

# School, System and Community Transformation: Lessons Learned Generation All Initiative

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# AISR

- Mission: Share and act on knowledge that improves outcomes and conditions in urban schools
- Core Principles: Equity, Community, Results and Learning Matter
- Four Areas of Work: District and System Transformation, Community Organizing & Engagement, Research & Policy, Communications and Technology
- Three Lines of Inquiry: College Readiness, Extended Learning, School/District Transformation
- Current multi-site initiatives: PASSAGE, Time for Equity, Student-Centered Learning, College Readiness Indicators, Youth and Adult Engagement, Education Justice Network, Urban Philanthropists Network.

# Presentation Goals

- Describe the historical national context surrounding urban education reform since *A Nation At Risk* and the Annenberg Challenge
- Discuss the national context in relation to urban reform efforts in Chicago
- Discuss the importance of smart education systems to take reform to scale
- Describe new opportunities for collaboration and advocacy grounded in equity and social justice

# 1980s–2000s: Standards and Market Based Reforms

- *A Nation at Risk* shifts the national narrative: *Education reform as an economic imperative.*
- ESEA reauthorizations (IASA, 1994; NCLB, 2002; *RTT*) shift from an equity to an excellence agenda: Emphasis place on *human capital* development, *standards, assessment and accountability systems, data-based decision making, choice, school/district interventions, school autonomy.*
- **Conflicting Goals and Approaches.** *All Children Achieve High Standards but All Schools Invent Reform on their Own*

# The Annenberg Challenge: 1993

- Funds: \$500 million that generated \$600 million in matching grants
- \$1.1 billion on initiatives in 18 sites (Urban, Rural and Arts Challenge Initiatives)
- A moral and political initiative as well as one that provided fiscal resources
- Launched at the beginning of the Standards Era
- 1.5 million children and youth involved
- Three broad goals: Improve education in inner-city schools, support achievement in rural schools, demonstrate the power of the arts to enhance learning

# Annenberg Challenge Design Principles

- All children can learn
- Rigorous academic standards and supports
- Children learn better in small schools and settings
- Teachers need to measure students' strengths and weaknesses regularly and use results
- School must engage parents as active partners
- Schools cannot succeed without political, financial and moral support from communities
- Schools work better in networks
- Systemic change requires changes in policies that perpetuate inequity and hold schools back

# Annenberg Challenge Theory of Change

- Using the AC Design Principles as a guide, a broad civic coalition (local Annenberg Challenge Committees) can marshal the fiscal resources, expertise and political will needed to transform schools in ways that would yield systemic change.

# Lessons from the Annenberg Challenge

- Every child benefits from high standards
- Large gifts no substitute for adequate & equitable funding
- Schools are too isolated. Networks needed to provide support and feedback
- Schools need lots of allies and partners
- Professional development is key
- Personalized, student-centered learning is key
- Strong leadership is needed at all levels
- Accountability must be reciprocal
- Public education is better than its image



# Deeper AC Lessons

- School transformation does not equal district transformation, district reform must be addressed directly.
- Changing district policies and practices requires more than bold leadership, it also requires political will at the neighborhood, city and state levels.
- Partner organizations can provide valuable technical expertise if they work in close alignment with the systems they support rather than in a loosely coupled manner.
- The “story” must be told all along the way, not just the end.
- Reaching **scale** does not occur without political, technical, cultural and social change/transformation.

# Urban Education Reform in Chicago

# Chicago Major Education Initiatives

- Chicago Annenberg Challenge Project: Democratic Localism (1996-2007)
- Gates/Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (2003-07): 32 New Small High Schools by 2007
- Chicago Mid-South Initiative (2003)
- Gates/Chicago Compact (2011)
- Chicago City of Learning (2014)
- Community Schools/Extended Learning (Ford plus)
- PASSAGE (Atlantic)

# Mid-South: The Vision

- The new Mid-South schools must embrace and embody all of the promising new approaches developed under the current wave of school reform: community schools, small schools, schools of choice that draw beyond their neighborhood boundaries, pre-school for every child, a clear focus on the core subjects of reading and math in the early grades, a full menu of after-school programs and extracurricular choices in the upper grades and in high school, and direct links to area colleges, universities and the work world.

# Mid-South: Our Goal

- To insure that every opportunity – both in education and in life – is accessible to all of our children through the schoolhouse doors of the new Mid-South community.

# Mid-South: Our Challenge...

Is to create a plan which is:

- Bold
- Innovative
- Incorporates current CPS plans and activities
- Reflects the desires of the current and future residents of the Mid-South communities

# Mid-South: A Significant Contribution to Urban School Reform

To date no other urban school district has created a regional planning process which is:

- Centered on public education, as well as public housing and economic re-development
- Focused on the development of human capital of all participants
- Transportable to regions throughout the city
- Involves a wide range of community partners.

# Mid-South's goals align with the CPS Education Plan

- **Expanding choice within neighborhoods**
- **Building instructional capacity**
- **Strengthening existing high school programs**
- **Enhancing Accountability**



# Opportunities

- 1) **Create a portfolio of high-quality and varied neighborhood schools** designed to meet the needs of all families living in the Mid-South communities;
- 2) **Extend learning opportunities** across the day, calendar and generations;
- 3) **Build human capacity** of principals, teachers, parents, as well as the staff of community organizations; and
- 4) **Link resources** including public and private housing, schools, community-based organizations, foundation and corporate support

# A Partnership Effort

- The residents of the Mid-South
- The Chicago Public Schools
- The Annenberg Institute for School Reform
- Members of the Working Groups
- Bank One
- The MacArthur Foundation
- Chicago Community Trust

Nationally and Locally Schools are  
still struggling:  
Now what?



[AT WWW.AISM.ORG](http://www.aism.org)

# NAEP 2011-14 Reading Results

- Students' reading comprehension unchanged from 2009 at grade 4, and improves slightly but not significantly at grade 8
- Higher percentage of students performing at or above *Basic*; however, percentage performing at or above *Proficient*, or *Advanced* has not changed significantly since 2009.

# Background characteristics of lower- and higher-performing students

## Among 4<sup>th</sup> graders who scored below 25<sup>th</sup> percentile

- 33% White, 25% Black, 35% Hispanic, 3% Asian
- 74% free/reduced lunch
- 24% English language learners
- 38% read for fun almost every day.

## Among 4<sup>th</sup> graders who scored above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile

- 71% White, 7% Black, 11 Hispanic, and 8% Asian
- 23% eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 2% English language learners
- 60% read for fun almost every day

# Domains of College & Career Readiness

- Context-specific knowledge and skills
  - Acquired disciplinary knowledge and skills
  - Learned cognitive skills
  - Foundational dispositions
- Cognitive
  - Intrapersonal
  - Interpersonal

# Building a New Narrative: Reframing the Problem and the Critical Questions



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# The Existing Narrative

Bad Teachers  
Bad Schools  
Broken Systems





# Recent Critiques

- Failure to narrow achievement gaps also due to lack of attention to broader social and economic factors
- School and district reform models pay little attention to political, social, and cultural dimensions of reform that reside inside and outside the school/district/state
- Weak support for capacity building focused on teaching and learning at school, district and state levels
- Building social and cultural capital in neighborhoods is critical to the success of school improvement efforts

# Lessons from Recent School Research

# Communities for Excellent Public Schools: Call for Sustainable

## Three Elements of Sustainable Transformation:

- A Strong Focus on School Instruction, Culture, Curriculum and Staffing
- Wrap-Around Supports for Our Students
- Collaboration to Ensure Local Ownership and Accountability

# Carnegie Corporation: Secondary School Redesign Principles (2013)

- Integrates positive youth development
- Mastery of rigorous standards
- Continuously improves its operations & model
- Develops and deploys collective strengths
- Has clear mission & coherent culture
- Manages operations efficiently & effectively
- Maintains and effective human capital strategy
- Empowers & supports leaders
- **Remains porous & connected**
- Personalizes student learning

# Implications for School, System and Community Transformation?



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# Fixing low performing schools and districts: Other concerns

- Comprehensive interventions imposed on schools and communities
- Emphasis on governance, leadership and staffing, less on instructional change
- Burden for failure placed entirely on school
- Ignores need for collaboration and ownership
- Weak support for ELL, Special Education and Gap Closing

# Framework of Essential Supports:



Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppecsu, Easton

Professional Capacity

School Learning Climate

Parent, School/Community Ties

Instructional Guidance

*Three Components of School Leadership:*

Inclusive, Instructional, Facilitative

# Beat the Odds Study (New York), AISR (2007)

- Academic Rigor
- Networks of Timely Support
- College Expectations and Access
- Effective Use of Data
- A Better Distribution of Resources
- Great Control Over Enrollments
- A Stronger System of Support and Accountability



# From At-Risk to On-Track: Lessons From Philadelphia, PCCY (2008)

- Sustained Effective Leadership
- High Expectations for Success
- A Climate of Trust, Pride, Respect and Collaboration
- Strong Instructional Programs
- High Attendance and Stability
- Use of Data to Improve Student Achievement
- On-going professional development
- External Partnerships and Parental Involvement

# Implications for System and Community Transformation?



[www.aism.org](http://www.aism.org)

# AISR's Smart District Framework

- Lead for results and equity
- Focus on instruction
- Use data for accountability **and** continuous improvement
- Build partnerships and community investment
- Develop human capital
- Distribute resources equitably

# Peer Networks in School Reform

## England

- Wide range of external networks
- Schools expected to be outward facing
- Balance top-down expectations with bottom-up customized ideas
- Supportive scheduling

## New York City

- Limited external networks, more robust internal networks
- Emphasis on within-school pd and data
- Considerable disruption of existing peer networks
- High stakes accountability fosters competition
- Less time

# Smart Education Systems also Matter

- Multiple Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Focused on a Broad Set of Academic and Developmental Outcomes
- Community and Family Centered
- Fosters Shared Accountability
- Systemic Approach for Bringing Work to Scale
- Strategies that Address Power Differentials (social, cultural, political, economic)

# TASSSC Education Vision

- Serves ends of democracy
- Helps every person reach his or her full potential
- **Supports robust participation in civic/cultural life and meaningful work**
- Builds vibrant communities
- **Develops a broad set of skills and competencies—academic, socio-emotional, cultural and political.**
- Approaches to curriculum, teaching, assessment and accountability should reflect these skills and competencies and promote deep learning.

# TASSSC Design Principles

- **Comprehensive vision for community revitalization and youth well-being**
- Self-reflection, humility, dialogue & growth
- A belief in all students
- Investment in adult learning
- Focus on strategic change and system capacity building, and well-balanced data
- Equitable and adequate distribution and use of resources
- **Communities, parents and youth as essential partners**
- **Race, class, power and diversity as key levers of learning and strategy**

# Student-Centered Learning Design Principles (Nellie Mae Foundation)

- Learning is personalized
- Learning is competency-based
- Learning takes place anytime, anywhere
- Students exert ownership over learning

## ***Sample approaches:***

- Authentic projects and performances before real-world audiences
- Performance assessments, such as presentations and exhibits
- Credit for learning beyond school hours
- Multiple pathways that build on students' interests and mirror economic, social and cultural growth opportunities



# Conclusions

- Communities need multi-sector coalitions that articulate an education vision and a set of school and system transformation design principles that are evidence-based, and student-, family-, and community-centered
- Build cross-sector coalitions to sustain effort; support and monitor implementation; and strengthen investment and political will
- Develop and implement a broad community engagement and communications strategy to coincide with upcoming debate about next round of education reform so that national efforts reflect local priorities and lessons