative." Such organizations do not deliver service learning programs to the local school, but rather act as liaison between the school and potential community partners. They offer support in all the areas which challenged coaches during the first year: designing a service learning project, negotiating and building relationships in the community, and in building and sustaining a service learning team.

In order to facilitate the student leadership curriculum, coaches were required to participate in training/orientation workshops. In the workshops, coaches were provided with the outline and overview of the 15-week student course, often modeling the activities they would be using with students.

In working with coaches, the *Chicago Do Something* team presented service learning within a framework of youth development and asset-based community development. That framework focuses on the needs, strengths, resources, and development of youth and their communities. As one representative of the organization put it, "It's is a philosophy of development versus fixing or preventing."

The *Chicago Do Something* approach to service learning is inherently political. In presenting a spectrum of community service, action is described as running the gamut from short-term, direct action projects such as aid to the homeless or food

drives to long-term community organizing represented by campaigns to preserve affordable housing or build safer communities. Short term projects are presented as interventions which treat the symptoms whereas economic development and community organizing address the root causes of social problems. *Chicago Do Something* aims to develop youthful leaders capable of improving the system and even changing it if necessary.

The CPS service learning initiative proved to be mutually beneficial for both the district and *Chicago Do Something*. Chicago became the 8th city in the country to establish a local organization under the national *Do Something* umbrella. While committed to supporting the initiative, *Do Something* was also able to test its program, bringing together in one place all the components which had been used only partially, albeit successfully, in smaller venues. By working directly throughout the year with coaches and their schools, *Chicago Do Something* provided the kind of sustained staff development and support that Central Office, lacking the resources of time and personnel, could not provide.

*Chicago Cares*: Building Corporate Support for Service Learning. Service learning coaches often struggled just to enlist students and place them with appropriate agencies during the first year. Coaches acting alone were hard pressed to provide students with experiences connecting service learning projects to the classroom. Developing a high quality program was perhaps even more difficult. The majority of coaches assumed their duties with little prior knowledge of service learning. For these coaches, organizations like *Chicago Cares* could be a godsend. As part of a network of not-for-profit *"Cares"* organizations designed to create and manage volunteer service programs in 25 cities nationwide, *Chicago Cares* brought valuable resources to the CPS initiative.

The *Chicago Cares* Business Shares program creates corporate sponsored service projects designed to complement a company's "team building, leadership development, and philanthropy initiatives." With ties to many social service agencies, parks, and educational centers, the organization is in the position to offer companies a wide variety of volunteer activities. Working to support the CPS service learning initiative, *Chicago Cares* successfully partnered schools with companies willing to guide students through their service learning projects. AT&T was one such company.

The *Chicago Cares/AT&T Youth Service Corps* offered students an opportunity to team with adult volunteers from AT&T in the creation and follow-through of a service project. With the direction of a *Chicago Cares* representative, volunteers and students worked through a nine-week program which included exercises in brainstorming, assessment, planning, and evaluation. Reflection was an important aspect of the program and a "reflection thought" was part of the weekly meeting.

During Saturday half-day sessions at the partner high schools, participants were taught step-by-step the process of planning and coordinating a service project. Volunteers, adult and student alike, learned the responsibilities of managing the activity including the work assessment, supplies planning, project implementation, and reporting project results.

These nuts and bolts skills were honed on field trips to project sites where, for instance, volunteers measured walls to be painted, determined how many gallons of paint were needed, where the closest hardware store was located, whether the site offered bathroom facilities and public phones. Volunteers

negotiated with site supervisors regarding provisions of food and/or drink for the volunteers, involving community members in the project, making sure there were site supervisors throughout.

Just the myriad physical details that form part of the framework of a service learning project can be overwhelming for the uninitiated. In this respect, an agency like *Chicago Cares* provides invaluable support for coaches and their schools. Students who successfully completed the *AT&T Youth Service Corps* program earned the entire 40 hours of service learning required to graduate.

Finally, an important aspect of agency partners is their potential for generating social capital within the community. For example, as the corporate volunteers from the *AT&T Youth Service Corps* model standards and values, they provide students with an opportunity to interact with norm-bearing adults. At the same time, the community has an opportunity to see youth in a positive light. Part of the one-year evaluation of the initiative sought to measure agency support for the new requirement. Phone interviews were conducted with twenty randomly selected agencies. Agency names were taken from a list of agencies that had expressed interest in working with the service learning initiative. Eight did not work with any students. The twelve that did were all very supportive of the program.

**Summary** As implementation of the service learning requirement moved into the community, coaches were confronted with the need to provide students with appropriate settings in which to perform service activities. Central Office provided assistance by listing potential agency partners in the coaches' Resource Directory. However, the Directory could only offer an overview of agency

partners. The quality of the resources they brought to the initiative and the degree of support they were capable of providing, varied widely.

Agencies that were designed specifically to support quality service learning implementation and its role in youth development, emerged as valuable partners. These agencies acted as liaisons between the school and other community organizations. They brought opportunities for sustained staff development and increased the possibilities for meaningful service experiences.

# CHAPTER V

# THE CASE STUDIES: VARIATION IN THREE SCHOOLS

## *DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL*

Daniel Hale Williams is a general high school located on the Southside of Chicago. It occupies an historic school building, built in 1926. The school's philosophy states that, because of the relationship between self-esteem and student achievement, the curriculum should provide content that gives appropriate attention to the culture and ethnicity of the student population. At Williams High School students explore their African American culture and heritage within the context of their instructional program.

### Environmental Factors

Chicago has been identified as one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States. Due to housing patterns and other related economic factors, most students in the Chicago Public Schools attend racially isolated schools. These schools are located in areas where it is neither practical nor possible to desegregate effectively. These schools are often plagued by below average achievement, poor attendance, truancy and high dropout rates, gang problems, substance abuse and other problems. At the onset the 1996-97 school year, two years before the study, Williams High School was placed on probation. It continued to be on probation during the period of the study. This intervention

strategy, determined by Central Office, testified to the seriousness of the problems facing this racially segregated school.

According to the CPS Office of Accountability, every school with less than 15% of students achieving at or above national norms is placed on probation. Additional criteria that may be considered for probation include:

- Performance on the Illinois Goal Assessment Program test
- Attendance rates
- Dropout rates
- Remediation plan not implemented
- School support programs not implemented

Once a school is placed on probation, a probation team is assigned to monitor school progress and to assist with developing a corrective action plan. Probationary status lasts for up to one year, at which time the school is reevaluated. It is a serious situation with the potential for serious consequences, as outlined by the Office of Accountability:

> If the probationary plan has not resulted in school improvement, the Chief Executive Officer, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, may order new local school council elections, remove and replace the principal and faculty members, reconstitute the attendance center, and/or close the school.

In an interview at the end of the year, the principal of Williams that probation had not interfered with implementing service learning. At the same time, he acknowledged that the new requirement was not a primary goal, "Obviously, improving our test scores has had to be our highest priority." Daniel Hale Williams High School was one of 17 high schools on probation during the 1998-99 academic year.

In both its social and academic characteristics, the school reflects the characteristics of CPS in general. That meant the majority of students at Williams had modest family incomes and below average academic skills. Table 5.1 shows how Williams compared to other schools in Chicago during the first year of implementing the service learning requirement.

An enrollment of 857 students placed Williams within the range of medium-sized high schools, defined by CPS as between 638 and 2875 students. The student population during 1998-99 was entirely African American. While the percentage of minority students at Williams was close to that of the city's 90%, the ratio was different. Citywide, the percentage of minority students included 53% African American, 34% Hispanic, and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander.

The community surrounding Williams High School is a largely African American residential neighborhood of single-family homes. According to the 1998-99 School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA), the neighborhood, "... is experiencing a period of increasing unemployment and economic decline and the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals has increased proportionately over the past several years."

CPS counts as low income, students who "... may come from families receiving public aid, may live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, may be supported in foster homes with public funds, or may be eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches." The 81% of Williams' students described as low income is slightly lower than the city's 85%.

**Table 5.1**

School Characteristics of Daniel Hale Williams High School Compared to Schools in the District, 1998-99

| | *Williams* | *District* |
|---|---|---|
| Total Enrollment | 857 | 431,000 |
| Percent Minority | 100% | 90% |
| Percent Low Income | 81% | 85% |

Table 5.2 presents scores on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) in reading and mathematics for Grades 9 and 11 taken at the time of the study. Citywide scores on the same test are included for comparison. The figures for the school and the city represent the percentage of students scoring at or above national norms on this test. In reading, only 18.6% of Williams' students scored at or above national norms. Similarly, 23.2% scored at or above national norms in mathematics. Comparison of the two columns show that scores for Williams students closely parallel those for students citywide.

According to the 1999 School Report Card, an annual report required of all public schools by the state, Williams students made the largest single-year gains in reading and mathematics than it had in the previous twelve years. The following year, the Williams School Report Card stated, "Williams students made a valiant attempt to clear the probation hurdle and merely missed their objective by only 3.5%." While the performance of Williams students on standardized tests remained below national norms, it was clear that during the first year of the service learning initiative the school was beginning to show steady improvement.

| Table 5.2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| TAP Scores for 1999: Percentages of Students at Williams and in the District Scoring At or Above National Norms | | |
| | *Williams (N=285)* | *District (N=37,440)* |
| Reading | 18.6 | 32.0 |
| Mathematics | 23.2 | 41.0 |

As a general high school, Williams offered a wide range of courses that included college preparatory, vocational, and programs for students with special needs. In 1993, a decision was made by the Local School Council and the faculty to make Williams an African American Specialty School. Programs related to that specialty were implemented the same year and continue to date. The school's ethno-centrist identity expressed itself in many ways. Halls and main office displayed African artifacts, a social studies classroom featured student posters of prominent African Americans, the school newspaper ran articles about the achievements African Americans alongside the usual school news.

Interracial relationships were not entirely comfortable at Williams. Conflict occurred between students and some of the white staff. During one such instance, some students hung about talking loudly in the hallway. An elderly, male teacher stood at his doorway and addressed one youth by name, "Mr. Smith, the bell rang. Shut that locker and get to class." The student called out loudly, "Am I talkin' to you, Baldheaded m——f——?" Another student complained once to Mr. Powell, who was African American, about another teacher who was white. The teacher had accused the student of wearing a shirt that displayed gang affiliation. The youth was derisive of the teacher's ignorance, "Anyone knows these ain't the colors."

## The Service Learning Coach and the Program at Williams High School

*February: an ambitious plan*

With more than 20 years of experience as a social studies teacher, Mr. Powell was a veteran of the system. He had attended three of the citywide meetings for coaches as well as the smaller regional ones and seemed comfortable with his duties as coach. In February, Mr. Powell spoke of combining service learning with careers in geriatrics. A pilot group of 50 freshmen and 25 sophomores would be working in three different senior facilities in the community.

His initial interest in working with seniors was sparked by his own mother's residence in a nursing home. During visits with her, Mr. Powell and his wife noticed how many seniors appeared alone and forgotten. They talked about how students could make a difference in the lives of these older people. At the same time, he realized the potential for a variety of careers in the field of geriatrics open to students who might be drawn to this kind of work.

Central Office had awarded Mr. Powell a service learning grant which he intended to use for student transportation. The current service learning newsletter distributed by Central Office, included Williams High School in a list of successfully launched service learning programs. Mr. Powell felt the theme of how seniors are treated in a society could easily be tied to both English and social studies curricula. In addition, the topic could be used for discussion in Advisory classes.

However, Mr. Powell had not gotten that far yet. His time was currently taken up with preparing students for a Know Your Heritage television competition as well as a program for Black History Month. He was still coordinating bus transportation and finalizing plans with the nursing homes. Some facilities wanted students to volunteer after school; others wanted students to be there only on Saturdays. The coach was currently asking students to fill out information sheets choosing a nursing home and listing the times they would be available to volunteer.

*April: paperwork and resistance*

After several unsuccessful attempts to reach Mr. Powell in the weeks that followed an initial visit, he called one Friday sounding somewhat harried, "I'm the only one doing service learning here and I'm still placing students." He went on, "I'm trying to get grades ready for parent conferences. Report card pick-up is next Thursday and grades are due on Monday. I have to deal with that first." He agreed to a visit two weeks later.

Mr. Powell was at his desk in his social studies class while his students worked independently at theirs. He was completing some paperwork for his homebound students, "This is due and I don't have any other time to do it." He had been thinking about ways to link service learning to his own classes and spoke enthusiastically of possible units: The Role of the Elderly in the African American Family, The Economic Impact on the Families of Older People, The Care of the Elderly in World Cultures. He saw a natural tie to chemistry and biology classes.

Meanwhile, there were problems. Students, although initially excited about the project, don't show up, don't bring in the necessary paperwork. "There is no urgency on their part," Mr. Powell explained. The paperwork was his biggest problem and he complained that CPS still had not come up with a computer program to deal with it. Because of his own class load, the coach had to try catching students during division periods. He complained that division teachers had been given lists of student assignments but offered him little help in working with students.

Mr. Powell had arranged for two buses and had enlisted three adult school aides to accompany 50 students to nursing homes the following Saturday. On this particular day, students were submitting paperwork, including parental permission forms, to the coach. Students drifted into Mr. Powell's classroom continually during four class periods. Most came to pick up time logs and to commit to the Saturday trip. Students were to keep a log of their hours and to have them signed by nursing home authorities.

At times a line formed in front of the coach's desk. One student asks another why he is there. "I want to graduate," the boy replies. Another student complains, "Uh, uh. I can't go Saturday. I have a party." The girl's friend reminds her that the trip to the nursing home is in the morning and that she has time to get ready for the party. Mr. Powell says, "That's right. So you be her support system and make sure she gets there."

During one class period, students work on timed readings to prepare for the upcoming TAP tests. Two school aides arrive. They would be accompanying students on Saturday and have come for instructions. The coach is using some of

his grant money to pay for the adults to supervise students. He asks one of the women to bring a camera, "I want some photos to send to Central Office."

Mr. Powell directs them on how to get students onto the bus, how to get them to nursing home personnel, how to sign them in, how to monitor them as they work with seniors. The danger of gang violence in the community prompted the need for busing students. According to Mr. Powell, students are very uncomfortable about crossing into hostile gang territory to do service, even on a bus. The conversation is friendly and the two aides reassure Mr. Powell that they will do whatever is expected to make Saturday a success.

*May: a service learning team is formed*

Two weeks later, a polite but clearly irritated Mr. Powell is returning a phone call request to meet, "You know I have five classes and an advisory." He described himself as "very tired" and "suffering from work overload right now." The coach mentioned that the TAP tests were scheduled for the next day and as he put it, "The TAP takes priority over everything else." He described feeling very upset about how things were going with service learning. He reluctantly agrees to meet but warns, "I can't even think straight right now."

At a meeting one week later in the school library, a revived Mr. Powell greets with a smile, "I arranged for us to meet with some members of the service learning team." Two members of the team, the counselor, Dr. Russell and Mrs. Allen, the librarian joined us at a long conference table. The coach explained that he had decided to form a service learning team at Williams in order to come up with ideas to tie service learning to the classroom. He took out two flyers that

had just been created and were being circulated to staff and students. A one-page sheet entitled, "Service Learning Program Memo" was directed at students and covered basic information about service learning at the school. Included in the memo were the seven steps students were instructed to follow (emphases are original):

- ***Step 1: Inform your parents*** about this requirement. ***Check*** your time availability. ***Arrange*** your schedule to slot in a service project.
- ***Step 2: Go*** to Room 204 to see ***Mr. Powell*** to view and select a service project. ***Pick up*** all necessary ***Forms A-H.***
- ***Step 3: Review,*** complete and ***return forms*** (A, B, C, &D) to the Service Learning Mailbox in the main office.
- ***Step 4: Consult*** with the designated classroom teacher/sponsor to prepare for your project.
- Step 5: ***Perform task*** and ***record service*** on ***Form F. Complete Form E.***
- ***Step 6: Write*** a reflection ***(Form H)*** about your service. ***Get a signature from the service sponsor*** to complete your lesson.
- ***Step 7: Return Forms E, F & H*** to Mr. Powell or the Service Learning Mailbox.

That's it! The Service Learning Design Team and I are excited about getting started and we know you will be too. Let's make Williams High School shine even more!!!

The document bore the signature of the principal, Mr. Gates. The other flyer, addressed to "Students, Parents, Colleagues, and Community Supporters," reminded each group of its responsibilities regarding the new service learning initiative. A paragraph is devoted to each group outlining what they must do to fulfill the requirement. This flyer is also endorsed by the principal and reflects a new get-tough approach by the school.

The recent formulation of a service learning team by the coach has alleviated him from having to assume the entire burden of what has become a very problematic requirement. The newly formed team of eight were confronting more than the need to tie service learning to the curriculum. The trouble was more fundamental, as Mr. Powell explained, "The problem is not the curriculum, the problem is not money, it's getting kids to take ownership."

All of his efforts to arrange for the Saturday trip to the nursing home in April had resulted in only two students showing up that morning. School aides and the buses had to be sent away, having had to pay them despite the fact that their services could not be used.

Mr. Powell had a long list of complaints regarding the disastrous trip, beginning with students, "They come up with a million excuses." Some students had to participate in a ROTC parade that day. Most students wanted to stay in the neighborhood but there were not enough nursing homes to accommodate them all. Some students don't want to work in nursing homes. Most students feel they have two or three more years to accumulate the required hours. The librarian, Mrs. Allen said, "They don't feel pressure to do it," adding "and there are some who just don't want to work."

There were problems at the service sites as well. Although one nursing home was working out well, others were reluctant to have students in the evening because they had less security at those times. The sites all wanted students to have passed TB testing and physical exams. The closest Board of Health facility could only process five students a day. Students had to follow up on TB screening results.

The time demands of being a coach continued to wear Mr. Powell down. He reported having to put in long hours at home and after school. He pulled out at least ten phone messages from parents who had called to complain. He has to take time to call them back to address their concerns. The coach offered a litany of typical parent complaints, "I can't afford to send my child to that place." "I don't have time to take my child to that place." "My child has to babysit at home."

The service learning team is overwhelmed as the counselor, Dr. Russell explained, "Everyone here at school is doing so many other things." The coach has not done a workshop for teachers but seems to realize he will have to do so eventually. A letter to the faculty, "to let them know their responsibility" regarding service learning hasn't worked. Division teachers ignore Mr. Powell's requests to see students. They fail to collect forms from students. "Some teachers feel that service learning is just going to go away, so they don't want to be bothered," said Mrs. Allen.

The coach returned to his original complaint about students, "Students don't think that there will be a penalty. The really don't believe they won't graduate if they don't do service learning. And the ones who do believe they have to do it still think they have plenty of time." Mr. Powell has a special problem enlisting male students in service learning, "It interferes with sports and ROTC activities."

With the end of the school year quickly approaching, the coach has turned to a number of other sources of service. There are tutoring programs already in place at local elementary schools and some students have been sent to these.

Students are participating in Walk-a-Thons. Mr. Powell is giving service learning hours to students in ROTC who act as firebox monitors on their lunch hours to eliminate false fire alarms.

For the first time, there is a the sense that Mr. Powell would like more support from the principal, "You know he gave me this and expects me to just do it." He would like Central Office to arrange a faculty workshop with the principal. Perhaps all-class meetings with freshmen and sophomores could be scheduled in which the principal and Central Office personnel could impress upon students the seriousness of the requirement. On a hopeful note, the coach said he hopes service learning continues. He has learned a lot and thinks next year will be much better.

Table 5.3 shows the number of Williams students who participated in service learning and the average number of service learning hours they performed. A comparison of Williams students with those citywide shows that students at the school accumulated far few service learning hours. The low number of service learning hours performed by Williams students corresponds with the problems related by the coach.

**Table 5.3**

Service Learning at Daniel Hale Williams High School Compared to Students in the District, 1998-99

| | *Williams* | *District* |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Students Participating in Service Learning | 118 | 7,300 |
| Average Number of Service Learning Hours Performed | 5 | 19 |

## The Service Learning Site: Initiative in Action

*May: small numbers— big impact*

When the service learning coach, Mr. Powell was asked to describe the kind of service students would be performing at nursing homes in the community he replied, "Students will play board games with senior citizens, read to them, push them about in wheelchairs or walk with them, maybe they will sing to them."

Cermak Pavilion is one of the nursing homes most sought out by students. It is in the neighborhood, a clean and well-managed facility. Four girls from Williams High School are engaged in service activities this afternoon in late May. In a large day room, elderly residents, mostly in wheelchairs, sit at tables or watch television. Two of the students are distributing glasses of water to them. It is a very hot day, and although the room is air conditioned, the heat can be felt. A third student, holding a microphone, is leading a game of Bingo. At least half of the 50 or 60 residents are participating. The girl reads the numbers loudly and clearly, doing her job with enthusiasm. "Okay, Miss Hatfield, you gotta win a Bingo, " she tells one woman. The girl manages to make each new number sound unique, "Okay, we have another number: G52, G52." And then, "Mary's got a Bingo!"

This is obviously a favorite activity for these seniors. The students from Williams High School bring to the game the energy of youth. The students change roles, "Okay we have another volunteer to read Bingo," announces the original mistress of ceremonies. As she hands the microphone over, she taunts her friend,

"And she said she wants to sing too." Some of the seniors join in the fun, "That's so nice," one laughingly adds.

In an adjacent room, ten seniors afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, are seated in wheelchairs in a semi-circle. Another Williams student stands in front, bouncing a large ball for them to catch. She cheerfully encourages the seniors as she bounces the ball to each one, "Okay, Miss Bea. Miss Bea is gettin' down!" As she comes to another woman, she calls out, "Miss Lee likes this game. You like this game, Miss Lee?" To which Miss Lee protests loudly, "No!" Laughter fills the room.

Later the students talk about their experiences at the nursing home. Erica, a sophomore, originally did not want to volunteer at the home, "But then I understood how the people felt. They needed my help, my mentality." Erica takes residents up to their rooms; she talks to them, and sometimes does their hair. Asked what was hard about the job, she answers straightforwardly, "The smell. But you get used to it."

Monique, a freshman, explains her feelings about working in a nursing home, "They needed me as much as I needed service points. Some people don't have family. You feel good when that person looks forward to seeing you." Both girls agree that they would not be at the nursing home if not for the service learning requirement.

Since volunteering, they've grown close to some of the residents. Erica says, "They get attached to you and then they feel like you deserted them. I don't want to feel that, so I might keep coming up after I have all my hours."Monique adds,

"Some of them make you laugh. They're funny." Desiree, another sophomore, joins in, "They be tellin' us stuff. Miss Booker, she's my friend. She tells us about the Bible."

*The site supervisor*

Jeanette Davis, the activities director at Cermak Pavilion, supervises the youth who volunteer at the nursing home. She is very happy with the new requirement and talks about how students adapted, "They were scared at first. But it's been a nice experience for residents and for the kids. The residents look forward to the students coming over." She describes the students as "joyful." In some cases, the presence of the students has worked wonders, "Some residents are in a shell. They stay in their rooms. Then the kids started visiting and these same residents began to come out into the day room and to participate."

Ms. Davis mentions that some students have inquired about careers in health. One girl talked about becoming a nurse. Two students were given jobs at the nursing home. She thinks it is important to let students know they are appreciated, "There is going to be recognition for students. We are giving them certificates and a plaque." In general she found the students to be obedient and helpful, "The week-enders are really appreciated because our staff is lower then. The students play a very important role here."

*A note of caution*

The pairing of teenagers and senior citizens works well at Cermak Pavilion. One group complements the other. However, the facility does not really provide training for students. This can result in frightening and even dangerous

situations, as one student related. Her first assignment was to watch a small group of residents, some who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. "Don't let them leave the room," the girl was told. Eventually, one of the residents announced that she had to go to the bathroom. The teenager was frightened as the elderly woman became more distressed. The girl did not know what to do.

Fortunately, staff arrived quickly and the problem was solved. But, it is easy to imagine such a situation escalating into a real disaster. Clearly, training of students and defining their roles is required in such sensitive placements. CPS and participating agencies need to consider what tasks are appropriate for young teens working with the elderly or the very young.

### Students Respond

In June, a group of Williams students gathered at the school to discuss their service learning experiences. Most had been involved in more than one project. None of the students spoke of classroom ties to the service they performed. They seemed genuinely pleased with their experiences, though some admitted that other students were very upset about the new requirement. A couple of the students boasted that they had completed the entire 40 hours. Most of the group, however, earned less than 15 hours.

### The Principal's Efforts to Implement Service Learning

Mr. Gates had been an assistant principal at the school before assuming the job of principal at Williams High School. He agreed it was useful knowing the school before becoming principal there. "But I would not have wanted to be a teacher in

**Table 5.4**

Williams High School Students Talk About the Requirement

- "At first I thought older people were just all mean and hard to get along with. But now, they cool. You can talk to them and stuff and they talk back to you and tell you stuff about their past and they teach you."
- "This one lady, she's really into church and she said, 'We're here for you and the younger people and we want you to know we appreciate all you do.'"
- "One man tells us how our high school was in the 1920's. He told us he was a police officer in the olden days and how it was."
- "Not everybody is happy. Some people are saying they're not going to do it even if that holds them from graduation. They're not going to do it."
- "Most people think they're graduating no matter what. They don't think the requirement's stopping them because it's new."
- "At the day care center, I got training. You had to change diapers and wipe mouths and discipline the child. I didn't really feel like I should be the one to discipline the child but I had to get used to doing it because if you're not strict with them, they won't listen to you. I worked with kids from two years to six years old."
- "I tutored 8th graders and I'm learning some of the math I missed in 8th grade and it's given me experience teaching."
- "The people at the nursing home just put us in a room with the old people and we just had to give them activities to do, think of things to do with them. That was kind of hard because some of them weren't listening to us. But then we talked to them, worked with them, and they started following our directions."
- "One lady, every time I see her, she's asking me am I going to college, every time I see her, and she's like, 'Yeah, you're going to college.' Her one granddaughter graduated and now she really wants everybody to go to college."
-

a school before becoming principal," he admitted. Mr. Gates' statement revealed the realities of a principal's role and relationship with teachers. While clearly hierarchical, it must also acknowledge the teachers' claim to some degree of autonomy. The contradictions existing within the principal-teacher relationship can be the source of strain. Therefore, moving from within the ranks of

administration to assume principalship would prove an easier adjustment than coming from the clearly subordinate role of teacher.

Mr. Gates' demeanor, while polite, can also give the impression that the clock is ticking. His commanding tone leaves no doubt that he is in charge. The principal's efforts to provide order and discipline are evident in the very visible presence of security personnel and adults who monitor the halls. Improved scores on standardized tests are testimony that this principal's style of formal governance appears to be working.

Even so, the school struggles to function in a hostile urban environment. During the time of the study, a student was killed in a gang-related shooting, one block from the school. At times, violence made its way into the school building as it did one day when a group of students set off devices spraying pepper and mace into the school halls. The incident sent students and staff into the streets and some to area hospitals with serious respiratory problems. A picture of crying students, holding on to one another outside the school was featured the next day in one of the city's daily newspapers. Such negative publicity contributed to low morale among students and staff. As the end of the academic year came to a close, the strain showed on the faces of teachers. It was amid these influences from the environment that the principal and service learning coach worked to implement service learning.

*The exercise of power*

Mr. Gates exerted two kinds of authority as principal. His selection of coach was indirect, while his support of the practice of service learning was direct.

Although the mandate that established the new requirement was imposed from above, the principal had the major responsibility for seeing that the program was implemented in the school.

He expressed feeling very good about the initiative "in terms of its intent." His concerns were logistical, "It's an awful lot to ask one teacher to take on. It's very paper-intensive and it requires a lot more monitoring and record keeping than one teacher can reasonably do while teaching a full load of classes." According to the principal, neither the Local School Council nor the parents opposed the new requirement. He was not sure, however, how that translated into support. He did not allude to the problems Mr. Powell had encountered with some parents in their complaints about the program.

In choosing Mr. Powell to be the service learning coach, the principal was looking for someone who had demonstrated a belief in community service. He was very aware of the potential demands of the position and considered appointing one of the counselors but decided against it, "My counselors are so overloaded with special initiatives and special projects that they've taken on that I thought it would be better with a classroom teacher. And Mr. Powell had indicated an interest."

On the coach survey, Mr. Powell indicated very little support from the principal in terms of encouraging linking service to curriculum or involving other teachers in the initiative. He did not reduce the coach's course load nor did he provide time for him to visit agency sites during school hours. The principal's reluctance to push implementation is understandable if one considers the constraints felt at

the local school level. The teachers experienced service learning as the imposition of an unfamiliar program about which they were given no choice.

Without additional support from Central Office, the principal was not willing to use his hierarchical powers to aggressively push for more service learning. As he explained at the end of the first year,

> I would like the freedom to give Mr. Powell one less class to accomplish the work or an additional person to assist him. Central Office should help him create a database to handle all the recordkeeping. And there needs to be staff development. Teachers have not known how to make the connection with the curriculum. Maybe more than anything else they haven't had the time to make one more connection. There are a lot of initiatives and new requirements that have come down for high school teachers over the last two years. I think high school teachers are feeling overwhelmed with additional requirements.

Clearly this principal did not feel comfortable in doing more until it became obvious that the coach needed additional support. By May, the principal had approved the memo that reminded students, parents, and teachers of the need to cooperate in implementing the initiative. The section which addressed teachers, made them directly responsible for supporting service learning. The principal's signature at the bottom of the memo was a clear message to teachers that service learning was not going away. The following paragraph outlined what was expected of them:

> All teachers are required to correlate classroom assignments with service learning. They can check the service learning bulletin board for projects. The can also create their own projects individually or collectively. Every class provides a basis for a service learning project connected to classroom learning. It is imperative that division teachers urge their students to start their hours, follow through and give them any connected correspondence. This program cannot succeed without the help from the best part of the system.

While the last sentence may acknowledge the importance of teachers' cooperation, it would fall on deaf ears if teachers did not share the same organizational goals or if they felt unequipped to work with the elements of this new pedagogy.

## Summary

The service learning requirement arrived at Daniel Hale Williams High School amidst pressures to contain violence from the outside environment and to increase students' test scores at the same time. The principal downplayed the competing pressures around the school's probationary status and the need to implement the new requirement. The principal stepped in only when it became apparent that the school was struggling to meet the expectations for implementation. The coach and other teachers felt their jobs depended on having students meet guidelines.

The coach's years of experience and familiarity with the community were no guarantee of the program's success. The constraints of time and mobility, inherent in the role of classroom teacher, were crucial challenges identified by the coach. The faculty, feeling already overwhelmed by pressures to contain students and improve test scores, were unwilling to assist the coach. The principal was reluctant to force the program on teachers before they had training or materials.

As the coach reflected on the first year of service learning, he was most troubled by the failure of many students to follow through with their projects. He remained unsure if it was something lacking in the placements or whether it was

simply a case of students' lack of initiative. He acknowledged that students who worked in groups did much better than those who performed independently. The coach would have liked to see more accomplished but felt very positive that a foundation had been created which would serve well for the following year.

Both principal and coach kept waiting for more directives or more support from Central Office. When it was not forthcoming, the coach turned to the principal to back him with parents and faculty. While relations with community agencies were amicable, they presented obstacles with scheduling students and additional requirements.

At the end of the first year, the principal and the service learning coach expressed satisfaction with the progress that had been made in developing a more realistic program for the school. The formation of a service learning team alleviated some of the pressures on the coach. The letters to students, parents, and staff communicated the support of the principal and the legitimacy of the requirement. However, without additional support from Central Office, in the form of release time for the coach or additional personnel, neither principal nor coach could see the program moving forward.

## *WEST TOWN COMMUNITY ACADEMY*

West Town Community Academy is a general high school on the city's north side. Built in 1974, the steel mid-rise structure was designed to accommodate a growing Hispanic community. Over the years, West Town Community Academy had been the center of conflict between CPS and a staunchly political minority in the community. The school's administration and Local School Council were accused of using school funds to support political causes and were eventually replaced. At the time of the study, the school had been entirely reorganized with a focus on careers.

### Environmental Factors

As a major urban center, Chicago is home to many ethnic groups. The neighborhood around West Town Community Academy has been the center of Hispanic growth for over twenty years and continues to grow. Many students arrive at the school deficient in English and often from low-income families. Figures for the last ten years show the percentage of West Town students identified with limited English language skills rose from 17% in 1990 to 31% in 1997. The percentage of low-income students rose from 57% to 93% during those same years.

Unlike Williams High School, with its ethno-centrist thrust, West Town Academy has chosen to acknowledge diversity and cross-cultural appreciation. Teachers are expected to select and focus on "content that relates to the diversity of cultures within West Town, Chicago, the world." However, West Town Academy did share the same probationary status as Williams High School. The

school's SIPAAA for 1998-99 represented a major shift as the school responded to the challenges of both high school redesign and probation. The three major goals for the school included literacy and numeracy "in every subject," as well as, dignity and excellence. The year before, West Town Academy began "a transformation into a 21st Century Learning Center." The new structure incorporated standards from *Workplace 2000, What Work Requires of Schools* and sought to prepare students for both continued learning and for careers. Students could choose to plan their programs around a number of curricular choices including a Math/Science/Technology Academy, a World Language Academy, and nine different Career Pathways.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of West Town Academy was its small school approach to restructuring. As part of the plan to improve high schools in 1997, CPS created the Junior Academy (Freshman and Sophomore levels) and the Senior Academy (Junior and Senior levels). West Town chose to further organize the school into units of approximately 200 students. West Town's eleven units, called Learning Communities, functioned as schools-within-a-school and included the following staff:

- Eight teachers responsible for the core curriculum and related subjects
- Two teachers responsible for special instruction areas. For the Junior Academy, the teachers facilitate the learning skills center and the computer center. Within the Senior Academy, the teachers provide instruction in either career or college placement.
- One supervising teacher
- One counselor
- One clerk

Each Learning Community was further divided into two 100-student core clusters. The four core curriculum teachers in each cluster worked as a team, meeting weekly. It was the job of the four-teacher teams to manage monitor, and support the progress of the 100 students in each cluster. The coordinating teachers within each Learning Community met weekly with the school administration to monitor instruction and assessment. Table 5.5 illustrates the framework of a typical Learning Community:

**Table 5.5**

Model of a Learning Community at West Town Academy

| LEARNING COMMUNITY | |
|---|---|
| CORE CLUSTER<br>English Teacher<br>Math Teacher<br>Science Teacher<br>Social Studies Teacher | CORE CLUSTER<br>English Teacher<br>Math Teacher<br>Science Teacher<br>Social Studies Teacher |
| Computer Teacher<br>and<br>Learning Skills Teacher<br><br>or | |
| Career Placement Teacher<br>and<br>College Placement Teacher | |
| Supervising Teacher<br>Counselor<br>Clerk | |

Learning Communities were designed to facilitate staff collaboration for planning instruction and to increase support for students. They were also designed to ensure safety, order, and discipline in a school that had seen its share of violence.

The community around West Town Academy is rife with gang activity. The school is not unique in its use of metal detectors and school uniforms to address the problem. Every high school in the district uses some form of security check as students enter the building. Uniforms, while seen more frequently at the elementary level, are an option in high schools where gang colors worn by students can cause disruption. In addition, according to the SIPAAA, West Town has launched an intervention program and an internal alternative school to deal with discipline problems. But the same report complains about inconsistent enforcement to these policies.

Table 5.6 compares West Town Academy to Williams High School and the district as a whole in terms of enrollment, racial composition, and percent of low-income students. More than double the enrollment, West Town like Williams is considered a middle-sized high school. The proportion of racial minorities at West Town was more diverse than at Williams. Hispanic students represented 86% of the students, African Americans 12%, and White 2%. The percentage of low-income students at West Town surpassed the numbers at Williams and within the district.

**Table 5.6**

School Characteristics of West Town Community Academy Compared to those at Williams, and in the District, 1998-99

| | *West Town* | *Williams* | *District* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Enrollment | 1,895 | 857 | 431,000 |
| Percent Minority | 98% | 100% | 90% |
| Percent Low Income | 89% | 81% | 85% |

Standardized test scores were on the rise at West Town Academy during the year of the study. However, the school was still on probation at the end of 1998-99. Table 5.7 shows TAP scores in reading and mathematics for Grades 9 and 11 for that year. Scores for Williams High School and for the District are included for comparison. While reading scores for both high schools were in the bottom quarter, West Town students performed especially low.

The percentage of limited-English students at the school may help explain the large number of students with poor reading skills. Twenty-four percent of West Town students were described as Limited-English-Proficient on the 1999 Illinois School Report Card compared to 0% at Williams. CPS defines limited-English-proficient as students whose first language is not English and who are eligible for transitional bilingual education. Students performed much better in mathematics where language skills were less important. West Town students surpassed those at Williams in mathematics.

**Table 5.7**

TAP Scores for 1999 Percentages of Students at West Town Academy Compared to those at Williams, and in the District, 1998-99 Scoring At or Above National Norms

| | *West Town (N=520)* | *Williams (N=285)* | *District (N=37,440)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | 12.9 | 18.6 | 32.0 |
| Mathematics | 28.8 | 23.2 | 41.0 |

The challenges facing West Town Academy were substantial as the school began to implement service learning. It was a school on probation, serving low-income students, almost a quarter of them with limited English, within a community impacted by gangs and violence. The situation did not bode well for the new requirement. And yet, West Town's small schools framework with its opportunities for collaborative interaction among students and staff had the potential to compensate for some of the problems with which the school wrestled.

## The Service Learning Coach and the Program at West Town Academy

### *January: uncertain how to proceed*

To understand the plight of West Town Academy in January 1999, it is necessary to look back a couple of months. The city-wide meeting of coaches in November, 1998 was the fourth such meeting organized and conducted by Central Office staff. With student participation scheduled to begin no later than the following January, CPS needed to gauge the progress of implementation at the local school level. For the recently appointed coach from West Town Academy, Susan

Mitchell, it was the first opportunity to participate in staff development on service learning. It was the second year of this novice teacher's career.

She was chosen by the principal and given complete autonomy because, "She understands our vision for the school and shares it. She knows how to interpret that for students." Ms. Mitchell also taught five social studies classes and a freshman advisory, was responsible for a freshman division, and sponsored an extracurricular club designed to assist problem students. At the November coaches' meeting she would write, "I feel as though I am a little behind."

The statement would prove prophetic. At an initial meeting in January with the coach and the principal, Susan Mitchell seemed uncertain how to proceed. The principal expressed the need to link service learning to the school's career oriented framework. She envisioned a type of flowchart in which coursework and service would be somehow linked to a student's career choice, "Course descriptions should include pathways to service also. Student perception is very important. Service should be positive and automatic." However, the principal did not elaborate on how this could be accomplished.

During the meeting, the coach said very little. While the principal talked generally of the benefits of service learning, the coach was concerned with more concrete issues. At one point she said, "The kids are afraid, nervous about going out into the community," referring to gang problems in the neighborhood.

A week later in a phone conversation, the coach was more open. Ms. Mitchell said she was very busy. As a result of the CPS policy to clamp down on social promotion, a number of eighth-grade students were being held back. West Town

Academy would be receiving 50-100 new freshmen at the beginning of February. Ms. Mitchell felt this was very disruptive. She did feel though that the school was a much calmer place in the past year. She talked about there being a "system in place." Lockers had been moved to discourage students congregating in the halls. There had been changes in the staff and in duty schedules to deal with disruptive students. The coach had thought about planning a service fair, inviting local agencies to come to the school.

February passed and the service learning coach did not return phone calls. In mid-March, we found her at the school. West Town Academy still had no service learning program in place. The coach, with little assistance from principal or staff, was clearly struggling. She decided upon a natural course of action: simply take programs within the school that sounded service-related and use them to fulfill the requirement. She invited us to observe the work of one such organization, Life Directions, as it worked with West Town students.

*April: putting a program together*

Life Directions, founded in 1973 in Detroit, serves a multi-ethnic and bi-lingual population of youth. The agency seeks "to motivate at-risk youth to lead self-directed lives." It does this by partnering goal-oriented, high achieving peers with those at risk. The organization expanded its efforts to Chicago in 1990, and was operating in eight Chicago high schools and neighborhoods at the time of the study. The program at West Town Academy was similar to those in other high schools in the city. It consisted of three components:

- Peer Motivation brings students together for values-based discussions moderated by Life Directions staff members. The students, identified by their teachers, fall into two categories:

those considered at risk and those who are considered goal oriented. They meet during school hours in sessions that cover how to set goals, overcome hurdles, and take control of their lives. After school activities are devoted to service projects and activities designed to enhance their communities.

- Neighborhood Enrichment groups consist of graduates of the Peer Motivation Program who are matched with responsible adults, parents, and community leaders to create activities that reduce violence and foster youth development. These groups meet twice monthly under the auspices of Life Directions which also sponsors workshops and conferences for this program.
- Peer Mentors are also graduates of the Peer Motivation Program. These sophomores and juniors tutor at-risk eighth graders after school at feeder elementary schools. Life Directions staff also help peer mentors work with the younger students in group sessions and community activities.

West Town students who participate in the Life Directions program begin as freshmen in Peer Motivation classes where they do role-playing and work on leadership skills. The purpose of these sessions is to develop communication skills while giving high achievers the opportunity to motivate their peers through interaction and discussion.

The Life Directions program at West Town Academy was conducted by two men who worked at the school with about fifty students two days a week. Neither of these individuals was familiar with service learning nor were they aware of the CPS requirement when we spoke with them in March. One of them came from a position in business and the other had a degree in philosophy and had experience working in youth motivation. Both felt that the goals of their agency matched those for the initiative and were very interested in participating. By April, Susan Mitchell, the service learning coach, had spoken to them briefly about giving students credit for the hours they tutored the eighth graders.

By mid-April, Ms. Mitchell was still trying to find a way to establish service learning at West Town. She admitted, "I bit off more than I can chew this year. There just isn't time to work with teachers." She felt the problem was that teachers needed more information. Not even administrators at the school seemed to know what service learning was about. Central Office had sent her materials, but having missed the initial coach meetings, Susan Mitchell was proceeding with minimal training herself.

She looked for other programs in the school that she felt would qualify for service learning. In addition to Life Directions, the coach was considering awarding service learning hours to students who worked as peer mediators. This program, conducted by Mr. Rivera, one of the West Town counselors, trained students to act as mediators for students in conflict. It was the first year that Mr. Rivera had worked with the program and he felt it was going well. The student mediators, mostly sophomores, attend 30-minute training sessions after school once a week. Training includes a video on conflict resolution, role-play, tips for active listening, getting the facts, and other skills they would need.

The recipients of the mediation, called disputants, were usually students involved in a fight or some other kind of disruptive behavior. They are offered mediation in lieu of suspension and must sign a contract. Mediation itself is usually a one-session event. Mr. Rivera said March was very busy. There was a lot of need for mediation. Mr. Rivera was also interested in trying to tie service learning to the program but had not really talked with the coach about it.

In April, the coach made an attempt to create a program that she felt met the standards which combined service and the curriculum. When we spoke, she

sounded optimistic as she outlined the steps she had taken to establish a recycling program at West Town. She had spoken with an intern from a local university, who currently worked with five advisory classes at the school. The coach thought this individual could introduce the recycling ideas there. She had spoken with the Administrative Assistant, a science teacher, and an art teacher about involving the Environmental Club. The plan would be under the supervision of the building engineer, who she said had experience with recycling.

As the coach spoke, she seemed to have finally come upon a feasible way to satisfy the requirement. Having found support from her colleagues, she sounded confident. The plan would take advantage of the small school structure at West Town Academy, with each floor's residents responsible for recycling there. Freshman and sophomore advisory classes would discuss the value of recycling. Containers would be set up in every room. Money collected from recycled cans would be donated to a shelter. She talked about applying for a service learning grant, which she had not done before. The program would satisfy the requirement while addressing what she perceived as the students' reluctance to volunteer in the community. She wanted to keep service learning an in-house activity. She restated her philosophy, "I think you need to work with what's going on in your school. But you have to come up with a gimmick."

The slow processes involved in implementation were illustrated by West Town's attempts to create the recycling program. The coach would find that the program she envisioned would take time to realize. A discussion later that month with the school's Administrative Assistant, Mary Anderson, revealed the problems they had encountered.

A meeting of the Environmental Club was called to discuss a recycling program. About fifteen students showed up and an ad hoc Environmental Committee had been formed to talk about recycling. However, the Environmental Club, which had only recently been organized, was still trying to define what the organization would look like. Ms. Anderson, one of the club's sponsors, hoped that the ad hoc committee would be a springboard for a recycling program the following year.

As part of the school' administrative staff, Ms. Anderson felt service learning needed to have a higher profile at West Town Academy. She felt students and staff needed to be made more aware of the requirement. At the same time, she felt the need to structure it more, "We need to define what is acceptable and what's not." As April came to a close, a handful of staff and students were beginning to share ideas about the way service learning might be introduced the following year. But for the first year of the initiative, the service learning coach had determined that service alone would have to do.

***June: summary of hours***

In Table 5.8, the number of service learning hours performed by West Town students is compared with students at Williams High School and across the district. CPS records for the first year of the service learning initiative relied upon the coach surveys. At West Town Academy, the coach chose to record service learning hours to sophomores in the Life Directions program and to those in the Peer Mediator program. The average number of hours is much higher than the hours earned at Williams, which had similar problems in launching its service

learning program. They also surpass the average hours performed by students across the district.

**Table 5.8**

Service Learning at West Town Academy High School Compared to Students at Williams and in the District, 1998-99

| | *West Town* | *Williams* | *District* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students Participating in Service Learning | 55 | 118 | 7,300 |
| Average Number of Service Learning Hours Performed | 48 | 5 | 19 |

In considering these numbers, the reader should remember that students at West Town had been involved in the two youth motivation programs from the beginning of the year. Whether or not either school was involved in real service learning is problematic. This is especially true for students in the Life Directions program at West Town. One could argue that the students themselves were the recipients of service, especially after reading the agency's own materials:

> ...given the dire environment within which the program functions - high schools under siege, neighborhoods devastated by high crime rates, substance abuse and unemployment, and families torn apart with absent parents and worse - Life Directions serves as a "life saver" for many of the recipients in what they perceive as an otherwise hopeless situation.

## The Service Learning Site: Initiative in Action

### *April: service learning as event*

One form of service, which students in the Life Directions program perform, is that of tutoring younger pupils. One of the individuals who served as a counselor in the program explained that about fifteen West Town sophomores serve as tutors and mentors to twenty eighth-graders from three feeder

elementary schools in the neighborhood. The tutoring has not been going well this year according to the counselor. The younger students, identified by their teachers "as students who may not make it through high school," have not been waiting after school for the West Town students.

The counselor felt that the eighth-graders "don't like to hang around after school, but they'd like to be in the high school." Accordingly, plans began in mid-April to bring the younger students to West Town for an event that would introduce them to the school and give the tutors an opportunity to motivate their younger charges. The two Life Directions counselors began working with the tutors to prepare them for the event. During the regular motivation sessions, West Town students were asked to think about their experiences as freshmen. Students, seated in a circle, shared the typical tales of getting lost, of having pennies thrown at them; one student even got suspended the first week he arrived. Other students related positive experiences because they knew people at the school or found sympathetic teachers. From these stories the counselors helped students determine ways that they could support the eighth-graders, many who would chose West Town as their high school the next year.

One week before the event, the counselors are finalizing plans and assigning students various roles. It is obvious that the adults are guiding the group but students are given full voice and appear confident that their opinions are valid and will be taken seriously. Most decisions are by group consensus. Topics are discussed like "What I Thought High School Was Going to be Like" and "How Peer Mentoring Helped Me." Students volunteer to speak or to assume some other role. The counselors are serious about students committing to this afterschool event. Letters are given to students excusing them from conflicting

activities such as practice for sports or extracurricular clubs. One counselor reminds me, "There is competition for the good kids. The same kids are in a lot of activities." This was a complaint heard from many coaches who depended upon student volunteers to make up their service learning pilot group.

On the day of the event, a third Life Directions counselor who works at another CPS high school, is assisting by transporting the eighth-graders to the high school. Meanwhile, back at West Town, the two regular counselors are preparing the tutors, "We want you to share with these kids what it was like for you coming to high school." The tutors are handed Life Directions business cards. They are told to put their names on the cards and to give them out to the eighth-graders. "You are like ambassadors for West Town Academy. When you give a card to a kid it means they can count on you," they are told. Two girls enact a role-playing situation in which one plays an eighth-grader. They stand up, "My name is Maria and I'm giving you my card so that when you get to West Town you can look me up. And if you need help, I'll help you." The other girl says a bashful thank you amid laughter and applause.

The West Town students stand around, putting on T-shirts over what they already wear. The t-shirts, which feature the Life Directions logo, have been ordered especially for the event. The sophomores appear excited and happy. They busy themselves cleaning the room and setting up refreshments. There is joking about "women's work." Much debate over whether the white or the green t-shirts are better. Then a watchout at the window announces excitedly, "They're here!"

Soon the eighth-graders filter into the room. They sit at desks arranged in a large circle while tutors stand or sit around the perimeter. Tutors who speak will move to the inside of the circle. One eighth-grader, spying the refreshments, calls out, "Hey, we're gonna have pop!" The tension is broken as both groups of students break into laughter. Tutors give the younger students t-shirts of their own and soon everyone in the room is wearing a new t-shirt.

Throughout this event, which resembles a festive orientation, the West Town students are clearly in charge. The three Life Directions counselors sit quietly in the background. One boy gets the younger kids quiet. Two girls deliver welcomes. Then the sophomores talk about how it was for them coming to high school the first time:

> "When I first come here I was scared. I didn't know anyone."
>
> "There are three ways to get good grades and have a good future. First, learn good English so you can read faster and grasp ideas. Second, keep your mind on what you need to do. And third, keep a sharp eye, focus on what you're supposed to."
>
> "You are the future of West Town. West Town is tough but you can make a difference."
>
> "I heard West Town is tough, lots of fighting and shooting. It's not true. You need your high school degree. My father is having to go back now and get his GED."

There is warm applause after each tutor gives his/her speech. The eighth-graders listen intently to these short but heartfelt messages delivered in the language of kids. The one adult speaker is a social worker at West Town After welcoming the eighth-graders, she tells them, "I find the following things will help you succeed: come to school regularly, do your work, and follow the rules." Having shared that good advice, she exits to applause.

One counselor approaches during a lull in the activity. He is obviously relieved at the good turnout and how well things are going. He describes one of the sophomores who gave a speech as, "... very bright, but kind of nerdy. His giving that speech was a big deal for him. He obviously worked on it." He pointed out two other boys who have been on their best behavior, "They were once very volatile. The program turned them around."

After a quick tour of the floors where freshmen take classes, the students are all back. The eighth-graders are the guests of honor and are brought soda pop and potato chips. One of the sophomores takes photographs. One of the sophomores quiets the room as others begin to talk about the activities and clubs to which they belong. A girl talks about being on the softball team, a boy about the football team. Another boy jokes about being on the swim team and "coming in first in the city in the breast stroke." The eighth-graders pretend to be scandalized. One girl with a commanding presence talks about struggling to stay on the softball team despite low grades, "I really wanted to stay on the team so I went and got tutoring. I'm not ashamed. You should go get tutoring if you need it."

Afterwards, the three Life Directions counselors are introduced. They speak briefly and ask for applause for the sophomores. The students end the event by handing out their "business cards." The sophomores talk one on one to the younger students, all of them coming away with at least one card from a sophomore. There is a feeling of a job well done after the eighth-graders are escorted to the waiting van. The adults congratulate the tutors who remain. There is hand shaking and the sophomores appear to be partners with the adults in this endeavor.

*The site supervisor*

During the weeks at West Town Academy, the service learning coach has arranged opportunities to talk to the Life Directions adult counselors and to observe them working with students. Steve, works with students in the motivation training sessions that meet twice weekly. These are primarily freshmen and some sophomores who have been selected by the teachers in their advisory classes. The Life Directions classes substitute for advisory on those two days. On a table near the door is a huge box of cookies and a sign-in sheet. Students wander in, sign their names, take some cookies, greet Steve and take a seat at one of the desks arranged in a circle. One day six students show up and two girls are sent to find a couple of boys who are dallying in the hall. The sessions always begin this way. Somewhat chaotically, and usually late. The two girls return and there is now a total of eight students. But once the students settle down, they appear involved in the discussion.

Steve says that leadership is the underlying goal of the program. The counselors also teach values. According to the Life Directions brochure, the values that guide the program are:

- Self-Responsibility for one's future
- Balance in relationships
- Partnership in diversity
- Fostering a mission-driven attitude.

Steve explains the mission here is to encourage solid family life and to create positive action in the community. The agency is funded through foundation grants and counts powerful and prestigious corporations and financial institutions among its sponsors. The motivation sessions follow a similar pattern.

The students often warm up some form of theater game. One day ten students sit in the circle and each is given a plastic spoon. The question for the day is: What value do you want to pass on? The game begins when a marble is placed in one student's plastic spoon. The student says, "Family," and carefully transfers the marble to the next student in the circle. That student says, "Trust." and the marble moves around the circle. Finally, a boy says, "Respect," but drops the marble as he tries to transfer it. He must now explain what it means when a value is "dropped." The boy says, "My coach slapped me — that's disrespect."

The counselors seem comfortable working with the students and the students refer to them by their first names. Both counselors are bilingual and often students slip into Spanish or the counselors repeat some important point in Spanish. The warm-up exercise is usually followed value-oriented discussion. This particular day happened to follow the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado. Steve wisely chose violence as the topic for discussion. When he asks if anyone knows any details.

The students were very animated as they shared their information. One boy talks about the shooters being neo-Nazis who targeted the jocks in the school. A girl talks about the number dead and how the school was being closed while the investigation continues. Another boy says he heard one student was shot nine times but was still alive. The counselor then says, "Lets turn it real, do we have any groups like that here at West Town?"

The students all begin to talk at once, naming groups, clubs, gangs. This is a topic with which they can easily identify. "A person could be very quiet and you go against them and they explode. It could be any one of us in this room," a girl

says. The comments quickly turn to what they perceive as an oppressive climate at West Town. "How come in this school you have to go through metal detectors and visitors come and they don't have to go through," one boy asks. Another student points out that the school is better now and doesn't need such heavy security measures. A girl agrees, "Before, this school was bad. People would fight right in front of security and would have weapons inside and teachers were afraid of students. One student complains that the school's administration does not ask students for their opinions or talk to them about security. Another points out the inequity in their lives, "Those suburban kids don't have metal detectors at their schools." The students are so energized they pay no attention to the bell and continue to talk until Steve moves them out.

These kinds of involved discussions were often observed in the Life Directions sessions. The students obviously liked and trusted these adults. Unfortunately, the counselors never moved the students to some understanding of possible actions they could take to address the problems or issues that came up. The discussion of violence and security at West Town never translated to any kind of grievance to take to the administration or to address through Student Council. The counselors were satisfied in getting students to think about issues. There was no reflection following the event with the eighth graders. The Life Directions staff never talked about making connections with the classroom. The coach had talked to them briefly about the service learning requirement but they were not trained in service learning techniques and were unsure how their program fit into the initiative.

*Missed Opportunities*

The decision by the coach at West Town Academy, to apply the definition of service learning to activities already in place at the school, was understandable given the constraints she felt. While original and innovative programs were documented throughout the city the first year, some coaches like the one at West Town, looked within the school for reasonable alternatives. Some coaches counted activities like playing in the school band, acting as teacher aides, and monitoring hallways as service learning. Activities without any connections to preparation and reflection or link to the curriculum, whose only attributes were that they were service oriented and were in place.

One of the ironies at West Town was the fact that the coach overlooked a program that did qualify for service learning. West Town was one of the schools working with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, preparing students for the annual Youth Summit. CRF had worked with a social studies class throughout the year as students prepared a project designed to combat hate crimes in the community. In late April, West Town students participated in the daylong event at the Dirksen Federal Building with twenty other city and suburban high schools. The school was one of seven CPS high schools attending that day. The description of the school's service project was listed in the Summit agenda:

> West Town students have created and implemented the service project E.C.H.O. of Compassion. E.C.H.O. (Everyone Can Help Out) is a peer leadership project focusing on human relationships and tolerance, and the goal of the project is to diminish the hate and violence permeating society. E.C.H.O. consists of a peer and public education campaign including the creation of workshops, informational flyers and posters.

None of the students, all of them eligible, received service learning hours for this program. The coach, if she was aware of it, never mentioned the program.

Although participation in the Youth Summit incorporated all of the elements of high quality service learning, was facilitated by an established and reputable agency, and was already in place, the program was not counted. Neither the coach nor the participating teacher had connected the program to the new requirement.

How could this happen? In an interview at the end of the year, the coach talked about her only attempt at staff development at West Town. At one staff meeting, she "... went through the guidelines so all teachers did know. That's where they were informed of what this is, that it's a requirement. I went through all the stuff about service learning." She was asked about the reactions of the teachers, "I don't know what the reaction was. It was in the auditorium, so I couldn't get an accurate read on what they thought."

The classroom teacher, perhaps because he was unfamiliar with the nature of service learning, did not discuss the project with the coach. It is also possible that the teacher, a long time veteran of the system, valued the closed-door culture of the classroom teacher and simply did not want to get involved. The agency, CRF, shared its resources with the teacher and students but did not make contact with the coach. It was a case of missed opportunities and wasted resources, something implementation efforts at West Town could ill afford.

**Students Respond**

In May, fifteen students who had served as mediators at West Town Academy, gathered for a forum on service learning. The mediators were all sophomores and all female. The preponderance of female students in service learning projects

was noted by a number of coaches. Coach surveys referred to the need to recruit more male students. Some coaches felt that sports interfered as well as the perception of volunteering as a female activity. Like the students in Life Directions, the mediators were long on preparation but had few real hours of actually performing service. There were no ties to the curriculum. Their comments centered on their experiences as mediators, as well as, their opinions of the new requirement. Often there is a disconnect between the students' positive feelings about their own service experiences and the requirement in general. The mandated nature of service learning does not sit well with many students. Others see it as just another task to "... take it and get it over with."

### The Principal's Efforts to Implement Service Learning

Chicago's school reform efforts and the subsequent changes in school-level governance structures have greatly affected the role of principal. Since 1990, Local School Councils have exerted their influence in the evaluation and selection of principals. Since 1995, Central Office has wielded the power to place schools on probation, declare them in remediation or reconstitute non-performing schools. In the latter cases, faculty and principal positions are subject to change at the hands of central administration. These changes have brought increased turnover and a sense of instability among the ranks of principals.

| Table 5.9 |
| --- |
| West Town Academy Students Talk About the Requirement |
| "I don't think service learning should be required because it takes a lot of your time up and if you want a job or you want to do something else, you can't." |
| "I think it's good because we get a chance to learn and get to know people. But then it's bad because some of us aren't doing it out of our hearts, we just feel that we're being forced to do it." |
| "Peer mediation is pretty good because sometimes, not always, it prevents people from violence." |
| The good thing about peer mediation is most conflicts misunderstandings and when you're going through peer mediation, everything is cleared up. You understand what the other person's going through and why he or she did this." |
| "It may not always work out, but at least you tried and you feel you tried." |
| "Sometimes you feel like you're just wasting your time. Eventually you start to realize that out of five mediations a year maybe there were two where you prevented a fight and it makes you feel good. |
| "It's important that you try. If everyone goes around not trying then it's going to be a school of violence. It's good to have some students who are trying to make this school better." |
| "I don't think we should have to get 40 hours of community service. It's too much. We should be concentrating on school and things like that. Why should be have to do community service first?" |
| "Most people don't like it, they're like, 'How come I gotta do this?' 'I don't want to do this.' 'I don't have time to do this.' But if you gotta do it , you just gotta do it. I don't feel there's any harm to it. It's like most people don't want to take their Drivers Ed test. But you have to take it, it's part of life. So take it and get it over with." |
| "If it was voluntary, most people wouldn't do it 'cause most people wouldn't think about it." |

During the first year of the new requirement West Town Academy and its principal were part of major changes at the school. West Town was on probation and the principal, Elisa Torres, was serving as interim principal, hoping to be selected as full principal at years' end. That would mean she would sign a contract ensuring her position at the school for a four-year period. According to the school's 1998-99 SIPAAA, Ms Torres was "definitely committed." Listed among her attributes were the following: "Positive attitude to change," "Wide

vision and ability to follow through," "Creates professional learning environment."

The principal's positive attitude was reflected in an interview in January when she described the school's probationary status as "a gift." She explained that she was actually glad to be on probation, "... because it's causing everyone to rethink what we do." When asked whether probation might not create a problem for teachers who were responsible for raising test scores, she replied, "No. It provides teachers with an opportunity to really think, 'Why am I doing this?

Why am I here?' This is not a job. This is a mission." The principal's tendency to always look on the bright side emerged again in an interview with the student newspaper. Alluding to the bad press the school had gotten in recent years, Ms. Torres was asked how she felt about media with its' negative perception of the school. In response, she said, "I value the media because they are like giant independent eyes: if they see something that is wrong, they write it up. I like that they care sufficiently about West Town to show what is and what isn't working well."

One of the areas that needed work, according to the SIPAAA that year, was the principal's visibility to staff and students. The principal's office was imbedded in a suite of offices, invisible to the traffic in the Main Office. It was unlikely that teachers signing in and out for the day would encounter the principal. Nor would parents or other visitors catch a glimpse without an appointment. During the four-month period observing the school, the principal was never seen in the school hallways or in the Main Office. The service learning coach confessed at the end of the year, "I saw her today, and that was the first time in about two

months. It's hard to get appointments with her. It's hard to discuss a school-wide plan. I know she's for it, but she doesn't have the time. I mean, it's just even hard to see her." It is easy to understand how a novice teacher in such a demanding position would need even more support than veteran coaches like the one at Williams High School.

In an interview at the end of the year, the coach expressed the feeling of being on her own, "... everything has to be on my initiative. And I don't have the time to do it properly." She said that over the year, teachers and students had become more educated and aware of the requirement, but other teachers did not feel obligated to be part of the initiative. She explained, "It's not a priority at all, which is going to trickle down to the kids. The teachers see it as another program from the Board, thrown at them without any way to implement it."

The coach would receive little support that first year. She received no release time from classes nor were teachers directed to include service learning in their courses. The principal did not see her role as an advocate of service learning. In fact, she once referred to the requirement as, "a nightmare of an enterprise." While in accord with the potential benefits of service learning, she felt overwhelmed by the need to provide her large student body with opportunities for service experiences. She complained that community relations take time to build. She offered this example, "After five years of a successful connection between a school and one soup kitchen, they'll say, 'Oh, please come.' But that took five years." The principal felt in competition with all the other high schools for service learning sites, "... all tapping the same resources."

Staff development was another area the principal worried about, "It cannot be just, 'Oh, okay, let's have a teacher workshop here. We'll give you a little talk. We'll have a little speaker. Then you go do the work.' and that's all." She felt staff development should be a local effort and looked forward to doing more the next year. At the same time, it was clear that she expected more support from Central Office in the form of a database that could be adapted to monitoring service learning hours and additional staff to help.

In selecting a coach, the principal looked for someone who she felt shared her sense of mission, "A teacher understands much better what is happening in the life of a student. A teacher is with the students." However, she was aware of the limitations facing a teacher-coach. Asked about the time coach needs to plan a program, participate in staff development, and monitor students, the principal stated emphatically, "It's foolish to believe one human being can do that."

The West Town principal put responsibility for implementation in the hands of Central Office. While proclaiming her willingness to "do it and to keep doing it," she worried that service learning would suffer the same fortune as other failed programs. Speaking of these kinds of initiatives, she said, "We don't have the managerial strategies to sustain them. We kill them."

While she applauded the efforts of the coach and the students who earned service learning hours, she did not share the coach's vision of keeping service learning inside school walls, "If we're doing it only from within, we are not creating connections to the outside world." She was not sure how to go about linking service learning to the curriculum. Listening to the principal, it was clear that she did not see how service learning could help accomplish her goals of

raising test scores and uplifting her student body, "First of all, I'm getting my kids to read and write, because we're on probation. I have to sensitize teachers to the needs of the students. If my students are misbehaving, it's because they have some emotional and spiritual needs that are beyond reading and writing."

Like the principal from Williams High School, Ms. Torres envisioned service learning as an additional burden, not as a way to facilitate student learning. Perhaps because of her own uncertain status, however, the West Town principal had not even taken small steps to support the coach and the program. While the Williams principal had lent his signature to letters informing parents and staff of their responsibilities to implement the new requirement, this principal appeared to be waiting for more support from Central Office. While still endorsing the spirit of service learning, one got the impression that she too might be waiting to see if it would all just go away.

**Summary**

The constraints that limited implementation at West Town Academy were formidable. The school was already on probation as it adjusted to the major changes inherent in the district-wide redesign of high schools. The principal praised the philosophical implications of service learning, but did not feel she had the managerial strategies to make it a reality. The coach, a novice teacher, with a full schedule of classes and extracurricular ideas was appointed late in the year and never quite caught up. The staff, under pressure to raise test scores, dismissed the initiative.

The students, after years of bad publicity, had to overcome the public perception of the school as a place of violence and poor performance. When the principal declared that, "Success is a choice," the students who were interviewing her dismissed her statement. They did not see themselves capable of the kinds of success enjoyed by students at high-performing schools in the district. Their response to the principal was, "But we're not other schools, like Whitney Young or Lane Tech (two well known and respected Chicago high schools). We're West Town Academy. We aren't like them."

And yet it is just these kinds of students who can best benefit from service learning. One of the findings from student surveys, which formed part of the first year evaluation, found student "agency" tied to gains in civic capacity and commitments. When students were given opportunities to take on meaningful roles or felt that their efforts made a difference, they were more likely to feel connected to community and capable of producing change. West Town students, who so often expressed negative feelings about themselves, the school, and the community, were sorely in need of the positive reinforcement, which can accompany a thoughtfully managed service learning program.

West Town Academy, with its small school framework, has the potential for effective staff collaboration, thereby facilitating the implementation process. But without a forceful administration to coordinate the efforts of the varied units within the school, such a framework can actually serve to isolate staff and waste resources.

## *CODY ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL*

Chicago's magnet high schools attract students from throughout the city and offer curriculum centered on a specific area. Magnet schools originated in the city in the 1970's and were seen as a means to voluntarily desegregate racially isolated schools. Traditionally, these schools have been associated with what CPS calls, "a rigorous curriculum in a challenging academic environment." Regional magnet college preparatory high schools give priority to students living in the region in which the school is located but are open to all. Cody is a regional magnet school. Admission is through a selective testing process and competition for placement within these schools can be rigorous.

### Environmental Factors

Cody Academic Magnet High School came into being just as the service learning initiative was launched. The new magnet high school occupies a building in the city's center where strong signs of revitalization are evident. New construction and renovated loft buildings have made the area a destination for residents seeking the amenities of the city. Parks, shopping, jobs, museums, and universities are all within walking distance for those fortunate enough to secure housing downtown.

The building, a concrete frame and window wall structure, was constructed in 1967 to house another CPS high school. The original school, called simply Cody High School, featured a two-year curriculum which prepared juniors and seniors for jobs in the business world. The original school had been struggling for years to attract students and maintain respectable scores on standardized tests. In

recent years it had been failing at both as it faced competition from newer magnet schools offering more attractive programs. That school was being phased out and during the 1998-99 school year, the building housed the last senior class of the old business program and the first freshman class of the new academic high school. While service learning did not apply to the seniors, the freshmen would participate *en masse* in the new requirement.

The newly appointed principal came to the school grounded in knowledge of service learning, having established and coordinated service learning programs in two previous schools. Enthusiastically embracing the new requirement, the principal aligned the service learning goals of the school with those established by Central Office. The service learning coach was selected with an awareness of the demands that the role required. A veteran teacher, who served as program coordinator for the school, was appointed coach. As program coordinator, the coach was free of classroom duties and had the mobility and flexible schedule to contact teachers and community agencies at will. Cody Academic Magnet High School would prove to be a sound example of best practice during the first year of the initiative.

Having two very different populations within the school building could create tension as the school changed identity. The soon-to-be former school was staffed by a handful of teachers who would soon have to find new employment. Like the students, the staff for the new high school had to compete for their positions. For most teachers, a magnet school connoted denoted less discipline problems and more academically gifted students, so enthusiasm tended to run high among the new staff. The younger students were isolated from the seniors on two upper floors. Facilities shared by both groups like the lunchroom, gym, and library

were scheduled so that there was little chance of freshmen and seniors encountering one another. It was only during arrival and departures from the building that the two groups met and the dichotomy of the place could be felt.

Upon entering the school in the morning, a visitor moved through a double set of metal detectors as classical music was heard piped through the public address system. The older students were often challenged by security guards if they failed to display photo ID's. The verbal confrontations that ensued between security and older students could be loud and hostile. In the spring, tulips and daffodils were on display in the courtyard that surrounded the entrance to the building. But a visitor who lingered too long to watch a migrating songbird amid the flowers would bring security outside to ask, "Is there a problem?"

The 1999 Illinois School Report Card for Cody High School included both student populations in compiling school demographics that year, with no breakdown for the two programs. During the year of the study, there were 486 students in the Cody building and 168 of them attended the new magnet school. Table 5.10 compares figures on school size and percentages of minority and low-income students for the three case study schools and for the district. These figures would indicate that the students at Cody were not that different from those at the other two schools and in the district as a whole. The size of the three schools differs much more than the lack of racial diversity among them or the prevalence of economic hardship.

| Table 5.10 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Characteristics of Cody High School Compared to those at West Town, Williams, and in the District, 1998-99 | | | | |
| | *Cody* | *West Town* | *Williams* | *District* |
| Total Enrollment | 486 | 1,895 | 857 | 431,000 |
| Percent Minority | 97% | 98% | 100% | 90% |
| Percent Low Income | 84% | 89% | 81% | 85% |

Because the two student populations were combined that year at Cody, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the emerging magnet school. Comparing school demographics over a two-year period allows the reader to see changes more clearly. Table 5.11 shows that by the second year of the magnet school, Cody students were better off economically than they were the year before when they shared the building with the seniors. In addition, the student body was more racially diverse than the year before. In 1998-99, white students represented 2.7% of the student population; by 1999-2000 their numbers had grown to 8.1%. Asian students made up only 0.8% of the school's population in 1998-99 but rose to 5.1% in the second year.

| Table 5.11 | | |
|---|---|---|
| School Characteristics of Cody High School Over Two Years, 1998-2000 | | |
| | *1998-1999* | *1999-2000* |
| Total Enrollment | 486 | 395 |
| Percent Minority | 97% | 92% |
| Percent Low Income | 84% | 76% |

While racial diversity and family incomes improved, it was in the area of standardized test scores that Cody students appear to deviate dramatically from

students in the other two case study schools and those in the district as a whole. Table 5.12 shows TAP scores in reading and mathematics for Grades 9 and 11 during 1998-99. Since there were no 11th graders at Cody during this period, the scores reflect only the 9th graders in the new magnet program. Scores for West Town Academy, Williams High School, and the District are included for comparison.

**Table 5.12**

TAP Scores for 1999: Percentages of Students at Cody High School Compared to those at West Town, Williams, and in the District Scoring At or Above National Norms

| | *Cody (N=168)* | *West Town (N=520)* | *Williams (N= 285)* | *District (n=37,440)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | 81.5 | 12.9 | 18.6 | 32.0 |
| Math | 89.8 | 28.8 | 23.2 | 41.0 |

If one looks at the TAP scores for reading and mathematics, it is clear that the Cody students achieved far better than students at West Town, Williams, and throughout the district. With 81.5 percent of students reading at or above national norms and 89.8 percent scoring the same in mathematics, Cody students promised to live up to the standards established for the new school. Compared to the other high schools in the district, Cody had a student body able to withstand the "rigorous curriculum" set forth in descriptions of this kind of magnet school.

## The Service Learning Coach and the Program at Cody Magnet High School

*January: a program already in place*

Central Office had urged student participation to begin no later than January, 1999. With this in mind, many coaches in the city struggled to define the service learning programs in their high schools. At Cody Magnet High School, implementation was already well established in terms of locating outside partners and in linking service learning to the curriculum. At a meeting in January, the Cody principal reported that there were a number of projects in place at the school, including a Rivers Project and the Youth Summit. Projects are closely tied to the curriculum.

The principal, Barbara Whitman, said that the school is building a culture at the school that supports the curriculum. Problem-based service learning fit perfectly into the school philosophy. She alluded to the Active Citizenship Today (ACT) program sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF). Two teachers at Cody had gone through ACT training sessions and were responsible for staff development at the school. In fact, Cody had been chosen as a service learning partner school by CRF and would receive intensive support by the agency during the first year of the initiative. In February, principal, coach, and the two teachers would be flown to CRF national headquarters in Santa Monica, California for further training.

It was clear from the beginning, that the management of service learning was very different at Cody compared to the other two schools in the study. The service learning coach at the school had the advantage of full support by the

principal and every staff member was involved in service learning. At that first meeting, the coach stressed that department chairpersons were important people at Cody. They are ultimately responsible for implementing the new requirement.

The coach Ellen Smith, having worked within CPS for almost twenty years, was a veteran of the system. She assumed the position of coach with more than 40 hours of professional development related to service learning. She had attended all of the CPS citywide coach meetings as well as regional meetings and statewide conferences. As program coordinator, she had a flexible schedule, which the principal cited as critical in her selection of Ms. Smith. The coach's job at Cody was primarily one of facilitator. Staff development and student participation was wholly the responsibility of teachers. The coach acted as liaison with outside agencies, scheduled staff development sessions, and kept records of students' service hours.

Unlike the coaches at West Town and Williams, Ellen Smith was the least visible member of the service learning team at the school. The principal was a forceful and energetic leader who was visible to students and staff. A visitor could spot her greeting students in the morning, visiting classes, and walking the halls throughout the day. If she was in her office, it was often to confer with teachers who were regularly monitored and reminded of the high expectations expected of them.

One of the most distinctive characteristics in the school's implementation of service learning was the effective use of lead teachers. Two teachers proved to be critical in staff development and in integrating service learning into the curriculum. It should be noted that these teachers were trained and supported by

agency partners in the community and most importantly by CRF. One of the teachers, Sue Eaton, played an important role in demonstrating to other teachers how service learning could be integrated into their subject areas. Her social studies class incorporated service learning as students prepared for CRF's Youth Summit. Ms. Eaton also inserviced staff in the tenets of the ACT approach to service learning. The other teacher, Benjamin Lewis, taught biology and headed up the Rivers Project. Aided by partnering universities, a local environmental agency, and CRF, Mr. Lewis worked with the entire staff to involve students in a project to protect the Chicago River.

The principal had determined that a whole school approach to service learning would bring the best results. That meant that the entire staff, as well as every student, would be involved in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the school project. The River Project, while primarily reflecting the biology curriculum, would be find its way into every classroom.

***February: ongoing staff development***

Staff development in service learning began even before students arrived in the Fall. In August, staff developed a mission and vision statement for the school that incorporated service learning. The priorities for the first year, according to the principal, were, "First, get everybody to buy into the concept of service learning. Secondly, educate people as to what true service learning really is: an action- based curriculum. And last, help them feel good about doing it, not imposed upon from above."

Having received intensive training throughout the first semester and at CRF headquarters in early February, lead teachers Sue Eaton and Benjamin Lewis began to share their experiences through staff inservices. Sue Eaton conducted one such workshop in late February. Although CRF has helped to organize the workshop and a CRF staff person is present, it is social studies teacher Eaton, who guided staff through the half-day in-service.

About thirty staff are present and the atmosphere is collegial and upbeat. As teachers walk into the room at Cody, they are invited to contribute to three poster boards hanging on the wall. The posters are entitled:

- What is Service Learning?
- What Organizations Could We Collaborate With?
- How Can Service Learning be Integrated Into the Classroom?

Teacher response is lukewarm. After staff is seated, Sue Eaton begins by reviewing a handout that includes the school's mission statement. She reminds teachers that they had included a commitment to, "... creating humanitarian and service-oriented opportunities for personal growth." The teachers have been working on the whole school River Project all year. They have included it in their individual lesson plans and have participated in all school planning sessions. However, their tepid response so far would indicate that not all are "buying into the concept," as the principal had described it. It was Sue Eaton's job to help make that happen. She offered the teachers a visual illustration:

> Standing at the front of the classroom, the teacher holds up a large, clear flower vase. "This is Cody Magnet High School," she explains. Placing the vase on the desk, she begins to pour water into it, "These are the classes (adding more water) and the extracurricular activities (again more water) and the meetings (more water) and division." The water in the vase has reached the rim and threatens to overflow. "So the question is

> how do we fit in service learning?" The staff members mutter in agreement. At this point, the teacher takes a stopper of blue ink and adds it to the vase, stirring until the vase is filled with beautiful aqua water, "This is service learning. It enhances everything we are already doing at Cody." The teachers laugh and applaud loudly at their colleagues' magic act.

The teacher's simple demonstration brilliantly defined the way Cody High School would approach service learning, not as an additional burden but as a tool to bind together their efforts as a staff.

In the question and answer period that followed, staff members at Cody would bring up issues critical to the implementation of service learning. One teacher asks if students can earn service learning hours on their own. The question is critical because it involves the difference between community service and service learning. Sue Eaton's answer is perfect, "The Board doesn't want kids to just volunteer. They want them to do something that includes preparation and reflection and is incorporated into the curriculum. The school wants it to be meaningful and not just forced labor." This basic understanding of the goal of service learning represented a major breakthrough for the staff at Cody, something never witnessed at West Town and Williams.

The school's total immersion in service learning was evident in how it approached the yearlong River Project. The school was broken into teams of teachers and students. The staff pilot every major activity before students are involved. The purpose of the project is to monitor the cleanliness and health of the Chicago River. The culminating activity would be a day at the river where students sample river water and test it for PH, temperature, animal life, and other vital signs. Before this happens there will be a run-through by staff on a

Saturday. The school is getting help from a number of sources, including Friends of the Chicago River, Columbia College, and the University of Chicago. The school has received a four-year grant to continue with the project. Sue Eaton reminds the staff, "This project gives kids ownership of the river and the city."

At this inservice, staff are provided with service learning materials including the CRF book, Active Citizenship Today and the curriculum guide that accompanies it. The CRF representative also distributed a three-page handout listing the key elements of reflection and suggested reflection activities. This kind of in-depth information on service learning was rare, even among coaches, the first year. The fact that it was being shared and modeled for staffmembers at Cody illustrated how far implementation had advanced at the school.

In addition to clarifying the difference between community service and service learning, this workshop helped to define the role of school service organizations. Like many high schools, Cody had a community service club. When the sponsor of the Cody club asked where they fit into the new requirement, Sue Eaton explained, "I think the main question is whether the activity includes the following: service, classroom, and follow-up reflection." Unlike students at West Town and Williams, students at Cody would not be awarded service learning hours for community service. This was another vital distinction that set Cody Magnet apart. Finally, staff were made to understand that large-scale projects were the goal of the service learning program at Cody. One teacher asked Eaton whether students could earn service learning hours for school projects, "I think the school wants a core group of agencies to work with us, not have a million projects going on at once." In discouraging individual student projects, the school ensured that students would be involved in collaborative experiences and

also avoided the exhaustive recordkeeping that plagued coaches at other high schools.

*March: advanced staff development*

Many factors contributed to the high quality of staff development at Cody Magnet Academy. One of the most crucial was the working partnership with CRF. This organization guided the school's efforts at implementation and supplied human and material resources on a regular basis. In March, CRF sponsored advanced training to six Cody teachers at a daylong event held at the private University Club of Chicago. This was on a day when teachers throughout the district gathered for inservice activities at various high schools.

The Cody teachers would spend the day in an oak-paneled meeting room of the venerable club. Breakfast and lunch would be served to them on silver trays by uniformed waitstaff. A representative from the agency's headquarters in Los Angeles had been flown to Chicago to conduct the inservice. The exquisite setting and professional training enjoyed by the Cody staff that day might be commonplace within the corporate world. Few public school teachers can count such experiences in their careers. The event underscored the potential material resources which outside partners can bring to schools. More importantly, it communicated to these teachers that they were valuable partners, worthy of the kind of treatment afforded other professionals everyday.

On this particular day, Kathleen Kirby, CRF-LA, would demonstrate the ACT approach to service learning. While designed to augment the social studies curriculum, Kirby would show how it could be applied to other subject areas.

The six Cody teachers each represented a different discipline. Sue Eaton, who again assumes the role of moderator, had received ACT training at CRF headquarters in February. The same method of hanging poster boards to be filled in by participants is being used this day. The questions they pose are:

- Problems of Implementing Service Learning at Cody
- Name a Resource in the Community
- What Do You Think When You Hear "Service Learning?"
- What Skills Could Be Learned Through Service Learning?

The board which receives the most attention is the problem board. Among the challenges that the Cody teachers list are things like: "time requirements" "leadership" "takes away from classwork" and "too much work for teachers."

Coaches all over the city reported the same problems during the first year of the initiative. By the end of the day, these problems would be addressed and solutions would be offered.

The approach again was one in which the teachers would model the same activities they would use with students. Sue Eaton, brought the session to order and made introductions. Teachers were divided into two groups. The job of each group was to draw a map of the school. The mapping exercise created two very different perspectives. One group made Cody the focus of their map. The school occupied the entire page, a blow-up of the building, showing little else. The second group produced almost an aerial view of the school, showing Lake Michigan and downtown. It was a much larger landscape in which the school played a minor role.

The exercise is a way of getting into the first ACT unit, "Defining and Assessing Your Community." A discussion followed about the two different viewpoints and how they might influence the approach to assessing community resources. Like the vase demonstration, this exercise is meant to help make concrete those ideas that can otherwise prove to be abstract and difficult to grasp. The teachers appeared to appreciate how such a method could be used successfully with students. Because ACT is a process not a curriculum, it has applications in various subject areas. Using both the teacher's handbook and the student's guide, Sue Eaton took the group through the remaining ACT units.

The principal and the service learning coach joined the group for lunch but soon returned to Cody where the majority of teachers were involved in other types of staff development. The fact that the coach, Ellen Smith, was not part of the inservice that day, demonstrated again how the principal considered the role one of management. Service learning would be in the hands of teachers at Cody.

Kathleen Kirby addressed the group in the afternoon. Her presentation, entitled, "ACT: Overview, Framework, Implementation," stressed the CRF message. "Service learning needs to be linked to curriculum and then to academic standards to make it rigorous and part of the school culture," she said. Kirby offered a brief history of service learning and discussed the various programs of the Corporation for National Service, including Americorps and Learn and Serve. She mentioned that Americorps volunteers were working with the CPS initiative and suggested one could be assigned to Cody.

The day ended with a report on the upcoming Service Learning Conference, co-sponsored by CPS and CRF. There was a discussion on how Cody might actively

participate in the conference by teaching one of the sessions that day. The school's approach to staff development was beginning to extend beyond school walls as Cody Magnet Academy assumed a leadership role in districtwide implementation.

### *April: service learning in the classroom*

Sue Eaton's social studies class had just participated in the Illinois Youth Summit the day before. Today's class will cover a de-briefing of yesterday's events and students will work on some of the continuing aspects of their Summit project. The class had worked on school safety issues throughout the year. Like the students at West Town Academy, those at Cody were deeply affected by the shootings at Columbine High School earlier in the month. But at Cody, the tragedy was integrated into students' ongoing efforts to raise awareness on gun violence. This is how their project was described in the Summit agenda:

> Cody Academic Magnet High School has always been concerned about school safety. This year, as part of our service learning component, we are focusing issues surrounding gun legislation and control. We support the City of Chicago's effort in holding gun manufacturers and retailers responsible for the harm inflicted from guns. We have been raising public awareness through various ways including:
>
> - Writing letters to governmental leaders
> - Preparing and distributing a student survey
> - Inviting students from Omaha, Nebraska to come to our school and share their experiences with us
> - Creating public service announcements for commercial radio stations
> - Designing and displaying posters around our school
> - Presenting announcements on our school intercom
>
> These activities will help to raise our fellow students' awareness of gun related violence. It is intended that the message will reach beyond the

> walls of Cody High School to the homes and neighborhoods we live in. This is just part of our ongoing commitment to work towards a better school within a better city.

During the class, the students will put the finishing touches on their survey. The Student Survey on Gun Violence has been created by the class and will be distributed to the entire student body. It will be administered during a division period and teachers will be working to make sure their students complete it. Like the River Project, the student survey receives support from administration, staff, and students.

As students work together to make last minute revisions, class and teachers discuss the difficulties of assessing public opinion. One student complains, "Some people are just going to say yes to everything or no to everything." The teacher agrees and points out that surveys are never 100% accurate. The principal suggested one survey item. It asked the question, "Do you feel safe at Cody?" The students become animated. They don't like the question. "Do you feel safe at this school, Ms. Eaton?" The teacher responds that she feels very safe and goes on to tell them about another school where she taught and where a parent came into the school one day angrily waving a gun. The teacher has a very personal style of teaching, sharing anecdotes from her life whenever it appears appropriate. In a statement that revealed the impact of Columbine of the youth of the country, one student glumly concluded, "No place is very safe."

The class moves on to reflect on their experiences at the Summit. Three students attended the session on date rape and one of them reports on what they learned. The teacher restates and summarizes the student's impression. A girl asks, "Can rape happen with a married couple?" Eaton answers, "Yes, any forced situation"

To which another student adds, "That's like spousal abuse." "Right," the teacher responds. As the discussion continues, the visitor is struck by the maturity of the students and their respect for each other and their teacher. Eaton has created a civil atmosphere where no question is considered foolish and all have a voice.

The teacher continues to pull the threads of the class discussion together. A student complains about an encounter she had at the Summit, "There was a guy there whose dad was in the gun business and he was defending it. He really got on my nerves. I almost snapped." Another student relates another impression, "One girl said her school's metal detector didn't work and kids brought in guns and chains. Kids hit teachers in that school. They have sweeps of the halls and then kids just come right out again."

The teacher grabbed the opportunity to integrate service learning into the class discussion, "Yes, we sometimes forget how lucky we are here and how hard it is at other schools. But maybe we can share some of the things we're doing here." Eaton looks at the girl who had admitted being angry at the Summit, "Remember, Sandra when you said how that guy got on your nerves? Well, that happens to us all. Then some people do snap and if they have guns we end up with guns violence. That's why the Youth Summit is so great because it shows that people can disagree but resolve differences through discussion. No one had a gun at the Youth Summit and things still got resolved."

*Postscript*

On a return visit to the class in May, the class was reading a letter sent to them by Mayor Daley. In it he applauded their efforts, "... to explore the issue of gun

control with your fellow students through your survey." They also had copies of an article in the Chicago Sun-Times devoted to the class and the results of their student survey.

Not surprisingly, the survey revealed that students at Cody were only too familiar with gun violence. Overwhelmingly, these inner city youth reported knowing someone who had been injured or killed by a gun. The majority of students reported that someone in their immediate family owned a gun at some point. Sadly, the survey revealed that even students from this respected magnet school were as likely to suffer from violence as students at schools like West Town and Williams. In the wake of Columbine, local papers picked up on the story and the students were enjoying the recognition their project had brought.

Sue Eaton spoke about the general problem of youth's distrust of the political process and how she sees service learning addressing the situation. She tries to impart agency to her students through active involvement in the life of the city. She urges students to see visiting political figures when they stop in Chicago. She wants her students to realize, "Political figures are just people, some are short or balding — just people." She encourages students to think of changing the world bit by bit, "Think grassroots, think of changing your neighborhood, think of growing up to be alderman."

***June: summary of hours***

Three major service learning programs were in place at Cody during 1998-99. The River Project involved the entire school, including the staff. The Youth Summit included the students in Sue Eaton's social studies class. Finally, a group

of about fifteen students worked on the Chicago Cares program. All three projects were major in that they used agency partners to bring needed resources to the school program. By the end of the year, staff development, student training, and community outreach had been incorporated into the service learning program at Cody. This was in addition to curriculum guides and materials for students, transportation, and supplies for the projects.

Given the school's commitment to service learning, it comes as no surprise that the entire school completed the requirement. Table 5.13 shows 168 students, 100% of the new magnet high school, performed at least 40 hours of service learning. There are many remarkable aspects of the program at Cody High School, the most important being the quality of the service learning there. While much of what transpired within the district that first year may be characterized as community service, it appears that at Cody, at least, students enjoyed quality service learning.

**Table 5.13**

Service Learning at Cody Academic Magnet High School Compared to Students at West Town, Williams, and in the District, 1998-99

| | *Cody* | *West Town* | *Williams* | *District* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students Participating in Service Learning | 168 | 55 | 118 | 7,300 |
| Average Number of Service Learning Hours Performed | 40 | 48 | 5 | 19 |

## The Service Learning Site: Initiative in Action

*May: Service learning as action*

Students Day at the River is one of the culminating service learning events for the Cody freshmen. They have been working all year in their science classes and with teams of other subject area teachers to prepare for this day. The school has followed a program devised by Southern Illinois University which supplied them with curricular ideas and lesson plans. They have also worked closely with Friends of the Chicago River to choose an appropriate site and relevant activities for the students.

The important thing to remember is that Student Day at the River follows Staff Day at the River. The week before, the staff completed a run-through of today's activities. That event took place on a Saturday and represented the kind of extracurricular efforts expected of the staff at this magnet school. Student preparation has been extensive. Students reviewed in detail, the activities for the day at the river. They were lectured on safety, filled out permission forms, and were assigned specific tasks as members of the teams that had been in place all year. It appears that the planning for today's event was as intricate as that for D-Day. And unfortunately, the weather conditions just as hostile.

It is unseasonably cold this May day; the skies are misting and gray. Walking through the woods toward the river, the path is so muddy from days of rain that one is regularly forced off in spots flooded by the rains. At the river site, teams consisting of ten to twenty students working with three staff members, are already at work. Stations, about thirty feet apart, are set up along the river where

students are conducting various tests on the river water. Three students, in bright yellow waders up to their chests, were moving into the water in a line to collect water samples for the various teams of students and teachers. Although there was much laughter and a lot of talking in unison, the students appear quite organized. The months of preparation have paid off. A stranger, coming upon the group in their safety goggles and rubber gloves, could easily confuse these students with a class of college students rather than high school freshmen.

Everywhere one looked, some very sophisticated science lesson was taking place. Students dipped test strips in the water samples and matched them to color wheels. The location of samples is recorded and mapped. A math teacher, working with this team, reflects on attaining knowledge in a new subject area,"It's about how to sample — what makes good samples. Students are taught what observation is all about. Then we will reflect and make recommendations."

A girl explains how to test for torpidity, "You find out how much carbon dioxide is in the water. You put a sample in a jar and the pinkness will tell you how much carbon dioxide is in the sample. You do two readings." Students use graphing calculators and data sampling graphs. They gather around teachers, asking questions, testing samples of river water, entering data.

The day centered around the science curriculum. However, the activities also reflected other subject areas such as art, mathematics, and English. Students sketched, charted and calculated data, and all were required to complete reflection assignments in which they wrote about two of the following statements:

- What I want to know is...

- The river reminds me of...
- I never thought I'd find...
- Today was interesting because...
- I now know the difference between...
- Something I'd like to change is...

When the teams completed their assigned tasks, students moved over to observe as other teams finished up. Some posed for group photos. There was a sense of purpose at the site, students knew what they were supposed to do and stayed on task despite the cold and mud and the wide array of activities. When the sampling was completed, equipment was gathered up and students and teachers moved back to the shelter where other staff had been preparing lunch for the group.

At this point, the event took on the nature of a successful field trip. Although some teams continued to work on data for awhile, it was clear that students were beginning to relax. They became playful, running after one another, joking as they waited in line for hot dogs and hamburgers. Teachers and students, relieved of classroom strictures, joked and talked.

An English teacher talked about how unique the experience was for so many of the Cody students, "I grew up in the country and I've had the pleasure of hearing the wind in the trees. This project is so important because it has students really interacting with nature. For some it is the first time."

A math teacher also talked about how powerful today's event would be for students, "Kids are going to remember today. They're going to remember doing the tests and contacting people about the results. Whereas, in a classroom, you

give a kid a test tube and its not going to make much of an impact. This was a big day for them."

One had only to look around to understand the teacher's words. During an observation at the school in April, students worked in a science class to identify tiny animals called macroinvertebrates. They were taught to measure the river's health by counting the number of these creatures living in the water. It was a good class. But this day, students actually encountered the river. At the site, the Chicago River is fairly wide and moves along swiftly. One can hear it and smell it. Even on this cold day, the river captures one attention, because it is so clearly powerful. As students interacted with the river, none appeared daydreaming or bored. Rather, here were students connecting in memorable ways to the subject at hand.

*June: The Cody Academy Action Plan*

The school's success in integrating service learning into the school curriculum was admirable. However, in addition, the CPS initiative requires students to spend time outside of the classroom performing service in the community. Cody students earned part of these hours working after school to prepare and present "The River Fair" to parents and community. The fair was an effort to share the information students had gathered through their work on the River Project, as well as, announce the school's plans for continuing service through the Cody River Action Plan.

The River Fair, presented at the school on a warm evening in June, combined all the elements of pleasant end-of-year events. The evening was part science fair

and school play. It included art and music and media displays. The same meticulous planning, so evident at the river, was seen again at the fair. Each of the teams had its own table with photos and findings from the day at the river. It turned out that the findings from water samples were very encouraging. The students' efforts would offer proof that the city's program to clean up the Chicago River was working.

While the science theme was obvious, other subject areas had lent support to the project. As proof, the visitor need only walk around to encounter "The Poet's Corner" or hear "The Nitrates Song." Students stood at tables to explain about how river temperature was taken and what the findings implied. Another student appeared as "The Science Guy," ready to answer any questions the visitor might have about the various tests.

The most important part of the evening came when all gathered in the auditorium for a showing of a film shot the day of the river event. This was followed by the announcement that the school and its students would continue to monitor the quality of the Chicago River the following year and participate in clean-up activities there. The action plan, like the entire project, was a collaborative effort, having been voted upon by the entire student body. The evening ended with an ice cream social where beaming parents scooped out cones for students and visitors.

**Students Respond**

In May, a group of Cody students gathered to talk about their service learning experiences. Most of these freshmen had by now attained the required forty

hours necessary to satisfy the requirement. With all of the service learning opportunities available to them this year, it would have been difficult not to done so. In addition to the all-school River Project, many of these students had participated in the CRF-sponsored Youth Summit. Others were participants in the AT&T Chicago Cares service learning project at the school. With all this abundance, one can still hear the occasional complaint about the mandatory nature of the requirement. If Cody students, with their natural academic gifts and supportive setting, could still complain, one realizes the amount of work facing teachers and coaches in less fortunate schools. What is more striking is the success the school had in making the connection between service and the classroom. In their comments, Cody students frequently mentioned how they no longer saw service learning in stereotypical terms. What's more they talked about how their experiences enlightened them in regards to the school and the larger community. They talked about making an impact.

### The Principal's Efforts to Implement Service Learning

The principal, Barbara Whitman, felt very strongly about the potential of service learning and had a lot of experience working with it. Her understanding of the elements of quality service learning came from earlier work with at-risk students. She had written a proposal using service learning to prevent students from dropping out of school that had been funded by Learn and Serve. She had trained teachers in the use of service learning to engage students and make them active participants in school.

**Table 5.14**

Cody Magnet High School Students Talk About the Requirement

- "I found out about service learning through our teacher, Ms. Eaton, in social studies. At first, I didn't think it could make a difference. We're just a small class. But now it's like we got along, we did a lot of things: the survey, we went to meetings, we talked to people in other schools. I realized we could make a difference."
- "The school was talking about service learning, about how we had to have forty hours when we graduated. But if we started now and started doing a lot of stuff that we could probably have all our hours up like our first year. I wasn't happy about it. I mean it was okay, I guess."
- "My mom thought it was okay. She tried to think of different things I could do in the community in order to fulfill those forty hours. But, I really didn't like it. I thought forty hours was a lot. It turns out it wasn't really that bad."
- "I didn't know what service learning was. I started to get it in biology class."
- "It should be optional. You can't just force someone to do forty hours of work for somebody else without being paid for it."
- "You can't be a volunteer for something that someone is forcing you to do."
- "When I first found out about the service learning project, I thought it would be like community service, like clean-up. But when we started in our social studies class, it was interesting."
- "I felt proud about how quickly they put our story in the newspaper and they even put a picture in there of our survey."
- "It was fun, you know, we learned and we worked with other people, so we learned from them and they learned from us."
- "I felt like we accomplished something, I think we made like the community aware that this is going on. I think we made them aware that students do know people that have been shot and killed. And people own guns in the community and it doesn't matter if it's a good community or not. It could happen."
- "The way our mothers were talkin' about it, I think of service learning like doing yard work for someone or helping out at a church or something. I didn't know it had something to do with school and everything."
- "I went to this Chicago Media Project, where we talked about violence and how we can use the media to prevent violence and do more positive things."

**Table 5.14 — Continued**

- "I knew there was violence but I didn't know there was that much violence and especially not in this school."
- "The survey didn't seem like service learning. It was kind of interesting because of the Columbine stuff. So it really didn't seem like service learning because of what was going on in the world at the time."
- "The survey was no big thing. You see surveys all the time. But it does go to show you what we're involved with, you know, in everyday life, the real world, you know what I mean? There's guns out there, people are getting killed, and it really doesn't have anything to do with the movies."

Before being assigned to Cody, she had served as principal at an elementary school where, as she described it, "... service learning really helped us change the whole being of that school." Discipline problems eased and students became engaged in learning when Whitman introduced service learning to the school.

It would not be exaggeration to single out the principal as the most important element in Cody's service learning program. As a new principal in a new school, she was able to incorporate service learning in such a systemic way as to, "... make it so much a part of our being that it's just us." In an interview at the end of the school year, the principal talked about her vision for the school, "When you think of service learning, you think, well, this is what we do here. This is the way we conduct business here. This is a part of every curriculum. We look for culminating projects at the end of a unit. We look at ways that kids can determine what the action will be or how to solve problems."

The principal's belief in service learning was grounded in earlier achievement. It was also bolstered by her established relations with the agency partners who

would be so instrumental in helping to establish service learning at Cody. She described how her knowledge of one agency grew to include a whole network of community partners:

> Well, the one really strong partner is the Constitutional Rights Foundation. I called the administrator there and told her I was coming to Cody. We had a strong program with them at my former school. She was glad because CRF had a pilot program with the high schools that she wanted to try out here. The Friends of the Chicago River came because CRF helped us define the River Project. So that's their mission and then they brought us, you know to Southern Illinois University to help us with the training. Columbia College helped us with the training. I had been involved with Chicago Cares for years and I called the guy and said, 'I really want to do this, do a project here.' They had a pilot program that engaged kids with AT&T and so they asked us if we wanted to do that. I think we're the only school that's doing that right now.

It would be easy to dismiss the success at Cody as pure serendipity. But that would not take into account the knowledge and determination of this principal to see service learning as part of the framework of the school. In selecting a service learning coach, she chose an individual who would serve almost in a semi-administrative capacity. Ellen Smith is "a true believer" in service learning. She was someone who shared the same philosophy as the principal. "I wanted

somebody who could come in and kind of follow my lead in that area and then take it to a new level. I could just plant the seeds and they could take it to that higher level," the principal explained. In her capacity as service learning coach, Smith spends much of her time strengthening the relationships with agency partners, scheduling events, and coordinating staff development. She does not work directly with students, but is responsible for keeping records of students' service learning hours. The paperwork becomes much easier as students perform service in large groups and as one school.

The principal's knowledge of service learning extended to her insistence that preparation and reflection be part of every student's service experience. She described how integral these elements were for her, "You can't do service learning without doing your research, preparing — you know, looking at what is it you want to do, and then reflecting on it. I mean, if you don't do reflection, everything usually ends up to be very meaningless. And there's a big sense of frustration. Kids are out there, but they don't know why they're there. You know, they look at it as a field trip or something else. They don't make the connection."

Staff development was vital to the service learning program at Cody. As the principal explained, "The real key is training your teachers who are going to be working with the kids. If the teachers are just giving lip service to this, it's not going to work." She wanted to include cross-curricular activities whenever possible. In reviewing the River Project she talked about including subjects other than science, "We knew we wanted to do the river, but you have to look at what's happening in a math class, what's happening in social studies. You see how you can tweak them a little bit or rotate them around so they can accomplish the things that you need to do in a River Project."

In order to accomplish all this, the principal relied upon the support of agency partners. Without the resources they brought to the table, the story of service learning at Cody would not have been the same. The principal was adamant about showing service learning in the most positive light. In the interview at the end of the year she talked about the use of resources:

> Money for expenses, money for training, money to treat kids good, you know. You don't pay kids to do service learning, but you can make them

> feel really special. And you need a little hook in the very beginning until kids really feel empowered. If you're going to do reflection and they want to keep journals, why not make a really neat journal, you know, so it's a special journal. If you're going to do training, why not provide nice food and treats and things like that to do training, you know, and shirts to empower them and let them know they're part of this special group.

If this sounds like compromising, one need only think of the last professional conference attended with its accompanying coffee mugs, T-shirts, and tote bags to realize the principal was simply applying sound human resources psychology to her service learning program.

Unlike the principals at West Town and Williams, Whitman did not look to Central Office to supply her with the resources she needed. She felt the support was adequate, "You know, I'm okay with it. I mean, I'm going to do what I'm going to do anyway whether they support me or not." She appreciated that CPS had established a framework with the mandate. The stipend for a service learning coach, while not enough, "... validated what they did." This principal would take the framework established by Central Office and stretch it. While

CPS suggested a pilot group of 50 to 100 students to begin, Whitman would expand it to include all of her students, "We made a decision here, to do our complete freshman class, everybody. I mean we had this huge opportunity to build this great community here and develop a certain kind of culture. So, like, why do it with just part of the kids?"

*Summary*

The resources which contributed to success at Cody Academic Magnet were ample. The newly appointed principal came to the school grounded in

knowledge of service learning, having established and coordinated successful service learning programs in other schools. Enthusiastically embracing the new requirement, she aligned the goals for the school with those established systemwide and then expanded upon them.

The service learning coach was selected with an awareness of the demands such a position entails. A veteran teacher, who served as program coordinator with no classroom duties, was selected to assist the principal in building the program at Cody.

The school took a common sense approach to staff development. Teachers are taught first and then are better able to model for their students. The school is building a multidisciplinary leadership team that understands service learning and is committed to making it part of the school's culture.

Service learning at Cody was constrained by students, who, although they performed well academically, were nevertheless subject to economic hardship and violence in their lives. The Cody students struggled with many of the same issues as students at West Town and Williams. These included misgivings over the "voluntary" nature of the mandate, conflicting family responsibilities, and the need to find time for service learning while fulfilling already established requirements for graduation.

While the school did not have to contend with the pressures of being on probation, it still had to deal with the constraints placed upon all schools to perform well on standardized tests. As in all schools within the district, teachers and students at Cody found it necessary to include test preparation in daily

classes. This created special challenges as the year wound down. Schools worked to define and complete service learning projects amidst daily preparation for testing. At Cody, students prepared for TAP tests in early May while trying to complete their survey and the River Project. Three weeks later they would have to take CASE exams.

The support of agency partners was critical in bringing the resources necessary to build a sound service learning program to Cody. These partners were expert in providing the training and materials that CPS could not afford. The involvement of the agencies, along with a dynamic and committed principal, ensured that Cody would be an example of best practice during the first year of the requirement.

# CHAPTER VI

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chicago's design for service learning implementation and the role of service learning coach reflect a particular time and place and the decisions and actions of specific individuals. At the same time, the initiative and its impact on schools took place within the larger framework of American school reform and a concern for engaging the nation's youth. The district and the case study schools, while unique in many ways, also represent typical organizational structures. So while the Chicago initiative and the context of the individual schools will not be replicated elsewhere in the same way, the forces which shaped implementation will be recognized in other school systems attempting to introduce service learning.

## *ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES*

Large scale implementation of service learning is a growing trend within urban school districts as they work to revitalize schools and motivate youth to participate in their communities. This study used the Chicago Public Schools new service learning graduation requirement to document and analyze implementation and the role of teacher coach. Data from a one-year evaluation of the initiative, as well as, survey and case study analyses confirm that the evolution of the service learning coach profoundly affected the implementation process during the 1998-99 academic year. It also suggests that the coaches'

continued willingness to participate is based on psychic rewards which motivated them to withstand demanding tasks and meager resources.

The variables presented in Chapter III, which frame the analyses, will be discussed in relation to the findings. The variables were organized around two theoretical models: first, a resource allocation model based on indicators of organizational capacity; and second, a model of engagement, based on teachers preferences and strongly held beliefs.

## *A RESOURCE ALLOCATION MODEL*

As Table 2.1 suggests, service learning implementation involves varying levels of capacity and constraints at all organizational levels. In the Chicago initiative, the capacity to implement standards of high quality service learning was limited by constraints of time, money, and inexperience with this alternative method of teaching. While these constraints were present at all levels of analyses, it was at the local school level that they were most evident. The following variables, a sampling of the standards that contribute to high quality service learning, reflect capacity at all levels.

- Implementation based on clear objectives

The CPS decision, to allow flexibility in implementing the new service learning requirement, is typical of many large-scale initiatives. The literature suggests that such programs eventually get implemented through a mutual adaptation process at the various organizational levels. This appeared to be the case in Chicago, where funding was increased after the first year to include additional coaches in each school. It became obvious to Central Office that a one-coach model was

inadequate to provide service learning at the volume needed to satisfy the requirement.

Indeed, issues of quantity appeared to characterize the initiative during its first year. The objectives for the start-up year, simply stated, called for 50-100 students in each high school to begin accumulating 40 hours of service learning. One coach was assigned to coordinate the program in each school.

The survey of coaches at year's end confirmed that the goals for the first year were largely achieved. The average school engaged 113 students in service learning during the first year of the initiative. The average student performed 19 hours of service learning.

However, to its credit, CPS also included expectations for program substance, quality, and impact in its service learning mandate. In order to achieve a measure of quality service learning, CPS will need to exercise its formal authority more emphatically than it did the first year. Flexibility is a good thing when it allows schools to develop programs based on the needs of the individual communities. But, it assumes a knowledge base and a supportive leadership that was not necessarily present at the local school and community levels. Instead, survey and case study analyses found principals, coaches and community representatives unfamiliar with service learning methods and principals unwilling or unable to lend coaches the support they needed.

Central Office personnel performed their duties admirably within the limitations of the objectives for the first year and the authority granted to them. However, they were stymied by the absence of more stringent objectives to address

accountability, staff selection, and built-in support at the local school. Ultimately, the Board and CEO need to recognize that certain initiatives require a steadier hand at the helm. If the Board believes the potential benefits of service learning are significant then they will need to clarify objectives, not as a punitive measure but rather as support for the schools that need it.

- Performance measures that monitor degrees of implementation

As objectives are put into place, performance measures can serve as a means of administrative control during policy implementation. Performance measures can be as elaborate as full-scale evaluations or as simple as principals inviting regular feedback regarding coaches' efforts to provide high quality service learning opportunities.

Systemwide evaluation, which Chicago built into its mandate, is laudable in that it can highlight problems as well as possibilities. When evaluation is conducted early enough, it can help determine whether an initiative is moving in a productive direction and it can enable midcourse adjustments.

The same can be said of performance measures at the local school level. Central Office attempted to gauge the levels of implementation through a brief survey of service learning coaches in November. A complete end-of-year report from coaches provided extensive information on the initiative. However, there was scant evidence of performance measures at the local school level. Once selected, coaches received little support from principals or staff in developing service learning programs. Principals, who are ultimately responsible for implementation at the local school level, did little to assist compliance with the mandate.

The inclusion of service learning on agendas for staff meetings and meetings with department chairs, requiring lessons plans to reflect service learning, requesting parents to complete permission forms for service experience are all informal ways that principals can measure implementation at the local level. Principals will need to support more involvement by classroom teachers in order to further quantity and quality of service learning at the local school level. A means of measuring service learning should be a part of evaluating teacher performance. Of course, without adequate staff development for principals and teachers, performance measures are meaningless.

- Staff development that contributes to professional growth

One of the primary elements required in a quality based service learning program is staff development. Because service learning involves instructional components unfamiliar to teachers grounded in traditional methods, staff development needs to be a priority. The survey of service learning coaches confirmed that in the Chicago initiative, few coaches had prior service learning experience. The fact that the majority of coaches were veteran teachers, did little to equip them for the kinds of tasks expected of them.

Staff development needs to begin with principals who, like their teachers, often lack a background in service learning methods. A simple start in Chicago would have been to inform principals of the characteristics to look for in selecting coaches. An understanding of the rigors of the job would have helped principals adjust their own levels of support for coaches. While administrators conveyed some of this, they were apparently unwilling to compromise the policy of flexibility or to infringe upon the principals' authority by formalizing the role of service learning coach.

The efforts by Central Office to provide staff development through city-wide meetings and smaller regional meetings tended to give an overview and often did not reach the coaches who most needed the information. Even these basic lessons in service learning assumed prior knowledge that was often lacking on the part of coaches. Visits to schools by Central Office staff were helpful, but since such visits depended upon invitations from coaches, the most needy schools were often unattended. The service learning newsletter was received eagerly by coaches and served as a successful means of providing a measure of staff development. But Central Office simply lacked the resources to provide intensive, universal staff development. The judicial use of outside agencies, often overlooked by Central Office, provided a kind of exported staff development.

Agencies such as the Constitutional Rights Foundation and Do Something have the resources to provide schools with information and support. The examples of staff development provided to case study schools serve as models for high quality service learning. And yet these agencies were not recognized by CPS for the quality of their programs. At a citywide meeting for coaches they were assembled alongside other community partners with far less to offer.

Those schools fortunate enough to partner with CRF or Do Something were guided through the entire first year experience. Concrete staff development was provided as these agencies worked with coaches and classroom teachers to formulate a school plan, make connections to the curriculum, and ensure that preparation and reflection was part of the experience. Some schools received additional material resources and staff to mentor students. Such agencies need to be recognized and emulated for their approach to staff development. Central Office efforts to produce locally driven curriculum, while understandable,

ignores the excellence of programs already available. The success of these agencies, in working with local schools during the first year, should encourage efforts to broaden their participation in the future.

- Service projects that reflect shared goals

This variable is basic to an understanding of experiential education as envisioned by John Dewey. Dewey's conviction that individuals should work together toward common goals and his belief in a curriculum which reflects the needs of the community are familiar themes in service learning literature. Encouraging group rather than individual action is a recognized way for students to develop communal identity.

In the Chicago initiative, opportunities to establish service projects that reflect shared goals begin with an assessment of school and community needs. Central Office included a needs assessment as part of the preparation in designing a school plan for service learning. Coaches were encouraged to form a service learning team of teachers and community representatives to determine community resources and needs.

Few coaches actually followed through in conducting a needs assessment and Central Office did not require any submission of a formal plan. Time constraints and perhaps inexperience with assessment tools limited coaches in this important task. Schools working with outside agencies familiar with service learning methods were more likely to include a needs assessment in their planning activities.

Service learning projects rarely included input from students. Coaches reported that the majority of projects were not planned by students. While some school projects involved students working in groups, many others involved students working individually on projects of their own. The lack of communal planning and few instances of student participation in the planning process increases the risk that students feel put upon. In focus groups with participating students, a common complaint was of the involuntary nature of service learning. Some students resented service as something imposed upon them or as just one more requirement they needed to fulfill.

Without training in assessment tools and adequate time for planning, it seems unlikely that coaches and teachers will be able to develop service learning projects that reflect shared goals. Teachers who worked with agency partners to identify the resources and needs in their communities were better able to model this kind of task with students. These kinds of alliances often resulted in high quality service learning projects and brought needed staff development opportunities at the local school level.

- Classroom time for preparation and reflection

The final variable chosen to represent a resource allocation model concerns the use of classroom time devoted to preparation and reflection. These activities are also key to identifying shared goals. Since few coaches were able to establish links with subject area teachers during the start-up year, there were few opportunities to include guided preparation and reflection in students' service learning experiences. A survey of 268 student participants found that preparation and reflection were not related to two measures of impact: an

increase in students' civic commitments and capacities and an increase in students' knowledge of and interest in academic and vocational goals.

Preparation and reflection are features believed to be associated with high quality, high impact service learning programs. An evaluation of the initiative's first year found the results of the student survey worthy of significant attention. It recommended that preparation and reflections be used in ways that "... build interest, challenge students, develop their knowledge of social problems, connect with classroom curriculum, and foster a sense of agency." At the same time, such activities can bring negative results if students find them pointless, dull, or a burden. Again, the resources of time and professional development are key to ensuring meaningful preparation and reflection activities.

## *A TEACHER ENGAGEMENT MODEL*

An examination of organizational capacity only serves to emphasize the discrepancy between the problems encountered by teachers and their willingness to continue in their roles as service learning coaches. Survey responses and findings from interview and case study analyses show coaches feeling overwhelmed and often frustrated in their efforts to introduce service learning at the local school level and in the community. In spite of the challenges they encountered during their first year as coaches, 89 percent said they considered the new requirement a good thing and 87 percent indicated that they planned to return as coaches the following year. The following variables represent ways in which coaches dealt with scarce resources and demanding tasks during their first year.

- Respect for teacher competence

In Chicago, most coaches were selected by their principals. In interviews with both Central Office staff and principals, the desired characteristics for service learning coach centered on competence and dedication. The majority of coaches were veteran teachers although a few had previous experience with service learning. The coach survey shows that most coaches were already involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. The choice of such individuals is recognition of their competence by principals and a source of satisfaction for teachers.

Very few coaches reported that principals selected them through any kind of competitive process. Rather, their appointment came as recognition of an individual capable of taking on a difficult task. Both Central Office and principals acknowledged the demanding nature of the coach position. Coaches were expected to connect with students, staff, and communities as they developed the school's service learning program. This was usually in addition to already full teaching or counseling schedules.

Just the act of selection appears to have been a powerful incentive for teachers. Most coaches reported having been supported by their principals and yet few can actually point to concrete ways in which this occurred. Time, the most critical resource, was not offered to coaches in the reduction of teaching loads or divisional duties. Few principals emphasized service learning with other staff members and so coaches were faced with the job of trying to engage classroom teachers with no real authority to do so. Most opted not to even try.

Most support for coaches came from Central Office staff and from the few agency partners with the resources to help. The most successful of the case study schools was one where the principal expressed a strong belief in rewarding the

efforts of staff and students. This school was also fortunate to have an agency partner which rewarded teacher competence with professional courtesy and additional resources.

- Projects based on meaningful activities

Participants in a forum of coaches questioned whether their efforts would be meaningful if the initiative was just going to be dropped anyway. Having witnessed failed programs in the past, coaches were reluctant to invest themselves in an enterprise that was not going to continue. While school grants and encouragement from Central Office helped to legitimize individual school programs, most coaches expressed satisfaction in seeing students involved in worthwhile activities.

When asked on the coach survey to describe a positive experience they had during their first year, most coaches related stories of watching students perform meaningful service activities. Coaches appeared to gain satisfaction when they felt service learning experiences had a positive impact on students. Others felt good about serving a real need in the community, often pointing out the mutual gain for students and those receiving service.

The most powerful activities were those that served a real need based on some form of assessment, were collaborative efforts, and received some form of recognition. Cody Magnet High School, an example of best practice, was the site of two student projects that were well planned and executed. The recognition they gained served to impart agency for students and satisfaction for the teachers who participated.

In the community, the site supervisor needs to work with coaches and classroom teachers to ensure meaningful activities for students. In addition to asking coaches to share their most positive experiences, they were also asked to share the most negative ones. The most difficult situations for coaches involved service sites where students performed mundane tasks or those in which students received little direction from site staff. Case study analyses illustrated that site supervisors need to work closely with schools to develop appropriate criteria for student service. Otherwise, service learning experiences can end in cynicism and resentment for both school and community.

- Opportunities for teacher collaboration

One of the most consistent complaints from coaches was their inability to involve other teachers in service learning activities. While the culture of the classroom teacher values autonomy, it can also contribute to feelings of stress and isolation. Collaborative action is intrinsic to the communal goals of service learning. In addition to philosophic considerations, it enables teachers to share the job of implementation. In an undertaking as massive as the Chicago initiative, this is an absolute necessity.

Plans to increase the number of service learning coaches in each school will not satisfy the task of "increasing the volume of activity by a factor of six" which faced CPS officials at the close of the first year of implementation. But the issue extends beyond accommodating large numbers of students.

The power of service learning, to deepen students' understanding of academic subjects, will rely upon collaborative efforts by teachers in those subject areas. Curriculum development requires collaboration in order to incorporate the

service learning experience into the general curriculum. Team teaching enables cross-curricular efforts to increase the impact on students while relieving individual teachers of bearing the entire burden on their own. At Cody, the entire high school was involved in teams of teachers and students, all working collaboratively toward a common goal. Such programs appear to further both quality and quantity of service learning experiences.

- Projects that meld classroom learning with the "real world

Service learning affords teachers a rare opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of classroom studies by actively involving them in issues beyond school walls. It provides teachers with an effective teaching tool that gives meaning to the curriculum.

Chicago offered few examples of linking the classroom to service learning experiences during the time of this study. Most of the activity during the initiative's first year will likely be characterized as community service rather than service learning. However, Cody High School offers ample evidence that service learning can enhance classroom learning. The school's service project of creating and conducting a student survey on gun violence reflected the national anguish surrounding the tragedy of Columbine while demonstrating how such potential violence lies very close to home. Through their social studies class, Cody students were able to spark a schoolwide if not citywide discussion on gun violence and its proximity to youth.

With its River Project, the same school offered students a means of affecting biodiversity within Chicago and even at a regional level. The involvement of individuals from universities and environmental groups lent legitimacy to

student efforts. The River Project provided curriculum ties to science and math, as well as, English. art, and music. The school's culminating River Fair showcased the multifaceted aspects of the project and demonstrated the power of combining forces both human and academic.

On a more modest level, coaches all over the city related stories of students enriching the lives of seniors, students helping peers navigate disputes, and tutoring younger pupils. Coaches and teachers need help to see how these kinds of activities enhance what they are doing in their classrooms.

- Opportunities to share innate moral purpose

The final variable is perhaps the most important in that it ties service learning to one of the primary rewards of teaching. The literature has established that teachers are often motivated to enter the profession by a desire to make a contribution. Service learning gives teachers the ability to make a difference in the lives of students.

The coach survey served as a measure of both the goals of the initiative and the coaches' commitment to them. In promoting the initiative, there were two frequently referenced goals: increasing students' civic capacities and motivating them academically. The survey found that coaches in each school shared these same goals. Most coaches, 89% of them said they considered the requirement a good thing.

Service learning does more than offer teachers a chance to make a difference in the lives of students. Through these students, there is the promise of contributing to the larger community. Service learning has the ability to generate social capital

by engaging youth in the civic life of communities. By providing the framework for students' voluntary civic participation, service learning assists teachers in giving voice to their own generosity of spirit.

### *POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION*

The role of service learning coach fueled implementation in two ways during the start-up year of 1998-99. First, coaches served to focus attention on the necessary elements involved in delivering high quality service learning. As Central Office staff directed the activities of service learning coaches, protocols and methods were established to deal with the day-to-day demands of bringing service learning to Chicago high schools. As coaches tested the waters of implementation, CPS responded by creating staff development opportunities, developing curriculum, and originating forums for recognizing and publicizing their efforts.

Secondly, coaches provided the engine to move implementation from concept to practice. With limited resources and scant background in this new pedagogy, coaches gamely introduced the elements of service learning at the local school level and into the community. Because of their efforts, preparation and reflection, needs and resources, community partners, and collaborative efforts, ceased to be amorphous phrases. New connotative meaning was given to such phrases as coaches worked to implement the new service learning graduation requirement.

In examining service learning implementation in Chicago, this research primarily centered on the selection, training, and assessment of the teacher coach. As discussed in the previous section, this study supports the proposition that

implementation was subject to both resource allocation and strongly held teacher beliefs which helped to supplement organizational capacity. The Chicago initiative revealed important ways to support, strengthen, and sustain the efforts of service learning coaches. The policy implications of this study involve the areas of professional development, collaborative planning, institutionalized teacher leadership, and strong administrative support.

The need to focus substantial emphasis on professional development was made apparent as service learning coaches coped with the many tasks involved in implementation. They were expected to simultaneously familiarize themselves with the elements of service learning, structure service learning opportunities for students, and encourage classroom teachers to link service learning to the academic curriculum. The city-wide meetings for coaches, under the auspices of Central Office, were instrumental in providing coaches with an overview of service learning. However, there is a need for more intensive staff development consistent with the features of effective practice identified in this study.

In failing to recognize the special resources which certain agency partners brought to professional development, CPS missed the opportunity to integrate important aspects of service learning into the fabric of the initiative. The emphasis on preparation and reflection, the need for collaborative action, the means to link service learning to academic subjects were some of the areas demonstrated by agency partners using extant curriculum. The training offered by the Constitutional Rights Foundation and Do Something showed that staff development and curriculum development could evolve together as teachers modeled the activities they could later incorporate into their classrooms.

The Chicago initiative also illustrated the need for instructing teachers in the use of traditional assessment tools. Central Office showed correct judgment when it directed coaches to begin developing a school plan by conducting some form of needs assessment. This would not only give schools the chance to define its needs and resources, it would also introduce opportunities for collaboration within the school and between school and community. Unfortunately, few coaches felt they had the experience or the authority to complete the task. The community mapping exercises demonstrated by agency partners illustrated how effectively a needs assessment can be introduced to teachers and students.

Chicago also demonstrated the need to extend professional development to include principals. This study includes numerous examples of inadequate principal support based upon a lack of information or unrealistic expectations about how much time and energy the role of coach requires. If principals are ultimately responsible for implementation at the local school level, they need to be familiar with performance measures that monitor degrees of implementation. The inclusion of service learning should be as automatic for principals as considerations of academic performance or attendance.

The ability to provide adequate professional development is a crucial resource in service learning implementation. Its economy lies in the impact it has on so many other areas. This study is testimony to the power of professional development to act as a catalyst to strengthen and sustain all the other variables. Professional development is critical during early implementation. It provides the framework for all that follows. The allocation of time and funding for professional development pays off in creating an organizational infrastructure which will support and sustain service learning.

The emphasis on collaborative planning is an important aspect of service learning with implications for strengthening educational reform policies. During the first year of the Chicago initiative, service learning afforded schools an opportunity to partner with local community agencies and institutions of higher education. These partners brought needed resources as they assisted schools in organizing and managing service learning projects. During the start-up year, school-community partnerships were a natural outgrowth of service learning projects. The requirement also served as an excellent vehicle for making parent knowledge and support a priority. Case study analyses demonstrate the need for involving parents if service learning initiative is to succeed. A consideration of shared goals must also include input from parents. A forum such as Cody High School's River Fair showcases the power of collaborative planning.

Inside schools, opportunities for teacher collaboration support efforts to link service learning to the classroom. The Chicago initiative makes it clear that without collaborative efforts within and across subject areas, service experiences will resemble community service not service learning. The study offers the example of whole school projects as a means of encouraging collaborative planning. Such projects reflect the spirit of educational school reform. Just as importantly, they help sustain the efforts of service learning coaches and other teachers in need of team support. In service learning initiatives as ambitious as Chicago's, collaborative action is fundamental.

The support of service learning coaches through professional development and collaborative planning should be bolstered by additional efforts to institutionalize this example of teacher leadership. Staff selection for service learning coaches should be based upon competence and moral purpose. Criteria

for selecting coaches should be established and shared with principals to avoid appointing individuals who lack the needed experience. The recognition of coaches should include principal support in the form of release time to perform the variety of tasks involved in planning and managing a service learning program. The efforts to involve classroom teachers in service learning planning require the involvement of the school's administration. The Chicago initiative demonstrated that without the backing of the principal, the service learning coach felt extremely limited.

The role of service learning coach served to focus and move implementation along. As liaison between the varied organizational levels, the coach plays a vital role in ensuring the standards of high quality service learning. Strong administrative support is required to develop and sustain the role of coaches at each level.

At the district level, Chicago showed support by increasing funding to include additional coaches at each school. In addition, CPS planned to provide two forms of professional development for the second year of the initiative: one day workshops to introduce service as a teaching method and a lane credit course in service learning methodology through the CPS Teachers Academy. While these plans recognized the need to emphasize professional development, they do little to provide for the kind of systemic attention that the initiative requires.

The district will also need to tighten accountability at the local school level in an effort to support coaches. But, before that can happen, principals need help assistance from the district to understand the nuances of the initiatives, including appropriate staff selection and ways they can lend support to coaches and

teachers. By clarifying objectives for principals, the district provides principals with expectations of accountability that need to filter down to the next organizational level.

At the local school level, principals need to set expectations for all classroom teachers that they find a way to integrate service learning into their classes. The principal has the authority to form a service learning team that plans inservice activities, secures grants, and provides planning and oversight of local service learning activities. The principal needs to work with the Local School Council to build understanding of the initiative. Principals can use their authority to allow deviations to traditional scheduling to support teacher collaboration and encourage students to do presentations showcasing their service learning efforts.

At the community level, site supervisors can assist coaches by working with schools to provide meaningful service experiences. Site supervisors need to work with teachers to develop activities that reflect and support classroom activities. Criteria need to be established to govern age-appropriate service. Finally, sustained service projects should be a goal in planning with site supervisors. Such projects allow site staff to model standards and values in their interactions with students.

In examining implementation during the first year of the Chicago requirement, numerous high quality service learning opportunities were apparent at all levels of analyses. In creating the role of service learning coach, CPS has provided the initiative with a valuable asset. Despite limited resources, service learning coaches worked to realize the goals of the initiative. Bolstered by a strong belief system, these individuals performed admirably in most instances. The challenge

to support and sustain coaches at all organizational levels can work to ensure that students develop civic capacities through projects that meld classroom learning and the real world. The potential benefits for students and community would suggest that the results may well be worth the effort.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

# COACH SURVEY

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

PART I – GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following best describes your role at the school? *(Check only one)*
   - ___ Teacher (subject: _____)
   - ___ Administrator
   - ___ Counselor, Social Worker, or other non-teaching personnel
   - ___ District level personnel
   - ___ Other (please describe: _____)

2. How many years have you worked for the Chicago Public Schools?
   - ___ 1 year or less ___ 2-5 years ___ 6-10 years
   - ___ 10-15 years ___ 16-20 years ___ 20 years or more

3. How many years of experience have you had in Service Learning? *(Check only one)*
   - ___ 1 year or less ___ 2-5 years ___ 6-10 years
   - ___ 10-15 years ___ 16-20 years ___ 20 years or more

4. How did you become the Service Learning Coach? *(Check only one)*
   - ___ The principal asked me to be the Coach
   - ___ I volunteered to be the Coach
   - ___ The principal asked for applications/interviewed interested candidates
   - ___ The principal assigned me to be the Coach

5. For how many months have you been actively working on the Service Learning program as the Coach for your school?
   - ___ 3 months or less ___ 4-7 months ___ 8-12 months

6. Do you plan to continue as the Coach next year?
   - ___ Yes ___ No

7. Which of the following have you attended? *(Check all that apply)*
   - ___ Citywide Coaches meetings
   - ___ Regional Coaches meetings
   - ___ Professional development experiences related to Service Learning
   - ___ Service Learning in-service at my school
   - ___ Formal coursework related to Service Learning
   - ___ Statewide Learn & Serve conference (April 26)
   - ___ CPS Service Learning conference (May 18)

8. How many of the Coaches meetings hosted by Central Office did you attend?
   - ___ 0 ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

9. Which of the following best describes the TOTAL number of hours that you were involved in professional development related to Service Learning? *(Check only one)*
   - ___ 5 hours or less ___ 6-10 hours ___ 11-20 hours
   - ___ 21-30 hours ___ 31-40 hours ___ 40 hours or more

10. **In which of the following have you participated at your school?** *(Check all that apply)*
___ Faculty meetings related to Service Learning
___ Department meetings related to Service Learning (subject area: _____)
___ LSC meetings related to Service Learning
___ Community meetings related to Service Learning (please describe: _____)

11. **In which of the following ways has your principal shown support for you as the Coach?** *(Check all that apply)*
___ Included Service Learning on the agenda for staff meetings throughout the year
___ Supported opportunities for other staff members to receive professional development related to Service Learning
___ Encouraged linking service to curriculum in meetings with department chairs
___ Devoted time during LSC meetings to discuss Service Learning
___ Provided me with release time to develop the program (i.e. released from advisory/division duties)
___ Reduced my course load
___ Scheduled meeting times with me to discuss the status of the program
___ Provided time for me to visit service sites or other schools to observe their Service Learning activities
___ Provided me with a phone and voice mail

12. **How many hours a week do you work on the Service Learning program, on average?**
___ 5 hours or less ___ 6-10 hours ___ 11-15 hours
___ 15-20 hours ___ 20 hours or more

13. **To what degree has your work as the Service Learning Coach lessened the time you put into your other work/duties at your school?** *(Check only one)*
___ Not at all ___ Some ___ A great deal

14. **Was there a significant amount of community service and Service Learning at your school last year on which you could build the program this year?**
___ Yes ___ No

15. **How does the amount of Service Learning activity at your school this year compare to last year?** *(Check only one)*
___ Less than last year ___ Same as last year
___ Twice as much as last year ___ At least three times as much as last year

16. **Please compare the degree of connections between your school and community organizations/institutions, this year with last year.**
___ Less than last year ___ Same as last year
___ Twice as much as last year ___ At least three times as much as last year

17. **Through which programs did students participate in community service at your school last year?** *(Check all that apply)*
___ Key Club ___ International Baccalaureate program
___ Student Council ___ National Honor Society
___ Youth development programs ___ Other after school service programs
___ Our students did not do school-based community service last year

18. Through which programs have students participated in community service at your school this year? *(Check all that apply)*

___ Key Club
___ Student Council
___ Youth development programs
___ Our students did not do school-based community service this year
___ International Baccalaureate program
___ National Honor Society
___ Other after school service projects

19. How many students were involved entirely in after-school Service Learning activities this year? _____

20. Which other staff members work with you on the Service Learning program? *(Check all that apply)*

___ The Coach position is shared between 2 staff members
___ Classroom teacher (subject areas: _____)
___ Administrator(s)
___ Counselor(s)
___ I work with a Service Learning team
___ No other staff members work with me on this program

21. What is the total number of classroom teachers who are active participants in the Service Learning program at your school? _____

22. What is the total number of other staff members, not including classroom teachers, who are active participants in the Service Learning program at your school? _____

23. Please list any other responsibilities you have in addition to your primary job (for example, club sponsor, newspaper advisor, homebound, etc...)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

24. Were the following factors problems for you in your job as the Coach?

| Factor | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Record keeping | | | |
| Getting teachers involved | | | |
| Recruiting enough students to participate | | | |
| Service site safety issues | | | |
| Student transportation issues | | | |
| Linking service to the curriculum | | | |
| Providing staff development related to Service Learning for teachers at the school | | | |
| Principal support | | | |
| Finding high quality service placements for students | | | |

Continued on the next page

| Factor | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Having time to plan and monitor student projects | | | |
| Students who do not show up regularly at service sites | | | |
| Time to monitor Service Learning activities after school and on weekends | | | |
| Finding organizations which provide opportunities for student service | | | |
| Discipline problems during service experience | | | |
| Competition for attention due to school's probationary status | | | |
| Parent complaints re: service requirement | | | |
| Relationships with staff of service agencies | | | |
| Other (please describe) | | | |

25. **How helpful were the following in your job as the Coach this year?**

| Item | Did not occur | Extremely helpful | Somewhat helpful | Not helpful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coaches meetings | | | | |
| Service Learning News (newsletter) | | | | |
| Service Learning Resource Directory (binder) | | | | |
| Presentations by Central Office staff at my school | | | | |
| Partnerships with service sites where students could do service | | | | |
| Partnerships with service sites that offered a range of support (staff development, curriculum development, student training) | | | | |
| Partnership with an organization that actually helped develop and implement our Service Learning program | | | | |
| Principal support | | | | |
| Reduction in teaching load or division/advisory responsibilities | | | | |
| CPS/ISBE Service Learning grant | | | | |
| Working with classroom teachers | | | | |

26. **How helpful would the following resources be in your job as the Service Learning Coach in future years?**

| Resource | Extremely helpful | Somewhat helpful | Not helpful |
|---|---|---|---|
| Structured training workshops for Coaches | | | |
| Assistance in completing a needs assessment for my school & community | | | |
| Service Learning curricula and other print materials | | | |
| Assistance in creating a Service Learning plan for my school | | | |
| Technical assistance for tracking student hours | | | |
| Opportunities to network with other Coaches | | | |
| Informational materials for students and parents | | | |

Continued on the next page

| Resource | Extremely helpful | Somewhat helpful | Not helpful |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assistance in conducting staff development on Service Learning for our faculty | | | |
| More support from my principal | | | |
| More support from the Central Office * | | | |
| Assistance in measuring the success of our Service Learning program | | | |
| Clearer criteria for measuring the success of our Service Learning program | | | |
| More support from teachers at my school | | | |
| More information on service sites | | | |
| More time to work on Service Learning during the school day | | | |
| More money to spend on service projects | | | |
| Additional Service Learning Coaches at my school | | | |
| Additional stipends for Service Learning Coaches | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

*** If you feel that more support from the Central Office would be "extremely helpful," please describe what type of support you would like to have:**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

27. **Student service activities were conducted primarily:** *(Check only one)*
    - ___ Within the school building/grounds
    - ___ In the community/outside the school grounds

28. **Is Service Learning being integrated into one or more subject areas?**
    - ___ Yes (please specify: _____)
    - ___ No

29. **Which of the following resources were used to identify sites for service activities?** *(Check all that apply)*
    - ___ Organizations/clubs already established at my school
    - ___ Service Learning Resource Directory
    - ___ Coaches meetings
    - ___ My own outreach
    - ___ Other (please describe: _____)

30. Student service activities at your school were mostly: *(Check only one)*
___ Direct service (working at a shelter, tutoring, helping senior citizens...)
___ Indirect service (food/clothing drives, fundraisers...)
___ Advocacy (letter writing campaigns, public education efforts...)
___ Environmental projects (recycling drives, community beautification...)
___ There was no predominant type of activity at my school/students participated in a variety of activities

31. What best describes the structure of service activities at your school (the way that students participated in activities)? *(Check only one)*
___ Several short service projects (walk-a-thons, serve-a-thons...)
___ One long-term project/students committed to one project or agency for the entire (or majority of) 40 hours

32. In how many service projects did the average student participate? *(Check only one)*
___ 1 ___ 2-4 ___ 5 or more

33. How were most service activities selected? *(Check only one)*
___ By students as a group ___ By individual students
___ By someone other than the students (teachers, parents...)

34. How were most service activities planned? *(Check only one)*
___ By students as a group ___ By individual students
___ By someone other than the students (teachers, parents...)

35. How were most service activities conducted? *(Check only one)*
___ Students worked in groups
___ Students worked independently on their own projects

36. Did your school do an assessment of the needs and resources of the school and its community as part of the implementation process?
___ Yes ___ No

37. Did you collaborate with staff from local elementary schools to identify/create service opportunities for your students?
___ Yes ___ No

38. Exactly how many 9th graders participated in service activities at your school this year?
_____ 9th graders

39. How many service hours did the average 9th grader complete this school year?
_____ hours of service

40. Exactly how many 9th graders completed 40 hours of service this school year?
_____ 9th graders

41. Exactly how many 9th graders completed more than 40 hours of service this school year?
_____ 9th graders

42. Exactly how many 10th graders participated in service activities at your school this year?
_____ 10th graders

43. How many hours of service did the average 10th grader complete this school year?
_____ hours of service

44. Exactly how many 10th graders completed 40 hours of service this school year?
_____ 10th graders

45. Exactly how many 10th graders completed more than 40 hours of service this school year?
_____ 10th graders

46. To your knowledge, what best describes the total number of hours the average student spent on an entire service project, including the preparation and reflection? *(Check only one)*
___ 5 hours or less ___ 6-10 hours ___ 11-20 hours
___ 21-30 hours ___ 31-40 hours ___ 40 hours or more

47. What percentage of students engaged in some type of preparation prior to beginning each of their service projects?
___ 10% or less ___ About 20% ___ About 30% ___ About 40%
___ About 50% ___ About 60% ___ About 70% ___ About 80%
___ About 90% ___ 100%

48. Which of the following activities were used during the preparation phase for each service activity? *(Check all that apply)*
___ Community mapping
___ Leadership activities/workshops
___ Site visits by the students
___ Discussion groups (small group, whole class)
___ Outside speakers
___ Research by students (reading materials/watching videos related to the issue)
___ Preparation activities that were fully integrated into course curriculum
(subject areas: _____)
___ Preparation was not part of most students' service activities
___ Other (please describe: _____)

49. On average, how many hours did each student devote to structured preparation (writing/thinking, discussing, planning, learning about issues, research...) at your school?
_____ hours of preparation

50. What percentage of students completed some type of reflection project related to each service activity in which they participated?
___ 10% or less ___ About 20% ___ About 30% ___ About 40%
___ About 50% ___ About 60% ___ About 70% ___ About 80%
___ About 90% ___ 100%

51. **Which of the following activities were used during the reflection phase for each service activity?** *(Check all that apply)*

___ Journal writing
___ Essay/paper writing
___ Oral presentations
___ Dramatic presentations/readings
___ Video presentations/documentaries
___ Small discussion groups
___ Whole class discussions
___ Artistic expressions (photographs, posters/bulletin boards, art projects)
___ One-on-one discussion between the student and Coach or with another teacher
___ Reflection activities that were fully integrated into course curriculum (subject areas: _____)
___ Reflection was not part of most students' service activities
___ Other (please describe: _____)

52. **On average, how many hours did each student devote to structured reflection (writing/thinking, discussing, presenting information about their experience...) at your school?** _____ hours of reflection

53. **Are the following outcomes for students specific objectives of your school's Service Learning program?**

| Outcome | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| Increase in academic achievement | | | |
| Increase in motivation to learn | | | |
| Increased engagement in learning | | | |
| Increased understanding of the value of helping others | | | |
| Awareness of different areas and neighborhoods | | | |
| Increased commitment to active citizenship | | | |
| Understanding the causes of social problems | | | |
| Identifying effective responses to social problems | | | |
| Improved understanding of subject matter | | | |
| Increased awareness of possible jobs or occupations | | | |
| Increased sense among students that they can make a difference | | | |
| More opportunities for interaction with diverse populations | | | |
| Having as many students as possible complete some service hours this school year | | | |
| Increased personal responsibility | | | |

## PART II – MOST COMMON SERVICE EXPERIENCE

In this section we would like information about the one Service Learning activity where the most student service hours were logged. Please describe the characteristics of that placement.

1. Name of the project: _____

2. Please describe the type of service work that the students performed:

3. Total number of students involved: _____

4. Average number of hours each student earned on this project: _____

5. Was there an agency (service site) partner or partners involved in this placement?
___ Yes ___ No

*If yes, which agency/ agencies and please describe their role in the project:*

6. How was the agency partner or site selected/identified?

7. **Did the agency partner or site offer training for students?**
___ Yes ___ No *If yes, how many hours of training (average):* ____

*If yes, please describe the type of training provided (what, how much, by whom...):*

8. **Were students involved in preparation activities as part of this Service Learning project wither at school or at the site?**
___ Yes ___ No *If yes, how many hours (average):* ____

*If yes, please describe the preparation activities (what, how much, by whom...):*

9. **Were students involved in reflection activities?**
___ Yes ___ No *If yes, how many hours (average):* ____

*If yes, please describe the reflection activities (what, how much, by whom...):*

10. **Did the agency partner or site offer staff development for you or other members of your school's staff?**
___ Yes ___ No *If yes, how many hours (average):* ____

*If yes, please describe the staff development activities (what, how much, by whom...):*

11. Did the service project connect to a subject area curriculum at your school?
___ Yes ___ No

*If yes, please describe:*

12. Overall, how satisfied do you think the students were with this experience? Why?

13. Overall, how satisfied were you with this experience? Why?

14. Other information about this activity you feel is important to note:

## PART III – THE GRANT

If you received a Service Learning grant from CPS this year, please complete this section; your answers will not affect any future applications for CPS Service Learning grants.

**If you did not apply for a CPS Service Learning grant this year, please explain why; your answer will not affect any future applications for a CPS Service Learning grant:** *(Check all that apply)*

___ I was not aware that a grant was available
___ The application was too complicated
___ I did not have the time to complete the application
___ My school did not identify a need for Service Learning funds
___ Other (please explain: _____

_____

1. **How did you find the process of applying for the grant?**
   ___ Simple ___ Complicated

2. **How closely did you adhere to your original spending plan for these funds?**
   ___ Spent funds exactly as planned
   ___ Made minor modifications to the spending plan
   ___ Made major modifications to the spending plan

   *If you made changes to your original spending plan, please explain why the changes were necessary:*

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. **How did you spend these funds?** *(Check all that apply)*
   ___ Student transportation – school bus rental
   ___ Student transportation – CTA fare
   ___ Student transportation – car travel reimbursement
   ___ Refreshments for student participants
   ___ Refreshments for staff development meetings
   ___ Printing
   ___ Supplies (please describe: _____)
   ___ Parent stipends (non-Board employees)
   ___ Teacher extended day stipends
   ___ Career Service extended day stipends
   ___ Textbooks/curriculum materials (please describe: _____)
   ___ Consultants (please describe: _____)
   ___ Other (please describe: _____)

4. Was the amount of funds you received adequate for meeting your program's goals?
___ Yes ___ No

5. The amount of time you had between your funds being "on-lined" and the "encumberment" deadline of June 1 was:
___ Enough time ___ Not enough time

6. Were you the only person who designed the plan for the use of these funds?
___ Yes ___ No

*If no, please describe the planning process; if classroom teachers assisted in the planning please note their subject areas:*

7. Did you/your team assess the needs of your school and the surrounding community in preparation for the planning of the grant?
___ Yes ___ No

*If yes, please describe how the needs were assessed:*

*If no, how did you determine how the funds should be spent?*

8. Did you/your team assess the assets (people, organizations, resources, etc...) of your school and its surrounding community as part of your planning process?
___ Yes ___ No

*If yes. please describe how the assets were assessed:*

*If no, why not?*

9. **How did you find the process of providing stipends to adults?**
___ Simple ___ Complicated

10. **For what activities were adults compensated?** *(Check all that apply)*
___ Supervising students at service sites
___ Assisting with program management (please explain: _____)
___ Leading staff development activities
___ Participating in staff development activities
___ Other (please explain: _____)

11. **The majority of adults who assisted with your Service Learning program were:**
*(Check only one)*
___ Parents (non-Board employees)
___ Teachers
___ Career Service employees
___ None of the above were a majority; adults in my program were a mixed group
___ No other adults assisted with my program

12. **How helpful was your school's Budget Manager with the process of spending the grant funds?**
___ Very helpful ___ Somewhat helpful ___ Not very helpful

13. **How helpful was your school's Clerk with the process of spending the grant funds?**
___ Very helpful ___ Somewhat helpful ___ Not very helpful

14. **Please explain how the grant process (applying for and spending the funds) could be improved next year.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

## PART IV – SUMMARY

*You may attach additional pages.*

1. Overall, how would you rate the design and implementation of the new CPS Service Learning requirement during this first year?
   ___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor ___ Very poor

2. Knowing what you know now, do you think making Service Learning a graduation requirement is a good idea? ___ Yes ___ No

3. **Please describe the greatest success you had/your best moment as the Service Learning Coach during the 1998-99 school year:**

4. Please describe the greatest challenge you encountered as the Service Learning Coach during the 1998-99 school year:

5. Are there any agencies or sites you would rate as excellent partners? Please describe your experience with this agency/these agencies:

6. Please describe any negative experiences you had working with service agency partners:

7. We may not have asked you about important issues regarding your experience as the Service Learning Coach this year. Please share any information you feel is important. We will pay close attention to your perspectives in planning for next year.

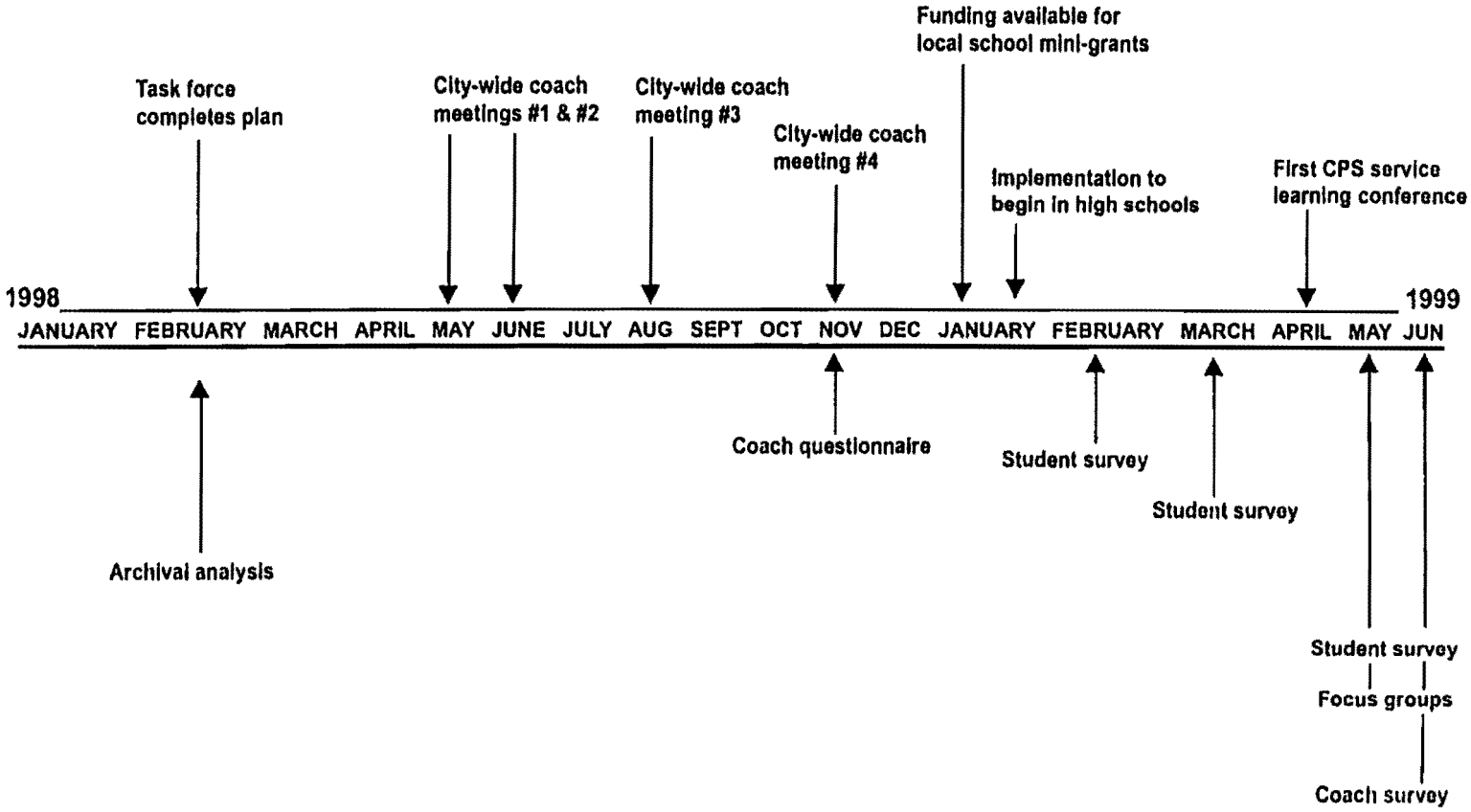
# THANK YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT AND HARD WORK!!

# APPENDIX B

# TIMELINE OF KEY SERVICE LEARNING EVENTS AND DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

# TIMELINE OF KEY SERVICE LEARNING EVENTS AND DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

## SERVICE LEARNING EVENTS




## DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

# APPENDIX C

# CPS SERVICE LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COACHES

# SERVICE LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE

November 12, 1998

*Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire so that we may serve you better. This questionnaire serves only to inform us of the implementation progress – your responses will not be used to judge you.* ***Please print neatly.***

**NAME:** _____ **SCHOOL:** _____

**Please describe the status of the Service Learning program at your school/what you have been doing thus far.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**What connections to learning are being built into your program/what connections with teachers and/or courses are being developed?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**What connections to the community have been made or are currently being built?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Please list any agencies/organizations you are currently working with.**

_____

_____

_____

**What support has been helpful to you, and what frustrations and/or obstacles have you encountered (at school and from Central Office)?**

**What type(s) of assistance from Central Office staff would be helpful to you?**

**How often should Coaches meetings be held? What size should the group be? What should be the structure of the meetings?**

**Additional comments/suggestions:**

# APPENDIX D

# SERVICE LEARNING STUDENT SURVEY

*STUDENT INFORMATION*
*Please help us by telling us about yourself:*

_____1. Please write your middle initial. (If you don't have a middle name, write "Z.")

2. What school do you attend? _____

3. What program are you participating in? _____

4. What is your gender? male female

5. What grade are you in? _____.

6. When were you born? _____ _____ _____
month day year

7. What is your student ID? _____

_____8. What is your ethnic/racial group?

a. European/white
b. Latino/Hispanic
c. African American
d. Asian/Pacific Islander
e. American Indian
f. Other (or more than one ethnic/racial group)

*Section I*

*Below are sentences that have two different endings, one on the left and one on the right. Decide how you would finish each sentence and circle the letter closest to that ending. Circle A or D if you strongly agree with one of the statements. Circle B or C if you agree with one of them but not as strongly. In the example below, circling C means you "sort of" think learning to play a musical instrument is something anyone can do well if they practice enough.*

Example: **Learning to play a musical instrument...**
is something only some people can do well. **A B C D** is something anyone can do well if they practice enough.

1. **Taking care of people who are having difficulty caring for themselves...**
Is everyone's responsibility, including mine. **A B C D** is not my responsibility.

2. **When it comes to saving energy...**
it's everyone's job to use less. **A B C D** people worry too much about it.

3. **Helping others without being paid...**
is not something people have to do. **A B C D** is something everyone should feel they have to do.

4. **Being concerned about state and local issues...**
is an important responsibility for everybody. **A B C D** is not something in which most people should be involved.

5. **Keeping the environment safe and clean...**
is something I <u>don't</u> feel personally responsible for. **A B C D** is something I <u>do</u> feel personally responsible for.

6. **Helping a person in need...**
is something people should do for anyone, even if they don't know them. **A B C D** is something people should only do for friends or relatives.

7. **Doing something about school-wide problems...**
is a job for only a few people who want to be involved. **A B C D** is something every student should be involved in.

8. **Doing things for other people when they need help...**
is not very important to me. **A B C D** is an important part of how I live my life.

9. **The problems of pollution and toxic waste...**
are everyone's responsibility to stop. **A B C D** are not something for which individuals are responsible.

10. **Being actively involved in community issues...**
is everyone's responsibility, including mine. **A B C D** is not my responsibility.

11. **Recycling cans, bottles, and other things...**
is too much hassle for me to bother with. **A B C D** is everyone's job, including mine.

12. **Participation in activities that help improve the community...**
is an important job for everyone, even beginners. **A B C D** is the job of people who know how to do it.

13. **Environmental problems are...**
a result of factories polluting. **A B C D** are a result of individuals not recycling enough.

14. **People are poor because...**
they don't work hard enough. **A B C D** there aren't enough jobs that pay decent wages.

15. **We need to focus more on...**
putting criminals in jail. **A B C D** addressing the causes of crime.

*Section II*
*Please choose the answer that best reflects your feelings for each of the following statements.*
**A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Neutral D) Agree E) Strongly Agree**

____16. I enjoy talking about politics and political issues.

____17. I am often unsure about how to improve my community.

____18. People like me can try to improve society but not much will change.

____19. All students should be encouraged to participate in community service.

____20. Organizing people to change the community in which I live will not accomplish much.

____21. I know my community has needs, but I don't know what to do about them.

____22. In the next three years, I will work with others to challenge unjust laws.

____23. I am good at organizing others to accomplish group goals.

____24. I am not very good at running meetings.

____25. I am good at expressing my opinions in front of a group.

____26. Once I know what needs to get done, I am good at planning how to do it.

____27. Everyone who works hard and plays by the rules can live well in the United States.

____28. In the next three years, I will contact public or elected officials to tell them my views on issues.

____29. I expect that I will vote in every election after I reach voting age.

____30. In the next three years, I expect to work on at least one political campaign.

____31. In the next three years, I will work to promote social justice.

____32. I have good ideas for programs that would help children and adults in my community.

____33. I know what resources are available to help me with a community project.

____34. I know how to contact and work effectively with organizations in my community such as schools, businesses, and social service organizations.

____35. I know a great deal about how to be an effective leader.

____36. I am interested in a career in politics and government.

____37. I believe that I personally can make a difference in my community or surrounding communities.

____38. I want to become an effective leader in my community.

____39. I have in mind a program that would improve my community.

____40. I am committed to community service both now and later in life.

____41. By organizing and participating in protests, people make society better.

____42. I believe people my age have enough influence to impact community decisions.

____43. In the next three years, I expect to be very involved in improving my community.

____44. In the next three years, I will become actively involved in political issues that affect my community.

____45. When thinking about what needs to be done, I often focus on the root causes of social problems.

____46. In the next three years, I expect to be involved in at least one protest.

____47. I am willing to volunteer a great deal of time to make my community better.

____48. I am glad I did my service project.

____49. I would rather stay quiet than discuss political issues.

____50. In the next three years, I will volunteer to do something like tutoring kids, visiting the elderly, being a mentor, or coaching a team.

____51. In the next three years, I will volunteer to work on environmental projects (like cleaning parks, monitoring pollution, and neighborhood recycling).

*Section V*
*Please select the best answer for the following questions.*

____52. In a typical week, on how many days, if any, do you read the news section of a newspaper?
A) Never B) Rarely C) Once or twice D) Most days E) Everyday

____53. In a typical week, on how many days, if any, do you watch news on TV?
A) Never B) Rarely C) Once or twice D) Most days E) Everyday

____54. How many times each week do you have discussions on community issues that lasted more than five minutes?
A) Never B) Once C) 2 - 3 times D) 4 - 5 times E) More than 5 times

*Section V*
*The following is a list of some of the people of organizations that you may have had contact with. Please indicate how much trust you have in each one to do the right thing, by choosing one of the following answers:*
**A) Not at all B) Very little C) Some D) Quite a lot E) A great deal**

____55. Adults in your neighborhood

____56. Students at your school

____57. Teachers

____58. Leaders in your community

____59. Religious organizations in your community

____60. School Administration/Principal

____61. Social service agencies in your community

____62. The Police

____63. The News Media

____64. Your Alderman

____65. The Mayor

____66. The President

*Section VI*
*Please tell us about your community service experience:*

____67. Do you feel all students should be:
A) neither encouraged nor required to participate in community service
B) encouraged to participate in community service
C) required to participate in community service

____68. How important is it to you to do the best you can in school?
A) Very important
B) Somewhat important
C) Not very important
D) Not important at all

____69. How far do you expect to go in school?
A) Drop out of high school before graduation
B) Drop out of high school and earn a GED
C) Graduate from high school
D) Graduate from a two year college
E) Graduate from a four year college or graduate school

____70. Did your program include:
A) time set aside in class to discuss your service experience
B) time set aside out of class to discuss your service experience
C) no time to discuss the experience at all

____71. Were you usually:
A) assigned tasks or projects
B) able to choose your tasks

____72. About how many total hours of service did you do as part of this experience?
A) Less than 10 hours
B) 10-20 hours
C) 20 - 30 hours
D) 30 - 40 hours
E) more than 40 hours

____73. How much time did you spend after each of your service activities talking or writing about your experiences?
A) less than 5 minutes
B) 5 - 15 minutes
C) 15 - 30 minutes
D) more than 30 minutes

*For each of the following, enter A for those that describe the service you were involved in, and B for those that do not describe the service you were involved in:*
____74. Education *(such as working as a teacher's aide, mentor, or tutor; or working in a Head Start program)*
____75. Human services/needs *(such as taking care of children, helping the elderly, or working in a hospital, or homeless shelter)*
____76. Environment *(such as cleaning up a park, playground, or neighborhood)*

____77. Public safety/Prevention *(such as doing peer mediation, drug or alcohol abuse prevention, or taking part in a neighborhood watch or community policing project)*
____78. Political Activities *(such as working to change laws or rules, getting signatures on petitions, working with a political campaign, community organizing or analyzing political issues)*

Did you develop a really good personal relationship with any of the following during your service experience? A = no, E = yes
____79. An adult, supervisor or teacher
____80. A person receiving the services of the organization

*Please choose the answer that best reflects your feelings for each of the following statements.*
**A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Neutral D) Agree E) Strongly Agree**

____81. My service experience made me more interested in my other classes.
____82. My service experiences were connected to work I'm doing in one of my classes.
____83. The experience helped me think about the kind of job I might want when I am an adult or helped me learn more about a career I thought I might be interested in.
____84. I worked harder in my regular classes than in my service experiences.
____85. My service experience helped me to improve my academic skills (like reading, writing and math).
____86. What I did was interesting.
____87. I found my tasks challenging.
____88. I was given enough training to do my tasks.
____89. I did things myself instead of just observing.
____90. I had adult responsibilities.
____91. I was learning things that would help me in the future.
____92. Adults at the site took a personal interest in me.
____93. I had the freedom to develop and use my own ideas.
____94. I was helping to improve my community.
____95. My job was just busy work
____96. I was appreciated when I did a good job.
____97. I got help when I needed it.
____98. I discussed my experiences with my supervisor or co-workers.
____99. I felt I was doing a good job at the site.

____100. I made important decisions.

101. My overall rating of my placement is: (check one)

____ Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor

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