

The Business Roundtable and Systemic Reform:
How Corporate-Engineered High-Stakes Testing Has Eliminated Community
Participation in Developing Educational Goals and Policies

By

KATHY EMERY

B.A. (Mt. Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass.) 1977
M.A.L.S. (New School for Social Research, New York) 1985

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DEDICATION

To the 1995-1996 San Francisco Mission High School community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the greatest myths in our society is embedded in the concept of “individual achievement.” There is no such thing. No one person produces a dissertation just as no one person pulls herself up by her own bootstraps.

I never would have considered pursuing a doctorate if Karen Bray hadn’t suggested that I do so. Not a person to hit and run, Karen was there for me throughout the process. Her support was manifest in many ways, from reassuring pep talks to bureaucratic demystifications. I also want to thank Marian Boncanto for making it seem that it was her personal quest to ensure that all my financial forms were filled out correctly and on time.

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ABSTRACT

The Business Roundtable and Systemic Reform: How Corporate-Engineered High-Stakes Testing Has Eliminated Community Participation in Developing Educational Goals and Policies

Throughout the history of K–12 public education in the United States, parents, teachers, students and other local community members have been able to participate in the development of educational goals and policy through their local school boards. While rarely prevailing, such community participation has led, at times, to schools being responsive to the diversity of opinion among its constituents. Since the early 1980s, however, state governments have seized complete control over the development and delineation of educational policy resulting in the pursuit of a high-stakes testing agenda in all fifty states. When enacted, this policy has reduced local school boards to implementers rather than creators of policy while giving corporate lobbyists a free hand at the state level to influence the details of education statutes and appointments to the state educational bureaucracy. This development has been orchestrated by one of the most influential organizations of corporate executives in this country — the Business Roundtable.

In the summer of 1989, the national Business Roundtable devoted its entire annual meeting to synthesizing the various business-led reform efforts of the 1980s into the high-stakes testing agenda. Once the agenda was crystallized around what would eventually be referred to as the “nine essential components,” each state’s business coalition was responsible for generating consensus among the state’s business leaders, persuading the governor and state legislators to enact each of the “nine components”, and regularly reporting back to the national Business Roundtable on the progress being made towards establishing state systemic reform. The advocacy of high-stakes testing agenda by a wide network of nonprofit and government agencies has eliminated public debate over educational goals and justified the resegregation of the public school system. Goals associated with democracy and desegregation have been eliminated, leaving schools with

the narrow charge of educating students to become highly skilled task completers in the New Economy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
ABSTRACT	VI
 LIST OF TABLES	
2.1 COMPARISON OF EDUCATION GOALS: BRT 1989; GOALS 2000; AND BRT 1995.....	47
6.1 COMPARISON OF CBR AND BRT REFORM AGENDA.....	184
6.2 COMPARISON OF GOALS 2000 WITH CA EDUCATION SUMMIT GOALS.....	187
6.3 HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA HIGH-STAKES LEGISLATION.....	193
 LIST OF FIGURES	
A.1 INFLUENCES ON SCHOOL BOARD DECISIONS.....	14
4.1 TEXAS EDUCATION REFORM	100
5.1 WHITE STUDENTS IN HOUSTON HIGH SCHOOLS.....	157
5.2 CHARLOTTE HIGH SCHOOL WHITE POPULATION.....	158
5.3 WHITE STUDENTS IN PITTSBURGH HIGH SCHOOLS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WHITE AND BLACK POPULATIONS.....	159
5.4 WHITE STUDENTS IN BOSTON HIGH SCHOOLS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL WHITE AND BLACK STUDENT POPULATION.....	160
8.1 CHANGES IN THE MAKE-UP OF MISSION HIGH SCHOOL FROM 1989 TO 1998.....	277
8.2 COMPARISON OF THE CHANGING ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION IN MISSION HIGH SCHOOL WITH THAT OF THE SFUSD IN GENERAL.....	277
 CHAPTERS	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
THE ARGUMENT.....	2
A NOTE ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENT	11
A NOTE ON METHOD.....	12
<i>History</i>	17
<i>Philosophy</i>	18
 CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MODERN EDUCATIONAL REFORM.....	 21
INTRODUCTION.....	21
THE SUBORDINATION OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO STATE CONTROL.....	24
THE TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS AND CULTURE	26
THE CHALLENGE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.....	29
OBSTACLES TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORMATION.....	32
STATE CONTROL OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY – SETTING THE TABLE FOR CORPORATE CONTROL	39
 CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE, CORPORATE DOMINATION OF SCHOOL POLICY	 43
INTRODUCTION.....	43
THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE AND SYSTEMIC REFORM	45
<i>No Turning Back: Turning Up the Heat</i>	50
<i>Students as Task-Completers, Not Problem-Solvers</i>	54
<i>School Boards as Middle Managers</i>	64
THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE NETWORK.....	69
<i>Institute for Educational Leadership</i>	70
<i>Public Agenda</i>	72
<i>Education Commission of the States</i>	73
<i>Annenberg Institute for School Reform</i>	74
 CHAPTER 3: BRT’S CO-OPTATION OF EDUCATORS AND PARENTS	 78

INTRODUCTION.....	78
CO-OPTATION OF TEACHER UNION LEADERSHIP.....	79
PARENTAL OPPOSITION AND ITS COOPTATION.....	83
THE COOPTATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS AND TEACHERS.....	86
CHAPTER 4: BUSINESS INFLUENCE ON THE SCHOOLS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.....	97
INTRODUCTION.....	97
HOUSTON, TEXAS.....	99
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA.....	112
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.....	119
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.....	122
CHAPTER 5: THE REVIVAL OF SEPARATE BUT EQUAL – “MAKING PLESSY WORK”	128
INTRODUCTION.....	128
FROM <u>PLESSY</u> TO <u>BROWN</u>	129
JUSTIFYING RESEGREGATION.....	134
BUSING AND MAGNET SCHOOLS.....	136
SYSTEMIC REFORM AND RESEGREGATION.....	140
<i>Houston, Texas</i>	141
<i>Charlotte, North Carolina</i>	143
<i>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</i>	144
<i>Boston, Massachusetts</i>	145
<i>St. Louis, Missouri</i>	148
INTRODUCTION TO HIGH SCHOOL CHARTS.....	154
<i>Proportional Representation</i>	154
<i>Understanding the Charts</i>	155
CHAPTER 6: CALIFORNIA	161
INTRODUCTION.....	161
STATE CONTROL OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY.....	162
SB 813.....	164
TESTING AND TEXTBOOKS.....	167
NEW DIRECTION OF REFORM.....	170
THE SIX RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 1988 CBR REPORT.....	175
<i>“Expand and Focus Schooling”</i>	175
<i>“Establish Accountability Based on Performance and Choice”</i>	176
<i>“Establish School Autonomy, and Empower Parents, Teachers, and Principals”</i>	179
<i>“Modernize Instruction”</i>	181
<i>“Strengthen the Teaching Profession”</i>	182
<i>“Capitalize on Diversity”</i>	183
DEVELOPING CONSENSUS.....	183
IMPLEMENTATION.....	190
<i>High-Stakes Testing Moves Center Stage</i>	190
<i>The Legislative Timetable</i>	192
OPPOSITION TO HIGH-STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING.....	200
CHAPTER 7: SAN FRANCISCO	210
INTRODUCTION.....	210
THE DRIVE FOR INTEGRATION.....	214
THE CONSENT DECREE.....	218
FROM DESEGREGATION TO RECONSTITUTION.....	225
RECONSTITUTION AND RESEGREGATION.....	232
ALIGNMENT OF DISTRICT AND STATE POLICY.....	241
THE LEGACY OF ROJAS AND RECONSTITUTION.....	243
CHAPTER 8: MISSION HIGH SCHOOL.....	251

INTRODUCTION.....	251
COMMUNITY BASED REFORM	252
THE END OF COMMUNITY-BASED REFORM.....	263
NO TURNING BACK	268
TED ALFARO AND THE CORPORATE AGENDA.....	271
COMMUNITY POWER AS A THREAT TO THE POLITICAL AND CORPORATE MACHINES.....	284
CONCLUSION.....	292
REFERENCES.....	297
APPENDICES	298
APPENDIX A: CREATING THE NEW MYTH.....	298
APPENDIX B: NEWSPAPER DATABASE WITH FILEMAKER PRO.....	301
APPENDIX C: WASHINGTON STATE’S 1998 SCHEDULE OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES (BRT, 1998; P. 30).....	302
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE DIRECTION EDUCATION REFORM SHOULD TAKE	305
APPENDIX E: IEL GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTORS.....	308
APPENDIX F – THE RECONSTITUTION OF MISSION HIGH SCHOOL.....	309
APPENDIX G: FROM THE REPORT OF THE MONITORING TEAM APPOINTED BY THE FEDERAL COURT TO EVALUATE THE DEGREE OF COMPLIANCE BY SFUSD WITH THE 1983 CONSENT DECREE	312
APPENDIX H: TEN POINT FRAMEWORK OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION FUND NETWORK AND CORPORATE FUNDERS	315
APPENDIX I: 1999 HIGH-STAKES TESTING STATUS REPORTS FROM STATE BUSINESS COALITIONS TO THE NATIONAL BRT	317

Introduction

After stubbing her toe on a raised floorboard, [Erin Brokovich] began asking the kinds of questions that led to the landmark lawsuit against PG & E . . . "I began to put two and two together," she said. "I have floors coming up. Why? The house smelled musty. Why? Could there be a water problem? And then I started thinking - water, mold, what's going on? I'm sick." Tests confirmed her suspicions, revealing construction flaws and high levels of several molds [Brokovich then testified in support of new legislation protecting homebuyers from buying moldy houses unawares]

"Erin Brokovich Crusades Against Mold" by
Anastasia Hendrix, *San Francisco Chronicle*,
p. A3, 3/8/01.

The Big Box

Now, Patty used to live with a two-way door
In a little white house quite near us.
But she had too much fun in school all day
And made the grown-ups nervous.
She talked in the library and sang in class
Went four times to the toilet.
She ran through the halls and wouldn't play with dolls
And when we pledged to the flag, she'd spoil it.

So the teachers who loved her had a meeting one day
To try to find a cure.
They thought and talked and thought some more
Till finally they were sure.
"Oh, Patty, " they said, "you're an awfully sweet girl
With a lot of potential inside you.

"But you have to know how far to go
So the grown-up world can abide you.
Now, the rules are listed on the walls,
So there's no need to repeat them.
We all agree, your parents and we,
That you just can't handle your freedom"

Patty sat still and, to avoid their eyes,
She lowered her little-girl head.
But she heard their words and she felt their eyes
And this is what she said:
"I fold my socks and I eat my beets
And on Saturday morning I change my sheets . . .
Even sparrows scream
And rabbits hop
And beavers chew trees when they need 'em.
I don't mean to be rude: I want to be nice,

But I'd like to hang on to my freedom.
"I know you are smart and I know that you think
You are doing what is best for me.
But if freedom is handled just *your* way
Then it's not my freedom or free."

From *The Big Box* by Toni Morrison,
Hyperion Books for Children, New York, 1999.

The Argument

Myths play important roles in every culture. One important role is to legitimize existing social, economic and political arrangements. The power of a myth resides in its ability to reflect enough of reality to be believable while also articulating enough hope to counter the reality it does not reflect. For example, the reality of social and economic inequality in the United States is made acceptable to a critical mass of citizens by the myth of social mobility. The few examples of rags to riches allows many to argue that the possibility (if rarely the reality) exists for those willing and able to seize it, if not for themselves, at least for their children.

Public education plays an important role in the maintenance of this myth for two reasons. The content of the curriculum itself emphasizes the "rags to riches" stories of able, industrious and clever individuals and promotes the economic and political system as one that is always improving — "all boats rise with the tide". The public school is also represented as the "great equalizer". The myth goes like this: all children go to school and those who are smart and hard working succeed. Success is manifested by "good grades" which promise well paying jobs.

The coalition of organizations pushing the New Standards Reform Movement during the last twenty years is not only attempting to reshape the public school system to reflect the new workplace dynamics but it is also attempting to modify the role education plays in supporting the myth of merit based social mobility. Specifically, the old myth reflected by the tracking system is being replaced by the new myth that all high school students can, want to and should master college entrance level requirements. Some-Can-and-Some-Can't (College v. Vocational tracks) is being replaced with Everyone-Can (High Standards for All).

This shift is in response to a crisis of legitimacy. The old myth has been losing its power. Until recently, it had been acceptable to the many to be sorted into the non-college bound tracks because the high school diploma led enough citizens to jobs with acceptable incomes. Union jobs in manufacturing allowed workers to support families above the poverty line with the hope that their children would go to school and get into the college bound track. But the restructuring of the United States economy during the last twenty years has resulted in an unprecedented polarization of wealth. The decline of union and manufacturing jobs and the expansion of the service sector has directly contributed to the growing wage disparity between high school and college graduates. It is this new reality that has made the Some-Can-and-Some-Can't myth lose its persuasive power.

Instead of addressing the polarization of wealth — the soaring compensation for business managers and sales workers while working class wages decline in inflation adjusted dollars — a new myth is being promulgated by a network of corporate funded nonprofits. The Education Trust appears to be the lead organization in this myth-making network (see Appendix A for a more detailed description of the role of the Education Trust in creating the new myth). The success of the new Everyone-Can myth depends, however, on the success of transforming the structure of the K–12 public school system. The responsibility for taking the lead in engineering a network of organizations for this purpose was assigned to the Business Roundtable in 1989.

During the summer of 1989, the top CEOs in the United States sat down together and wrote the blueprint that has guided the third fundamental transformation of the K–12 public school system in the nation's history. Popularly known as high-stakes testing, systemic reform, or the New Standards movement, the program of one of the most influential organizations in the United States, the national Business Roundtable (BRT), has been implemented by over a dozen state legislatures. The lobbying efforts of state business coalitions (organized by the BRT) are persuading every state government to consider legislation that would force the students in its public schools to take a single standardized test, the results of which would be used as the criterion to determine sanctions or rewards for the teachers and administrators in every school. The use of

standardized tests is not new. What is new is the strategy of attaching “high stakes” to test scores. By penalizing low scoring schools and rewarding high scoring schools, advocates of high-stakes testing argue that parents will be able to hold teachers “accountable” to teaching every student “high standards” as defined by state content and performance standards. “Does it increase test scores?” is fast becoming the single litmus test that any teaching method, curricula or structural change must pass in order to be funded and implemented.

On some dimensions, this transformation is nearly complete. Virtually all states now have statewide testing systems capable of producing performance data on individual schools. Virtually all states have some form of standards to offer guidance to local schools and school systems. *On some other dimensions, the transformation is far from complete.* Perhaps a third of the states have developed, or are in the final stages of developing well-articulated systems of standards, assessments, and accountability measures that can be used to make judgments about individual schools’ performance (Richard Elmore quoted by BRT, 1999; p. 3)¹ [BRT’s emphasis]

As educational theory or practice, the BRT’s blueprint is seriously flawed. But as a strategy to insure corporate control of the political, economic, and cultural life of the nation, it is a clever and plausible plan. During the 1980s, the corporate CEOs of the Business Roundtable believed their dominance of the nation’s institutions were threatened by democratic movements, as did their counterparts in the 1840s and 1890s — two other periods of cultural turmoil and economic dislocation. The response in each of these time periods has been to fashion a strategy to divide and quell those who were promoting cultural diversity and social justice. Education has played a key role in each of these responses. Horace Mann’s concept of public education was of great interest to the elites in the 1840s. Social and economic dislocation, religious revivals, increased immigration, workingmen’s parties, a growing anti-slavery movement (among other challenges to the status quo) made property owners intensely nervous about what the future generation might think and do. Again, in the 1890s, a persistent economic depression, massive immigration, the end of the “frontier”, the formation of national farmer’s and worker’s organizations (and other sources of turmoil) created a sense of crisis among the new corporate leaders. The captains of industrial America responded in

¹ See Appendix I for the name of each state’s business coalition responsible for pursuing the BRT agenda, the date of its founding, and the report of its progress to the BRT as of 1999.

a variety of ways, not the least of which was to see the public school system as a means of Americanizing the new immigrants and creating a more passive and obedient workforce.

Ignited by the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, the modern Civil Rights Movement launched one of the most significant and powerful social movements in American history. During the next twenty years, many groups were inspired to organize and demand that they be part of the decision-making processes in this country. In education, one manifestation of such organizing was the increase in the number of educators promoting student-centered, interdisciplinary, experiential, and multicultural education and an increase in the number of school boards allowing such education into the classroom. These events threatened to challenge a dominant culture and political process that was fundamentally dependent on racism.²

The cultural and political challenge to the status quo of the sixties was made more serious by the invasion of Toyota trucks and cars. By the 1970s, Japanese car manufacturers had fundamentally transformed the production process through a method called Total Quality Control or lean production. This allowed them to produce fewer expensive but much more reliable cars than Ford, Chrysler, or General Motors. Corporate-run American responded to the simultaneous cultural, political and economic challenge in many ways. Part of the response included transforming the U.S. corporate structure and assembly line according to the U.S version of Total Quality Control. This involved “downsizing” or reducing the number of mid-level managers and imposing the responsibilities of the laid off supervisors upon the assembly-line workers – a crude interpretation of the Japanese model. Fewer managers meant less money spent on salaries and benefits and more profits. Corporate CEOs also pushed for deregulation, a euphemism that meant that the public interest, as expressed through government

² I would think that anyone who reads Edmund Morgan’s *American Slavery, American Freedom*, D. Massey’s and N. Denton’s *American Apartheid* or Glenn Loury’s *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality* would have a difficult time arguing with either John Ogbu (poor African Americans “are at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy, the ones held out as examples to other minorities of what will happen if they don’t shape up” (1995; p. 284)) or Anthony Walton (“even as whites, Hispanics, and Asians come together in the new American melting pot, blacks, as the saying goes, remain the pot” (Harpers, August, 2002; p. 69)). Recent history is replete with examples of race used as a divide and conquer tool. Two more generally well known: George H. W. Bush used “Willie Horton” to defeat Michael Dukakis and Jesse Helms used a pair of white hands to defeat Harvey Gant. I will argue in this study that the rhetoric of the Business Roundtable’s education reform program is consistent with these examples.

regulators from Occupational, Safety, and Health Administration (OSHA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and especially from the Civil Rights Commission should not interfere with the “cost-saving” changes that were being put into effect.

The search for increased profits also included corporate investment in technology. The major “cost” of production has always been employee wages. As did machines during the industrial era, the new computer technology of the 1980s held out the promise of increased “efficiencies” that could further reduce the number of workers needed for production, thereby ushering in the New Economy. But the profit gained by substituting technology for workers on the factory floor would be offset by the higher salaries of computer programmers and engineers. This could be avoided if the pool of such highly skilled labor could be expanded beyond the numbers actually needed, resulting in lower salaries. Initially, this was achieved by having the U.S. Congress expand the H-1B visa program that opened the immigration doors to foreign high-tech workers. But a more fundamental solution was needed.

Corporate CEOs turned to educational reform as one of several means to address the economic, political and cultural challenges of the post-Cold War era (the subject of Chapters 2, 3, and 4). They did so because business leaders have always seen the educational system as both a means to “externalize” training costs as well as a means to socialize a citizenry to support the national interest (as defined by business). As the Business Roundtable developed its educational program, both the cultural/political concerns as well as the economic concerns must have been foremost in their minds given the details of the program that they came up with in 1989 and again in 1995. The plans called for a transformation of the educational system that would mirror the corporate structure of the New Economy — i.e., downsize and deregulate. To downsize the school system, systemic reform advocates argued that school boards and district administrators needed to withdraw from their policy and supervisory roles. Supervision was no longer needed because test scores would determine if teachers and principals were developing programs and strategies that would achieve the educational goals now set by the state government. Such a structural change promised to eliminate the influence of those

groups that promoted the kinds of changes (e.g., ethnic studies and real problem-setting and solving skills) that empowered students to challenge the status quo during the sixties

Deregulation, as applied to school reform, has come to mean the streamlining of state rules and regulations and is often referred to as school autonomy or site-based decision-making. According to the BRT strategy, state governments would no longer decide which textbook a teacher must use, what bilingual program a district or school should adopt, whether teachers should use direct instruction or project-based learning, how much time to devote to each part of the curricula, or any other such issue. Instead, individual school sites would be responsible for deciding which methods and what resources would achieve the goals set by state content and performance standards. The BRT executives were confident that they could dictate state standards that would produce significant numbers of students who were highly skilled at completing assigned tasks while incurious as to whether such tasks served anyone's interests other than those of the corporate leadership of the nation.

By transforming the structure of the public school system to mirror the new workplace structure, corporate CEOs expected to foster a seamless transition from school to work as well as increasing the number of "high-skilled" employees. This addressed the economic crisis prompted by Toyota's challenge. But systemic reform is also known as the New Standards movement, and in the name of "high standards for all" and "equity and excellence," standards advocates have directly responded to the cultural and political challenges posed by multi-culturalists, environmentalists, feminists, teachers' unions, civil rights advocates, and all those who question the prevailing unequal distribution of privilege, power, and resources. By seizing the rhetorical high ground — "high standards for every child" — standards advocates have put opponents to high-stakes testing on the defensive and prevented political alliances between teachers and parents. To oppose "high standards for all" is to appear to be supporting the dual tracking system that was created at the turn of the century (ironically, through the use of standardized tests). Standards advocates argue that subjecting every student to a single standardized test would force every teacher to prepare her students for college, thus eliminating the defacto racist sorting system that public schools have been. That over 85 percent of public school teachers are white, middle-class females and that the vast majority of urban public school

students are poor people of color makes it problematic for teachers to oppose a reform initiative that promises to close the “achievement gap” — the persistent difference in test scores between predominantly white, middle-class students and predominantly poor students of color. The rhetoric of systemic reform successfully isolates those teachers who oppose the BRT’s attempts to overhaul the public school system. Teachers who see systemic reform as exacerbating the “achievement gap” and increasing the numbers of dropouts and push-outs are thereby politically isolated from parents whose experiences with the public school system have not been positive.

Like all parents, poor and minority parents have always wanted teachers to be more responsive to the needs and interests of their children. Teachers, however, have generally failed to develop relationships with parents that would lead to an educationally and politically powerful alliance. There are several reasons for this. The manipulation of racist ideology by the media and politicians makes the cultural divide between teachers and urban parents almost impossible to cross. This situation is made worse by the economic and politically vulnerable position of teachers. Teachers are treated like blue-collar workers but aspire to the status of white-collar professionals. In response to their treatment, teachers formed unions in the sixties. But teacher unions, like all other unions before them, have been allowed to exist only if they agree to confine their goals to wages and a narrow definition of working conditions.³ It is this position that has made teachers susceptible to divide and conquer tactics.

Accepting the terms of their existence, teacher unions are powerless to advocate for specific curriculum and methodology, the very topics that would allow teachers to be more responsive to parental and student concerns. Then when teachers do campaign for better wages and working conditions, editorials and news articles portray the teachers as self-serving. This reinforces parents’ suspicions that teachers are not primarily concerned with the needs and interests of the students, suspicions already fueled by the context of racial and ethnic inequality. With little power and low status, teachers often assert that they are professionals — educational experts who know better than editorialists and

³ This can be readily seen by comparing the history of the Knights of Labor and the International Workers of the World with that of the American Federation of Labor. For those who wish to explore this issue in depth, I recommend starting with Philip Foner’s seven volume *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York, International Publishers, 1987).

parents what is best for students. This strategy to gain greater *status* has only served to undermine the *power* of teachers by further alienating parents.⁴ The impulse to claim the status and decision-making authority that lawyers and doctors have only serves to exacerbate the hierarchal relationship that the racial divide maintains. Dialogue, partnership, or alliance building is problematic when the power dynamic is unequal.

The BRT promotes its educational agenda by promising “high standards for all” and “equity and excellence.” These slogans are perfectly calibrated to drive a wedge between teachers and parents, undermining any real opposition to systemic reform. Part of the success of this divide and conquer tactic relies on maintaining a mutual ignorance by each racial ethnic group of the others. This has been created and maintained in large part by segregated housing, health care, and education. The growth of ethnic studies and desegregated schooling in the sixties began to break down the barriers of prejudice dividing various groups from one another. Tactics, such as the assault on affirmative action, however, have reversed this movement. The BRT’s strategies have contributed to this reversal. While “high standards for all” responds to the critique that the public school system does not provide educational opportunity for everyone, “equity and excellence” has been used to justify the resegregation of the nation’s school system (the subject of Chapter 5).

By controlling state standards, the BRT has seized the high ground of one of the many battlefields in the nation’s “culture wars” — course content. State history standards, for example, emphasize the success of existing U.S. institutions at resolving conflicts and problems in society and point to a future in which all boats will rise with the tide of globalization. Reading standards emphasize the requirement that students accept the literary interpretations of the test makers rather than develop their own critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, by reducing the curriculum to a “test-prep” course of study, students are subjected to superficial coverage of content as they are drilled in reading and math skills. State adopted, commercial curricula such *Open Court* and *Success For All* remove decision-making from teachers, further preventing educators

⁴ The distinction between status and power is important in understanding why the BRT has been so successful in creating a network of organizations supporting its agenda. It is precisely because most people cannot distinguish power from status that they are easily co-opted – accepting privilege and foregoing real power.

from responding to the needs and interests of the students. In Chapter 8, I argue that the removal of curricula decisions from the district and school site has had the effect of eliminating literature and history of identity courses as well as community participation in providing crucial health and social services to the members of the Mission High school community in San Francisco, California.

In 1989, the Business Roundtable developed a national K–12 educational reform initiative. Since 1989, the BRT has taken the lead in developing consensus among corporate business leaders on a specific educational agenda and fostering a network of government, private, and nonprofit organizations to systematically impose its agenda on the public schools. The success of their efforts makes this the third major, business-led educational reform movement in U.S. history. The purpose of the reform has been to transform the public school system to mirror the structure of the New Economy workplace as well as to contribute to the consolidation of corporate hegemony over American political and cultural life. The BRT educational agenda achieves these goals by eliminating debate over the goals of education through the elimination of community participation in the development of educational policy. This has been achieved by removing educational policy formation from local school boards and putting such decision-making in the hands of the state government. The success of this fundamentally anti-democratic reform strategy has depended upon rhetoric that divides and quells opposition, justifies the resegregation of public schools, and co-opts those who don't know what the real purpose of such reforms are.

The BRT believes that there are nine “essential components” of systemic reform (BRT, 1995). By 2001, they have succeeded in implementing three of them — state content standards, state-mandated tests, and sanctions/rewards — in over a dozen states (see Appendix I). They are now working on component number four — transforming pre- and in-service teacher training so that teachers are socialized to support the first three components. This is known as “professional development.” Further success, however, depends upon the degree to which they can manage the backlash that has emerged. While the leadership of the two major teacher unions — the American Federation of Labor and the National Education Association — has expressed their full support of systemic reform, the rank and file remain troubled by the disconnect between their own

experience of how students learn and the BRT's educational theory. In addition, many parents, poor and rich alike, have expressed serious doubts about the validity of using one test score to define the educational achievement of their children as well as critique the shallowness of a curriculum that is orientated towards a standardized test. This opposition, for reasons I have explained above, has yet to form a political movement that is capable of countering the powerful lobbying that the nation's CEOs can bring to bear on state and local political leaders. Until such opposition emerges, the development of school policy will continue to be a fundamentally anti-democratic process and promote anti-democratic goals. It is my hope that this study can provide some perspective that will contribute to the development of effective opposition.

A Note about the Structure of the Argument

In Chapter 1, I outline a brief history of the role that the economic and political elites of this country have played in the formation of educational policy and how school boards are central to that story. The last section of Chapter 1 describes the shift in educational policy from local school boards to state governments. This created the situation that allowed the national BRT, through its state BRT organizations, to direct the shape of modern educational reform. In Chapter 2, I argue that the BRT's educational goals are to promote curricula and pedagogy intended to increase the number of high-skilled task completers through the writing of state standards and enforcement of those standards by mandatory state tests. To eliminate any debate over the wisdom of such an agenda, the BRT has created a network of organizations to support its state BRT lobbying efforts. In Chapter 3, I show how this network has successfully co-opted teachers, parents, and educational researchers. Those in these groups have been recruited, through pressure and misinformation, to support and develop the means by which to achieve the BRT's goals. The effects of the BRT's network of educational organizations and efforts at co-optation can be seen in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I looked at four cities — Houston, Charlotte-Mecklenberg, Pittsburgh, and Boston — and describe how the state BRT organizations interact with the state government to influence each school district's policy. In Chapter 5, I revisit these cities and also look at St. Louis to show how systemic reform, by

eliminating public debate over educational goals, has allowed for the resegregation of the public schools.

Chapter 1 informs the analysis of the BRT-led reforms as described in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Similarly, Chapters 6 and 7 provide context that makes Chapter 8, the story of Mission High School, more understandable. To explain what the community reformers at Mission High School were up against, I explain the history of contemporary educational reform in the state of California in Chapter 6. This chapter builds upon the information of the previous five chapters. In Chapter 7, I explain how state reform interacted with the city's educational and political history from 1983–2001. The relationship between resegregation and the BRT agenda not only provides insight into the goals of systemic reform as seen in five major U.S. cities (Chapter 5), but provides a way to understand how the history of desegregation in San Francisco was co-opted by the district's administration as a means by which to undermine the democratic process (Chapters 7 and 8). In Chapter 8, I tell the story of educational reform at Mission High School, San Francisco, from 1985 to 1997. This story is a case study of the failure of democratic reform when community reformers act in isolation without the understanding of the forces ranged against them and without the support of a larger social movement supporting their cause.

A Note on Method

This project originated out my interest in school reform and democracy. As I began researching the factors allowing for grassroots school change, I came to two conclusions. One is that changes initiated at the school site have been ephemeral. The second conclusion is that if any systemic change were to be made by members of a school's community, it would have to be approved and supported by the local school board. This led me to investigate who or what influences schools board decisions and how. It is from this investigation that my present argument has emerged.

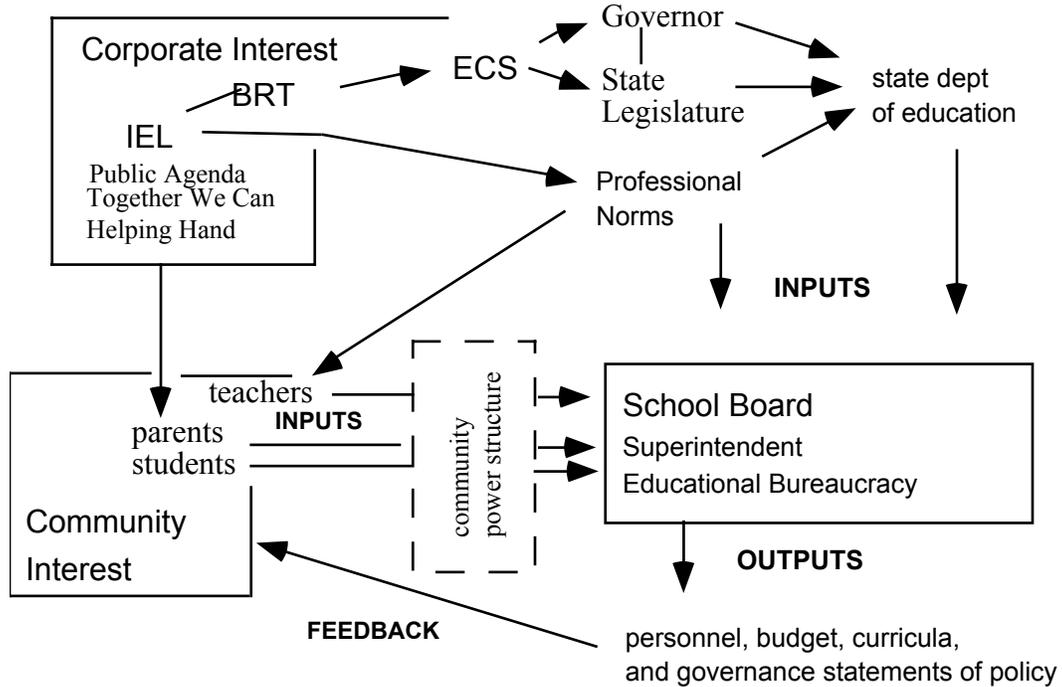
In my research, I have drawn upon the methodology of three disciplines — sociology, history, and philosophy. Looking at organizations as dynamic systems and establishing criteria for “units of observation” is a function of sociological analysis. But such study does not always “supply explanations — only the historical imagination can

do that” (Sewell, 1967; p. 217). Historians assume that human behavior is not merely guided by present systems but is causally tied to a historical continuum and dictates that a narrative story be told. Historical methods rely heavily on interpretation and interpolation of data since the written and oral records of the past, even the most immediate past, are always incomplete however abundant they are. The purpose of this research and important features of the criteria used to determine the methodology are largely the result of philosophical inquiry. These dimensions of the research arise out of deeply held and rationally argued beliefs about what the purpose and aims of education should be, as well as how those purposes and aims can and ought to be determined.

Sociology

I have drawn from both David Easton’s (1965) and Frederick Wirt’s (1975) models in developing a framework that guided my research and analysis of the role of school boards in the determination of educational policy. Easton’s framework helped Johnson (1988) argue that the school board is the “focal point of educational governance. As a *conversion system*, [the school board] is the recognized institution through which policy decisions regarding education at the local level are made” (Johnson, 1988; p. 11). The environment (cultural influences, temporal demands/considerations) influences the form and nature of board decisions (outputs). “Stress from the social environment generates inputs of demand and support for the conversion process” (p. 13). Feedback (outputs) are attempts to reduce the stress. “A system that fails to reduce stress will collapse” (p. 14). Wirt’s model (1975) of school politics specifies the environmental influences of Easton’s model (particularly identifying the “community power structure” as a filter for the communication of “core constituency of needs”). Instead of a conversion system, however, Wirt makes the board a “lens focusing the often disparate calls for the redistribution of resources” (p. 202).

Figure 1 – Influences on School Board Decisions



IEL = Institute for Educational Leadership
 ECS = Education Commission of the States

In the model I developed (see Chart 1), I have adopted some of the basic assumptions of both Wirt’s and Easton’s models. The historical record and the research literature seems to justify placing school boards at the center of conflict between the business-led reforms of statewide testing and traditional community concerns of teachers, parents, and students who oppose an educational policy which seeks to confine K–12 education as a mere “pipeline” for the work force. School boards throughout their history have occupied a position between business and community concerns. During the last twenty years, more specifically, school boards have had to negotiate between the state government demands of “high standards” and community concerns that such demands are being imposed unfairly and are, perhaps, unwarranted.

In defining the relationships among corporations, government (from federal to local), and community-based organizations, I developed the “general notion” (Stinchcombe, 1978; p. 4) that school boards are intersections of conflict between corporate and community interests. In order to identify what those conflicts have been, I read newspaper accounts of school events and controversies in San Francisco from 1980 to 2001 that called for school board action or comment. I used such accounts “as tracer[s]” of community and corporate interests. Sewell (1990; p. 528) uses “well recorded violent events . . . as a kind of tracer for collective action and loyalties in general.” Paige (1975; pp. 86-92) used newspaper accounts of “overt acts” to develop a typology of “events” which, in turn, became his “units of observation” — social movements — to be associated with his “unit of analysis —” the agricultural export sector. Walton and Ragin (1990) used journalistic accounts of austerity protests both as a means of hypothesis generating and as a means of generating criteria that defined the dependent variable of the study. In order to qualify as an event, or variable, I was looking for “overt acts” that were conflicts between groups representing “core constituent interests” (Wirt, 1975; Wirt & Kirst, 1982).

In this paper, I am arguing that there are fundamental conflicts between community and corporate educational goals that often collide at the school board level. I fully define who the corporate elite are and what the corporate educational agenda is in Chapter 2. Defining “community” is not quite as easy or clear. Logan and Molotch (1987) provide a useful way to distinguish between the interests of neighborhood residents and corporate capitalists. In their conceptual framework, Logan and Molotch argue that interests, or “values”, emanate primarily from location that “establishes a special collective interest among individuals” (p. 19). Neighbors share common experiences of public services, natural as well as man-made disasters (e.g., floods as well as placements of toxic dumps). These kinds of experiences, shaped by what happens inside as well as outside a neighborhood, create common experiences out of which shared interests or values arise. While corporate capitalists may own land or businesses in a neighborhood, they don’t live there. So, while their material interests may lie with the condition or fate of a neighborhood, their emotional or psychological interests do not.

The material use of a place cannot be separated from psychological use; the daily round that makes physical survival possible takes on emotional meanings through

that very capacity to fulfill life's crucial goals. The material and psychic rewards thus combine to create a feeling of "community". Most of residents' striving as members of community organizations or just as responsible neighbors represents an effort to preserve and enhance their networks of sustenance (p. 20).

Logan and Molotch make such assertions about the nature of residents' attachment to place based on a rich research tradition. They admit, however, that little is known about the corporate culture, "corporation's attachments to place," or how corporate decisions come into conflict with community-based efforts to "preserve and enhance their networks of sustenance." Nonetheless, the authors feel confident enough to make three general observations about how corporate capitalists differ from residents in their relationship or attachment to place.

First . . . the satisfaction that capitalists derive from place is less diffuse. Their paramount interest is the profitability of their operations; concerns with place turn heavily on how well land and buildings serve that overarching goal. Second, capitalists, at least compared to residents, have greater opportunity to move to another place should conditions in one place cease to be appropriate. Free of at least some of the constraints holding residents, such as sentimental ties to family and access to schools and jobs, corporations can exit more easily . . . Finally, capitalists' use of place is less fragile than that of residents. Capital can adapt to changes such as noise, odor, and ethnic succession, whereas the effect of such change on residents is more immediate and more serious (Logan and Molotch, 1987; p. 22).

One tactic by which capitalists are able to determine the "changes" that affect neighborhood's "access to schools" (which includes the nature of what happens in a school) is to pit neighborhoods against each other while claiming that the corporate "overarching goal" represents the "public interest" (a goal never acknowledged as making profit but as "creating jobs"). Neighborhood concerns are belittled and de-legitimized as parochial, narrow, partisan, and self-interested. The degree to which housing patterns are ethnically segregated and the degree to which race and class correlate is the degree to which de-legitimizing tactics are couched in racial terms. This will be explored in Chapters 5, 7 and 8.

Originally, I had wanted to choose conflicts involving the school boards in both San Francisco and Oakland, California. I had intended to use the conflicts as case studies through which insight could be gained as to what factors allowed for or prevented community influence in the formation of educational policy. Using File-maker Pro, I began to create a database of news items of school controversies in Oakland and San

Francisco from 1980 to 2000, coded for 32 issues.⁵ During the process of recording and coding 740 news items, I was also exploring the organizations linked to the BRT's web page as well as mentioned in the organization's research reports. As I began to realize that the BRT was virtually dictating state educational policy, I came across a momentous school board conflict in San Francisco that seemed to involve "core constituent interests." Because of the wealth of information available regarding this conflict, I dropped my idea of comparative case studies and focused on exploring why the superintendent, supported by a majority of the school board, insisted upon the removal of an extremely popular administration team from Mission High School. This is the subject of Chapter 8.

History

The questions that have guided my research and analysis have arisen from my reading of the past as much as my reading of current research on educational reform. Furthermore, I believe that the past influences and thus explains the present in the same way that geological formations affect the direction and depths that water flows. So, in chapter 1, I have used secondary historical sources to create a chronological narrative of the development of school boards as educational policy institutions.⁶ Throughout American history, economic and political elites have attempted to control the socialization process of future generations through the agency of local school boards. School boards, however, were not always compliant. This suggests one reason why current debate over educational reform includes arguments critical of the practices if not the existence of local school boards. Embedded in the historical narrative is the results of educational research that offers explanations as to why some groups have greater influence over determining the goals of schooling than others. The history and research reveal that the success of systemic educational reform during two transformational periods (the 1840s and 1890s) depended heavily on the resources that business and property elites were able to bring to bear on the political process. Such a perspective allows one to appreciate

⁵ See Appendix B for a copy of one record from the database.

⁶ In Chapter 1, I relied heavily on Joel Spring's 1986 history, *The American School: 1642-1985*, since this book is an impressive and comprehensive historiography of educational history. I recommend this book as a starting point for those interested in becoming more familiar with the history of American public education.

better why reforms initiated at the school site have rarely become systemic, while top-down, business led reform has achieved fundamental changes in the educational system.

Tyack and Cuban (1967) have observed that educational reforms, in practice, rarely resemble the original plans. They attribute this to a “layering” effect. Reforms are always imposed on an existing system which itself is a layer of past reforms. The past reforms always interact with the new reforms by altering them. I am using the historical narrative in Chapter 1 to argue that if one takes several steps back from this “layering” theory of educational change, one can begin to see fundamental structures within which educational reformers operate that shape and limit the scope of their reforms. That powerful business and property elites are responsible for the creation of such structures is important to understand if reformers ever want to transcend them.

The purpose of providing the historical context of Chapter 1 is to provide support for my argument that current calls for systemic reform emanate from the current economic elites in this country and, if the historical record is a basis for prediction, will succeed in fundamentally altering the structure of public education. The description and analysis of the implementation of the BRT’s national agenda would be less understandable without it being placed in the context of long-term business-led educational reform. Similarly, the description and analysis of how modern systemic reform actually works to eliminate community participation in setting educational goals and programs at the school site (with all of its economic and political effects) would be less understandable and less persuasive if not put in the context of district and state educational history. The story of Mission High School in San Francisco (Chapter 8) is preceded by the history of state educational reform from 1980 to the present (Chapter 6) and how the state’s history interacted with the development of San Francisco Unified District educational policy during the same time period (Chapter 7).

Philosophy

The purpose of this research comes out of my deeply held belief that neither I nor any other person has the right to determine what the educational aims of a school district should be. Instead, I believe that all persons in the district need to have a voice in the determining of such aims. There should be a decision-making process that does not

allow the most powerful always to dictate educational aims. This means a process that is not about winning but achieving a decision without the suppressing of alternative views. This means that meeting the “needs of the workplace” and developing “democratic dispositions” need not be mutually exclusive educational goals. Nor does the view adopted here support the liberal, elitist argument that certain groups like segregationists, creationists, or fundamentalist Christians should never be allowed at the decision-making table. Such arguments for exclusion are ironic. Elitism creates reaction to it. Often that reaction is allowed no other outlet than movements such as creationism or segregation. Elitists then hold up these groups as “bogeymen” to prevent a movement towards a decision-making process in which elites (liberal or otherwise) no longer can control the agenda or frame the debate. This is a mechanism very similar to although more subtle than conservatives’ use of redbaiting to stifle debates over economic justice.

John Dewey (1944) presented a vision of what a truly participatory democratic decision-making process would look like and its probable effects. Dewey argued that if there existed a “free play back and forth among the members of the social group” which included “an equable (sic) opportunity to receive and to take from others” then there would be a “diversity of stimulation.”

Diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought. The more activity is restricted to a few definite lines – as it is when there are rigid class lines preventing adequate interplay of experiences – the more action tends to become routine on the part of the class at a disadvantage, and capricious, aimless, and explosive on the part of the class having the materially fortunate position. Plato defined a slave as one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense. (p. 85)

Without an “equable” give and take within and between groups in a society, there can only be a narrow range of interests that are shared among all the members of that society. For Dewey, the harm would be the same as that wrecked upon society by warlords and “criminal bands.” In a

criminal band . . . the ties which consciously hold the members together are few in number, reducible almost to a common interest in plunder; and they are of such a nature as to isolate the group from other groups with respect to give and take of the values of life [O]n the other hand, [in] the kind of family life which illustrates the standard, we find that *there are material, intellectual, aesthetic interests in which all participate and that the progress of one member*

has worth for the experience of other members [my emphasis] . . . [T]he family is not an isolated whole, but enters intimately into relationships with . . . other modes of association. (p. 83)

The less equitable the give and take is, the fewer interests are shared between governed and governors. The fewer shared interests a society has, the more rulers rely on the appeal to fear as a motivator. Dewey believed that despotically governed states well illustrated one end of this continuum in that they completely isolate the “capacity for fear”.

In evoking dread and hope of specific tangible reward – say comfort and ease – *many other capacities are left untouched* [my emphasis]. Or rather, they are affected, but in such a way as to pervert them. Instead of operating on their own account they are reduced to mere servants of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain. (p. 84)

Many groups in our society are shut out of the decision-making process. Their voices are not represented on the op-ed pages of newspapers, their concerns and stories are misrepresented on the evening news, and their vote is not cast since no candidate represents them. It is not surprising that those whose needs and fears are publicly ridiculed turn to increasingly “extreme” forms of self-expression or engage in activities and groups whose leaders, for their own personal gain, can easily manipulate followers whose “capacities” have been “left untouched.” On the other hand, if we did have a political and educational system that truly allowed for “free play back and forth” of ideas, then it seems more than likely that the social interests of individuals would have a better chance of prevailing over antisocial motivations than they do at present. This study is an attempt to demonstrate how corporate business successfully bars other groups from the decision-making process. It arises from my belief that the aims or purposes of a society (and the institutions which socialize its members towards those aims) should be derived from a “free play back and forth among members of the social group” so that no one group tyrannizes, exploits, or impoverishes another.

Chapter 1: The Historical Context of Modern Educational Reform

Introduction

The first part of this chapter is a very brief history focusing on the conflict between local communities and state and national elites over the goals of schooling. The conflict over educational goals often became one over the structure and purpose of school boards since the local school board was the only policy-making body to which the local community had access. The creation of the public school system, beginning with Horace Mann in 1837, involved the subordination of local school boards to a state board of education. Around 1890, when predominantly immigrant workers gained substantial representation in city governments, business leaders launched a municipal reform movement that eliminated such working class representation. This ensured that business interests prevailed at the local school board level. One purpose of this history is to show how the obstacles confronting contemporary communities are deeply embedded. Another purpose of this history is to show that the modern, BRT-driven, systemic reform movement is consistent with this history. Systemic reform advocates have and continue to argue for the transfer of educational policy-making from local school boards to the state government for the purposes of subordinating educational policy to the corporate agenda.

During colonial America, there was no public school system. Education was completely decentralized resulting in a diversity of curricula and organization. For those communities that chose to formally educate their children, school curricula was created to impart the values and knowledge of that community, whether they were schools by and for free blacks or those set up by the plantation elite for their sons. After the American Revolution, leaders of the new nation began to realize that such local control, in the context of growing regional differences, threatened the rule of property owners. Consequently, the concept of a public school system which subordinated local school boards to state government supervision, slowly gained support from among state and national elites. Massachusetts created the first state board of education in 1837. The consequent establishment of other state boards of education was accompanied by the

growth of an educational bureaucracy that allowed the few to decide what and how the many would learn in school.

A centralized state bureaucracy, however, continued to rely on local, elected school boards. This did not prove a challenge to elite control as long as the ownership of significant amounts of property was a requirement to register to vote. But democratic movements from roughly 1830 to 1860 forced states to drop property qualifications for voting and the urban workforce began to increase rapidly during the 1880s. The growth of a highly diverse urban workforce dramatically changed the make-up of locally elected school boards and the nature of the educational goals its members wished to pursue. To reverse this development, local and state business leaders organized charter reforms that altered the electoral process in favor of pro-business candidates. After 1900, business dominated the membership of school boards and ensured that the goals of schools promoted their vision of society. Part of this process was accompanied by rhetoric that argued, and still prevails today, that the elites of society know best what the interests of society are and also know best how to protect them. The elites appointed professionals or presumably apolitical representatives to boards and commissions that made decisions affecting the distribution of public resources, decisions rarely made in conjunction with wishes and opinions of the general public. The corollary to this argument is that the general public, when they attempt to organize politically – e.g., unions, churches, neighborhood or ethnic-based organizations – are necessarily parochial in their perspective and therefore unfit to make important decisions affecting entire cities and states.

This position was not effectively challenged until the Civil Rights movement. By 1960, the federal government had become involved in influencing curricula and pedagogy, further undermining the influence of the local community. Yet the interaction among corporate-funded educational foundations, state and federal governments, and the grassroots social movements of the sixties also led to the emergence of a “community control movement” around education. This movement revitalized urban school boards as arenas of conflict among state and local community members over the shape and purpose of educational reform. The complexity of this conflict has been the subject of educational research that suggests that this period represented a democratization of the

educational decision-making process, especially allowing previously silenced minorities to begin to influence the content of what was being taught in school and who was teaching it. It was at this point that the weakness of the community control movement made itself apparent. Predominantly white teachers found themselves the objects of criticism and attack for the historic and structural failure of the public school system to successfully teach children of color. At the same time, teachers were prevented from responding to such criticism by a bureaucratic system that insisted that a standardized, anti-democratic curriculum be taught. Teacher unions, recently allowed to engage in collective bargaining, were still not allowed to negotiate with the bureaucracy over curricula and other policy issues, topics of concern to the organized, urban parents.

The inability of parents and teachers to form strong, political alliances has undermined their ability to influence educational policy. But by 1990, such obstacles to community influence are threatening to become moot. By 1990, most state governments had eclipsed the policy-making authority of school boards. They did this by becoming the predominant and parsimonious source of funding for school districts and then by requiring adherence to state policy guidelines as a condition for such funding. It is this situation that has allowed state BRT organizations and others to use their superior lobbying capabilities to convince state legislators and governors to adopt systemic reform.

The anti-democratic bias of the nation's elites strongly influenced the shape and structure of the public school system as it developed during U.S. history. This can be seen clearly during periods of crisis and transition. In 1837, Horace Mann convinced the Massachusetts state legislature to establish a state board of education. His success can be explained as part of the elite's response to the social turmoil of the period. The municipal reform movement, beginning in the late 1880s, had the effect of eliminating working class representation in city and school politics. In the 1980s, state governments began to encroach upon local school board policy-making authority. State officials were able to do this by first taking on responsibility for school financing. This created a situation that shaped the strategy of the BRT educational agenda. It is this context that the programs and rhetoric of the modern, "systemic" reform movement can be more easily seen as

originating with the CEOs of the Business Roundtable and serving interests that are not consistent with those of local communities.

The Subordination of Local School Boards to State Control

Education in colonial America was a highly diverse enterprise reflecting the distinctly different purposes for which each colony was founded as well as serving the contrasting cultures of the colonists. In 1647, English Puritan leaders in Boston legislated that every 100 households needed to establish a grammar school to ensure that children learned the alphabet, religious and moral maxims, and the duties children owed their parents.

German Quakers in Pennsylvania established a variety of religious schools in which German was the language of instruction. Southern planters created private pay schools for their children to learn Latin and Greek while also establishing a few pauper schools dedicated to imbuing poor white children with the principles of hard work and obedience (Spring, 1986; pp. 2–10).⁷

Those towns and counties which contributed public money to the support of a local grammar or charity school eventually established committees to administer these schools – to appoint and supervise teachers, collect taxes, and select school books. After the Revolution, these committees turned into local school boards whose members were chosen through district or ward elections. Most men, however, were not allowed to vote. The new state and local authorities made owning property a precondition for participation in government. Richard Hofstadter (1973) argued: “Government, thought the [Founding] Fathers, is based on property. Men who have no property lack the necessary stake in an orderly society to make stable or reliable citizens” (p. 16). This is why every state had significantly high property qualifications in order to vote until just before the Civil War. In illustrating his argument that the founding fathers believed democracy was to be feared because “the unstable passions of the people would dominate lawmaking,” Hofstadter quotes Madison as saying that a representative government was superior to real democracy since it would “refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through

⁷ Joel Spring’s (1986), *The American School, 1642-85*, seems to be the most comprehensive review of U.S. educational history research in print. He cleverly combines an historical narrative with a historiographical analysis of different interpretations of the past.

the medium of a chosen body of citizens” (p. 11). Noah Webster’s *Federal Catechism* reflected the anti-democratic values of most of the founding fathers:

Q: What are the defects of democracy?

A: . . . tumults and disorders . . . a multitude is often rash and will not hear reason.

The *McGuffey Readers* replaced Webster as a primary text by 1870 but continued to hammer home the dual themes of distrust of popular participation in government and belief that the wealthy were the best qualified to run society because they knew what was best for all (Spring, 1986; p. 140).

The elites’ control of local school boards was threatened during the first major social movement of the new nation. A number of factors converged during the 1830s that led to a surge in demands for a more democratic society. The elites were able to contain such demands to the extent that they were able to maintain their predominant influence over the nation’s institutions. The nation’s leaders were able to maintain control over the nation’s schooling by subordinating local school boards to state control. The impetus to do this grew during the 1830s in Massachusetts, as New England began to industrialize. The abolition of property qualifications for voting, the growing diversity of the population because of immigration, and the development of a class conscious proletariat (i.e., the development of “workingman’s organizations”) could all have been seen as threats to the existing social order by the New England Brahmins, prompting them to support Horace Mann’s vision of a centralized and bureaucratically controlled school system. The establishment of state control of education was to ensure that children learned to read and write about topics that supported the values of the ruling elite.

In this context, Horace Mann found it relatively easy to convince the Massachusetts legislature to create a state board of education in 1837, with himself as secretary from 1837 to 1848. An admirer of the Prussian school system, Mann pressed for a common curriculum, graded classrooms, and a supervisory bureaucracy to ensure that the curriculum was taught. When Massachusetts replaced oral exams with written exams in 1845, Mann condemned the results as “horrible” and thus gave impetus to his reform agenda. In 1848, Quincy, Massachusetts, adopted the first graded school. By 1851, Massachusetts had made the state superintendent of schools a permanent position (Callahan, 1975; p. 23). Workingmen’s parties had organized against such reforms,

wanting to keep educational decisions in the hands of the local community in order to have a curriculum that empowered their children (Spring, 1986; pp. 81–83).⁸

The Transformation of School Board Elections and Culture

The massive infusion of southern European immigrants in the 1880s and 1890s along with the rapid growth of the industrial sector in America created conditions for another wave of business-led reforms. A strong labor movement and the Settlement House movement were pressing school boards to use schools as community centers. Most of the urban school boards were still elected by district and many revealed their responsiveness to organized community demands by adopting a multicultural curriculum, kindergartens, health facilities, playgrounds, auditoriums, summer schools and night schools. The response to these manifestations of democratic influence was swift and decisive. In 1885, John Philbrick, U. S. Commissioner of Education, issued a report on school boards calling them “corrupt” and lacking in “expertise, virtue, professionalism, intelligence, and dedication.” City superintendents organized to demand more power. The National Education Association issued a report in 1895 calling for superintendents to be independent of school boards (Callahan, 1975; p. 26).

State legislatures rewrote the charters of school boards giving the superintendent more power and reducing the size and composition of the school board. The principle behind these reforms was to lift education “above politics,” and to eliminate lay influence by putting educational decisions in the hands of professionals. By reducing the size of city school boards (e.g., from 46 to 7 in New York) and by either eliminating elections or making the elections at large (instead of by district or ward), several historians have discovered that business leaders were able to eliminate working class representation and influence on the school boards (Cuban, 1995; Callahan 1962; Hays, 1983).⁹

⁸ For those wishing for greater detail on this point, Spring (1986) recommends Philip Foner’s article, “The Role of Labor in the Struggle for Free Compulsory Education” in Berlowitz and Chapman, ed., *The U.S. Educational System: Marxist Approaches*.

⁹ Elimination of working-class representation by replacing district elections with at-large elections works in the following way: To successfully run a citywide campaign, a politician must have a highly sophisticated political machine as well as name recognition. The former is very expensive, the latter is a function of the degree to which one has already been born into a political family (e.g., John Q. Adams or George W. Bush) or has

After 1900, businessmen dominated the membership of school boards and ensured that schools remained firmly in the service of industrial capitalism (Callahan, 1962; p. 7: Tyack and Cuban, 1995; pp. 17–19). For example, in Chicago from 1900 onwards

Chicago business leaders resisted increased spending for education because of a fear of an “over-educated workforce.” But when faced with the prospect of increased school attendance by working class children, they began to demand a differentiated curriculum that emphasized character development and vocational training (Spring, 1986; p. 158, paraphrasing Julia Wrigley’s work in “Class Politics and Public Schools in Chicago, 1900–1950”).

In the context of a frenzied media campaign that attacked the schools as inefficient and impractical, the newly constituted school boards pressured superintendents to adopt the principles of scientific management in the administration of schools.¹⁰ Those superintendents who were able to reduce the cost per pupil and implement a vocational track found their salaries increased substantially (Callahan; 1962, p. 75). The general effect of this pressure was to increase class size from 25 to 40 and even to 75 (Callahan, 1962; p. 230). The number of classes a teacher taught was increased and the salaries of teachers were cut. In order to know when teachers were inefficient and how schools compared with each other, standardized tests and record keeping were developed (Callahan, 1962; his argument throughout his book).

One manifestation of the business orientation of the curricula was the “efficiency list.” By 1915, nine “efficiency bureaus” had been established in large cities (Callahan, 1962; p. 101). The lists were kept by superintendents and made up of names of

been able to make a name for oneself in the military (e.g., Andrew Jackson or Dwight Eisenhower). Members of the working class are systematically denied both wealth and family/political connections putting them at a distinct disadvantage when campaigning against the wealthy and powerful in an at-large election. The playing field, however, is more level if the campaign is confined to a part of the city in which the working class candidate grew up, has family, and can afford to run a grassroots, door-to-door campaign. Hays (1983) points out that the rhetoric of the progressive municipal reformers argued that people who ran for citywide positions would have the city’s, not special group’s, interests in mind. Such rhetoric, however, masked a more insidious effect. The success of the political progressives have made the “interests” of business owners and the so-called interests of the city or nation, in the minds of middle class Americans, the same ever since. The “interests” of workers have successfully been portrayed in endless editorials as opposed to that of the city and nation.

¹⁰ This is part of Callahan’s thesis in *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (1962). See footnote 16 in this chapter for more details on the media campaigns.

“employable” students. *The American School Boards Journal* published the criteria of one of these lists from Lincoln, Nebraska. Lincoln’s superintendent wrote to the local Commercial Club explaining that the boys and girls on his list fulfilled the following qualifications: they were of good character (truthful, obedient, industrious, didn’t smoke or drink), were at least 14 years old, scored a minimum of 90 percent on a test of knowledge of Lincoln and Nebraska, were able to write a good business letter which was legible with no spelling errors, were able to express themselves in a businesslike manner, and were able to perform the four fundamental math functions with speed and accuracy (Callahan, 1962; p. 228).

Opposition to the business reform agenda came from parents who sent their children to alternative schools but also from public school teachers and organized labor. The American Federation of Teachers began in Chicago with the formation of the Chicago Teachers Federation (CTF). The Chicago teachers opposed the centralization of power since they perceived the new school boards to be “elitist and anti-immigrant”.¹¹ From 1900 to 1909, the CTF allied itself with organized labor and successfully held off the implementation of the school board’s vocational education plan. The Chicago Commercial Club, however, eventually succeeded in having the Chicago schools adopt a dual school system as a means of supplying business and industry with the specific skilled workers it desired (Spring, 1986; pp. 261–4).

A 1912 article in the *American Teacher* (a published teacher magazine) complained that schools had become too commercialized. “Education, since it deals with . . . organisms and . . . individualities is not analogous to a standardized manufacturing process.” Another article in *American Teacher* (1916) claimed that the implementation of scientific management techniques “demoralized the school system” by promoting “discontent, drudgery, disillusion . . . exploitation, suspicion and inhumanity; larger classes, smaller pay and diminished joy” (articles quoted in Callahan, 1962; p. 120).

¹¹ Spring (1986; p. 260), again, is depending on Wrigley’s analysis of school board politics in Chicago from 1900–1950.

Business was not completely deaf to these criticisms and encouraged, through foundation support, organizations such as the Progressive Education Association.¹² The PEA provided structural support for alternative schools and methods. When such schools and methods began to be oppositional rather than alternative (Shapiro, 1990), business withdrew its financial and media support, preferring to rely on professional administrators to carry out efficient education. School boards remained firmly behind the professional/business agenda.

The Challenge of the Civil Rights Movement

The Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement combined to present serious challenges to local control of school policy. American business wanted to maintain the economic and technological advantages it gained as a result of World War II. In 1945, the United States was the only industrial country whose plants and infrastructure had not been destroyed during the War (the United States had 90 percent of the world's manufacturing capabilities by 1945). American business wanted to maintain its monopoly as a producer of manufactured goods, wanted Europe as a market for such goods, and wanted the "third world" as a source of raw materials. To enforce these relationships, the U. S. government would need to maintain and develop its military superiority.¹³ The schooling of math and science students was one of the key elements in this strategy of developing the military and industrial complex. The G.I. Bill of 1944 and the National Defense and Education Act of 1958 marked the beginning of the nationalization of educational policy that, in turn, set the stage for the creation of the Education Commission of the States in 1966 (Johnson, 1988; Wirt and Kirst, 1982).¹⁴

At the same time that business continued to lobby for federal leadership in defining national education goals, the social revolution in the South was radicalizing the nation prompting, among other events, a "War on Poverty." Those northerners and

¹² The PEA was founded in 1919 and had a membership of eighty-five. It was funded by wealthy individuals and membership dues until the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations underwrote its budget from 1930–41. In 1941, the Foundations withdrew their support and the organization limped along until disbanding in 1955.

¹³ See Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War (1985)*.

¹⁴ The Education Commission of the States will be featured in Chapter Two.

westerners who went south to participate in grassroots direct action returned to their own communities empowered to act upon the principles of nonviolence and self-determination. Organizations such as the Congress on Racial Equality and the Southern Christian Leadership Council expanded their scope of activities from the South to the rest of the country. Nationwide movements centering on student rights, women's rights, and welfare rights movements were all inspired by the fight against segregation, lynching and economic inequality in the South. The federal government felt obliged to respond to this revolution since the now highly publicized existence of violence, poverty, and racism undermined the government's ideological war with the Soviet Union. The Economic Opportunities Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and the American Indian Education Act of 1972 were part of this response.

These education acts gave federal and state policy makers an opportunity to harness popular demands for community control of local school districts. Parents were rebelling against the centralized bureaucracy of city school systems run by professionals. Community activists argued that community control was necessary because Title I funds were not reaching the students in the classroom, assessment was culture-bound, and overly negative and pessimistic teachers needed to be removed from the classroom. Federal policy analysts concluded "that lowering the locus of power along the hierarchy leads to increases in members' motivations to produce, identify with, and get involved in the organization." These policy analysts suggested that structural support be given to school advisory councils made of the core constituencies of the school district. The expected effect would be to keep policy making in the hands of the school board and superintendent while bringing the critics into the system in a controlled way (Hatton, 1979).

The "expected effect," however, was not completely "controlled." A movement for local control of schools made considerable headway from 1966 through 1970. This movement received impetus from a combination of private foundation support, from federal requirements for parental participation in schools receiving federal funding, and from the grassroots demands of parents, teachers, and students. Many urban school boards set up advisory councils during this period and some were successful in socializing some residents to accept the values of the status quo. But in some cities, the

school boards found that the community was not so amenable to the traditional leadership and they found they had to respond to community demands. In the late 1960s, both in the Ocean Hill–Brownsville district of Brooklyn, New York, and in Oakland, California, members of the community were able to put pressure on the school board to respond to neighborhood demands. In Ocean Hill–Brownsville, the community gained direct policy-making authority. The Oakland advisory committee was a key component of the community coalitions putting pressure on the board to respond to their concerns.

In 1967, the Ford Foundation provided funds to promote community control in three demonstration districts in New York City. One of the sites was the Ocean Hill–Brownsville district in Brooklyn. Local churches and the Congress on Racial Equality put together a planning board of teachers and parents. This board then created a governing board of 24, included among which were one parent, eight teachers, five community representatives, one university delegate and two people chosen by school supervisors (Havinghurst, 1979). During the three years of the governing board’s existence, it managed to appoint principals with community orientations, employ more local people, increase money for basic skill development, and increase the variety of programs offered. It was the first district in New York City to adopt bilingual and open classrooms. This was accomplished in spite of opposition from the New York City Board of Education and a teacher’s strike¹⁵ (Gittell, 1979).

From the 1920s to the 1960s, the Oakland, California, school board was a self-perpetuating institution. Incumbents appointed their successors and only five non-incumbents had been elected during that forty-year period. All but one board member had been white (the first black member was appointed in 1958). In 1961, the school board created the virtually all–white Skyline high school. The board did not respond to the local NAACP proposal to reconsider the boundaries of the new high school until 500 people showed up at a school board meeting in 1962, representing a coalition of CORE, the NAACP, Oakland teachers, and white liberals. This was enough pressure to force the board to agree to establish a Citizen’s Advisory Committee on School Needs. In 1962, the board appointed a new superintendent who proposed open enrollment for the new

¹⁵ Why teacher unions often act as if they are supporting the status quo is a complex issue that is partly addressed in the pages that follow.

high school. The board, however, limited the criteria for enrollment by those outside the school boundary to those seeking relief from overcrowding. The board did not want to use race as a determining factor.

In 1963, the NAACP promised further direct action unless the board promised to end segregated schooling. Included in this demand were calls for courses in the curriculum on minority cultures as well as increases in the number of minority teachers and administrators. In May 1964, the NAACP organized a boycott of the schools and the Citizen's Advisory Committee presented a desegregation plan. The board rejected the plan but admitted 200 students outside Skyline's boundaries. More pressure on the board led the board to adopt a Model Desegregation Plan in 1966 using federal funds. The program ended in 1968 when federal funding was cut. In 1969, more pressure forced the board to appoint its first black superintendent, Marcus Foster. Foster pursued a policy of hiring more minority teachers, spending more money on minority-dominated schools and expanding bilingual education. The state legislature overturned guidelines intended to desegregate schools in 1970 and Foster was assassinated in 1973. Both events postponed further action by the community (Kirp, 1979).

Obstacles to Community Participation in Policy Formation

The history of the relationships among community activists, school board trustees, and business leaders combined with the educational research on this issue reveals four major obstacles to community empowerment. One obstacle has been a lack of cooperation between parents and teachers. The failure of these two groups to unite is made difficult by racial and ethnic differences exacerbated by a culture of professionalism. But even if such a powerful community alliance could form, parents and teachers can confront structural obstacles preventing them from influencing school policy. The separation of school board politics from city government, the power of the superintendent, and the development of nationally normed standardized tests are formidable obstacles in the way of local control over education. The changes effected by the municipal reform movement of the Progressive Era are a powerful legacy. Business leaders can rely on an inherited belief, cultivated during the last one hundred years, that they are the ones most able to determine the best interests of the community, city, state, or nation. Finally, the removal

of educational policy-making from local school boards to the state government during the last twenty years has made it even more difficult for communities to have an effect on what happens in the classroom.

During the height of the community control movement (1966–1970), parents and students were able to put pressure on local school boards to depart from the national agenda of a standardized curriculum imposed by professionals in the service of workplace needs. Teachers, however, were not effective allies in this struggle, and in some cases were opposed to parental participation in policy formation. There were many reasons for this. Teachers had finally gained the right to collective bargaining during the 1960s and teacher unions were able to influence board decisions. But the issues and concerns that teachers brought to their school board were not the same ones that parents and students were bringing. Gelberg (1997) argues that

unions are precisely what society allowed them to become in the 1960s. Legislation never empowered them to work for school improvement, only for wages, hours and working conditions of their members . . . despite the stated goal in the 1960s of becoming co-leaders with management, unions rarely have any part in substantive discussions on or decisions about the content and character of educational services (p. 239).

In assessing teacher union activity in the 1960s and 1970s, Hatton (1979) pointed out that the inability or unwillingness of teachers to adopt issues of “content and character of educational services” had a profound impact on the ultimate failure of the community control movement.

In no place has a coalition between powerless insiders (e.g. teachers) and powerless outsiders (e.g. African Americans) been apparent in the many efforts to reform urban school systems. . . a genuine parent-teacher parity in consequential educational decision-making seems the only way to interrupt daily erosion of educational opportunity for African Americans and the poor in urban schools (p. 17).

In the attempts to raise their social and economic status, teachers have promoted their own professionalism. Deborah Meier, principal of an alternative high school in Harlem, told Dan Perlstein, an educational researcher at the University of California at Berkeley, that most teachers bring their prejudices against poor minority children to their work, and “rather than undermining these prejudices,” the teaching experience “arouses them.” Perlstein argues that “adherence to seemingly uniform, race-blind standards of instruction asserted teacher’s professionalism while absolving them of responsibility for

their ineffectiveness” (Perlstein, 1999). Popkewitz (1979) points to one explanation to why there has been no “coalition between powerless insiders and powerless outsiders.”

Teachers are told [in credential classes and by school principals] that their job is to teach as though education best occurs in a vacuum . . . [they] believe their job is to give their superior wisdom to the masses and see no reason to link what goes on in their schools to student’s lives outside of school (p. 246).

Such an attitude is deeply rooted in class and race. The vast majority (75–85 percent) of teachers are white, middle-class women. College and credential training socializes these teachers to perceive themselves as the experts vis-a-vis parents and students. Furthermore, state curriculum mandates and standardized tests required by colleges, such as SATs, Achievement, and Advanced Placement subject tests, have forced teachers to teach a curriculum that is not “based on a critical analysis of their students’ and their parents’ lives.” But a curriculum based on the lives of students and parents, Popkewitz argues, would include the following topics of inquiry:

- What elements of our national culture serve the interest of my community or the interests of people like me?
- If my interests are served, what is the effect on other people?
- What social institutions touch my life every day?
- Whose interests do they serve?
- How can these institutions be influenced? (p. 247)

Noguera’s (1996) assessment of a community based, collaborative reform project in West Oakland from 1993 to 1996 identified as an obstacle to reform the cultural division between middle-class teachers and poor, urban students and their parents. Teachers failed to understand the culture of their students. One example of this problem was the impulse by teachers to address symptoms (e.g. student behavior) before understanding underlying causes. Teachers assumed that the community was unsafe and unsupportive and this prevented them from seeking information that would have allowed them to understand the underlying causes of student behavior. Noguera broke down this misunderstanding by taking reluctant teachers on a field trip through the community. The teachers learned, through visiting the student’s neighborhoods, that their assumptions about how their students lived were wrong. The results of these interventions convinced Noguera that “reform strategies must be devised by key stakeholders; namely teachers, parents, administrators and community members and must take into account the relationship between the school and the urban environment” (p. 16).

Misunderstandings and misconceptions, however, are not the only reasons for the failure of teachers and parents to form strong political alliances. Structural obstacles also are in the way of achieving Noguera's "reform strategies." The municipal reform movement from 1890 to 1920 "insulated" school government from the rest of local government thus preventing the integration of educational policy with other urban activities (Fantini, 1970; p. 61). Once one "takes into account the relationship between the school and the urban environment," more fundamental problems will emerge. Health care, employment, and housing issues are part of the "urban environment" that affects a child's ability to learn in school. But school policy or programs are developed in isolation from the development of public health, housing, and employment policy.

Another structural obstacle that prevents the development of consensus among the stakeholders is that school boards rarely have their own staff. As a result, school board trustees are dependent upon the superintendent's office for most of their information and recommendations (p. 68). This structural obstacle can prevent community influence on district policy whether the influence is channeled through the school board or through community advisory councils. For example, in 1968, most members of the New York City advisory boards felt their advice was not affecting district superintendent actions (p. 73). In 1963, when the New York school board directed the district bureaucracy to implement integration policies, principals and district superintendents openly refused (p. 68). When the parents of IS 201 in Harlem adopted community control as an alternative to integration (after numerous attempts to integrate from 1954 to 1966 failed), they were opposed by both the teacher's and district administrative unions (p. 9). These examples suggest that devising "reform strategies" that will have a systemic effect is much more complicated than taking a field trip to clear up some "misunderstandings."

Even if one were to overcome the above mentioned structural obstacles, the development of "strategies . . . devised by key stakeholders" would remain problematic in the current reform environment which defines academic excellence solely on the basis of standardized test scores. As long as the *goal* is to raise test scores on standardized tests, which reflect a very narrow and specific worldview, the choice of "*strategies*" becomes excessively narrow. AFRAM Associates, a Harlem based non-profit organization, addressed this issue in a 1970 document entitled *Action Stimulator #32: A Twenty Point*

Program for Real School Community Control.¹⁶ Some of the twenty points challenged the goals of standardized tests, which are used not only to classify and sort students but also to select and socialize teachers.

7. Abolition of all testing until tests can be developed which are relevant and geared to the requirements of individual communities.

10. Establishment of educational programs which teach modern awareness of the real world. This includes Puerto Rican, Black, and Chinese culture and history, problems of unemployment, poor housing, malnutrition, police brutality, racism, and other forms of oppression.

15. Immediate changes in the teacher and supervisory licensing and certification procedures so as to eliminate practices which have been used to exclude minority group persons from teaching and supervisory positions.

20. Abolishment of the tracking system

(quoted in Havinghurst, 1979; pp. 35-36)

Those community members who asked for real control of the district's policies during the 1960s and 1970s wanted to influence educational goals as well as instructional strategies, and they locked horns with local school boards in their attempts to do so. Demonstrations at school board meetings, threats of school boycotts, and campaigning to defeat incumbent school board members proved to be effective tactics in moving school board policy in the direction of community defined goals. The ultimate failure to make school policy responsive to community concerns indicates how much more coordinated and sustained direct and indirect action must be. Furthermore, teachers and parents will have to achieve a degree of consensus on what goals are to be achieved by such action. Both teacher unions and parent/community groups must become less conservative. Otherwise, they will continue to be victims of the time honored "divide and conquer" strategies adopted by the economic elites of this country.¹⁷

¹⁶ Havinghurst (1979) cites the AFRAM (African American) document in the following context: ". . . Kenneth Haskins, in 1973 Vice Superintendent of Schools in Washington, D.C. . . . is a leader in the black movement for self-determination. Presenting 'A Black Perspective on Community Control,' he is not content for blacks to accept the concept of a school advisory council as satisfactory. He wants full control of black schools by a black community. He quotes with approval a document from AFRAM Associates, Harlem, New York, 1970 . . ." (p. 35).

¹⁷ In both Chapters 3 and 4, I will analyze the current manifestations of these tactics. For historical analysis of such tactics, I recommend Edmund Morgan's *American Slavery*,

The legacy of the professionalization¹⁸ of school decision-making beginning in the 1890s (explained previously in this chapter) continues to have a “divide and conquer” effect. One manifestation of this is in the selection and socialization of school board members. Ziegler and Jennings (1974) argued that their survey of 490 board members and 82 superintendents in 83 school districts (supplemented by local sources, government publications, and interviews with the public) “suggests in unequivocal terms the existence of an educational elite which is consciously self-perpetuating” (p. 51). Incumbents generally select their successors, most candidates don’t campaign on issues that would distinguish themselves from others nor do they court endorsements from community interest groups (Zerchykov, 1984). Even when “delegate”-minded board candidates are elected, they soon take on a “trustee” mentality — they know what is best for the community and they do not want to be seen as being responsive. This culture is reinforced by national board meetings, superintendent sessions, as well as a plethora of handbooks (Lutz, 1975).

Looking at school boards as a self-perpetuating cultural system set up after 1890 by business leaders helps to explain why the degree of voter turn out, whether school

American Freedom; Peter Wood’s *Black Majority*; and Philip Foner’s *Organized Labor and the Black Worker (1619-1981)*, New York: International Publishers, 1982.

¹⁸ The process of “professionalization” is one of identifying a body of information, through “scientific methods,” and then conferring a degree, membership in an organization, or state sanctioned license upon those who can prove, through a completed course of study or test, that they have mastered that body of information, that they are now “experts” in their field. At the turn of the century, school administrators along with lawyers, doctors, and architects created organizations to enhance their job status. These organizations conferred upon their members the status of “experts.” After 1900, the “new universities became centers for the creation of new knowledge through research and a training ground for scientific managers” (Spring, 1986; p. 222). The “professional” administrator, through his assertion of “expert knowledge” shifted the power balance between school board and superintendent when he argued that the superintendent, not the lay or non-expert school board member, should determine policy. Ever since, board members and teachers, hoping to regain influence on policy, have sought status through approximating the stance of the “expert” as closely as possible. This entails asserting objectivity or nonpartisan positions on educational issues while simultaneously becoming disempowered. Teachers gain no more policy making authority, yet, by asserting their “expert” authority, create greater distance between themselves and parents, thereby rejecting the very alliance that could lead both to real influence over policy. I hope to provide evidence of this with the case studies analyses later in this book.

boards are appointed, elected at large, or by district, seems to have little effect in terms of the board's responsiveness to expressions of community concerns (Zerchykov, 1984). It also helps to explain why the overall effect of the community control movement on board policy making was "situational" and "short run gains were absorbed into the long term predominance of the governing structure" (Wiles, 1975; p. 222). Nevertheless, Zerchykov (1984) argues in his review of the literature that boards can be "responsive." The criteria used by Zerchykov to select and review the literature on school boards was for the purposes of "providing clues about what actionable factors are associated with different kinds of board responsiveness in order to guide and inform the practice of citizenship" (p. 66). Don Davies believes that the research argues for boards to be repoliticized if they are going to truly be representative of various community interests:

The democratic potential of school boards can best be realized if they become more, not less political [which was the effect of the municipal reforms, c. 1900]. . . [This can only happen] if [school board] members have their base in a special interest constituency rather than in a vision of an objective public interest Citizen participation is an essential ingredient in school improvement and citizen's access to information is indispensable for effective participation.¹⁹

Zerchykov conceded that most of the research points to ecological factors (size and heterogeneity of district and nature of the community power structure) as influencing how much effect citizen participation has in board policy-making. Nevertheless, Zerchykov insists that the research does point to other factors that may be under community control that can politicize the process. He suggests that community lobbyists anticipate being deflected from one "branch" to the other—from superintendent to board and back again. Community activists should work towards charter reform (district elections and one term limits) and actively recruit board candidates from "politics"—one of three specific recruitment channels ("politics", "civic leadership," and "parent activists"). Public confrontation with the school board needs to be supplemented through indirect contact, especially with the superintendent. If the superintendent is unresponsive, then activists need to work to defeat the incumbent board. It is important to have influence with superintendents since they continue to monopolize what little

¹⁹ This directly contradicts Danzberger (1994a, 1994b) and the Twentieth Century Task Force's 1992 *Report* – but more about these people later.

policy-making authority is left to the school boards by state and federal mandates and funding requirements.

Don McAdams' career as a Houston trustee²⁰ from 1990 to 2000 illustrates several of the points Zerchykov makes in his research review. McAdams (2000) observed that the shift from at large to district elections in 1975 and changing the number of districts from 7 to nine in 1977 "increased minority representation" on the school board." Yet McAdams, exhibiting a "trustee" mentality, believed this change had "negative" consequences.

Board members only felt accountable to the group that had elected them. The result was a board plagued by racial, economic and geographical divisions. Several trustees appeared more interested in their trustee districts than in the district as a whole. This made it difficult to allocate resources and facilities fairly. . . low turnout [during school board elections] meant a small group of activists could capitalize on any unrest in the district and propel the most zealous candidate into office. Once in office, zealous individuals concentrated on those issues which got them elected, making compromise for the good of the whole take a backseat to the rhetoric of extremism (McAdams, 2000; p. 221).

When the business community of Houston began to press for the elimination of district elections, the Hispanic and African American activists forced the business leaders to relinquish that goal. Instead, the majority on the school board enacted procedures to prevent the school board from "meddling" in school administration of individual schools. McAdams supported movement in this direction since he believed that "politics in the schools was an enemy to reform" (McAdams, 2000; pp. 222–226). In the ten "lessons" that McAdams says can be learned from his experiences on the Houston school board, number "2" was that the "superintendent must lead." Number "5" was that educational administrators "make reform happen" if properly led (McAdams, 2000; p. 255). The reform in Houston that McAdams describes is the corporate business reform agenda, organized and orchestrated by the Business Roundtable, the subject of the rest of this study.

State Control of Educational Policy – Setting the Table for Corporate Control

Any direct action through alliances of parents, teachers, students, and community based

²⁰ Houston, Texas, school board members were called "trustees."

organizations will have to be well-orchestrated and sustained given the present context of financially squeezed school districts. Historically, local school board control of educational policy developed from the fact that local property taxes paid for buildings, supplies, and salaries. But since the 1970s, local control has ceded to state control as state governments have begun to provide the majority of funding for local school districts. Nationally, local education associations contributed 52.2 percent of their budget in 1977. By 1982, their share of the burden dropped to 47.8 percent. Conversely, state governments' contributions to local school budgets averaged 39.7 in 1977 and increased to 45.2 percent in 1982 (federal money declined by 1.1 percent during the same period ([Census Bureau data as reported by *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/28/84]). In California, the shift occurred dramatically beginning with a property taxpayer rebellion in 1978. Before 1978, local property taxes provided two-thirds of California's public school revenues. But in June of 1978, the passage of Proposition 13 limited the increase of property taxes. The ensuing financial crisis afflicting the schools created an environment that allowed the state to begin taking the leadership of educational reform in California with the passage of SB 813 in 1983 (the details of this story will be explained in Chapter 6). By 1997, the California state legislature provided local districts with two-thirds of their funding.

Local districts can raise revenue through private donations and ask the voters for parcel taxes or general obligation bonds. Since 1986, the state of California has mandated a two-thirds requirement for passage of state taxes for education. This has severely hampered local school boards' abilities to raise needed funds (EdSource, 1995). Joel Spring argues (1998b, p. 62) that a national pattern of tax abatements for corporations (suspension of otherwise applicable tax laws) began in the 1980s, creating a financial crisis and consequent loss of power for school boards in the 1990s for state governments had to assume more of the financial responsibility for funding schools. Spring paraphrases a *New York Times* article, May 1991, to illustrate his point: "Corpus Christi, Texas, lost \$900,000 in tax support because of tax breaks given to local companies. On the other hand, local companies donated \$250, 000 to the school system. Consequently, corporations reduced their support of the schools by \$650,000, while projecting an image of increasing financial support" (p. 63). Spring further argues, "tax

concessions at the state level proved the biggest aid to business.” Again citing the *NYT*, Spring pointed out that the Florida state government gave up \$500 million in state revenue through tax concessions while corporate donations to schools added up to \$32 million (p. 63).²¹

State funding in the last twenty years has been used to support business-led reform whose “high standards” agenda is not the same as that expressed by representatives in the community. While school boards continue to exist as a key arena in which members of the community can pursue implementation of their educational vision, such pursuit is often effectively countered by lack of funding and state and court mandates, as well as by media hostility²². These factors continue to reinforce a school

²¹ The decisions by elected officials to use public money to underwrite corporate profits comes in a variety of forms but falls under the corporate umbrella term of “externalization of costs” – which undermines simplistic arguments supporting capitalism as a “free enterprise” system. Whether it is job training or cleaning up of toxic factory waste, the public often picks up the tab resulting in higher dividends for corporate stockholders and less funds for public services. For example, the state legislature of Mississippi, wanting Nissan to build a truck factory in their state, used its power of “eminent domain” to seize private farmland (2.5 square miles) for the factory site (the farmers didn’t want to sell), and offered the corporation \$400 million dollars in spending and tax rebates. Part of that sum included the promise to pay for an “\$80 million job-training program for Nissan workers and to build the factory’s \$17 million vehicle-preparation building. It promised \$60 million in new and improved roads, to be built far faster than most state roads. It even allowed Nissan executives to use a state plane for several months” (Firestone, *NY Times*, 9/10/01; A1). The legislators argued that they were spending public funds and seizing private land in order to create 4,000 new jobs. They did not say how much these jobs would pay or how long Nissan would keep the truck, Minivan and SUV factory operating at full speed.

²² Both the creation of the common school in the 1840s and the takeover of school boards in 1900 were accompanied by a media blitz. For the purpose of building support for the common school between 1825 and 1850, sixty educational journals and several institutions were established (e.g. American Lyceum, 1825, and the American Institute for Instruction, 1830) (Spring, 1986; p. 81). Callahan (1962) points out, “beginning in 1911, hardly a month passed for two years in which articles complaining about the schools were not published either in the popular or in the professional journals” (p. 47). Berliner and Biddle (1995) provide extensive evidence of the media’s role in portraying the present educational system as one in crisis. Berliner and Biddle seem unable to imagine the kind of interlocking directorate that organizations such as Public Agenda, the Institute for Educational Leadership, and the Business Roundtable have created (this web of influence will be described in Chapter 2). As a result, they conclude that widespread and consistent media misrepresentation of the educational system happens “for obscure

board culture and decision making process, developed during the last one hundred years, that channels or harnesses community concerns in the service of a business-led reform agenda.

reasons . . . until and unless the press can be induced to mend its ways, Americans will continue to be given the false impression that their public schools, colleges, and universities are in deep trouble -- when in fact they are doing remarkably well" [i.e., tests scores are as high as ever] (p. 171).

Chapter 2: The Contemporary Scene, Corporate Domination of School Policy

Introduction

The historical and contemporary research on urban school reform indicates that the conflict between community and corporate influence is like that between David and Goliath, but without the probability of divine intervention on behalf of David. While resistance to corporate determination of educational policy may not be futile, the obstacles are great. In the last twenty years, corporate America has been able to convince the public that there is a crisis in education and that only a national campaign can solve this crisis. What follows is an analysis of what appears to be the second fundamental reshaping of the public school system since its inception. Leading corporations, foundations, and state and federal governments have created a partnership during the last twenty years that has pushed for a national campaign of school-wide systemic reform; and this educational reform is inextricably linked to the transformation of the U.S. and global economies.

From 1979 to 1980, Japanese vehicle production superseded U.S. vehicle production (Womack, 1999; p. 248). This represented a major challenge to U.S. economic world hegemony because of the fundamental significance of car and truck production to the American economy. While U.S. production regained its competitiveness by 1983, public debate began to focus on the educational reforms of the 1960s and 1970s as a probable cause for the temporary stumble in U.S. economic growth.²³ The concern expressed by opinion writers critical of the growth of student-

²³ A sample from school-related articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* during the 1980s yields the following result: Fred Hechinger (1982) in a book review approved of the authors' critiques of the 1960s reforms as "hostile to competence" (6/27/82; p. 2). A *Chronicle* editorial on 12/13/82 argued that the "challenge" facing the new state superintendent of schools, Bill Honig, was to "fix the disaster of the 60s". Several months later, another opinion piece in the *Chronicle* supported Honig's assertion that the 1960's "lax and permissive approach" has been responsible for "plunging student achievement scores" (Pierce, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/27/83; B9). Two years later, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported upon a new trend in the CSU and community

centered and multicultural education in the late sixties and early seventies was that this kind of education was not producing students who would be disciplined and intelligent workers. Interestingly, there were few who complained that the sixties' curricula reforms hadn't produced citizens whose political participation went beyond the ballot box. Instead, editorials and state school officials argued for a more "rigorous academic curricula" that was not dismissive of "rote learning" and taught "the basics" so students would be ready for the "real world" and "the future."

This rhetoric successfully combined both the cultural and economic concerns of business leaders. The back-to-basics rhetoric has been successful in minimizing the in-depth study of cultural minorities and the fundamental obstacles to democratic participation in this country. Equally, if not more centrally, the rhetoric of academic rigor also supported educational reforms that seem specifically designed to counter the economic threat from Japanese companies. The reasons for the dramatic increase in Japanese vehicle sales from 1960 to 1980 had to do with the invention and implementation of Total Quality Control or lean production. This allowed Japanese manufacturers to produce reliable cars and trucks at a lower cost than the traditional mass production techniques being used since the turn of the century. The key to lean production was a workforce that had the incentive and ability to adapt to new production methods, especially to observe and intervene whenever problems arose on the assembly line or in the design process. Unable or unwilling to adopt all of the Japanese techniques to American production practice, U.S. CEOs developed their own versions of lean

college curricula – the addition of "Critical Thinking." Honig was reported as explaining, "today's lack of critical thinking is the consequence of the laid back 70s when academic rigor succumbed to academic self-indulgence." The need for critical thinking skills was important in the 1980s since employees in "sophisticated information and service industries need" the capabilities of "abstract thought and logical reasoning" (Curtis, 4/1/85). A *Chronicle* editorial in 1987 believed that recent test scores heralded the public schools' return to "academic basics" and "away from the free-swinging and often undisciplined habits of the 1960s" which did not prepare students "for the real world" (4/23/87; p. 62). In an opinion piece, Abe Mellinkopf expressed relief, "The horrible drop [in the quality of education] of the late 1960s and the 1970s has been braked . . . [but cautioned] we have yet to climb back up to where we were in 1963" (4/29/88; A6).

production. Central to their designs for the New Economy was transforming the structure of the public school system so it would be aligned with their version of lean production.

The Business Roundtable and Systemic Reform

During the 1980s, the leading CEOs in the country knew they wanted fundamental educational reform but had yet to reach consensus as to what that would be. By 1989, they had reached consensus. Since then, the CEOs of the major corporations in the United States have developed structures that allow them to speak with one voice on education.²⁴ The primary structure, the Business Roundtable, has taken credit for developing unanimity on educational reform by claiming that it took the lead in “establishing the Business Coalition for Education Reform [BCER], now a 13-member group²⁵ that serves as a unified voice for the corporate community, and in developing a Common Agenda for reform endorsed by the business community Roundtable companies are at the forefront of a national effort by businesses to stimulate academic progress by aligning their hiring, philanthropic and site location practices with our education reform agenda” (Rust, 1999).

The Business Roundtable (BRT) was founded in 1972. It is “an association of chief executive officers who examine public issues that affect the economy and develop positions which seek to reflect sound economic and social principles” (Business Roundtable, 1995; preface. Future references to the Business Roundtable will be listed as BRT). In 1989, CEOs of the nation’s largest 218 corporations met to decide how to

²⁴ Cornell Maier, a business lobbyist in California, explained the evolution of business interest in the following way: “When they first read *A Nation at Risk*, the 1983 report . . . businessmen charged into partnership with the schools. Companies, in their thousands, hurried to adopt schools. These partnerships, which included things like buying chic uniforms for school bands and school basketball teams, make local people happy. But business leaders began to realize that they did nothing for true educational reform. But the Boston Compact, and the copycat programs that followed, are today regarded as a disappointment [see Chapter 4 for a description of the Boston Compact]. In Boston the number of students failing to complete high school has actually increased. The partnership programs now tend to be dismissed as no more than ‘temporary palliatives.’” This is why, in the summer of 1989, “the Business Roundtable devoted their entire annual meeting to the subject” (Maier, 1989).

²⁵ Among its members are: the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business, and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

promote the National Education Goals developed by the nation's governors. Their decision to bring the resources of corporate America behind a specific educational reform agenda stemmed from what they saw and continue to see as the threat to the United States' premier economic status in the world. Edward Rust, chair of the BRT Education Task Force in 1999, explained the economic motive behind their education agenda.

In a global economy built on knowledge and technical skills, employees must be able to do more now than they did a generation ago. And these demands will continue to increase. In 1950, 60 percent of jobs for new workers were classified as unskilled; by 2000, only 15 percent will be The percentage of U.S. companies reporting a lack of skilled employees as a barrier to growth continues to rise—from 27 percent in 1993 to 69 percent last year (Rust, 1999; p.1).

Therefore, in order to increase the number of “skilled” workers necessary for “growth,” the educational system would have to be fundamentally overhauled.

The 1989 Business Roundtable meeting resulted in the promulgation of a nine-point program for educational reform that it became committed to implementing during the next ten years.²⁶ The chart below (figure 2.1) reveals that the educational program outlined in 1989 has provided the blueprint for systemic reformers to the present day. The intimate relationship between corporate CEOs and state governors (described in detail later on) is suggested by the immediate adoption of the BRT's agenda by the nation's governors the following fall. The nine educational goals, as presented in figure 2.1, sound innocuous enough. I will demonstrate, however, that they are not innocuous and are presented as such in order to co-opt any opposition to them.

²⁶ Perhaps it is possible to trace the reform agenda back to the *Nation At Risk* report or President Reagan's promulgation of his “Six Fundamentals”: (1) give more authority to teachers to demand that students take tests, hand in homework and “quiet down” in class; (2) remove drug and alcohol abuse from schools; (3) raise academic standards; (4) establish merit pay for teachers; (5) restore parents and local governments to their rightful place in the educational process; (6) teach the basics (as reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12/9/83, p. 11).

Figure 2.1
Comparison of Corporate Educational Goals over Time

Summer 1989 BRT Educational Reform Goals (10 year commitment to implement Goals 2000)	Fall 1989 National Education Goals for 2000 (established by President Bush and the nation's governors)	1995 - BRT's "Nine Essential Components of a Successful Education System" (no time frame for implementation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome based education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will leave grades 4, 8, 12 showing competence in core subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and complex assessments of student progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high school graduation rate will be 90 percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations for all children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United States will be first in the world in math and science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewards and penalties for individual schools • Greater school-based decision making 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Autonomy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on staff development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of pre-kindergarten programs • Provision of social and health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children will start school ready to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Readiness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school will create partnerships to increase parental involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Involvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults will be literate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater use of technology in schools 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology²⁷
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will be free of drugs, violence and weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Discipline

²⁷ A recent survey by the Progressive Policy Institute (an affiliate of the Democratic Leadership Council) used 16 "indicators" to create a "new economy index" by which to evaluate an "area's ability to take advantage of the "new economy." One of the sixteen indicators was "computer use in schools." The report is expected to be used to "promote the tech policies of elected [Democratic] officials, and help mayors and city managers adopt tech-friendly policies to boost the income of their residents" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/19/01).

In assessing the progress of the Roundtable's ten-year commitment, Rust admitted that it was "a sometimes frustrating but clearly important journey." He noted, however, that some of the individual state BRT coalitions had made progress. This progress has depended upon the intimate relationship between business and state government officials. In Washington State, "Boeing's Frank Srontz worked with Governor Booth Gardner to draft comprehensive reform legislation that passed in 1993. . . . In Kentucky, John Hall of Ashland, David Jones of Humana, and Oz Nelson of UPS personally intervened to save school-improvement legislation" (Rust, 1999).

The heart of BRT's agenda for the last ten years has been to move state governments to establish "rigorous standards" for *all* students (their emphasis) in core academic subjects (math, science, English, and social studies) that are measurable, and then adopt statewide testing to determine whether the standards are being met. If the standards are not met, then students should not be allowed to graduate and the individual school in which those students are found should be "sanctioned." That standards are measurable is crucial to knowing whether the standards are being met. Furthermore, measurable standards are the only way one can "have data that allows one to guide efforts to achieve higher standards" (BRT, 1996; p. 6). BRT decided to place the focus on standards because "standards drive curriculum, teacher training and assessment" (BRT, 1996; p. 8). Or, in other words, "when standards are high and assessments are geared to such standards, teaching improves and student achievement rises" (BRT, 1998; p. 4).

Since 1989, members of the Business Roundtable have been successful in controlling the content of state standards in order to shape the direction of educational reform. BRT decided to "concentrate on the state level for two reasons. First, under the U.S. Constitution, states have primary responsibility for education. Second, no state had solved the problem of providing high-quality education to students in all localities" (BRT, 1995; p. 1). BRT's *A Business Leader's Guide to Setting Academic Standards* (1996) provides several case studies as examples of how business leaders have succeeded in being the ones doing the writing of the state standards. Examples of what BRT considers to be "relevant and rigorous" standards were demonstrated in Fort Worth, Texas. There, three hundred companies analyzed the tasks and knowledge needed for nine hundred different jobs. One survey result indicated that 72 percent of all jobs

required a high level of math to be successful (e.g. an entry-level job of putting telephone poles in the ground required geometry). As a result, low-level math was deleted from the high school standards. Every ninth grader was required to take algebra. The curriculum was made even more “relevant” by having English students write “personnel evaluations as well as essays on Shakespeare.” The Texas BRT leaders believed that students would be better motivated to learn to write well “by showing them the importance of academic skills in the real world” (BRT, 1996; p. 21).

When relating what he learned from his experiences in setting state standards in Georgia, Gary Lee, director of the United Parcel Service foundation, offered a particularly effective piece of advice to “other employers” should they encounter any opposition to BRT’s agenda. Lee “urged other employers to remind their communities that U.S. based companies can find skilled workers for everything from manufacturing to software development overseas, adding that companies increasingly decide where to locate their operations both in the United States and abroad on the basis of workforce quality and the performance of local school systems” (BRT, 1996; pp. 26–7).

When developing the science standards in Delaware, Dupont’s Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Joe Miller, suggested that business leaders make it clear what the goal of these reforms are: “to be the best in the world.”²⁸ Japanese and British education standards were used as a basis for comparison to ensure that the Delaware standards were more rigorous than those of other countries. One of the criteria BRT insists that is used in selecting standards and assessment is that they be comparable to international standards. For example, if France or Germany has standards for each grade, then the United States must also have standards written for each grade as opposed to more general standards covering several grade levels.

In summarizing the lessons learned in these case studies, Rust (1999) emphasized that business leaders, in working with educators and other members of the community, “need to help [them] understand the constantly evolving needs of the workplace.” Standards must not be static, but change as the needs of business change. Business

²⁸ Miller and his co-chair on the committee, a Delaware teacher, wrote the standards. They submitted the document to teachers at the 301 participating schools for review and rewrote the standards using this input (p 23).

leaders need to show the state standards to entry-level, front line supervisors to get input as to whether the standards help students to be successful on the job. Business leaders also need to show the standards to the people in the company with expertise in the subject; for example, a chemist should look at the chemistry section of the science standards. Input from business is to determine the content of the standards. Input from the community is cultivated in order to get them to “buy in” to the standards. “Don’t tell parents they are wrong . . . [instead] lead them to information sources [like toll free numbers for local BRT coalitions].” BRT knows that “without parental and public support, reform cannot succeed.” Yet it is clear that parents and teachers are to play an advisory role and only then as a means to gain their necessary support. Business insists that it must set the agenda. Rust concludes his assessment of the last ten years with this claim:

It is said that large organizations such as schools “don’t change because they see the light; they change because they feel the heat.” Business Roundtable CEOs have successfully applied the heat on state policy makers, while state coalitions are helping the public and educators see the light about the need for change. We need to keep it up The history of past reform attempts is very clear on this point. If we believe that school reform is vital to the success of America, we cannot — and will not — leave the job to others. There can be no turning back (Rust, 1999).

No Turning Back: Turning Up the Heat

Standards advocates have met periodic resistance to the high-stakes testing program. In order to deal with such resistance, the BRT has published several handbooks detailing effective strategies to deal with opposition. The purpose of the BRT document *Building Support for Tests That Count* (1998) is to “help business leaders be effective advocates for building and sustaining the necessary community support for rigorous assessments and student achievement” (p. 4). The Maryland BRT surveyed candidates during election years and testified in state legislatures. They also reviewed the state test in order to correlate student ability on it to the ability to perform well in the workplace. When MBRT sponsored focus groups of parents, teachers, and principals and discovered widespread concern about the tests, MBRT had the state delay the introduction of the new exams and then used funds from the Anne Casey Foundation to create a 45-member speakers bureau to begin to change the public opposition to the test.

Members of Washington’s BRT coalition, Partners for Leadership²⁹, met with newly elected state legislators every two years and served on “cut-score” committees. The Partnership, upon discovering public concern over the reform agenda, launched a media campaign. They created a video and handbook to explain the new standards movement to parents and sponsored workshops for editorial writers, members of the chamber of commerce and community “movers and shakers” on “how to get the word out to the community.” Massachusetts’ Coalition for Higher Standards is now developing local leadership groups to effect school change. The Ohio coalition conducted a survey that documented the gap between what high school seniors know and what they should know in the workplace. The Partnership for Kentucky’s Schools funded an 8-page advertisement insert into the major newspapers in Kentucky as well as distributing 1.5 million copies of it through a direct mailing. The advertisement was translated into a video and aired on television.³⁰ They used grants from the PEW Charitable Trust and the Annie Casey Foundation to fund research on professional development for teachers and made presentations to state legislators. McDonalds has sample test questions on its placemats. CEOs have “brown bag lunches” with their employees “to talk to them about the importance of high standards and assessments.” The publisher of the Orlando *Sentinel* has encouraged the state education commissioner to meet with editorial boards, teachers, and parent organizations to introduce Florida’s Comprehensive Assessment Test. [See Appendix C for how the Washington state BRT organization handled its public relations campaign.]

One has to admire the ability of the CEOs of BRT to move state legislatures to adopt standards and assessment practices designed to increase the number of “skilled workers” in this country so United States businesses and the U.S. government can maintain its political and economic hegemony in the world. But in spite of being able to rally powerful political and media forces, the opposition to imposing the kinds of high standards and assessments as described above has continued, if not increased. During the awards dinner on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the 18-member National Goals

²⁹ Funded by Boeing, Microsoft, Washington Mutual, and Weyerhaeuser (p. 8).

³⁰ During the last ten years, the media has donated 254 million dollars of space and time for BRT’s public-awareness strategy of which Washington and Kentucky have made particularly good use (Rust, 1999; insert).

Panel (12/1/99), Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin proclaimed “Our goals are great We’re going in the right direction, but we’re going at a very slow speed” (Wilgoren, 1999). The slow speed he was referring to might have been a reference to the withdrawal of the statewide test in Wisconsin in response to parental demands (Steinberg, 1999). The “rumblings” of protest have forced several state legislatures to scale back implementation of the BRT agenda. Steinberg (1999) reported:

. . . that the politicians are tuning in, and responding to such rumblings was obvious in October, when many of the 24 governors who gathered at an education summit meeting in Palisades, N. Y., conceded that they had been taken aback by the “demoralizing effects” of their new policies. In urging them to stay the course, the organizer of the meeting, Louis Gerstner, chairman of the International Business Machines Corporation, asserted: “We understand the pain. And we’re going to have to deal with it. But we’re not going to deal with it by backing off.”³¹

In the spring of 2001, the BRT published *Assessing and Addressing the “Testing Backlash”*: Practical advice and current public opinion research for business coalitions and standards advocates. The authors reassured the members of the state BRT organizations that

tests provide important information that educators, parents, and citizens can use to improve school performance and accountability. Recent proposals by the president and other federal leaders on testing and accountability underscore the importance of this agenda (BRT, 2001; p.1).

The authors of *Assessing and Addressing* acknowledged, however, that those working to implement state standards and tests “are challenged by concerns and questions from increasingly vocal parents and teachers” (p.1). But this is to be expected and is part of the process of change.

³¹ The reporter continued writing: “At the end of the two-day gathering, the governors were among the signers of a mass pledge that, if carried out, would give students and teachers the very underpinning they have requested.” The NYT reporter identified “professional development and smaller class sizes” as the teachers’ demands. Reducing class size in K–3 has been implemented in California while professional development is considered one of the Nine Essential Components. In this context, professional development will necessarily be confined to techniques to help students improve their scores on statewide exams, which are not necessarily the same as those techniques “requested by teachers.” Class size reduction has been seriously undermined which raises doubts about the states’ commitment to responding to teacher “demands.”

This “backlash” to higher standards and increased accountability is not a surprise. It is a natural reaction to change and to tougher consequences for poor student performance” (p. 1).

The authors expressed confidence that parents and teachers who oppose the BRT agenda can be “handled” (p. 2). There is no “need to panic” (p. 2). But what is of real concern is that the “media” has “played up this conflict and presented a lopsided view of the issue.” So now “more than ever, the leadership and credibility of the business community is needed [to] address the ‘testing backlash’” (p. 1).

The handbook provided the following suggestions to the business community to help them “address the backlash.”

1. “Anticipate organized opposition” (p. 12)
2. Take advantage of the superior organization and resources of the BRT network (p. 12)
3. “Teachers are especially credible and influential voices [according to polling by Public Agenda³²] but they also are more likely to be concerned about how tests are causing them to change instruction. Adjust state policies, if necessary” (p. 13).
4. “Be thoughtful about separating complaints that the standards are simply too hard from legitimate concerns from teachers about test alignment and lack of instructional support” (p. 14).
5. “Perhaps create an alternative appeals process for students who do not pass the tests but can show they nevertheless have mastered the material” (p. 15).
6. “Make sure assistance, such as after-school tutoring and summer school, is provided immediately to students who do not succeed the first time (p. 16).
7. Don’t back down but don’t rush either. “Changes can be implemented only so quickly by teachers in the classroom, and rushing risks errors that can undermine the overall effort” (p. 16).
8. “Find out what sort of support teachers need, such as sample lessons, classroom assessments, or time to plan with and learn from colleagues” (p. 17).
9. Make sure that “educators, parents and students receive testing results in a timely fashion so they can act on the information and make changes. Help them learn how to access this data, how to analyze it and how to act on it” (p. 17).
10. “Sponsor ‘take-the-test’ days” in order to “allow teachers, parents and citizens to see for themselves what students are expected to know and be able to do . . . If you are concerned that your state’s test might not withstand such public scrutiny, then you must improve the test” (p. 18).
11. “Target key audiences” – those people who can change the minds of those parents and teachers who believe that systemic reform is “too punitive, too

³² Public Agenda is a nonprofit polling organization that works closely with the BRT agenda. I describe it in more detail later in this chapter.

rigid and too focused on measuring rather than improving student achievement” (p. 18).

12. “Make sure that people understand that students will have more than one chance to pass [the high school exit exams]” (p. 15).
13. “Remind people why states and communities are raising standards in the first place: Large majorities of employers, college leaders, education experts and citizens say too many American students are failing to leave high school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college, at work, and in their communities”³³ (p. 19).

These suggestions focus on a few fundamental strategies. One is that opposition to systemic reform can be “handled” by more clearly and “proactively” communicating the reasons for such reform to “key audiences” (i.e., use propaganda to divide and conquer). Another one is to identify those changes that can be made in the strategies and tactics that do not alter the basic goal of reform (i.e., focus public debate over the means to improve test scores without allowing debate over the validity of using test scores to enforce state standards). The ostensible goal of systemic reform is to increase the number of students who can “succeed in college, at work, and in their communities.” But BRT publications never explain how high-stakes testing would accomplish such a goal nor do they define what such success actually means. In the next section, I will argue that such statements as number 13 above do not reflect the real goals of systemic reform; rather, they are strategic rhetoric being used to silence criticism surrounding the negative effects of high-stakes testing.

Students as Task-Completers, Not Problem-Solvers

Corporate advocates of “high standards” and “excellence for all” promise that systemic reform will increase the skills of graduates allowing them to fill the increasing percentage of high paying, New Economy jobs. All boats will rise with the tide of higher standards. Yet the New Economy has created more unskilled than skilled jobs and the

³³ No one can argue with this statement. But such a statement ignores equally important concerns. One important concern systematically ignored by the BRT rhetoric of reform is the high number of dropouts, possibly being made higher by the implementation of high school exit exams. In spite of the BRT’s insistence on “data-driven” decision-making, there has yet to be any reliable data gathered to explain the rather astonishing attrition rate that public high schools have experienced. See footnote 18 in Chapter 8 for some examples of this. That the BRT focuses on increasing the number of college prepared students and does not care to explore the causes of dropouts is one clue to revealing what the real goals of systemic reform are.

income differences between the wealthy and the working class have never been greater than in the 1990s. Sassen's (1998) analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) paints a somewhat different picture than the one Edward Rust portrays of the past and the future U.S. labor market.

[The] BLS projects a massive growth of low-wage service jobs, including service jobs catering to firms. Three service industries alone will account for about half of total U.S. employment growth between 1992 and 2005: retail trade, health services, and business services. Using . . . (223 categories), the largest increases in terms of numbers of jobs are, in descending order: retail sales workers, registered nurses, cashiers, truck drivers, waiters and waitresses, nursing aides, janitors, food preparation workers, and systems analysts. Most of these jobs do not require a high school education and they are mostly not very highly paid. Nor does the BLS expect an increase in the median weekly wage of workers. At the other extreme are jobs requiring a college degree. Their share was twenty-three percent in 1992 and is projected to rise only by one percent to twenty-four percent by 2005 (p. 143).

Contrasting these figures to those of Rust suggests that Rust would like to see a larger pool of skilled workers than there are jobs for them in order to keep wages low and profit margins high. Citing research showing that there is “no systemic shortage of appropriately skilled workers for contemporary jobs,” Michelson (2000) believes that corporate leaders are really “dissatisfied with the work ethic of their less skilled employees” (p. 151). Furthermore, “by focusing concern on the public schools, corporate leaders deflect attention from their own contributions to domestic and international productivity problems” (p. 129). Louis Uchitelle (*NY Times*, 2002; A1) described the growth of one sector of the “service economy” – call centers. Those hired to answer customer service 800 numbers represent the fastest growing job category of any major occupation, “making this work force roughly as numerous as the nation’s truck drivers, assembly line workers, or public-school teachers.” In spite of the surge in call center employment, call center workers’ salaries remained between \$7 and \$14 an hour throughout the so-called economic boom of the 1990s. Pay remained low because call centers, unlike factories, “can be relocated easily to lower-wage cities or even overseas” and there is no shortage of applicants. Those who apply are mostly women with one or two years of college who can’t “find better-paying alternatives as bank tellers, teachers, office managers, or government clerks.” There is high turnover since much of the work is tedious and routine (employees call up scripted responses). Yet the employees must

have a high level of social skills (answering complaints all day); knowledge of the product and they must meet the industry standard of one call per 3 minutes.

Other evidence that business leaders are perhaps disingenuous in declaring that the U.S. economy is desperate for a larger number of high-skilled workers is in Matloff's op-ed piece (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1/1/01). Business leaders have demanded that the federal government expand the H-1B guest worker visa quota because of a supposed shortage in computer programmers. Matloff, however, provides evidence that there is no shortage of programmers and that H-1B programmers "are paid \$20,000 to \$25,000 less than Americans with the same skills." This may be in part because the median age of an "H-1B" is 28 while available Americans with commensurate skills are over 40 years old. Richard Rothstein (*New York Times*, 9/6/00; A26) argues that industrial CEOs reduced wages of high-tech workers when there was a glut in 1995 of such workers, thus creating the present shortage and justifying their requests to extend the H-1B program. Rothstein points to a 1992 *NYT* article reporting that 1 in 5 college graduates had a job not requiring a college degree and a 1995 *NYT* article citing nationwide unemployment of engineers, mathematicians, and scientists. Rothstein further argues that any tightening of the labor market for computer workers is not because

students suddenly lack preparation. On the contrary, high school course-taking in math and science, including advanced placement, had climbed [from 1985-1996]. Further, math scores have risen; last year 24 percent of seniors who took the SAT scored over 600 in math. But only 6 percent planned to major in computer science, and many of these cannot get into college programs . . . colleges themselves have not yet adjusted to new demand . . . More H-1B immigrants can have a perverse effect, as their lower pay signals young people to avoid this field in the future, keeping the domestic supply artificially low.

Lowering workers' wages is a major source of profit but so is "externalizing costs."

Maier (1989) explains that business wants the public school system to train its workers so it does not have to do so itself. For example, "training programmers for entry-level workers at United Technologies, which lasted two or three weeks in the early 1980s, now averages eight to ten weeks."

In the light of the above information, caveats must be added to the basic argument that systemic reform is needed in order to produce a greater percentage of needed high-skilled workers. Edward Rust argued in 1999 that

in a global economy built on knowledge and technical skills, employees must be able to do more now than they did a generation ago. And these demands will continue to increase (Rust, 1999; p.1).

More accurately, *some* “employees must be able to do more now than they did a generation ago” so that *others* can be let go to join the growing ranks of low-paid, unskilled labor. Schools need to produce increased numbers of “high-skilled” workers so business executives can pay American citizens at the same level as H1-B employees, thereby increasing shareholder profits and winning bonuses for themselves. Those unable to meet the higher standards can fill the ranks of the growing number of unskilled jobs created by the New Economy.

The economic reasoning behind business leaders’ interest in educational reform resonates with two earlier periods of educational reform as I discussed in Chapter 1. The timing of the adoption of systemic reform suggests that the BRT decided to initiate the third major educational reform in U.S. history as part of the second major economic transformation in U.S. history. As mass-production replaced craft-production (circa 1870-1915) so now is lean-production replacing mass production. Lean production was developed in Japan after WW II. Lean production techniques have enabled manufacturers to reduce the size of their inventories (they carry fewer parts) and increase the reliability of their product through the introduction of “quality circles” at each stage of design and production. Every worker in the company, from industrial designers to assembly line workers, participate in study groups that research and discuss the means by which they can detect and resolve defects at every stage, not just with the finished product. These innovations allow manufacturers to reduce drastically the time it takes to make a product, and eliminate recalls as well as reduce overhead costs (Womack, 1990).

Lean production was first adopted by Toyota in the 1950s. By adopting lean production techniques, Japanese vehicle manufacturers were able to overtake U.S. manufacturers as the world’s leading producers of motor vehicles by 1978.³⁴ Ford, to avoid bankruptcy, was the first U.S. corporation to adopt lean production in 1981.

³⁴ Motor vehicle production in the United States dropped from its historic zenith in 1978 (about 12 million vehicles that year) to 6 million vehicles in 1982. Japanese vehicle production, however, had climbed from approximately 7 million in 1978 to 11 million in 1982 (Womack, 1990; from graph on p. 248).

General Motors and Chrysler, not yet facing bankruptcy, were resistant, choosing instead to close their least productive plants from 1987-1990. They choose to experiment with lean production by hiring Toyota to manage a reopened plant in Fremont, California (Womack, 1990; p. 244, 82). It was during this same period that the number of Japanese “transplants” in the U.S. increased significantly. Honda, the first major transplant, opened its vehicle assembly plant in 1982 (Womack, 1990; p. 241).

The success of Japanese car manufacturers, the increased productive capacity of lean production, and the ability to make more reliable products at less expense caused many MBA programs to incorporate the principles of lean production into their curricula. Many CEO’s sent representatives to study the Japanese techniques. The result of study and partnerships has resulted in various forms of lean production being adapted to production throughout the United States during the 1980s. The adoption of lean production by American manufacturers has not followed the Japanese model exactly. There are too many cultural and historical differences for copying to be exact. One of the modifications that U.S. CEOs have made to the Japanese model is to draw upon their historic relationship with education. The American people were threatened by a “crisis” in the educational system beginning with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the year after lean production began in Honda’s Ohio plant. In 1989, the BRT hammered out its agenda for systemic reform, in the midst of plant closings brought on by the competition of lean producers.

That educational reform accompanied production reform is not a coincidence. Part of the evidence supporting this assertion lies in the historical patterns of the past as I have outlined them in Chapter 1. Another part lies in the similarity between the skills required in lean production and the skills promoted by the BRT’s educational agenda. One characteristic of lean production is “total quality control” (TQC) which is sometimes referred to as Total Quality Management.³⁵ Simply put, TQC is the process by which the detection and fixing of defects happens at every stage in the development and production of a product.

³⁵ For a complete description of Total Quality Control see *What Is Total Quality Control? The Japanese Way* by Kaoru Ishikawa, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985).

The truly lean plant has two key organizational features: It transfers the maximum number of tasks and responsibilities to those workers actually adding value to the car on the line, and it has in place a system for detecting defects that quickly traces every problem, once discovered, to its ultimate cause.

This, in turn, means teamwork among line workers and a simple but comprehensive information display system that makes it possible for everyone in the plant to respond quickly to problems and to understand the plant's overall situation Every time anything goes wrong anywhere in the plant any employee who knows how to help runs to lend a hand

Building these efficient teams is not simple. First, workers need to be taught a wide variety of skills . . . then they need encouragement to think actively, indeed, proactively, so they can devise solutions before problems become serious.

Once lean production principles are fully instituted, companies will be able to move rapidly in the 1990s to automate most of the remaining repetitive tasks in auto assembly – and more. Thus by the end of the century we expect that lean-assembly plants will be populated almost entirely by highly skilled problem solvers whose task will be to think continually of ways to make the system run more smoothly and productively (Womock, 1990; p. 99).

For a factory to run “more smoothly and productively,” it needs workers to take on increased “tasks and responsibilities,” have a “wide variety of skills,” learn how to work in “efficient teams”, and be able to “think actively”. These “highly skilled problem solvers” are perhaps some of the kinds of employees that Edward Rust and the BRT CEOs have in mind when they call upon the public school system to have “high standards for all” for the purposes of increasing the numbers of highly skilled workers. In raising the bar for everyone, systemic reformers expect that more students will master advanced academic subjects. The reformers also expect that by insisting on site-based decision-making, teachers will use a variety of teaching techniques such as group work to teach “problem-solving skills”.

Corporate CEOs certainly wish to have some workers who can “do more now than they did a generation ago” and they want more of them than they need. But equally important, they want to keep control of the kinds of problems to be solved. Those who are presiding over the transformation of the economy want to increase the numbers of graduates who are able to work in groups to solve highly complex tasks. Many educators are attracted to and co-opted by the rhetoric of systemic reform because it promises to be more challenging. But the promise is an empty one. The state standards coauthored by members of the Business Roundtable reveal the business leaders’ inability to allow real problem solving to be taught in the schools.

To teach real problem solving, it is crucial that the student be able to choose the problem. Otherwise students are merely completing a task. To complete a task, one needs to rely on habitual activity, rarely needing, if at all, the kinds of thinking involved in problem-solving (i.e., the processes of fact gathering, hypothesis development, testing ideas, putting ideas into practice, revising hypothesis, etc.).³⁶ The BRT envisions teachers having the authority to teach the habits with which their students will complete the tasks determined by statewide standards. While couched in terms of “problem-solving skills,” an educational theory and system based upon state standards eliminates problem setting, a crucial step in real problem solving. No real problem solving can occur if the student is never able to pursue “a matter of curiosity” to the point of articulating it “in such a way that it becomes amenable to inquiry that is relatively systematic” (Arnstine, 1995; p. 113). To tell a student what to learn and when to learn it, however complex the learning may be, is the surest means of preventing that student from being engaged in the material. Without engagement or interest, none of the dispositions necessary to successful problem solving are developed.

Solving problems isn't just a mechanical procedure; it calls for more than a set of skills. It requires attitudes and dispositions – like the courage needed to acknowledge the existence of a problem that has to be dealt with; the patience and persistence required when a problem isn't easily resolved; a willingness to risk, to seek help and to give it, to accept personal responsibility, and to admit error (Arnstine, 1995; p. 129)

For the quality circles in lean production to work effectively, workers need to learn to “think outside the box.” The mass production model required a high degree of specialization. There was no requirement that an employee make connections between what his job was with what other workers were doing on other tasks. Lean production requires workers to create interdisciplinary teams, as it were, in order to understand the implications of how their job impacted upon other's jobs. The rhetoric supporting the BRT educational agenda and the new, TQM structure they are attempting to put into place reflects the CEOs' concern that both teachers and students learn to “think outside the box.” But in looking at the actual standards being written, it seems as if American

³⁶ I am grateful to Don Arnstine for this insight and recommend *Democracy and the Arts of Schooling* (1995) for anyone who wishes to try to teach students real problem-solving dispositions.

CEOs are unwilling to let go of “the box.” They seem to merely want to make “the box” bigger in the hope that high school and college graduates can learn to “problem-solve” without learning to “problem-set.”

The Business Roundtable’s choice of an example from the National Center for Education and the Economy’s (NCEE) New Standards reveals their confusion over the concept of problem-solving. In the example, the language of problem solving easily turns into simple task completion. According to the NCEE, “hands-on learning” and “long-term group projects” develop “problem solving” (sic). In developing the “tools and techniques for working with others,” elementary school students can

Work with others to achieve a shared goal, to promote *on-the-job learning* and to respond effectively to *the needs of a client*.

The student works with others to complete a *task*; that is, the student

- reaches agreement with group members on what work needs to be done to complete the *task* and how the work will be tackled . . .
- consults with group members regularly during the *task* to check on progress completing the task, to decide on any change that is required, and to check that all parts have been completed at the end of the *task*. [my italics]

The “tasks” listed above will not lead to problems to solve and the development of the dispositions necessary to solve those problems unless the students have an interest in them, i.e., unless students are allowed to choose topics and teachers work to arouse the students’ curiosities. State standards and tests are less and less likely to provide room for student choice given the BRT’s desire to make the standards as “specific” as possible. The BRT Virginia coalition, for example, referred to this narrowing of choice as “more specific and rigorous.” The 1989 standard: “Students will *explain* how scientific and technological changes have made *major impacts* on society” was rewritten in 1995 to be “more specific and rigorous.” The 1995 version: “The student will *analyze and explain* the effects of the Industrial Revolution, in terms of . . . how scientific and technological changes, *including the inventions of Watt, Bessemer, and Whitney*, brought about *massive social and cultural change* . . . [not environmental or political?]” [my emphasis] (BRT, 1996; p. 25). The latter version is, indeed, more specific, although teachers are left to figure out what is more “rigorous” about analyzing as well as explaining.³⁷

³⁷ I would argue, however, that it doesn’t really matter how rigorous and specific the standards are in determining what and how teachers teach in the classroom. As long as

While the BRT seems intent on promoting standards which reduce problem-solving to task completion, it also seems equally intent on eliminating the concept of interpretation. Both reveal a refusal to relinquish control of the goals of education as well as the goals of production. When writing standards, BRT advises business leaders to make sure that “educational jargon” is eliminated for the purpose of “clarity.” The illustrative example provided reveals that what is being eliminated is the need for students to construct their own meaning from the text. BRT (1996; p. 22) writes:

Here is a draft standard for reading in Washington State that was rewritten after business leaders and others complained it was difficult to understand. The revised version uses clearer language, for example, omitting the phrase, “construct meaning,” which is educational jargon.

Washington Standards, Before Revisions

Essential Learnings: Reading

2. The student reads to construct meaning from a variety of texts for a variety of purposes.
 - comprehends important ideas and details
 - analyzes and synthesizes
 - thinks critically
 - reads to learn new information
 - accesses information to solve problems and perform tasks

Washington Standards, After Revisions

2. The student understands the meaning of what is read. In order to meet this standard, the student will:
 - comprehend important ideas and details
 - expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing of information and ideas
 - think critically about authors’ use of language and style, purpose, and perspective, and know how to apply ideas to new situations

What is made “more clear” in the revision is that the business community wants to control what students and their workers “think critically” about. By replacing the student’s need to “construct meaning” with the requirement that the student must

teachers feel compelled to teach from a textbook, the books will determine what the impact of the Industrial Revolution was, with no “higher order thinking” required from the student except to understand the bias of the textbook and conform to it. The standards do force a teacher to rely on a textbook by identifying a huge amount of information to be learned by the student in a short amount of time.

“understand the meaning of what is read,” the authors of the Washington Standards are narrowly defining what “thinking” means. A further indication of this appears in Education Trust’s analysis of the reading portions of a variety of standardized tests.³⁸ The Education Trust’s team of analysts considered the New York Regents exam and the Massachusetts state exam (MCAS) to be the “best” exams of all available state K–12 tests. These tests stood out because they had “written, open response questions” to “sophisticated and varied reading passages”. Such a characterization, however, is misleading. “Sophisticated” apparently means “dense with single spaced text and no supplemental decoration” (Education Trust, 1999; p. 23). “Open response” is misleading since the reading pieces were “clarified” for the students by a set of multiple choice questions which “acted as scaffolding to support students through their timed writing tasks” (Education Trust, 1999; p. 21). To emphasize that textual meaning comes from an “authority” rather than from the dynamic interaction between reader and text, the analysts strongly urged that the writing required on tests should not be dominated by “personal and reflective essays” since “the writing needed in college and in work is not primarily concerned with personal feelings or ruminations, but with analysis, reporting, summary, argument, persuasion . . . connected either to reading or observation” (Education Trust, 1999; p. 25). Apparently students are to be trained to write about what is given to them in a way that does not involve their interests or values.

While the demands of lean production require workers who can “think actively,” the new standards for the New Economy reveal the limits CEOs wish to place on such thinking. Instead of investing in worker-organized study groups, newsletters, institutes and other supportive structures that was done in Japan after World War II, American CEO’s expect the public school system to take on the responsibility of producing employees who are highly skilled at and highly motivated to solve complex problems. That they think systemic reform will accomplish this reveals the extent to which they

³⁸ The Education Trust is a nonprofit, corporate funded organization based in Washington, D.C. Among its financial backers are the Pew Charitable Trust and the Knight Foundation. The Education Trust is working to align state high school graduation tests with state university admission/placement tests. The stated purpose of such alignment is “to promote high academic achievement for all students at all levels.” This will guarantee “equity and excellence” in the educational system.

cannot truly problem-solve themselves. For if they could, the CEOs of the BRT would realize that their goals of maintaining control in a hierarchal system and having motivated, disciplined, and thoughtful employees are mutually exclusive.

School Boards as Middle Managers

Through systemic reform, the BRT does not only want to maintain its control over the goals of education through state control of content standards, but to do so through fundamentally altering the structure by which decisions are made. Denise Gelberg in *The "Business" of Reforming American Schools* (1997) documents the adoption of Total Quality Management theory (one effect of the diffusion of lean production principles) to educational reform in the 1980s. The downsizing or "rightsizing" of the last twenty years has been part of a fundamental transition in the workplace in which certain decisions have been taken away from middle managers (thus needing fewer of them) and placed in the hands of the assembly or frontline workers. Upper management still has absolute control of what the production goals are but now frontline workers, instead of middle management, have the added responsibility of devising strategies and techniques to fulfill those goals. The parallel with educational reform seems clear. Business CEOs, through state standards and tests, decide the goals of education while school staffs are responsible for devising the means for improving student achievement as defined by those standards. In newly created site-councils, teachers and parents must devise a variety of instructional strategies to help students master the state standards. This, theoretically, eliminates the program and policy-making role of school boards. School boards, if they are to maintain any relevance within this new structure, must agree to be middle managers — ensuring that site-councils operate within the limits imposed by state standards and tests while providing whatever support they can in helping teachers and principals raise test scores.

This means that school boards cannot be forums for dissent by members of the local community who are opposed to the BRT educational agenda as they were briefly in the late Nineteenth century and during the Community Control movement of the sixties. In order to obviate or undermine the representative function of school boards, standards advocates have revived Progressive period arguments regarding the role and values of school board members. The cultural legacy of these arguments is one reason why they

remain powerful today. As I explained in Chapter 1, progressive business leaders, at the turn of the twentieth century, powered the restructuring of municipal governments. In most of the major cities in the United States, power was centralized in a strong mayor. City councils and school boards were reduced in number and either appointed by the mayor or elected at large. The reformers argued that these changes would lead to government by expert professionals with a citywide perspective instead of a government by narrow, corrupt, ignorant, and inept nepotists. The effect of these reforms was essentially to eliminate working class representation from city institutions. School boards, in particular, became dominated by businessmen intent on transforming the public school system into a top-down hierarchy operated according to the principles of scientific management.

During the social reform movement (roughly 1955 – 1975), school boards were increasingly vulnerable to pressures from organized community activists. But with renewed interest on the part of business to once again transform the public school system so it resembled the business structures of the New Economy came a renewed interest in the role of school boards in school governance. As school boards have continued to operate as potential platforms for community opposition, business and educational professionals have begun to focus their attention on regaining control of school board culture. The Danforth Foundation’s 1992 *Facing the Challenge: The Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on School Governance* made this strategy explicit. The membership of the Task Force (TCFTF) which wrote the *Report* is reminiscent of the “interlocking-directorate” (Tyack, 1967) leading the reforms of the progressive era.³⁹ In making an explicit reference to such a past, The Task Force’s *Report* calls for a “restructuring of the public school system like that of 1900” (TCFTF, 1992; p. 9). The *Report* justified its focus on school boards by arguing that “the current debate about the

³⁹ Membership of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on School Governance includes seven professional administrators, four heads of corporations, three representatives from school board associations, two writers, two professors of education (Stanford and Harvard), two presidents of local teacher unions (Rochester and Seattle). Such a task force is heavily weighted by top administrators who value efficiency over democratic decision-making and put a great deal of value on “expertise” over experience. Parents, students, and organizations like the NAACP or the Urban League are not represented at all.

future of education in America . . . has focused largely on issues such as choice, school based management, class size, teacher preparation, and student assessment, not on the governance role of school boards . . . [R]eform efforts will have only limited impact until the role of governance is addressed and the question of how basic decisions are made is answered” (TCFTF, 1992; p. 1).

The *Report* explained that school boards were obstacles to reform when they “interfere with the day to day tasks of administration of their districts that is properly the realm of the professional administrator” (TCFTF, 1992; p.5). School boards need to act as “disinterested” citizens focusing on broad educational policy instead of “constituent service” (TCFTF, 1992; p. 6). On the other hand, “boards recognize that they need leadership training as well as dialogue with the community to define areas of governance responsibility if they are better to meet constituents’ expectations.” The distinction between constituent “service” and “expectations” is a revealing one. In 1994, this “problem” was addressed again by one of the authors of the *Report*. Danzberger (1994) argued that the problem with school boards is that they are

not structurally suited to govern effectively in an increasingly divisive society that is facing unprecedented social and economic challenges. The American public increasingly uses the public schools to fulfill immediate political demands (from creationism to Afro-centrism), at the same time that society faces the challenge of the need to improve schooling and increase educational achievement for all students (p. 371).⁴⁰

Michael Kirst echoes dissatisfaction with the local concerns of school boards when he writes that they must “spend more time on systemic policies that help implement curriculum frameworks based on national standards” (Kirst, 1994; p. 379).⁴¹

⁴⁰ To argue that debates over content (creationism and Afro-centrism) are “political” and a proposal to reduce the community’s input in the formulation of school policy is *not* “political” suggests that such a position represents propaganda rather than research.

⁴¹ Kirst is a Stanford University professor, codirector of Policy Analysis for California Education and a former member of the California State Board of Education. Most recently (March, 2000), Kirst has served on Oakland, California, Mayor Jerry Brown’s Education Commission and supports Brown’s attempts to gain mayoral control over the Oakland School Board. The narrow passage of Measure D on March 7, 2000, expanded the Oakland School Board from seven to ten members. The additional three members will be mayoral appointments while the other seven will continue to be elected by district. A statewide political action committee, the 3R’s, and local real-estate developers raised \$350,000 dollars for the Measure D campaign while opponents of the Measure, the

This desire to turn back the gains made by the Community Control movement and return to the days of 1900 reveals itself again in one of the Task Force's structural recommendations. They want to see a "mixed system of at large and district-based elections so a citywide perspective is represented" (TCFTF, 1992; p. 16). In spite of the concession to "district" or constituent representation, the Task Force wishes to reduce the school board's ability to function as an arena for conflict of interests ("embroiled in constituent politics"). The Task Force warns that if school boards continue to be such arenas, as they were in the 60s and 70s, they will not "pursue coherent and continuous initiatives" needed to stop increasing numbers of children from failing (TCFTF, 1992; p. 51). Conflict "can be devastating for school systems that are attempting to effect long-range systemic reform" (Danzburger, 1994b; p. 369).

Donald McAdams (2000) concluded from his ten-year experience on the Houston, Texas, school board that the "core issue in urban school reform is governance" (p. 260). More specifically, "school reformers must design systems of governance that get politics out of schools" (p. 262). He argues that school boards need to be elected at large or appointed, all possible non-educational functions must be privatized, and that as many charter schools or voucher programs should be implemented as possible. Every possible reform needs to be done to "insulate the education of children from direct democratic control" (p. 263). The Texas Education and Business Coalition continues to lobby for state mandated rules and regulations for school boards to prevent such boards from continuing to indulge in "protracted and truly dysfunctional governance situations." TEBC has eleven items on its legislative agenda all designed to curb the ability of a school board member or trustee from acting as an individual and to prevent the board from acting independently of the superintendent. In addition to limiting board meetings to once a month, the TEBC wants to promote "cumulative voting" or at large elections arguing that a requirement "that candidates for the board must reside within different defined geographical areas of the school district [will] ensure that all members of the community are fairly represented on locally elected school boards" (www.tbec.org/2001session/governance.htm).

NAACP, the Teamsters Union, local activists and the majority of the school board members could only raise \$19,000 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/28/00; A1).

In the context of TQM/TQC-style “systemic reform,” school boards have a very specific role to play. They must give individual schools more authority and define the “new roles for participants in school-based decision making” as well as identifying the “locus of accountability within the school system” (Danzburger, 1994b; p. 369). School boards are seen as “middle management” through the TQM lens – they are no longer to micromanage their teacher-workers as in the scientific management model. Instead, school boards along with principals are to provide “support” for the teacher-workers who have become responsible for deciding how to reach the goals (high test scores). Middle management no longer needs to concern itself with the responsibility of assuring “accountability” since that is achieved by measurements of goals/production/output. As the facilitator between state standards and assessment practices and the pedagogical practices within schools, school boards need to “take a comprehensive look at the objectives of the local school community and examine progress toward meeting state and central district objectives” (Kirst, 1994; p. 380). School boards must link policies and reform initiatives to student outcome objectives, curriculum frameworks and assessments; establish staff development consistent with district goals and objectives; and convene community forums to discuss educational policy (Danzburger, 1994b; p. 372). In other words, school boards need to co-opt parental and teacher support in the service of state standards established by the Business Roundtable Coalition.

To this end, Brown’s 1996 study of Maine’s adoption of the National Science Foundation’s Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI) program (which is part of the Comprehensive School Reform initiative of the federal government and the Education Commission of the States) provides some evidence that a “climate” change among school board members can occur with the infusion of federal money and facilitators. The researchers noted that if the SSI project can move local school boards in Maine towards the kind of policy-making body that BRT school board reformers advocate, then it can be done anywhere, since Maine school boards are renowned for their “independence.” The results of their study led the researchers to suggest that “school boards can be responsive to programs supportive of systemic change and that boards themselves through their policy-making mandates can be positive players in engendering [results driven, schoolwide] systemic change” (Brown, 1996; p. 5).

In spite of the tremendous corporate pressure for systemic reform, school board members continue to be caught in the middle between the concerns of local community members and the demands of the national corporate reform agenda. The National School Board Association (NSBA) resolved in 1992 that “local boards are ‘the nation’s preeminent expression’ of grassroots democracy and . . . fundamental to the continued success of public education”. While conceding BRT’s “America First” principle [to “keep America free and first among the nations of the world”] Shannon (1994), executive director of the NSBA, argues that it is the school boards and no one else that are responsible for creating the “vision of the educational future of its community” and that all true reform, even systemic reform, must be local.

The Business Roundtable Network

In the summer of 1989, the top CEO’s of the nation’s corporations hammered out an educational agenda. The first part of that agenda – state standards, state mandated tests, and rewards/sanctions – has been successfully implemented in over a dozen states. Such enormous change has been made in less than 15 years. The nation’s business leaders have been so efficacious because they have been able to create an interlocking network of state and national business organizations, state and federal governments, private foundations and nonprofit organizations. It is a network of organizations that is mind boggling in scope. I have already explained how the national Business Roundtable, working with other business groups, was able to provide the template for the 1989 National Goals Education Summit attended by both CEOs and state governors and convened by President Bush. In the following section, I detail the relationships that the top corporations are able to cultivate with organizations that are willing to promote the BRT educational agenda.

Through grants and contributions, the top corporations fund the Institute for Educational Leadership. IEL is a nonprofit organization that has national influence over the training of superintendents and the socialization of school board members. One of the most influential roles that IEL plays is to train people to go out and start other organizations that will promote “student achievement” – which necessarily means “higher test scores.” Another nonprofit organization supporting the BRT agenda is called

Public Agenda. This organization conducts public opinion polls relating to current educational issues. The web site of Public Agenda is intended to be a source of information for news reporters who are doing research on education. No information is provided that allows one to challenge the goals of systemic reform. Not surprisingly, IEL and Public Agenda cosponsor other organizations and supply data for BRT publications.

There are several organizations that foster dialogue between state governors and corporate CEOs. One of the oldest and most important is the Education Commission of the States. Started in 1966, the current role that ECS plays is to provide state governors with practical resources with which to implement systemic reform in their respective states. One of those resources is IEL. Another organization of CEOs and governors is Achieve, Inc. Both ECS and Achieve are partnered with the Annenberg Institute that in turn has partnerships with Public Agenda as well as dozens of other institutes and research centers, all promoting standards-based, systemic reform.

Institute for Educational Leadership

Educational researchers, school boards, and administrative and teacher unions have been successfully co-opted by the wide network of programs and partnerships funded by the major corporations of this country. (The effectiveness of this network in co-opting educators and parents will be explored more fully in the next chapter.) The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is a major player, and its programs and partnerships provide structural support for BRT's standards and assessment agenda. IEL is a nonprofit institution established in 1964 in Washington, D.C. to run a "Washington Internships in Education" program. Today, sixteen major foundations and forty-four corporations support a wide array of programs, publications, and networks sponsored and supported by IEL.⁴² IEL describes itself on its Web page in the following manner:

Improving education requires a nationwide commitment that transcends institutional and partisan loyalties. For more than three decades, IEL has helped build that commitment. By establishing broad-based leadership networks and by creating innovative approaches to complex issues, IEL has brought forth change and produced striking results. With more than twenty programs and partnerships in place, IEL is a national institution that reaches deep into states and communities throughout the country (iel.org/programs, p. 1).

⁴² See Appendix E for a list of IEL's Grants and Contributors.

IEL's School Board Effectiveness Program helps school boards "focus on the critical issue of student performance" (IEL, 1999a).⁴³ Six major foundations helped IEL to establish Superintendents Prepared. This program provides training and on-the-job support for aspiring urban school superintendents "to strengthen the pool of individuals . . . in an era characterized by declining public support and funding, by growing diversity among students and by rising awareness for the need to focus more attention on student achievement in order to develop and prepare students for the twenty-first century" (IEL, 1999b; p. 1).

IEL programs provide structural support for the development of an "interlocking directorate" that promotes BRT's standards and assessment agenda. IEL's Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) has produced "4000 plus alumni who now lead in K-12 and higher education, foundations, education policy groups, nonprofits, government and the private sector" (IEL, 1999c). The "ten month program in fourteen sites across the country . . . offers a wide-angle perspective on the leadership challenge facing education and related issue areas, helping them link seemingly unrelated policy issues and understand how to effect change in their communities" (IEL, 1999c). Once the "leaders" are in place, EPFP provides ongoing workshops and national forums. One of the two national meetings takes place in Washington, D.C., and "connects Fellows to national policy processes and personalities" (IEL, 1999d; p. 2) as well as to "develop professional relationships with EPFP colleagues" (p. 3). In North Carolina, the Public School Forum, the Roundtable's administrative nerve center in the southeast, "takes a cohort of mid-level professionals through a series of seminars on how educational policy is made in North Carolina and on the national level" (PSF, 2000; Programs). The California site, located in Downey, serves research fellows from the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) that produces research to guide the development of teacher training. Such training and professional development models are to help teachers adapt to their new roles in the developing TQM system promoting the BRT agenda of high standards and

⁴³ J. P. Danzberger is the director of Governance Programs at IEL and coauthor of the 1986 and 1992 school board reports as well as contributor to the Danforth Foundation's Task Force report on school governance. Michael Usdan is President of IEL.

assessment. The following selection, from the foreword to a SWRL publication, illustrates this development.

While the changing student population presents numerous challenges to teachers and other persons involved in teacher development, future agendas for school improvement/restructuring also hold heavy expectations for changes in teacher responsibility and performance. For instance, new approaches to student performance assessment, including application of national standards and use of alternatives to standardized achievement tests, call for teacher participation in development and interpretation of performance measures as well as application of them. New models of schooling that incorporate high technology and school-business collaboration ask teachers to expand their instructional processes to include an enlarged array of human and technical resources Reconceptualization of both teaching and the teacher development process is required if persons who assume this professional role are to be both effective teachers of diverse student populations and effective contributors to reform of the schools in which the students are enrolled. . . . The ideas advanced in this occasional paper suggest some ways to accomplish this” (Tikunoff and Ward, 1994; vi-vii).⁴⁴

The vague language above perhaps indicates the ambivalence the authors feel towards the BRT agenda. It is difficult to imagine that many “alternatives to standardized achievement tests” will exist in the context of state-mandated standards and statewide tests. In the context of “reform”, “effective” teaching of “diverse student populations” can only mean developing methods to prepare all students for one test.

Public Agenda

Public Agenda is another nonprofit organization whose apparent purpose is to be a source of information for newspaper reporters investigating educational issues.⁴⁵ Public Agenda has “discovered” that four “alternative perspectives” on educational reform exist. One is that “higher academic standards and well-defined goals are essential.” A second point of view is represented by those who believe that “student-centered schools” should be created to teach “problem-solving skills.”⁴⁶ A third position argues “the fundamental

⁴⁴ The paper was prepared under subcontract with Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development and has a Department of Education code number.

⁴⁵ The subtitle to Public Agenda’s Web Page is “The Journalist’s Inside Source for Public Opinion and Policy Analysis.”

⁴⁶ For Engaging Americans in Educational Reform “problem-solving skills” means the completion of tasks assigned by others. It is difficult to ascertain whether, when doing its survey, Public Agenda pollsters clarify what they or their respondents mean by “problem-solving.”

problem is that most parents don't have a choice about where their kids go to school." A fourth perspective is that there is not enough funding for schools. Public Agenda concedes that these four perspectives "are not necessarily mutually exclusive" but insists that "each leads to a distinctive prescription about what is to be done" (Public Agenda, 1999). From the point of view of BRT, all four are essential factors to be implemented into systemic school reform. So the debate is kept nicely within the boundaries of the agenda as defined by BRT's "Nine Components of a Successful Educational System" — the TQM/TQC management model. If one wished to go outside of the narrow boundaries of the "four perspectives" offered by Public Agenda, one would find many other "perspectives" leading to "distinctive prescription[s] about what is to be done."⁴⁷ Yet Public Agenda, IEL, and the BRT wish to keep the debate within the narrow confines of high standards and high-stakes testing. They ignore altogether some 2500 years of debate about educational means and goals.

Public Agenda has joined with IEL to create Engaging Americans in Education Reform (EAER). This is a program to help shape any grassroots debate over public education by defining what the "public" thinks. EAER provides start up kits for school district and state educational leaders interested in "fostering productive discussion among community members." These kits (video tapes and print material)

use a 'choice' work approach which presents alternative perspectives on educational issues through 'real world' scenarios. These choices are framed in the language of ordinary people, not in professional jargon. They focus on the kind of concerns and values in which non-experts can readily engage, and not the technical issues that sometimes drive professional debate and exclude the public (IEL, 1999g).

Education Commission of the States

IEL is also partnered with the Education Commission of the States (ECS). The 1966 National Governor's Conference voted unanimously to create the ECS as a vehicle to "improve education with the active leadership and personal participation of the governors" (ECS, 1999a). On the 1999–2000 executive committee there are three governors, the chair of the U.S. Budget and Taxation Committee, the vice-chair of the U.S. Senate Education Committee, an assistant superintendent of public instruction of

⁴⁷ See Appendix D for a small sample of alternative perspectives.

Utah, a retired superintendent, the educational policy advisor to the governor of Colorado, and Carl Takamura, executive director of the Business Roundtable of Hawaii. Takamura also serves on the ECS Steering Committee (ECS, 1999b). The blueprint for action by ECS is laid out in a document called “ECS Priorities.” It is a good summary of the goals and aims of all of the organizations mentioned above. High standards and assessment are at the heart of the agenda. These provide the data to which teachers, students, and individual schools can be held “accountable” through a system of incentives, rewards, and sanctions. Complex assessment of measurable standards will provide “credible and reliable data” to “communicate to people what they need to know, when they need to know it, and in a form that is understandable and useful to them.” Data is needed so as to be able to share “what works.” Disaggregated data — e.g., test scores separated out by race/ethnicity and gender — is especially important so no student falls through the cracks (ECS, 1999c).⁴⁸

ECS is committed to the principles of lean production (a.k.a., TQM, TQC and de-regulation). They agree with IEL’s position that state governments need to “reduce bureaucratic barriers and not micromanage from on high.” ECS works with state governments to promote flexibility among school systems through decentralized decision-making (problem-solving), charter schools, and by joining the U.S. Department of Education’s Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project (one example of which is the SSI project described above). It is the position of ECS that teacher “quality” needs to be improved; “research has shown” that the quality of the teacher is the “single most important variable in determining student achievement.” Teachers also need to be trained on how to use data (test score results) to make decisions to improve student performance (higher test scores) (ECS, 1999c).

Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Headquartered at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, the Annenberg Institute was established in 1993 and operates on an annual budget of \$5 million. Warren Simmons, the executive director, calls the Institute a “standards-based, practice-centered

⁴⁸ See Appendix A for some of the context from which systemic reformers view the need for disaggregated data. More will be said in later chapters on why the BRT, and especially one of its allies, the Education Trust, are particularly interested in disaggregated data.

policy research and technical assistance organization” (Annenberg, 1998a; p.1). The organization is also one of the central hubs in the vast network of standards-based reform. As a central hub, the Institute coordinates a network that is attempting to replace school boards as the governing agency of local schools. This network is called the Task Force on the Future of the District and includes the Education Commission of the States, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, the Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform, and the New American Schools (Annenberg, 1998a; p.4). Another project is Annenberg’s Tools for Accountability Project that is pursuing a key component of the BRT strategy – data driven reform (Annenberg, 1998a; p.6).

Much of the resources of the Institute is devoted to the development of “public engagement” — co-opting members of the community to support standards-based reform. The Institute has contracted with Public Agenda to determine what are “the attitudes of school board members, administrators, teachers, and the general public on the challenges and impediments to effective, sustained public engagement around the issue of education” (Annenberg, 1998a; p.7). One Public Agenda poll published by the Education Commission of the States reveals, “85 percent or more of parents approve of their local school district holding students to high academic standards and involving the business community in changing schools” (Annenberg, 1998c; p.23). One might question the self-serving nature of how the survey questions were framed or wonder at the usefulness of such a gross generalization.

Nevertheless, with this and other “data,” the Institute is confident that “engagement techniques” have been developed and implemented that are “channeling a community’s concern, apathy or anger into informed and constructive action” (Annenberg, 1998b; p.3). These techniques include house meetings, neighborhood canvassing, focus groups and meetings among local business owners” (Annenberg, 1998b; p.8). “Business and community groups are launching parent institutes” and radio, TV stations, and newspapers are establishing “civic journalism projects” to help communities “make tough decisions” about educational reform (Annenberg, 1998b; p.9). The success of these techniques can be seen in that “many groups can already point to substantially improved student performance” and there is evidence of “involvement of the public in formulating new standards for student achievement.” The future challenge

is to figure out “how to bring in senior citizens, small business owners, or citizens without school age children” into the discussion of how improve test scores (Annenberg, 1998b; p.9). The 1998 Annenberg summary of “public engagement” efforts focused on those efforts being made to include parent participation in improving “student achievement”, that is, improving student scores on state standardized tests. The report noted that

once standards, especially statewide benchmarks, are adopted, public engagement continues and is often even more important. In many places, it *is needed to sustain political and popular support for standards over time* [my emphasis] (Annenberg, 1998b; p.32).

The Annenberg Institute casts a wide net. It is partnered with the Public Education Fund Network⁴⁹, Achieve⁵⁰, the Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform, the Providence Public Schools, the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute for Learning, and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education. Sharing resources and information with its partners, the Institute has spent \$500 million dollars to fund 18 “locally designed school reform projects” assessed by university-based researchers. Among the Institute’s Program Advisory Group are university education professors,

⁴⁹ The Public Education Fund Network is a corporate funded organization that coordinates and supports the activities of Local Education Funds in many major cities in the United States. These LEFs are organizations of local business leaders who promote standards based reform in their city. One indication of the web-like structure of networking among business and educational leaders is the resume of Paul S. Reville. Reville is on the board of directors of the Public Education Network. As a Harvard faculty member, Reville teaches a course on standards-based reform and coordinates state relations at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Reville is also the executive director of the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform, chairman of the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission, which oversees the implementation of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. If that did not make him busy enough, Reville is also the co-founder and executive director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, the state’s Business Roundtable organization (publicagenda.org/aboutus).

⁵⁰ Achieve, Inc., is an organization of the nation’s top CEOs and state governors which provides states with assessments of their standards and testing programs (for a fee) and supports an on-line database and “links” to help state governments develop and implement standards and assessment. As of June 2000, Louis Gerstner of IBM and Tommy Thompson, Governor of Wisconsin, were the co-chairs of the board of directors. Governor Gray Davis of California was among the other ten members of the board (achieve.org). Achieve has a partnership with the American Federation of Teachers.

several Local Education Foundation (LEFs) representatives, as well as representatives from each of the following: Achieve, Inc., Public Agenda, the Disney Learning Initiative, the Education Trust, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC). Without such a network, it is unlikely that so many parents and educators would have been misled into believing that systemic reform can deliver on its promise to make the educational experience successful for all students.

Chapter 3: BRT's Co-optation of Educators and Parents

Introduction

In 1989 and again in 1995, the national Business Roundtable defined an educational agenda that consists of state content/performance standards, a state-mandated test, rewards and sanctions based on test scores, school site-councils composed of administrators, teachers, and parents, professional development focused on using test scores to drive instructional decisions, and phonics instruction in pre-kindergarten. Since 1989, a network of public and private organizations promoting the BRT agenda of systemic reform has developed through persistent lobbying, overlapping memberships, common funding sources, and partnerships. Operating within such a powerful, national network, teachers, parents, and educational researchers have succumbed to the rhetoric of reform without closely questioning the content. The leadership of both national teacher unions, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, has expressed support for state standards and school deregulation. One of the *Nine Essential Components* of systemic reform is “school autonomy.” This is part of the larger design by which teachers are expected to work with administrators and parents in site councils to figure out the means by which to raise student test scores. By agreeing to support this definition of “autonomy,” the national union leadership has implicitly accepted the BRT agenda and relinquished any rights to be a part of deciding what the goals of education should be. Many of the union’s rank and file, however, continue to object to systemic reform. Seeing the threat of a potential parent/teacher alliance, standards advocates continue to use the rhetoric of “high standards for all” to drive a wedge between parents and teachers. Educational researchers have also been drawn into supporting systemic reform by the web-like network of corporate funding sources. Universities, regional laboratories, and think tanks are increasingly dependent on corporate and federal funding for their existence. Many of the areas of research available to those who wish to influence public policy are confined by the goals set by systemic reformers.

Co-optation Of Teacher Union Leadership

Under pressure, the two national teachers unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have agreed to a division of labor in which teachers have the “autonomy” to devise the means by which the goals established by others will be achieved. In the language of systemic reform, this is called “site-based decision management” (SBDM). The NEA adopted SBDM as a bargaining goal in 1991 (Gelberg, 1997; p. 148). Perhaps they did so because they thought that the “autonomy” of SBDM would finally allow them to have some say in what they were expected to teach in the classroom. This, however, was a shibboleth. In agreeing to SBDM, the NEA leadership put its members in the position of accepting responsibility for increasing student achievement while relinquishing all power to do so. In 1997, Bob Chase, president of the NEA, spoke to the teachers gathered at the annual convention. He encouraged them to support the BRT agenda – rigid standardization, deregulation, and parental support of expert teachers.

The fact is that while NEA does not control curriculum, set funding levels, or hire and fire, we cannot go on denying responsibility for school quality. . . . The fact is that *no group knows more about the solutions that will work in our schools than America’s teachers.*⁵¹ We know what our schools need: higher academic standards; stricter discipline; an end to social promotions; less bureaucracy; more resources where they count, in the classroom; schools that are richly connected to parents and to the communities that surround them (Chase, 1999). [my italics]

Chase did not explain *how* teachers were to implement those “solutions that will work in our schools” without the power to “control curriculum, set funding levels . . . hire and fire” and decide on textbook selections or assessment tools.

⁵¹ It is phrases like this one “no group knows more . . .” that has the potential to alienate parents by calling upon the legacy of professionalism. Chase, in the face of a concerted assault on *real* teacher autonomy through the imposition of state standards and tests, is attempting to assert teacher expertise as a means to carve out some space in which teachers can retain some respect or prestige. But in seeking status from state officials and editorialists instead of parents (by accepting their definition of the proper role of teachers), Chase threatens to alienate the only constituency that would support real decision-making authority for teachers – parents. Many parents who come to school to speak to teachers about their children want to have a dialogue with the teachers. They don’t want to be talked down to from an attitude that the teacher rather than the parent knows what is best for the child. As long as teachers couch their opposition to systemic reform in a professional paradigm (we know better than parents or state policy makers), they will be vulnerable to divide and conquer tactics by the BRT network.

The history of SBDM in Montgomery Maryland, suggests that the NEA leadership, in promoting the BRT agenda, is perhaps out of touch with its rank and file as well as promoting a professionalism among teachers (“no group knows more”) that does not promote parent/teacher trust. One of the largest NEA local chapters is the Montgomery County Education Association. The union, in accordance with the demands of its national leadership, established site-based decision-making councils called “Quality Management Councils” or QMCs (which makes the connection between systemic reform and economic reform explicit). In 1998, the union successfully negotiated the establishment of QMCs into their contract. MCEA’s president admitted, however, that only 10 out of the 187 schools in the district have come forward to establish QMCs in the first year. Furthermore, the expectations that QMCs would lead to “rich” relationships between schools and parents did not materialize. Neither the local PTA nor the parents of the local NAACP wanted to participate in QMCs (Simon, 1999).

In a 1996 BRT publication, the authors indicate the degree of collaboration they have with the AFT by citing the contributions the AFT has made to ensure that state standards are “high.”

Examples of Ineffectual, Unclear or Poorly Written Standards:

The following selections of standards are cited by the American Federation of Teachers as examples of what to avoid. The AFT criticizes these standards for being confusing, not academic enough and overly focused on skills at the expense of knowledge Many of the standards below met objections from members of the public and business community and were rewritten as a result.

“Students will demonstrate the ability to examine problems and proposed solutions **from multiple perspectives**”⁵² (Missouri’s Standards, Draft, 1995).

⁵² I have highlighted in bold the presumably offensive, or “unclear,” words and phrases that makes these standards “unacceptable” to both the BRT and the AFT. The first four examples are probably “unclear” because they can be interpreted as sanctioning divergent thinking. The fifth example is clearly “not academic enough;” “care-giving skills” are not required in the workplace and one wonders whether BRT CEOs believe “care-giving skills” are necessary at all. BRT envisions the role of parents as helping their students succeed academically. Given the plethora of words like “rigorous,” “disciplined,” and “academic,” one is led to wonder if “care-giving” skills are necessary at all. By citing the AFT as the critics of such “soft” standards, the BRT simultaneously undermines the standards while conferring status upon the AFT. The leadership of the AFT apparently is susceptible to such tactics of co-optation.

“[A high school graduate] understands and describes ways that a **specified culture shapes patterns** of interaction of individuals and groups” (Minnesota’s High School Standards, Draft, 1994).

“While performing individual and group tasks, students organize and intellectually process symbols, pictures, objects and information in a way which **permits the mind to generate the reality** of what is being represented” (Florida’s Blueprint 2000, 1992).

“... A student will demonstrate the ability to think critically, **creatively and reflectively** in making decisions and solving problems” (Oregon’s Certificate of Initial Mastery, 1991).

“All students demonstrate **care-giving skills** and evaluate, in all settings, appropriate child care practices necessary to nurture children based on child development theory” (Pennsylvania’s Student Learning Outcomes, Draft, 1991 (p. 19).

Sandra Feldman, president of the AFT, used BRT rhetoric at the union’s 1998 Convention to define the agenda for the AFT’s members: “we must do everything *within our power* to make turning around low-performing schools – improving all schools – the top agenda of every community in this nation!” [my italics] (Feldman, 1999). She assured her audience that in spite of the lack of support for teachers, “education reform is working! Academic standards and requirements are up, student attendance is up, dropout rates are down, and our students are achieving at much higher levels.” While implicitly acknowledging the small box within which teachers are allowed to move, Feldman apparently believes, like Chase, that by asking for professional responsibilities, perhaps unions might be allowed more power. Feldman’s agenda is not for teachers to claim the right to bargain collectively over textbook selection, standard setting, or school design, but for teachers to demand that they be involved in the hiring process through “peer review and intervention programs.” This would result in the “professionalizing [of] dismissal proceedings” (Feldman, 1999).

By abandoning the fight over the goals of education and allowing themselves to be confined to arguing for increased professionalism (a wedge issue leading to parent alienation), Feldman and Chase may be responding to the pressure that editorialists exert over public debate. One example of this kind of pressure is revealed in a *New York Times* editorial (4/24/00; p. A20). The editors express satisfaction that the AFT

... is rushing to cast itself as an agent of change [i.e., promoting the goals of the high stakes testing agenda] instead of an advocate of the status quo. A new

report from the teachers' union embraces stronger teacher training and breaks with a longstanding union tradition by calling for more rigorous tests for prospective teachers. The report is encouraging, but it will take more than rhetoric for the A.F.T. and its sister union, the National Education Association, to be seen as reformers.

The editors identify the major items in the AFT's report with approval, items that are completely consistent with BRT's professional development goals as identified in their policy statement, the *Nine Essentials Components*. The editorial ends with a warning to the leadership of both national unions that they need to discipline their membership so every teacher lines up behind the enforcement of "rigorous tests" for teacher credential programs and closing the "loopholes allowing teachers who fail the exams to enter the classroom anyway."

The proposed changes will take years to phase in. Meanwhile, the two biggest teachers' unions have an important role to play The unions can take an open-minded approach to special incentives and new assignment strategies, and can crackdown on local unions that resist vitally needed reforms.

That the editors feel a need to call for a "crackdown on local unions" indicates that many teachers are not happy with the official position taken by its leadership on high-stakes testing reform.

The standards movement is one in which the principles of TQM are to be put in place. In site councils or Quality Management Councils, teachers are to become manager/workers while upper management maintains control of the goals of education. When business leaders want students to "think critically" they want students to be able to "analyze," "synthesize," and "apply" given bodies of knowledge and theories. They do not want students to *evaluate* what is presented to them in school, to examine the purposes for which various bodies of knowledge are presented, or to question the values on which competitive testing is based. The concept of citizenship is never defined and rarely referred to in BRT documents. "Skills necessary for the workplace" is their mantra. It is the sphere of work, and not political or social life, that is defined as the "real world." The BRT network has succeeded in disciplining the union leadership. Those teachers who do not succumb to "crackdowns" remain politically powerless unless they can ally with parents and students.

Parental Opposition and Its Cooptation

Business and the professional educational leadership see parent opposition to the standards as one of the reasons for the initial failure of the standards movement. In order to challenge such opposition, various arguments are made by systemic reformers to motivate parents to support high-stakes testing. In October 1999, California Governor Gray Davis, in an op-ed piece, complained about a recent survey result that showed parents to be “generally satisfied with the quality of their children’s education.” Davis argued that “tests scores show otherwise. Parents must throw off their complacency.” Maureen Steinbruner in an op-ed piece (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1999) acknowledged the existence of parental opposition, yet framed systemic reform (by “politicians and experts”) positively, as an attempt to “challenge children” – one variation on the “high standards for all” theme. Apparently, Steinbruner believes that a little more “support” might go a long way.

[There is] a great ‘disconnect’ today between politicians and experts, on the one hand, and citizens, on the other, over how American schools are doing Business and government leaders want school systems that challenge children. The public, in contrast, sees kids as overly challenged without enough support, either at home or in school. Arguments over what government should do make voters frustrated and annoyed.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) also point to polls that reveal parents having favorable views of their own children’s education. Even more telling, a 1992 poll revealed that 57 percent want school boards to have more control of education than the national or state governments (pp. 32–33). To counter community concerns over the loss of influence over the goals of education, George W. Bush and the Republican Party’s used the BRT rhetoric of “local control” of schools during the 2000 election campaign. Campaign speakers, however, rarely defined what they mean by “local control.”

The closest any parent organization has come to translating their concern over the loss of control over educational policy into active opposition are in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts’ statewide, standardized test, called the MCAS, has provoked the creation of a parents’ organization call MassParents, which has joined the Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE), Boycotting MCAS and FairTest. MassParents seems to be the most vocal parent group against the state test but pulls back at condemning all standardized testing as inherently problematic. Using a web page

(www.egroups.com/group/care) and a listserv (care@egroups.com), members of CARE are coordinating opposition to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Opposition includes letters to state legislatures and visits with them in an attempt to repeal the legislation that created MCAS. Many coalition members start petition drives or create brochures and hand them out on street corners before school and school board meetings. Their activity has encouraged numerous school boards in Massachusetts to pass resolutions similar to the one passed in July 2000 by the Berkshire Regional School District:

1. WHEREAS an MCAS program as currently devised will increase high school dropout rates, discourage some middle and high school students who perform at marginal levels, and unnecessarily frustrate some younger children, especially those with special needs, who are unable to succeed in the challenging MCAS test, and
2. Whereas there is evidence that states that have implemented education reform without high-stakes [testing that links passage to graduation] are having better results in providing academic performance than states that have voted high-stakes testing,
3. Now, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee opposes the use of a passing grade on the 10th grade Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS tests as a requirement for graduation from high school, and
4. In ACCORDANCE WITH THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT, REQUIRING A VARIETY OF ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE, now BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great and General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, urge the Board of Education to not link MCAS test results with the granting of high school diplomas and the aforementioned groups lobby for legislation that will prohibit the use of MCAS test results for this purpose (from the CARE listserv July 24, 2000).

CARE is an unusual organization. More common is the pattern of parental involvement established in Texas. Dennis Shirley (1997) has chronicled the development of community organizing by the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) since 1979 and its eventual partnership with the Texas Education Association in 1992 to create 21 “Alliance Schools.”⁵³ Although the IAF began its work in Texas as an attempt to help communities take back control over their lives from “huge corporations, the mass media,” and “benevolent government,” it ended up promoting the educational reform agenda promoted by these very institutions. This is a testament to the effectiveness of the

⁵³ All page references in this section are from Shirley’s book.

systemic reformers' structural design of its reforms – by removing goal-setting functions from local control, local organizers feel unable to help parents address the content and methods teachers use in the classroom. Beginning in 1986, Morningside Elementary School in Fort Worth, Texas, was the pilot for the Alliance Schools. The pilot project was funded by the state government, local business leaders, and foundations (p. 100). The money was spent on an organizing staff who identified and trained local leaders through church “education committees”, home visits and training sessions.

The visitations and training sessions gradually changed Morningside from a school with no ties to the community to a fulcrum of parental involvement. Many parents had never understood the actual course of study for their children in the school or how their children were assessed. ACT leaders prepared training sessions to teach the parents about the structure of the school and to advise them about ways they could reinforce activities at home. *At this stage, abstract debates about the legitimacy of the curriculum or the problems of Texas' standardized tests were avoided; the focus was on helping parents to understand the given realities of the school and how they could assist their children within that framework* (p. 109). (my emphasis)

As long as local organizers stay away from addressing the “legitimacy of the curriculum or the problems of Texas' standardized tests,” they could expect corporate foundations to continue to support them. In 1990, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to fund the training of organizers to spread the success of Morningside (p. 115).

Shirley provides example by which parental desires for educational reform was diverted because IAF organizers were not willing to allow the parents to debate the goals of education. In 1994, parental opposition to tracking in El Paso, Texas, was channeled by corporate-funded IAF community organizers into a renewed commitment to the “traditional curriculum.”

The parents of children at Alamo Elementary School knew that for many years, through some slow, opaque, and seemingly inexorable process, their children always ended up tracked to the lowest level when they arrived in middle school and high school. The parents refused to believe that that tracking was a reflection of students' natural abilities rather than the culture of their schools, but they were reticent to pin responsibility on their children's teachers and principal. Working with EPISO organizers and leaders, Alamo parents decided to *address the problem of academic standards* by looking neither to the “Essential Elements” mandated by the TEA nor to the curriculum experts of the El Paso Independent School District. They decided that they wanted to play a major role in setting the curriculum standards for the school themselves. In a series of house meetings, parents discussed what they wanted their children to know at the end of each grade level. [School staff and IAF organizers participated in but did not lead the discussions.] The parents would need time and a supportive

environment to develop their leadership and to establish those curricular goals which most deeply emanated from their own thoughts and experiences.

What kinds of curricular themes did the parents identify? Parents wanted their children to be literate and skilled in arithmetic, science, and social studies. *As the conversations evolved, there was an almost perfect overlapping between the parents' curriculum and that which traditionally was taught at Alamo* (p. 211) [my emphasis].

Shirley explains that IAF organizers began discussions with the parents over educational reform by presenting the parents with the “ugly realities” that their children “need to acquire the education which will enable them to become skilled laborers or professionals” instead of “low wage service sector jobs” (p. 24). As I explained in Chapter 2, this is the argument the BRT makes to support the need for systemic reform and it is a highly debatable one. By setting the goals of education essentially off limits, the IAF organizers, like the BRT has done throughout the nation, severely narrowed the options from which content and instruction can be chosen. Given the goals of education as “ugly realities,” IAF organizers prevented parents from considering education as a process by which they and their children could learn how to change the “ugly realities.” It is somewhat surprising that IAF organizers allowed this to happen given their commitment to helping communities articulate “curricular goals which most deeply emanate from their own thoughts and experiences.” The organizers, presumably, were aware of the teachings of Paulo Freire whose work with poor and working class communities in South America resulted in very different educational goals and practices than what had been “traditionally taught” in the villages.⁵⁴

The Cooptation of Educational Researchers and Teachers

Many educational researchers face a dilemma. Their research depends on funding from the corporate world and the federal government, both of whom are dedicated to promoting comprehensive school reform, high-stakes testing or the New Standards Movement — all three of which are euphemisms for BRT’s agenda. In this section, I provide examples of how researchers associated either with a university or with regional educational laboratories essentially end up as technocrats trying to find ways to

⁵⁴ See Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

implement the nine *Essential Components of a Successful School System*.⁵⁵ The first example explores the effect of the partnership between the Annenberg Institute and the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative.

The BRT agenda has influenced the goals of many research organizations like the Bay Area Schools Reform Collaborative (BASRC). BRT's "essential components" of high standards, "rigorous" and "measurable" assessment aligned with those standards, the focus on every student, parent involvement, teacher development and technology are fundamental to BASRC's research and development priorities and to BASRC's definition of "Core Reform Issues." This is not surprising given that the Hewlett and Annenberg Foundations (who are among the most generous sources of funds for national systemic reform) are BASRC's principal funders.

BASRC funds research and development in six areas that are "of critical importance to finding better methods and more effective responses to the new challenges that face our schools." The areas are "school-to-career approaches," technology, professional development, teacher practice, "equitable outcomes"⁵⁶ on standardized tests and support for school reform leaders (BASRC, 1999a). BASRC also has established a

⁵⁵ Kirst (2000) unwittingly describes the process by which many researchers become supporters of the BRT educational legislative agenda. He argues that educational researchers can influence state legislative policy if they choose "issues that have a high probability of state legislative action within a one or two-year time frame" (p. 3). In order to get the ear of a legislator or staff person one should become part of a "natural network" whose "common mission . . . reinforces potential relevance". These networks are formed through personal, face-to-face relationships cultivated through previous employment in state government, that is, having worked already in the state department of education. But even if one gains access to legislators and their staff members by developing personal relationships, it is still important, Kirst cautions, to present information in a way "that users are least threatened and purveyors are seen as trusted colleagues" (Kirst, 2000). Described like this, it is little wonder that the BRT educational agenda was translated into state legislation with little alteration.

⁵⁶ Linda McNeil (2000) studied the impact of the high-stakes testing agenda in Houston, Texas. She found that in the pursuit of "equitable outcomes" (attempts to raise the test scores of poor and minority students to the levels of middle-class whites and Asian Americans), school administrators were forcing teachers to abandon "rich and authentic" curricula for a "dumbed-down, test-prep" course of study (see Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, I attempt to demonstrate that the euphemisms of "equitable access," "equitable outcomes," "equity and excellence," and "high standards for all" mask an insidious development – the reinstatement of the principle "separate but equal", i.e., the growing resegregation of our nation's schools.

club to which individual schools can apply “through a rigorous portfolio process.” To qualify as a BASRC member one must already “show concrete evidence of effort in” the areas of “quality teaching,” high standards, “partnerships with key stakeholders” [local business leaders], “systems to manage the change process,” and “developing a sense of professional community and internalized accountability among teachers” (BASRC, 1999b; Leadership).

The benefits of being accepted as a BASRC member are access to facilitators and the potential for funding. North Campus Continuation High received a Hewlett-Annenberg Leadership school grant when the school established a partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce to develop a performance assessment matrix that reflected the skill requirements of local businesses (BASRC, 1999b; Depth). Washington Science Elementary School, a magnet school in Point Richmond, received \$380,000 over four years for building a community culture committed to increasing test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (BASRC, 1999b; Breadth). Teachers in membership schools are offered grant money to go to professional development workshops. The money is offered “with no strings attached. Interested teachers have gone together to conferences on subjects like laptop instruction and assessment” (BASRC, 1999b; Leadership).

Fremont High School in Sunnyvale is BASRC’s showcase “Leadership School.” Its economic and ethnic diversity (60 different languages) make it the “picture of what California - and the rest of the country - will look like in the next century.” Its success in implementing high standards has made it a must stop for international educators. It even attracted the attention of Linda Darling-Hammond and a Central Park East teacher. The reason for its success, according to BASRC, is that it “looks at student data to diagnose what is and isn’t working” — a fundamental requirement in BRT’s theory of educational reform. When looking at the “data,” the Fremont staff discovered low test scores in math, science, and English, so it was decided to reformulate the daily schedule to give students more time for instruction in those subjects. But Fremont High doesn’t want to rely on test scores only. It has programs to “increase student input on campus.” Increasing student as well as teacher “input” is done because “research shows that democratically run schools increase student achievement” (BASRC, 1999b; Leadership). One might question how “democratic” the school decision-making can be when the goals

of education are decided by an interlocking network consisting of BRT members, state governors, and foundational support for IEL studies and programs.

The experiences of Gabriel Proo⁵⁷, an elementary teacher at Belle Air Elementary School (2000 – 1), suggests that BASRC’s emphasis on “data-driven reform” has made test scores a blunt instrument by which teachers are deskilled and students are humiliated. Although his account is only one teacher’s testimony, it provides a vivid and concrete illustration of the effect of “data driven decision-making” when part of systemic reform. Before deciding to teach, Gabe had been a paralegal for seven years, a purchasing agent for five years. He has a BA in Spanish, a multi cultural credential from San Francisco State University, and a Masters in Spanish Literature. He started teaching in a middle school in Los Angeles (Spring, 1994) then moved to San Francisco to teach in Aptos Middle School (1994-95), then to Oakland’s LaFayette Elementary (1996-97) and Hoover Elementary (1997-2000).⁵⁸

When the principal of Belle Air interviewed Gabe in the spring of 2000, she told him that every teacher at the school was expected to attend a three-day retreat in June and a two-day retreat in August. The purpose of these retreats was to create a “site plan” to improve test scores at Belle Air. When Gabe arrived at Asilomar State Park near Monterey for the June retreat, he learned that he was one of approximately sixty teachers attending. They were part of a BASRC “cluster” of six schools. Gabe was stunned at the intensity of the “gung-ho” enthusiasm of the BASRC-trained facilitators who ran the three-day retreat. He said it felt like a marketing workshop. He was being sold on using test scores as the basis of the “cycle of inquiry.” This eventually would become the “cyclone of inquiry” since the process of diagnosis and “cure” was to be repeated until the students’ test scores improved. (Interestingly, Gabe could not remember the five or six steps of the “cycle.”)

For three days, the teachers were “taught” how to analyze test data. They were given the scores at Belle Air from the previous year and asked, “What do you see?” The teachers dutifully pointed out “gaps in performance,” for example, a precipitous drop

⁵⁷ I interviewed Gabe on October 15, 2001.

⁵⁸ Gabe moved every year for different reasons some personal, some professional. He left Aptos and LaFayette because of “bad” and “crazy” principals, respectively. He has retired from teaching because his experiences at Belle Air ruined his health.

from third grade to fourth grade. There was neither discussion of test score validity, reliability or accuracy nor mention of the Joint Committee on Testing's *Code of Practice*. There was no discussion as to why scores should be reported as a range and not a single number or why the American Psychological Association has argued that important decisions about students should never be made on basis of test scores alone. What was impressed upon the teachers was that where there was a gap or disparity in test scores, the "cure" should be applied.

The "cure" consisted of teaching only math and English during the first four hours of school. The teachers were handed the curriculum that they were to follow during those four hours – the phonics-based *Open Court* and *Math Steps*. The teachers were told explicitly to not use any other subjects to help teach the reading and computation skills outlined in the given curriculum. Teacher manuals were distributed to help teachers implement the "cyclone of inquiry" and to "customize" the standard curriculum when students failed to learn it (Gabe said that there was no time to give students the individual attention they needed). Gabe asked why he couldn't use his Spanish in the classroom to help the Spanish speaking students understand what they were supposed to do and learn. The only answer he received was that instruction always had to be in English because the tests were in English. During the school year, when Gabe didn't understand the teacher manuals, his requests for explanation were ignored, so he started to lie about what he was doing in the classroom.

A fundamental part of the BASRC "site plan" included testing the students three times a year. The teachers were expected to administer five tests per student in the fall, five more in the winter and five again in the spring. These tests were in addition to the SAT9 and other practice tests that the principal told the teachers to go out and buy and administer throughout the year ("April was all tests"). Several of the five-test battery that BASRC provided (only one copy of each so the teacher had to make copies for each of their ~150 students) had to be administered individually. This meant that while Gabe was giving a test to one child, he was unable to monitor the other students in the class (who necessarily were unruly because the test prep materials they were working on did not hold their interest). Students persistently failed to come to school the day they were supposed to be given the test and had to be tracked down later. Gabe argued that the

enormous administrative load that all the testing required of him (teaching had lost its beauty and was now “just grading papers and tests”), made him unable to ensure that all the children were tested. Out of sheer frustration, Gabe began to invent test scores for those students who he failed to track down. One of the many sources of frustration for Gabe was watching students sit in silent humiliation as he administered the tests. Many students didn’t speak English well enough to even understand what was being asked of them by the test. As Gabe followed the curriculum plans of *Open Court* and *Math Steps* and administered practice test after practice test, the students became “bored to tears” and discipline problems escalated.

I asked Gabe if the test scores of his students went up at the end of the year. He said “Yes, but another school got the extra cash from the state. We were demoralized because we worked just as hard as they did.” Gabe’s experiences at Belle Air were far more stressful than those at the previous schools at which he taught (experiences which included dealing with a “race riot” at Aptos Elementary school). It was only during this last year that Gabe felt his health decline dramatically. He is hesitant to cite the intensity of the BASRC “site plan” as his reason for leaving the teaching profession since other factors exacerbated the anxieties created by implementing a test-based curriculum. Other factors identified by Gabe as contributing the stress he felt: no access to bilingual scaffolding materials (which he had in Oakland); no library or playground (a new school was being built on the space around them); the absence of the principal one out of every 2 days (she complained of migraines and said she was attending BASRC meetings she eventually told Gabe that he “was the problem”); an all white faculty who “patronized” their minority students (Gabe was the only Spanish-speaking member of the faculty); no computer specialist; no science manipulatives and the school secretary was fired early on in the year (the principal was never around to provide initial training).

Gabe’s experiences echo the research of Linda McNeil (2000)⁵⁹ and belie BASRC’s abstract claims that “democratic decision-making” is part of their reform efforts. His experiences, perhaps, explain why many veteran teachers are increasingly

⁵⁹ See reference to McNeil’s research in Chapter 4, pages 108–109 in this paper in which she argues that “low-performing schools” are targeted with a “test prep” curriculum resulting in the deskilling and dumbing down of at risk students.

choosing early retirement rather than accept working within the intensified culture of testing that pervades those schools that submit to the kinds of special programs offered by so-called research-based, professionally staffed educational laboratories. Gabe said he chose to retire rather than continue to experience the contradictions inherent in systemic reform. For example, the principal at Belle Air sent Gabe to a three-day workshop on how to teach learning disabled students. He agreed to go in spite of knowing that he would not be able to use the techniques he learned because they “went against the BASRC program . . . in BASRC, there are no LD students.”

California Tomorrow (CT) promotes workshops similar to the one Gabe went to. CT is a nonprofit organization partnered with IEL and whose publications appear in the bibliographies of the Far West Laboratory newsletters. Far West Laboratory is the parent organization of BASRC. In 1994, California Tomorrow submitted to the California state legislature an “Executive Summary” of its research based upon several “demonstration sites.” The “Summary” consisted of 12 “conclusions” and 61 “recommendations.” Below are two of the recommendations that CT hoped the state legislature would act upon.

Recommendation #4 – Create and fund a major five-year professional development campaign with the goal of supporting mainstream teachers and administrators to develop the expertise needed to teach in a diverse society. These skills include: knowledge of second language acquisition processes and supports for students through the process; familiarity with a wide range of materials about different cultures and historical periods to enable teachers to build inclusive curricula; approaches to creating a climate supportive of diversity; exposure to the major cultures and national backgrounds of the student population of California; and strategies for working in partnership with other children and family agencies (Connor and Melendez, 1994: p. 52).

Recommendation #7 – Invest in the development of a data-driven accountability system that builds upon existing data and management information systems and holds schools accountable for both high-level standards and equitable student achievement and participation. The accountability system must promote self-examination of sub-aggregated data at the school site level, and include three basic components: incentives for schools to improve their performance, technical assistance and professional development for schools engaged in good faith efforts but not sufficiently improving, and reasonable sanctions for those schools which ultimately fail to improve over prolonged periods of time (Connor and Melendez, 1994: p. 53)

There is no indication anywhere in the document of an awareness of the potential conflicts (realized at Belle Air if not other schools) between recommendations #4 and #7.

Nor is there any indication of an understanding that the emphasis on “data-driven accountability” can and has successfully reduced issues of diversity and equity (issues typically raised at the community level) to test score results (issues raised at the corporate level).

The corporate funders of research organizations like BASRC and Far West Laboratory have succeeded in persuading the employees of these organizations to incorporate the goals of systemic reform into their research. In some cases, the incorporation turns into re-orientation. For example, one researcher who had a position of leadership in CT (California Tomorrow) had been a proponent of typical community concerns: bilingual education, student empowerment, and the ways in which the public school system force non-Anglo students to abandon their home cultures. But after receiving a five-year Mellon grant, her research turned to promoting the BRT agenda: “finding ways to use data and inquiry for accountability purposes, developing standards and exit criteria for ESL classes and increasing access to academic classes” as well as finding new models of professional development that would support data-driven decision-making. She became involved in finding ways to help immigrant children learn English in order to master academic content so as to qualify for college (UCSB, 1998). This, by itself, is a laudable goal. But if BRT is able to control what “academic content” is taught, then other goals — empowerment, divergent thinking, problem-identifying skills, care-taking skill, even preserving bicultural identities — cannot be pursued in the school system or even supported by it.

Dennis Shirley’s (1997) research⁶⁰ also seems to have been influenced by his funders — the Mellon and Ford foundations. Shirley states that his research is motivated by the need to

learn about forms of community self-mobilization and political action that not only confront the despair which haunts our urban schools, but also address Kozol’s question about the presence of the ghetto itself (p. 4).

Jonathan Kozol believes that teachers should not just teach in the ghetto but to inquire, with their students, as to why the ghetto exists. The rest of Shirley’s book never returns to Kozol’s question but focuses instead on the ways in which community organizers need

⁶⁰ Described above (at the end of the “parental co-optation section in this chapter).

to learn how to better “enhance academic achievement,” i.e., increase scores on the statewide mandated standardized test. It is rather surprising that Shirley chose to focus on academic achievement and standardized testing. For he apparently shares many educational researchers’ reluctance to support the concept of a single test score’s determining whether a student has achieved goals set for her by state curricular standards. Nor does Shirley question whether the tests themselves contribute to the “presence of the ghetto.” Shirley buries in a footnote his observation that

many convincing studies have been conducted by educators who warn about the reductionist nature of standardized test scores. Regrettably, some of the newer and more promising forms of assessment, which focus on exhibitions, demonstrations, and performances have not been in place for enough time to measure their efficacy in promoting higher order thinking skills (Shirley, 1997; p. 310).⁶¹

The focus of Shirley’s research is on the means by which the differing cultures of school and home in poor, urban school districts can be fused so students can better develop the “cognitive skills” they need in order to get the better jobs in the New Economy. Shirley notes that after four years of community organizing in support of the Texas state exam, the principal of a Fort Worth elementary school, in 1990,

confessed that a key part of her strategy to improve test scores focused on recitation and memorization – skills that are valuable components of cognitive development but that need to be balanced with higher order thinking skills involving creative expression, synthesis, and evaluation to enhance children’s many sided development (Shirley, 1997; p. 114).

Shirley points out that teaching to the test only worsened in 1994, when the new TAAS test was made public and schools began to build their curricula around the test (p. 215). In spite of these and other problems, Shirley feels compelled to use the test scores as the means to evaluate his ethnographic/historical “independent variables.”⁶²

⁶¹ One of the things that standards advocates like about nationally normed, multiple choice tests is their ability to make fine distinctions, e.g., between an 86 percent and an 87 percent. Alternative assessments do not do this as well nor are portfolio or performance assessment as reliable as commercial, standardized multiple choice tests. For these reasons, I don’t believe that it will matter how long these alternative forms are in place since standards advocates want the better sorting capabilities of the multiple choice tests.

⁶² Shirley’s research is a series of case studies. He wishes to test the “social capital theory” of Jane Jacobs, Glen Loury, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam, which “suggests that if reformers seek to improve schools, they need to cultivate generalized

One cannot know to what degree community-based organizations and the Alliance Schools network operate as independent variables in the data [TAAS scores from 1990 – 96] . . . there are many limitations on the test scores. Nonetheless, they do provide *one resource* for attempting to gauge academic progress. Recognizing the above qualifications, one may explore the TAAS results to ascertain if they provide clues about the development of the Alliance Schools (pp. 215 – 16) [my emphasis].

In spite of admitting the impossibility of drawing conclusions, Shirley draws them anyway.

What were the factors that promoted the leap in scores at Davis and Roosevelt [High Schools from 1993 – 96]? Davis’s achievement . . . was catalyzed by an unusual matrix of community support, innovative curricular and scheduling⁶³ reforms, and an increasingly academic focus in the school (p. 217).

Shirley is conflicted. His research reinforces the legitimacy of tests by using them as his measurement device. Yet, at the same time, he understands not only the limited validity of tests but also their destructive consequences as demonstrated by the confession of the principal of the Ft. Worth elementary school.

reciprocity and social trust in such a manner that virtuous circles replace vicious ones” (p. 27). He describes his books as follows: “I first describe the economic dislocations, decline in political participation, and social disorganization which characterize our current national predicament. Next, I provide background on the origins of the Industrial Areas Foundation in Texas, the nature of the organizations’ philosophy of education, and its strategies of community organizing around issues of school change and neighborhood development. The narrative then moves to case studies in which local organizations of the Texas IAF have sought to mobilize low-income citizens to forge new kinds of social networks among parents, clergy, parishioners, teachers, administrators, and civic leaders” (p. 9).

⁶³ The innovations are identified in Chapter 4: “intensive summer courses to prepare [the students] for college preparatory courses in their high school” (p. 122); Tenneco Corporation offered \$1000 per year college scholarships for every Davis high school student who could maintain a 2.5 grade point average and attend two month long summer institutes at the University of Houston for which they were paid \$150 a session; block scheduling (90 minute classes, 15 minute intersessions; an hour for lunch); alignment of feeder schools with high school curriculum; and thirty thousand hours of professional development “in new forms of instruction and curriculum development” – “hands-on mathematics, collaborative approaches to reading, student self-discipline and self-governance” paid for by Tenneco and its corporate allies (pp. 128-29). Tenneco’s scholarship program was cited by the BRT as one of several “Exemplary Corporate Policies and Practices to Improve Education” on page 20 of Agents of Change (Wentworth, 1993)

The rhetoric of union leaders, the concerns of parents, the implementation workshops of regional laboratories and educational researchers have all lined up behind systemic reform. High-stakes testing, enforced by content standards and written by state committees, is a given. It is a framework within which everyone, it seems, feels they must work. Otherwise, they risk being accused of not wanting every student to be “successful.” Very few are asking “successful at doing what?” At getting a good job? But there are only a small percentage of “good jobs” in the U.S. economy. At competing for a good job? The number of losers will still be the same regardless of how many more skilled people are produced by the schools. Systemic reformers have successfully stifled such questions by painting their critics as people who don’t believe in “high standards for all” and succeed in ending the debate there. Teachers are persuaded to support systemic reform because they are promised new responsibilities that will supposedly increase their status. Parents are persuaded to support systemic reform because they are told that student failure in the past was due to lazy, no-good teachers who didn’t have high expectations of their students. Educational researchers support systemic reform because, otherwise, they cannot get a job. Once again, the very few in this country have managed to give marching orders to the many.

Chapter 4: Business Influence on the Schools at the Local Level

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I identified the national Business Roundtable as the originators of the high-stakes testing agenda and began to show how BRT leaders have created a network of organizations to implement their agenda. In Chapter 3, I described how effective such a network has been at co-opting union leadership, parents, community organizers, educational researchers, and teachers. In this chapter, I will show how state BRT organizations have been able to influence district policy through the state government as well as through city organizations. This chapter establishes a pattern of development that the last three chapters will explore in greater detail through the example of how systemic reform in California (Chapter 6) influenced district policy in San Francisco (Chapter 7) which in turn prevented the governance team of Mission High School from pursuing community-based reform (Chapter 8).

This Chapter 4 also serves to illustrate the process by which business leaders generated a consensus behind the agenda of systemic reform as well as identifying further strands of the systemic reform network. Corporate presidents, chairs and CEOs are not a monolithic entity. They debate and disagree with each other — the business community even more so. Nevertheless, the boast made by Edward Rust that the BRT has taken the lead “in developing a Common Agenda for reform endorsed by the business community” is not an idle one (Rust, 1999). In this chapter, some of the differences among business leaders will be revealed as well as the strategies used to forge a “unified voice.” The development of comprehensive systemic reform, high-stakes testing, or the New Standards Movement (they all refer to BRT’s *Nine Essential Components*) has developed in fits and starts in different parts of the country and has taken various routes to the same end. This is true for Houston, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Boston, Massachusetts.

In Houston, Texas, the campaign for systemic reform began in 1989 with the election of a pro-business majority on the school board. In 1991, the school board hired a new superintendent who promised to implement the board’s goal of linking performance

with assessment. During the same year, the state's BRT organizations had succeeded in persuading the state legislature to pass the first of a series of bills that ultimately established the BRT agenda in Texas and in Houston. But the road to systemic reform was not smooth. Business leaders were not always in agreement over the definition of reform. Disagreements arose over performance assessment, vouchers, privatization of school services and how much money should be raised through bond votes. By 1996, however, effective coordination was achieved among business and school organizations so that state mandated systemic reform could be implemented at the district level.

Systemic reform in North Carolina began in 1985 with the formation of the business-dominated Public School Forum (PSF). The Forum sponsored a series of studies, the second of which provided the blueprint for the adoption, in 1989, of North Carolina's School Improvement and Accountability Act. In 1991, the national BRT organization and the federal government developed formal ties to PSF, thus making it a de facto headquarters of systemic reform in the southeast part of the U.S. As such, PSF coordinated a regional network of supporting organizations, including the Public Education Network (PEN), North Carolina Partnerships, and NC's BRT organization, Education: Everybody's Business Coalition (EEBC). In 1991, the business community of Charlotte, North Carolina, founded the Charlotte-Mecklenberg Education Foundation (CMEF) to be able to help the district implement state-mandated systemic reform. One of the effects of such reform in Charlotte was the elimination of community influence in educational decisions. Two manifestations of this (and perhaps two halves of the same walnut) were the end of Charlotte's historic desegregation plans and the creation of a publicly funded Education Village for the children of those working in IBM's corporate headquarters.

Pittsburgh's history is one dominated by its location at the juncture of three major rivers in the midst of coal country. Perhaps because of its history of industrial strife and the working class threat to the business leadership at the start of the Great Depression, Richard K. Mellon organized some of the leading industrialists of the 1930s to form the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD). This organization dominated Pittsburgh politics from the 1930s to the 1960s. In 1978, ACCD created the Allegheny Conference Education Fund (ACEF) to develop a program of standards-based

reform. In 1992, the ACEF was absorbed by the “implementing agency” of ACCD, the Allegheny Policy Council. The APC established a close working relationship with the superintendent of the city’s schools, Louise Brennan. During the 1990s, a national network supporting systemic reform emerged, which the APC and Brennan leaned on for resources and support. In 1993, the state legislature required districts to adhere to state standards. That same year, Brennan hired staff from the Pittsburgh Council on Public Education to help her implement standards-based reforms. By 1998, PCPE had joined the national Public Education Network funded by the Annenberg Center at Brown University.

Before arriving at a national agenda in 1989, business leaders experimented with a variety of business/school partnerships. Through these partnerships, business leaders expected schools to raise student test scores by a set amount. In return, the business leaders promised jobs and college placement opportunities. Boston business leaders, like those in other cities, continued to look for ways to influence school reform without having to negotiate in the public arena through public institutions like school boards. Business preferred to exercise its considerable power behind the scenes. From 1987 to 1991, business was able to engineer the replacement of an elected school board with one appointed by the mayor. In 1996, the appointed school board appointed a new superintendent who vowed to implement standards-based reform based on standardized test scores. In 1988, the state’s business leaders had founded a BRT-affiliated organization called the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. The MBAE persuaded the state legislature to pass the Education Act of 1993 establishing state standards, a state test, rewards and sanctions, and site councils. By 1999, state systemic reform had taken root in the Boston public schools provoking a backlash against the use of test scores as the only piece of data driving educational decisions in the state.

Houston, Texas⁶⁴

Every state has its own Roundtable organization. Each state BRT either takes the leadership in pushing the state government to adopt the *Nine Essential Components*, as in California, or creates, as in Texas, organizations that deal exclusively with the BRT educational agenda. In Texas, the Texas

⁶⁴ Please refer to Figure 4.1 (page 100) while reading this section.

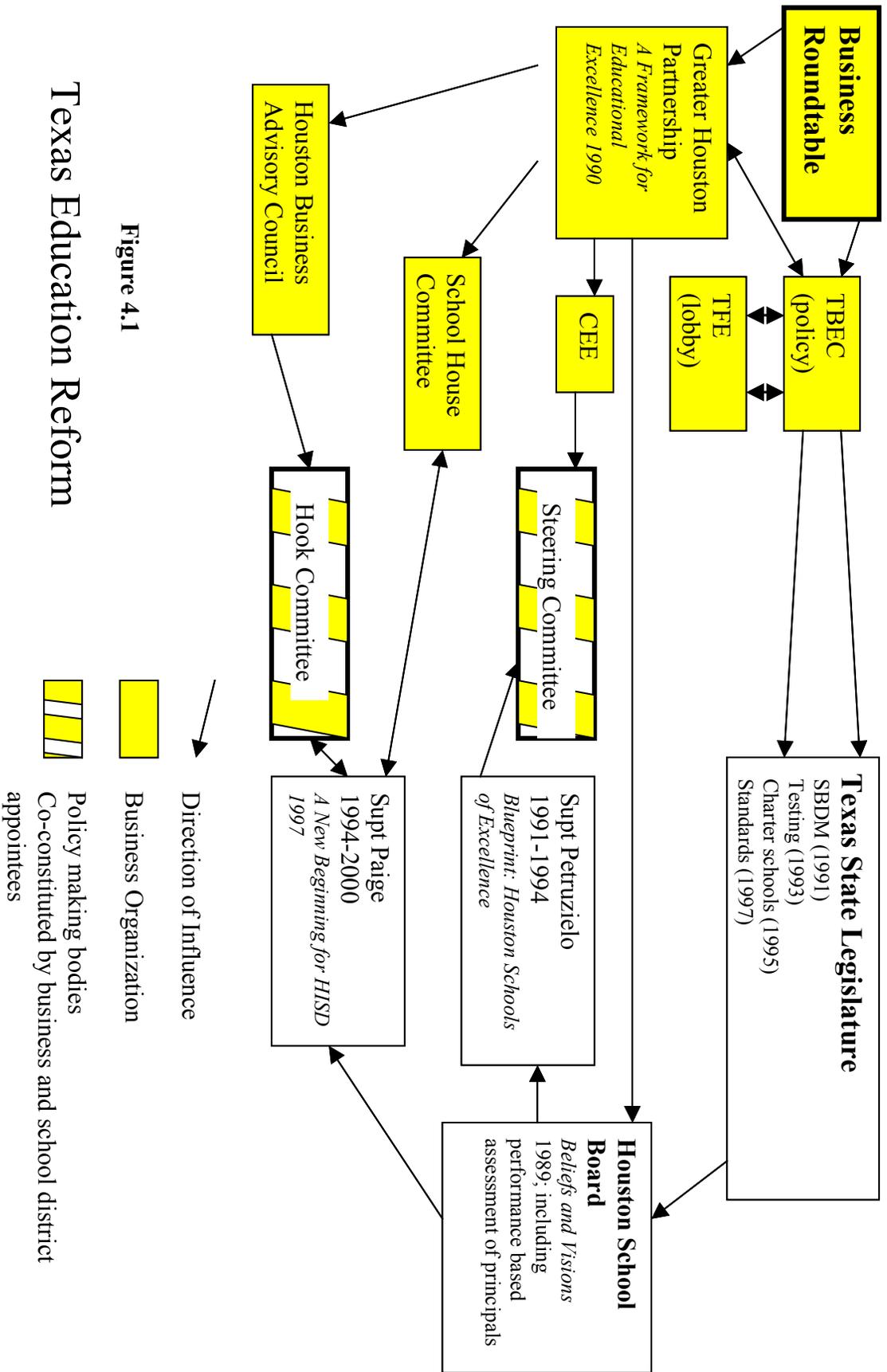


Figure 4.1

Texas Education Reform

Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) and the Texans for Education (TFE) were established in 1989 to “provide a mechanism through which business leaders can . . . influence the direction of state education policy and stimulate local school-improvement activities” (www.tbec.org/history). Reflecting the specific nature of Texas politics, Texas corporate leaders decided to form two organizations to achieve its aims instead of one. One organization, the TBEC, decided to cultivate a neutral image of the policy think tank “objectively” analyzing research upon which legislative policy could be written. One might consider the TBEC as the “good cop.” The TBEC describes how it has wrapped its agenda in a cloak of “objectivity.” In this way, policy and program suggestions issuing forth from the “TBEC contribution stream” could be directly introduced by legislators without the appearance of undue influence.

From the beginning, TBEC members believed it was important that the organization not lobby because there were programs the organization wanted to implement, policy issues which it wanted to objectively analyze, and the TBEC contribution stream was targeted for these purposes (www.tbec.org/history).

Meanwhile, the second organization, the TFE (the “bad cop”), would ensure that the legislators remain firmly behind TBEC policy initiatives in spite of their unpopularity with other groups.

Many of the same corporations and individuals who founded TBEC, however, also formed Texans for Education (TFE), a business lobbying group, to give them the capability to lobby for their interests on education matters. They [the TBEC founders] believed this was important because candidates who were helpful to the business community with their policy goals in education were periodically sustaining attacks for their views, so that they needed the business community’s support (www.tbec.org/history) [my italics].

These two statewide corporate organizations were incorporated into a national business-led educational network around 1990.⁶⁵ How the Business Roundtable organization engineered coordinated activities with state organizations is suggested by TBEC’s own history of itself on its webpage. Accordingly, the TBEC existed as a statewide organization with no formal ties to the national group. Around 1989, the executive committee of the Business Roundtable assigned Tenneco (a national energy company whose headquarters was in Texas) the responsibility of coming up with a plan

⁶⁵ I am referring here to the network of organizations described earlier – BRT, BCER, IEL, Public Agenda, Achieve, ECS, and regional research laboratories.

to “improve” education in Texas. The centerpiece of this plan was for the Business Roundtable to fund TFE so it could lobby the state legislature and professional educators consistently throughout the year, instead of merely as a response to educational issues as they emerged. This highly structured support

allowed business professionals and educators to begin and to continue a constructive dialogue about how to . . . *successfully advocate and support reforms that would otherwise have become mired in infighting and controversy* (www.tbec.org/history) [my italics].

In other words, to allow “business professionals” to continue to persuade educators to support systemic reform without submitting such “dialogue” to public debate, otherwise known as the democratic process.

The results of “bad cop” enforcement of “good cop” planning were the adoption of the BRT agenda in Texas from 1991 to 1997. TBEC and TFE boast as accomplishments the following state policies “that address most of the objectives in the BRT’s nine-point agenda”(www.tbec.org/history):

1991 – Texas legislature required school districts to develop site-based decision-making.

1993 – Texas legislature established annual testing.

1995 – Texas legislature rewrote the entire Texas Education Code, which included authorization at both the state and local level to establish charter schools.

1997 – Texas legislature enacted a reading program and new student learning standards.

The legislation at the state level had a profound effect at the district level. As a Houston school board trustee during the last ten years, Donald McAdams described in his book (2000) how such state legislation interacted with the reforms he was trying to enact in the Houston Independent School District (HISD).⁶⁶ The executive director of TBEC, John Stevens, has corroborated that “Don McAdams’ book is a fair representation of what has happened in Houston” (Stevens, 2000). Not surprisingly, the move for systemic reform in Houston began in 1989 when five of the nine school board members were up for reelection. The five candidates backed by Houston’s business leaders won all five of the contested seats (pp. 2-5). The newly reconstituted board proceeded to develop a

⁶⁶ All pages cited in this section are from McAdams (2000).

mission statement called *Beliefs and Visions*. The core principles were decentralization, accountability and a “common core of academic subjects for all students . . . so that [graduates] could enter college or the workforce fully prepared to be successful and not need remediation” (p. 8).⁶⁷ When the superintendent decided to implement the principles of *Beliefs and Visions* in only 10 percent of the schools, the new board members engineered her termination. A new superintendent, Frank Petruzielo, was hired in 1991 on the basis of his promise to implement system-wide reform (pp. 10–21). Both the Hispanic and African American board members had objected to the choice of Petruzielo. The white board members, using time-honored divide-and-conquer tactics, were able to cut a private deal with the Hispanic members. In return for their votes for Petruzielo, the white members promised to vote for an increase in the number of top-level Hispanic administrators, recruit bilingual teachers, and build a new high school in a Hispanic neighborhood (p. 22).

Instead of committing himself publicly to the school board’s *Beliefs and Visions*, Petruzielo published his own vision statement, *Blueprint: Houston Schools of Excellence*. This document promised decentralization, community surveys, school report cards, and an Educational Excellence Steering Committee that would coordinate four task forces⁶⁸ (p. 24). McAdams expressed his suspicions as to what influenced Petruzielo to come up with his own document.

For several years the Greater Houston Partnership, the business elite of Houston, had been studying public education reform. With substantial business money and excellent leadership by Dr. David Gottlieb, an executive with Mitchell Energy Company, the partnership had produced a first-class report. *A Framework for Educational Excellence 1990*, released in April 1990, put forth, with supporting research, twelve principles for student achievement.

Eager to see their recommendations adopted by Houston-area school districts, the Partnership had spun off a not-for-profit organization to carry forward the banner of school reform. The organization, the Greater Houston Coalition for Educational Excellence [CEE], chaired by Gordon Bonfield, a senior Tenneco executive nearing retirement,⁶⁹ expected to be a major player in the reform of

⁶⁷ Avoiding “remediation” in college is a major objective of the Education Trust.

⁶⁸ The four task forces were Staff Development and Recruitment; Increase Productivity through Technology and Reduction of Paperwork and Bureaucracy; Twenty-first Century School Facilities and Programs; Partnerships.

⁶⁹ It would be good to remember at this point that the Business Roundtable’s assigned Tenneco to be its corporate agent in Texas.

HISD. Frank [Petruzielo] could not reject their initiative, but his marching order was *Beliefs and Visions*.

In a wise move that removed a potential conflict and brought into the planning process some of Houston's most informed and committed business leaders, [Petruzielo] invited the coalition [CEE] to take joint ownership of the Houston Schools of Excellence Steering committee. Gordon Bonfield joined [Petruzielo] as cochair, and a business executive from the coalition board joined an HISD administrator as cochair of each of the four task forces . . . [that would] prepare policy and resource recommendations for the board (McAdams, 2000; p. 25).

In order to implement the recommendations of the four task forces, Petruzielo proposed a 47 percent tax increase (\$1.54 rate) for the 1992–93 budget. While the CEE apparently supported this increase, the “real powers” in the Partnership did not. The Houston newspapers attacked the tax increase and the school board voted against it, McAdams being the only vote in favor of the increase. Petruzielo presented a second budget (\$1.44 rate) and linked the smaller tax increase to “accountability.” The Partnership wanted a \$1.34 rate and a more explicit link to “performance objectives”. The second budget was voted down. At this point, many community activists began to put pressure on the school board to pass the \$1.44 rate increase. At an August 27, 1992, meeting “packed with activists,” the school board passed a tax increase of \$1.385 (pp. 35–45). McAdams believes that the battle over the budget revealed how

Power was diffused, but *business leaders were the primary power brokers*. They funded candidates for elective office and they expected to be heard when their interests were at stake⁷⁰ Historically, business leaders determined how much they would pay [and it was always low] (p. 45) [my italics].

The TBEC began to have an effect on Houston school policy when it successfully lobbied the state legislature to use the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills as a means to sanction individual school districts whose performance was unacceptable. McAdams believed that the formulas created by the legislature were too complex. Petruzielo presented McAdams with an alternative. McAdams didn't like it because it didn't “mandate restaffing if performance standards weren't met” (p. 73). McAdams then

⁷⁰ They argued for a dominant voice in school politics because they paid seventy percent of HISD taxes. The same argument has been made throughout American history by the wealthy, especially during the Progressive Era. The more money a person has, the more say they should have in the political process. This is particularly anti-democratic given that, generally, 15 percent of the U.S. population controls 85 percent of the wealth in this country.

proceeded to work with the school board to create a “matrix” of performance that would use the TAAS scores, be tied to teacher performance, and yet be simple enough that it “could be explained to a parent in sixty seconds.” Charles Miller of the Houston Partnership and chair of the policy committee that came up with TAAS was not pleased with the simplified matrix and sponsored a candidate to run against McAdams in the August 1993 school board elections. After McAdams won with 53 percent of the vote, Miller, in a private meeting, threatened to torpedo McAdams’s matrix. At this point, the CEE (the Partnership’s spin-off organization) stepped in and brokered a compromise in which all sides were satisfied. Miller supported the Houston accountability formula in return for a promise by the school board to communicate better with the city’s business leaders (pp. 81-82).

The Houston Federation of Teachers, however, did not want to see a formula using TAAS scores as the basis of teacher and district evaluations. McAdams complained that the ultimate failure of the school board to link effectively “performance” with assessment in 1993–94 was due to a combination of vigorous political activity by several employee groups with the simultaneous lack of business interest in the issue at the time (p. 101). But before the reform minded school board members could address the issue again, Petruzielo decided to leave and a new superintendent needed to be found and hired.

The school board hired the new superintendent, Rod Paige, in 1994. Paige not only had been one of the school board’s coalition of “reform-minded” members since 1990 but also had the advantage of being African American.

Only minority leaders can reform America’s urban school districts. . . . School reform is change, and many of the changes needed – higher academic standards, alternative schools, greater employee accountability, and outsourcing, for example – can be perceived as threats to minority self-esteem, minority jobs, and established centers of minority power. Only minority leaders have the credibility and trust to make tough decisions Most of the reform leaders on the HISD were white. Without Paige, the board’s voice would have been muted One could not effectively play the race card against Paige (p. 255).

By bringing in Paige, the business community was able to undermine black opposition to systemic reform by using the *reverse* “race card.” Opposition to Paige’s implementation of systemic reform could be rejected as an attack on him personally because he was black. Paige was able to argue that he was promoting test-driven curricula and

instruction in order to make sure that white teachers had equally high expectations for their black and their white students. This would be particularly effective when white teachers spoke out against his policies. It was immediately effective in dividing the Hispanic community against the African Americans. The Hispanic Education Committee filed a lawsuit to prevent the selection of Paige as superintendent (they were upset since they had been left out of the selection process). The Texas Education Administration supported the lawsuit by opposing an emergency administrative credential to Paige. Leaders of Houston's African American communities began to mobilize and eventually the TEA confirmed an alternative credential for Paige (pp. 110-118). With Paige as superintendent, McAdams felt confident that further reform would continue.

While still a HISD trustee⁷¹, Paige had been discussing with the Greater Houston Partnership how to move the budget process from the central office to districts. Out of these discussions, the Houston Business Advisory Council was established which, in turn, sponsored the Hook Committee, chaired by Harold Hook, Chair and CEO of American General. The purpose of the Hook Committee was to present the school board with the details of how to have each school site-council be responsible for developing annual budgets for its school. Petruzielo had opposed decentralizing the budgetary process and the constant conflict with the reform trustees over this issue may have been the reason he left. When it looked as if Petruzielo was leaving, McAdams had lunch with a member of the Hook Committee and created a plan to implement the recommendations of the committee (p. 126). The school board approved financial decentralization in June 1994.

Paige and McAdams then wished to revisit the performance/assessment issue as well as devise a plan to outsource or privatize as much of the school system as possible. Thirteen task forces were created to "examine every area of HISD in order to improve service delivery to schools and students" (p. 148). One task force was devoted to devising a system that would link professional development with student achievement. Each task force was staffed with many executives from Andersen Consulting, a national accounting firm headquartered in Houston. But the push for privatization led to defeat in the June 1994 school board elections where the "reform" faction lost its majority. A

⁷¹ In Houston, school board members are called trustees, perhaps to encourage a "trustee" rather than "delegate mentality" (see Zerchykov, 1984).

coalition of NAACP, labor, religious and civic leaders opposed privatization of services (p. 160).

When the school board rejected Paige's proposal to increase the number of required courses and credits for graduation, many leaders of the business community (whose membership overlapped with the various business organizations in the city) held a meeting to discuss how to reelect a reform board. The plans were not entirely successful (only one of the two business-backed candidates won) because a confidential memo from the meeting was leaked to the press before the election. The memo identified "talking points". It was intended to be circulated only among the business leaders who were to attend the meeting. The memo was a lengthy explanation of the situation and it also included a plea for financial contributions.

In the past, when we [businessmen] have been involved and have adequately funded Trustee races, we have been successful. Traditionally, school board races are fairly unsophisticated, poorly funded efforts. [Business] dollars have provided organization and well directed campaigns that include phone banking, voter ID, direct mail, and street programs. To achieve success, we [businessmen] must adequately fund these races. Our mechanism will be the creation of a specific purpose political action committee (PAC) called "Better Schools for Houston PAC." We will direct our financial efforts to the PAC so as not to cause any problems to the candidates (p. 182).

The "problems" that the business leaders wished to avoid by hiding behind a PAC became unavoidable when the memo was leaked to the press. Many citizens were outraged that business leaders appeared to be dictating the results of the election and refused to vote for the PAC's slate of candidates. But once the outrage abated, the business leaders were able to continue to pursue their strategies with an amenable school board.

From 1990 to 1995, business led reform had been piecemeal at best. The HISD employee unions and minority activists had been on the defensive throughout, but had managed to slow the pace of a standards movement whose shape was molded by the unique social and political landscape of Houston politics. It wasn't until 1996 that the overlapping agendas of the reformers on the school board, CEE, the Houston Partnership, TFE, and TBEC came together. McAdams argues that two events – failure of a school bond vote and an audit ordered by the Texas comptroller's office - gave Paige and the

school board the leverage they needed to successfully implement accountability, curriculum alignment, privatization, and deregulation.

Late in 1995, a small group of business leaders, who called themselves the School House Committee, and Paige had begun to develop a strategy to pass a school bond measure to upgrade dilapidated buildings and build new ones to ease the overcrowding in many of the schools. The school board wanted to raise \$597 million. When they went to the Greater Houston Partnership, the board was told to reduce the amount to \$390 million. The Partnership agreed to provide \$400,000 in contributions to fund a campaign to pass the school bond measure but only if the school board continued to pursue site-based decision making, accountability at all levels, public school choice, outsourcing, merit pay, reduction of administration costs, and establishment of a continuous maintenance program (pp. 191–94).

A perceived split in the Hispanic community and explicit opposition to the \$390 million bond measure by the Houston Federation of Teachers led McAdams and his allies to seek out support from the Republican Party. McAdams learned from lobbying the local Republican clubs that these local leaders “hated the public school system.” The only way they would support the bond measure would be if the school board could promise to privatize all noneducational support services, offer vouchers to all students, and abolish the limit of twenty-two children in K–4 classes. Unable to make such a promise, McAdams fell back on the tactic of preventing an anti-bond resolution at the next Republican convention of county precinct captains. This was achieved with the help of moderate Republicans and a professional lobbyist hired by the School House Committee (pp. 195–97). The final tactic to win approval of the bond measure was implemented by the School House Committee. They

determined to hold the election as a single issue election on a weekday [May 28] before school was out and take advantage of a 1991 amendment to the state election code which allowed early mobile voting. Starting on May 8, voting machines would be set up at schools, sometimes for only a few hours at a time when large numbers of parents were expected. Parents coming to schools for band concerts, parent fund-raisers, award ceremonies, etc., would have the opportunity to vote early at over 200 schools (p. 198).

In spite of such tactics or because of them, the bond measure failed.

In July 1996, the Texas comptroller, John Sharp, announced the results of an audit of HISD. The report made 288 recommendations that, if implemented over a five-year period, promised to save HISD \$116 million at a cost of only \$46 million. The audit itself cost nearly \$1 million and the gross savings promised to be less than two percent of the HISD budget (p. 217). The impact of the report was more political (a PR bombshell) than practical (it only offered fine tuning of the reforms already passed by the school board). McAdams argues that the “failed bond issue revealed the public had no confidence in Houston’s schools. The Sharp audit confirmed for most Houstonians that the bond vote was justified.” This created the climate that allowed HISD to present the community with a “bold new reform agenda” (pp. 229–30).

On October 16, 1997, Paige began a series of media events that unveiled his “new” program. *A New Beginning for HISD* rested upon four pillars: accountability, best efforts, choice, and decentralization. McAdams was disappointed by the poor media coverage at these events, especially given the mounting opposition to these initiatives by the “NAACP, employee groups, organized labor, and others.” Yet in the context of the audit and by “clever scheduling, a great deal of arm-twisting, enormous staff work behind the scenes and very close board votes, HISD began to embrace the principles of competition”(p. 232). The “Reforms of 1996–97” were as follows:

- Reduction of board meetings from two to once a month
- Superintendent’s personnel decisions completely independent of the board
- Contract with Community Education Partners to teach 450 “at risk” students
- Neighborhood schools admissions selectively open to non-neighborhood students
- Increase in number of charter schools
- Implementation of phonics based reading program
- Curriculum alignment among standards, instruction, and testing
- Testing grades 1-11 with the Stanford 9 test
- Elimination of continuing contracts, hearings, and appeals for new teachers
- Teacher appraisal linked to student achievement and discipline
- Complaints supervised by HISD’s chief of staff for business services
- Outsourcing contracts for installing management systems (Main Event Management Corp.); building repairs (Brown and Root); facilities management (ServiceMaster Management Services Company); food service supervision (Aramark); and revising human resources management (IBM) (pp. 232–241).

McAdams believes that these reforms completed a process of reform that began with his election to the school board in 1989. He also believes that this package is

responsible for the increase in Houston student's TAAS scores since 1994.⁷² Using the Houston matrix, from 1994 to 1998, the number of what the district labeled as “low-acceptable schools” decreased from 81 to 0; from 1990 to 1997, the dropout rate declined from 10.4 percent to 2.8 percent and the number of violent crimes fell 38 percent. And all this at a low cost to the taxpayers. HISD has the lowest effective tax rate among large urban school districts and a per-pupil spending rate less in 1999 than in 1992 (p. 253). Stevens, the executive director of TBEC, believes that along with the “significant and constructive force” of the business community, “Superintendent Rod Paige must be given an enormous amount of credit . . . his leadership has been the single most important factor in the success of [HISD]” (Stevens, 2000).

The reality behind the numerical definitions of “success” cited by McAdams and Stevens is poignantly described in the research of Linda McNeil (2000) of the Rice University Center for Learning in Houston. McNeil began her research in Houston's magnet schools looking for “organizational models of schooling that provided structural support for authentic, engaged teaching and learning” (p. 4). The focus of her research dramatically shifted, however, as she observed the effects of “accountability” and high-stakes testing on how teachers teach and students learn. At first, McNeil was observing students enthusiastically engaged in a “rich and complex” curriculum in schools specifically established as model schools of the “highest quality.” But

[a]s the controls were imposed, and regulations increasingly standardized, the quality of teaching and learning at even these exemplary schools began to suffer . . . The practice of teaching under these reforms [TASS, etc.] shifted away from intellectual activity toward dispensing packaged fragments of information sent from an upper level of the bureaucracy. And the role of students as contributors to classroom discourse, as thinkers, as people who brought their personal stories and life experiences into the classroom, was silenced or severely circumscribed by the need for the class to “cover” a generic curriculum at a pace established by the district and the state for all the schools (p. 5).

McNeil concluded that not only does standardization de-skill teachers and dumb down students, but it “restratifies education by race and class” (p. xxvii). According to McNeil, this happened within the context of the long-standing and intractable correlation

⁷² Not including special education students (p. 253).

of test scores with socio-economic status.⁷³ As a result, administrators insisted that the teachers in “under-performing schools” substitute curriculum they had developed with “test-prep” materials. Teachers in white affluent schools, in which there was less anxiety about the students’ abilities to pass the state tests, were allowed to continue to teach curriculum that didn’t separate out “the basics” from “higher-order thinking.” McNeil has observed the development of two curriculums in the Houston school system under the pressures of high-stakes testing. Affluent schools continue to teach “academically challenging” college preparatory curriculum in the upper grades and a hands-on, exploratory and thought-provoking curriculum in the lower grades. In schools dominated by poor and minority students, McNeil observed the prevalence of a test-prep curriculum that teaches students “strategies to simplify their thinking” and “practice weeding out ‘distractors’” among multiple-choice options (pp. 245-56). McNeil’s detailed descriptions of what actually goes on in classrooms reveals that an increase in test scores signifies an increase in thoughtless, meaningless, test-taking skills.

McNeil’s findings, perhaps, might be news to the experts and professionals, but not so to many parents, teachers, and students. Those who oppose standardization are rarely heard from in the national dialogue over educational reform. McAdams’s story of reform in Houston indicates why voices of business leaders have been able to dominate the public discussion. The story is one in which many business organizations, in spite of their differences, were able to unite behind systemic reform in the face of an opposed but divided community of teachers and parents. The appointment of Paige provided the leadership that the business community admired and could rally around. The appointment of Paige, however, also served to create a division between a conservative African American church leadership and the NAACP. The Hispanic community’s leadership opposed the appointment of Paige, thus pitting themselves against the African American leadership. Very much on the defensive, the Houston Federation of Teachers

⁷³ Close reading of the history of the development of standardized testing will reveal that such a correlation is not by chance. Furthermore, one reason for the development of standardized testing was because administrators did not want to rely on the judgment and expertise of teachers in evaluating students, even though those very judgments were used to measure the validity of the first IQ tests. I particularly recommend: Thorndike, R. M. and D. F. Lohman (1990), *A Century of Ability Testing* (Chicago, Riverside Publishing Company).

continued to pursue its historically narrow focus of job security. Most parents were co-opted by the establishment of site-based community councils that were only in a position to respond to the proposals presented to them by the task forces made up of HISD administrative personnel and business leaders. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the Houston school system has proceeded more rapidly towards systemic reform than other cities, and why George W. Bush appointed Paige to be the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Charlotte, North Carolina

While McAdams' story of educational reform in Houston provides an example of how business leaders are directly involved in school politics, the example of Charlotte reveals clearly how the interlocking network of BRT allies is effective at promoting systemic reform. The Public School Forum (PSF) was established in 1985 and is headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina. Currently it has 64 members on its board of directors: 20 representatives from business; 15 educational administrators (mostly post-secondary); 12 state legislators; and single representatives from other areas such as a teacher and a representative from the state's Parent Teacher Organization. It has a staff of fourteen, which oversees a wide variety of programs and publications dedicated to advancing an educational agenda aligned with that of the Business Roundtable. These programs developed over the last fifteen years and originated from study groups formed from its board of directors. Kronley's description below (from a report published by a business alliance) reveals the ability of PSF to influence legislation with little public input.

Because the study group process is so thorough and collaborative and its members are key stake-holders, the groups' reports are influential on state policy. The study groups give policy makers an opportunity to examine complex issues *away from partisan arena* and build consensus on educationally sound strategies to address them. In large part because of this consensus, every study group has resulted in the introduction of legislation that includes all or most of the group's recommendations (Kronley, 2000; p. 47) [my emphasis].

In 1985, PSF produced the first of many study group reports that led to the passage of state educational legislation. In 1986, a state-funded teacher scholarship program was established. Through the teacher scholarship program, PSF has awarded college tuition (\$6,500 per year) to those high school graduates who promise to spend a

minimum of four years teaching in the North Carolina public school system. PSF's criteria for selection reveals a desire that future teachers be good test takers (minimum of combined SAT scores of 1100) as well as "good" students (minimum high school GPA of 3.6) (TF, 2000). In spite of a quota system (at least 20 percent minority and 30 percent male), the "academic" criteria create a pool of teachers who are not likely to question the validity of standardized tests as a litmus test of academic achievement. The second study group report published by PSF was *Thinking for a Living: A Blueprint for Educational Growth*. This provided the basic structure for the 1989 North Carolina School Improvement and Accountability Act establishing statewide standardized testing.

The Business Roundtable did not establish a formal relationship to the Public School Forum until 1991, when "influential" CEOs of North Carolina (actually, the BRT's state organization, called Education: Everybody's Business Coalition,⁷⁴ became "impatient with the pace of school reform." EEBC asked the Forum, the Council of Local Chambers of Commerce, and North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry to "create a vehicle through which business could make more of an impact on policy," primarily on the state level. EEBC now consists of six organizations of which PSF is one, and it provides the administrative structure for the group (BRT, 1999).⁷⁵ The EEBC holds annual legislative briefings for local business organizations as well as posting legislative alerts and distributing mailing lists (Dornan, 2001). Through a collaboration with PSF and local business education foundations, EEBC funds pilot projects and local fiscal and legislative campaigns.

PSF has become the nerve center of systemic educational reform in the southeast region of the United States. In 1991, the federal government funded the establishment of the South East Regional Vision for Education (SERVE). This "research and development educational laboratory" supports a variety of programs in six states, all coordinated by PSF. SERVE sponsors seminars attended by "policy makers" and representatives of business such as the one in December 1998 in Washington, D.C., the

⁷⁴ Corporate members of EEBC are BellSouth, Carolina Power and Light, Duke Power, Food Lion, Glaxco-Wellcome, Guildford Mills, Jefferson Pilot Life Insurance, RJR Tobacco, Sprint, and Wachovia Bank and Trust.

⁷⁵ Others not already mentioned are the NC Business Committee for Education, the NC School Boards Association, and the NC Association of School Administrators.

focus of which was to determine how to analyze the results of the NAEP tests. In 1995, SERVE used its federal funds to “hire” PSF to administer a network of nine state Business Roundtable organizations (the Columbia Group)⁷⁶ funded by BellSouth; the nine states are each of the southeastern states in which BellSouth Foundation operates. Since 1996, the BRT has used the Columbia Group as a sounding board for national educational issues and a vehicle to advance its policies respecting those issues (PSF, 2000; www.ncforum.org/cg). *Southern Synergy*, a report by the Columbia Group, asserts that the roles of the nine-member organization are

unique: they work in different contexts; they have different histories, different agendas, and different styles. They are, however, united in their dedication to – and success at – communicating the central role that better education plays in the future of their states and in recommending and implementing ways to ensure that education in these states is in fact better (Kronley, 2000; p. 1).

“Better” essentially means “mandating the adoption of higher standards and greater accountability for students, teachers, and schools.” The Columbia Group has begun to focus on aligning teaching standards with state standards for students (Kronley, 2000). PSF is supporting the focus on teacher development through several research publications: an assessment of the first class of Teaching Fellows after their fourth year of teaching (1991); a blueprint to identify and keep “good” teachers (1996 – enacted into state legislation in 1997); and a comparison of teaching conditions in eight southeastern states (1996).

The current focus of PSF study and legislative action is finance. In 1996, PSF published *Things That Matter*. In the report, the authors argue that state funding formulas for public schools should not try to narrow the gap between amounts spent on rich and poor districts. Instead, state funding should “ensure that all young people have a ‘sound basic education’” (PSF, 2000; www.ncforum.org/forumpub.htm; pp. 3–4). To do this, PSF lobbied the North Carolina legislature, in 1999, to provide \$86 million in extra funds for those schools whose test scores defined them as “under performing.” McNeil’s

⁷⁶ Current members of the Columbia Group are A+ Education Foundation of Alabama, Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Prichard Committee of Kentucky, Council for a Better Louisiana, Public Education Forum of Mississippi, Public School Forum of North Carolina, South Carolina Chamber of Excellence in Education, and Tennessee Tomorrow.

(2000) study in Houston suggests, however, that such money is spent on test-prep material and consultants who instruct teachers in ways in which to use such material. Perhaps the authors of *Things that Matter* believe that part of a “sound basic education” is learning how to fill in “bubbles” and learn skills such as “if you answered ‘b’ three times in a row, no, no, no” (test-makers are unlikely to construct three questions in a row with the same answer-indicator) (McNeil, 2000; p. 235). Or perhaps those at PSF want extra funds for “under performing” schools because they hope such funds will assuage the expected backlash against using a test score to determine whether someone has gained a “sound basic education.”

Beginning in the spring of 2001, young people who have not passed several requirements, including the basic competency test given in the tenth grade and re-administered in subsequent years to those failing the first time, will not graduate from high school. *With the very real prospect of tens of thousands of young people being held back* from promotion to the next grade level or denied a high school diploma, the related questions of how much is spent on schools and how that money is spent have never been more important to North Carolina (PSF, 2000; www.ncforum.org/forumpub.htm; pp. 3–4) [my emphasis].

The research from PSF study groups invariably ends up as legislation. The research finds its way to state elected and appointed officials through the North Carolina Institute for Educational Policy Makers (NCIEPM). This Institute, also directed by PSF, provides orientation sessions for all newly appointed and elected officials at the state level. Symposia are developed by the Institute “tailored” to the members of the media in order to train them in how to interpret for the public test scores and other accountability data. The briefing sessions, orientation conferences, symposia, and position papers are funded by BellSouth Foundation and Burroughs-Wellcome Fund.

PSF as well as EEBC work primarily on the state level. But they do coordinate reform efforts on the local level as well. One staff member of PSF is dedicated to administering NC Partners. This program is dedicated to developing and supporting partnerships among various state and local organizations devoted to “improved student achievement.” PSF Director of Policy Research, John Poteat, organizes training, materials and marketing for existing partnerships among and between the following kinds of organizations:

- Local Education Foundations
- Chambers of Commerce

- Foundation and corporate donors
- Nonprofits
- Local schools
- State Board of Education
- Colleges and universities
- School/Business partnerships
- School-to-Work programs
- PTA/PTOs
- Community-based organizations.

One of the links on the NC Partners web page takes you to the Public Education Network (PEN). The Network exists to support Local Education Foundations. These LEFs are the vehicles through which local business groups pursue Standards-Based Reform in their cities. The *Ten Point Framework* which guides the work of these LEFs looks remarkably like the Business Roundtable's 9 point plan (see Appendix H for *Ten Points* and a list of corporate and foundation funders of PEN).

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation (CMEF), founded in 1991, is one of many members of the Public Education Network. CMEF are "active members" in NC Partnerships, "involved in annual legislative briefings of EEBC . . . on all legislative alert and updated mailing lists" and can be called upon by EEBC to "support specific issues like the recent successful \$2 billion bond package for higher education" (Dornan, 2001). Locally CMEF is active on many fronts. It gives out grants to teachers, helps parents be better "coaches" of their children, conducts annual surveys, coordinates high school application process to the state's university system, instructs the public on finance issues and school board elections, and honors those who show a "dedicated interest in education" (publiceducation.org/lef/nc.htm).

Business leaders were also directly involved in educational policy formation in Charlotte-Mecklenburg during the last twenty years. Mickelson (2000) argues that during the 1980s "Charlotte corporate leaders began to complain about the shortage of entry-level workers" (p. 132).⁷⁷ These leaders blamed the city's public school system for not contributing to a pro-business climate as well as not producing the kinds of workers they desired. The new superintendent in 1991, John Murphy, established a close working relationship with the business leaders of the city, many of whom belonged to CMEF. He

⁷⁷ All page references in this section are from Mickelson (2000).

convened a panel of experts to advise him on “systemic reform.” Business leaders served on educational task forces and adopted schools. Charlotte business leaders were delighted with the cooperation that Murphy provided. At the end of Murphy’s first year, the CEO of First Union Bank lobbied the school board for a substantial raise in pay for Murphy as well as a bonus for his first year of work (p. 133).

In 1992, Charlotte’s historic desegregation plan was replaced with a “parental choice” plan centered on magnet schools, increasing the segregation in the school system (which is ironic given that federal “desegregation money” was used to fund the pilot magnet schools). While many middle-class African Americans supported the creation of magnet schools, many from the working class did not. Opposition to the new “choice” plan was expressed in “criticism that the new magnet schools had diverted resources from older inner city schools” (p. 134). In response to this criticism, Murphy presented the school board with results of the first year of Project First in August 1994. This project, funded by IBM and Americorps in partnership with the Public Education Network and CMEF, was intended to provide technology and expertise to ten non-magnet elementary schools. Mickelson’s study questions how a program could rectify the imbalance of funds between magnet and non-magnet schools. For example, in 1993, one magnet school received \$750,000 in technology resources while a Project First school received an Americorps volunteer and several IBM computers. The volunteer was neither a technology expert nor had been trained in the technology. The IBM computers were never used because the existing infrastructure could not support them (p. 135). Mickelson believed, from talking to those who put together Project First, that IBM executives were motivated by the “increased share of the IBM computer market” and the greater “legitimacy” such a project gave to a business role in education (p. 162). This is consistent with “point nine” of Public Education Network’s Ten Point Framework for LEFs: “Technology must be included in teaching, special education, and information management” (publiceducation.org/lef/nc/charlotte.htm) [See Appendix H for all ten points of PEN’s framework].

From 1993 to 1996, IBM engineered a more ambitious educational project in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Murphy and Stanley Litow, IBM’s Vice President of Corporate-Community Relations, designed a four-school complex named Education Village. The

district, in 1993, paid IBM \$6 million for 200 acres adjacent to the IBM facility in University Research Park (Corporate HQ). In the fall of 1994, the Chairman of IBM, Louis Gerstner, announced that the first of 10 national Reinventing Education Grants (\$2 million) would be given to Charlotte to support the development of technology in Education Village. The school district, to receive the grant, would have to raise \$82 million dollars to pay for construction of the complex, which it did when a 1995 bond measure passed (pp. 138–39).

In the fall of 1996, the first of the four schools in Education Village was to open. It was only at this point that the school board had anything to say about the process. Many of the school board's constituents were angered at the attendance formula that gave 2/3 of the seats to University Park children or the wealthy white adjacent subdivisions. The newly elected school board cancelled the attendance formula citing lack of compliance with the 1971 desegregation court decision and began a process of open forums to come up with one believed to be fair. The “corporate actors” were furious. The President of University Research Park, Chapel Hill, wrote an editorial in the *Charlotte Observer*:

These companies [that donate to the school] do not need to have their motives questioned. They do not need to be hassled They need to be persuaded to offer even more support If our school board can't understand the grant's purpose, won't honor agreements, and can't act graciously, other companies will think twice before extending new offers of support (p. 142).

One CEO of a Research Park firm told Mickelson that business leaders “were very upset that the school board got involved It is business It was not an issue of quality education, it was an issue of development of University Research Park” (p. 144).

While IBM is not a member of EEBC, it is represented on the board of directors of both CMEF and PSF as is another inhabitant of Education Village, First Union National Bank. IBM has a national presence through its membership in the Business Roundtable as well as its own programs such as Reinventing Education grants. While the “business interest” in education is not monolithic, the interlocking networks created by business leaders do create a process that reinforces a cultural value system among business leaders. Fundamental to that value system is a belief in top-down decision

making and a belief also that business leaders are the ones to decide what shall be taught to the nation's children and how.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Business leaders influence in education, of course, is not a new phenomenon. In the 1930s, Richard K. Mellon brought together the business leaders of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania⁷⁸ (among whom were the “heads of many of the nation’s industrial leaders”) to form the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) (Portz, 1999; p. 57). From the 1930s to the 1980s, ACCD influenced the city’s development, in part, by creating “new civic organizations staffed with experts and insulated from the conflict-ridden electoral arena” (Portz, 1999; p. 59). As one ACCD leader reported in 1984, ACCD

[i]s more than a collection of business leaders. It has come to occupy a position at the heart of Pittsburgh’s civic activity. As initiator, broker, supporter, monitor or facilitator, it touches nearly every major civic or development undertaking in the city (Portz, 1999; p. 59).

In the 1960s, parents and teachers began to challenge ACCD’s control of the formation and implementation of public policy issues. One manifestation of this effort emerged over the issue of racial balance in the school system. In 1968, Pennsylvania’s Human Relations Commission (HRC) required the Pittsburgh public school system to submit a desegregation plan. The school board, part appointed and part elected at large, rejected four plans in a row. In 1976, the school board members were elected by district. In spite of the election of three pro-integration members (out of a total of nine), no desegregation plan was passed by the board. The patience of the state’s HRC was running out. In 1980, ACCD stepped in and created the Citizen Advisory Committee

⁷⁸ Beginning in the spring of 1993, John Portz, Lana Stein, and Robin Jones worked under the direction of Clarence Stone in studying “civic capacity and urban education” in three cities – Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis. Their central research questions were: “Why do certain cities show greater initiative than others? What are the roles of institutions and leadership in creating and activating that capacity?” (p. vii). The researchers chose to use “ten innovations” as their definition of reform. The innovations (pp. 53, 164–69) closely resemble the Business Roundtable’s “Nine Essential Components.” Privatization, charters and vouchers represent the only explicit departures from the BRT agenda.

(CAC). The CAC, chaired by the executive director of ACCD, drafted a “desegregation plan” which called for magnet schools and “school improvement plans to address achievement gaps in the African American schools that would remain segregated” (Portz, 1999; p. 60).

Earlier, in 1978, ACCD had created the Allegheny Conference Education Fund (ACEF), which began the more long-term process of creating the kinds of networks upon which the future standards movement would be built. ACEF funded programs that brought professional educators and business leaders together, promoted partnerships between schools and businesses, and gave grants to teachers and principals who were “innovative” (Portz, 1999; p. 61). After laying the groundwork, ACEF went out to find leadership consistent with its vision of school reform. In 1980, the new superintendent of the Pittsburgh school system, Richard Wallace, “quickly developed working relationships with the business community represented by ACCD, the school board, community organizations, and the educational research community” (Portz, 1999; p. 61).

Wallace hired the Learning Research and Development Corporation housed at the University of Pittsburgh to conduct a “needs assessment” survey.⁷⁹ Presumably using the results from this survey as well as other data, Wallace developed his *Excellence Agenda*. This six-point program anticipated the Business Roundtable’s push for standards and accountability. Wallace called for frequent testing, teacher training, management of

⁷⁹ LRDC was founded in 1963 and receives funding from a combination of private and public sources. Almost all of the 23 “faculty” positions at LRDC are joint appointments with University of Pittsburgh departments. For example, the present dean of the University’s School of Education, Alan Lesgold, was the executive associate director of LRDC and continues to be a “faculty” member of LRDC (*University Times*, 2000). Those who hold positions at LRDC are and have been presidents and board members of organizations such as the National Academy of Education, the American Educational Research Association, the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Scientists, the Society for Research in Child Development, several divisions of the American Psychological Association and the National Assessment of Educational Progress. LRDC’s “faculty” and 164 research and support-staff develop and evaluate programs in professional development and classroom modules. The LRDC web page proclaims their researchers’ goals as seeking “to describe what learning is, where and how it happens best, how it can improve, and how research can help.” In 1999, LRDC scientists and researchers were engaged in more than 50 research projects, one of which was an evaluation of the AFT’s Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) program (LRDC, 2000a & 2000b).

enrollment decline, establishing magnet and gifted programs, establishing discipline committees at each school, and training principals in the development of model school improvement plans. A \$200 million Mellon grant helped to develop a city-wide standardized test – Monitoring Achievement in Pittsburgh (MAP). The grant also funded the deployment of computer systems in 1982 that allowed for “more efficient maintenance of student records and implementation of data-based decision making” (Portz, 1999; pp. 62–65). Wallace cultivated teacher support by appealing to their sense of being experts, encouraging them to think of themselves as professionals. It is conceivable that this strategy had the same divisive effect in Pittsburgh as it has had historically since its inception in the Progressive Era. If teachers tie their esteem to the status of experts and their expertise depends on successfully teaching to the test, then parents and students are placed in the role of supplicants while teachers ally themselves with the administrators of tests. This dynamic is not conducive to collaboration between parents and teachers. One manifestation of this came in 1994 when the teacher union questioned the establishment of school site councils. The teachers were worried that they would have to spend with parents time “better” spent, perhaps, in meetings with other teachers or educational researchers (Portz, 1999; p. 71).

When parents agitated to be allowed to participate in district decisions, Wallace created “advisory committees.” These did not successfully co-opt parental concerns for the school board became increasingly “populist.” Portz argues that from 1986 to 1992, the school board began to micromanage the school system, presumably in response to parental demands. This did not fit with Wallace’s corporate leadership style. That the school board turned down the district’s membership to the National Alliance for Restructuring Education is the only concrete evidence that Portz provides to indicate what is meant by a “populist” school board (Portz, 1999; p. 67). The conflict between the school board and Wallace ended, however, when the superintendent resigned and went to work for LRDC at the University of Pittsburgh.

Wallace’s successor, Louise Brennan (1992–1997), proceeded to implement the recommendations of the task forces put into place by Wallace. The five areas these task forces were asked to explore were high standards for all students, effective schools, community partnerships, high quality staff and effective volunteer partnerships, and site-

based management decision making (Portz, 1999; p. 71). Brennan worked with the newly created Allegheny Policy Council. In 1992, the ACEF was absorbed by the “implementing agency” of ACCD, the Allegheny Policy Council. Membership of this council included the CEOs of the major corporations in Pittsburgh, the mayor, the Allegheny county commissioner, Brennan, staff members from several major Pittsburgh foundations, and a representative from LRDC. By 1993, the state legislature passed statewide standards or “learning outcomes” to which all public schools had to adhere. In response, Brennan promulgated a six-year strategic plan to ensure that all students in the Pittsburgh schools mastered the sixty-two “outcomes” while adding nine of their own. The plan included training parents to participate on school councils responsible for creating annual comprehensive educational improvement plans (Portz, 1999; p. 72).

In 1993, Brennan hired staff from the Pittsburgh Council on Public Education to train parents and support parental involvement in school site councils. In 1998, PCPE joined the national Public Education Network funded by the Annenberg Center at Brown University and headed by Paul Reville⁸⁰ who is also the cofounder and executive director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education.⁸¹ PEN is devoted to helping local education foundations like PCPE “to hold educators accountable for children’s education long after the standards have been written and public attention has ceased” (web page). PCPE does this through publications, roundtables, and community forums. They “inform parents and other citizens about the district’s academic standards: what they are, why they are needed, and ways they can be used as powerful tools for change.” PCPE also gives grants to teachers and schools to “encourage innovation” (web page).

Boston, Massachusetts

In Boston, formal business interest in education began in 1974 when the Boston Trilateral Council for Quality Education (created by the Boston Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Businesses) initiated twenty business–school partnerships (Portz, 1999; p. 85). This rather tepid foray into educational reform occurred during the height

⁸⁰ See footnote 27 in Chapter 2.

⁸¹ The MBAE was instrumental in the passage of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993.

of the school desegregation fights. But as the courts and the state legislature took over monitoring of desegregation of the Boston schools, business became more confident of its ability to have sustained but low profile influence in the development of educational policy (Portz, 1999; p. 86).

In 1982, the leading businessmen in Boston and the school board signed the first of several Boston Compacts, agreements between businesses and the school district. The agreement committed the school system to improving student test scores, attendance, and dropout rates.⁸² If there were measurable improvement in these areas, then businesses, labor organizations, and colleges would provide “post-secondary opportunities” for the high school graduates (Portz, 1999; p. 86). The Boston Private Industry Council provided the office and staff to support the agreement. The Council’s staff funneled federal job training dollars to nonprofits, orchestrated the formation of business–school partnerships, and supported the eleven work groups coordinated by the Compact’s executive and steering committees (Portz, 1999; p. 88).

By 1984, the city’s corporate business leaders created the Boston Plan for Excellence. The plan “provided a safe and reliable avenue for business involvement with schools” for its “staff was not subject to the political ventures of the school committee” (Portz, 1999; p. 89). But such “political ventures” would not last much longer. Beginning in 1987, business leaders launched a sustained attack on the way in which the school board governed.⁸³ This led to the replacement of a thirteen member elected school board with a seven-member board appointed by the mayor in 1991 and the appointment of a new superintendent in 1996. The new superintendent established four goals:

- improve teaching to enable all students to achieve higher standards
- change schools to focus on student performance and serving the community
- provide safe, nurturing, and healthy schools where students receive the support they need in order to succeed in school
- engage parents in school improvement (Portz, 1999; p. 97).

⁸² New student assignment plans and decentralization were later added to the deal.

⁸³ Until 1993, the business community in the state was divided over whether to commit itself to reforming the public school system. This rift was healed through the compromise of adding limited school choice options to the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 (Bolon, 2000; p. 1).

While the Boston corporate leaders were moving the city's schools towards standards-based reform, corporate business leaders were organizing on the state level. In 1988, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) was created and claims to have been the “driving force behind the passage of the sweeping Education Reform Act of 1993” (BRT, 1999). Bolon (2000), an opponent of MBAE, agrees.

[The MBAE], led by John C. Rennie, then CEO of the former Pacer Infotec, Inc. . . . and S. Paul Reville, then director of the Worcester Public Education fund, wrote the reform bill sponsored by the education committee of the [state] legislature. In 1991 the Business Alliance produced a document entitled *Every Child a Winner*. A story from the May 2, 1993, northwest edition of the *Boston Globe* quoted Rep. Mark Roosevelt as saying that the House education reform bill then pending “is essentially [the Business Alliance document].” In publications of Mass Inc., Rennie is quoted as saying, “We bought change” (p. 1).⁸⁴

The Education Act of 1993 stipulated the following:

- New goals, standards, and indicators of performance for schools, students, and teachers
- Financial rewards to teachers and schools that excel
- Decentralized authority, limiting school committees to policy making⁸⁵ and oversight, making CEOs of superintendents, and giving hiring and firing power to principals
- Preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds
- Expand professional development for teachers

⁸⁴ MassINC stands for the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth. MassINC is a nonprofit organization primarily funded by 53 organizations among whom are Verizon, PG&E, FleetBoston, and IBM (MassINC, 2000b). The organization also solicits memberships from individuals, universities, government agencies, and trade unions/associations. The mission of MassINC “is to develop a public agenda for Massachusetts that promotes growth and vitality of the middle-class” (MassINC, 2000a). The organization cosponsors quarterly forums, funds research reports, lobbies politicians, and feeds information to the media based on four initiatives. One of its initiatives is “Lifelong Learning” whose three goals are to: “(1) ensure that the state’s pre-K and K–12 Education Reform effort stays on track; (2) transform the state’s public college and university system into a powerful catalyst for economic growth; and, (3) explore innovative new ways to educate and train adult workers so that they have the skills in demand by Massachusetts employers” (MassINC, 2000c).

⁸⁵ “Limiting school committees to policy making” is a euphemism for stopping school boards from interfering with the superintendent’s implementation of state mandates. The architects of the 1993 act use “policy making” to describe the new role for school boards. Massachusetts’s systemic reformers wish to inhibit school board members from preventing district administrators from enforcing data-driven decision making throughout the system (see my discussion of school boards in Chapter 2).

- Use state funds to equalize spending among school districts.

The MCAS, the state test, driving the direction of all the above reforms,⁸⁶ was first administered in 1998. Boston School Board responded to test-driven educational reform by voting to end “social promotion.” The board required that all third, fifth, and eighth grade students pass the state test or the city test in order to be promoted to the next grade (Portz, 1999; p. 102). In 1996, anticipating MCAS and jumping on the bandwagon of comprehensive school reform, the Boston Plan for Excellence⁸⁷ developed a “model for whole-school change . . . to raise student achievement” on the MAEP, the precursor to MCAS. To encourage the adoption of the model, the plan offered as much as \$300,000 (over four years) for any school wishing to implement the model. In 1997–1999, the Annenberg Foundation provided the Boston school district \$30 million (to be administered by the Boston Plan) to implement the plan’s model on a district wide basis. “For the Boston Plan–Boston Annenberg Challenge and the district, as well as the schools, the single goal is improved student performance” ([publiceducation.org/about us/bostonplan](http://publiceducation.org/about-us/bostonplan)).

⁸⁶ Just how crudely the tests can drive administrative and teaching practice has been indicated by Dr. James Garvey, superintendent of the Worcester, Massachusetts, public schools. Garvey participated in a forum in June 1997 cosponsored by MassINC, the Bank of Boston, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable and the Massachusetts Taxpayer’s Foundation. The moderator of the forum was S. Paul Reville. The topic of the forum was “Are Schools Improving?” During the discussion among the panelists, Superintendent Garvey explained how he intended to instruct the principals in his district on how to use MCAS test results. Garvey argued that school principals would need to do an “item analysis” of test results, “see where you are weak, and you get that back into the classroom in an organized fashion” (MassINC, 1997; p. 7). If the test results reveal a weakness in mathematics, then the principal needs to “encourage the teachers to work in that area, and as a system we need to provide through staff development and in-service education those mathematics courses that are going to help the system achieve the goal that they’ve set” (p. 12).

⁸⁷ The Boston Plan for Excellence is a “Local Education Foundation” that participates in the Public Education Network. One of PEN’s board members is S. Paul Reville, lecturer and coordinator of state relations at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Reville is also Codirector of the PEW Forum on Standards-Based Reform. Many LEFs, including the Boston Plan, receive challenge grants from the Annenberg Center for Educational Reform at Brown University (see the end of Chapter Two for the network in which the Annenberg Center operates).

Several organizations in Massachusetts have formed to oppose the use of a single test to determine whether students are learning what they should be learning in school. Bolon (2000), writing for one of these groups, MassParents, doesn't understand why the state board of education is using the MCAS as the sole measure of student achievement.

The Massachusetts Board of Education . . . has received many recommendations to improve its practices and make its system of assessments more realistic and fair. It has had more than \$25 million to spend on developing MCAS. It is also well aware that "high-stakes" testing systems in other states have sharply narrowed the school curriculum and increased the population of school dropouts, who are likely to be eligible only for the "McJobs" of the future. Thus far, however, the Massachusetts Board of Education remains rigid, programmatic and hostile to the facts A weakness of all current school-based testing programs is lack of proven significance. It is well known that scores on school-based standard tests tend to increase with incomes of student households. It is also known that students from higher-income households tend to achieve higher status in adult life. However, none of the so-called "achievement tests" used in state accountability systems has ever been shown to predict success in adult life significantly beyond what can be associated with incomes of student households The students from households that already have the least suffer the most from such a system, tending to widen the economic gap between the haves and have-nots in our society, already among the greatest of the industrial nations (Bolon, 2000; pp. 3-4).

In the light of such criticism, it is not surprising that in MBAE's 1999 progress report to the national Business Roundtable, the Massachusetts' business leaders agreed that "the major challenge will be to close the student performance gap that was so evident on last year's first round of assessments. Massachusetts's business leaders and policy makers now must shift focus from developing policy to improving practice" (BRT, 1999; p. 27).

C

Chapter 5: The Revival of Separate But Equal – “Making Plessy Work”

Introduction

During the last twenty years, business leaders and state government officials have worked closely to develop high-stakes testing in all fifty states. The justification for mandatory state testing includes such phrases as “equity and excellence,” “equitable access,” and “high standards for all.” Such presumably laudatory goals have successfully hidden a trend that challenges the reformers’ claims to equality of opportunity. This trend, documented by several researchers and analysts, is the growing segregation of public schools during the last twenty years (Orfield, 1999; Kahlenberg, 1999; Kunnen, 1996; Yu, 1997; Weiler, 1998; Ascher, 1991). Systemic reformers do not deny the pattern of resegregation occurring during this period of structural reform. Instead the proponents of systemic reform argue that the reversal of desegregation is a moot point since the new reforms will force every school, regardless of the degree of its racial and economic isolation, to offer “a sound basic education” to every child (Education Trust, 1999; PSF, 1996). Such an argument has successfully reestablished the doctrine of “separate but equal” as part of the developing educational regime being built by the Business Roundtable and its allies. This doctrine, however, was the basis upon which an apartheid-like structure was built in this country after 1877. That there is no debate over the wisdom of ignoring such history seems to suggest that we are in danger of reliving it.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court declared, in *Brown v. the School Board of Topeka, Kansas*, that school segregation was “inherently unequal.” This decision overturned the 1896 decision (*Plessy v. Ferguson*), which had asserted that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was not violated by segregation – “separate can be equal.” The *Brown* decision reversed *Plessy* and provided the legal basis upon which the activists of the sixties and seventies were able to begin to desegregate the nation’s schools. Beginning in 1978, however, these gains were reversed. Throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, opponents of desegregation supported a legal campaign against affirmative action couched within a public relations onslaught promoting the myth of a color-blind meritocracy. As a result, some districts are more segregated today than they were in 1954.

Support for desegregation has been undermined by distorted arguments against busing (e.g., gross exaggerations of “white flight”) and unrealistic claims of the benefits of magnet schools. In the 1980s, public concern over the resegregation of schools was assuaged by policy makers’ and politicians’ false promises that magnet schools would serve the same function as busing but have the added benefit of being based on “individual choice.” Instead of continuing the desegregation process begun in the sixties, magnet schools merely created small pockets of integration within a vast system of segregation. As this result was becoming apparent in the late 1980s, public concern over the failure of desegregation was diverted by pervasive calls for systemic reform. Standards advocates were able to eliminate objections to resegregation by anchoring public debate over educational reform to the *Plessy* decision’s definition of “educational opportunity.”

The purpose of integrated schools was *not* to ensure that black children had the same “tangible” resources, such as lab equipment, textbooks or access to “qualified” teachers, as white children. The reason why “segregation is inherently unequal”, as debated and affirmed in 1954, is because it deprives children access to the “intangible” resources and experiences that are fundamental to “equal educational opportunity”. Such intangibles included not feeling like a second-class citizens or being able to benefit from study and social exchanges with a diverse group of people. The majority in *Plessy* argued that segregation does not necessarily deny equality of opportunity because segregated schools can have equal facilities. The majority in *Brown*, however, argued that educational opportunity cannot be defined only by the concrete. Systemic reformers have returned to the *Plessy* definition of educational opportunity by arguing that opportunity can be defined solely by one specific tangible – test scores. An underlying principle of systemic reform is that segregation does not deny “equity”, only low test scores do.

In the second section of this chapter, I revisit the four cities of Chapter 4 and St. Louis, Missouri, in order to demonstrate that the decrease in community participation in educational policy making, the strategies and goals of systemic reformers, and the resegregation of public schools are inextricably related.

From *Plessy* to *Brown*

Two years after the end of the Civil War, the U.S. Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867. This act divided the ten Confederate states into five military districts. Each district was ruled by a U.S. Army general whose immediate assignment was to register new voters, focusing on the freed male slaves and loyalist whites. From 1867 until 1876,

the political, economic, and social organization of the South was in transition. Newly freed slaves voted, held public office, went to school, and rode in public accommodations. The degree of integration and equality in each region or locale depended on many factors. There were tremendous variation and much contradiction. For example, most schools created by the federal government's Freedman's Bureau remained segregated, yet the New Orleans public school system was "thoroughly and successfully integrated until 1877" (Woodward, 1974; p. 24).

The Presidential election of 1876 was very close and hotly contested, resulting in somewhat of a constitutional crisis. The electoral crisis of 1876 was resolved by the Compromise of 1877 (although with much the same residual bitterness following a more recent presidential election).⁸⁸ The southern planter class agreed to abandon their support for the Democrat, Samuel Tilden (thus giving the Republican, Rutherford Hayes, the presidency) in return for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South. The withdrawal of federal troops meant that there was no force able to protect freed blacks from the growing power of the Ku Klux Klan, founded one year after the Civil War ended. Legal challenges to the growing state legislation, circumscribing citizen rights — called the "black codes"—were appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Beginning in 1876, the Supreme Court rulings consistently sanctioned the gradual creation of legal and political mechanisms of segregation in the South (such mechanisms, by the way, had never even been challenged in the north). By 1890, every southern state had succeeded in eliminating blacks from the political, economic, and social power they had been able to achieve under Reconstruction.

Freed slaves and their descendents did not submit to second-class citizenship willingly. In 1896, Homer Plessy, an African American described as "seven-eighths" Caucasian, tested the 1890 Louisiana law which decreed that all railroad companies provide "separate but equal" facilities for white and colored patrons. Charged with violating the segregation statue after boarding the white car of a train, Plessy argued that the law violated his constitutional rights (Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments) and

⁸⁸ When the 1876 election results came in, Sam Tilden (Democrat) was conceded 184 electoral votes (185 required for election) and Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) was only conceded 165 electoral votes. Nineteen of the twenty contested votes lay in the three southern states controlled by Republicans. On December 6, rival sets of Republican and Democratic electors cast votes and declared their candidate the winner. Congress had to decide which returns were "authentic." With a Democratic House and Republican Senate . . . well, the point is, after a great deal of political maneuvering, a deal was struck that included the abandonment of any protection for the freed slaves in the South.

sought to prevent the judge, John H. Ferguson, from proceeding with the trial. Plessy appealed the case to the Supreme Court, which upheld the doctrine of “separate but equal.” After dismissing the plaintiff’s arguments as based on false assumptions, the majority opinion of the Supreme Court reasoned that “the case reduces itself to the question whether [the 1890 law] is a reasonable regulation.” The court argued that it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order . Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable, or more obnoxious to the Fourteenth Amendment than the acts of congress requiring separate schools for colored children in the District of Columbia, the constitutionality of which does not seem to have been questioned, or the corresponding acts of state legislatures (quoted in Grant, 1968, p. 173).

In the ensuing years, legal challenges to segregation were defeated as federal and state judges continued to point to *Plessy v. Ferguson* as precedent - supporting segregation in all public and private spaces. There were still many who were not intimidated by the growing body of segregation laws. Such opposition to the growing apartheid system was eliminated through systematic lynchings and “race riots.” Between 1889 and 1898, an average of 187 lynchings per year took place in the United States, four-fifths of these in the South (Blum, 1985; p. 419).

The NAACP was born out of a reaction to the race riots in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908.⁸⁹ The organization’s first major campaign was launched against lynching in 1911. It also organized protests against *The Birth of a Nation* in 1917.⁹⁰ In 1939, the NAACP

⁸⁹ Journalist William Walling, New York lawyer Henry Moskowitz, and Mary White Ovington (granddaughter of an abolitionist) issued “The Call,” a statement of the intention to form an organization to address the injustices against blacks. The final draft of “The Call” was written by Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of Abolitionist newspaper editor William Lloyd Garrison. In his paper *The New York Evening Post*, Villard hoped to continue his grandfather’s efforts to use the power of the press for moral persuasion.

“The Call” united progressives from the labor movement, the college settlement movement, and the educational reform movement. Signers of the call included educational philosopher John Dewey; Jane Addams, founder of Hull House; labor leader Leonora O’Reilly; journalist and activist Ida Wells Burnett; and Atlanta university professor and outspoken critic, W.E.B. DuBois.

⁹⁰ One of the most popular movies of its time, D.W. Griffith’s “classic” was essentially an interpretation of Reconstruction, which painted freed male slaves as predatory rapists of white women and the KKK as gallant defenders (through lynching) of white womanhood and civilization itself. One could consider *Gone with the Wind* as a sequel.

Legal Education and Defense Fund was established to begin the long and arduous task of overturning what was considered the legal basis of segregation in this country — *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The original strategy was not to attack segregation as unconstitutional, but to demonstrate that *in practice* segregation offered unequal facilities to blacks. Such inequality was unconstitutional, based on the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Plessy*. Charles Houston, and his protégé, Thurgood Marshall, began an assault on legal segregation starting with graduate schools. Houston and Marshall reasoned that inequality was easier to demonstrate at the graduate level, that there would be less resistance to integration of graduate facilities, and that the NAACP could establish legal precedents that could ultimately be used to build a case against the constitutionality of the entire system of legal segregation. Through this strategy, the NAACP secured desegregation victories in graduate and law schools (Emery and Gold, forthcoming).

By 1950, the NAACP strategists decided to directly attack the doctrine of “separate but equal.” In 1951, the Rev. Oliver Brown went to enroll his nine-year old daughter in an all-white elementary school in Topeka, Kansas.⁹¹ When the school refused to enroll her, the parents agreed to allow the NAACP to represent them. The federal district court in Kansas found that segregation in public education had a detrimental effect upon black children, but denied relief on the grounds that the black and white schools were substantially equal with respect to buildings, transportation, curricula, and educational qualifications of teachers. The NAACP appealed this decision directly to the U.S. Supreme Court who agreed to hear the case. In 1954, Chief Justice Warren delivered the majority opinion in *Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. He noted that

the doctrine of “separate but equal” did not make its appearance in this Court until 1896 in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, involving not education but transportation. American courts have since labored with the doctrine for over half a century. In this Court, there have been six cases involving the “separate but equal” doctrine in the field of public education. [In two of them], the validity of the doctrine itself was not challenged. In more recent cases, all on the graduate school level, inequality was found in that specific benefits enjoyed by white students were denied to Negro students of the same educational qualifications In none of these cases was it necessary to re-examine the doctrine to grant relief to the Negro plaintiff.

⁹¹ In 1949, the Kansas state legislature passed a law that permitted, but did not require, cities of more than 15,000 population to maintain separate school facilities for black and white students. After the passage of this law, the Topeka Board of Education elected to establish segregated elementary schools. Other public schools in the community, however, were operated on a nonsegregated basis.

In [this case] . . . there are findings below that the Negro and white schools involved have been equalized, or are being equalized, with respect to buildings, curricula, qualifications and salaries of teachers, and other “tangible” factors. *Our decision, therefore, cannot turn on merely a comparison of these tangible factors in the Negro and white schools involved in each of the cases. We must look instead to the effect of segregation itself on public education.* [my emphasis]

. . . Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal education opportunities? We believe it does.

Warren defined what some of the “intangible” factors were that were fundamental to evaluating the quality of an educational experience. For the court, these included “the ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students.” To separate children “from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.” Warren believed that the psychological effect upon black children of segregated schooling was “amply supported by modern authority.”

Even though the Supreme Court overturned the “separate but equal” argument of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1954, it was not until the late 1960s that federal courts began to force recalcitrant school districts to implement desegregation plans. As a result of segregated housing patterns in most U.S. cities, such plans often included busing students from their own neighborhoods to schools in other neighborhoods. The Supreme Court argued in 1971 (*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education*) that since forty percent of American school children already rode buses to school, federal courts could continue to order school districts to use busing to desegregate schools. Indeed, busing as part of the increasing enforcement demanded by the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 had already broken the back of southern segregation. In 1964, 98 percent of southern black children were still in completely segregated schools. By 1970, the South was the most integrated region in the nation, contributing to a tripling of black high school graduation rates since the 1950s (Orfield, 1999).

Justifying Resegregation

The progress made in the late 1960s and early 1970s towards allowing blacks and whites “to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views” with each other quickly began to erode. By 1980, a liberal/conservative consensus challenging the importance of integrated schooling began to take shape. By 1990, the ill effects of segregated schooling were rarely, if at all, detailed in public debate. “Equity” has now come to mean the opportunity for everyone to achieve the same test score rather than equal exposure to the “intangibles” that proportional representation by race or ethnicity can bring to the students in a school. The justification for such a redefinition of “equity” rests upon several assumptions: (1) the sole purpose of education is to prepare students for a hierarchically organized workplace through a common core college-preparatory curriculum (see Chapter 2); (2) state standardized tests can accurately assess whether schools are achieving such a purpose; (3) equal funding of schools is not necessary to insure “a sound basic education” (low-performing schools will get increased but not necessarily equal funding); (4) offers of financial rewards and threats of the loss of funding, state take-over, competition from magnets, charter schools and vouchers are a sufficient array of incentives to motivate a school’s administrators, teachers, parents, and students to make changes that will result in higher test scores. But, these assumptions are highly questionable ones.

As long as these assumptions and the argument that they support receives little scrutiny and less challenge, support for integration as means or end for education will continue to fade. In this chapter, I revisit the cities discussed in the previous chapter in order to examine the relationship between the development of high-stakes testing and the resegregation of the schools in those cities. The promise that “high standards for all” will ensure “equity and excellence” has supplanted the 1954 Supreme Court decision that declared “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal”. This displacement may be due as much to a widespread belief that the structure of the American political and economic system is a meritocracy⁹² as it is due to the well-financed and orchestrated campaign by the Business Roundtable and its allies. The rhetoric of “equity and

⁹² See Appendix A – “Crisis of Legitimacy” for an explanation of the role education plays in promoting and appealing to the myth of meritocracy.

excellence” or “equitable access” promises every child who works hard and is worthy (smart enough) will be able to achieve high test scores, go to college, and get a good job. As long as the resources are available, success or failure is up to the individual. These resources don’t have to be equal, only sufficient. Sufficiency is measured indirectly through test scores primarily and sometimes, secondarily, through dropout rates or college acceptance rates. Systemic reformers argue that the racial and economic composition of a school do not affect test scores, only the *Nine Essential Components* do.⁹³ Equality is said to be measured by test scores.⁹⁴ The “intangibles” affecting the quality of education to which the Supreme Court in 1954 referred — social connections, the status of the school, or the understanding one gains when confronted with differences — are not part of systemic reformers’ definition of what constitutes a “sound basic education.”

The return to the *Plessy* argument of separate-can-be-equal has accompanied, not surprisingly, the resegregation of the nation’s schools. Although the Supreme Court extended desegregation requirements to northern and western cities (1973, *Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver, CO*), it also ruled in 1974 (*Milliken v. Bradley*) that city school districts could not forcibly include the surrounding suburbs in any desegregation plan. Conservatives argue that “forced busing” was and is doomed to fail as a means of desegregating city schools because it cause whites to “flee” the city. But whites had already fled before the *Brown* decision. The growth of the minority population in many cities has been due not to white “flight” but to a surge of non-European immigration since the relaxing of immigration laws in 1965 combined with the declining white birth rate (Orfield, 1999). From 1940 to 1960, nonwhite students were 11 to 12 percent of the nation’s public school enrollment. Immigration and changing birth rates resulted in an increase of nonwhite public school enrollment to 36 percent of the total in 1996. The census projections predict that the nonwhite public school enrollment will be 58 percent

⁹³ The Business Roundtable’s 1995 document by that name identifies the following as the “Nine Essential components of a Successful Education System”: Standards, Performance Assessment, School Accountability, School Autonomy, Professional Development, Learning Readiness, Parent Involvement, Technology, and Safety/Discipline.

⁹⁴ The arbitrariness of this argument can be easily exposed by asking critical questions such as: How and by whom is “sufficiency” decided? If by a “cut-off” score, then who sets it? If by dropout rates or college acceptance rates, then how can an individual be held accountable for a school’s apparent success or failure?

by 2050 (Orfield, 1999).⁹⁵ Both federal and private housing policies since the 1930s have insured that the growing nonwhite population has been increasingly segregated, even in the suburbs.⁹⁶ Without recourse to surrounding suburbs and counties, city schools began to resegregate after the Milliken decision.⁹⁷

Busing and Magnet Schools

The ascendancy of “separate but equal” has been given impetus by the development of a conservative/liberal consensus against “forced” busing and quota systems. Richard Kahlenberg argues in *Education Week* (1999), “Nationally, progressives have given up on racial and economic desegregation, preferring (in the words of Brown University’s Michael Alves) to “make Plessy work” . . . by attacking inequality in education in piecemeal fashion. If high-poverty schools don’t work, give them extra money . . . if the curriculum is watered down, try to raise standards [and] improve teacher training.” Louis Chandler (1997), representing the conservative view, argues that “in spite of 30 years of busing to achieve racial balance, there continues to be a significant gap between white and African American children in terms of school achievement [as well as] no improved self-image [nor] improved race relations . . . [In fact,] continued strife and controversy suggests busing solidifies prejudice and inflames racial tensions” (p. 3).

Since 1978 (the *Bakke* case), the federal courts have contributed to this growing liberal/conservative consensus by consistently ruling against various universities’

⁹⁵ Willie (1997) noted that the 17 percent decline in the white student population the year after Judge Garrity ordered comprehensive desegregation of the Boston schools in 1975 cannot be attributed to “white flight.” Only 7 of that 17 percent was unusual, given that Boston’s overall population had been declining steadily since 1950 but more precipitously before court-ordered desegregation than afterwards (20 percent decline from 1950 to 1970 and another 8 percent decline from 1970 to 1990). An equally plausible explanation for the spike in white student decline could be a response to the school districts’ correction of inflated attendance figures for the purposes of garnering state and federal aid (Willie, 1997; p. 16).

⁹⁶ See Kenneth Jackson, *Race, Ethnicity and Real Estate Appraisal* in *American Vistas*, volume 2, L. Dinnerstein & K. Jackson, eds., Oxford Upress, 1983) for an analysis of the role of the New Deal in creating white Christian suburbs. From the editor’s introduction: “Federally financed interstate highways [of 1916 and 1956] have undermined the locational advantages of inner-city neighborhoods, while income-tax deductions have encouraged families to buy homes rather than rent apartments. [Jackson’s essay] focuses on the much-praised mortgage policies of Uncle Sam [Home Owners Loan Corporation and Federal Housing Administration of 1933] and points out the extraordinarily “flagrant discrimination that was built into them from the beginning” (p. 164). Jackson shows how the federal government’s rating system was adopted by private banks thus laying the foundation for systematic redlining throughout the nation.

⁹⁷ Percent of black students in majority white schools: 1954 = .001; 1968 = 23.4; 1976 = 37.6; 1988 = 43.5; 1991=39.2; 1996 = 34.7 (Orfield, 1999).

attempts to create racial diversity on their campuses. In culminating two decades of court decisions against affirmative action, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh circuit, on August 27, 2001, struck down the affirmative action admission policy of the University of Georgia's arguing that if the university wanted diversity on campus, it couldn't single out race as a criteria. The court suggested that the admissions process instead needed to consider "the students' talents, life experiences, and other factors that can apply to white students as well as nonwhite ones" (Steinberg, 2001). In its argument the court also seemed to suggest that economic diversity could *replace* racial diversity. The court argued

If the goal in creating a diverse student body is to develop a university community where students are exposed to persons of different cultures, outlooks, and experiences, a white applicant in some circumstances may make a greater contribution than a nonwhite applicant A white applicant from a disadvantaged rural area in Appalachia may well have more to offer a Georgia public university such as UGA – from the standpoint of diversity – than a nonwhite applicant from an affluent family" (quoted by Tucker, 2001).

Cynthia Tucker, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* and an African American, believes that the judges were operating upon false assumptions.

Those judges imagine that the experiences of affluent black kid growing up in the Atlanta suburb of Dunwoody are no different from the experiences of an affluent white kid growing up in Dunwoody. I wish that were so. . . . But racism is alive and well in America. Every black American, no matter how wealthy, is eventually confronted with it. By contrast, no white student, no matter how poor, will ever meet a police officer or store clerk or judge who makes instant judgments about his character based on the color of his skin. Economic diversity on college campuses is indeed important, but it cannot take the place of racial diversity in teaching lessons about the broad American experience. If college is to grant a genuine education, it certainly ought to include the experience of rubbing shoulders with students who have struggled against the color line.⁹⁸

Ironically, it has been busing and affirmative action, combined with other remedies that have proven to be the only solution effectively to dismantle a system that was itself created through coercion. Desegregation was achieved through a long series of legal battles by the NAACP combined with a massive social movement whose direct action tactics put pressure on governments and school boards to obey the new laws. Both

⁹⁸ The judges' use of the "poor white Appalachian" is all too reminiscent of the historical strategy, used by elites to maintain their power, of pitting poor whites against blacks.

direct and legal action was needed.⁹⁹ The legal reverses by the courts of the 1954 *Brown* decision combined with the BRT's massive campaign for systemic reform have successfully undermined parental efforts to bring about desegregation. "Choice," in the form of Magnet schools and "voluntary transfer programs," has appeared as compensation for the return to segregated "neighborhood schools/"

Magnet schools are "public alternative schools" that school boards have increasingly used since 1975 to desegregate their districts. A magnet school offers "specialized subject themes or educational methodologies" to attract students from outside the neighborhood of the school, thereby integrating it. Often the admission process includes racial quotas to insure diversity (Yu, 1997). "Voluntary transfer programs" are programs in which schools, among which may be magnet schools, choose to participate in a busing program without the school district mandating student assignments. Both magnets and voluntary transfer programs combined with promises of increased funding for the remaining segregated schools have replaced court-ordered busing. For example, when the federal court ordered the Norfolk, Virginia, school board to end busing and return to neighborhood schools in 1986, "opponents on the school board decided to switch their votes in support of neighborhood schools in exchange for a commitment that the schools that would become all-black as a result would be targeted for extra resources, even though they doubted such a promise would be kept forever" (Kunnen, 1996).

Such "extra resources," ironically, end up being spent on magnet schools to which only a minority — in the numerical sense of the word — of the population has access.¹⁰⁰ The limited accessibility is justified by the theory of "choice": if magnet schools are "over-chosen" then the nonmagnet schools will be "forced" to improve in order to survive.¹⁰¹ Disparate resources are not considered a factor in the ability of schools to

⁹⁹ "Urban regime" theorists, such as Portz (1999), argue that the intervention of the courts undermines "urban capacity." But "urban capacity" is a very specific and conservative construct essentially defining the ability of business to move city politics in the direction of its interests.

¹⁰⁰ School districts divert extra resources to make magnet schools "attractive" and thus a school to be chosen over a student's "neighborhood" school. These extra resources come from district budget allocations and business partnership contributions. From 1985 to 1993, the federal government has given \$739.5 million to 117 different school districts, to be spent on magnet programs that have a desegregation component (Yu, 1997;16).

¹⁰¹ This is just one of many examples in which educational issues are forced through the lens of the corporate competitive model. This model assumes that if one creates a sink or swim situation, people will

“compete” for students. Those schools losing students to better-funded magnet schools are expected to develop specialized curriculum or methods *without the same help that the magnet schools received!* A *New York Times* columnist (commenting on Bakersfield, California, adopting, with federal approval, a desegregation plan exclusively relying on magnet schools) questioned the faith that “educators” have placed in magnet schools as agents of desegregation.

There is wide agreement among educators that magnet schools are an effective and academically sound tool for promoting racial desegregation. The main question . . . is whether it is possible to bring about *full desegregation* . . . using only magnet schools . . . [also] it remains to be seen whether there are enough possible different kinds of meaningful programs, especially at the elementary level, to make every school distinctive and attractive (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/29/84; WOR :p. 11) [my italics].

In the last fifteen years, school districts have become more not less segregated and funding remains “insufficient” regardless of how one defines such a term. Yet the decision to use magnet schools over the combination of increased and equal distribution of resources and integrated housing development in order to promote equality of education for all remains unquestioned.

It seems unlikely that it is mere chance that “major school improvement efforts typically begin only after desegregation battles have been resolved in the courts” (Hill, Wise and Shapiro, 1989; p. 5 paraphrased by Portz, 1999; p. 144). The new ethos since the 1980s among comprehensive school reformers is this: separate can be equal. High test scores are presented as evidence that “excellent education” is occurring (the definition of which does not include the “intangibles”). Where test scores are low, resources directed to those schools will raise scores (regardless of the drill and de-skilling, test-prep curriculum adopted to achieve these scores). In a 1996 report, the Public School Forum of North Carolina reveals how the present nature of the debate — one focused narrowly on finance — has been projected onto the past so as to eliminate even the memory of the historical debate over the relationship between separate and equal.

In the last three decades, dozens of states have been confronted with legal challenges similar to the one faced in North Carolina. Over time, judicial

teach themselves to swim. Those who do drown are victims of their own weakness, and were incapable of contributing to society anyway.

opinions and thinking regarding school finance has changed dramatically. Court cases in the sixties and seventies tended to hinge *narrowly on the question of equity* – how much was being spent on students in rich and poor districts and could, or should, states narrow the gap. In the eighties, the focus of court cases shifted to questions surrounding adequacy – were states providing *an adequate floor*, or base, of funding to ensure all young people an opportunity for learning? Today, the question has evolved to a much more difficult level. Does state funding ensure that all young people have a “sound basic education?” (PSF, 1996) [my emphasis].

In anticipating the 1954 *Brown* decision, southern states had launched a massive campaign to build and fund all-black schools. But the majority opinion of the court rejected the idea that equal funding and facilities guaranteed “equal educational opportunity.” The court argued that there were “intangibles” that could not be measured that were fundamental to a person’s ability to benefit from what a school had to offer. High-stakes testing reformers have clearly rejected the significance of “intangibles” and even the concept of equality of funding. Magnet schools offer the hope but not the reality of high quality, integrated education for all. For the increasing numbers of blacks and other minorities in segregated schools, scores from a state test are considered “sufficient” to determine whether they are getting an “equal educational opportunity.” It remains to be seen for how many years a school’s test scores will have to be considered “low” before such an argument loses its credibility.

Systemic Reform and ReSegregation

In preceding chapter, I described how and when systemic reform was implemented at the district level in Houston, Charlotte, Pittsburgh, and Boston. In this section, I revisit these cities as well as look at St. Louis, Missouri, in order to focus on a pattern in which the end of desegregation is seamlessly followed by the adoption of systemic reform. I do not believe this is a coincidence. As I described in the previous chapters, business leaders wish to devise and implement *public* policy without the *public* interfering with their efforts. Desegregation has been one of the major issues around which “the public” has built a political base independent of business control. In addition, integration in itself challenges the status quo. One of the potential effects (perhaps a goal of integration) is greater knowledge and understanding of other races/ethnicities. Such an effect would undermine stereotypes upon which racism, and the “race card,” depends. These are

important tools traditionally used by business leaders to maintain their control of society. Both as an indication of community influence and as a threat to the effectiveness of divide-and-conquer tactics, desegregation is inconsistent with the goals and strategies of systemic reform. This is why business leaders have promoted “separate but equal” systemic reform as an alternative to the “separate is inherently unequal” desegregation reforms.

Houston, Texas

Don McAdams, a trustee of the Houston school board, described a process by which business leaders in Houston and in the state of Texas worked to elect a school board that would support a superintendent who would bring “order and discipline” to Houston’s school system. That school board coalesced in 1989 and began a systematic process of reforming the school district upon the same principles guiding the lobbying efforts of the Business Roundtable. That process included the resegregation of Houston’s schools. Decentralization (a component of systemic reform¹⁰²) supported the revival of neighborhood schools, which became de facto segregated schools in the context of segregated housing.

McAdams (2000) argues that “desegregation was successful through magnet schools in 1981” (p. 20). The data in Chart 1 (at the end of this chapter) shows how misleading such a statement is. It was so suspicious that it provoked an investigation by the Citizen’s Commission on Civil Rights (Yu, 1997). One wonders what McAdams’ definition of “desegregation” is when he admits that whites make up only one percent of the student population of Madison High School (p. 55). McAdams notes that the increase in segregation of Houston schools under systemic reform was divisive. It was accompanied by constant battles over zoning and rezoning of attendance boundaries, often pitting white parents against parents of color as they fought over resources. “White parents wanted schools for their children that had minority children but not too many and to be from mostly middle-class homes” (p. 58). African American students, who did attend magnet schools, were primarily from middle-class households. While middle-

¹⁰² As may be recalled, decentralization or site-based decision-making (SBDM) has been a key component to the BRT’s total quality management model of governance reform. Calls for such “local control” are disingenuous since what is meant is that the staff at each school must decide how to fulfill educational goals set by state governments.

class magnet schools were built, segregation increased for poor students of color in the early 1990s as the school board recreated “neighborhood schools” as the “foundation for decentralization in 1995” (p. 57, pp. 59–60).

Systemic or comprehensive school reform was slow going until the school board was able to hire a new superintendent, Rod Paige, in 1994. The appointment of Paige, an African American, and the subsequent speeding up of school reform led McAdams to conclude that a minority superintendent is crucial to the success of systemic reform (p. 255). One of the “tough decisions” that Paige made (against which the “race card” could not be played) was to contract out (decentralize and privatize) school services. This meant laying off people employed by the Houston school district and contracting out to private businesses the work eliminated by the layoffs. This was done for the purposes of “efficiency and cost savings,” a powerful argument during an era of reduced school budgets.¹⁰³ But the “savings” came from eliminating decent paying jobs held mostly by people of color, primarily African American, and replacing those jobs with non-union, insecure, and poor paying jobs.¹⁰⁴ McAdams described the opposition to the loss of decent paying jobs as “emotional” and some school board members’ support of positions held by the “NAACP, AFL-CIO, religious and civic groups” as causing the school board to become “dysfunctional” (p. 160). Such a stance reveals an assumption, a legacy of the Progressive Era of the 1890s that only well paid, predominantly white professionals are objective and rational. Anyone who is not a well paid professional and believes that non-professional jobs should be well paid, too, are “emotional” and threaten the march of progress behind a unified decision-making body led by business concerns. Furthermore, any person of color who complains about decisions made by white professionals is accused of “playing the ‘race card.’”

McAdams and his fellow school board trustees have presided over educational reforms in Houston that have allowed district schools to become more segregated. The use of divide-and-conquer, race politics, and unnecessarily underfunded schools provided

¹⁰³ Although it may be recalled, as related in Chapter 4, that it was Houston’s business leaders who had kept the tax rate lower than what many others in the community wanted.

¹⁰⁴ This is ironic since systemic reformers argue that these reforms are necessary because the New Economy is generating an increasing proportion of highly paid, high skilled jobs.

a context in which magnet schools, decentralization, and privatization were presented as inevitable.

Charlotte, North Carolina

In Charlotte, magnet schools were introduced to replace the desegregation plan in 1992; this happened only one year after superintendent John Murphy was hired to pursue systemic reform (Mickelson, 2000). During the next decade Charlotte's high schools became more segregated (see Chart 2 at the end of this chapter). Superintendent Murphy introduced Project First in order to undermine objections to resegregation by promising "extra" resources to segregated non-magnet schools. Funded by IBM and Americorps in partnership with the Public Education Network and CMEF, Project First was to provide technology and expertise to ten nonmagnet elementary schools. Mickelson, however, didn't see how such a program could redress the imbalance of funds between magnet and nonmagnet schools. For example, in 1993, one magnet school received \$750,000 in technology resources while a Project First school received an Americorps volunteer and several IBM computers (Mickelson, 2000; p. 135).

Mickelson argued that not enough was spent on the nonmagnet schools to justify resegregation (an argument that already has abandoned the Brown decision and accepted the philosophy of *Plessy*). Her reservations about the ability of magnet schools to lead to systemwide school improvement are born out by a 1997 Report of the Citizen's Commission on Civil Rights. The commission noted that in order to ensure the success of magnet schools, many districts end up investing greater resources in magnet schools over nonmagnets while at the same time magnet schools have lower participation rates from low-income families. They observed that in the three cities they studied (Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Nashville), magnet schools averaged \$200 more per pupil than nonmagnet schools (Yu, 1997; p. 11). St. Louis school district spent 30 percent more on magnet school students than the average public school student (p. 17). In Houston, the disparity was greater — from anywhere between \$400 and \$1300 per pupil more (Yu, 1997; p. 11). The Commission conceded that magnets had achieved some desegregation by race but was exacerbating segregation on the basis of income (the few magnet schools are racially diverse, leaving the majority less so and also increased economic segregation). The only short-term solution the Commission could see to this was to

improve the resources of non-magnet schools as well (Yu, 1997; p.33). Yet this solution continues to ignore the argument made in Chief Justice Warren's 1954 decision that equal funding still does not guarantee equal education, which further illustrates the disappearance of the "intangibles" from the debates over and implementation of modern school reform.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In 1965, the Pittsburgh school board declared that "racial integration . . . is a problem that cannot be solved . . . through manipulation of children into a contrived 'balance'" (Chandler, 1997; p. 13). Nevertheless, under pressure from Pennsylvania's Human Relations Commission (PHRC), the board submitted a "desegregation plan" consisting of open enrollment, voluntary transfer programs, and a proposal to develop large, consolidated high schools. The PHRC rejected this plan and requested that the school board try again. In 1973, the board submitted another plan calling for new construction, the redrawing of school boundaries, and the introduction of magnet schools. The PHRC rejected this one as well (Chandler, 1997; p. 13).

In an attempt to make the school board more responsive to community demands (of which one was desegregation), school board members were elected by district in 1976. The subsequent election of three pro-integration members, however, was not enough to get a real desegregation plan passed by the board. The patience of the state's HRC was running out. In the suits and countersuits between the PHRC and the Pittsburgh school board, the courts supported the PHRC until 1980. In 1980, corporate leaders stepped in and created the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC, chaired by a corporate CEO, drafted a "desegregation plan" which called for magnet schools and "school improvement plans to address achievement gaps in the African American schools that would remain segregated" (Portz; p. 60).¹⁰⁵ While the PHRC objected to this plan, the courts allowed for its implementation, apparently believing that separate can be equal.

After settling the desegregation issue, the CAC funded the search for the new superintendent, Richard Wallace. The new superintendent focused on test scores, claiming that the "gap" between blacks and whites was cut in half from 1979 to 1984.

¹⁰⁵ "School improvement plans" or "site plans" normally require site-councils to explain to the district administration exactly how the school intends to raise test scores of the students, especially Latino and African American students.

Louise Brennan replaced Wallace in 1992 and focused her energies on aligning all reforms behind the goal of higher test scores. When there was a “crisis” in 1995 precipitated by declining enrollments, Brennan chose to recreate “neighborhood schools” along with the expansion of magnet schools and open enrollment, exacerbating the already growing segregation (Portz, 1999; p. 78).

When the school board attempted to cancel funding for busing, community opposition was great enough to force the school board to retreat. At this point, business leaders retreated in the face of growing community influence over school board politics (Portz, 1999; p. 78). In order to end busing in Pittsburgh, business leaders went to the state legislators and governor. In June 1996, House Bill 1689 was introduced into the Pennsylvania state legislature. The bill promised to end PHRC’s ability to order mandatory busing and limit conditions under which busing might be ordered by the courts (Chandler, 1997; p. 13). The bill was passed by the Senate and signed by the governor who observed upon signing that busing was a “well intentioned but failed experiment” (quoted by Chandler, 1997; p. 5).

The role of business leaders in Pittsburgh’s school reform movement clearly shows how they contributed to the adoption of test scores as the sole criteria for evaluating the nature and quality of schooling. Such a criterion is being used to justify an unequally funded and segregated educational system.

Boston, Massachusetts

In 1963, 80 percent of Boston schools were segregated. Today, with whites as only 17 percent of the students of the Boston public school system population and suburbs legally out of bounds for any systemic desegregation plan, it is difficult to believe Willie’s (1997) claim that recent desegregation plans are achieving “simultaneously” the “multiple goals of desegregation, school improvement and choice” (p. 14). (See Chart 4 at the end of this chapter for racial/ethnic breakdown of Boston’s public high schools, 1998–99). The first “student assignment plan” aimed solely at desegregating Boston’s school system was devised by the State Department of Education in 1974. Revision and expansion of this plan took place in 1975 and 1989. The second and third plans made desegregation only one of several “multiple goals,” compromising the principle of desegregation by conflating it with the goals of “school choice” (magnets) and the high-

stakes testing agenda. Instead of the goal being desegregation on the principle that “separate is inherently unequal,” the goal, especially since 1989, seems to be acceptance of unequally funded schools, but with African Americans having an opportunity to attend the few “good” schools in the system. This program has been dubbed “equitable access” (Willie, 1998; p. 16).¹⁰⁶

Prompted by a lawsuit filed by black parents in the face of an implacable school board, Federal District Judge Arthur Garrity promulgated detailed and complex desegregation orders for the Boston school system from 1974 to 1989. In 1975, Garrity appointed a committee of six “experts” to devise a plan. The resulting plan created a city-wide magnet school zone for 30 percent of the public school students while the other 70 percent either chose or were assigned to schools, depending on their location in one of eight “attendance zones” (Willie, 1997; p. 13). Racial imbalances nevertheless increased in the eight attendance zones from 1975 to 1989 (Willie, 1997; p. 15). Included in the “desegregation” plan, not insignificantly, was the inauguration of business/university partnerships with the public schools and the tying of the definition of “school improvement” to standardized test scores.

In 1989, Garrity ended judicial oversight by signing off on a “voluntary controlled-choice” program as an acceptable desegregation plan even though all four African American school board members had voted against it (Portz, 1999; p. 91). The “Controlled Choice” plan created three zones of 20 elementary schools per zone (the high school “zone” was citywide). There was a racial allocation for each school which was calculated by averaging the proportion of applications from each racial population to

¹⁰⁶ The Boston school board has been operating throughout the last 20 years in the context of a state reform agenda that has coupled “schools of choice” (of which magnets are the principal example), high-stakes testing, and “increased” but still unequal funding to poor districts. The 1993 state reform legislation was based upon the 1991 document, *Every Child a Winner*, published by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. Craig Bolon (2000), a member of MassParents, argues that the authors of the legislation were anticipating a Supreme Court decision based on a 1978 lawsuit calling for equal funding for schools. The Reform Act was passed one week after the Court’s decision was announced supporting equal funding for schools. The Reform Act increased state funding to poor districts but also allowed for the creation of “schools of choice,” set in motion the creation of statewide mandated standards and tests, and required the development of school committees (site-based management decision making) (Bolon, pp. 1-2).

grades one, six, and nine with the proportion of racial groups already enrolled in kindergarten, grades five and eight (Willie, 1997; p. 13).¹⁰⁷ Boston's business leadership wished to add standards and proficiency testing as part of the overall plan but was confronted by a "squabbling school board." They therefore put their energies into redesigning how school board members achieved their positions (Portz, 1999: 96).

As one of the principal architects of the 1989 plan, Charles Willie¹⁰⁸ (1998) argues that there is "no compelling educational value" to a desegregation plan unless it contains "a school improvement component" (p. 15). A "better" or "more attractive school" is defined as a school in which "the proportion of students in all racial groups who wish to attend a school as their first choice is substantially greater than the seats allocated for students in each racial group" (p. 16).¹⁰⁹ Willie has offered examples of what methods might produce such a result: being able to attend one's first or second choice of school, the opportunity to attend after-school programs at the same school one attends, the ability to walk to school, the experience of staying in the same school (or neighborhood?) from K–12, and going to a school that is racially and economically diverse. Willie's evaluation of desegregation from 1989 to 1998, however, only analyses the "choice" component and gives no data as to whether the school is more or less segregated — that seems to be a nonissue for him. For example, "for the 1997–98 school year, 32 out of 126 schools are listed as over-chosen"; 29 percent of those attending

¹⁰⁷ But such a formula does not *necessarily* lead to integration given the reality of segregated schools in Boston. For example, no movement towards greater balance would occur if the ratio of applicants to a school is 4 to 1 black: white and the ratio of enrolled students is 2 black students to every 11 white students. In this likely scenario, the average of the black applicants and black enrolled would be 6. The average of white applicants and enrolled would be 12. Thus, the racial allocation for that school would be acceptance of one black student to every two white students. When the formula does result in more black than white applicants to a school, it does so at glacially slow increments.

¹⁰⁸ Willie is a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (a colleague of Paul Reville) and codesigner (with Michael Alves of Brown University, home of the Annenberg School of Educational Reform) of the 1989 "Controlled Choice" plan.

¹⁰⁹ Willie is studiously evasive about defining what "school improvement" is. He does provide *examples* of "some of the finest schools in Boston" as evidence that "there is a direct link between school diversity and school quality" (1998; p. 18). What these six schools have in common, according to Willie, are lots of computers; partnerships with business and universities; extracurricular activities after school; and extra time devoted to reading and math instruction. One school is excellent because it "operates as a school-based management institution." Another school is excellent because the State Department of Education said so. Willie concludes by arguing "any good school system should be in the business of eventually magnetizing [sic] all of its schools so that they may attract all sorts and conditions of students" (p. 18). By defining a "good" school as a popular one, and the best schools as magnet schools, Willie has conceded the public relations battle to the BRT and made his diversity designs subordinate to systemic reform.

“over-chosen” schools walk to school; “80 percent of Boston’s parents are satisfied with the student assignment plan” (p. 16). He suggests that “over-chosen” schools need to be studied so they can be replicated. This seems at odds with another one of his suggestions — every school should be different (“magnetized”). Such confusion suggests that there are inherent contradictions in using “choice” to achieve integrated and equitably funded schools.

In 1998, the superintendent of the Boston school system began considering revisions of the 1989 plan. According to Willie, every option being considered would increase racial segregation of the schools (his plan, he believed, being the least worse). It is difficult to see how the proposed 1998 options could lead to greater segregation than already existed (see Chart 4 at end of this chapter). Even according to Willie’s criterion of desegregation (access to one’s first choice school), seventy to eighty percent of the students who want to attend [their first-choice school] could not enroll in them (Willie, 1998; p .16)!

Besides successfully co-opting a prominent educational researcher, the business leaders of Boston have managed, in concert with those concomitantly influencing state legislators, to reduce the debate over educational reform into a confused numbers game — whether the game is over “racial allocation” quotas or the significance of test scores. While those concerned with the fate of Boston’s school system fiddle with the numbers, desegregation and the “intangibles” of quality education have lost the burning urgency with which the 1954 *Brown* decision once invested them.

St. Louis, Missouri

In comparing the role of “civic capacity” in education reform in St. Louis to that in Boston and Pittsburgh, Portz (1999) concluded that reform¹¹⁰ has proceeded much farther in the latter two cities because of weak leadership within the St. Louis school district (p. 122). And because of such “weak leadership,” both state officials and local corporate

¹¹⁰ Beginning in the spring of 1993, John Portz, Lana Stein, and Robin Jones worked under the direction of Clarence Stone in studying “civic capacity and urban education” in three cities – Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis. Their central research questions were: “Why do certain cities show greater initiative than others? What are the roles of institutions and leadership in creating and activating that capacity?” (p. vii). The researchers chose to use “ten innovations” as their definition of reform. The innovations (pp. 53, 164–69) closely resemble the Business Roundtable’s “Nine Essential Components.” Privatization, charters, and vouchers represent the only explicit departures from the BRT agenda.

leaders showed relatively little interest in providing structure and funds for systemic reform. Unlike Boston and Pittsburgh, the school bureaucracy of St. Louis has been a “bastion of the city’s black middle class” (Portz, 1999; p. 113). This black middle-class, along with its allies, fought long and hard for desegregation and against attempts to resegregate. As long as community opposition was able to draw strength and support from a national social movement in favor of desegregation, leaders of systemic reform were unwilling to expend resources on a fight. They waited, instead, until the time was ripe.

In 1972, the courts ordered St. Louis to desegregate its schools (*Liddell v. Board of Education of St. Louis*). Since this decision there have been twenty appeals with the case “finally settled” in 1999. In 1976, the NAACP joined the ongoing legal struggle. In 1977, the U.S. Department of Justice joined a suit that resulted in a desegregation order involving the surrounding suburbs of St. Louis (Rebore, 1997; p. 8). In 1983, 22 suburbs volunteered to participate in an interdistrict transfer program instead of facing a judicial hearing which would have determined “the liability of predominantly white suburban districts for the segregation of predominantly black city schools.” The white suburban schools would be required under the agreement to accept city transfers up to 15 percent of their school population. “In return, white suburban students [were] encouraged to venture into the city to attend” magnet schools (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/23/83; p. 24).¹¹¹ If their school was more than half black, St. Louis city black students were allowed to attend a suburban school (Yu, 1997; p. 17). The St. Louis school district paid \$5,000 to a suburban school district for each black child it accepted (Tabscott, 1999).

This hard fought consensus supporting desegregation in St. Louis was under attack by 1991. During that year, the state of Missouri successfully filed suit to declare “unitary status” for St. Louis undermining the voluntary transfer program. The surrounding suburbs were now vulnerable to lawsuits if they continued to accept student transfers from city schools. Yet by this time, the suburban schools had found the transfer program beneficial both socially and financially, so they continued the program on a

¹¹¹ City schools had been under a mandatory busing plan since 1980, which was fairly ineffective since 80 percent of the city’s student population was black. But combining the city-county schools into one system, however, turns the black population into 37 percent of the total student population (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/23/83; p. 24).

voluntary basis (Gray, 1998). It was at this point that St. Louis business leaders began to be interested in expending political capital to replace the debate over desegregation with that of systemic reform. In 1991, they successfully put forth four candidates for the school board. The newly constituted school board began to move towards the same formula being followed by systemic reformers throughout the country. Magnet schools were established while other schools would remain segregated (Portz, 1999; p. 116). As yet, there was still a lack of consensus on systemic reform. A divided school board voted to continue the transfer program to the suburbs.¹¹²

New elections, however, led to the composition of a school board that rejected those elements of systemic reform that the business-sponsored school board members also pursued during 1991 and 1992. Rejected were federal funds for the creation of site-based management decision-making councils and a \$15 million grant offered by the Urban Systemic Initiative Program of the National Science Foundation (Portz, p. 120). The magnet schools remained a means by which the concept of “excellence and equity”, that is, the replacement of desegregation with the goal of “higher standards for all,” could be pursued by business leaders. It was this kind of political tug-of-war between community concerns supporting integration and a proportional distribution of resources against business leaders’ desire to implement systemic reform that led McAdams to label the school board in Houston “dysfunctional.”

In 1996, efforts to replace court ordered desegregation with systemic reform began in earnest. The Missouri state attorney general asked the courts for permission for the state to stop paying desegregation costs and set a deadline for the end of court-mandated desegregation plans. In February 1997, former U.S. Senator Danforth began a lobbying campaign to support state legislation that followed up on the state attorney general’s successful suit (Rebore, 1997; p. 8). In the Progressive Era tradition of state takeover of populist city governments, the Missouri state legislature, in 1999, imposed an end to court-ordered desegregation and supported changes that favored the BRT’s

¹¹² Suburban St. Louis is 25 percent black. Schools that were more than 75 percent white were obligated to accept black transfers until the school was 25 percent black (although some schools voluntarily exceeded this requirement). The city school board spent a total of \$118,600 on recruiting and busing 13,000 blacks (a third of the total) out to the suburban schools. The city magnet schools, however, only attracted 1154 county (suburban) students (Yu, 1997; p. 18).

agenda. The sponsors of SB 781 hoped simultaneously to end the 26-year-old desegregation case and establish statewide systemic reform.

SB 781 reveals an overwhelming emphasis on systemic reform. The major provisions of the bill provided for the creation of a three member, state-appointed interim school board which was to take “corrective action in underperforming schools and seek relief from state-mandated programs”; “explore alternative forms of governance for the district”; outsource district operations; “establish school-site councils”; promote “establishment of neighborhood schools”; develop and implement a “comprehensive school improvement plan” (i.e., site-councils must explain how they will increase the scores of the students at the school, especially the scores of minority students); “ensure that all magnet schools operate at full capacity” and promote the business model of workers as interchangeable parts. This includes to change retirement system to make teachers more mobile, not allow tenure for teachers until their sixth year of teaching, principals would lose tenure altogether, and principals are to be allowed to “reconstitute schools”¹¹³ (MO State Legislature, 1998, web page).

In none of the provisions was there reference made to desegregation. Presumably the support for magnet schools and a concession to districts that they could maintain existing transfer programs (but with added, burdensome restrictions) were intended to be an educational and morally defensible substitute for desegregation. But in naming the organization responsible for implementing the transfer program (*Metropolitan Schools Achieving Value in Transfer Corporation*), the legislators marked, in a subtle way, the shift in the definition of equity from integration (proportional racial representation in individual schools) to test score results.

Given that SB 781 was billed as the “1999 St. Louis school desegregation settlement” (*St Louis Dispatch* editorial, 2001), it said very little about the concerns voiced by Minnie Liddell (who started the suit back in 1972) and a great deal about the

¹¹³ “Reconstitution” is the policy of firing the entire staff of a school (based primarily on test scores) and re hiring from the district at large. This policy was tied to the court-ordered desegregation plan in San Francisco from 1992 onwards. The details showing both the ineffectiveness of this policy in promoting the goals of its proponents as well as the details of how destructive this policy is to an educational community attempting to provide the “intangibles” of quality education to its students will be discussed fully in Chapters 7 and 8.

BRT's educational reform agenda. At a final hearing in 1998, before the "settlement" was passed, Liddell gave the following testimony (as reported by an eye-witness):

All we have been asking for these last 25 years is for quality, integrated education for all our children from Ladue to the Ville. Everyone wants to know whether integration works. Well, I can tell you what didn't work — segregated education didn't work. It didn't work for me and it didn't work for a lot of kids. There is only one moral course: to provide all of our children quality, integrated education (Tabscott, 1999).

Liddell and her allies, in 1998, were asking not for "equity and excellence" but for "integration and quality." She has pursued the latter all her life. On March 5, 2001, the St. Louis Community Monitoring and Support Task Force released its assessment of the degree to which the school district had complied with the state mandated settlement of 1999. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* summarized the report as follows:

The report praises the city schools for:

- Offering all-day kindergarten to all children and expanding preschool.
- Expanding summer schools.
- Generally meeting state requirements on counseling services, library services, course offerings, and college prep programs.
- Maintaining a system of magnet schools.

The report criticizes the district for:

- Failing to raise scores in science, math, and communication arts by the number promised for all grades.
- Failing to boost attendance [rates actually dropped].
- Failing to reduce the dropout rate by the amount promised in the settlement (Franck, 2001).

The thrust of the report suggests that systemic reform ("high standards for all") has successfully eclipsed the moral, social, economic, and political issue of desegregation and is raising test scores at the expense of increasing absenteeism while failing to make a dent in the dropout rate.

Through a series of rulings following *Brown*, the Supreme Court eroded the legal tools available to oppose the systematic resegregation of America's schools. As a result, public interest groups, such as the ACLU, the NAACP, and MALDEF (Mexican-

American Legal Defense Fund) are acting as if they accept the rules of the new playing field: segregated schools, magnet schools, underfunded voluntary transfer programs, and the promise of increased (but not equal) funding for “low-performing” schools.

Architects of the new “desegregation plans” like Charles Willie and Michael Alves are now housed in some of the primary think tanks of systemic reform — Harvard and Brown University. School boards, once converted to the benefits of desegregation, now are in a confused retreat against the increasing demands for higher test scores. “Equitable access,” “high standards for all,” or “equity and excellence” are euphemisms that justify segregation, and inequality of resources in the name of educational quality and opportunity by test scores alone.

Introduction to High School Charts

My interpretations in this and the following charts are based on raw data from NCES Common Core of Data. I chose to look at the ethnic breakdown data from 1987 (the earliest available) and comparable data from 1998 (the latest to date). I only looked at high schools in the cities analyzed in chapters four and five (St. Louis data is not complete) for the following reasons: (1) the number of high schools in each city is a manageable amount for this kind of analysis; and (2) since high schools are generally more “comprehensive” than middle or elementary schools, the degree of segregation in high schools is an indication of even greater desegregation in elementary schools, the more so as district policy returns to neighborhood elementary schools.

Proportional Representation

There are many definitions of segregation used by researchers and the courts. I have chosen to look at proportional representation since few city student populations have a “balance” in which 50 percent of the students in the district are black and 50 percent are white. Or, in cities like Houston, 33 percent of the students in the district are black, 33 percent are white, and 33 percent are Hispanic. Furthermore, proportional representation is an achievable goal. But such a concept is not well accepted by those who stand to lose their privilege as a result. An instructive comparison might be made with the Title IX provisions governing the distribution of funding for collegiate sports. Compliance to Title IX was interpreted by the courts in 1995 to be that the number of men and women in a university’s sports program be proportionate to the number of men and women enrolled in the university. When the law was amended in 1972, men were 65 percent of college enrollment (now 46 percent) and most athletic directors didn’t believe women would come out and play anyway. In 1972, one in 27 girls in high school played a sport. In 2000, the ratio was one in three. The virtual explosion of women playing sports in college has forced colleges to redistribute funding away from the men in order to fund the new women’s teams so they remain in compliance with the proportionality ruling (the men, however, still get twice as much money as the women). This has sparked a movement by many men who blame Title IX for the loss of their opportunity to play sports on the varsity level (Bill Pennington, *NY Times*, 5/9/02). Perhaps the principle of

proportionality in sports is yet to be reversed because there is no issue of merit in the mix or that it is a gender and not a race issue. It is still agreed upon that resources should be distributed equally to men and women. But it is not agreed upon that educational resources should be distributed equally on the basis of race or ethnicity. Instead, a test, strongly correlated with SES, is to be the primary means deciding who merits entrance to the “best” schools. This allows those who test well to argue that they deserve the lion’s share of the nation’s paltry public school resources. No one has raised the question during the debate over Title IX of whether athletic resources and opportunities should be distributed according to the results of a team’s won-loss record or cumulative batting averages or other such “merit-based” criteria. As long as the debate remains at this superficial level, there will not be real educational opportunity in the United States.

Understanding the Charts

Each chart has a line along which every school would fall, if its white population were proportionately represented. The other two lines connect dots representing individual schools. The chart reveals the degree to which individual schools deviate from “achievable” desegregation. For Boston and Pittsburgh, the percentage of whites in each district (as a percentage of the total black and white population) is the same in 1998 and 1987. In Houston and Charlotte, however, the percentage of all whites students in the district (of total black and white) changes (Houston: 1987, 33 percent; 1998, 27 percent and Charlotte: 1987, 62 percent; 1998, 55 percent). In order to make the change in the percentage of whites in each school from 1987 to 1998 graphically comparable for these two cities, I adjusted the figures to represent proportionate deviation from a mean of one.

Assuming that all high schools filled out the NCES questionnaire correctly and returned it to the Center, several observations can be made. By 1998, the number of high schools has increased since 1987. I have chosen to look at the percentage of whites (y-axis) in each school (x-axis) as *only the percentage of the total white and black student population* since the inclusion of Hispanic students in court-ordered desegregation plans is a relatively recent phenomena. More importantly, the history of Hispanics in this country is complex and unique and an analysis of the dynamic of Hispanic school segregation is deserving of its own extended analysis. But, since Hispanics have made up

33 percent (1987) and 49 percent (1989) of Houston's high school population I have provided Chart 2 in order to give a complete ethnic/racial breakdown of the high schools for context.

In the following charts, the comparison of the percentage of whites in each school to the percentage of whites in the district reveals that only some of Pittsburgh's and Charlotte's high schools approach proportional representation while Boston's, Houston's and St. Louis' schools are not desegregated at all. In looking at the differences between 1987 and 1998, it would seem at first glance that, for all five cities, more schools over time have become more representative of the larger black/white racial make-up of the district. But, if one looks at the percentage of black students in over-represented white schools (figures are below the title of each chart), that is, in schools in which the percentage of whites (of total black and white) is greater than their percentage of the district's total, then one sees a polarization of the racial balance occurring. There are fewer black students in "white schools" in 1998 than in 1987.

Figure 5.1

White Students in Houston High Schools

Percentage of black students (of total white and black) in over-represented white schools (i.e. in those schools above the yellow line):

In 1987, 27%

In 1998, 20%

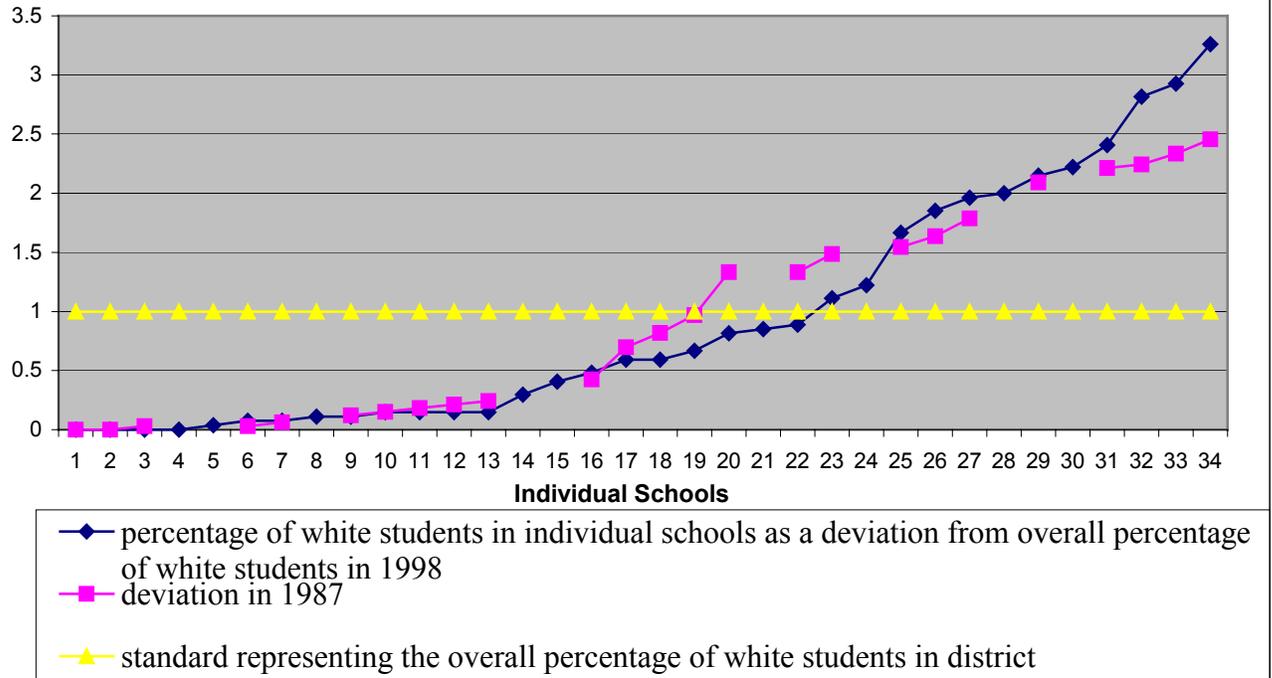


Figure 5.2
Charlotte High School White Population
 Percentage of the total black population that was in over-represented white high schools (above the yellow line):
 In 1987, 49%
 In 1998, 42%

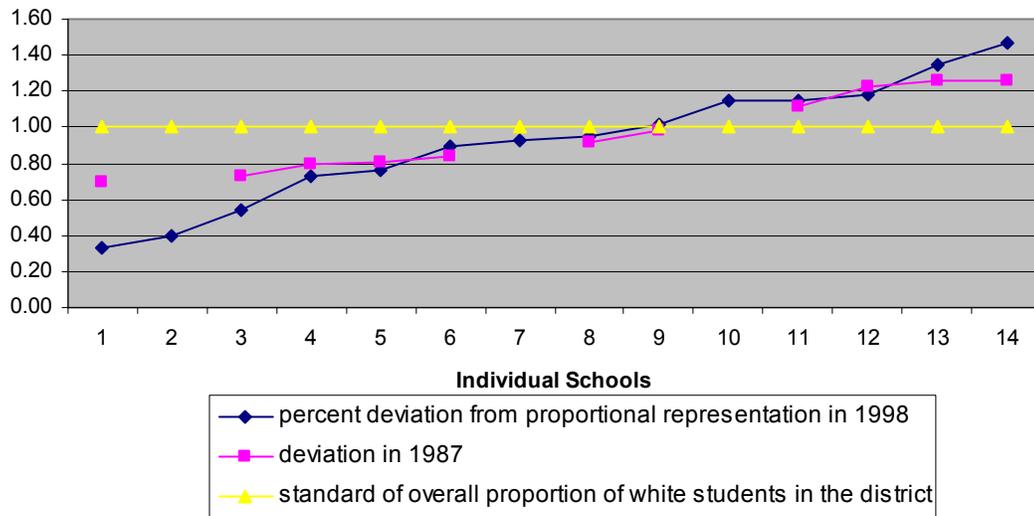


Figure 5.3
White Students in Pittsburgh High Schools as a percentage of total white and black populations

Percentage of black students in over-represented white schools, i.e. in all the schools above the yellow line:
 In 1987, 42%
 In 1998, 37%

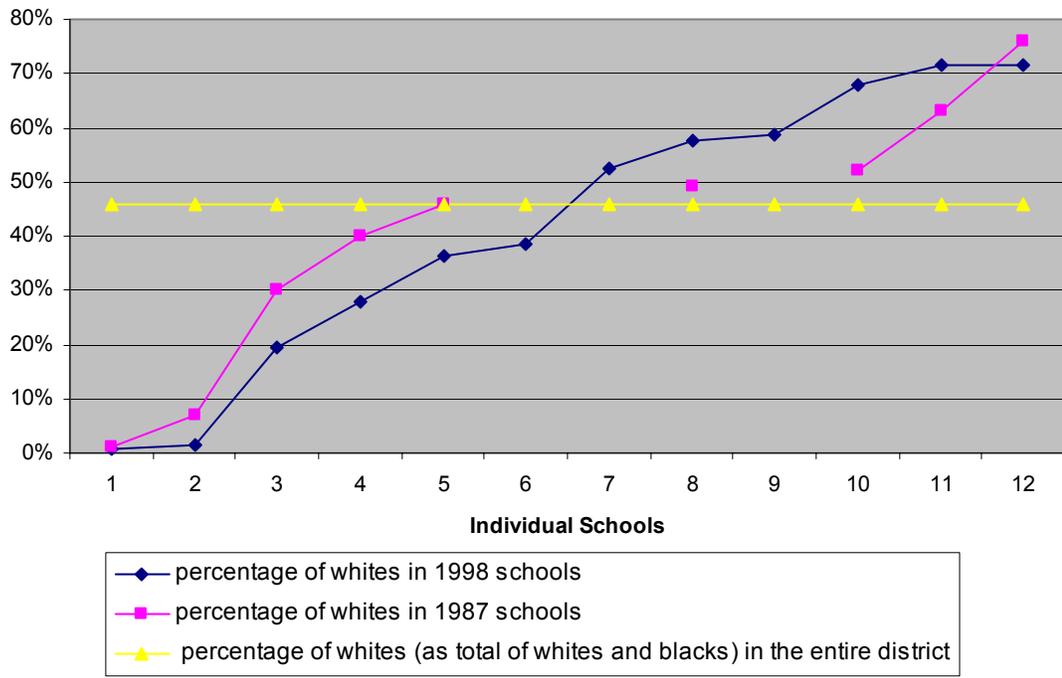
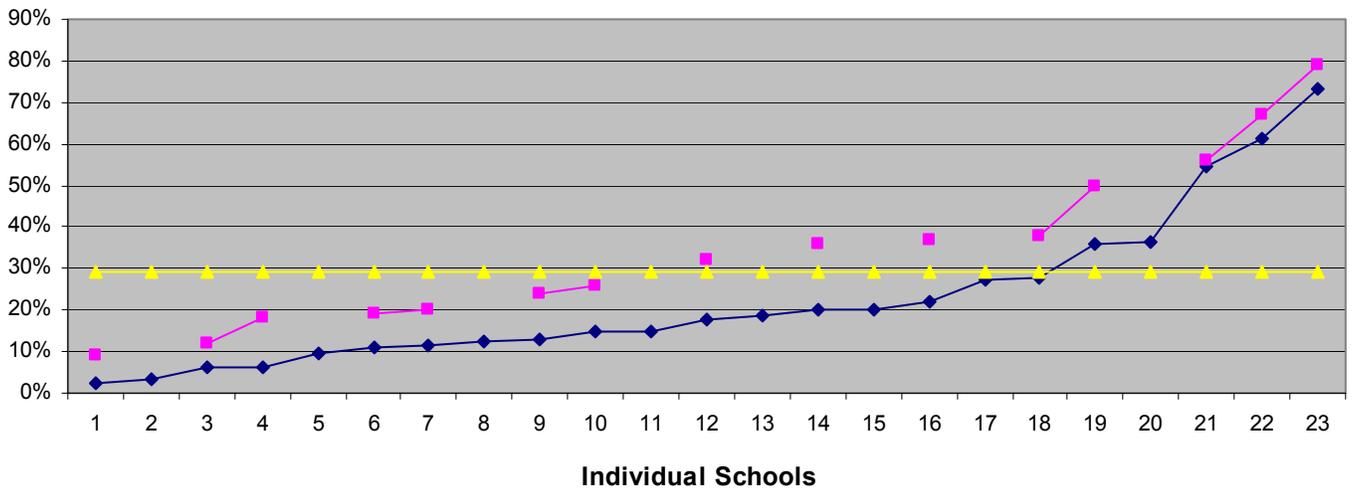


Figure 5.4
White students in Boston High Schools as a percentage of the total white and black student population

Percentage of total black population in over-represented white schools, i.e. schools above the yellow line:
 In 1987, 43%
 In 1998, 14%



- ◆ percentage of white students (of total black and white student population) in individual schools in 1998
- percentage of white students in 1987
- ▲ percentage of white students (of total white and black student population) in the entire district, the same for both 1987 and 1998

Chapter 6: California

Introduction

The previous five chapters have shown that the Business Roundtable's Educational Task Force has created consensus within the corporate community on the goals, strategy, and tactics of the modern educational reform movement. The broad framework of this reform effort is embodied in the 1995 BRT document *Nine Essential Components of a Successful Education System*.

The goals of the BRT's systemic reform efforts embrace both the structure and the outcomes of the nation's public school system. The structure of the system is to be transformed to resemble the structures of the "New Economy": policy decisions are to be made by an elite at the top and implemented locally. Systemic educational reformers referred to this as Total Quality Management in the 1980s and now refer to it (ironically) as "local control." The outcomes sought by the BRT's reform efforts include the transformation of scholarship into successful test-taking, and the production of high school graduates who are adept at completing assigned tasks but who are not accustomed to identifying and dealing with personal or social problems.

For legal and practical reasons, the education task force of the BRT has provided leadership and support to each state's Business Roundtable organization. The national organization has charged each state organization with implementing the *Nine Essential Components*. The national and the state Business Roundtable organizations have managed to create interlocking networks of both private and public organizations that have seized control of the terms of the debate over the schools. This has been crucial to the elimination of public debate over the goals of education. What public debate exists is focused solely on the means to achieve ends defined by each state's academic standards commissions.

State control of educational policy has seriously undermined the influence of local communities over the last twenty years. Local influence on educational policy is confined to whatever pressure local community groups can put on district school boards. The emerging new structures and outcomes of the public school system have permitted

the re-emergence of racism in education. Racism has been used to “divide and conquer” those who might question the reform movement. Prevailing euphemisms such as “equity and excellence” and “high standards for all” simultaneously drive a political wedge between white teachers and minority parents (preventing their effective opposition to systemic reform) and justify the resegregation of U.S. schools (perpetuating the privilege and the ignorance upon which racism thrives).

In this and in the final two chapters, I offer an example of how the Business Roundtable has effectively eliminated community influence in the formulation of educational policy. To do this I examine the history of high-stakes testing, both in California state legislation and in the history of school reconstitution in San Francisco. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the California Business Roundtable influenced the development of state educational policy in California. In the next chapter I show how these reforms dictated the direction of district policy in San Francisco, and how this led to the reduction of community influence on district policy. In the final chapter, I present a case study that reveals how state and district policy combined to prevent the community from having an influence on teaching and learning at Mission High School in San Francisco.

State Control of Educational Policy

In 1976, the California Business Roundtable (CBR) was established in San Francisco. At the time, the state Chamber of Commerce, according to CBR president Bill Hauck, was not “relevant in the lobbying process” in the state capital. A handful of CEOs wished to have an organization that was made up only of CEOs and would pressure the state chamber to become more influential.¹¹⁴ The purpose of the CBR has consistently been to lobby state legislators, departmental administrators, and the governor in the interest of its members on a wide array of topics. Only after 1978, however, did it make sense to lobby at the state level for educational reform. State statutes in 1965 had established some state regulation over textbooks and school personnel but local school boards had

¹¹⁴ In attempting to find out why the CBR was formed in 1976, I spoke on 3/18/02 by phone with Bill Hauck, the president of the CBR. He provided the above explanation but cautioned that it was “speculation” on his part.

“broad authority over most aspects of education and most funding was derived through local property taxes” (Warren, 1999; p. 7).

The California Supreme Court began the process of shifting funding authority to the state with *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), which prohibited differences in school funding based on differences in school districts’ abilities to levy local property taxes. This led to the passage of SB 90 in 1972. Already looking for a way to reduce property taxes on farmers and businesses, the legislature chose a method that would also “put the state in compliance with *Serrano*. This was done by shifting some of the burden of school finance from local to state revenue sources” so that “low-wealth districts” ended up receiving the largest increase in state aid (Sonstelie, 2000, p. 40). The Los Angeles Superior Court decided that SB 90 would not equalize funding quickly enough to comply with *Serrano v. Priest* but the decision was confirmed by the state’s Supreme Court in 1976. The State Assembly passed AB 65 in 1977 to comply with the second *Serrano* decision. But less than a month before AB 65 was to go into effect, the voters passed Proposition 13 which essentially “turned the local property tax into a statewide tax” (Sonstelie, 2000; p. 50). Several bills were passed following the adoption of Prop 13 that developed formulas for the distribution of state aid to schools. The *Serrano* plaintiffs were motivated by the desire to equalize funding among districts, yet the legislation that was passed in compliance with their victory in the court did not equalize funding as much as it provided property tax relief to businesses and farmers and moved de facto school policy making to the state level.¹¹⁵

The shift in funding from the local to the state level was accompanied by an increase in state regulation over education. In 1976, the state mandated that starting in 1981 high school graduates would have to be able to pass a “competency test” in order to graduate. Anticipating implementation of the new law, various constituencies began expressing concerns. Both the state’s testing director and representatives of the Southeast Legal Aid Center argued that student test scores should not be used as a condition of graduation because it penalized those students whose parents were not involved in their education. The Legal Aid lawyers further argued that since the tests would not be the

¹¹⁵ The *Serrano* plaintiffs went back to court in 1983 to argue that equal funding had yet to be achieved, but this time they were rebuffed by the judges (Sonstelie, 2000; p. 55).

same from district to district, students who moved from one district to another would be discriminated against. The lawyers from the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund expressed concern about using test scores to penalize students, suggesting instead that the district or individual school should face sanctions if a student did poorly on a competency test (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/2/81).¹¹⁶

After the first year of the testss implementation, the state reported that the test prevented only 1 percent of high school seniors from graduating. Wilson Riles, California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, argued that this proved the school system was successfully teaching students the basic skills. U.S. Secretary of Education, Terrence Bell, however, pointed out that such a result indicated "lax standards" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/24/82). In 1982, Superintendent Riles faced re-election. While Riles expressed concern over the increasing centralization of educational authority in the state capitol (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/17/82), his challenger, Bill Honig, was calling for more state action. Honig campaigned on a platform that called for an overhaul of the curriculum that featured a "back to basics" emphasis, a required course of study and tougher textbooks; the soliciting of money from business and universities; the retraining of teachers in history and science; a change in teacher tenure and seniority rules; the importance of merit pay; and a statewide exam that would hold schools accountable for results (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/30/82). Honig, who spent twice as much money campaigning as Riles, won the state school superintendency in the fall fo 1982. An editorial noted with satisfaction that Honig's ability to win was based on his ability "to convince voters, among them a large number of business leaders, that he would be able to upgrade the schools, restoring a program of 'high standards, tough academic requirements, and discipline'" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/20/83).

SB 813

After the election of Honig, the debate over the direction of educational reform continued in the state legislature, culminating in the passage of SB 813 in 1983. This legislation was one of the most comprehensive education bills in the state's history. Its more than

¹¹⁶ Ironically, the very arguments (parental involvement, one state-wide mandated test, sanctioning districts and schools) against using a single test score to make high-stakes decisions would be incorporated into a more standardized and punitive statewide "accountability" system in 1998.

eighty provisions attempted to address all aspects of schooling from financial incentives/support to curricular design. During the lobbying and negotiation period, the CBR attempted to influence what the final provisions would prescribe. To do this, the California Business Roundtable had formed “working committees [in 1982] . . . to make CBR’s views on educational reform known to the public, the legislature, the governor, and education interest groups” (Berman, 1983; p. 1).¹¹⁷ In this way, in 1983 CBR quietly “played a critical role in the shaping and passage of SB 813 . . . the first step toward bringing California students up to adequate levels of performance” (Berman , 1983; p. 11). From 1983 to 1998, the CBR developed and refined its educational agenda so that it would be consistent with the national BRT’s *Nine Essential Components*¹¹⁸ while at the same time be responsive to the more specific concerns of the state’s economic needs as defined by prominent business leaders in California.

In spite of CBR’s “critical role” in the formation of SB 813, not all of their recommendations were written into the law. In evaluating the degree of CBR’s lobbying success, Berman (1983) noted that 16 out of the 25 agenda items had been incorporated into the new education statute, 4 had been adopted in modified form, and 5 had been rejected. In fact, there was a significant disconnect between the stated purpose of the legislation and the “key reforms” that were being driven by the CBR. The statute identified eight purposes which the 80+ provisions of SB 813 were intended to promote. These purposes reflected a concern not only for academic and career goals but also for social and moral goals for individuals and for the larger society. The legislation identified “positive attitudes” and “high morale,” “sense of respect for self and others, personal and social responsibility” as well as career preparation and “academic proficiency” as the purpose of K–12 education (California, 1983; chapter 498, p. 2034).

¹¹⁷ Berman and Wieler Associates were a Berkeley-based nonprofit research group hired by the CBR to write a report evaluating the success of the CBR’s lobbying efforts.

¹¹⁸ The heart of BRT’s agenda for the last ten years has been to move state governments to establish “rigorous standards” for *all* (their emphasis) students in core academic subjects (math, science, English, and social studies) that are measurable, and then adopt statewide testing to determine whether the standards are being met. If the standards are not met, then students should not be allowed to graduate and the individual school in which those students are found should be “sanctioned.” The *Nine Essential Components* (1995) which crystallize the CEOs’ position on educational goals are (1) high standards; (2) performance assessment; (3) accountability; (4) site-based decision making (a.k.a., “autonomy”); (5) professional development; (6) learning readiness; (7) parent involvement; (8) technology; (9) safety and discipline. See Chapter Two for a fuller discussion of these “components.”

In contrast to the legislation's multiple purposes, the CBR seemed concerned only with "student performance". In writing for the CBR, Berman concluded:

The greatest strength of SB 813 is its *tightening of student standards*. These measures are fundamental to any reform effort, and are carefully written in the legislation. The new law has also taken important first steps to attract more high-quality teachers into the profession, and has made useful changes in personnel management. While the latter reforms are less likely to have a direct impact on student performance, they may make teachers and administrators *more accountable for their performance*. . . . All of the *key reforms* in SB 813 — tougher student standards, measures to attract quality teachers, the master teacher provision, improvements in personnel administration — are necessary components of any package of measures designed *to improve student performance* (Berman, 1983; p16) [my emphasis].

Berman's report categorized the statutes in SB 813 according to the CBR agenda and analyzed each category according to the criterion of whether the statute directly or indirectly had an impact upon "student performance" (those parts of SB 813 not relating to the CBR agenda are ignored in the Berman report). The report assessed those provisions relating to student discipline and attendance as "not necessarily central to improving student performance" (p. 11); provisions regarding personnel "cannot be expected to have direct, major impact on student performance" (p. 12); issues of school administration and governance "are unlikely to have a direct bearing on student performance" (p. 13); "provisions listed as improvements to existing programs are aimed at improving program efficiency, and are not directed toward improving student performance per se" (p. 15). What will have a "high impact on student performance," the report assured the CBR, were "new graduation requirements, mandatory local curricula reassessments, and a longer school day and year." Interestingly, the CBR proposals that indicated a desire to establish standards, assessment, and accountability — the triumvirate of the current high-stakes testing agenda — while adopted in the legislation, would not have a "high impact" on student performance, according to the Berman analysis. The CBR desire to "upgrade textbooks" would not raise test scores since "quality review [is] left to [the state superintendent], and is limited to courses required for graduation" (p. 4). Although the testing program was expanded by SB 813, Berman was afraid that new tests would prevent credible longitudinal comparisons (p. 4).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Berman and Weiler Associates would be hired again in 1988 to determine what would be effective ways to impose a standardized curriculum on California schools.

In 1983, however, the CBR's goal for testing was to strengthen and expand the existing program. SB 813 fulfilled that goal by adding science and social studies to the list of disciplines in which each district was to test its students (in addition to math, reading, and writing). Furthermore, the new law mandated that grades 3, 8, and 10 be tested in addition to the already required grades 6 and 12 (Berman, Appendix A, p. 2). As a foreshadowing of the future to be taken by state testing, SB 813 established the Education Improvement Incentive Program in order

to encourage improvement in the performance of all public schools by providing fiscal incentives to motivate teachers and school site administrators to work to increase school performance. . . . The legislature recognizes that recent indicators of education achievement, including the results of the California Assessment Program, show high schools to be in the greatest need of educational improvement. . . .

For this reason, the Program would be first implemented in the high schools (California, 1983; Chapter 498, p. 2132).

Those high schools that wished to participate in the program would be eligible to receive up to \$400 per pupil if their test scores improved from the previous year. The program required the State Board of Education to “develop a statewide composite rating of performance for all schools in the state” (California, 1983; Chapter 498, p. 2132). SB 813 also required the state superintendent to create an “honors exam” — the Golden State Examination Program — by 1985. By choosing to take these subject tests and achieving above a designated score, students could have a special insignia affixed to their high school diplomas. The statute “encouraged local representatives of business and industry to recognize pupils who receive an honors designation based on the Golden State Exam” (California, 1983; Chapter 498; p. 2140).

Testing and Textbooks

In the years following the passage of SB 813, several issues emerged in the public arena. One issue surrounded the role and nature of textbooks. Districts were required to spend 80 percent of their state-supplied textbook money on books approved by the state board (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/10/83). The CBR had wanted a new review process to make sure that “textbooks meet the state’s curriculum standards” (Berman, p. 2). Honig, perhaps stung by the lack of confidence Berman expressed in his ability to choose

“tough” textbooks, began a public campaign to upgrade the quality of the textbooks that the state board allowed for district purchase. In September 1983, Honig announced that during the next six years, California school children would become good readers and lifelong book lovers as the state began to choose new textbooks for K – 8 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/10/83). In early 1984, Honig spoke at a “two-day interstate consortium on instructional materials” at Florida State University. He blamed schools for not demanding that publishers market “tougher texts” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/20/84). As the state board of education began considering new textbook guidelines, Honig advised that such guidelines lead to the adoption of texts that are “interesting and difficult rather than easy and dull” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/7/84).

Honig continued to be a source of sound bites regarding state policy initiatives. Like a good politician, he stayed “on message.” Textbooks represented what was taught in the classroom; consequently, they had to meet the highest standards. When the state board of education refused to adopt any of the published textbooks made for junior high school science, Honig applauded the move arguing that it represented a “critical test of our efforts to upgrade textbook standards” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/13/85). Honig argued that the debate over these science textbooks was not one of creationism versus evolution but was related to the “need [for] a thorough and systematic discussion of topics” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/4/85). A *Chronicle* editorial applauded Honig’s position.

Honig has chosen a splendid platform – the unassailable need for “quality education.” He says, and we are pleased to hear it, that this is just the first in a series of steps needed to set higher standards for the textbook market (9/22/85).

In the summer of 1987, the state board of education adopted a 263-page history and social science framework which called for more religion and more “specific facts” in history books at all levels. Honig agreed that these new guidelines would lead to the adoption of textbooks that would “stress ethics, honest and moral values” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7/11/87). A year later, the board was still fine-tuning its textbook list by announcing that 23 books would be replaced on the state list (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/13/88).

The search for the perfect set of textbooks, however, seemed to be never ending. By the end of 1988, the very year Honig had promised that the selection process would

have been completed and a new, challenging curriculum in the form of tough textbooks would be in the classrooms, controversy continued to roil around the decision process. Honig, no longer the lead spokesperson for board policy decisions, called for an investigation of the state board to discover if the textbook selection process was unduly influenced by lobbyists hired by the publishers. The only African American on the board, Jim Robinson, argued that the new textbooks were too much like the old textbooks and had done nothing to improve the academic achievement of minorities (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/15/88). Berman's evaluation in 1983, that increased state control over textbook selection would have little impact, seemed prophetic.

The push for tougher textbooks was intended to raise student achievement. But in the spring of 1984, the *Chronicle* reported that a 5-point drop in the average California Assessment of Progress (CAP) score had put state officials "on the defensive" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/29/84). When the 1984 state SAT verbal scores were reported as below the national average, Honig said he was "extremely concerned" but explained that the scores were a result "of the cumulative effect [during the 1960s and 1970s] of lower standards and an insufficiently demanding curriculum" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/18/84). That fall, the California exam was correlated with the commercially produced, nationally norm-referenced Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) in order to create national comparisons. Some of the California scores were above and some were below the national median. Honig concluded that California was, nonetheless, "moving in the right direction" (*San Francisco Chronicle* 11/17/84).

The "right direction," apparently, was increased testing. In 1985, the eighth grade CAP history/social science test was expanded to test "12 critical thinking skills." Honig explained that the increasingly sophisticated information and service industries needed employees who were capable of abstract thought and logical reasoning. The new test questions would prod teachers who had "succumbed to academic self-indulgence" during the "laid back 70s" to once again teach students to be "critical thinkers" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/1/85). A year later Honig complained that, in spite of test-score gains from the previous year, California students still ranked below the national average (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/16/86). Honig visited the superintendents of "poor performing districts" and was assured that they were making the necessary "personnel and

curriculum changes” that would lead to increased test scores (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/20/86). Honig was convinced that rising test scores were evidence that “teachers were no longer concentrating on basic skills but on more sophisticated literature and reading programs,” programs that emphasized “comprehension and setting high standards” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/3/86).

But in March of 1987, test score interpretation began to be influenced by the impending budget battle. Honig argued that the 1983 reforms had been working because test scores were going up and that, therefore, the schools deserved more money to keep the reforms going. Governor Deukmejian, however, interpreted the test scores differently. He argued that test scores were not enough to gauge progress. The governor pointed to the high dropout rates and the number of students not going to college as evidence that pouring money into schools didn’t make them better (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/17/87). But the editorial staff of the *Chronicle*, supported Honig’s interpretation:

CAP scores prove that the return of public schools to academic basics is working. As Honig says, the scores reflect the impact of SB 813 which directed the schools back to educational basics and away from the free-swinging and often undisciplined bad habits of the 1960s. Teaching test-taking skills is not an “end run” around knowledge; rather it is an important preparation for the real world (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/23/87).

Later that fall, Honig echoed such concerns about “real world” preparation. While expressing pleasure with the increasing test scores, an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* cautioned that “only 40 percent of the state’s students reach ‘adept’ or twelfth grade reading levels. This means that [only 40 percent] can read the technical material required for many jobs and training programs. California must double the number of students achieving this higher level of literacy if the state hopes to remain competitive in the national world economies” (11/17/87).¹²⁰

New Direction of Reform

In spite of criticisms and concessions that test scores alone could not measure the success of SB 813 and that textbook selection was no silver bullet of reform, state education officials argued from 1983 to 1987 as if test scores did and textbooks were. But in 1988

¹²⁰ The 1988 CBR report called upon teachers to expect A-level work from 85 percent of their students (Berman, 1988; p. 140).

(the year before the national BRT devoted its entire annual meeting to developing its educational agenda), public debate over the means of educational reform was redirected in a series of published and widely reported studies. The theory of reform implicit in the 1983 legislation was challenged by these new studies. Furthermore, a new urgency or sense of crisis of legitimacy in the system was suggested by a focus on increasing dropouts and a growing “achievement gap” between whites and students of color. The Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), a nonprofit think tank, issued a press release in February announcing its study, *Conditions of Education in California 1988*. James Guthrie (at UC Berkeley) and Michael Kirst (at Stanford) noted that schools had improved because test scores were higher and more students were taking academic courses. But more money was needed to retain these accomplishments and to address the high dropout rate (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/24/88). In May 1988, the Oakland-based Achievement Council issued a second report (reiterating much of its 1984 report) that condemned the growing “achievement gap” and expressed concern over increasingly higher dropout rates (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/27/88).

The week before the Achievement Council’s report was released, the California Business Roundtable issued a 295-page blueprint for reform in 1988, entitled *Restructuring California Education: A Design for Public Education in the Twenty-first Century* (Berman and Weiler had once again been contracted to produce the report). This report, which would be the basis for educational reform for the next fifteen years, incorporated the concerns over dropouts and test score disparities into a new theory of educational reform (one that, conveniently, would *not* need the extra funding that the PACE report called for). The Legislative Analyst’s Office noted this shift in its briefing to state legislators in 1994.

School Restructuring has become a popular theme of school reform legislation in the 1990s. . . . The reform bills of the 1980s . . . imposed “top-down” changes upon schools to centralize and standardize specific areas of their operations. The reforms of the 1980s, for instance, included requirements governing state education curricula, textbooks, graduation requirements, class sizes, length of school day and year, teacher credentialing, and funding formulas.

School restructuring is an attempt to change the very nature of schools from the “bottom up.” Restructuring of schools, as in business, focuses on assessing organization and mission with the goal of improving performance. In other words, the focus is on the student, the teacher, and the classroom.

This approach to school reform looks at decentralizing authority, decision-making and resources, and collaborating among affected groups to achieve goals. It also focuses on increasing accountability, through means such as student testing and school choice, to ensure goals are met (Conner and Melendez, 1994; p. 13).

This passage is remarkable for its confusion over the terms “bottom-up” and “top-down.” The reform bills of *both* the 1980s and the 1990s are imposing “top-down” changes in schools. The difference is only in the kinds and degree of changes being imposed. By the 1990s, as the LAO notes, state legislation is demanding structural reform as well as changes in instruction and content. The “focus” in both the 1980s and 1990s has been “on the student, the teacher and the classroom.” In the 1980s, state legislation attempted to micro-manage the students and teacher in the classroom. In the 1990s, state legislation shifted to macromanagement of the student and teacher in the classroom.

The CBR/Berman report shows that by 1988, the CBR agenda had adopted the principles of Total Quality Management (as described in Chapter 2). This would characterize both the state and national agenda for the ensuing years.¹²¹ “Restructuring” or “bottom-up” reform meant that the state legislature would control the goals of education while school sites would be held accountable for designing and implementing strategies by which the goals would be met. The “vision” of the CBR was explicitly articulated in its report:

The State (that is, the legislature, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education) would be concerned with performance, not with the education process. It would set the goals for education; develop means for measuring how well schools meet these goals; disseminate information about their performance; take a proactive role in stimulating research, development, and training; and provide an adequate level of financing. The state would work with teachers to set standards for the teaching profession and assure quality control. The state would also intervene in failing schools, and help schools to develop and become outstanding or not permit them to continue (Berman, 1988; pp. 14–15).

Perhaps the major incentive to shift from a “top-down” to a “bottom-up” approach is revealed by the report’s observation that the “financial implications of relying [on the 1983 approach] are staggering” (Berman, 1988; p. 7). Echoing the concerns of the

¹²¹ Hauck insists that the CBR is independent of the BRT, yet he did admit that the impetus to adopt educational reform as an issue came from Sam Ginn (Air Touch, Pacific Bell), who was a member of both the CBR and the BRT in 1988 (Interview, 3/18/02).

reports by the Achievement Council and PACE, the CBR report identified the increasing high school dropout rate as potentially devastating, primarily because it was threatening to prove very expensive as well as challenging the legitimacy of the public school system. Citing a severe teacher shortage and the expectation of intensifying immigration, the report predicted “the number of dropouts and functional illiterates, as well as students lacking higher order skills, may well increase over the next decade” (p. 5). Dropouts are expensive because they “contribute to costly social problems” and “reduce the productivity of the workforce” (p. 3). The cost of “functional illiteracy” alone is “conservatively estimated” to be “over \$6 billion annually due to lost productivity” (p. 5). Part of the equation in calculating “lost productivity” costs was the amount of money businesses spent on training their workers. The CBR report noted that business spends at least \$1.2 billion annually on “basic skills” training (p. 5).

Another possible incentive driving the CBR is indicated in the report’s concession that the “achievement gap” needed to be addressed. Citing figures from the Achievement Council’s 1988 report, the CBR report warned that if the public system is not fundamentally reorganized, the achievement gap between “white and black or Hispanic students” would only grow larger (p. 6). They believed that such a gap would be extremely expensive to close. Yet in citing the Achievement Council, the authors of the CBR report also must have been cognizant of the powerful threat to the legitimacy of the public school system that such a disparity posed.¹²² In 1984, the Achievement Council had issued a report that challenged the educational reform movement to acknowledge the disproportionate failure of poor and minority students. But it wasn’t until the 1988 reports that Honig (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/1/88) and the CBR publicly conceded that the achievement gap was an important issue to address.

In developing a vision of educational reform in California, the CBR report identified tracking, remedial courses, and social promotion as the causes for the achievement gap.

¹²² See Appendix E for an explanation as to how the BRT educational agenda is responding to weakened legitimacy of the system. Also, given the ensuing development of euphemisms such as “high standards for all” and “equity and excellence” which functioned to justify the resegregation of schools (see Chapter 5), it is conceivable that the CBR adopted the Achievement Council’s critiques and recommendations but only to the extent that they fit within the larger framework of their own agenda.

In comprehensive secondary schools, pupils are generally separated into academic and nonacademic tracks, with most students from poor, non-English speaking, and minority backgrounds placed in lower tracks with watered-down curricula and lower standards. Research shows that both high- and low-achievers learn less under tracking and that most dropouts occur from the lower track in the last two years of high school. Dropouts are unlikely to be substantially reduced unless tracking is eliminated. . . . Schooling typically follows a remediation pattern for “lower-achieving” students that has not been effective; instead it stigmatizes students. . . . Students are promoted on the basis of seat time, rather than on objective measures of achievement. They are not challenged to develop reasoning skills, lack adequate career counseling, and are not free to develop their special talents (p. 9).

Few would disagree with the last sentence, yet it does not necessarily follow that high-stakes testing and Total Quality Management have succeeded in creating schools in which all students are “free to develop their special talents” or reducing the “achievement gap” without increasing the number of students who have been dropped or pushed out. Yet the 1988 CBR report promised that “if implemented, the recommendations made in this report would . . . stimulate excellence in all schools for all students” (p. 13).

In the next section, I summarize the contents of the 1988 CBR report. This report represents a watershed in the thinking of California CEOs. In 1988, the state’s business leaders finally arrived at a clear understanding of how they wanted to transform the public education system. Furthermore, this 1988 report apparently functioned as a rough draft of national systemic reform. The national BRT adopted the basic principles of the CBR report when the top CEOs met in the summer of 1989. The BRT’s 1989 agenda was then disseminated in the fall of 1989 to the nation’s governors in the form of *Goals 2000*. The national blueprint was consequently used by the CBR to pursue systemic reform in California.

The Six Recommendations in the 1988 CBR Report “Expand and Focus Schooling”

The CBR report, written by Berman and Weiler, divided their first recommendation into three parts.¹²³ First, the report called for “developmentally appropriate” schooling for all students from the ages of four to six. “Formal academic course work” would begin at age seven. Second, from ages 7 to 16 (up to grade 10), all students would learn the same “core competencies.” No longer would there be a separate junior and senior high school program. In citing a 1983 report by the Economic Commission of the States, Berman (1988) argued that, “success in both academia and the marketplace will lie in developing the skills and attitudes associated with learning-to-learn and manipulating information, rather than absorbing specialized facts” (p. 40). In other words, whether going to work or to college when leaving high school, a student needed the same “knowledge, concepts, and skills.” These competencies would be developed by state committees and “would specify only what students should learn, not how they should learn it” (p. 52).

Theoretically, this would allow “school-level authorities [to] choose the courses they require” even though 65 percent of elementary coursework and 50 percent of secondary coursework would have to be devoted to addressing the core competencies. Secondary students would be allowed “one free elective per semester” under this plan (p. 54).

High school would essentially end by tenth grade. At that point, students would begin taking “statewide exit tests” to qualify for a post-10 option.” After passing the tests, students could then “choose specialized educational programs such as college preparation, vocational or technical education, fine or performing arts, and other areas that would [be developed] to meet the needs of the twenty-first century” (p. 59). Students would be able to choose whether to take programs offered by their high school, or could attend local community colleges or Regional Occupational Centers (p. 63).

Freed from having to be comprehensive, [grade 7–10 schools would be able to] reorganize and focus on providing the curriculum, programs, and instructional services they do best. Some high schools might decide not to offer courses for the eleventh and twelfth grade so that they could direct their energies to excellence in the earlier grades in the common high school. The advantages of the post-10 option [are that students] would no longer be tracked but instead would be able to choose specialized schooling that fits their needs. . . . This practice would allow the highest achieving students to advance more rapidly

¹²³ All page numbers in this section refer to the 1988 report written by Berman and Weiler Associates.

[thereby saving the schools money since they] could be relieved of the pressure of offering advance material that might distort the curriculum for others (p. 63).
124

The authors of the 1988 CBR report expressed confidence that “expanding and focusing” would work in California because they had seen it work so well in Minnesota in 1984 and 1985. The authors did not explain what led them to conclude that such reforms were successful in Minnesota nor did they define success. Equally important, they did not indicate whether they thought the huge differences in the history, politics, demographics, and geography between the two states might affect the transferability of Minnesota’s programs to California.

“Establish Accountability Based on Performance and Choice”

One of the trademark policy goals of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s was deregulation. The CBR report believed that the school system should be deregulated in the same manner as corporations. What they meant by this was a process by which “state laws and regulations setting state graduation, course, and seat-time requirements would be phased out when the new tests and other measures are implemented.” The “new tests and other measures [would] assure that quality education is provided for all students without destroying the local autonomy essential to effective education.” There was a need for *new* tests because the testing program up until 1988 “ha[d] not been done well” (p. 71).

In 1988, there were three testing programs in existence: (1) the statewide California Assessment Program (CAP) taken by nearly all students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 12; (2) the Golden State Examinations which students could elect to take at any point; and (3) the district-administered Pupil Proficiency exams. According to the CBR report, one problem with CAP was that it did not “provide information on individual students.” Another problem with CAP was its “reliance on the multiple-choice format [which] limits the ability [of the test] to measure skills such as writing and open-ended problem solving skills that would be considered core competencies.” Both these problems “reduce the motivation to take the test seriously.” Since the Golden State exam was not taken by

¹²⁴ This would be, then, a new form of “tracking,” which is another indication as to why such systemic reform rhetoric as “high standards for all,” “equity and excellence,” “excellence for all,” and “leave no child behind” are disingenuous at best.

most students it could not be used when “assessing schools’ performance with all students.” The district tests chosen in order to comply with the Pupil Proficiency Law “set low expectations for students and teachers” and, since they were all different, they were “of little value for comparing school or student performance” (p. 74). The report dismissed the use of

commercial standardized tests for student assessment and program evaluation purposes. [These tests] differed too much across districts and are often too poorly matched to district curriculum objectives to provide useful information for the purposes of school accountability or recording student achievement. Scores on standardized tests are also subject to manipulation by teaching specific test items in advance, inflating percentile rankings so that nearly all districts are “above average” when compared to earlier national norms (p. 75).

There is terrible irony in this criticism of off-the-shelf, commercial standardized tests. When Bill Hauck said “it took ten years to implement these reforms,” he was undoubtedly referring to the passage of the 1999 Public School Accountability Act which used the Stanford 9, an off-the-shelf, commercialized standardized test, to determine which individual schools were successful and which needed to be taken over by the state because they were failing. Needless to say, critics of the PSAA have been using the very same criticisms made by the CBR in 1988 to question CBR President Hauck’s satisfaction with the implementation of the PSAA. This suggests that the CBR’s strategy is fundamentally negative. It is more interested in eliminating community influence in educational policy rather than in providing serious leadership in the creation of quality education.

Instead of any of the existing options, the CBR report recommended the development of “exit tests and end-of-course tests as challenging subject-matter examinations, emphasizing higher-order skills in core subject areas.” The report recommended that these tests rely less on multiple choice and more on written and oral presentations or demonstrations and “be graded largely by teachers rather than computers” (p. 75). The report recommended that districts would do well to adopt portfolio assessments as well but that the state should not require it. The required tests would be administered twice, once at the end of sixth grade and once at the end of tenth grade. The report also recommended that the University of California and the California State University system use the high school exit tests as substitutes for the SAT. Students

in special education would be exempt from end-of-year and exit tests. They would be assessed according to their Individual Education Plans (pp. 76–77).

The authors of the CBR report argued that performance-based assessment was the key to giving teachers the freedom they needed to be successful but still be able to hold them accountable.¹²⁵ Teachers would be “free” to choose instructional strategies but the tests would allow the state government to assess whether such strategies were successful in getting the students to meet the state’s goals. If teachers, parents and administrators did not use their freedom judiciously, the state would intervene. Intervention would ultimately be determined by a State Review Committee appointed by the State Department of Education. The Review Committee would be responsible for classifying every school in California as either “Class I (high or adequately performing), Class II (inadequately performing), or Class III (chronically low-performing or failing)” (p. 91). A state task force would be appointed by the State Department of Education to develop the criteria by which schools would be classified.¹²⁶

Districts would be responsible for developing (with technical assistance from the state) school improvement plans for all schools in their district designated as Class II or III.

They would have to develop and implement improvement plans for failing schools. These plans might involve reallocating district resources to increase the inputs for failing schools, replacing school principals or teachers, or contracting out for educational services in those schools (p. 97).¹²⁷

¹²⁵ In 1988, business leaders were still attracted to performance assessment because of its promise to encourage the development of “problem-solving” skills. This was later abandoned in favor of off-the-shelf, commercialized standardized tests. One reason for this change might have been that since performance assessment could not “sort” as well as multiple-choice exams could, they could not distinguish between an 85 percentile and an 86 percentile. When Kentucky adopted performance and portfolio assessment as part of its state’s systemic reform, many criticized these forms of assessment as being “unreliable.” See Popham (2001), Chapters 3 and 4 for an explanation as to why “sorting” and “reliability” are important to test-givers.

¹²⁶ Unlike performance assessment, the concept of classifying individual schools into three levels with the “lowest-performing” one being subjected to state intervention was adopted directly into California’s Public School Accountability Act of 1999. This legislation will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹²⁷ Schools would also be required to develop “school development plans” whose approval would depend on the degree to which they conformed to the CBR’s Six Recommendations. The core of these recommendations did not become law until 1999, yet the intense debate surrounding the lobbying to implement these reforms influenced district policy even before their legal ratification. In the next and final chapters, I will show how developments at the state level influenced district and school-site decision. Specifically, in Chapter 7, I tell the story of how, in the process of defending itself against lawsuits by the SF NAACP, the SFUSD selected “replacing school principals or teachers” as its preferred process of school improvement. The plan was called reconstitution and was eventually adopted as state policy in

Parents would have the right to transfer their students out of Class III schools. The district would have to ensure there were “alternative sites” available for any transfer request. If no alternative site existed, parents (representing a minimum of 30 students) would be able to start their own school (pp. 91–93). The report envisioned private schools (both for-profit and nonprofit) playing a key role in helping the district provide “alternative sites.” The report insisted that only a “carrot and stick approach assures action” (p. 97). The carrots were technical assistance, possible extra funding, and the suspension “of certain due process and collective bargaining constraints in order to facilitate improvement plans.” The stick was parental choice. The authors believed that their accountability procedures would ensure parental and community involvement in school reform and coax the districts’ central staff to work collaboratively with individual schools’ staffs.

“Establish School Autonomy, and Empower Parents, Teachers, and Principals”

The purpose of the first two recommendations was to effect what the CBR called “deregulation,” otherwise known as lean management, Total Quality Control, Total Quality Management, or site-based decision making. One of the purposes of such a reorganization was, theoretically, to eliminate the number of bureaucrats needed to insure adherence to the CBR-defined educational goals. Instead of a large bureaucracy, the CBR envisioned the objects of regulation — parents, teachers, and students — learning to regulate themselves. The third recommendation in the 1988 CBR report explained in more detail how this would work. In Orwellian language, the CBR report argued that teachers would more closely adhere to state standards if they were given more “autonomy.”

The preceding recommendations focused on reversing the increasing tendency of schooling to be overregulated and overcontrolled by the state. However, centralization is not simply a matter of state control. In many districts, the central staff exercises considerable authority that both creates excessive paperwork and limits discretion at the school level. . . . Therefore, this section proposes changes in governance that would enable schools to have more

1999. Reconstitution at the state level is currently called Immediate Intervention for Under Performing Schools (II/UPS) and incorporated the 1988 recommendation that individual schools be classified as either high-performing, acceptable, or low-performing.

autonomy in designing and carrying out their own educational program (Berman, 1988; p. 113).¹²⁸

The report recommended that to increase school autonomy, each school should have a “discretionary budget” from the state that it could spend as it wished as long as all spending was “related to the development and delivery of the instructional program” (p. 117). Each school would have a Parent-Community Governing Body and a School Coordinating Council made up of teachers. The former would have budgetary authority. The latter would be an “extension of the School Site Council operating under the [already existing] School Improvement Program” (p. 129). The Coordinating Council would serve as an advisory board to the principal, thereby providing teachers with an “opportunity to become actively involved in long-range planning, hiring prospective colleagues, development of school philosophy, setting staff development priorities, and managing school resources” (p. 129). Given that the state would remain firmly in control of setting the goals of public education, one can only presume that what the CBR authors meant by “school philosophy” was confined to textbook selection, methods, and school organization.

The authors of the report noted one source of inspiration for recommending this kind of “autonomy”:

Similar policies have been found to have significant payoff in private corporations that actively delegate authority and provide employees with the discretion and support they need to utilize their professional judgment and expertise. Firms that develop flexible, decentralized approaches to management and decision-making show higher long-term profitability and financial growth in comparison to their more hierarchically controlled counterparts (p. 130).

The report cited alternative schools as another model that illustrated the impact on student academic success had by increased teacher participation in the decision-making process. The report acknowledged that this same research pointed out that small, personal environments were also crucial to student success and recommended that

¹²⁸ But there is a fundamental difference between a business and a school. In a business, all employees agree on what the goal of the work is that they do. There is no such consensus over the goals of education. (See Appendix D for a short list relating to the 2000-year-old debate over the goals of education.)

teachers be encouraged to work in teams and create “mini-schools” within schools to reproduce the alternative schools that proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s (p. 135–36).¹²⁹

“Modernize Instruction”

The first three recommendations (my p. 167) were intended to “create a situation where educators can be ‘free’ to teach to a new and higher standard of excellence.” The provisions of this fourth recommendation were intended to “propose steps to enable proven effective modes of instruction to become the norm in California” (p. 139).¹³⁰ Berman and Weiler argued that teachers had not chosen effective instructional strategies previously because “teachers, administrators, and even parents assume that fifteen or twenty percent of the students are A students” (p. 139). Instead, “teaching should be geared toward expecting 85 percent of students to master material sufficient to receive As” (p. 140). If teachers begin by expecting all children to learn what A students can learn, then the teachers will want to adopt “mastery”¹³¹ and “cooperative learning” techniques that will successfully teach “more” to “all students.”

Before teachers can adopt such “proven methods,” they must be freed from overwork and rigid class scheduling. This can be accomplished by training the teachers to work in a hierarchically organized team as “part of a mini-school within larger school settings.”

¹²⁹ Corporate elites and educational professionals have historically perceived alternative schools as an experimental or compensatory dimension to the basic standardized and hierarchical public school system. The degree to which they have seen a “crisis” in the basic system has matched the degree to which they have provided support for “alternatives.” During the Progressive Era (c. 1890–1940) and in the sixties (c. 1960–1975), corporate funding swelled the ranks of alternative schools to the point where historians have recognized the increased numbers as a “movement.” In both eras, corporate funding was pulled and the “movements” ended when many of the alternative schools became oppositional. In the sixties, policy elites hoped to make hierarchal and bureaucratic school systems less crisis-ridden by “lowering the locus of control.” Today, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has contributed millions of dollars with the expectation that a “small schools” national network will develop as a means to offer solutions to the crisis-ridden public school system. Corporate capitalists believe they had found the right formula for reform in Total Quality Management supported by magnet and small schools.

¹³⁰ Apparently, the CBR authors believed that these recommendations were important in the event that School Site Councils began to choose instructional methods (one of the new “freedoms” teachers gained from such councils) that promoted goals other than those defined by the state.

¹³¹ The report defines “master learning” in the following “simplified terms”: (1) “teachers identify in advance the level of learning that they expect all students to achieve”; (2) teachers “divide the curriculum into small units [e.g., two weeks] and provide instruction geared to students learning the unit”; (3) “after each period of instruction, students are tested to see how much they have learned”; (4) students keep learning until “they have mastered the material” while those who have mastered it before the others become “peer instructors” or are given material to master “beyond the expected mastery level”; (5) “the class continues as a group to the next curriculum unit after all students have reached the mastery level” (pp. 141–42).

The team would have a Lead Teacher as supervisor, . . . regular Teachers, and Assistant Teachers. Working cooperatively with the principal and School Coordinating Council, the team could design flexible schedules. . . more efficient scheduling that would allow greater utilization of teacher expertise and produce more effective instruction. . . . The introduction of Assistant Teachers promotes flexibility by providing more adults available to oversee student learning” (p. 144).

The success of this strategy, the report writers insisted, also depended on the introduction of computer technology. Teachers needed to be trained to use computers to create efficient and flexible schedules but also to use computers directly in the instructional process.

“Strengthen the Teaching Profession”

The first four recommendations called for the “transformation” of the teaching profession. The CBR believed that further reforms were needed in order to attract and retain high-quality teachers (p. 180). This could be done, they believed, by creating a “multi-tiered teaching system with higher salary rates.” By creating “career paths” for teachers that represent significant increases in pay for each level attained, the best teachers would stay in teaching and the worst would either leave or be subject to supervision by their betters. As part of this “professionalization,” the credentialing process would be changed so it resembled the process of becoming a lawyer or doctor.

Teacher candidates would have to obtain a bachelor’s degree in a substantive major and pass a rigorous Professional Teacher Examination that tested them in subject matter, pedagogy, and effective instructional strategies (e.g., mastery and cooperative learning, techniques for flexible scheduling, and the use of educational technologies). Candidates who pass the Professional Teacher Examination would become Intern Teachers and serve a four-year internship under the guidance of Lead Teachers. They would become Teachers and obtain tenure if they were successfully evaluated by a Teacher Assessment Panel composed of their Lead Teacher, a Teacher peer trained in evaluation, and their school principal. . . . A California Teaching Standards Board, a majority of whose members would be teachers, would be established to set professional standards for teachers, approve the Professional Teacher Exam, issue credentials and certificates, and oversee the teacher evaluation process (p. 189).

“Capitalize on Diversity”

The authors of the 1988 CBR report argued that the 1983 reforms of SB 813 were inadequate since the growth of an “educationally disadvantaged economic underclass” remained unabated. The growth of this underclass would continue to increase in the future since a major teacher shortage was expected and the majority of the student population was expected to be made up of minorities by 1990. According to the report’s authors, there were two solutions to these problems. One was to increase funding for the 1983 reforms while the other was to “restructure” the system. The report adopted the second solution citing the former as too expensive. The first five recommendations outlined what the new structure of the educational system should look like.

The last recommendation directly addressed the “challenge” of getting the 25 percent of California’s limited English proficiency students “to learn English as quickly as possible so that they can succeed as students and working adults” (p. 207). To do this, the authors of the report suggested that all students begin “bilingual education” beginning in early childhood. All students would learn another language, even those whose first language was English. The report’s authors believed this to be important since the

shift to a global economy means that more people will benefit from learning the Pacific languages including Spanish. Moreover, national reports have stressed the need for citizens to learn foreign languages early as an important step in understanding the emerging twenty-first century environment (p. 207).

In order to increase foreign and ESL language courses, a “more diverse” teaching force would have to be recruited.

Developing Consensus

The 1988 report delineated a comprehensive education reform plan. After some modifications and additions, the CRB report was adopted by the national Business Roundtable. In the summer of 1989, the BRT CEOs devoted their entire annual meeting to education (Maier, 1989). At the end of the meeting, a ten-year commitment was made to initiating educational reform, state-by-state, according to nine principles. The chart below compares the “Six Recommendations” of the 1988 CBR report with the 1989 BRT principles of reform. The comparison reveals a high level of congruence between the two

plans, suggesting that the California Business Roundtable was at the forefront of the development of the BRT’s high-stakes testing agenda.¹³²

Table 6.1 Comparison of CBR and BRT Reform Agenda

CBR 1988 “Six Recommendations”	BRT 1989 principles of reform (summer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Accountability Based on Performance and Choice (rewards and penalties for schools based on exit and end-of-course tests of “higher-order skills in core subject matter”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome-based education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and complex assessments of student progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewards and penalties for individual schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish School Autonomy, and Empower Parents, Teachers, and Principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater school-based decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the Teaching Profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on staff development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and Focus Schooling (add Pre-K and 85% of students should achieve at “A” level work on the same core curricula) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of pre-kindergarten programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations for all children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernize Instruction (technology, cooperative and mastery learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater use of technology in schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of social and health services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on Diversity 	
	(Gelberg: 1997, p. 133)

After the fine-tuning of the 1988 report in the summer of 1989, the next step took place in the fall of 1989. At that time, President Bush and the nation’s governors participated in a national education summit. The participants wrote a report called *Goals 2000*.¹³³ These “goals” (see Table 6.2 on p. 184) represented the *means* by which the summit participants hoped to pursue their real *goal* — keeping the U.S. economy’s preeminent position in the world. The political and economic leaders of the nation

¹³² Bill Hauck, the president of CBR, indicated as much when he complained that other states only took the lead in school reform because they didn’t have strong unions to oppose passage and implementation of systemic reform (interview, 3/12/02).

¹³³ An indication of how closely business and political leaders had been working together to develop consensus over educational reform in the 1980s can be seen in Minnesota. The 1988 CBR report argued that its recommendations would be successful in California because they had been successful in Minnesota. In 1994, Congress appointed Ken Nelson as executive director of the National Education Goals Panel. Nelson was a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives and had been the chief author of Minnesota’s education reform bills. Furthermore, “while in the legislature, Nelson worked closely with several education, government, and business organizations including the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Governors’ Association (NGA), National Alliance of Business, and the Business Roundtable” (from NEGP web page: www/negp/NEGPTestimony, viewed 1/13/02).

believed that educational policy had an important role to play maintaining the disproportionate use of the world's resources.¹³⁴ One of the results of the summit was to call upon the policy makers of each state to start “the process of developing a consensus – a game plan for the 1990s – on the steps [each state] should take . . . to upgrade the schools; and to reflect on [the state's] experience and identify those elements which would increase the success in any *forthcoming national efforts*” (Conner, 1994b; p. 130 [my emphasis]). In Chapter 4 I described how the state BRTs in Texas, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Missouri adapted the national principles to their state's educational reform efforts and how those adaptations affected the educational policies of major urban districts. California had taken the lead in developing “elements which would increase the success in any *forthcoming national efforts*,” but lost its leadership of educational reform to Texas and North Carolina in the beginning of the 1990s. The loss of leadership to Texas and North Carolina was not due, however, to a failure to achieve state policy consensus around the CBR agenda. That consensus was articulated in the California Education Summits of both 1989 and 1994.

Following the 1989 national education summit, California political and business leaders began to organize consensus over the goals of education so as to make future debates only over the means to achieving those goals. On December 12–13, 1989, the California Department of Education convened over 300 educators and business leaders in Sacramento. The two-day conference ended with the writing of a report, published by the California Department of Education, entitled *California Education Summit: Meeting the Challenge, The Schools Respond*. The report, perhaps hoping to avoid further controversy over the discussion of goals, fails to identify them. Instead, the authors immediately launch into defining the means — higher levels of achievement (at learning what exactly?) — by which a crisis in the legitimacy of the system might be avoided.

We started the education summit with fundamental agreement on our goals as a state and a nation. These goals, once controversial and widely debated, are now

¹³⁴ In 1948, George Kennan, in a state department memo discussing the future shape of the Cold War, wrote: “We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security” (quoted by Lewis Lapham in *Harper's*, March 2002, p. 9). See also LaFeber (1985) for a description of the Cold War as a “pattern of relationships” which has successfully “maintain[ed] this position of disparity.”

generally accepted as the foundation of our reform efforts. We began with the premise that more of our students must be educated to higher levels than before. For example, at least 25 percent of those students who initially enter high school should earn a bachelor's degree; another 24 percent should earn an associate degree from a community college; and at least 40 percent should make a successful transition from school to work, thus reducing the dropout rate to under 10 percent. (From the Executive Summary of the Summit Report, as quoted in Connor 1994a; p. 130).

Those attending the two-day conference were assigned to one of seven groups the topics of which were perceived to be “those highlighted at the national education summit.” The “National Education Goals” reflected the CBR’s concern over dropouts and the threats an increasingly diverse society posed to the status quo. Furthermore, *Goals 2000* offered a template, an example of the kinds of strategies that states could adopt in order to provide the economy with more and higher skilled workers as well as “responsible citizens” (a term, interestingly, never defined). This understanding is revealed in the translation of specific outcomes of the national education summit’s agenda into more generic topics by the California Summit organizers (see Table 6.2 on page 184).

Table 6.2 Comparison of Goals 2000 with CA Education Summit Goals

1989 National Education Summit Goals 2000 (fall)	1989 California State Department of Education Summit (winter)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will leave grades 4, 8, 12 having demonstrated academic competency, be prepared for responsible citizenship and productive employment in our nation’s modern economy. This includes increased performance on tests in every quartile. • The United States will be first in the world in math and science. 	<p>Increasing Accountability and Improving Assessment</p> <p>Enhancing the Curriculum</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high school graduation rate will be 90 percent (to reduce drastically dropouts and eliminate the ethnic/racial gap in dropouts). 	<p>Improving High School Transitions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development that provides teachers with the ability to teach an increasingly diverse student body a more challenging subject matter with new methods. Partnerships will be established to provide preparation programs. 	<p>Improving Teacher Preparation and Recruitment</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school will create partnerships to increase parental involvement in order to support the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision making at school. Parents will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability. 	<p>Restructuring to Improve Student Performance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults will be literate. Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work. 	<p>Improving Adult Literacy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will be free of drugs, violence, and weapons. • All children will start school ready to learn. 	<p>More Effective Services for At Risk Children and Families</p>
<p>(www.negp.gov/NEGPLegislation)</p>	<p>(Connor, 1994b; pp. 130–33)</p>

Among the specific strategies that emerged from the California Summit’s seven working groups were calls to develop performance-based standards and tests; develop powerful end of course examinations; provide all students with a rigorous and sophisticated core curriculum; involve teachers in restructuring schools; recruit minorities as teachers; relax rules and regulations that impede schools’ efforts to organize to improve student performance; create a tiered teaching profession accompanied by a restructured salary scale; provide programmatic flexibility; and expand the use of information technology (from the report’s “Executive Summary,” reproduced in Connor,

1994b; pp. 130–33). While the Working Groups were organized around the *Goals 2000* agenda, they were also in complete agreement with the 1988 CBR report. The only area in which both the national and California Summits departed from the 1988 CBR report was in the area of health and social services. The CBR report argued for parental or community participation in school budget decisions. The 1989 California Summit devoted one working group to detailing a greater role for parents as well as outreach to parents and the community by city and state public health and social services. The summit workshop participants envisioned the school's becoming “the hub of services [e.g., prenatal care, parenting classes, child care] and using mandates, rewards, or penalties to motivate participation” (Connor, 1994b; p. 132).

The California Education Summit seemed to spawn a series of reports, each developing or spinning off of the CBR and Education Summit proposals. Each report signaled an implicit acceptance of the shape and purpose of educational reform indicating that a consensus had been achieved. No report questioned that the system needed to be restructured so that individual schools and districts had responsibility for devising the means to achieve state-defined standards, nor did any report question the nature of the assessment that would be applied equally to all students. In November 1990, the California Workforce Literacy Task Force issued a report calling for a master plan of education and training programs for noncollege-bound youth and adults in order to improve the “productivity” of the workforce. The “Task Force on Selected [limited English proficiency] Issues” offered strategies to redress the shortage of bilingual and ESL teachers. To maintain its relevancy or importance, PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education) came out with its *Plan for California's Schools* in 1991. Echoing both the CBR report and the California Summit, PACE called for parental choice; school site control over budget decisions; state control over outcomes; expansion of professional development; establishment of a state technology center that can lead planning and funding of technology in the classroom and school operations; pre-school provided for all children; and making the school site the hub of social service delivery to the community (Connor, 1994b; pp. 77k–84).

Another Berman and Weiler report in February 1992 argued that it would be cost effective to integrate ESL students into regular classes and that there was a need to

develop a valid test to hold schools accountable for what happened to ESL students in those classes. California Tomorrow, an organization dedicated to advocating for minorities and immigrants, signaled their acceptance of the nature of future educational reform in the title of their 1992 report, *The Unfinished Journey: Restructuring Schools in a Diverse Society*. The report emphasized that an accountability system were needed to address the achievement gap. Two other reports were released in 1992 that advocated the CBR's "expand and focus schooling" agenda. One was the Governor's Council on California Competitiveness, *California's Job Future*; and the other by Superintendent Honig's office, *Second to None: A Vision of the New California High School*.

Perhaps feeling the need to make sure state legislators and educators didn't lose the forest for the trees when reading through thousands of pages of reports in preparation for the next Education Summit in 1994, the CBR hired Berman and Weiler Associates to prepare another report. This report, *Mobilizing for Competitiveness: Linking Education and Training to Jobs*, identified three "goals" to guide restructuring efforts. Goal one was to transform the state's K-16 school system into "a coherent education and training system" which would provide "clear pathways and transitions to high-skill careers for all Californians." The second goal was to "upgrade education and training to world class standards." The strategies and policy options under the second goal reiterated the 1988 report's recommendations regarding deregulation, standards, assessment, accountability and technology (capitalizing on diversity was abandoned). The third goal describes the process by which post-secondary education was to be turned into high-tech training centers and how those businesses that had developed in-house training programs could be relieved of paying taxes.

The Legislative Analyst's Office, in its summary of educational reform as of July 1994, argued that such studies as well as the recent state educational summit in February support the following themes for educational reform:

- A rich core curriculum that moves students from a skills-based curriculum to a thinking curriculum linked to success in the real world;
- Better schools for ALL students through the reduction of ability grouping, expansion of support services for students, and creation of intensive early intervention strategies;
- Teacher professionalism through improved training and involvement in school improvement;
- Learning communities that reflect the diversity of their students;

Student assessments that are linked to the new curricula and use a variety of approaches to measuring student performance (Connor, 1994a; p. 33).

Those at the CBR responsible for steering educational reform had to be pleased at the consensus achieved supporting their agenda.

Implementation

In the previous section I showed the development and growing consensus around the business-led education policy. While consensus over policy had been achieved at the state level, however, implementation of the new policy proceeded slowly. At the district or school level not everyone agreed with the CBR that the only educational goal was to train workers who would fuel the prosperity of the New Economy (a prosperity in which not all were participating). The California Teachers Association was particularly successful in slowing down the CBR-driven juggernaut of reform. Six years after laying it out, the CBR had yet to implement its educational agenda. In 1994, the Legislative Analyst's Office put together an *Education Reform Briefing Book* summarizing past educational legislation and predicting key themes of the future in order to “assist the legislature in analyzing . . . ideas for reform, and . . . defining for itself an effective role, direction, and focus . . .” (Conner, 1994a, p. 35). In categorizing educational legislation in terms of reform areas since 1983, the report reflected the “direction and focus” of the CBR agenda. Among its categories were school restructuring, parental choice, performance-based assessment, reform of categorical spending (local budgetary decision-making), bilingual education, career pathways in high school, and technology in the classroom. The summary pointed to success in creating consensus over the direction of reform but not much success in implementing that consensus. The next section shows how the implementation proceeded through a series of education bills. These bills supplanted SB813, culminating in the centerpiece of systemic reform, the firm linkage of high stakes and accountability to standardized tests.

High-Stakes Testing Moves Center Stage

During the legislative process, the BRT and its allies worked diligently to ensure implementation of their education agenda. Bill Hauck, the current president of the CBR, was Governor Wilson's deputy chief of staff from 1992 to 1993 and had also been chief

of staff to both Assembly Speakers Bob Moretti and Willie Brown (1967 to 1975). In an interview with *Cal-Tax Digest* editor Ron Roach, Hauck reminisced as to why it had become more difficult for the CBR to translate its agenda into legislation during the 1980s and early 1990s, in spite of the organization's "impressive business climate surveys and proposals for reforms in education." Since 1978, Hauck explained,

everything has gotten more complex, more difficult. It all started with Proposition 13 and that was followed by a series of other major initiative enactments, and we had a very bad recession. Shrinking governmental resources is like shrinking the resources of a family. Everybody rallies around in a family, and it works. But if the budget problem stays for an extended period of time, people turn on each other. When you have continuing shrinking resources, legislators become concerned about their own careers; they are more partisan. Add term limits to that and you've got the ingredients of a much more partisan environment. It is not totally the politicians, but the nature of the problems and issues they have to deal with, and the lack of solutions that appeal to all voters (Roach, 1997).¹³⁵

The extended recession in California during the early 90s partly explains the reluctance to pass costly legislation. Yet the "partisan environment" was also a key factor. In a phone interview with me, Hauck bemoaned the power of the California Teachers Association and other public employee unions for slowing down CBR education reform. Hauck explained that the CBR educational agenda would have been implemented sooner had California been a "nonunion state." For example, Hauck said, the state legislatures of both Texas and North Carolina had efficiently implemented the BRT goals earlier than California did because there had been no union opposition in those states. The CTA was effective in slowing down systemic reform in California, Hauck argued, because "they have lots of money" since the unions are able to collect dues on a regular basis from paychecks. Hauck complained that the CBR was unable to raise money on such a regular basis so had to rely on coalitions with other business lobbying groups such as Cal-Tax, the California Chamber of Commerce, and the California Manufacturers and Retailers Association. These business organizations

¹³⁵ Such an analysis may seem vague and suggest that Hauck doesn't have a clear understanding of the dynamics of power. But one must consider that Hauck's audience for this interview are businessmen with whom Hauck shares a great deal of knowledge and assumptions. As a result, much is left unsaid or is implicit when public statements are made. Like diplomats who do not wish to tip their hand to foreign heads of state, business leaders, too, tend to speak in carefully chosen euphemisms whose fine shades of meaning are lost on the uninitiated.

employ full-time lobbyists whose effectiveness is due to their previous state government employment experience (interview, 3/18/02).

Hauck's complaint about the "power" of the CTA reveals his belief that they have no place at the table during discussions of educational policy. Unions historically have only been allowed to survive by business and political leaders if they agreed to wait at the door, to confine their organizational efforts to promoting wages and working conditions.¹³⁶ Normally outspent by 11 to one by business during elections, unions have been constantly on the defensive and most have felt compelled to agree to their assigned position in the decision-making process. That the CTA has fought the CBR reforms is an indication that teachers felt very strongly about their different views about educational reform. Educational researchers hired by the state department or the CBR may poll parents and teachers, a teacher may sit on a panel with 15 other businessmen, or a parent advisory committee may be consulted by district administrators. But businessmen or their lobbyists sit down with state legislators and write educational policy. This inequality of input has only increased in recent years.

The Legislative Timetable

In the short time span of eight years (from 1991 to 1999) a series of education bills slowly but decidedly transformed the education agenda of the BRT and its allies into legislation. The following table is a summary of these bills. Their inception and consequences are described in the rest of this section.

¹³⁶ One only need compare the history of the Knights of Labor with that of the American Federation of Labor to see which unions survive and which do not, and why. Interestingly enough, such a history never made it into the California history and social science standards.

Table 6.3 History of California High-Stakes Legislation

Year	Bill	Acronym	Content
1983	SB 813		More than 80 separate provisions
1991	SB 662	CLAS	Established performance-based assessment Authorized 100 partnership academies
1993	SB 44		Authorized 100 Partnership Academies
1995	SB 265	CAAAA	Authorized temporary funds for state approved tests, mandated development of state tests aligned with state standards (CAAAS)
1996	SB 1570		Creation of advisory committee to develop plan to improve student achievement
1997	SB 376	STAR	Established yearly testing with SAT9 test
1999	SB X1	PSAA	Linked high stakes to standardized tests by establishing the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming School Program (II/USP)
1999	SB X2		Established a high school exit exam

Until 1994, school restructuring had been limited to 141 demonstration schools (SB 1274, 1990) and 100 charter schools (SB 1448, 1992). Parental choice, in the form of a voucher initiative, was defeated in 1993 while gaining some ground in the growth of magnet schools and optional enrollment policies. Performance-based assessment was established in 1991 with the passage of SB 662 authorizing the development of the California Learning Assessment System. CLAS was first implemented in 1993 but Governor Wilson vetoed the reauthorization of the legislation the next year.¹³⁷ Little had been achieved in passing legislation that related to attracting, retaining, and training teachers (especially minorities) as of 1994. The 1992 to 1993 state budget managed to

¹³⁷ CLAS was developed in 1991 in order to ensure that a statewide test was “aligned” with the state’s curricular framework: to “better measure curricular attainment by performance-based assessment”; and to gather scores for individual students as well as districts and schools (Kirst, 1996; p.2). Governor Wilson vetoed the reauthorization of CLAS asserting that the 1994 bill did not allow for the gathering of individual scores and that “implementation prioritized performance-based aspects” of the test (Kirst, p. 6). Kirst argues that Wilson vetoed the legislation because he believed that it was too expensive to make a test that would provide reliable and valid scores for individual students (p. 7). Wilson also apparently believed that “performance accountability” would undermine school deregulation (p. 9).

“bundle” categorical aid money into “mega-items,” thus succeeding in giving “school districts some flexibility in using their categorical dollars.” Bilingual education and services has failed to be reinstated into state law. In 1992, SB 2026, the last bilingual education reauthorization bill, was vetoed. Developing career pathways in high school had progressed but only through continued funding for a small number of Partnership Academies. By 1994, there were “50 career training academies statewide that provided ‘schools-within-schools’ for eligible high school students.” In 1993, SB 44 authorized up to 100 partnerships academies and expanded student accessibility to them. The California Planning Commission for Educational Technology, created in 1989 (AB 1470), was authorized to create a master plan for the teaching and use of technology in the schools. But little of that plan had been implemented by 1994 (Conner, 1994a, pp. 12–28).

The creation of increasingly larger business networks and the convening of yet another state education summit created the momentum that led to the passage of the California Assessment of Academic Achievement Act (AB 265) in 1995. AB 265 required that funds be distributed to schools that administer state-approved tests. This was to be temporary as AB 265 authorized the development of a new state test, the California Assessment of Applied Academic Skills (CAAAS). This test was to be aligned with state standards. The law also called for a commission that would oversee the development of content and performance standards in all major subjects for 1–12 schools.¹³⁸ By November 1997, the first subject-based committees had been appointed to begin writing content standards (WestEd, 1999; p. 7). The science standards were the last of the content standards unanimously approved by the Academic Standards Commission in July 1998. An article in the *Sacramento Business Journal* indicated that business interests were well served by the commission, while the scientific community deplored the contents of the science standards.

Rigorous new science standards for the California students will probably be adopted [by the California Board of Education on October 9]. That’s either good news or terrible news, depending on whom you talk to. Representatives of business groups that have followed the issue say they welcome higher standards

¹³⁸ The California Academic Standards Commission was made up of two members appointed by the legislature, 11 members appointed by Governor Pete Wilson, six appointed by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, and Eastin herself.

for California students and think these standards will make California graduates competitive in a global economy. “We’re very pleased with the standards, and we’d like to see them adopted,” said Teresa Casazza, executive director of the state public policy for the American Electronics Association.¹³⁹ “The industry needs a qualified work force, and we’d like to see the qualified work force coming from California.”

But more than two dozen members of the national scientific community have spoken out against the standards [wrote official letters of protest to the state board of education], saying they are so overstuffed with specific facts that students must learn that they leave no room for hands-on investigation. They predict that only a small fraction of students will be able to meet these standards, and that teachers and students will have to resort to rote memorization to try rather than achieve true understanding of scientific concepts.

The business community largely supports higher educational standards, but most business leaders have stayed out of "the science wars" debate, said Daniel Condron, a standards commission member. He is Hewlett-Packard Co.'s public affairs manager and the public policy director for the Sonoma County Business Education Roundtable. One weakness of the procedure the state used, he said, was that most business leaders didn't have time to address the nitty-gritty details of standards and therefore the educational establishment tended to drive the debate. [But] “we are happy with the result and feel our objectives can be met,” Condron said of the standards (Marquand, 1998).

The next piece of the business-led educational agenda was to be put in place through SB 1570 (1996). This bill authorized the creation of an advisory committee to develop a plan for a system of “incentives for the improvement of pupil academic achievement” (from SB 1570 quoted in the Rewards and Interventions Advisory Committee’s report, *Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 1). The committee was convened in the spring of 1997.¹⁴⁰ The report published by the committee

propose[d] a plan for an integrated program of incentives — called rewards and interventions — to encourage all California schools to reach state performance goals. The rewards and interventions program would become an integral part of a statewide accountability system that would include the state academic standards

¹³⁹ Those AEA members with specific educational programs are Microsoft, Intel, Texas Instruments, and National Semiconductor (AEA web page: Government Affairs >> Education >> AeA Member Company Education Initiatives, viewed 3/12/02).

¹⁴⁰ The committee was cochaired by Sam Araki, former president, Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space, and Charles McCully, former Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District. The largest group among the thirty-five members of the committee were twelve representatives of major corporations (e.g., National Semiconductor, Chevron, Hewlett-Packard). The second largest group comprised eight school district administrators of various levels. Other members included one person representing each of the two teacher unions (CFT, CTA), a representative from the California PTA, one from the Education Commission of the States, one from the National Center of Education and the Economy, one school board representative, and the director of PACE.

and assessments currently in development (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 1).

Attaching “rewards and interventions” to test score performance

would lead to improved instruction because teachers would focus on what was important; . . . would motivate students and parents to put more effort in school work; . . . would encourage greater parental involvement in children’s education; . . . [and] would enable the state and districts to target resources more effectively to give special assistance to those schools in trouble (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 4).

The Advisory Committee’s report acknowledged that several unintended consequences could result from such a plan, “in particular, the danger that the public might come to equate student learning with test scores.” Yet such shortcomings were dismissed since “this approach is the best hope for reestablishing the position of preeminence that California public education enjoyed in the past” (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998, pp. 4–5). The report did not explain why its recommendations were “the best hope.”

Nevertheless, its recommendations were adopted by the state in SB X1.

The report made seven recommendations. First, develop a school performance index “based exclusively on the results of the new statewide student assessment.” Second, establish a rewards program to recognize successful schools. The rewards should be in cash to individual staff members at schools that meet their short-term goals. Third, establish an interventions program to assist low-performing schools. These schools would be required to develop “action plans” focusing on student achievement. The schools would receive funds and a coach to help them. If the schools did not meet their “short-term growth targets” in two years, then the state superintendent would recommend to the state board one of the following options: continued coaching; state takeover; closing the school; or “other action deemed appropriate.” Fourth, develop a student incentives program to support the school rewards and interventions program. One of the primary reasons for the decline in standards and expectations in California has been a lack of motivation on the part of students and parents. This recommendation would highlight to both parents and students that “they bear the ultimate responsibility for student performance.” Fifth, provide adequate funding to implement the rewards and interventions program. The committee estimated that the cost of the program would peak at \$985 million during year 5 of its implementation but that number would decline as the

program produced results. They pointed out that while the program was expensive, it was minimal in the context of the \$40 billion that the state was expected to spend on K–12 public education during the next few years. Sixth, establish an advisory group to deal with policy and technical issues. Seven, conduct comprehensive, ongoing, external evaluations of the rewards and interventions program.

In 1997, SB 376 was passed, which abandoned the development of state tests as authorized by SB 265. Instead, it established yearly testing with the SAT-9 test. In June 1998, the State Department of Education commissioned WestEd to perform an external evaluation of AB 265.¹⁴¹ The evaluation was complicated by the delay in the development of performance standards and seemed to be moot in the face of the “sudden” abandonment of the development of a performance-based test as authorized by AB 265.

A complicating factor in the development of this standards-based test was the somewhat sudden enactment of a new testing program (SB 376) in 1997, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Concerned by the lack of a statewide comparable measure of academic performance for schools and districts that could report individual scores for all students, former Governor Pete

¹⁴¹ WestEd is a nonprofit “research, development and service agency.” In 1995, two federally established Regional Educational Laboratories, Far West and Southwest, joined together to form WestEd. With its headquarters in San Francisco, WestEd provides “services” throughout the United States by its 400-person staff and 15 regional offices. Among the members of the 2002 board of directors are the superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, the current state superintendent, former president of Pacific Telesis Foundation, and the program manager from Silicon Graphics. In 1997, WestEd prepared a report on the role of Technology in Education with IBM for a state education symposium. In 1998, WestEd published a report supporting state intervention as a method to improve academic performance. WestEd houses federally funded Comprehensive Centers to help schools accomplish “system-wide reform” and oversees BASRC (see Chapter 3). It is partnered with Education for the Future whose *Initiative* was developed upon the recommendations of the California Business Roundtable.

Peter Farruggio, an Oakland, Cal., bilingual teacher, teacher educator, organizer, and PhD graduate student in the fall of 1996, described being invited to an all-day “Equity Committee” meeting at WestEd. Farruggio described the meeting thusly: “Ray Bachetti of the H-P Foundation was the obvious biggest shot of the big shots present. Other foundation honchos and “professional minority” types [were there as well as] a handful of real educators from poor schools with more than just a few years of experience. I guess I fit in this latter group, and we were there to “make it real.” Anyway, I remember the general discussion being about how we all felt about things, and if we were sensitive to the issues of poor minorities in poor schools. . . . So when it came my turn I told about how I had organized the Mexican and Black parents in my neighborhood in Oakland to protest the bad principal we had been stuck with, and the horrible year round schedule, and the fact that downtown had been ripping off our categorical budget and not allowing us to exercise our legal rights to choose how to spend our funds, etc. And I described the parents’ strike and picket line we had and how we marched into a few school board meetings demanding action, and how we used to meet clandestinely in local churches because our school board “rep” was in cahoots with the official bureaucracy and was trying to threaten both parents and teachers. You know, a little slice of life from the urban ed jungle. Well, there was a polite chill around the table of 20 or so people. Real uncomfortable, like I had farted in church. And there was a look of horror on Mr. Bachetti’s face, like King Kong was coming through the huge conference door. So I realized that this was too much “equity” for this crowd” (personal e-mail, 3/12/02).

Wilson and legislators jumped ahead with [Standardized Testing and Reporting program] STAR to address these issues (WestEd, 1999; p. 8).

Interestingly, the “sudden” abandonment of the goal of the state developing its own standards-based test coincided with the appointment of Bill Hauck as president of the CBR and the move of its headquarters from San Francisco to Sacramento “one block north of the Capitol.” Hauck explained the purpose of the move in May 1997.

It is going to make a difference, because it is difficult to be part of the public policy-making process with some concentration on implementation and action if you are not here. This is where the decisions eventually are made, unless they are made on the ballot. It is important for us to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, as well as Cal-Tax, who are more day-to-day lobbying oriented. We are not. That is a good balance (Roach, 1997).¹⁴²

The increased coordination of lobbying by business might have been a factor in the decision by Wilson and the legislators to “jump ahead” with imposing a statewide test.¹⁴³ AB 265 had intended a statewide test to be given to grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. The 1989 governor’s education summit had set the goal for 2000 at 4, 8, and 12. SB 376, however, mandated that every student would be tested every spring in grades 2 to 11. The test chosen by the state board of education, in spite of the superintendent’s recommendation against adoption, was the Stanford-9 (SAT-9), a commercial, off-the-shelf, norm-referenced multiple-choice test.

Testing needed to be implemented because the “rewards and interventions” piece of “accountability” could not be put into place unless there were test results upon which “a performance index” could be calculated. In spring 1998, the SAT-9 was administered to all California Schools. In 1999, the legislature passed SB X1, the Public School Accountability Act, which linked high stakes to standardized testing.

PSAA called for the creation of three basic components: 1) an index to rank the performance of schools, 2) an assistance and intervention program for schools that fall below expectations, and 3) a rewards program for schools that exceed

¹⁴² Apparently it was not “balanced” enough. In December 1998, the CBR formed, with 10 other businesses, the California Business for Education Excellence which was to focus on “promoting high academic standards, measuring student achievement, establishing accountability for educators, and improving the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy” (BRT, 1999; p. 10).

¹⁴³ Another factor may have been the fear of how time-consuming (and costly) the development of a performance-based test would have been. Purchasing a commercial, off-the-shelf, multiple-choice, norm-referenced test satisfied the desire for test scores that could both provide scores for individual students and have those scores nationally compared. Instead of protracted meetings needed to develop performance standards, a single test score could be plugged into a formula that would calculate a school’s rank compared to other schools.

them. The law also mandated the creation of a broad-based advisory group to guide implementation decisions and an ongoing evaluation of the law's impact. . . . For the first time in the state's history, public schools are operating under a high-stakes testing and accountability system that defines a sequence of events and consequences for schools that continue to fall below expectations. The hope is that such a system will force schools to focus on improving academic results — thereby raising the performance of all students (WestEd, 1999; p. 11).

The first component ranks schools from 1 to 10 according to a complicated formula. The number-ranking is called the Academic Performance Index.

The API currently consists of the norm-referenced STAR test as the sole criterion for performance. . . . Another key part of the new system is a program designed to assist and intervene when schools fail to show improvement, called the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). This program, which allows schools to volunteer (or in some cases, to be randomly selected) to participate, provides school improvement funds and the assistance of an external evaluator who works in concert with a community-school team. If growth targets are not met in twelve months following the implementation of a school improvement plan, local interventions, possibly including reassignment of school staff, will take place. If no substantial progress is made by the second year, state interventions including the takeover of the governance of the school by the state Superintendent of Instruction or some other entity may occur” (WestEd, 1999; p. 12).

WestEd also noted the implications that PSAA and the SAT-9 test would have on education and everyday life in the classroom.

The norm-referenced SAT-9 portion of STAR is now the linchpin of the state's new accountability law, PSAA. Until other indicators of academic performance are deemed valid and reliable, the SAT-9 is the sole indicator currently being used in an index that will help to rank schools' performance and determine their eligibility for an intervention and rewards program.

Unclear is whether attaching high stakes to such a test may drive teachers to “drill and practice”¹⁴⁴ techniques on a narrow subset of skills or eventually lead to a stronger focus on standards-based skill development. These fears were expressed by district and school personnel in surveys and interviews, as discussed in Chapter 7 [of the WestEd evaluation]. Another concern is the future and role of the previously mandated (AB 265) standards-based matrix test. In October 1999, the State Board of Education voted to delay, perhaps indefinitely, the issuance of the contract to develop the assessment (WestEd, 1999; p. 9)

¹⁴⁴ An interesting revision of the more common expression “drill and kill” or Linda McNeil’s “drill and deskill”.

Opposition to High-Stakes Standardized Testing

PSAA firmly established high-stakes testing but did not quell concern and opposition — nor was this the end of business-led practical support and defense of the centerpiece of systemic reform. In their commissioned evaluation of California’s education system, the WestEd evaluators discovered a number of problems relating to the implementation of California’s standards, accountability, and assessment system. First, district and school personnel viewed the SAT-9 as “inherently flawed” (WestEd, 1999; p. 61). Second, there was an “overall concern that rankings and subsequent sanctions may exacerbate already-difficult conditions for the lowest performing schools”(p. 98). Third, “the information [teachers] receive about new policies appears contradictory to the purpose of existing reforms” (p. 164). Nevertheless, using the logic of *Steering by Results*, the evaluators concluded in fall 1999 that

for the most part, California should “stay the course”¹⁴⁵ with developing the existing components of its accountability infrastructure; standards, assessment, and a system of interventions, rewards, and sanctions. However, no approach is perfect from the start. Modifications may be necessary to rectify unintended consequences and ensures the system is meeting its primary objective [improving student performance] (p. 165).

The criticism that WestEd noted in their report was a national phenomenon. By 2001, it became so widespread and obvious that the Business Roundtable started to talk about a “testing backlash.” Eager to defend their education agenda, the Business Roundtable published in spring 2001 a report entitled *Assessing and Addressing the “Testing Backlash”*: Practical Advice and Current Public Opinion Research for Business Coalitions and Standards Advocates. Using polls by Public Agenda (see Chapter 2), the BRT argued that public opinion still supported the standards movement. The growing opposition to the effects of the new reforms was merely “warning signs of discontent” that could be countered by “getting the policy right, and communicate more broadly about how to make the system work” (p. 25). They recommended several specific strategies to do this. These strategies are remarkably similar to the ones that WestEd

¹⁴⁵ “Stay the course” was the same expression used by Louis Gerstner at the 1999 governor’s education summit that he convened in Palisades, New York. Gerstner, CEO of IBM, explained, “We understand the pain [that is being inflicted by high-stakes testing]. And we’re going to have to deal with it. But we’re not going to deal with it by backing off” (Steinberg, *NY Times*, 1999). The use of quotation marks by the WestEd authors indicate that, among the people they associate with, it is a common expression.

recommended to the California State Board of Education in November 1999. WestEd's "overarching recommendation" for "political leaders and educators" was to "align what already exists" before implementing any further pieces of the high-stakes agenda (p. 172). In *Assessing and Addressing the "Testing Backlash"* (2001), the BRT also recommended that systemic reformers

make sure standards are clear, right, reasonable, and matched to the curriculum. . . . Make sure [parents and teachers] understand that this is so; if you sense a disconnect, adapt and clarify. Do the same with your state's tests: make sure they actually measure your state's standards (p. 14). . . . One business leader in Massachusetts — a state that recently has seen its teachers' association organize an aggressive anti-testing effort — observes, "Pacing is everything." Changes can be implemented only so quickly by teachers in the classroom, and rushing risks errors that can undermine the overall effort (BRT, 2001; p. 16).

WestEd argued that the only way "to inform policymakers about any modifications necessary to the existing accountability system" was to "adequately fund the evaluation currently mandated" (p. 166). The BRT suggested that taking a close look at how their goals were being implemented did not threaten the goals themselves since "making adjustments does not mean backing down." It was possible that "listening to reasonable requests and suggestions — for more resources, more flexibility, more time — can make the state's reform effort more successful in the long run" (p. 16). WestEd argued that part of the "alignment" problem lay not only in the need to clarify the chain of command, but to make sure that each link in the chain fully understood what its responsibilities were. One way to do this was "to ramp up [the state government's] use of the World Wide Web in communicating accountability policy to all stakeholders within the system" (p. 166) or in the words of the BRT, "communicate more broadly about how to make the system work" (2001, p. 25).

Parents and others must understand why this fundamental change in behavior and culture is worth the effort and how it is leading to positive changes for students and schools. . . . Most state or local education departments lack the communications capacity to mount a sustained, effective communications effort. The business community can provide much-needed help (BRT, 2001; p. 18). [See Appendix C for the example of Washington state's "schedule of communication activities".]

One of the major problems with the high-stakes testing agenda is its reliance on test scores from standardized tests as the single criterion upon which rewards and sanctions are determined. WestEd recommended that "standards-based assessments,"

and other “comprehensive measures, such as attendance and graduation rates” needed to be added as part of such an accountability formula (p. 167). The BRT’s advice was similar.

The public opinion research suggests that, in addition to state tests, state policymakers should consider other measures of student performance, such as course grades and teacher evaluations. Perhaps [they should] create an alternative appeals process for students who do not pass the tests but can show they nevertheless have mastered the material (p. 15).

Another major problem recognized by both WestEd and the BRT is that “data-driven” reform will not work unless teachers and district personnel understand and support each aspect of its implementation. But teachers are part of the “backlash.” The WestEd evaluators recorded the following comments by teachers:

[In the newly adopted district standards] there’s an obvious philosophy behind it that it should be hands-on. . . . My biggest complaint with the hands-on is that [students are] not tested that way. It’s like they [the district] want us to use hands-on materials, but then they test us in a much more traditional way. . . . Regarding the district and the state, teachers are getting mixed messages about hands-on versus seatwork. I don’t get a consistent message. No one fully explains to you how you’re supposed to prepare kids for tests (p. 64).

I think the standardized test that we have to take gets in the way. Because it forces me to teach to the test, instead of teaching to what the standards are (p. 66).

The SAT-9 tests a lot of stuff that they haven’t even learned. . . . The problem is that we’re supposed to be aligned with the state test. And so, that means basically we need to advance all our students before they’re ready. . . . The seventh graders had to take this test, the STAR test. . . . While they were taking it, I could just see the frustration on their faces, and I was like, what’s going on? So I grabbed a copy of the test. I started looking at it; I was like, oh my gosh, they’re so frustrated because this is the stuff I’m teaching my eighth graders right now, but my seventh graders haven’t even seen this material yet (p. 68).

Some kids [e.g., English language learners, special education students] shouldn’t have to take the standardized test, and if they still have to, and those scores are counted into my scores, into my teaching, and I’m held accountable for that, then I kind of have a problem with that. . . . And the other factor is transience. I mean, there’s a lot of kids who bounce from school to school to school, and if I have not taught them all year long, it doesn’t seem fair to me to be held accountable for them (p. 70).

The district has had . . . performance-based assessments that we had three times this year. . . . And I have no trouble doing performance-based assessments, but when it comes from the district, it doesn’t necessarily fit with what you’re doing at the time. I’d rather have an assessment that goes along with what they

[students] are doing. . . . It was like, just take this chunk out of time, and do this thing that's not associated with what you're teaching (p. 74).

The kids I have . . . are good kids; they came in with good scores, they'll go out with decent scores; they probably could have done that no matter whether I did a good job or not. On the other hand, you can get kids that are ill-prepared, and you know, how much you can help them improve — I don't know that anybody knows, is that 5 percentage points? Is that 25 percentage points? I guess we're all wondering, what's going to be the measure of achievement? So that's all a little iffy when the test is the thing (p. 77).

Instead of concluding from comments such as those cited that there may be multiple, legitimate goals of education and that forcing a uniform curriculum upon diverse communities undermines the very democratic processes for which this country is supposed to stand, both WestEd and the BRT's *Advice* concluded that teacher resistance equals teacher ignorance.¹⁴⁶ Both argued that better teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, will help teachers better understand and thus effectively implement standards reforms. Specifically, WestEd recommended that districts “ensure that professional development programs are aimed at building teacher knowledge and skills related to content standards” and that the state university teacher preparation programs should “specifically address issues related to accountability” (p. 162). Furthermore, “the governor and the legislature should fund capacity-building opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn about analyzing data to improve student achievement and school performance” (p. 162). BRT's *Advice* encouraged “standards advocates” to “make more of a concerted effort to reach out to classroom teachers. Explain these changes [standards-based reforms], tell them that many teachers think there are benefits, and show

¹⁴⁶ Debbie Meier, founder and principal of Central Park East Secondary School in Harlem, argues that “there are multiple, legitimate definitions of ‘a good education’ and ‘well-educated’ and it is desirable to acknowledge that plurality” (p. 16). She explains that the new standards movement “will not help to develop young minds, contribute to a robust democratic life, or aid the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens. By shifting the locus of authority to outside bodies, it undermines the capacity of schools to instruct by example in the qualities of mind that schools in a democracy should be fostering in kids — responsibility for one's own ideas, tolerance for the ideas of others, and a capacity to negotiate differences. Standardization instead turns teachers and parents into the local instruments of externally imposed expert judgment. It thus decreases the chances that young people will grow up in the midst of adults who are making hard decisions and exercising mature judgment in the face of disagreements. And it squeezes out those schools and educators that seek to show alternate possibilities or explore other paths. The standardization movement is not based on a simple mistake. It rests on deep assumptions about the goals of education and the proper exercise of authority in the making of decisions — assumptions we ought to reject in favor of a different vision of a healthy democratic society (pp. 4--5, Debbie Meier, *Will Standards Save Public Education?*, Beacon Press, 2000).

them how other schools are using standards and tests to improve student learning” (p. 20).

For “standards advocates,” it is not about changing the goals of systemic reform but in massaging the message through focus group research.

Public opinion research contains valuable ideas about what messages on education and standards make the most sense to the public.

Stress that the effort is about better schools and higher levels of learning — not standards, tests, accountability or education reform.¹⁴⁷ Parents and educators want to know that better schools are needed because we have to be fair to all students, not because schools are failing. Your communications efforts should emphasize:

- the importance of raising expectations for all students;
- the fairness that comes from higher expectations (too many students are not getting the education they deserve);
- the ability of testing to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of students (helping them learn and teachers teach);
- the value of test scores for comparing schools and identifying necessary improvements — and as part of the decision to promote or graduate students. (BRT, 2001; p. 21)

The similarities between the WestEd recommendations and those of the BRT’s *Advice* are not a coincidence. WestEd was contracted by the California Department of Education to evaluate the implementation of standards-based reforms, whether embodied in AB 265, SB X1 (PSAA) or SB X2 (high school exit exam). While the evaluators could not help note the limitations of such “top-down” reform,¹⁴⁸ all of the recommendations were created within such a paradigm, representing another example of how the BRT network has successfully co-opted educational researchers (see Chapter 3). The state government had charged the researchers with finding out what the state needed to do to implement systemic reform — reform driven by the Business Roundtable. Edward Rust, chair of the BRT’s Education Task Force indicated in 1999 a firm belief in the effectiveness of top-down reform:

¹⁴⁷ This is a particularly egregious example of manipulation. While everyone can agree that they want “better schools” and “higher levels of learning,” disagreement emerges immediately when one begins to define what these vague terms mean.

¹⁴⁸ “Study findings, however, suggest that communication about accountability becomes increasingly diluted (or even worse, becomes increasingly muddled) from the pinnacle of the system (the state) to the foundation of the system (the classroom). In addition, very few districts appear to have a consistent local vision of accountability. In many cases, districts’ notions of accountability had not filtered much beyond district staff. Principals often had different notions of what accountability required, and teachers either had no awareness or a different concept of the accountability process” (WestEd, 1999; p. 164).

Large organizations such as schools don't change because they see the light; they change because they feel the heat. Business Roundtable CEOs have successfully applied the heat on state policy makers, while state coalitions are helping the public and educators see the light about the need for change.

WestEd's evaluation pointed to where the heat needed to be applied. In 1998, the CBR had decided to begin stoking the furnace in anticipation of a need to apply greater pressure on state legislators and increase the massaging of public opinion. Larry McCarthy, president of the California Taxpayers Association in Sacramento, wrote in December of that year:

Now, in an unprecedented way, thousands of California companies, through their associations — the California Business Roundtable, the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Manufacturers Association, the California Taxpayers' Association, Technology Network, and the American Electronics Association — are joining forces to speak with a united voice on education policy.

They have formed California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE). With key corporate support from Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Boeing and the business-labor California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, it is bringing the voice of business to the education policy debate.

The intent is to influence the development of methods that encourage new education standards, assess how they work, and assure accountability to the standards. The new organization will work as a partner with the education community, the new Gray Davis administration,

Bill Hauck, president of the California Business Roundtable and chair of the CBEE, recently told reporters that "our whole focus is on achieving better results." . . . As education continues to hold center stage, the business community will not be taking a sideline seat. Through this new coalition, there will be a stronger-than-ever voice for quality schools in California (McCarthy, 1998).

In its 1999 report to the BRT, the CBR announced the formation of the CBEE and defined more specifically what goals the coalition would pursue.

Over the past two years, CBR education committee members have led the push for the development and adoption in California of the most rigorous academic standards in the country. CBR also has been involved in the charter school movement and California's Digital High School Initiative, a four-year competitive grant program that provides computer technology resources to California high schools. In early 1999, CBR joined ten other business organizations and businesses to form California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE), a coalition focused on four basic public education issues: promoting high academic standards, measuring student achievement, establishing accountability for educators, and improving the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy (BRT, 1999; p. 10).

While WestEd (1999) advised the State Department of Education to “conduct a periodic alignment inventory” to make sure “key state policies, such as PSAA, STAR, and the High School Exit Exam” are aligned with the standards, pre-service and in-service teacher training (p. xxx), the CBR assigned the CBEE to “work with state policymakers to revamp the state tests and better align them with academic standards” (BRT, 1999; p. 10). Furthermore, CBR believed that the state legislature needed help from business so as to better implement top-down reform. The CBR explained to its national brethren that “California’s fragmented education system and partisan political climate” was responsible for the state’s failure so far “to foster accountability and innovation in schools at the local level” (p. 10). CBEE promised to end the debate by helping to design a K–12 master plan that will “clarify state and local responsibilities related to education” (p. 10).

In 1999, the Legislative Analyst’s Office published a report written by Paul Warren that would guide the legislature’s “planning process for kindergarten through high school.” In the report, entitled *K–12 Master Plan: Starting the Process*, Warren recommended that a master plan should focus on defining the “separate responsibilities for most decisions as a way of creating clear lines of accountability” — in other words, “clarify state and local responsibilities.” Citing a 1998 National Education Goals Panel report,¹⁴⁹ Warren argued that

state strategies adopted in Texas and North Carolina [see Chapter 4] reinforces our assessment of appropriate state roles. The [1998 NEGP] evaluation concludes that critical elements of the states’ strategies have resulted in sustained long-term increases in student achievement. These elements include: state content standards accompanied by a student assessment system; a state accountability system that has consequences; deregulated state fiscal and program policies; state data systems to encourage continuous local improvement; [and] a long-term state commitment to these strategies (pp. 3–4).

The report emphasizes two factors that appeared to make the difference in North Carolina and Texas. Both states viewed the state role in school improvement as a *long-term endeavor requiring stability and continual refinement of state policies. The other factor was the sustained commitment to the reform strategy by political and business leaders* (p. 20) [my emphasis].

¹⁴⁹ David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan, *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas*, NEGP, Washington D.C., November 1998.

In spring 2000, Bill Hauck confirmed CBEE's commitment to supporting a "long-term state commitment" to the BRT agenda. In an interview with the magazine of the California School Boards Association, Hauck explained that the "first priority" is to keep the SAT-9 in place so that "five years of data" can be collected. He conceded that it may not be "the best test in the world" but "if it is testing whether we are achieving the standards that the [state] board adopted, then we have what we need." When asked to comment about the recent joint legislative committee's development of a master plan for K-16 public education, Hauck explained that he told the committee members to "pick specific objectives rather than to try to cover every issue under the sun." If the master plan includes "thousands of other issues" apart from "those things that are critical to teaching young people more effectively" then the plan will be "doomed".¹⁵⁰ These comments can be interpreted as evasive, ignorant, or euphemistic. Given the history of CBR's role in California educational reform, and specifically Hauck's role, one can imagine with some certitude that Hauck was referring to state-mandated tests, content standards, rewards and sanctions as "those things" or "specific objectives."

With content standards, assessment (SAT-9 and High School Exit Exam), and accountability (API and II/USP) now in place, California's business and political leaders are turning their attention to transforming the state and district bureaucracies into more effective tools of control. As part of this process, Warren recommends that "the state should review the 'health' of local school boards" by asking the question "does at-large representation result in broader representation than 'regional' [district/ward] representation?" (p. 25). When such a question is placed in the context of the research on school board representation (TCFTF, 1992; Danzberger, 1994a and 1994b; Bediner, 1969; Gittel, 1979; Hatton, 1979, Grant, 1979; Kirp, 1979) and the historic battle between at large and district representation (Hays, 1983; Callahan, 1962; Callahan, 1975; Johnson, 1988; Hatton, 1979; Katz, 1973; Zerchykov, 1984; Ziegler and Jennings, 1974; McAdams, 2000), it suggests that "broader representation" means a larger state view rather than the more "narrow" views of the local community. In other words, the state

¹⁵⁰ Selections from the California Schools Magazine interview with Hauck can be found by going to www.csba.org>>Q&Awith Bill Hauck

should ensure that school board members are committed to implementing and enforcing the state educational policy over which parents and students have little to no influence.

Another area on which Warren recommends that state policy focus its energies is that of teacher training and the role of teacher unions. The recommended reforms are intended to subordinate teacher judgment and influence to those making state policy. If school boards and district administrations can be made “healthy,” that is, if they can be relied upon to uphold the triumvirate of standards, assessment, and accountability, then they should be given more power over teachers (pp. 40–41). Simultaneously, teacher credential programs should be centralized into a single agency supervised by the State Department of Education (with the state Superintendent of Public Instruction no longer being an elective office but one appointed by the governor). Again, Warren justifies this consolidation by appealing to the “broader perspective of the state board of education and the state department of education over educational issues.”¹⁵¹ A more centralized state agency (with a “broader perspective”) would allow the new agency to assign clear and specific roles to each institution responsible for teacher training and would be able to hold each agency “accountable for desired results” (p. 44). Presumably, this would ensure that every teacher trained in a state credential program would resist the temptation to allow classroom experience to provide evidence with which to question whether the demanded “results” are “desired.”

The Business Roundtable acts as a clearinghouse for advice on how to address the “testing backlash,” and the CBR and CBEE work to completely eliminate teacher, parent, and student influence in educational policy making. It remains to be seen whether local community organizations will be able to mount an effective challenge to this onslaught. In the next two chapters, I explore what happened to a school staff that tried to respond to community concerns in the context of growing pressure from state systemic reform. In Chapter 7, I trace the history of educational policy in San Francisco. This provides the context that is needed in order to understand the story of Mission High School in Chapter

¹⁵¹ The current (2002) State Board of Education is appointed by the governor. As of 11/20/01 the eleven-member state board consisted of four businessmen (one of whom is president of the board), the executive director of CBEE, two former mayors, two former school administrators, one teacher union representative, and a student from a San Francisco high school (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/bio.htm>, viewed 6/2/02). This suggestions that business leaders seem to be particularly endowed with “broad” perspectives.

8. In that chapter, I describe the attempt and the failure of Mission High School to create a school program responsive to the needs and interests of its students, parents, teachers, and the members of the local community. I hope that the lessons learned from such a case study can help local community organizations develop strategies to create some “crawl space” in which to pursue educational goals of their own choosing.

Chapter 7: San Francisco

Introduction

By taking a close look at the details of the development of systemic reform in California, one can begin to define more concretely what standards advocates mean when they call for “higher standards for all,” “local control,” and “equity and excellence.” California history also suggests that several factors contributed to the crystallization of the 1989 BRT blueprint for educational reform. That calls for “tougher textbooks” in the 1980s was contrasted with the “lax” sixties and seventies indicates that standards-based reformers feared a loss of centralized control over the state’s curriculum. Concern over the “achievement gap” suggests a crisis of confidence in the public school’s ability to support the myth of meritocracy, a myth that denies society’s reliance on personal connections as crucial to finding jobs and college placements. The rhetoric about closing the “achievement gap” also seems to make resegregation defensible again. Demands for “more skilled workers” in the context of the Japanese challenge to Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors points to business fears that schools are not producing the kinds of workers they need for the twenty-first century.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the relationship between the development of systemic reform at the state level and at the district level. The kinds of state-city relationships described in Chapter 4 as well as the relationship between segregation and systemic reform described in Chapter 5 are made manifest in the more detailed look at San Francisco. Both high-stakes testing and desegregation were used in San Francisco to divide community advocates against each other. This resulted in the elimination of community participation in educational reform (which has devastating effects on real reform as will be seen in the final chapter). The reward and punishment system based on test scores, the heart of the PSAA of 1999, was essentially given a trial run in San Francisco from 1984 through 1997. Reconstitution was introduced as part of educational reform in San Francisco through a process by which the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the State Department of Education (CDE), and the San Francisco chapter of the NAACP settled the latter’s 1978 desegregation lawsuit. The 1983

settlement, known as the Consent Decree, was a SFUSD-driven document reluctantly accepted by the NAACP lawyers. The presiding judge, William Orrick, cautioned the NAACP lawyers to not go to trial since he did not see how they could win their case. They would not be able to prove that the SFUSD *intentionally* promoted or maintained segregated schools. As a result, the NAACP lawyers could demand only what the SFUSD and the CDE were willing to concede.

The concessions were gained, however, by paying a heavy political price. By accepting a place at the negotiating table, the San Francisco NAACP acquiesced to the exclusion of teachers, Latinos, and Asian Americans from the table. The latter three groups all filed lawsuits during the life of the Consent Decree demanding that they, too, be parties to the desegregation settlement. Judge Orrick consistently denied their claims, explaining to them that the San Francisco NAACP was able effectively to represent Latino and Asian American interests and the district office would represent the interests of the teachers. This would prove illusory when lawyers representing Chinese American students filed suit against the desegregation policies of the Consent Decree. Furthermore, as part of the Consent Decree, the district's accountability tool for all schools (called "reconstitution") was "shielded from the normal political process" (Ruiz-de-Velasco, 1998; p. 14). This shut out any community influence upon reform in the district. Hoping for the creation of an academically rigorous school in a predominantly black neighborhood, the San Francisco NAACP abandoned potential alliances with other community based groups whose various educational goals would necessarily challenge the high-stakes testing agenda. By refusing to appeal through the normal political process, the NAACP lawyers were increasingly guided by the SFUSD district office as the court deferred to the expert advice of professional educators.

During the lawsuit, the school district agreed that there was de facto segregation and that African American students, on a multiplicity of scales, were not succeeding in school in proportion to their numbers in the district. The solution to these two, agreed-upon problems rested on a single shared assumption among the three parties: teachers were responsible for the failure of students in school. The solution that incorporated this assumption into the Consent Decree was called reconstitution. Reconstitution of a school resulted in the "vacating" of the entire faculty and staff and then hiring new teachers and

administrators based on their commitment to hold low-performing students to high standards. The most segregated part of the city with the poorest performing and most underfunded schools in the district were two neighborhoods called Bay View and Hunter's Point. The Consent Decree stipulated that desegregation of the Bay View and Hunter's Point area would be achieved by reconstituting three schools and establishing two new ones (one school was added in the largely Hispanic Mission district). Four reconstituted schools were physically renovated, brochures were made and distributed, the new staff were given six days of training, and the schools were opened with the expectation that parents from all over the city would want to send their children there. According to the court-appointed experts, this would result in five racially diverse schools in the Bay View/Hunters Point neighborhoods (plus one in the Mission) whose success rates and reputation of academic rigor would place them among the most prestigious schools in the district.

Since the district conceded that there were 19 racially segregated schools, they had agreed to expend resources on those schools to improve, through "targeted programs," academic performance, attendance, dropout, expulsion, and suspension rates of all students and African American students in particular. Furthermore, the district agreed to a 45 percent cap for any of the 9 specified racial/ethnic groups in 19 regular schools and a 40 percent racial/ethnic cap for the 16 elite alternative schools. An independent monitor was ordered by the court to evaluate annually the progress the district was making in complying with the more than 40 major stipulations required by the Consent Decree. Since the district was never in full compliance, the NAACP lawyers periodically sued for expansion of the settlement in an attempt to apply more of the stipulations to more schools. By 1991, the NAACP was able to convince the judge that a more thorough review of compliance was necessary. The judge entertained nominations from each of the parties to the lawsuit for a special committee that was chaired by Gary Orfield.¹⁵²

In 1992, Orfield's committee of experts submitted a report to Judge Orrick in which they concluded that the district was in compliance with the racial caps but had not

¹⁵² At the time, Orfield was a professor at the University of Chicago. Currently he heads the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

succeeded in closing the achievement gap between whites and African Americans. Among the 72 specific recommendations in the Orfield report was one that the newly appointed San Francisco superintendent, Waldemar (Bill) Rojas, would pursue as his signature issue for the next seven years. Since it appeared that test scores had improved in the reconstituted schools but not in those schools with “targeted programs,” Orfield recommended that the district begin to reconstitute three schools each year. The parties agreed to this modification to the original Consent Decree. From 1993 to 1998, Rojas used reconstitution “to raise expectations and increase accountability” — in other words, to implement systemic reform throughout the district.

In 1993, Rojas directed the development of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). This was a process by which low performing schools were identified (primarily by test scores), offered resources and time, and then threatened with reconstitution if they did not improve student achievement. In spite of skepticism and concern from principals and serious objections from teachers, Rojas placed 24 schools on the CSIP track and reconstituted ten of them from 1993 to 1997 (see Appendix F for evaluation criteria used in June 1997). Throughout that period, Rojas had the support of the local business community, the San Francisco NAACP, and the city’s black leadership because he was thought to be pursuing “equity and excellence” by holding teachers and principals “accountable” for the *high* performance of *all* students. Rojas argued in his 1996 PhD thesis, in numerous press conferences, and in all the official SFUSD publications that reconstitution was responsible for raising San Francisco students’ test scores generally and minority students’ in particular. The continuing disproportionate rates of attendance, expulsions, suspensions, and dropouts, concerns over the validity of using a standardized test as the primary measure of a school’s effectiveness and creeping resegregation did not seem to tarnish the shine that Rojas was projecting upon himself.

In 1998, however, the San Francisco teachers’ union finally forced Rojas to abandon reconstitution — a pyrrhic victory since the very next year the process of CSIP/reconstitution was institutionalized at the state level as the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program of the Public School Accountability Act. In response to the lawsuit brought by Brian Ho against the SFUSD in 1994, Judge Orrick decided, in 1999, to eliminate the racial caps of the Consent Decree and end all

provisions of the Decree by 2002. Rojas, reeling from increasingly vociferous accusations of district fiscal disarray, resigned as superintendent in 1999, spent six months as superintendent of the Dallas, Texas, public schools, and was fired from that post. He then moved to San Diego. In 2000, the San Francisco school board hired Arlene Ackerman as school superintendent, basing their decision on her reputation for implementing standards-based accountability in the Washington, D.C., school district. Systemic reform, ironically, came to San Francisco in the guise of desegregation. Yet while systemic reform planted deep roots from 1984 to 1998, desegregation disappeared as an issue, leaving the San Francisco NAACP defending the new black superintendent's five-year, standards-based accountability plan entitled *Excellence for All*. In Chapter 4, I argued that standards and accountability were not imposed in five major cities until the city and state had abandoned the goals inherent in the strategy of desegregation. In San Francisco, however, the pursuit of desegregation was immediately co-opted by systemic reformers.

The Drive for Integration

The San Francisco NAACP's odyssey to desegregate the school district began in 1962. During that year, the Congress on Racial Equality and the Council for Civic Unity had launched a campaign to persuade the San Francisco school board to alter the student assignment process. When the district superintendent, Harold Spears, opposed any alterations in the student assignment process, around 1400 people packed a school board meeting to protest Spears's position. In response to public pressure, the school board established an ad hoc committee to study the issue of how best to desegregate the district's schools. Perhaps concerned about the effectiveness of the ad hoc committee, the NAACP filed a desegregation suit against the district (*Brock v. San Francisco Board of Education*). In April 1963, the ad hoc committee issued its report, recommending that race be taken into account in determining school assignments (Fraga, 1998; pp. 67–68). Apparently satisfied with this outcome, the NAACP allowed its lawsuit to lapse.

By 1970, the school board had a busing program in place that was targeting two neighborhoods, Richmond and Park South. When white parents sued to stop the busing

program, the NAACP countersued (*Johnson v. SFUSD*) and won expansion of the busing program.

The District Court found that SFUSD violated the constitutional rights of Black children by (1) establishing school boundary lines knowing that such lines would maintain or intensify racial segregation, (2) constructing and modifying schools in a manner that would maintain or intensify racial segregation, and (3) assigning black teachers of limited experience to "black" schools while assigning few such teachers to white schools (Biegel, 1997; p. 27).

In spite of the court order to desegregate 102 elementary schools, the elementary schools in Bay View and Hunter's Point remained overwhelmingly black (Fraga, 1998; pp. 68-69). In 20 of the district's elementary schools, over 65 percent of the students were black and in 10 of those, black students constituted between 89 to 97 percent of the school (Rojas, 1999; p. 3). While African Americans were 28 percent of the district's student population in 1970, Chinese American students were approximately 18 percent. Seventy-six percent of the Chinese American students refused to attend public schools when the court issued its desegregation orders. Instead of having their children attend majority black schools, community leaders created Chinese Freedom Schools (Fraga, 1998; p. 69).¹⁵³

In another attempt to address the issue of desegregation, the new superintendent, Robert Alioto, began implementing in 1975 what he called the Educational Redesign Program. The plan relied heavily on the introduction of magnet schools to move schools towards the newly adopted goal of a 45 percent cap on any one ethnic group in a school.¹⁵⁴ The NAACP challenged this plan but Judge Wiegel dismissed the case in June 22, 1978, "without prejudice." Undaunted, the NAACP immediately filed its third major case of the decade on June 30, 1978 (Fraga, 1998; pp. 69-70). Unlike in the previous two lawsuits, the NAACP now asserted that it was representing all students in the district and was suing the state as well as the district.¹⁵⁵ Peter Cohn, one of the NAACP lawyers,

¹⁵³ Ironically, the Chinese Freedom Schools chose the same name used by schools created to integrate Mississippi society 6 years before. In 1964, the Congress of Federated Organizations sponsored Freedom Schools in Mississippi. These "freedom" schools were created as part of the process to force integration of all public institutions in the state through the creation of an alternative political party, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 5 for the role magnet schools have played in the desegregation battles.

¹⁵⁵ One might note that in Chapter 6, I argued that it was in 1978 that the state began to be the major source of funding for local school districts. It was, then, only appropriate that the NAACP begin to consider the

explained that the ultimate goal of the lawsuit was to improve the worst schools as well as desegregate the district (interview, 11/30/01). In order to do so, the NAACP lawyers filed a complaint in which they argued that the district pursued segregationist policies by

constructing new schools and annexes, leasing private property for school use, and utilizing portable classrooms in order to incorporate extant residential segregation into the District; establishing feeder patterns, transfer and reassignment policies, optional and mandatory attendance zones to situate children in racially isolated schools; implementing racially discriminatory testing procedures, disciplinary policies, and tracking systems within schools and classrooms; hiring and assigning faculty and administrative personnel; and allocating financial resources in a discriminatory manner (Orrick, 1983; quoted in Biegel, 1997; p. 27).

From 1978 to 1983, Judge Orrick entertained 25 pretrial motions. The most important one from the point of view of the NAACP lawyers as well as the judge was the 1980, 206-page motion and supporting memorandum

for partial summary judgment on the issue of whether, as of 1954 and 1970, the District was racially segregated as to the substantial portion of its facilities, programs, student enrollments, and personnel. The memorandum traced the history of de jure segregation in the District from the establishment of “colored schools” and “Chinese schools” in the 1850s to the segregation of the housing industry during the 1940s and 1950s. The memorandum also identified numerous instances of alleged discriminatory decision making inter alia in the selection of school sites, the establishment of student attendance zones and feeder patterns, the assignment of faculty and administrators, and the administration of achievement tests and discipline, from which the Court purportedly could draw the inference that the defendants intended to segregate the District (Orrick, 1983).

Judge Orrick, however, refused to “draw the inference.” He ruled instead against the motion explaining that the plaintiffs had failed to establish that the district had created a “dual system as of 1954 and that they had failed to assert a sufficient number of undisputed facts to create an inference of segregative intent.” If Judge Orrick had ruled that the NAACP’s evidence proved that the SFUSD was segregated before 1954, then, all the plaintiffs would have to do is “simply show that defendants had failed to meet their affirmative duty [established by *Brown v. Board*] to dismantle the dual system.” But the

role of the state as a potential funding source for any desegregation plan that the NAACP would be able to win from its court battle.

judge indicated that the evidence in support of a “dual system” prior to 1954 was “of dubious validity.”¹⁵⁶

Judge Orrick, in summarily dismissing the relevance of dozens of cardboard boxes filled with historical documentation of school district boundaries and feeder patterns prior to 1954, made the burden of proof more difficult. Judge Orrick told the NAACP lawyers that, to win their case, “plaintiffs would be compelled to prove current (post–1954) incidents of intentional segregation.” But the judge explained, in 1983, that the NAACP lawyers did not seem to have sufficient evidence to prove that the district acted purposefully to maintain or create segregated schools after 1954. The plaintiff’s case was weak, he argued, since

they relied largely on an analysis of the number of physical changes in facilities at “racially identifiable” schools from 1960 to 1970 to demonstrate defendants’ segregative intent during this period. Defendants, however, sufficiently cast doubt on the accuracy of plaintiffs’ data on a number of these changes. Plaintiffs also relied heavily on an analysis of defendants’ use of fourteen optional attendance zones during the 1940s through the 1960s to show segregative intent. However, their proof of the racial characteristics of the neighborhoods affected by these zones was often weak or unavailable. Moreover, defendants offered racially neutral explanations *for all but four of the zones described by plaintiffs*. . . . All of this is not to say that plaintiffs could not have won their case. . . . The Court suggests only that the risks of further litigation for the plaintiff class are very real (Orrick, 1983) [italics added].

The NAACP lawyers were dumbfounded that the judge could agree that there were four attendance zones that exhibited “segregative intent” and yet refuse to “find as fact” that the district was pursuing a racially segregated school system. The failure to win such a “finding” meant that the NAACP now had to prepare simultaneously for trial and for settlement (interview with Peter Cohn, 11/30/01).

¹⁵⁶ Orrick believed that the NAACP had relied primarily on a 1943 study, *The Negro War Worker in San Francisco*. The study was administered by the YWCA and carried out in connection with the Race Relations Program of the American Missionary Association. Judge Orrick said it was questionable because it “does not adequately disclose the source of the racial statistics included therein, or how or when they were collected; it does not describe the methodology used to analyze these statistics; it contains no background information concerning the qualifications of its authors; it does not purport to be an official District census” and was not used by the NAACP in its previous lawsuits against the District.

The Consent Decree

The NAACP, in agreeing to pursue a settlement, began negotiations with the district and the State Department of Education for the next nine months. Their strategy throughout was to be very careful to not demand anything that the district or state could not or was unwilling to deliver. At the very least, however, the NAACP wanted to establish an “alternative school” in the historically neglected southeast part of the city (interview with Peter Cohn, 11/30/01).¹⁵⁷ By April 1982, Judge Orrick was satisfied that “except for current conditions at certain schools in the Bay View and Hunter’s Point area of the city [the southeast], there was no serious impediment to settlement of the action” (Orrick, 1983). He felt confident in suggesting “the appointment of a settlement team composed of the nation’s leading experts on school desegregation and education policy to resolve” the remaining points of contention (Orrick, 1983).¹⁵⁸ Fraga (1998) noted “a criticism of this [settlement team] has been that its members as a whole operate on a higher policy level and do not have extensive experience working in public schools at the K–12 level” (in a footnote on his p. 88). The team, composed of university professors, consultants, and district administrators, were not only “at a higher policy level” but, except for the two district appointed employees, were all from out of town as well, having little or no knowledge of the unique history and characteristics of San Francisco.

Judge Orrick directed the settlement team “to deliberate in confidence, outside the presence of counsel, and the cochairmen were to act as sole spokespersons [for] the team.” The judge further indicated that a trial date in February 1983 “would not be changed and that, in the meantime, counsel for the parties were to continue to prepare for trial” (Orrick, 1983). This deadline undoubtedly helped focus the energies of the settlement team and

¹⁵⁷ “Alternative schools” have had and continue to have open and often more competitive enrollment procedures than regular neighborhood schools. The most prestigious alternative high school in San Francisco is the nationally known Lowell High School, located in the southwest quadrant of the city. Currently, the four most desired high schools (out of 16) are located in the western part of the city.

¹⁵⁸ Judge Orrick appointed as co-chairs of the settlement team “two of the best educators in the country,” Harold Howe (chair of the board of Institute for Educational Leadership) and Gary Orfield (professor of political science, public policy, and education at the University of Chicago). The NAACP lawyers appointed Gordon Foster (professor of education at the University of Miami) and Robert Green (Dean of Urban Affairs at Michigan State University). The district appointed Barbara Cohen (Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of SFUSD and previously employed by Far West Laboratories) and Fred Leonard (Associate Superintendent for Instructional Support Services of SFUSD). The state appointed Ples Griffin (Chief of Office of Intergroup Relations for the California Department of Education and formerly a special consultant to the Rand Corporation) and Thomas Griffin (lecturer in a graduate student law course at the University of California at Berkeley).

they came up with a “final settlement team agreement” in September 1982. After consulting with a court-appointed law firm, the team submitted a formal Consent Decree to the judge on December 30, 1982. Judge Orrick made a preliminary ruling that the “decree is fair, reasonable and adequate, and ordered that notice be given to the absentee class members and to the public . . . [and] scheduled a public hearing on the fairness of the decree for February 14, 1983” (Orrick, 1983).

According to the judge, 29 individuals or groups submitted written comments to the court and 23 elected to speak at the public hearing.

The court received the greatest number of objections from parents in the Bayview/Hunter’s Point area concerning the plans to convert [Drew] from an elementary school into an academic middle school, and to convert the Pelton Middle School into an alternative academic high school (Orrick, 1983).

In spite of detailed objections to the conversion plans by those who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of the plans, the judge had supreme confidence in the judgment of those who had no recent or direct “experience working in public schools at the K–12 level.”

Judge Orrick explained that

the changes mandated by the Decree are the product of recommendations by (without overstatement) the best local, state, and national desegregation/education specialists available. These experts, after considerable study, have concluded that comprehensive changes in the academic programs at Bayview/Hunter’s Point are absolutely essential to the revitalization and enhancement of education for children of all races/ethnic groups in San Francisco. . . . While the court sympathizes with the concerns of the parents at Drew and Pelton Schools, it must defer to the opinion of the experts. . . . The Court believes that the plan, viewed as a whole, is a good one (Orrick, 1983).

Judge Orrick was similarly dismissive of the objections made by a representative of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and a parent of two Hispanic students. Their objection that the decree “fails to address the need for equal educational opportunities for Hispanic students” as well as African Americans, apparently reflected

a basic misunderstanding about the nature of this lawsuit and objective of the Decree. . . . The remedy sought and the remedy proposed is system-wide desegregation. . . . It does not address the needs of any particular racial or ethnic group. . . . In addition to the relief provided at the Bayview/Hunter’s Point Schools, the Decree requires by September 1983 a reduction in the percentage of students from the dominant racial/ethnic group in all other historically segregated schools in the district. MALDEF’s contention that the proposed decree does not

address the educational needs of Hispanic children is simply incorrect. (Orrick, 1983).

Furthermore, the judge warned MALDEF against filing a separate suit since “a class of Hispanic students filing suit separately could not obtain any fuller desegregation relief than that mandated by this Decree” (Orrick, 1983). One speaker at the hearing questioned whether the NAACP was able “to represent all the racial/ethnic groups” in the city. Judge Orrick was not moved, explaining “The Court finds that plaintiffs’ counsel throughout the litigation represented the interests of all class members in an exemplary fashion.” Judge Orrick defined the goal of all of the class members as “complete desegregation of the district” and “found” that the Consent Decree achieved such a goal, so, ergo, the NAACP lawyers achieved the goals of everyone. That “29 individuals or groups” believed that their goals were not achieved by the Consent Decree did not undermine the judge’s supreme confidence in the judgment of experts to determine the greatest good for all.

Representatives from the two teachers’ unions in the district expressed dismay at the terms of the settlement. They pleaded with the judge to add, at the very least, a provision to the Consent Decree stating the district’s responsibility to continue to abide by the terms of the union’s contract. But Judge Orrick saw no reason to do so since he viewed the district administration as representing the teachers. When several people spoke to the lack of a clear role for the community in developing the details of the Consent Decree, the judge assured them that “this Decree purports to be nothing more than a framework for desegregation that will be greatly enhanced by input from others, including members of the community.” No special provisions for community input were required since “the Court is satisfied that the parties are committed to considering and incorporating valuable suggestions made by speakers at the fairness hearing.” Since the “Court is not the local superintendent of public schools or the state superintendent of public instruction . . . it cannot substitute its judgment of what constitutes a good academic program for that of these elected officials.” Judge Orrick’s trust in the appointed district superintendent led him originally to reject a suggestion that an outside monitor was needed to ensure that district officials fulfilled the demands of the Decree (Orrick, 1983). Judge Orrick’s assumptions concerning the judgment of the experts and ability of the

district and the NAACP to represent everyone else's interests as well as their own would soon prove unwarranted.

In 1980, Judge Orrick had warned the NAACP lawyers that they were highly unlikely to be able to prove in court that the SFUSD was a "dual system" before 1954 because their evidence was of "dubious validity." But in defining the goal of the Decree as the "complete desegregation of the District," the judge was acknowledging the existence of a segregated system, although he insisted that the people responsible for running the system were not aware of the "segregative" effects of their practices.¹⁵⁹ Given the judge's position, the NAACP lawyers were forced to retreat to their fallback position — creating a prestigious, alternative academic high school in BayView or Hunter's Point. This position, however, did not represent the interests of the African American parents of the neighborhood who had recently fought and won for themselves brand new elementary and middle schools. Nor would it serve the majority of students who would not qualify to enter a newly created, prestigious high school. Judge Orrick and the experts were, essentially, asking some students (who would be bused out of the neighborhood) to lose while others (those who would be bused into the neighborhood) gained because the NAACP couldn't prove "segregative" intent and the district was not willing to desegregate the entire district unless forced to do so.

The only real point of agreement between the district and the NAACP lawyers was about the role of teachers in the disproportionate failure rates of poor and minority students. Judge Orrick noted that the NAACP lawyers

alleged that faculty hired by the district possess racially prejudiced attitudes toward minority school children, which attitudes have had the effect of denying minority students equal educational opportunity (Orrick, 1983).

¹⁵⁹ Judge Orrick identified practices that had created and maintained segregation in San Francisco in his 1983 order: "The SFUSD shall continue to avoid choosing sites for such special programs as magnet or alternative schools or curricula . . . facility utilization policies or practices, including school openings, closings, conversions, renovations, grade structure changes, boundary changes, or feeder pattern changes . . . transportation policies that disproportionately burden any racial/ethnic group" (Orrick, 1983, 13e and 13f). Almost in anticipation of Orrick's order that the district not use alternative schools to "disproportionately burden any racial/ethnic group," the district established four new alternative schools, three of them high schools, between September 1981 and September 1982 (Wallenberg High School, School of the Arts, International Studies Academy, and Lilienthal Elementary) (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/17/82, 6/17/82, 6/18/82, 6/29/82).

Peter Cohn explained that the NAACP lawyers visited many schools and walked into classrooms unannounced. What they saw was not just shoddy teaching but reprehensible practices. Cohn admitted that teachers are in the best position to identify those schools in the district that were in the most trouble, but since the union had not taken a proactive role in pushing for educational reform, he and his colleagues could not rely on the teachers to effect reform (interview, 11/30/01). That teachers, by state law, were not allowed to be “pro-active” in educational reform did not seem to factor into Cohn’s thinking.¹⁶⁰ Instead, the NAACP lawyers agreed with the district that when children fail in school, it is due to bad teaching. Both parties willingly agreed that to improve four schools in the Bayview/Hunter’s Point area they would have to be reconstituted. Judge Orrick ordered that

- SFUSD shall declare all staff and administrative positions in the Bayview-Hunters Point Schools open and shall reconstitute the staff and administration of those schools on the basis of a desegregation plan *developed by SFUSD* and submitted to Court (paragraph 18).
- The plan . . . shall focus on improving both the educational quality of the schools and the public perception of the area (paragraph 19).
- Dr. Charles Drew School shall be converted into an academic middle school with an academic program with *high quality standards*. . . . Counseling staff shall be provided to *help prepare Drew students for the Lowell High School program*. Transportation shall be provided for students coming from outside the attendance areas (paragraph 20).
- Sir Francis Drake Elementary School shall be converted from a basic K–5 elementary school to a *computer-assisted instruction and computer science and awareness* elementary school (paragraph 21).
- Dr. George Washington Carver Elementary School shall be *converted into an academic school* (paragraph 25).
- Pelton Middle School shall be converted into an *alternative traditional Academic* High School and shall be renamed San Francisco Academic High School . . . [and] have a curriculum and program *modeled after Raoul Wallenberg High School* (paragraph 28).
- A coordinated public information effort aimed at dealing with public stereotypes about the Bayview–Hunters Point area shall be undertaken by the SFUSD in consultation with State Defendants (paragraph 31).
- *The SFUSD, in consultation with the State Defendants, shall develop* and submit to the Court and parties . . . *a comprehensive staff development plan* and budget necessary to implement the provisions of this Decree. The plan and budget shall include up to six days per year of staff development. . . . The training shall

¹⁶⁰ When a San Francisco teacher was told by a *Chronicle* reporter that the new contract with the district allowed for teachers to have a “role in decision making,” the teacher was quoted as saying: “Role in decision making? It’s not customary for the district to give us any role in decision making. I haven’t a clue what that means” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/5/84, p. 4).

address areas . . . such as the following: student discipline procedures and goals; *academic achievement and performance goals*; teaching in a diverse racial/ethnic environment; parental involvement; and the desegregation goals and provisions of this Consent Decree (paragraph 36) [italics added].

Judge Orrick’s “framework” as outlined above kept the discussion of educational reform well within the confines of the California Business Roundtable agenda. The primary goal was academic excellence, not desegregation, and computer technology was considered a key element in making a school prestigious enough to draw middle-class white and Asian American students to Hunter’s Point. Furthermore, it was district administrators *not* in collaboration with community members who were to design both the desegregation plan and staff development.

Given the authority to do so, district administrative staff immediately set about writing the *Special Plan for Bayview–Hunter’s Point*. The plan consisted of seven “components,” using terminology that is consistent with the Business Roundtable’s *Nine Components*.

1. Administration, faculty and staff positions were vacated (reconstituted), and new personnel were hired who were committed to the Consent Decree goals and the Philosophical Tenets.
2. The Philosophical Tenets established high expectations for learning and behavior of all individuals. (There were twelve Philosophical Tenets. The eighth stated, “If individuals do not learn, then those assigned to be their *teachers* will accept responsibility for this failure and will take appropriate remedial action to ensure success ¹⁶¹) [my emphasis].
3. Specific and explicit student outcomes were delineated for each subject at each grade level.
4. Technology-rich environments were available for teaching and learning.
5. Flexibility in adult-student ratios allowed for small group instruction and closer adult attention at various times throughout the day.
6. All personnel participated in extensive professional development related to the Consent Decree goals.
7. Each school was given a unique instructional focus (Rojas, 1999; p. 6).

An eighth “component,” parental involvement, was added later. During the summer of 1983, the district began to implement the *Special Plan*.

¹⁶¹ From the April 1995 draft update of the district’s SFUSD Special Plan for Bayview–Hunters Point Schools, 3–14 (Biegel, 1997; fn 116). The same wording is repeated in Rojas’ 1996 dissertation (p. 59). A later version of the eighth Tenet reflects the influence that the San Francisco teachers’ union was finally able to effect on the process of reconstitution: “Teachers, administrators, and staff are partners with students in the learning process. If students fail, *all partners* should accept full responsibility for this failure and take action to ensure success” (Rojas, 1999; p. 7) [my emphasis].

Judge Orrick's 1983 opinion and order did indeed create the "framework" within which systemic reform was able to take root in the SFUSD. Ostensibly it was a framework by which the school district would eventually be desegregated. Yet because of the judge's confidence in the experts from Boston, Miami, and Chicago to know what was best for San Francisco schools, and because of his desire to give the SFUSD district administration control over the definition of strategies and tactics to "eliminate racial/ethnic segregation" and "achieve academic excellence throughout SFUSD," the emphasis was eventually placed on the SFSUD, as defined by the Business Roundtable's campaign. Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco described the process as one in which the school board and the superintendent "co-opted the court regime" (1998; p. 2). The superintendent was able to seize the initiative from the NAACP since the district was the one responsible for defining implementation as well as acting upon those definitions and then providing the data by which they would be judged as to whether they had fulfilled their own definitions of success. It would be a formula that ended up hiding a multitude of sins.

Judge Orrick's confidence in national experts and district administrators was such that he could write in 1983 that "complete desegregation of the San Francisco schools" would be achieved "in the next few years." Yet immediately in August 1983, the "framework" was not working. The parents of both Pelton and Drew continued to oppose the plan. The Reverend Cecil Williams, chair of an 18-member committee appointed to advise the district on implementation, argued that implementation should be delayed so that parents could be brought into the design process. He predicted that the plan would not work unless parents wanted it to (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/10/83). Simultaneously, the NAACP filed a "show cause" motion accusing the district and state of not taking steps needed to implement the plan (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/11/83). Ten days later, Bayview-Hunters Point parents filed suit to prevent the district from closing Drew Elementary.

When the schools opened that September, district buses arrived in the neighborhood of Drew to take the elementary students to other schools in the city. The buses were met by picket lines of parents and their supporters, preventing the buses from transporting the children for two hours (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/9/83). On September 19, four people, including the Reverend Cecil Williams, were arrested for blocking school

buses. Williams explained to the *Chronicle* reporter, “integration will never work unless the people of Bayview-Hunter’s Point are included” (9/20/83). On September 22, the 198-member bus driver’s union voted unanimously to honor any future picket lines by Drew parents (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/23/83). The situation was finally resolved when the school board voted 6–1 to reopen Drew as a prekindergarten through second grade school (subject to approval by NAACP and Judge Orrick). The Drew parents had wanted complete restoration of the PK–5 school (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 11/4/83).

Pelton parents were not as successful as the Drew parents in opposing the reconstitution of their school. On February 21, 1984, the school board voted 5–2 to move Pelton students to another site. Pelton Middle School was reconstituted and renamed, becoming the Philip and Sala Burton High School. When the parents complained about not being part of the planning process, the superintendent told them they were forbidden from doing so by the Consent Decree (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/22/84).

From Desegregation to Reconstitution

What happened between 1983 and 1992 is not completely clear. Ruiz-de-Velasco (1998) describes the period as one of “grudging implementation of the Decree” (p. 10). Fraga (1998) argues that district superintendent Alioto was fired in 1985 “because of his vigorous enforcement of the Consent Decree” in the face of white and Chinese parents who objected to the integration of their schools. There was also the sense that the new superintendent, Cortines, was hostile to the Decree during his tenure from 1986 to 1992 (p. 78). Peter Cohn described the period of initial implementation and expansion of the Consent Decree as one of constant interaction among the superintendent, the school board, the teacher unions, district employees (at all levels), and “parent boosters” (interview with Cohn, 11/30/01). The NAACP was able to force the district to expand the number of schools receiving Consent Decree funding from the state by consistently showing the court that the district was not in compliance with the Decree. For example, the district announced that 99 percent of its students were in racially balanced schools — defined by the Consent Decree as no more than 40 percent for alternative schools, 45 percent for regular schools (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7/27/85). Yet two years later, district officials conceded that 44 percent of the students at the alternative, Lowell High School, were

Chinese Americans. This was more than double their representation in the district population and 4 percent more than legally allowed (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/18/87). An editorial in the *Chronicle* foreshadowed how the Consent Decree would end when it argued against enforcement of the Decree at Lowell.

A well-balanced school population is a desirable concept, but Lowell has long attracted a citywide selection of scholars that has made it one of the most prestigious secondary schools in the country. Its enrollment should not be confined to a strict ethnic percentage [(6/24/87); test scores and GPA are the criteria of selection at Lowell].

Waldemar (Bill) Rojas, who was the district superintendent from 1992 to 1999, argued in his dissertation that the tree reconstituted and two newly created schools in 1984 “built a system of success for African American and Latino students” (1996; p. 3). Like the BRT, Rojas relied on test scores to define “success.” Rojas compared the CTBS scores of the originally *reconstituted* schools in 1984 (called Phase I schools) with those that were merely *targeted* (16 schools — called Phases II through IV — from 1985 to 1990). Targeted schools received Consent Decree funds for special programs, but were not required to adhere to the *Special Plan* of the Decree. That the reconstituted (Phase I) schools maintained higher average test scores than the district average and also higher than those targeted (Phase II-IV) schools led Rojas to conclude that an “assertive approach” in which the *district* “defines the structure of each school and the steps toward reaching the goals” (p. 46) resulted in “excellence and equity for all children” (pp. 3–4). In *Benefits of the SFUSD Consent Decree*, Rojas (1999) argued, “one of the earliest measures of academic improvement in [these schools from 1983 to 1985] is evident in the scores on the former California Assessment Program” (p. 8). Rojas pointed to continued improvement of the original Consent Decree Schools by citing CTBS scores from 1992 to 1995 (1999; pp. 9-10).

Goldstein (1998) points out, however, that Rojas paints with too broad a brush when citing improvement on standardized test scores. For example, three Phase II middle schools (Lick, Potrero Hill, and Visitacion Valley) performed as consistently as two Phase I middle schools on the mathematics tests (p. 8, fn. 9). Two other targeted schools, E.R. Taylor and Commodore Stockton, improved their scores much more than Phase One Schools (p. 10). African American students who transferred out of Bayview–Hunter’s

Point “performed higher than African American students in both Phase I” and targeted schools (p. 8, fn. 8). Since the scores were not tracked according to individual performance, high scores in Phase I schools “may well be attributable to the influx of higher performing students” (p. 10).

These concerns, however, were never raised until the end of Rojas’ tenure as superintendent. The Consent Decree had instead created a framework within which district administrators were able to connect test scores (“academic achievement or performance”) inextricably with desegregation. If the district could create schools in which African American and Latino students would score as well as whites and Asian Americans, then the racial imbalances would right themselves. High-performing blacks and Latinos would be able to compete successfully with high-performing whites and Asian Americans to enter the prestigious alternative schools, in numbers not exceeding 40 or 45 percent of their respective racial/ethnic group (with the corollary, never publicly addressed, that low-performing students would be left in less prestigious, more poorly funded schools). By 1990, this had not happened and the NAACP requested that the judge appoint another panel of experts to investigate why. Judge Orrick appointed Gary Orfield to once again chair the panel of experts (Robert Green, Gordon Foster, David Tatel, and Barbara Cohen). From November 1991 to June 1992, the panel gathered their data from the school district. Their interviews with district administrators “and other parties” were “confidential private discussions”

The goal of the committee was . . . to recommend ways to improve the desegregation plan. Our goal was to examine issues fully so that it would be possible to find evidence sufficiently convincing to win the agreement of experts chosen by all of the parties (Orfield, 1992; p. 15).

The goal was not to “win the agreement” of teachers, parents, students, or other interested members of the community. The experts assumed that to eliminate obstacles in the way of integration would not require the knowledge or cooperation of members of the community. Instead, they continued to assume that teachers were obstacles to be retrained (to change their attitudes) through district-designed programs, or be removed. The experts’ report called for a “major push” for the cooperation of “other basic community institutions and for increased parental involvement.” Yet these are the very groups excluded by the decision-making process, a dynamic that may explain why the Consent Decree “is little

understood . . . by the broader community” (p. 2). The experts “urge[d] the decision makers to . . . keep a strong focus on the needs of African American and Hispanic youth” but never allowed these students to help the experts understand why they dropped out or were pushed out in disproportionate numbers (p. 82).

The experts relied instead on district data and interviews with NAACP lawyers to arrive at their conclusions.

The implementation of the Bayview–Hunters Point model of school reconstitution — with staff selection and training built around a philosophy of opportunity for all children — did work [integrated schools, higher test scores, and lower dropout rates]. Reconstitution, under the first phase of the Consent Decree, involved selecting a new principal and recruiting an entire new staff at a school, committed to the goals of the Consent Decree.

The Decree also required special efforts to hire more minority teachers and to ensure that all teachers are equitably assigned throughout the system. These goals have not been reached, and this report calls for renewed efforts to accomplish those goals.

The Decree called for assuring equity in many aspects of district operations including assignment to special education, discipline, bilingual education, and other arenas. We propose new methods for reaching the goals in these areas. The committee’s work shows that the district must do more than it has done to educate Hispanic and African American children. Clearly there is a social and economic crisis of great severity in the inner city and the schools need the support of other basic community institutions in their efforts; we call for a major push for such cooperation. . . .

We recommend that more schools be required to undergo fundamental transformations like those that occurred in the Bayview–Hunter’s Point area. There should be deadlines for schools receiving Consent Decree funds to produce clear gains for student outcomes. When schools succeed they should be rewarded with increased flexibility in managing their educational program. If a school fails, after adequate notice and special training assistance, a new principal and a newly recruited faculty should be appointed (Orfield, 1992; pp. 5–6).

Orfield’s committee made over fifty specific recommendations. Many of these recommendations were embodied in a compromise document agreed upon by the parties’ lawyers and called the parties’ *Second Joint Report* (October 1992). When the teachers’ union objected to their lack of participation in the process, the judge observed that they had no legal right to do so, based on his previous decisions. Attorneys representing the Chinese American Democratic Club and Multicultural Education, Training, and Advocacy, Inc. (a Latino nonprofit organization) argued to be part of the overseeing committee. They were concerned that the needs of Limited English speakers were not

being met (Fraga, 1998; p. 79).¹⁶² Their motion also was denied. One of the committee's recommendations adopted in the *Second Joint Report* directed the district to reconstitute three Phase II–IV schools per year. It would be this recommendation that the new superintendent, Bill Rojas, would seize as his signature issue. The experts had recommended the expansion of reconstitution because they believed that the evidence supplied by the district proved that it had been effective in raising the achievement levels of the students in Phase I schools. But Goldstein (1998) points out that

even accepting the expert panel's conclusions about heightened achievement in the Phase One schools, it is not clear that the evidence fully supported the expansion of all aspects of reconstitution as a remedy. It is particularly not clear that vacating the adults led to heightened performance. . . . First, seven other components of the Phase One reforms may have led to the successful turn-around of the Phase One schools independent of vacating the adults. . . . The experts did not and cannot isolate which of the reforms actually caused the improved achievement in the Phase One schools. . . . Second, there is evidence showing that vacating the adults alone, without implementing the other Phase One components [which included more money, smaller class sizes, renovated buildings, and new equipment] may not lead to improved school performance. . . . Finally, reconstitution was expanded as a remedy for failing schools in San Francisco without a firm understanding of the educational illness in the first instance. . . . Reconstitution as a remedy assumes internal organizational failure (pp. 9–10).

Perhaps the experts' faith in reconstitution was influenced by the gathering momentum of the BRT-driven high-stakes testing movement that began in earnest in 1989. Rojas certainly was not concerned with any theoretical inconsistencies or bothered by contrary evidence. In 1996, when such inconsistencies and evidence were becoming apparent, Rojas would write in his doctoral dissertation that reconstitution was successful in raising the scores of all students and especially African Americans because it

Commits the persons in the school system to the rules and principles of excellence and equity for all children (p. 4).

Provides an expeditious path for school change and the development of an educational structure that espouses the goals articulated by the District through the superintendent and the school board (p. 6).

¹⁶² The concerns of MALDEF and other Latino advocacy groups were to some degree incorporated into the parties' *Second Joint Report*. The report made specific recommendations to the district regarding bilingual and LEP instruction. Yet these recommendations were never implemented. For example, the time LEP students spent in segregated classes was not "minimized." Those in bilingual programs who developed English proficiency were rarely placed out even after official redesignation (Biegel, 2000; p. 40). When the district was out of compliance, the NAACP had the legal right to file suit. MALDEF and others did not.

Create[s] an opportunity for a new culture in which the belief system is one of high expectations and the success of all children (p. 25).

In 1999, Rojas authored the district publication *Benefits of the SFUSD Consent Decree*. Even the title of the document concedes the minor role that Rojas consigned to the NAACP lawyers and their interests as he chose how to prioritize the court orders and committee recommendations and which to pursue and how. In *Benefits*, Rojas explained

the Committee of Experts [1992] called on the district to recommit itself to the original goals and vision of the Decree by focusing on the low achievement levels of targeted — African American and Latino — students, and replicating Phase I (p. 13).

Under new leadership [Rojas is referring to himself here], the SFUSD began the process of recommitment to the goals of the Consent Decree through raising expectations and increasing accountability for the achievement of students throughout the district. A key element of this new district-wide focus on accountability was provided by the order of the court — following the recommendation of the Committee of Experts and a stipulation of the parties of the Consent Decree — that three targeted schools be reconstituted annually until student achievement improved among targeted students throughout the Consent Decree (p. 14).

I don't think it is a coincidence that Rojas' language and focus (achievement and accountability) completely mirror the language of the business-led state and national movement.¹⁶³ The year of Orfield's report and Rojas' appointment was four years after the national BRT met to establish its educational agenda, three years after President Bush (père) convened the national governors' educational summit and one year after passage of SB 662 by the California state legislature (see Chapter 6). Nor do I believe it is a coincidence that Rojas focused on test scores as the criterion by which to judge the success or failure of students, teachers, parents, and schools. And it is not a coincidence that by 1997, Rojas had become "a national spokesperson for both increased equity and higher academic standards" (Biegel, 1997; p. 8).

Orfield's committee accepted test scores as the bottom line indicating academic achievement and concluded that desegregation had been achieved in "all buildings" and

¹⁶³ The language parallels are pervasive. Another example comes from comparing the first sentence of Rojas' *Benefits of the SFUSD Consent Decree* ("San Francisco's children are able to attend 'World Class Schools in a World Class City'" — p. 1) with the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Education Committee's explanation as to why they exist ("A world class city needs world class schools" — web page viewed 4/15/02). That Rojas actually puts quotation marks around the common phrase is perhaps an indication that he is attributing credit to his corporate supporters.

“80 percent of classrooms” (p. 22). But when the committee wrote about the “devastating levels of educational failure,” it was not referring merely to test scores. When the NAACP periodically dragged the SFUSD back into court, it was not doing so because the test scores of African American and Latino students continued to lag behind those of whites and Asian Americans. Orfield (1992) and his committee believed that

the Consent Decree had *two* related goals: improved academic performance and the desegregation of the city’s schools.¹⁶⁴ We conclude that the District has not realized the goals for academic achievement for the overwhelming majority of African American and Hispanic students in the critical areas of educational attainment, *dropouts, special education, placement, and suspensions from school*. We conclude that the district has *largely achieved* the Decree’s desegregation goals. We recommend that the district take strong leadership in rededicating itself to the *goals* of the Decree, that it build upon those programs developed under the Decree that have succeeded for African American and Hispanic students and that all Consent Decree expenditures be evaluated by the extent to which they actually improve educational *opportunity* for African American and Hispanic students (p. 1) [italics added].

Rojas believed that the above conclusion charged him with the responsibility for developing a system by which “low achieving” schools would be identified for the purposes of reconstitution “until student achievement improved among targeted students throughout the Consent Decree” (Rojas, 1999; p. 14).

The Consent Decree directs the district to pursue continued and accelerated efforts to achieve academic excellence throughout the SFUSD, and to eliminate disparities in achievement between groups of students (Rojas, 1999; p. 15).

Rojas believed he could abandon desegregation as a goal since he interpreted “largely achieved” as a done deal.

According to Judge Orrick in 1983, the “major goal” of the Consent Decree was “to eliminate racial/ethnic segregation or identifiability in any district school program or class and to achieve throughout the system the broadest practicable distribution of students from nine racial and ethnic groups” (Orrick, 1983). By 1992, Orfield had identified “two related goals” of the Consent Decree as desegregation and educational equity. By 1999, Rojas defined the goals of the Consent Decree as “excellence for all.”

¹⁶⁴ Using test scores to define “academic performance” makes the relationship between performance and desegregation problematic. The strong correlation between test scores and socio-economic background combined with the strong correlation between SES and race make test scores and desegregation as compatible as oil and water. For a powerful critique of the commercial standardized tests, see Chapters 3 and 4 in W. J. Popham, *The Truth about Testing: An Educator's Call to Action*, Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

Furthermore, Rojas had narrowed the judge's definition of "academic achievement" primarily to CTBS test scores. The "variety of measures" used to determine whether the SFUSD has met the goals of the Consent Decree were "districtwide growth on standardized tests," "reduction of percentage of students scoring in the bottom quartile," "growth in CTBS scores over the past six years for the district's African American and Latino students," and "staff and student diversity"¹⁶⁵ (Rojas, 1999; pp. 15–22).

Reconstitution and Resegregation

It would seem that Rojas, in the process of making a national name for himself, fully embraced the BRT's high-stakes, data-driven agenda (to the point that generating data in and of itself seems to be the goal of reform). Rojas argued in his dissertation (1996) that reconstitution should be expanded as the district's accountability tool since "the academic rigor of the programs in Phase I elementary and middle schools may result in an increased number of [African American, Latino, and Native American] students in schools like Lowell" (p. 143). If there was "close monitoring of the educational program" of "all schools," then, Rojas predicted, the "goal of academic excellence" will be achieved "for all students" (p. 143). Rojas observed that the "expansion of CSIP to [the entire district] has . . . been instrumental in promoting interest in student achievement data that have been generated districtwide for many years. . . . Since the inception of [CSIP], teachers and administrators in every school review the data closely. This information is most interesting to schools that experience limited success in meeting the district goals regarding student performance" (1996, pp. 128–129).¹⁶⁶ That test scores rose in the district during his tenure as superintendent was supposed to prove that such data-driven reform was effective.

¹⁶⁵ Rojas argued that the district had made significant gains towards elimination of "racial identifiability" by arguing that in 1978 "ten district schools had African American enrollment exceeding 90 percent, and an additional fifteen schools exceeded 50 percent African American enrollment. Because of the Consent Decree implementation, such segregation no longer exists in the SFUSD" (1999; p. 22). This brief statement is in marked contrast to the previous six pages of detailed test scores indicating where Rojas' priorities were and raising questions as to what his definition of "identifiability" was.

¹⁶⁶ In the next and final chapter, I demonstrate that the teachers and administrators of Mission High School, under threat of reconstitution, did indeed take a great "interest" in "student achievement data." But I also demonstrate that their "interest" in "district generated data" was not useful in helping them serve the needs and concerns of the students or the community.

Goldstein (1998), however, found that any “improvements” were “determined largely by the ability of school leaders and staffs to beat the odds” since the district provided little or no support apart from generating data. Furthermore, improvement occurred “in spite of the district’s predictions of failure” (p. 27).

Under superintendent Rojas, the District has begun to employ reconstitution as a remedy and an incentive to prompt improvement in failing schools. In this dual capacity, reconstitution is the hammer looming behind the school improvement process (CSIP) that failing schools are supposed to employ in an effort to raise student achievement. With the hammer in place, some schools have improved and others have languished in what appears to be an idiosyncratic fashion. Meanwhile the use of reconstitution has had deleterious effects on San Francisco’s teachers — their morale, their relationship with the district, their sense of professionalism — and has reduced the presence of experienced teachers at reconstituted schools, while increasing instability overall. Further, the hammer and CSIP have become tightly linked in the minds of teachers and the San Francisco community. The result is a school improvement process that is perceived to be doomed from the outset (Goldstein, 1998; p. 31).

The court appointed monitor, Stuart Biegel and his team,¹⁶⁷ found in 1997 that such top-down systemic reform seemed counterproductive. The monitoring team’s report suggested that the renewed effort by the teacher’s union to become part of the process might make CSIP and reconstitution less hit or miss.

It is difficult to attract dedicated, experienced teachers to reconstituted schools. Many feel the reconstitution label will stigmatize them. Some are so disheartened by reconstitution that they do not reapply for positions at their home school. While not “reconstituted” herself, one teacher noted that a colleague who had just undergone the process the year before still describes it as the most demoralizing, heartbreaking experience of his life. In this environment, retaining reconstituted teachers seems to be a tough challenge.

The result of this difficulty in attracting seasoned educators to apply to reconstituted schools is a surplus of new and inexperienced or noncredentialed teachers filling slots at reconstituted schools. This situation reduces the seasoned teacher’s perspective and leaves novice teachers without mentors. High turnover rates at reconstituted schools, in part because of one-year renewable contracting, can further exacerbate the situation. Thus the ability to transform a school by creating a community dedicated to mutual goals may be tempered by the inability

¹⁶⁷ One of the stipulations of the Consent Decree, from its inception in 1983 and through its many revisions, was that the Court appoint an outside monitor to evaluate, on a yearly basis, the degree to which the SFUSD had complied with the Decree’s stipulations. Stuart Biegel, a law professor at UCLA, was appointed in 1996 and has been in charge of a monitoring team ever since. In reading the monitoring team’s reports, I was struck by the extent the “outside” evaluators are dependent upon data received by SFUSD in order to evaluate SFUSD’s compliance for the court. District officials, rather than students, teachers, parents or the NAACP provide the bulk of the information in these reports.

to attract teachers to what is sometimes perceived as a “sinking ship” (Biegel, 1997, p. 103).¹⁶⁸

Such a result is not surprising from a process that started with the premise that if students didn’t learn it was the teacher’s fault and at the same time prevented teachers from participating in both the development of policy and the specifics of implementation. It is difficult to understand how the district schools could be continuously improving while destroying the morale of its teachers.

Nevertheless, the Court monitors were pleased with Rojas’ “enthusiastic embrace” of the Consent Decree goals.

Generally, the monitoring team concluded that from 1992 to 1997, there is evidence of positive growth and change. . . . While this positive turn of events is very encouraging, it must be noted that there are still some basic Consent Decree compliance issues that need to be addressed. For example, while the district is substantially in compliance with regard to school-by-school desegregation, it has not yet achieved comparable desegregation of programs and classrooms. In addition, questions have been raised regarding the efficacy of continuing efforts to desegregate by race without also focusing on desegregation by socioeconomic status. And while academic progress has been evident among all racial and ethnic groups at all levels, African American and Latino students continue to lag behind their peers (Biegel, 1997; p. 10)

Using data provided by the district, the monitoring team concluded that the district was “substantially in compliance . . . with regard to school-by-school desegregation” (Biegel, 1997; p. 10). But from on-site visits, members of teams observed tracking in advanced placement classes, bilingual and ESL placements, and homogenous ability grouping (p. 11). In Appendix G is the data that was included in the monitoring team’s 1997 report that showed the SFUSD in “substantial” compliance with the “school-to-school” edict of the Consent Decree. The Consent Decree identified 9 racial/ethnic categories for the purposes of redressing the alleged “dual system” of the SFUSD. Throughout the periodic alterations to Judge Orrick’s original opinion and order in 1983, the definition of “racially identifiable” remained at 40 percent for any one of the nine groups at alternative schools and 45 percent for regular schools. While there were changes in the ratio of each of the nine groups to each other from 1983 to 1997, none of

¹⁶⁸ After deciding to leave San Francisco, Rojas responded to such criticism by insisting that the “schools are fundamentally sound, with a solid core of teachers.” Early retirements and an explosion of new hires, he said, have left a fairly young team of teachers and administrators “with a good shelf life ahead of them. . . .” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/21/99).

them approached 40 percent, the closest being the Chinese-Americans at 27 percent in 1997.¹⁶⁹ Peter Cohn of the NAACP explained that they had agreed to the 40/45 percent ruling because they wanted to be very careful not to demand anything that the district or state could not deliver. Yet according to the district's own data, 28 (out of 66) elementary schools, 3 (out of 17) middle schools, and 6 (out of 15) high schools could not meet such a generous limit. The monitoring team concluded that such numbers did not warrant the conclusion of "noncompliance" since these schools all hovered around the legal limits.

Yet the picture that the statistics (in Appendix G) cannot capture is the degree to which African Americans and Hispanics are concentrated in "low-performing schools" while Chinese Americans are concentrated in "high-performing schools." For example, Lowell High School is considered the district's most prestigious and highest performing school and often rated as one of the top ten high schools in the country. In 1998, 72 percent of its students were Asian American (Chinese Americans were over 50 percent), while only 6 percent were Latino and 6 percent were African American (NCES data). In 1999, the monitoring team was curious as to why there was an increase in African Americans at Lowell given the increasing segregation that they were seeing in the district since 1997. They visited the school and

found that the apparent reason for the increase in African American student numbers from 1.9 percent of the incoming class to 4.4 of the incoming class was the fact that one special ed class was added at Lowell, which included 16 African American students out of the original 25. This class was comprised of students who did not actually apply to Lowell. According to district policy, special-ed students and classes are often distributed to various schools throughout the city, outside of the regular admissions process (Biegel, 2000; p. 37).

Ida B. Wells High School is one of SFUSD's continuation high schools, schools for those students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable or unwilling to work within regular comprehensive high schools.¹⁷⁰ While both Lowell and Wells are considered

¹⁶⁹ See also the introduction to the charts in Chapter 5, where I argue that proportionality should be the criterion to determine integration.

¹⁷⁰ Even though a California State Department Bulletin in 1973 referred to continuation schools as "alternative" schools whose constituency were the "bright but bored," Kelly (1993) argued that the subordinate position and stigma attached to continuation schools allowed them to be used by public school staff as a threat to induce conformity among public school students (p. 68). The continuation school's subordinate position is enforced by the system's demand that continuation schools be used as a "safety valve" for comprehensive schools. "As long as the academic curriculum remains central and the

“alternative” schools, they are very different in terms of the opportunities offered and pupils served. Wells has a graduation rate of 52 percent and 81 percent of its students are “educationally disadvantaged” (Wells’ 1998 SARC, see my fn. 20, and see Appendix G for ethnic breakdown). Lowell’s graduation rate in 1998 was 96 percent with only 5 percent of its students listed as “educationally disadvantaged.” O’Connell High School, a vocational/technical school, with 76 percent of its 2001 freshman class identified as Latino, has a graduation rate of 61 percent and 71 percent of its students are educationally disadvantaged (SFUSD school profile, 2001). Lincoln High School, a regular school, is also considered prestigious with a graduation rate of 92 percent and an only 38 percent of its students labeled “educationally disadvantaged.”¹⁷¹

The existence of a tiered school district whose schools are rated according to word-of-mouth reputation¹⁷² and the disproportionate concentration of middle-class Chinese American and white students in those prestigious schools remained “substantially” unaffected by the Consent Decree. This was partly due to racial caps that were far higher than the actual percentages of students in each of the nine ethnic categories. But part of the cause can be attributed to staunch resistance to the goals of desegregation exacerbated by segregated housing and testing.¹⁷³ Many Chinese

comparative and selective functions of schools remain unchallenged, alternative schools are liable to get pushed to the margins and devalued” (p. 218). From the Wells’ Student Accountability Report Card: “Ida B. Wells High School is an alternative school for San Francisco students who are seeking smaller classes and a family-like school, hands-on learning, and an opportunity to earn credits through course work, work experience, community service, and independent study. Students who transfer to Ida B. Wells must be willing to improve their attendance, challenge themselves to learn, and collaborate with other students and staff to create an exciting learning environment.”

¹⁷¹ SFUSD profiles (<http://orb.sfusd.k12.ca.us/profile/prfl-697.htm>) viewed on 5/6/02.

¹⁷² One parent after visiting elementary schools for her child wrote an op-ed piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* observing: “Nearly all the top-rated schools have playgrounds, some with two or three different structures. Sunnyside has a black, asphalt play area. Much of the instruction at the better schools centers around hands-on projects that engage the child in the subject. At Sunnyside, students listen as the teacher lectures. . . . Why doesn’t my neighborhood school have the wide-eyed, eager expressions of learning going on, let alone rooms without paint chipping off the walls and clean floors? How did there get to be such a disparity in the San Francisco public schools?” (Susan Levi-Sanchez, 5/23/00; A25).

¹⁷³ Segregated housing and schools allows for the perpetuation of myths, myths confronted by one parent who overcame her prejudices when looking for a school for her daughter because she has valued the goals of integration: “I looked at Paul Revere Elementary School in San Francisco when Hedda was a 1-year-old. I thought I would find what I believed about urban public schools — that it would be chaotic, dangerous, and frightening. I found the opposite. . . . I was led to believe that there were just a few good public schools. And if I didn’t get Hedda in one of them, I was better off sending her to private school. . . . I might not always relate easily to other Paul Revere parents, who may come from different backgrounds. But she is expanding her universe in a way that can never be reversed. If she continues down this path, she

American parents in San Francisco believed that their children deserved to go to the prestigious schools in disproportionate numbers because they were better students as defined by their grades and test scores. This view was reinforced publicly. A *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial labeled the district requirement that Chinese American students must “earn a district rating based on grades and test scores that [is] higher than those of other students” as “discriminatory treatment” (2/29/96). A *San Francisco Examiner* editorial commented that “almost everybody agrees that . . . [allowing] applicants [to Lowell] from other racial and ethnic groups [to] gain admission with scores and grades somewhat lower than those required of Chinese students . . . is discriminatory” (1/2/96). *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Ken Garcia was more blunt in describing the district’s attempts to keep Chinese American student enrollment at Lowell below 40 percent as an attempt to “dumb down . . . the top public high school in the city” (11/23/99). The Lowell High School Parent, Teacher, and Student Association wrote in a letter to the school board, “the pool of students for Lowell should include *all* students who meet the entrance requirements of grades and test scores” [original emphasis] (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/13/99). That year’s freshman class was 52 percent Chinese American and 20 percent white. Arguments defending diversity as an important educational goal were rarely, if ever, publicly spoken.

In 1970, Many Chinese Americans resisted integration by boycotting district schools and setting up Chinese Freedom Schools. Several groups representing Chinese American students attempted, like MALDEF and the teacher’s union, to gain a role in the decision-making process of the Consent Decree but were denied. Perhaps sensing the effect of the national movement to replace desegregation with “equity and excellence,” several Chinese American students who failed to be admitted to Lowell High School filed suit against the district and the state in July 1994 (hereafter referred to as the Ho case or settlement). They charged that the student assignment plan of the Consent Decree “constitutes race discrimination in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution” (Orrick, 1999). By 1998, the process had reached the Ninth Circuit on appeal. The Ninth Circuit ruled that issue for a

won’t feel uncomfortable with the parents at her child’s school — wherever it is, and whoever they may be” (Deena Zacharin, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1/16/01; A17)

trial was whether or not the defendants could “demonstrate that paragraph 13 is still a remedy fitted to a wrong — to show that the racial classifications and quotas employed by paragraph 13 are tailored to the problems caused by vestiges of the earlier segregation” (Orrick, 1999). Apparently neither the SFUSD nor the NAACP was prepared to provide such evidence by the scheduled trial date of September 22, 1998. Attempts at a settlement failed and a new trial date was scheduled for February 16, 1999. In response to plaintiffs’ motions, the Court

ordered the SFUSD to file, by February 1, 1999, a proposed student assignment plan that was not race based, and that could be implemented in time for the 1999-2000 school year if defendants did not prevail at trial. On February 16, 1999, the day trial was to begin, the parties requested that the start of trial be delayed so that they could finalize a settlement. . . . The Court tentatively approved the settlement and set a fairness hearing for April 20, 1999 (Orrick, 1999).

Judge Orrick argued that the settlement was “fair” primarily because the plaintiffs were more than likely to win their case.

The Supreme Court has placed severe restrictions on the use of racial classifications by governmental entities. . . . In the Ho action, the Ninth Circuit held that “racial balancing cannot be the objective of a federal court unless the balancing is shown to be necessary to correct the effects of government action of a racist character.” (Orrick, 1999; 147 F.3d at 865). . . . It is apparent to the Court that defendants in the Ho actions were having great difficulty trying to prove that any current problems in the SFUSD were caused by governmental discrimination prior to 1983 . . . the evidence submitted by defendants of the alleged vestiges of past racial discrimination is conclusory and anecdotal. . . . There was little likelihood that defendants would be able to prove that the race-based student assignment plan was still constitutional today in light of the very strict burdens of proof imposed by the Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit. Accordingly, this factor favors a settlement (Orrick, 1999).

Other factors favoring a settlement, according to the judge, were the likelihood that the trial would be lengthy, complex and expensive; likelihood of further appeals “probably all the way to the Supreme Court”; the long duration of litigation would be “racially divisive”; and threatened to undermine the definitions of existing classes including “the propriety of the Ho class itself in light of the different needs of limited English proficiency of Chinese students when compared to those Chinese students who are proficient in English” (Orrick, 1999).

When Gary Orfield testified at the fairness hearing that the settlement would re-segregate SFUSD, Judge Orrick dismissed his argument by explaining that the settlement

did not preclude the district from “attempting to ensure that each school has a diverse student body. . . . The settlement merely precludes the SFUSD from using race or ethnicity as the primary or predominant consideration in determining student admissions” (Orrick, 1999). Judge Orrick explained that the only reason that the number of Latino and African American students in the freshman class at Lowell dropped for the 1999–2000 year was because of the haste with which the district put together a student assignment plan for Lowell. Yet in the same document, the judge had ruled that the district had enough time to put together a plan (Orrick, 1999). The plan, however, had been derailed at a school board meeting when “more than one hundred people attended the meeting” and persuaded the school board to withdraw their proposed plan (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/13/99). Biegel (2000) wrote that the district failed to adopt the fall 1999 assignment plan “for reasons which remain unclear” (p. 6).

The fight over assignment plans to Lowell affected the entire district. The Ho plaintiffs challenged the districtwide Consent Decree because they were not able to get into Lowell. In winning their case, they succeeded in eliminating race as a factor in student assignments not only to Lowell but also to all schools in the district. This paved the way for a return to the severe segregation that existed before 1983. Daniel Girard, the attorney for the Ho plaintiffs, identified the significance of the case: “the Ho case is not limited to the issues raised by the Lowell admission process. The Ho case is about the district policy of using race in assigning students throughout the district long after the justification for race-conscious assignment policies has ended.” Orfield’s testimony before the judge predicting increased segregation as a result of abandoning “race-conscious assignment policies” was no longer a persuasive argument. The political climate and demographics of San Francisco has dramatically changed since 1983. As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, the “intangible” effects of segregation that had led to *Brown v. Board* had been supplanted, beginning in 1989, by test scores as the litmus test for educational equity. As Orfield predicted, and as the Consent Decree monitoring team discovered, during the very next year after the final Ho settlement “approximately 16 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and one high school have shown severe re-segregation at the incoming class level” (Biegel, 2000; p 7).

The conflict over Lowell admissions criteria affected the district in another profound way. It acted as a powerful hammer blow on the wedge between middle-class Chinese Americans and blacks and Latinos. The wedge had been inserted as far back as 1882 when the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. It was driven in further when San Francisco decided to create separate schools for Asian Americans in 1906. In 1994, a year after Chinese American students sued the district because they were denied access to Lowell based on their test scores and grade point averages, black and Latino students who had been accepted to Lowell decided not to go. Ninety-one Latino and 46 African American students were admitted to the fall 1995 year at Lowell. But only 66 Latinos and 26 blacks actually enrolled (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 12/21/95). The debate over the Ho case, instead of clarifying the goals of diversity, firmly established “academic excellence” and desegregation as mutually exclusive. One of the Ho plaintiffs explained her position by telling a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter that “we’ve worked so hard to get good grades, and now we can’t go to a decent academic high school that is safe and will prepare us for a four-year university”¹⁷⁴ (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/19/95). In 1993, when Chinese students and their parents began to increase the volume of complaints over being excluded from Lowell, the district set up a committee to begin to rewrite the Lowell admission policy. The Chair of the Committee, Carol Kocivar explained, “we have to find a solution that meets the needs of both sides . . . on the one side, there’s the issue of social justice and integration. On the other, it’s a merit-based school, and we should reward kids who work hard” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/21/95). Whenever “social justice and integration” are pitted against “merit,” the latter prevails. Middle-class liberals and conservatives, the majority of the 35–40 percent of registered voters who vote, perhaps perceive social justice as a threat to their status that they justify by their superior “merit.”

¹⁷⁴ Many Lowell students had a particular 4-year university in mind: “Underlying their [opponents of affirmative action] arguments is the idea that everyone should be judged on merit. You study hard, get good grades, you get into Lowell High School and Cal [University of California, Berkeley]” (William Wong, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/9/96).

Alignment of District and State Policy

“Merit-based” systemic reform in San Francisco successfully replaced desegregation efforts in San Francisco. It was perhaps this success that convinced state legislators that it was time to adopt reconstitution on a statewide basis. On January 19, 1999, California State Senator Alpert introduced the first draft of the Public School Accountability Act to the Senate. The next day, January 20, Bill Rojas wrote a letter to Gary Hart, Secretary for Education under Governor Pete Wilson in which he explained the reasons for sending to him, along with the cover letter, documentary evidence of SFUSD accountability system. Rojas had met with Hart the week before. Referring to that meeting in a letter to Hart, Rojas explained how “delighted” he was

to learn the direction that you [Hart] and your team are taking regarding school accountability. Based on our experience in San Francisco School District, this direction holds great promise. . . . My dissertation strongly supports this and gives a comprehensive, detailed view of the district’s reform efforts to improve low-performing schools. . . . The accountability at SFUSD is guided by the district’s values aimed at educating all children. . . .

The primary objective of the accountability system is to support data driven decision making by school administrators and teachers to improve teaching and learning throughout the district. Schools develop a school site plan for meeting the learning needs of their students. The school site plan becomes the key driver or management tool to implement and monitor progress and ensure acceptance of responsibility for student achievement. . . . In addition to the district values, *each year I set priorities that guide planning for the district. . . .* As an example, my number one priority for this year is to raise the academic achievement level of African American, Latino and English Language Learners to the 50 percentile as measured by a standardized test [italics added].

It appears that Rojas, in his meeting with Hart, had offered him “and his team” a case study in how the high-stakes testing agenda of the BRT could successfully “make Plessy work.” During the next few months, the Public School Accountability Act (PSAA) underwent the amendment process in both the House and the Senate. While that process was underway, Judge Orrick forced the SFUSD and the NAACP to retreat and settle on February 16, 1999. The governor signed the PSAA on April 5 and the judge scheduled a fairness hearing for the Ho Settlement for April 20th. Since the spring of 1997, the San Francisco teachers’ union had been negotiating with Rojas to shift the emphasis of his accountability system (CSIP/Reconstitution) away from test scores and towards site-plans and school portfolios (Biegel, 2000; p. 9). [See Appendix F.]

Negotiations between the district and the teachers in the School Accountability Process were unofficially terminated in the fall of 1999 as SFUSD officials chose instead to buy into California's new Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/UPS). These shifts of direction initially resulted in an additional level of tension between the district and the teachers' union, but by the end of the 1999–2000 academic year a Labor Management Community Advisory Committee had begun work toward developing a process that would hopefully lead to improved II/UPS collaboration (Biegel, 2000; p. 9).

The court monitor's expectation that teachers would cooperate more readily with state reconstitution (II/UPS) rather than district reconstitution was tempered a few pages later when Biegel expressed a certain frustration with Rojas' focus on test scores and then noted the direction reform was heading on the state level.

As we have pointed out year after year, research in the area of educational assessment and evaluation points unequivocally to the centrality of a basic principle in this area: relying on *one* standardized test to measure anything is at best inappropriate and at worst a very dangerous practice (Biegel, 2000; p. 11) [original italics].

Cutting against these research-based imperatives, however, is the state's ongoing effort to tie a growing number of programs and policy decisions to the results on only one test — the STAR test (a.k.a. SAT-9). . . . The monitoring team has found that as a result of this increased focus on the scores of this one test, individual school sites in San Francisco have understandably begun to devote more time to test preparation exercises and activities. To the extent that these activities help build basic skills, they can serve a valuable purpose. But at a certain point, test preparation crosses the line and ceases to be a valuable educational activity. At a certain point, it serves only a narrow cognitive function, taking away from time that can and should be spent developing the student's writing skills, problem solving skills, higher order thinking skills, and creative abilities in general. Thus we urge members of the SFUSD community to monitor closely the nature and extent of test preparation activities in individual schools and supplement this monitoring with relevant staff development so that an important curricular balance continues to be maintained (Biegel, 2000; p. 13).

The monitoring team did not point out that there was no forum at which the "certain point" of diminishing returns could be explored and defined, certainly none when accountability was moved to the state level. Given such a finding, it is difficult to see why the monitoring team was "hopeful" that the district's negotiations with teachers would lead "to improved II/UPS collaboration."

In heaping praise upon himself in his letter to Hart, perhaps Rojas hoped to move up to the state level to become part of Hart's "team." Whatever ambitions Rojas had, he seemed to have overstepped them five days before the PSAA was passed in the Assembly

and six days before it was passed in the Senate. On March 17, 1999, the deadline for districts to report their fiscal condition to the state and the day before the Assembly was scheduled to vote on extra funding for SFUSD, Rojas announced his plan to cut \$17 million from the district's budget. The San Francisco Assembly representatives were furious with Rojas' "dramatic announcement" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/18/99). Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) immediately added an amendment to the funding bill (AB36)¹⁷⁵ that would have authorized a complete audit of SFUSD finances. (The bill was ultimately vetoed by Governor Davis on July 7, 1999, but an audit was still authorized by the state superintendent of public schools, Delaine Eastin.) On April 22, the Dallas school board stunned San Francisco by announcing that Rojas was its first choice to replace a superintendent who had pleaded guilty to fraud and embezzlement. Two San Francisco school board members called for Rojas to resign immediately "on the ground that he violated his contract by interviewing for a job without telling the board" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/23/99).¹⁷⁶

The Legacy of Rojas and Reconstitution

Rojas' March 17 announcement unleashed a firestorm of criticism of past fiscal practices, which was curious since Rojas had a legitimate claim to expect the state to reimburse the district for the \$17 million it had spent from 1993 to 1997 on Consent Decree programs. The Court had ordered the state to reimburse San Francisco for 80 percent of the cost of its desegregation order since 1985 (Biegel, 2000; p. 178, fn. 236). Yet for two years leading up to Rojas' "dramatic announcement", there had "been a growing lack of confidence expressed by state and local legislators regarding the district's financial condition and fiscal practices" (FCMAT, 2000; p. 1). One example was reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle* on March 20:

San Francisco schools Superintendent Bill Rojas' management of his beleaguered district is coming under renewed scrutiny as officials question why he dipped into [the general fund] to buy a building that stands vacant five months

¹⁷⁵ The bill "set aside \$8.3 million to reimburse 14 districts for desegregation expenditures. San Francisco's share would be \$12.7 million . . . perceived by some as a pork barrel bill for San Francisco" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/18/99; A11)

¹⁷⁶ It would not be the first time that Rojas took a job while under a cloud. When hired by the San Francisco school board in 1992, the school was sued for allegedly violating the Brown Act. This act was passed to stop back-room dealing. One of the concerns that the public had but did not get a chance to explore during the hiring process was Rojas' DUI record, which may have indicated some issues around alcohol abuse.

after the purchase. Summer school and substitute teachers were two of the areas where Rojas announced \$17 million in cuts and funding shifts last week to cope with the district's financial crisis. That money comes from the schools' general fund, the same one Rojas tapped for \$7.8 million in the fall to buy the building at 33 Grant Ave . . . from Pacific Bell for "office/administrative space." No funding source was identified in the resolution [authorizing the superintendent to purchase the building], and several board members recall being told by Rojas' staff that the money was guaranteed from the state through its school facilities reimbursement program. . . . Reimbursements are made for school buildings only, and even then, the district must prove it has an overcrowding problem [although] rules are relaxed somewhat for magnet schools that draw a diverse student body from across a district. School board President Juanita Owens said the administrative purpose of the Grant Avenue building was abandoned months ago in favor of her proposal to open it as a business magnet school. The board has never voted on that plan, however (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/20/99).

The audit ordered by the state superintendent took place from July 1999 through April 2000 when Rojas was no longer there. The conclusions of the report indicate why Rojas might have been eager to seek new employment before completion of the audit. The auditors found that many of the problems leading to fiscal mismanagement dated back "five years or more," about the time Rojas fired a conservative budget manager and replaced him with one of his New York colleagues. The audit found that district offices were providing "unreliable and untimely financial information" because of a "substantial lack of internal control consciousness in the SFUSD." Incompetent and poorly supervised and trained staff systematically failed to perform "account reconciliations and budget monitoring." This indicated to the auditors that it was likely that "fraud and abuse" occurred as well as possible "violations of laws and regulations" (FCMAT; 2000, p. 11).

It is interesting to note that in addition to leaving the school district vulnerable to fiscal "fraud and abuse," the auditors believed that Rojas' district bureaucracy was not "receiving the level of service they need to support adequately the educational programs." District support, according to the theory of reconstitution, is crucial for the success of such an accountability system. The court monitoring team also noted in its July 2000 report that it was unclear how the support from Consent Decree funds were being spent.

Once the Department of Integration approves a school's budget, the Department appears to have no further monitoring function to ensure that the school in fact spends its funds as it promised or to ensure that the programs funded lead to

improvements in the academic performance of the school or toward other Consent Decree goals (e.g., improved attendance) (Biegel, 2000; p. 57).

The monitoring team, in looking at the district's 1999–2000 Consent Decree budget records, was curious why “almost \$400,000 was budgeted for CSIP if in fact the CSIP program was discontinued in 1997” (Biegel, 2000; p. 55, fn 91).

The *San Francisco Chronicle*'s postmortem on Rojas claimed, in the headline, that his *Record Can't Be Denied: Scores, graduation rates rose during his tenure as San Francisco schools chief* (6/21/99).

Even a critic such as school board member Dan Kelly still glows when talking about the educational state of the district today. . . . [He] praised the district's focus on low achievers and non-English speakers, its interest in expanding the variety of schools and programs, and its overall emphasis on student progress. . . . “If we say that what really counts in a school district is student achievement, then Bill Rojas gets an ‘A,’” state Superintendent Delaine Eastin said, noting that San Francisco's numbers have gone up faster and higher than in such cities as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

While the reporter admitted that the cornerstone of Rojas' reform package — reconstitution — showed “little evidence that it helped” and “did not always help raise scores,” nevertheless “the chaotic environment at some schools eased.” Peter Cohn “praised Rojas as being more committed to minority student achievement than any previous superintendent.” Pedro Noguera, professor of education at Berkeley, concluded that Rojas improved the district because he “challenge[d] the orthodoxy and tr[ied] new things.” The reporter concluded that the fiscal problems of the district were the responsibility of the school board who “did nothing, for example, when Rojas stopped giving members budget previews that might have provided early warning of fiscal problems” and “did not forbid him” from using the same evasive tactics again and again (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/21/99).

So, it seems, the focus on rising test scores concealed a multitude of sins. Rojas' promises to eliminate the “achievement gap,” to hold teachers accountable, and to provide high standards for all led to the hijacking of desegregation funds and the elimination of even the appearance of democratic decision-making. The school board “did nothing” to hold Rojas accountable because the Consent Decree gave Rojas the right to ignore school board members' request for information. The sloppy, if not illegal, manipulation of the budget and the lack of structural support for the “new things” that

Rojas “tried” were hidden from public view under the umbrella of the Consent Decree, the size of the umbrella having been expanded districtwide by the experts’ collaboration with the BRT agenda. Ironically, in the name of accountability, systemic reform relieved Rojas from being held accountable by the people of San Francisco. The emphasis on test scores as the “bottom line” made other indicators of institutional health disappear, for a while, from public view.

The only group, apparently, that was consistently upset with Rojas were the teachers. But to criticize Rojas meant one was criticizing the Consent Decree and was thereby against “equity and excellence.” This necessarily pitted the mostly white teachers against the NAACP and its allies. Nevertheless, many teachers persisted in asserting that Rojas’ public descriptions of what was going on in the schools had little to do with the reality they were experiencing. One teacher complained

“we don’t have nearly adequate counseling staff in the district. Teachers are so overworked that we barely have time to say ‘hi’ to the kids. We don’t even have a phone number that we can count on to be answered in case of emergency. . . .” Other [teachers] complained that Rojas eliminated a number of vocational electives such as wood shop, home economics, and auto mechanics classes that had kept many students coming to school. Cohn of the NAACP and many others applauded when Rojas replaced those high school courses with strengthened academic requirements. Some teachers, however, said the change actually led to dumbed-down classes because they were pressured to dole out high grades to underprepared students. Rojas put that pressure in writing in 1993, requiring that middle and high schools maintain at least a “C” average for all racial and ethnic groups. He also said high schools should either maintain a “B” average for all college preparatory courses or improve grades in classes required for University of California admission. The result was documented grade inflation at Balboa High and anecdotal reports at other schools. Under Rojas’ direction, the district also began highlighting the scores of fewer students each year in its reports, eventually putting into its primary report only the scores of the English-speaking students who had been in the district at least two years. The result was an appearance of scores rising faster than may have been true. It was all part of the superintendent’s push for higher graduation rates and better numbers overall. Often that approach meant teachers and principals were not asked what they wanted to do, but were told (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/21/99).

Rojas’ response to such charges was to repeat that the

“schools are fundamentally sound, with a solid core of teachers.” Early retirements and an explosion of new hires, he said, have left a fairly young team of teachers and administrators “with a good shelf life ahead of them. . . . Maybe my successor will be more loved,” Rojas said. “But I feel very good about the success here. As far as urban districts go, San Francisco is probably one of the best in the nation. . . .” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/21/99).

The lack of “internal controls” that the state’s audit discovered when looking at the district’s budget strongly suggests a lack of “internal controls” regarding other numbers coming out of the district’s offices, especially test scores. Rojas’ dictatorial decision-making process and selective disclosure of district data prevented the kind of access to district records that would have allowed reporters, the court monitoring team, and school board members to discover to what degree, if any, there was a cause/effect relationship between district policy and student educational experience, never mind discover how much of the financial mismanagement was outright fraud, kickbacks or embezzlement. A *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial explained that Rojas’ “refusal to reach out to parents and teachers” had been acceptable because his “strategies paid off in better academic achievement” (4/24/96). This is the BRT formula. While it is impossible to determine to what degree the numbers indicating “better academic achievement” were accurate, the educational establishment and even those who create the standardized tests all agree that even if test scores are not manipulated, no important decision should ever be made on the basis of one test score alone. Yet Rojas, Peter Cohn, members of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the California Business Roundtable, and the editorial board of the *San Francisco Chronicle* dismissed the pleadings of community leaders, parents, teachers, and students that higher test scores not be used as the sole indication of educational excellence in the schools.

Rojas pioneered the state’s high-stakes accountability system — the 1999 Public School Accountability Act — in San Francisco by using CTBS test scores to determine whether a school was either high- or low-performing. Low-performing schools were theoretically given support to help raise their scores. When the scores did not go up within one or two years, the schools were reconstituted. Besides being a narrow and debatable goal of education, basing educational “equity and excellence” on a standardized test score is educational malpractice. Rojas defended the use of test scores to make “high-stakes” decisions as “data-driven” reform that would lead to the elimination of the “achievement gap,” thereby making desegregation debates moot. According to Rojas’ theory of systemic reform, teachers were to be trained to use the test scores to evaluate which instructional programs were working and which were not and

act on that evaluation. If they didn't (or even if they did to no effect) they would be "vacated." Yet at the same time when the district distributed the CTBS scores to the principals of each school (who theoretically share these scores with the teachers in the school), they cautioned that

first, achievement test scores [such as the CTBS] are only estimates of students' performance levels. They are not absolute or permanent indicators of ability, performance, or academic achievement. Test scores indicate how an individual or group of students performed on specific skills at one point in time, under specific circumstances. Secondly, test scores show only how students performed, but not why they performed as they did. Lastly, knowledge of basic skills is not the only factor influencing student achievement. Other factors may include curriculum factors, test factors, and student background factors (*Academic Achievement*, SFUSD, Volume I, Appendix B (printed August, 1998); p. A-4.).

The CBR is currently lobbying state legislators to streamline teacher credential programs and reorient the courses in order to focus on teaching teachers how to use test scores to develop their instructional methodology. Yet using test scores in this manner is as useful as reading tea leaves, perhaps less so. There are so many variables that affect test score results that the test score itself must be confirmed by other means. This means that an ecological or qualitative study must also be done. This, however, defeats the ostensible purpose of using standardized tests in the first place — to make assessment cost-effective.¹⁷⁷ That supporters of the BRT agenda are not concerned with this issue of test validity suggests that they are either willfully ignorant (and stubbornly so) or wish to use tests to undermine community influence in curricula and instruction.

The proliferation of test preparation materials seems to be one response to criticisms that no amount of training can lead teachers to use test scores to adjust their teaching practices. Rojas' successor, Arlene Ackerman, seems to be desperately relying on such a course. She is putting into place a policy in which those who score below 40 percent on the SAT-9 (approximately 1/3 of the SFUSD student population) must go to

¹⁷⁷ The misuse of testing, that is, the use of testing for high-stakes accountability and systemic reform, has led James Popham (2001), a long-time developer and defender of such tests to express his frustration with their current usage: Current "policymakers' actions reflect their ignorance of the reality of educational testing. Even worse, they don't know what they don't know" (p. 35). Popham argues that what policymakers seem to only value in a test is its ability to reliably result in a "substantial score spread, enough to distinguish between 83rd and 84th percentile." The reason the strongest correlation is between test scores and socioeconomic status is because SES is "a nicely spread out variable that isn't easily altered" (p. 53). This allows the test to function as a sorting device for many years, thereby saving districts and states the cost of having to purchase a new test once teachers learn how to teach to it.

summer school and Saturday classes in order to be drilled from test preparation materials so they can have a better chance of passing the state's High School Exit Exam. The next step is to begin to force teachers to "teach at high enough standards." The district "will get teachers to know what the standards are" by creating end-of-course exams. Instead of the teacher creating the final exam for his or her course, district administrators will write the exams (Elois Brooks, Secondary Task Force meeting, 4/11/02). Ackerman's 5-year plan is called *Excellence for All*. It is closely linked to the state's Public School Accountability Act. The school board, however, passed a resolution in January 2002 requiring the superintendent to accompany the announcement of all major policy initiatives with a "racial/ethnic impact study." The resolution came out of a school board meeting on October 30, 2001, at which dozens of teachers, students, and community leaders testified to the increasing segregation and alienation in the district's schools. Shortly after the passage of the board's resolution, Ackerman announced the closing of one of the poorest-performing comprehensive high schools. When a board member asked her for the impact study, she replied that she had not done one.

In Chapter 5, we saw that in five cities, the BRT agenda was not fully adopted until the debate over desegregation had been abandoned. I argued that such a pattern was not a coincidence. The same pattern prevailed in San Francisco but with a slight twist. The hostility of the San Francisco NAACP lawyers to the district's teachers allowed Rojas to use the rhetoric of the BRT agenda to eliminate the debate over the complex benefits of diversity. Rojas and his supporters succeeded in replacing discussion and debate over the multiple and legitimate goals of education (and an examination of the budget) with a false dichotomy: one is either for "high standards for all" or for allowing poor and minority students to continue to fail. There was no question, until the last two years of his term as superintendent, about the authenticity, validity, or reliability of the test scores he was using to justify the elimination of community participation in policy making. Rojas was congratulated for raising expectations but never managed to close the achievement gap (Biegel, 2000; p. 51). Within-school segregation continued and began to get worse after 1998 (Biegel, 2000; p. 73). From 1996 to 2000, there had been "no progress" in disproportionate suspensions and dropouts of African American students and the problem is "getting worse" (p. 110). African American students continue to have the

lowest mean GPA in all 12 of the district high schools (p. 130) and the lowest percentage attending 96 to 100 percent of their classes at every level (p. 133).

In spite of evidence suggesting the ineffectiveness of Rojas' policies, his claim that CTBS test scores were "going up" — announced periodically in press conferences from the board rooms of Pacific Bell and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce — allowed him to advance his own career goals. He gained a PhD, a national reputation, access to Gary Hart's "team," election to the presidency of the Council on Great City Schools, and a 41 percent increase in salary when he moved to Dallas. Rojas pursued the Business Roundtable's agenda of "high standards for all" and was rewarded for it. That such policies left havoc in their wake did not seem to bother the CEOs of the California Business Roundtable since the ultimate effect (and perhaps the real purpose) was to eliminate community-based reform. Real reform was sacrificed for rhetorical reform.

In the next and final chapter, I examine the trials and tribulations of a single high school in San Francisco. We will see how the imposition of divisive, top-down reform interfered with and ultimately destroyed policies and practices that were designed to solve the problems Rojas chose to ignore.

Chapter 8: Mission High School

Introduction

When the San Francisco school board appointed Bill Rojas as the district superintendent in 1992, they allowed him to control the development of educational policy. Rojas, willingly operating within the boundaries defined by local and state business leaders, demonstrated how systemic reform could be used to eliminate community influence and reduce demands for educational opportunity and equality of resources to a test score. With the help of the court system, Rojas was able to co-opt the goals of the Consent Decree in the service of promoting himself as a successful advocate of systemic reform. Under Rojas, the corporate model of organization and decision-making prevailed — but instead of quarterly profits as the bottom line by which decisions were made, test scores were used.

From 1985 to 1996, members of the Mission High School community in San Francisco committed themselves to improving the educational opportunity of its student body. In doing so, the administrative team of principals, counselors, teachers, parents, and students walked a fine line between satisfying state systemic reform goals¹⁷⁸ and responding to the needs of the community. That these two sources of influence on the development of the Mission High School (MHS) program were in conflict with one another became apparent only when Superintendent Rojas removed Mission's principal, Lupe Arabolos, in 1996. The ostensible reason for replacing Arabolos with Ted Alfaro was the former's failure to raise the test scores of one of the most troubled high schools in the city. The real reasons for Arabolos' removal, however, are more complex. By creating a horizontal network of organizations supporting the academic development of MHS students, Arabolos

¹⁷⁸ The most recent expression of the CBR's education goals is in the 1994 Berman and Weiler Associates, report, *Mobilizing for Competitiveness: Linking Education and Training to Jobs*. The report identified three "goals" to guide restructuring efforts. The first goal was to transform the state's K-16 school system into "a coherent education and training system" which would provide "clear pathways and transitions to high skill careers for all Californians." This goal found its way into the state board of education's policy statement regarding high school restructuring, "Second to None." Mission High School academic planning team took the recommendations for "pathways" and career training very seriously as will be seen later in this chapter.

inadvertently represented a direct challenge to Rojas' vertical control of a \$500 million, 4000 employee, and 60,000 student organization.

From 1994 to 1996, MHS was threatening to become an independent base of power. The program developers at MHS had attracted funding sources that the district administration could not fully control and therefore could not use as leverage to control the people and programs at the school site. More significantly, however, Arabolos had facilitated the creation of *community* — residents and their allies who shared a common set of values and interests bound by sentimental and psychological ties (Logan and Molotch, 1987; p. 20). Rojas hired Ted Alfaro to destroy this community and resubject the residents to a system of values and priorities aligned to those of corporate capitalism.

Upon arriving at the helm at MHS in the fall of 1996, Alfaro immediately began to dismantle the network of programs and organizations that had successfully created community. The programs that Alfaro kept in place and his choice of new programs suggests he was serving both national and local corporate interests. In support of the national BRT agenda, Alfaro ended the Step-to-College program that promoted real problem-solving skills. Instead, Alfaro wished to increase the use of standardized testing to determine which students should be allowed into college-preparatory courses. From a local perspective, Alfaro's appointment came in the midst of a real-estate boom in San Francisco with particularly the Mission district targeted for gentrification. Alfaro's reforms seemed to be intended to make Mission High School into another marketing tool with which developers could persuade upper-middle class parents to buy houses in the Mission District.

Community Based Reform

Among San Francisco's six comprehensive high schools in the fall of 1996, Mission High School had the greatest percentage of Limited and Not English Proficient students (45) and the second greatest percentage of Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (63). The ninth grade class ranked fourth in Reading Comprehension (42 NCE) and was tied for

last place in Math Concepts and Applications (39 NCE).¹⁷⁹ The 138 students that the Mission mental health team treated from 1995 to 1996 suffered from “anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorders and compulsive-obsessive disorders,” primarily caused by violence, poverty, and neglect (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. v). In spite of such obstacles, a core group of Mission school staff was able to implement reforms from 1985 through 1996 that had a fundamental and positive impact on the lives of those at Mission High School and the community that it served. One of the many manifestations of the dramatic changes effected between 1985 and 1996 is in the college acceptance rate. In 1985, only 15 percent of MHS seniors went on to college. By 1996, 85 percent of the graduates went to college (interview with Jake Perea, July 19, 2001). Lupe Arabolos came to teach in Mission High School in 1985. As a teacher, Arabolos began to work with gang leaders, gaining their trust and respect.¹⁸⁰ She also began to work with Professor Jacob Perea at San Francisco State University, bringing the newly established CSU program, Step-to-College, to MHS in 1985. As originally designed, the program would offer summer courses to high school graduates who had been able to maintain a “B” average during their senior year. Successful completion of the summer courses would result in automatic admission to the participating CSU. Perea and Arabolos decided to alter the program, providing after-school courses at the high school campus during the school year. Under Perea’s program, SFSU professors offered to teach a college course to MHS seniors at MHS in lieu of a course to SFSU students at SFSU. Successful completion of these college-level seminars in critical thinking meant automatic college credit for the high school senior. To further “demystify college” for these students, the volunteer professors offered counseling as well as academic instruction (interview with Jake Perea, July 19, 2001).

But by 1993, “it was clear . . . that current programs were not sufficient to meet the special needs of an increasingly at-risk population. Teachers felt isolated, students were not connected to the school, and the dropout rate of over 5% was unacceptable”

¹⁷⁹ Comparisons based on SFUSD 1996-97 profiles of Balboa , Galileo, Lincoln, MacAteer, Mission, and Washington High Schools. These profiles can be found on the SFUSD district’s web site. Test scores are reported as Normal Curve Equivalents (NCE) from two sub-tests of the CTBS fourth edition.

¹⁸⁰ Barbara Nanney wrote, “Lupe Arabolos, upon her arrival at Mission High School, got to know all the gang members by their real names and street names. She visited them where they hung out and sent the leaders of each of the ten gangs to leadership conferences and got them involved with the school. As a result, mutual respect developed” (*The Independent*, 6/11/96).

(Arabolos, quoted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 5)¹⁸¹. The Step-to-College program for seniors was not enough. Steve Phillips was a teacher at Mission High School during 1991–1992. He recalled there being a “huge cultural gap” between the teachers and the students, and a “lack of organizational vision” on the part of the administration, led by principal Pat Aramendia.¹⁸² Jose Luis Pavlon was a ninth grade student at MHS in 1993–1994. Jose remembers being disappointed with the ninth grade curriculum. In spite of being placed in the honors courses at Mission, he did not feel challenged. In hindsight, he believes that one of the major problems at the time was the lack of a support system for students when they had problems. He said, “there was no counselor behind the students and no one to mention college to them.” Jose was interested in the growing “schools not jails” movement and joined the Latino Club at school. In December 1993, the advisor of the club, who was also a popular security guard, was fired by the administration. The Latino Club, with the help of community based organizers, staged a walkout and organized an assembly. In April 1994, Jose helped organize a Bay Area schools walk out, starting with a rally at Dolores Park, across the street from Mission High School. The students wanted a culturally relevant curriculum that would challenge them intellectually.¹⁸³

When Superintendent Bill Rojas appointed Lupe Arabolos principal in 1994, Arabolos wished to respond to such student expressions of discontent. As a first step towards expanding reform efforts throughout the school, she established a Task Force to develop an academic program for ninth grade students that would respond to their interests as well as their needs.

Membership on the University Academy Task Force was . . . completely voluntary. The meetings were held on a weekly basis after school hours, including some weekends. Sitting together at the table as equal partners were teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents, students, community members, and university staff, averaging 12–15 people at each meeting (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 5).

¹⁸¹ Mary Aschenbrener has been a social studies teacher at Mission High School for 30 years. After MHS was reconstituted in 1997, Aschenbrener collected 400 pages of documents into a manuscript and submitted it to Teachers College Press for publication. All references to Aschenbrener in this chapter are from the original manuscript she submitted to TC Press in 2001.

¹⁸² I interviewed Phillips on August 7, 2001. Phillips was elected to the school board in 1992 and voted to support Superintendent Rojas’ firing of the 1997 administrative team at Mission High School.

¹⁸³ Interview with Jose Luis Pavlon, November 2, 2001.

But the problem for Mission High School students was not merely a lack of culturally relevant material to maintain the student's interest in staying in school. MHS is on the border of the Mission district. Many of the students at MHS lived in the Mission, an area of the city that attracts a large number of immigrants from Central and South America. It is a neighborhood that suffers from the lack of city services but it is vibrant and diverse. It also is home to many youth gangs.

The Mission is "home turf" to nine gangs, including two based in the Valencia Gardens and Bernal Dwelling housing projects and one Asian gang operating in the northernmost section of the neighborhood. Estimates on the number of Latino gang members in the Mission are between 300 and 700. Officers Mario Delgadillo and Dave Elliot of Mission station outlined the various Latino gangs in the district, broken into red and blue groups characterized by the color of clothing worn by the members (i.e., bandanas, tennis shoes, or jackets). The blue group includes Folsom Street Posse, Sure Treces (the 13th Street Gang), and the 11th Street Gang, while the red is comprised of the 18th Street Gang, Bryant Street Gang (a.k.a. Bryant Street Posse) and the 25th Street Gang (a.k.a. Little Park Gangsters). The City has failed effectively to coordinate efforts between Mission community organizations involved in gang prevention, street cops assigned to the neighborhood, and the Gang Task Force located at 850 Bryant (Miller, 1992).

As part of a larger attempt to begin to coordinate the community based organizations in the Mission,¹⁸⁴ the San Francisco State University School of Nursing pulled together a consortium of health organizations¹⁸⁵ to establish in 1993 the Mission High School Health Center. From 8am to 4pm, the health center provided to the youth of the community "health education, mental health counseling, physicals, treatment of minor illnesses, immunizations, and referrals for physical and mental health needs" (p. 15). Doctors held regular hours at the Center. Toni Nemia, a Mission High School teacher, who held a license in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling, was appointed to supervise mental health interns. The interns, up to thirteen at one point, were graduate students at SFSU working towards their masters degrees in counseling (p.15). From 1993 to 1996, the original two-room clinic was expanded to include a conference room, community health education room, counseling room, family reception area, administrative offices, a

¹⁸⁴ By 1996, the administration of MHS would eventually establish working relationships with 19 community-based organizations in the area (including the police department), all providing support services for the students at Mission High School (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 198).

¹⁸⁵ The consortium included SFSU Department of Counseling, SFSU School of Social Work, the SFSU Center for Advanced Medical Technology, the SFSU College of Education, UCSF, SF Public Health Department, and the SF Unified School District.

laboratory, and three examination rooms. At the height of its funding, the clinic had eleven paid staff members and a Teen Advisory Board that met twice a week to discuss the degree to which the clinic was addressing the needs of the “whole child.” From 1993 to 1996, the clinic saw, on the average, 30 students per day (Crews, 1996). Outside access facilitated client use after school hours and an evening Rota-Care clinic served people in the community of all ages whether they were insured or not (Ferreti quoted in Aschenbrener; p. 432).

It was not a coincidence that a health center was established at the same time as a ninth grade core academic program was being designed. The administrative team “realized that meaningful reform must consider the physical and emotional health of the students as well as their educational needs. The Task Force developed a comprehensive proposal for the education of the whole child” (Arabolos quoted in Aschenbrener; p. 5). The new proposal and all future proposals were “aligned” with the California Department of Education’s *Vision of the New California High School* and was “incorporated” into the “Action Plan that the school developed for the [western regional accreditation] review taking place that year” (Arabolos quoted in Aschenbrener; p. 6). Superintendent Rojas approved of the Action Plan while at the same time appointing Lupe Arabolos as principal of MHS in the fall of 1994.

The MHS Task Force continued to attempt to adhere to state mandates, which were becoming more narrow and specific over time. In 1992, state prescriptions were still vague enough that Arabolos and her team were able to develop programs that both satisfied state guidelines and responded to the needs and interests of their constituency.¹⁸⁶ For example, the degree of successful adherence to the state’s 1992 “*Second to None*” report was recognized by SFUSD’s administration when Greg Bender, Associate Superintendent of High School Operations, distributed to the principals of SFUSD high schools copies of Mission High School’s successful application proposal to the state’s High School Networks’ “Second-to-None” Project. Committed to this “Blueprint,” Arabolos and her three vice principals, in the fall of 1994

¹⁸⁶ An example of the kinds of generalities found in the state’s 1992 *Second to None* report include statements like “every student participates in the academic foundation” and “students make choices.” In the context of the CBR’s 1988 report, such vague statements begin to take on meaning, but it remains unclear how many high school principals were required to read the CBR document in tandem with the *Second to None* report.

implemented a shared decision-making Administrative Team approach. All decisions were made collectively [by ad hoc and permanent task forces] in a collaborative approach to problem solving. [The administrators] shared responsibilities equally with one another, and worked cooperatively with the Task Force, staff, and students in an inclusive structure and open forum (Arabolos quoted in Aschenbrener, p. 6).

The Task Force, led by the administrative team, began systematically to implement each item in the Action Plan. The first task was to establish a program — called the College Prep Summer Enrichment Program — for incoming ninth graders to help them adjust to high school.¹⁸⁷ A ninth grade core program had been developed the previous summer consisting of “a block-scheduled group of three classes — [History of Identity, Literature of Identity, and study skills support class] — taught in an interdisciplinary approach by a team of three teachers who shared the same 75 students” (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 6). LEP students had their own special core program but Special Education students were integrated into the regular core programs (p. 7).

The second task they set themselves was to expand the Step-to-College Program that had already caused a dramatic increase in the college attendance rate. An advanced computer course was added and all the courses were integrated into the school day, offering concurrent high school and college credit (p. 7). This change would allow graduating seniors simultaneously to have an entire semester of transferable university coursework completed. The third task was to expand the role of the Health Center. It continued to provide “primary health care, mental health, education and prevention services as well as management and referrals.” At the request of the Task Force, the Health Center began to “provide staff development, curriculum design, and community outreach” (p. 8).

Arabolos called these plans Phase 1.

By December 1994, the Task Force was emboldened by its success and began to envision Phase 2, which included the development of an “Academic Complex” that would link the local elementary and middle schools to Mission High School and SFSU while developing an “interdisciplinary curricular focus on health and science at MHS.” A year later, in

¹⁸⁷ That a high school summer prep program would be called “College Prep” seems to indicate the success of the BRT agenda in promoting the high school experience as one of preparation for college for every student (*Nine Essentials*: all students will be expected to achieve high standards. Education Trust: one exam to function both as a high school exit exam and an entrance exam to the state university and community college system).

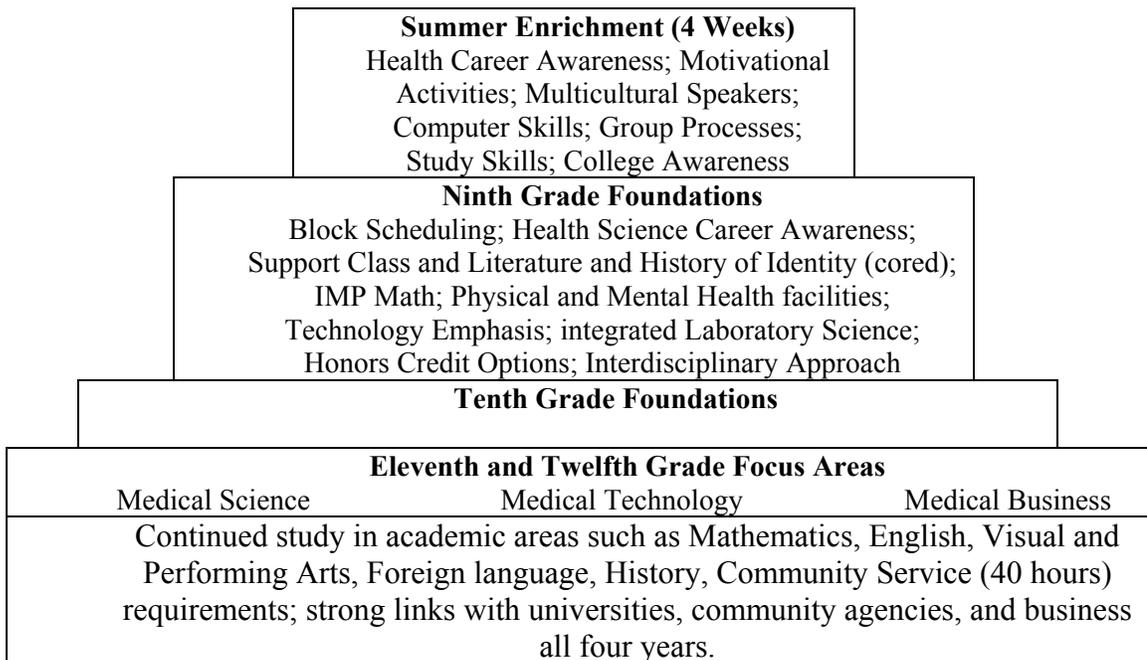
December 1995, a meeting among educators, community groups, and business and health officials brought the Mission Academic Complex “focus.” Furious grant writing on the part of the Mission High School Task Force resulted in many grants, the largest of which came in fall 1995 from the U.S. Department of Education, awarding the SFSU Urban Institute \$2.5 million over five years as funding to coordinate the Mission Academic Complex. While many were interested in MAC as an opportunity for Mission youth to learn, starting in kindergarten, about health professions they could eventually enter, the vision by the grant director, Jake Perea, and his allies was much more fundamental. Perea wanted to prove that “all children can learn if they are given the care and respect of the adults working with them and an understanding that health is an important part of the child’s life” (*Vision*, vol. I, no. I, p. 2, Dec 1995, reproduced in Aschenbrener; p. 22–29). The influence of the California Business Roundtable’s agenda on the developing curriculum at Mission High School seems clear. The CBR commissioned a report in 1988 whose authors recommended that public high schools in California be restructured so that “core foundation skills” are taught in ninth and tenth grade, an “exit exam” be given at the end of tenth grade, and students focus on career education in eleventh and twelfth grades (Berman, 1988). In January 1994, the California Business Roundtable published a summary of its “goals, strategies, and policy options” in a report entitled *Mobilizing for Competitiveness: Linking Education and Training to Jobs: A Call for Action*. “Goal One” emphasized the desire of the state’s BRT to see K–16 education transformed into “high skill career” training institutions or “career pathways.” One “option” they suggested was to “establish a system of certificates and degrees that provide *transition ladders* going from the *foundation skills* to advanced higher skills in different careers” [my emphasis]. The document put out by the MHS Task Force (see next page) indicates an attempt to respond both to the CBR as well as to the Mission community. That the MHS document fails to mirror exactly the CBR language (as indicated in the table below) suggests that Arabolos and her team had educational goals different from those of the state’s business leaders.

CBR language	MHS language
Career pathways High skill career	Educational pathways Focus Areas

	Strong links with business in all four years
Foundation skills	Foundations
Transition ladders	A vision of each year being a building block for the next year

Mission High School

**The University Academy of Health/Science
A Member of the Mission Academic Complex
Educational Pathways under Development**



Arabolos and Perea led a group of parents, students, community groups, staff, and faculty in the creation of an Academic Complex that was consistent with the dictates of the state department of education and with the concerns expressed by corporations through the CBR. But they also indicated a willingness to deviate from the business agenda. Those involved in creating MAC developed a “Blueprint for Success” (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 24) during a series of meetings that occurred in January 1994. Below are the goals and outcomes for the “Mission Academic Health Sciences Complex” as defined by the Mission community. The list below, generated by members of a “site council,” is remarkable for both echoing the language of high-stakes testing but also departing from

it.¹⁸⁸ (I have underlined the sections that deviate from the high-stakes agenda and attempted to explain the nature of deviation from the BRT agenda in italics.)

Six Goals:

1. Every student . . . will graduate with . . . skills needed to pursue career and higher education pathways for successful employment in high growth industries, particularly those in the fields of health, science, and technology.
2. The Mission Academic Complex offers a challenging curriculum based on current research on student learning as well as high standards and continuous assessment for relevancy and high student achievement. [*The MAC community is concerned not merely with a curriculum's relevance to needed workplace skills, but also to the relevance of the content to the history and values of the student. The inclusion of courses such as History and Literature of Identity and the commitment to dual immersion math and science courses suggest that "relevancy" in this context is related to the history and culture of the students, the very issues that Mission High School students staged protests about in 1993–1994.*]
3. All educators and other adults involved in the Complex help define and implement the supports and the professional development activities needed to improve networks for teaching, learning, health, and social service. [*The BRT concept of teacher and parent involvement is primarily to develop curricula and academic tutoring to promote higher test scores, not develop complex and horizontal networks of social, physical, and psychological support.*]
4. The Complex supports and promotes . . . faculty, student, and parental participation to ensure the health and well being of young people, parents, and the Mission Community. [*In the BRT's Continuing the Commitment (1995), the author(s), in attempting to explain what they mean by "learning readiness," agree that "schools can help students handle the crises in their lives and connect community agencies to students needs." But, in the very next sentence the author(s) insist that "schools cannot, however, compromise their educational missions in order to provide health care . . ." (p. 11). The staff at Mission High School housed a fully staffed mental and physical health clinic in the basement of the school.*]
5. The Complex is a fully integrated, high-quality academic program that supports and reflects the goals of the Mission District [*not just the district or CBR's goals*]. These goals have been defined by established community planning processes, parents and students, and residents of the Mission neighborhood. [*An essential element of the BRT agenda and of the Total Quality Management model is to keep the determination of the goals of education in the hands of upper management or the state while the site councils are responsible for coming up with the means of fulfilling goals set for them.*]

¹⁸⁸ Funding for the development of MAC came from the Cowell Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, Blue Cross Fund, State Farm Community Investment Corporation, Pew Charitable Trust, McKesson Corporation, National Services Corporation and the Division of Nursing of the U.S. Department of Education.

6. All the partners who form the Mission Academic Complex jointly plan and coordinate

Expected Outcomes: The dual emphasis on preparing the students academically while helping them realize emotional, physical, mental, and social health will ultimately bring about the following outcomes [*the BRT believes that health care is a concern only to the extent it raises test scores*]:

1. Students . . . will demonstrate high academic achievement.
2. Parents and teachers will receive academic and professional training opportunities.
3. More young people in the Mission Community will receive a high school diploma.
4. Children, parents, and teachers will demonstrate responsible decision-making and behaviors that lead to and reinforce healthy life choices. [*Again, it's not just about workplace skills.*]
5. Students will demonstrate high self-esteem and a sense of self-reliance. [*This is a goal of little relevance to the BRT.*]
6. All individuals will be treated with respect and dignity. [*While CEOs would say they appreciate such a goal; nevertheless, their decisions to move their factories to wherever labor is cheapest — whether Appalachia or China — seem to indicate that any concerns for human dignity are outweighed by concerns over profit margins.*]
7. The curriculum instructional strategies, supports, and opportunities provided at the Mission Academic Complex will reflect the diversity of the Mission and San Francisco. [*The imposition of state standards demands the implementation of a uniform, not diverse, curriculum. Emphasis on test scores argues against diversity of instructional methods as well. Research reveals “strong positive correlations between higher scores on standardized achievement tests and ‘direct’ or ‘explicit’ instruction.”¹⁸⁹*]

While Step-to-College and the Mission Clinic were high-profile programs, other less celebrated programs and reforms were implemented as well. The MHS staff felt many and diverse programs and reforms were crucial to achieving the kinds of success as defined by the “Blueprint” above. Some of the changes included the reduction of class sizes for the ninth and tenth grade cores. The teachers of these courses received extra planning time. The Columbia Boys and Girls Club offered tutoring and gang prevention workshops to Mission students. A Peer Resources program was established and English

¹⁸⁹ This is from p. 92 in a textbook used to teach administrators, mentor and master teachers in the methods of *supervision* of teachers. I was asked to use this text in a professional development course designed as a collaboration between a local high school and UC Davis. (*Supervision of Instruction: A Development Approach* by Carl Glickman, Stephen Gordon, and Jovita M. Ross-Gordon; Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1998, fourth edition.) For a review of the literature on the correlation of instructional techniques with test scores, Glickman, et al. cite J. Brophy (1979), “Teacher Behavior and Its Effects” in *Journal of Teacher Education* (71, 733–750).

and social studies courses were detracked. The administrative team at Mission High School believed that the variety of programs that simultaneously addressed both social and academic needs was responsible for a 93 percent decrease in dropouts and a 37 percent decrease in suspensions from September 1993 through November 1995, as well as the growth in CTBS scores¹⁹⁰ (*Mission High School Progress Report*, reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 54).

Such confidence was echoed by a report generated by Social Policy Research Associates. Local funders of Mission High School's programs had hired this nonprofit research organization to spend three months at Mission High School to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs. In a letter to Lupe Arabolos,¹⁹¹ an SPRA evaluator summarized the findings by noting that "school and community individuals" believed that MHS had been doing an "outstanding" job in promoting the three goals for which the school was receiving funding (most notably from the Haas Family Fund and the San Francisco Foundation):

1. Using "multiculturalism" to enhance "civic competence and intergroup relations";
2. Developing school programs "that are meaningful to students";
3. Revealing "how the academic and social experiences of students reinforce each other in promoting civically competent knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

Through 1996, Lupe Arabolos had led an administrative team, a critical mass of dedicated faculty, foundation representatives, community nonprofit organizers, parents, and students in an effort to satisfy district and state mandated goals as well as promote the students' "emotional, physical, mental, and social health." They believed that they were making fundamental progress in achieving their and other's goals. Carlos

¹⁹⁰ According to the Mission HS Parent and Community Action Group "Information Sheet" (5/30/96; reprinted in Aschenbrener; p. 125), CTBS NCE gains from 1995-1996 were as follows: Reading; ninth grade +4.9, tenth grade +7.5, eleventh grade +7; Math, ninth grade +5.5, tenth grade +7.7, eleventh grade +1.7. According to a *San Francisco Chronicle* article on August release of 1996 CTBS NCE scores, "Although Mission High ranked third from the bottom in reading (42.4) and second-to-last in math (41.6), its gains were strong in both areas. In math and reading, Mission students achieved more than twice the gains that would be expected in a single year [and] made greater gains in reading than students at any other city high school . . . greater math gains than all but one high school, Thurgood Marshall" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/14/96; A15).

¹⁹¹ The letter was from Hanh Cao Yu of SPRA, Menlo Park, 5/13/96, to Lupe Arabolos, thanking the teachers who participated in the focus groups of 5/7/96. Copies of the letter were also sent to Superintendent Rojas, the School Board, and the teachers of the focus group (reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming).

Cornejo¹⁹² argues “the turnaround was made in 1996 with excellent management from Principal Lupe Arabolos” (personal statement in Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 427). Tracy Brown was a graduate of MHS in 1985 and, as a community worker, worked with Mission High School female students during the 1990s. She had helped a group of MHS students organize a citywide walkout in the spring of 1994. Brown believed that Arabolos had made fundamental changes at Mission High School since becoming principal. Students felt welcome at the school regardless of any gang affiliation or other “problem” that they may have represented or caused. It was of great significance to Brown that Arabolos had created an environment in which “the students were allowed to be who they were.” There was little gang tension inside the school because the gang leaders had a relationship with Arabolos. She took into consideration the “environmental factors” when dealing with the students. If a student was out of control, the student wasn’t expelled or suspended but brought to Arabolos’ office for a talk. For example, if the student was a girl, Arabolos would call Brown at Mission Girls (a nonprofit community-based organization) and arrange a meeting with the girl’s parents to try to find out what the problem was. The student “would continue to be talked with if the problem continued”. Brown was particularly impressed with the health clinic. She saw its particular usefulness in terms of providing a mechanism by which a social worker could be called in, thus triggering a home visit.¹⁹³

The End of Community-Based Reform

So it came as a dreadful shock to students, teachers, and community members of the Mission when Superintendent Bill Rojas informed Lupe Arabolos and two of her vice principals, Jan Hudson and Peter Long, on February 28, 1996, that their contracts would not be renewed. Rojas cited three reasons for his lack of confidence in Mission High School’s administrative leadership. They

¹⁹² Carlos Cornejo was a former SFUSD teacher, counselor, principal, and administrator (39 years in the district). In 1995, he had retired from the district and began to work with Mission High School staff as a consultant from the Urban Institute at San Francisco State University. He worked on reducing class and school absenteeism. He was part of the 25-person planning team of parents, students, teachers, and administrators who had mapped out a strategy for the high school. He also helped prepare a presentation to Rojas to persuade him not to remove Arabolos.

¹⁹³ Interview with Tracy Brown, October 15, 2001.

1. had become too close to the culture of the school;
2. had not brought changes quickly enough;
3. were not making computers available to all students; (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 38).

In a letter (4/8/96) responding to a community organizer's protest of his decision, Rojas wrote:

There have been improvements at Mission, to a degree through the efforts of the administrative team but also because of the instruction partnerships and extra resources that have been poured into the school these past two years . . . [But] the improvements at Mission have not yet seen [sic] sufficient, and I want to give the school the opportunity to improve next year with a new, outside administrative team (reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 74).

Rojas told the *Chronicle* on May 29, in response to student protests of his decision, “It is virtually impossible for me to recommend (to the board) the same administrative team for next year. I’m not comfortable with this team. They’ve taken the school forward part of the way, but it needs to make the next leap” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/29/96; p. A11). In the month following Rojas’ official notification of the removal of Arabolos, Long, and Hudson, there was an outpouring of protest from those with whom Arabolos had developed working relationships. The degree with which the MHS community protested the removal of their leadership reflects the nature of the relationships defining such a community. The wide variety of sources of support and their relationship to MHS indicated that Arabolos had created a horizontally structured community.¹⁹⁴ This became evident in the continued outpouring of support for Arabolos. On March 1, Arabolos received a letter, copied to Rojas, from San Francisco State University La Raza student organization noting that “graduates from MHS [at SFSU] . . . have spoken highly of your contributions. . . .” On March 5, one hundred and one MHS staff members signed a letter to Rojas protesting the removal of Mission’s administrative staff citing all the programs at the school that they had worked hard to implement. On March 8, Linda Mornell of the summer Search Foundation wrote a letter to Rojas accusing him of “punishing excellence.” On March 19, Jacqueline Nazel, community liaison with the Homeless Education Project, wrote to Rojas telling him that she knew of “no other programs . . .

¹⁹⁴ Thompson (1967) identifies three kinds of bureaucratic structures that function in very different ways. One is “coordination by standardization”; a second is “coordination by plan,” and the third is “coordination by mutual adjustment” (p. 57–58). Arabolos seems to have created the third one in direct contrast to the district administration’s pursuit of “coordination by standardization.”

that address so positively the issues that face our district's most needy children" as those established under the administration of Arabolos. On March 27, Sergeant John Fewer of the San Francisco Police Department wrote to School Board President Steve Phillips requesting that the removal be reconsidered. Fewer was part of the High School Law Enforcement Program and had been assigned to MHS since 1993. He argued in the letter that the administration, headed by Arabolos, "not only concerned themselves with public safety for the school but also for the immediate neighborhood. They have taken a proactive approach toward deterring violence in the school" (letters reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming).

On April 23, over 300 people attended the school board meeting to urge the board to reconsider their support of Rojas' decision to fire Arabolos, Hudson, and Long from Mission High School (Asimov, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/24/96; A15). The School Board had "quietly endorsed . . . Rojas' recommendation not to renew 11 out of 80 administrators' contracts that expired at the end of the semester. Arambolo [sic], used to high praise for her work, was the only on-duty principal fired this year. Hudson and Long were the only high school vice-principals let go" (Asimov, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/23/96). Asimov quoted the student body president as being "really angry about this. . . . They're really close to the students – and that's why everyone loves them." School Board President Steve Phillips, in responding to the many passionate appeals to keep the three MHS administrators, succinctly summed up the difference between an organization based on responding to the needs of its constituents and one that imposes its will on the community: "There's always a sense of fondness for individuals. These decisions have to be guided by educational outcomes" (Venise Wagner, *Examiner*, 4/24/96).

At the school board meeting, speaker after speaker testified in support of Arabolos and her team. Luis Cruz, a Mission HS graduate and UC Berkeley student, explained to the board, "This administration has instituted major reform in the last two years. It wasn't until I came to Mission that my life changed. I'm still a poor Mexican kid . . . but today I have a sense of hope I gained from Mission High School." Eileen Gold, a MHS neighbor for ten years, remarked that in the last two years, the students "are much quieter and much friendlier when you meet them on the streets. It wasn't always like that. The

building is almost graffiti free and the grounds are better kept. There's been such a big turnaround. It's unbelievable." (quoted by Barbara Nanney, *The Independent*, 4/26/96). The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that students at the meeting "described Arabolos, Hudson, and Long as approachable administrators who have made key improvements at Mission. They said removing the three would adversely affect the quality of education at the school." Board members refused to explain their support for Rojas' decision citing the issue as a "personnel matter".

On April 29, the district ordered the administrative team to eliminate 15.7 teachers and trim \$600,000 from its budget. The Mission Planning Committee concluded that to adhere to such a directive would mean the dismantling of the following programs at the school: Peer Resources (tutoring, gang prevention, conflict management, STD awareness, and prevention); Mental Health Supervisor (intern placement, service outreach, drama therapy for ninth and tenth grade cores); Attendance Incentive Program and Coordinator (attendance lotteries, family scholarship, letters home, referrals to health clinic); Columbia Park Girls and Boys Club after school tutoring/activities; smaller class size for Cores; elimination of six courses (including AP Spanish, advanced math in Spanish, Literature of La Raza, Automotive Technology, training for History of Identity) (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 93). On April 30, at a ceremony celebrating the expansion of the Mission HS Health Clinic, most of the faculty and students in attendance were wearing a button with "15.7" crossed out on it (Crews, 1996).

Teachers and students at Mission High School continued to protest. In preparation for the next school board meeting on May 14, the Mission High School

social studies department developed a two-day lesson plan [taught on May 13 and 14] for the students on reconstitution to inform all students how Mission has been affected. Students received a package which contained a vocabulary list defining each important term, such as CSIP¹⁹⁵ and recent articles on Mission's situation. . . . "We learned a lot from the lessons. Before the lessons, no one had a clear understanding of the topics. Especially we didn't understand some of the vocabulary, such as CSIP and reconstitution" (Judy Lau, MHS *West Wing*, 5/28/96; reprinted in Aschenbrener.)

At 11:30, on May 14, the administration, teachers and students organized a "hug in." Local news media were informed that the entire high school would be surrounded by its

¹⁹⁵ CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan) was part of the district's rewards and punishment system set up by Rojas. This was described in detail in the previous chapter.

members who would be holding hands. Arabolos told the Mission HS student reporter: “the ‘hug in’ is a nice, impressive idea that raises people’s awareness of Mission’s unity.” At 7pm that evening, over 200 Mission supporters attended the school board meeting. Twenty-five had signed up to speak. Once again, Board President Phillips told them that the decision could not be discussed because it was a “personnel issue based on quality education” (Lau, *MHS West Wing*, reprinted in Aschenbrener). The board did decide to meet the next week on May 21 to discuss the issue and then vote on May 28.

On the morning of May 28, at least 400 students walked out of Mission High School and walked two miles to City Hall and demanded to see Mayor Willie Brown. Brown met with the students and promised to address the school board meeting that evening. Then he marched with them to the Board of Education building two blocks away. Brown was able to negotiate a meeting among himself, Rojas, Phillips, and five student representatives. One of the students was disappointed with Rojas’ explanation that “a school is like a business.” The student responded by arguing that, “Mission is more than a business. We’re a community” (Spero, *New Mission News*, 6/96). At the school board meeting that evening, Brown addressed the board, arguing that the students needed to be involved in the decision making process. The board then agreed to set up a meeting the following week with 20 students and then make a final decision on June 11.

Perhaps in the hope of influencing the June 11 decision, letters continued to be sent to Rojas and the board requesting reconsideration of the decision to remove Arabolos and her two vice principals. Those protesting Arabolos’ removal argued that she “is clearly cherished and respected by her faculty and student body” and “her love of students is unsurpassed” (Dennis McCarthy); she developed a “wonderful working relationship” with the alumni association (John McGir); that she should not be judged on test scores alone since Arabolos “shows [the students] that an intelligent, academic person can also be warm and compassionate, and deeply concerned about their problems academic or personal” (James Hannon); furthermore, Arabolos is “not at odds with [the school board’s] desire for student success” (Aschenbrener; letters reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming). That these arguments failed to move the school board suggests that the nonhierarchal model of reform Arabolos was pursuing that relied on the development of

personal relationships was at odds with Rojas' top-down, carrot-and-stick approach that the board had committed itself to supporting, apparently at any cost.

No Turning Back

On June 11, the school board met and finalized its decision (on a 4 to 2 vote) to remove Arabolos from Mission High School and confirm Rojas' appointment of Ted Alfaro as the new principal at the school. (The school board would vote to replace Hudson and Long in a 6 to 1 vote on June 29.) Rojas's spokesperson, Gail Kaufman, without any apparent hint of irony, told reporters that Alfaro was hired for his "programmatically, academic, and community strengths" (*Independent*, 6/12/96). But indicating that it was not completely deaf to the expressed interests of the community, the school board voted to retain 14 out of the 15.7 teachers the district had previously asked Arabolos to "consolidate." Not realizing that the battle had already been lost, five Mission HS students demanded that the district release "matched scores" from that spring's MHS CTBS scores, arguing that such scores would confirm the improvements made during the last year. In response Gail Kaufman pointed out, "test scores are not the only indicator of how a school is doing or what the district might want for the school."

Asked what the district wanted for Mission, Kaufman said Rojas would have to answer the question. Rojas could not be reached for comment. Hudson and Long said they had emphasized the progress the school had made in a meeting with Rojas Friday, but he didn't seem to be swayed. "I told him I felt that he made a mistake," Hudson said. "I felt our test scores and the progress we made bore that out. But he didn't in any way seem to be ready to alter that decision." Rojas declined to comment on the decision, saying through Kaufman that it was a private personnel issue. Students, teachers, and parents speculate the action means Mission is headed for a broader shake-up [reconstitution] (Venise Wagner, *Examiner*, 6/12/96).

The MHS community continued to be stunned and confused. They had created "career pathways," introduced technology into the classroom, offered courses focused on building "foundational skills," and imposed a college-prep curriculum on all of its students. They also had focused a great deal of their energies on raising test scores. They tried very hard to adopt what they perceived to be the district's focus on data-driven decision-making (using test scores as a means to select course method and content). They pointed to higher attendance rates, fewer dropouts, and increased college

attendance. When all this seemed to be beside the point, they were at a loss to understand where and why they had failed.

In trying to understand their banishment, the principals recalled that Rojas asked them for a progress report last November. But he postponed their meeting five times and did not meet with them until February 15. “The superintendent asked us for more statistics, which we gave him on February 24,” Hudson said. “By then, it’s our understanding that decisions had been made already.” Neither Rojas nor board members visited Mission before deciding to fire the team, she said. Teachers say they are mystified. They suggest that the principals may be pawns in a union dispute over Rojas’ wish to reduce administrative contracts from three years to one. They wonder if Rojas is irked because the principals followed federal rules to the letter instead of letting all students use computers intended for low-achievers alone (N. Asimov, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/23/96).

Randy Shaw, the executive director of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic and an experienced, grassroots community organizer suspected that disputes over test scores, computers, or length of contracts masked a more fundamental issue — one connected to the national movement for systemic reform.

Rojas has sent a message to parents throughout the city that their input is not truly desired and that they have no role in shaping their children’s education. Rojas’ act is consistent with a nationwide trend of superintendents and school boards that urge parental involvement while sabotaging all meaningful efforts toward that end. . . . There has been a subtle, implicit effort to blame parents — rather than depressed family incomes and local economic conditions — for the school’s poor test scores. . . . A 1993 study by the Parents’ Coalition for Education in New York City found that “parents play a minor role, at best” in the management of public schools. The study concluded that even school-based management councils did not provide sufficient input. Mission High School is precisely the type of institution that politicians and school boards have argued needs more parental involvement. Deposed principal Arabolos has fostered such activism and helped create a sense of community that educators stress is essential for scholastic success. . . . Arabolos succeeded too well. . . . *Rojas . . . certainly did not appreciate Arabolos’ creation of a constituency base that he did not control. Nor was Rojas comfortable with Arabolos’ nurturing style. . . .* Rojas and his school board allies have stated in no uncertain terms that parental involvement means handing out books and helping with copying, not influencing policy (*Independent*, 6/18/96) [my italics].

Shaw believed that Rojas saw a threat from Arabolos’ method or “style” that had allowed her to create a network of residents and community-based organizations that were effectively improving the educational opportunities for the students at MHS. The majority on the school board went along with Rojas because they believed that their role was to support the superintendent no matter what. Board President Steve Phillips

exhibited the classic “trustee” mentality in defending Rojas. Phillips explained why he dismissed the evidence of community opposition. Since “there is a rally every time a principal is fired, one cannot be swayed by community opposition.” Phillips insisted that in order to make public policy, one has to establish principles and stick to them, not succumb to popular pressure. The “principle” in question was, apparently, that test scores indicated “change was not happening fast enough at Mission High School . . . these are kid’s lives, we can’t wait around for long-term changes to go into effect.” When I asked Phillips why the “85 percent of graduates going on to college” figure did not impress him, Phillips replied that such a statistic was invalid since so few ninth graders even made it to twelfth grade (interview with Phillips, 8/7/01).¹⁹⁶ From his experiences as a teacher at MHS from 1991 to 1992 and by looking at the attrition rate, Phillips concluded that the teachers at Mission High School were not creating an interesting enough curriculum to keep the students in school and thus he was not willing to challenge Rojas’ decision to remove Arabolos. Yet if McNeil’s (2000) research is any indication, it was the use of tests that prevented the development of a more interesting and authentic curriculum at MHS.

¹⁹⁶ In chapter two, I cited some of the literature on school board behavior. Ziegler and Jennings (1974) argued that their survey of 490 board members and 82 superintendents in 83 school districts (supplemented by local sources, government publications, and interviews with the public) “suggests in unequivocal terms the existence of an educational elite which is consciously self-perpetuating” (p. 51). Incumbents generally select their successors; most candidates don’t campaign on issues that would distinguish themselves from others nor do they court endorsements from community interest groups (Zerchykov, 1984). Even when “delegate” minded board candidates are elected, they soon take on a “trustee” mentality — they know what is best for the community and they do not want to be seen as being responsive. This culture is reinforced by national board meetings, superintendent sessions, as well as a plethora of handbooks (Lutz, 1975). BRT proponents continue to argue that school boards need to focus on the so-called big picture and not act like the elected representative that they are. As the facilitator between state standards and assessment practices and the pedagogical practices within schools, school boards need to “take a comprehensive look at the objectives of the local school community and examine progress toward meeting state and central district objectives” (Kirst, 1994; p. 380). School boards must link policies and reform initiatives to student outcome objectives, curriculum frameworks, and assessments; establish staff development consistent with district goals and objectives; and convene community forums to discuss educational policy (Danzburger, 1994; p. 372). Don McAdams’ career as a Houston school board member (they are interestingly called “trustees”) from 1990 to 2000 manifests the quintessential “trustee mentality” when he complains that Houston trustees are no longer elected at large but by district: “Board members only felt accountable to the group that had elected them. The result was a board plagued by racial, economic, and geographical divisions. Several trustees appeared more interested in their trustee districts than in the district as a whole. . . . Once in office, zealous individuals concentrated on those issues which got them elected, making compromise for the good of the whole take a backseat to the rhetoric of extremism” (McAdams, 2000; p. 221).

Ted Alfaro and the Corporate Agenda

In spite of an unprecedented expression of community support for their principal, the Mission community could not persuade Rojas or a majority of the school board to reverse their “personnel” decision. Rojas did not have to publicly explain his decision. All he needed was the support of 4 out of 7 school board members, members who were elected at large so were not accountable to a particular neighborhood or constituency. The only recourse the Mission community had was to organize a citywide movement against the “principles” guiding Rojas’ policy and wait until the next election cycle.

In the meantime, the new MHS principal, Ted Alfaro, went to work dismantling most of the programs that the community had invested time, energy, and passion in building. Rojas had found in Alfaro a subordinate who had little interest or ability in cultivating a strong and emotional connection to all the members of the Mission District community. The programs Rojas and Alfaro chose to eliminate were those that had contributed to the horizontal network of various organizations — Step-to-College, the Health Clinic, gang prevention, attendance, and tutoring services by a variety of community-based organizations. The programs and relationships that Alfaro did pursue were completely consistent with the principles of systemic reform as well as promoting the interests of local corporate capitalists, in particular, real estate developers.

Jose Luis Pavlon¹⁹⁷ believes that Mission High school was being made “ready for white middle-class families to move into the area.” Pavlon argues that Alfaro collaborated with school security and police to displace gangs from neighboring Dolores Park to where they now are, at 16th and Bryant Streets (interview with Pavlon, 11/2/01). By creating a closed campus¹⁹⁸, expelling “poor test takers”¹⁹⁹, imposing a rigidly college

¹⁹⁷ Pavlon was a student at MHS in 1993 and has maintained his ties to the MHS community through his work for Coleman Advocates, a child advocacy nonprofit in San Francisco. Pavlon is a youth organizer for YMAC, Youth Making a Change, one of the organizations within Coleman Advocates (interview with Pavlon, 11/2/01).

¹⁹⁸ “Closed” in the both the sense of not letting students out but also not letting local community-based groups in. David Mauroff, who has worked for Columbia Boys and Girls Club, and worked with Mission High school students before Alfaro took over, conceded that there were serious problems at Mission in 1995–96. Some of the problems were poor teachers, kids roaming the halls, and serious tensions between students in the school and those on the outside. Mauroff was initially optimistic when Alfaro was appointed but soon was disappointed when Alfaro wouldn’t let Columbia Park mentors inside the school. Alfaro “wouldn’t do anything for the kids” he kept in the school nor did he offer any help for those who were shut out (interview, 9/19/01).

preparatory curriculum emphasizing computer literacy,²⁰⁰ closing down the health clinic,²⁰¹ and replacing the Step-to-College program with School-to-Career, one might be led to believe that Alfaro's job description was to transform Mission High School into a middle class, college preparatory school. Any students hanging out on the street corners around the neighborhood who might be considered gang-related could be seen as undermining local real estate values. In September 1999, the administration told the faculty that "there no longer was a gang problem at Mission High School" (Aschenbrener; forthcoming; p. 416). Certainly, the housing and rental prices of the late 90s indicated that gentrification was engulfing the neighborhoods around Mission High School.

Formed [in March of 2000], the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition has led 1,000 supporters on a spirited march through the Mission District, demonstrated outside the Mission's Armory building, shut down the Planning Commission after

¹⁹⁹ Tracy Brown recalls that "Alfaro started kicking students out. He did it legitimately — filling out "safety transfers" for those who showed the slightest sign of gang affiliation. . . . He had started profiling kids, saying parents and students didn't feel safe. But no school had to take a student who had been tagged as gang affiliated. Where were these kids to go? RAP High School was already full. . . . Many community-based organizations were upset with Alfaro because he was expelling, transferring, pushing out the very students that the CBOs were involved with. . . . Alfaro was trying to create a school for smart kids, another OER school (open enrollment). It was all about scores; get rid of the poor test-takers" (interview, 10/15/01).

²⁰⁰ Defenders of Alfaro have argued recently that "in 1996-97 when Mr. Alfaro came to Mission High there was: 1 AP math course, 1 honors class, only 8 students took the Advanced Placement Test, only 30 percent passed the Integrated Writing Assessment Test, and none passed the Entry Level Math Exam (ELM) required by the California State University System. Before Mr. Alfaro came to the school, there were less than 15 computers available for student use at the school. Today, Mission High has 7 AP math courses, 7 honors classes, 92 students took the Advanced Placement Test this year, Mission High School took second place in the State Mock Trial Court competition, and sixth place in the State Academic Decathlon. Mission High's highly applauded Law Academy program gives students the opportunity to participate in a rich integrated curriculum, (a curriculum that uniquely combines relevant work-based experience in major law firms with a rich integrated curriculum of college prep classes, in the context of a legal career). Mission High School has a state of the art computer science curriculum beginning in ninth grade, . . . the Pathway program. That's educational opportunity!" (bullet points from a "Briefing Paper" prepared this year by a group of "community activists" protesting the removal of Alfaro as principal of Mission High School. Gene Royale gave me a copy of this during an interview, 7/31/01).

²⁰¹ The health clinic closed the summer of 1998 (services had begun to be reduced the previous April). In November 1997, Rojas refused to sign a letter to the San Francisco Foundation which was needed to authorize the clinic to accept funding from outside the district. Charlotte Ferreti said "she could no longer afford to operate the clinic because of the lack of support from the district and the school administration." She didn't have enough money to last until the U.S. Department of Education's grant was renewed in October. Associate Superintendent Laura Alvarenga was quoted as saying that it is was "now time" for the district "to assume responsibility for the clinic" (Angela Rowen, *Bay Guardian*, May 13, 1998; p. 10). By the end of 1999 "Health services the following school year consisted of a nurse who had a cubicle in the counseling office. . . in fall 1999, the nurse was no longer in her cubicle, health services at the school consisted of an envelope of band-aids distributed to each teacher. Protective latex gloves were also provided" (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 416).

a speaker was forcibly removed, and invaded the offices of Bigstep.com to protest its takeover of Bay View Bank. MAC's mission statement is ambitious: "To eliminate the displacement of low-income and working-class people from the Mission District, who are primarily Latinos and other people of color, tenants, artists, and community serving businesses and nonprofits." (Cassi Feldman, "Defending the barrio: Will working-class activists save the Mission?" *Bay Guardian*, October 18, 2000).

Rogelio Estrada entered MHS as a ninth grader during Alfaro's first year as principal (1996–97). Estrada lived in the Mission and began to participate in the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition 2001 when his family was given an eviction notice. When Alfaro was removed as principal of MHS in the spring of 2001, Estrada, who had liked Alfaro, immediately began to think about organizing a student protest demanding the reinstatement of Alfaro as principal of MHS. But when Estrada began to talk to people about the situation, his assessment of Alfaro began to change. In an attempt to sort out increasingly contradictory information, Estrada went to Alfaro directly. He asked Alfaro why the health clinic had been closed. Estrada thought Alfaro's answer was "confusing." Estrada began to talk to some of the board members of Mission Housing (474 Valencia), a nonprofit organization on which Alfaro sat as a board member. Estrada was told by several members of the Mission Housing Board that Alfaro was a vigorous proponent of removing the tenants around Bryant Square (20th and Bryant) to make room for the building of new, live/work lofts. When Estrada asked Alfaro about this, Alfaro denied that he had lobbied for this. When Estrada heard that Gene Royale was having a meeting to organize a protest against Alfaro's "promotion," Estrada went to listen to what Royale had to say. When Royale argued that the new school board was "kicking out all the Latinos," Estrada decided not to join the "community protest" because he believed that most of the Latinos that Rojas had appointed to district positions were choosing to follow Rojas to Dallas (interview with Rogelio Estrada, 12/6/01).

The possibility of an alignment of school policy with real estate development suggests that one cannot look at educational policy independently of city politics. The schools can be a small part of the larger design pursued through city government by corporate developers. Schools can help raise real estate values through higher test scores. But school district resources can also be used as a source for patronage to build political support for political campaigns. In pursuing such a connection, I asked Steve Phillips

why Mayor Brown's initial support of the Mission High School students disappeared. Phillips argued, "Brown needed to be at peace with Rojas because the superintendent is the second most powerful position in San Francisco — a half million dollar budget, 4,000 employees, buildings, and all you need to control that is four votes on the school board" (Interview, 8/7/01). In other words, Rojas was at the head of a powerful patronage system. Brown could ill afford to have such a system be mobilized against him or his surrogates. One manifestation of Brown's peace making was through political appointments and mutual fundraising. For example, Felipe Floresca, Rojas' brother-in-law, was appointed to head the city's Housing Authority, and Mayor Brown and Representative Nancy Pelosi hosted one of Phillips' fundraisers.

In the context of city politics and city patronage, Mission High school can be seen as a mere pawn, a possible source of patronage or part of a potential base of political power. Mission High School is located on 18th street between Church and Dolores streets, technically not in the Mission, yet being that area's "neighborhood" school. Dolores Street is the western boundary of the Mission district, home to anywhere from nine to twentyfour gangs, depending on whom you ask. Fourteenth and Cesar Chavez Streets are the North and South boundaries and Portrero Street is the eastern boundary; "Within that area, there are at least 30 nonprofit organizations serving youth" (Mauroff, *New Mission News*, 1999). Seventy-three point four percent of San Franciscan Latinos live in the Mission district (Biegel, 2000; p. 39). In seven out of the nine census tracts in the Mission, 20 percent or more of the population are below the federal poverty line (DeLeon, 1995; p. 22).

Much of the money that flows into the Mission is public money and is therefore determined by public officials. In the mid 1990s, Latinos, as 13.9 percent of the city's population but in only 9 percent of official/administrator and professional positions, exhibited "the lowest level of political incorporation of the four major groups" (DeLeon, 1997; p. 146). It is not unlikely that the coming of Rojas to the political scene excited some hopes of changing the "level of political incorporation" on the part of Latinos. Mitch Salazar seemed to indicate that such hopes were to some degree fulfilled when he summed up Rojas' nine year tenure in San Francisco by saying how much he liked Rojas for taking on the unions and bureaucracies and for the "fiscal love he gave to

communities that had never gotten it before” (interview, 10/2/01).²⁰² And as long as the distribution of “fiscal love” was a zero sum proposition, i.e., as long as some got it while others didn’t, such patronage worked to successfully divide communities against each other. The lack of internal controls noted in the state’s 2001 (see previous chapter) audit allowed Rojas to spend money on those he categorized as “doers” without having to justify the expenditures. This might explain why very little of the millions of dollars raised by a 1994 bond measure for repairs and construction were actually spent on the district’s infrastructure needs. It could also explain why the court monitoring team noted in its July 2000 report that it was unclear how the Consent Decree funds were being spent.

Once the Department of Integration approves a school’s budget, the Department appears to have no further monitoring function to ensure that the school in fact spends its funds as it promised or to ensure that the programs funded lead to improvements in the academic performance of the school or toward other Consent Decree goals (e.g., improved attendance) (Biegel, 2000; p. 57).

The monitoring team, in looking at the district’s 1999–2000 Consent Decree budget records, was curious why “almost \$400,000 was budgeted for CSIP if in fact the CSIP program was discontinued in 1997” (p. 55, fn. 91).

Several sources I interviewed suggested that Rojas, who became superintendent in 1992, wanted to use Mission High School as a source of Latino patronage — to use the positions and funds of the schools to reward Latino followers. One source argued that since Arabolos was presiding over the successful transformation of Mission HS into a multicultural school, she needed to be removed. (See Figures 8.1 and 8.2, below, which illustrate the ethnic shift occurring at MHS. The first figure shows that during the school year 1988 to 89, Hispanics made up approximately 35 percent of the Mission High School student population. Ten years later, Hispanics grew to be nearly 45 percent of the total student body while the proportion of Asian Americans dramatically shrank. The second figure shows that from 1988 to 1999, the percentage of Asian American students in SFUSD schools increased. But at Mission High School, during the same period, the

²⁰² It was the Consent Decree that provided over \$30 million a year to “targeted schools.” Rojas could, in large part, determine which schools were and were not targeted. Rojas admits that he was criticized for unequal allotments of district money but defends such spending as legally justified under the Consent Decree and morally justified because the groups he gave to had been discriminated against in the past (interview with Mark McNamara).

percentage of Asian American precipitously dropped. While there was an increase in the percentage of Hispanic students overall, the percentage increase at Mission High School from 1988 to 99 grew disproportionately larger.)

Figure 8.1
CHANGE IN THE ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF MISSION HIGH SCHOOL
FROM 1988 to 1999

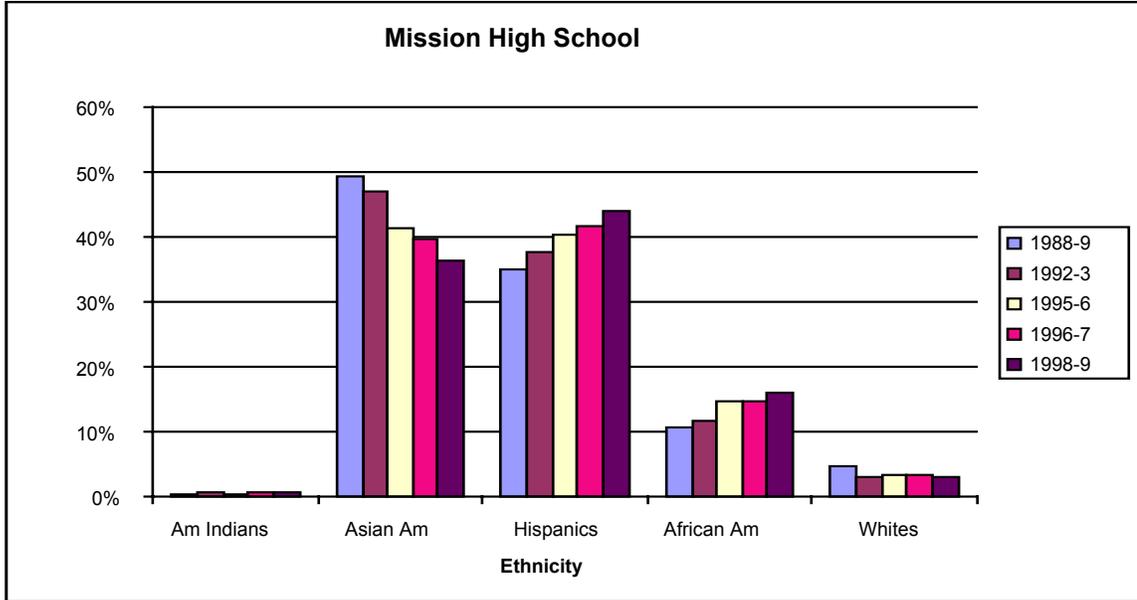
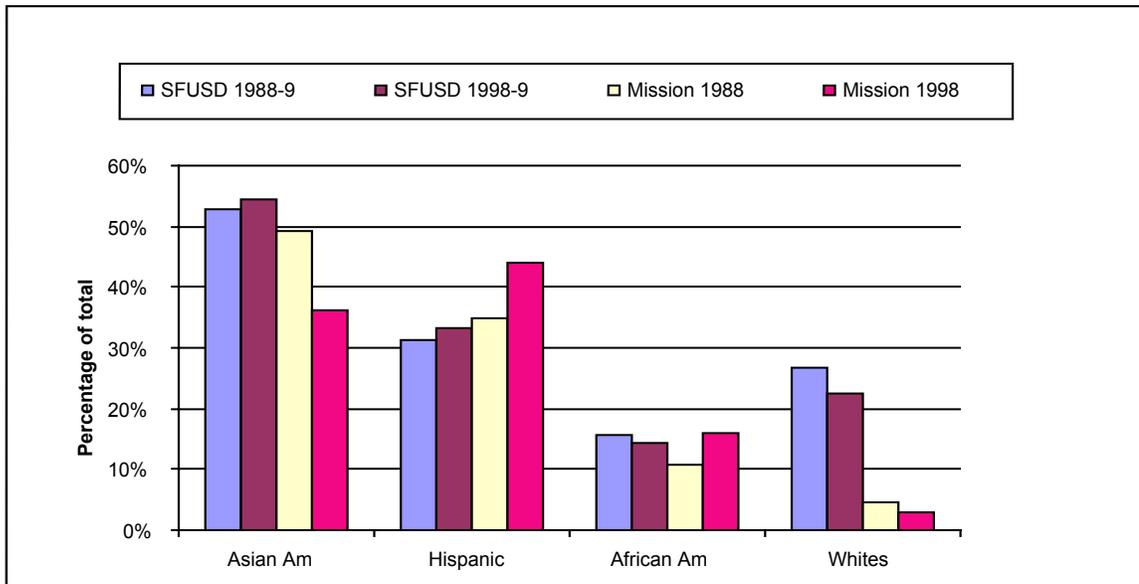


Figure 8.2
COMPARISON OF THE CHANGING ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION IN
MISSION HIGH SCHOOL WITH THAT OF THE SFUSD IN GENERAL



Data in the above two graphs are taken directly from the Common Core of Data, NCES.

Cornejo was told that, beginning in 1996–97, Rojas was committed to “a new type of governance” which “was to consist of a partnership between activists in the community and the professional appointees in the next school year” (Cornejo quoted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 428). These “community activists,” however, seemed to consist only of those organized by the Real Alternatives Program.²⁰³

When Alfaro became principal, he cut the high school’s contacts with every other community-based organization except the Real Alternatives Program run by Mitch Salazar, executive director of RAP from 1986 to 1999. According to David Mauroff of the SF Girls and Boys Club, “RAP co-opted the funding for the neighborhood [and] . . . refused to work with all the youth.” Mauroff conceded that RAP was very successful with some individuals but overall was divisive. Since the demise of RAP as a power in the area, “there is much more cooperation among organizations” serving all the youth of the Mission area (interview with Mauroff, (9/19/01). According to Salazar, RAP first approached SFUSD in 1988 with the idea of an alternative school for gang-related, at-risk students. Superintendent Ramon Cortines “embraced” the group at that time because “he believed in what [RAP] was doing. . . . We had aligned ourselves with the right people — Rosa Perez [community college vice-chancellor] and Gene Royale [Urban Institute at SFSU].” Salazar explained that having aligned themselves with “Latinos who knew the Mission and were affiliated with institutions . . . [RAP] could go to Cortines and get support. . . . I could give Cortines a bigger impression than what we had . . . one of academic success and not soft social support services. . . . We weren’t going to pass kids to pass kids, we were going to raise the academic bar . . . not be another continuation school that was just a dumping ground” for high school pushouts and dropouts (interview with Salazar, 10/2/01)

²⁰³ RAP emerged as an organization out of the student strikes at San Francisco State University after 1969. It was the leading group in demanding policy and personnel decision-making influence for the Mission community during the community control fights of the early 1970s. From 1972 onwards, RAP developed as a formal nonprofit organization. At the height of its power, RAP had a \$1.9 million budget to run an alternative high school, an HIV/AIDS prevention and education program, a teen center, a “violence prevention initiative,” and a teen health clinic. Mitch Salazar was the executive director of RAP from 1985 to 1998. In 1998, RAP began to run into severe financial troubles and had to abandon most of its programs, many of which were taken on by other community-based nonprofits. RAP continues to operate an alternative high school.

Salazar said that running RAP HS was a learning experience. They learned how “to deal” with the school system, for example, learning “how to relate to Pupil Services” and other departments. Salazar wanted to be able to choose the teachers at RAP HS and not have the district’s personnel office “send” them the teachers. Cortines enabled RAP HS to break the union rules.

We learned to deal directly with the superintendent. If not for the superintendent, the bureaucrats would have killed the HS. We were competing with other high schools and other community day schools for resources. You cannot do that through a Board and have the same effect as dealing directly with the superintendent,. The superintendent has such broad authority — a pen stroke, a phone call — it’s done (interview, 10/2/01).

When Rojas replaced Cortines, Salazar wanted direct access to the new superintendent. Cortines had promised Salazar that RAP HS could occupy the entire west wing of the district’s building at 1950 Bryant Street. Rojas, upon his arrival in San Francisco, refused to return Salazar’s phone calls, so he went ahead without building permits or district approval and extended RAP high school into the west wing of the building. Then Salazar pursued Rojas by ambushing him outside of meetings and dinners he was attending, “walking and talking” with him as he left the functions and eventually becoming one of Rojas’ “drinking buddies.” Salazar convinced Rojas to visit the newly rehabilitated and expanded RAP high school. Rojas was extremely impressed with the fresh and brightly painted walls and the computers in the classrooms. Rojas observed to his aides, in front of Salazar, that “these people are doers!” Salazar received, ex post facto, district approval for the expansion of the school which could now enroll ninth through twelfth grade students (originally only ninth and tenth grade students attended). Salazar maintained his direct access to Rojas by providing vote canvassing for a multimillion dollar school bond. In the spring of 1996, Rojas brought Alfaro to RAP high school’s first senior class graduation, telling Alfaro, again, in front of Salazar, “you can trust these guys” (interview, 10/2/01). In October 1996, Alfaro, as the new principal of Mission HS, informed the faculty that RAP HS students would be attending classes as MHS. Later in the year,

at a faculty meeting attended by Rojas, [a teacher] asked if Mission High's school site planning committee would have the authority to determine which community-based organizations were invited into Mission, and what the role of these community-based organizations would be. Rojas responded, "Mitch [Salazar], Gene [Royale], and I have no unspoken agenda about Mission High." (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 219)

Many faculty were confused by the apparent non sequitur. They became suspicious that Rojas did have an unspoken "agenda." Alfaro had already severed MHS's relationships to every community-based organization except RAP. Many began to fear that MHS was being set up for reconstitution, a move they thought would displace existing faculty and programs to make room for positions and funding for Rojas' favorites. One RAP staff member told Margaret Brodtkin, executive director of Coleman Advocates for Youth, "Have you heard? RAP is taking over Mission High School!" (Brodtkin, phone conversation, 12/13/01). Such suspicions had been initially inflamed by the publicly reported hearsay in the neighborhood newspaper just prior to Alfaro's appointment.

Not everyone is a total fan of the embattled principals [Arabolos, Long, and Hudson]; some feel they have not been strong enough in challenging faculty to do better by Latino students. One former student teacher and current employee of the Real Alternatives Program testified that Arabolos refused to let Latino students call their group "La Raza Students." He accused some teachers of closing their doors, locking students out. One student teacher said teachers have told Latino students that they are not qualified to take Algebra. Rojas may feel that reconstituting MHS will help him get rid of the dead wood. He may also believe Arabolos is more concerned with meeting kids' emotional and social needs than their academic ones. . . . The top-down approach to reform by wholesale removal is the exact opposite of the family-building style of Arabolos. . . . Rojas disdains Arabolos' lovey-dovey family approach to education. He told the MHS students that he runs the schools like a business, with quantifiable results to show investors, whether taxpayers or corporate donors . . . the district points to overall CTBS numbers in 1995 as proof that the progress is too slow. They will not wait for the 1996 results. . . (Michael Spero, *The New Mission News*, June 1996).

Rojas' style of leadership did not allay growing suspicions that the district was being run on the principles of secrecy and patronage. The democratic and transparent decision-making process set up by Arabolos' team involved a wide range of parent, teacher, student, and community concerns. This was in sharp contrast to the new Alfaro regime in which RAP had a monopoly of access to Alfaro and to MHS. Rojas' offer to Royale ("How would you like to run the Health Clinic") predated the district's decision to take over the administration of the MHS Health Clinic from San Francisco State University. When Perea asked Alfaro why the Health Clinic was finally shut down, Alfaro said it was because it was "run by a bunch of white, middle-class lesbians" (Perea 7/19/01). This suggests that Rojas, while publicly claiming that he was running the district according to TQM, corporate "data-driven" techniques, was more interested in transferring successful programs to those he personally trusted as loyal supporters, regardless of their abilities or qualifications.²⁰⁴

Rojas was able to create the illusion of "data-driven" reform by being very careful to limit access to himself. Very few penetrated his inner circle (Salazar was one of the few who remained on the inside track). Those on the outside were left either frustrated by lack of information and, unable to challenge Rojas' decisions²⁰⁵ or terrorized by a seemingly arbitrary decision-making process as many of the teachers were at Mission High School. Rojas seemed to incline towards "doers," not consensus builders, suggesting to his staff, upon his arrival in 1992, that they read *The Art of War*, a brief compendium of Chinese military strategy written during the period of 400 to 320 b.c. (MacNamara, *San Francisco*, September 2001; p. 58). Alfaro, not surprisingly, did not set up a democratic decision-making process at Mission High School.

Students describe Alfaro's style as dictatorial, while teachers say he and other administrators have demoralized the staff by stubbornly insisting they know best

²⁰⁴ Rojas' success at creating the illusion of educational reform suggests that the use of "data" at the district level can be easily manipulated.

²⁰⁵ Jill Wynns wrote in 1999 about her experiences as a school board member with Rojas and MHS: the school board "believed anything the superintendent told them. Bill Rojas was the creator of reality at the governance level of the SFUSD. The same superintendent who said that things were going well at Mission one spring, told us the next spring that the 'pace of change' was not fast enough" (Aschenbrener, p. 435). "Those close to Rojas defend his methods, . . . defending his commitment to high standards for all students and saying that is what reconstitution is all about" (Asimov, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/28/96).

how to reach Mission students. . . . Several teachers and students said program and schedule changes were often made with little planning and announced at the last minute, resulting in chaos and confusion. . . . Any changes [Alfaro said] have been designed to increase academic achievement and prevent the school from being reconstituted. . . . School district officials say they are unaware of the discontent at the high school and are satisfied with the work of the new administration (Nanney, *The Independent*, 10/29/96; p. 1).

The teachers perceived “little planning” done by the administration at Mission, perhaps because they were not allowed to participate in it. Possibly “chaos and confusion” occurred because the Mission administrative team failed to consult parents, teachers, and students as to the likely effects of their decisions. District officials accepted reports about Mission High School only from Alfaro, so it is not surprising that they would believe that everything at the school was going according to plan, whatever that plan might have been.

During Alfaro’s first year (1996–97), the frustration on the part of many teachers at Mission with the “chaos and confusion” grew unabated. The Union Building Committee (UBC), representing the unionized teachers of the school, decided to poll the faculty in November 1996. The survey was summarized and presented to the district administration since the assistant superintendent in charge of secondary education, John Quinn, had told a reporter that “we are very, very pleased with all the things that are happening at Mission” (Nanney, *The Independent*, 10/29/96; p. 9). The UBC received 56 responses (total of 103 certificated staff). The survey was divided into four response categories. Faculty and staff were asked to cite (1) positive changes that had happened in their classes or departments since the beginning of the school year, (2) positive changes that had happened schoolwide, (3) setbacks, and (4) concerns. Eleven cited positive changes (2) that could be attributed to Alfaro (e.g., five wrote “closed campus” and one wrote “[new] paint job”). Thirty-one did not respond to the second category while three wrote “none.” Only three respondents failed to cite a “setback” since the beginning of the year. Typical of the citations of “setbacks” by those who did respond were “low morale,” “no planning time,” poor attendance by students, and “lack of support for affective problems”. The “concerns” that were most cited were lack of administrative

leadership (fourteen), lack of input or notification (fifteen), fear of impending reconstitution (thirteen), lack of cooperation among teachers (nine), and the destruction of the program/community involvement (five).

The survey fell on deaf ears. Undaunted, the UBC requested a faculty meeting run by ten district-appointed facilitators to allow them to express their concerns with the new administration. The meeting was held on December 19, 1996. The UBC then organized follow-up meetings with Alfaro to discuss the concerns raised at the December 19 meeting. Seeing no progress in these follow-up meetings, the UBC then requested a meeting with Rojas. In a presentation to Rojas on February 4, 1997, UBC representatives expressed their concerns. Tony Mana told Rojas that

the biggest question on the minds of the faculty was “What is the big picture for MHS?” More specifically: Who is deciding which programs stay and which are cut? What is the basis for these decisions? Why is there no professional dialogue or articulation about changes that are being made? . . . Connie Flannery spoke of the programs that had been cut and the lack of thought, process or communication regarding those cuts.²⁰⁶ . . . She mentioned that despite the efforts of the faculty to establish a School Site Council, there was still none, an omission which could well cause a loss of funds for the school

[Rojas] concluded by identifying the three areas where he could take immediate action: support in assuring fiscal management at the school and the establishment of a school site council; facilitation at all future UBC and staff meetings; and clarification of his academic objectives for MHS. He stated his support for the cores and directed that any further concerns be directed to either Maria Santos or John Quinn (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 299).

Rojas failed to respond to the fundamental questions being asked by the teachers.

Promising to establish a school site council would not address the problems inherent in

²⁰⁶ In October, Alfaro had decided to close the Step-to-College program to seniors who had not yet passed competency tests in reading, writing, and math (requirements for graduation). Alfaro explained, “You can’t put kids into a program who aren’t ready to graduate” (Nanney, *The Independent*, 10/29/96; p. 9). Other changes that the teachers objected to were: elimination of attendance program and mental health intern program; elimination of mental health supervisor position; removal of graduation pictures from the walls of the school; Step-to-College courses cut from ten to two; elimination of career center coordinator; ESL students pulled out of the CORE programs; and 19 community based support groups (and their programs) denied access to the school (Aschenbrener, forthcoming; p. 192).

Alfaro's management style ("no professional dialogue or articulation about changes"). Did Rojas believe that the "clarification of his academic objectives" would explain why Alfaro cut the Step-to-College program and eliminated the mental health supervisor position? Based on the teachers' previous experience, being referred to John Quinn was akin to referring the teachers to a brick wall. Not surprisingly, Rojas' disingenuous response did not end the convening of future UBC meetings as many of the teachers at Mission High School attempted to convince someone in the district of the legitimacy of their concerns during the rest of the school year.²⁰⁷ Those who had learned the value of participating in the decision-making process under the previous administrative team felt its absence sorely.

The students also were kept informed and expressed their concerns through the student newspaper, the *West Wing*. The pursuit of information by the students led to consistent attempts by Alfaro to censor the paper. The student reporters, however, like the teachers, had already experienced what "free speech" meant under the previous administration and were not cowed. One student reporter for the *West Wing* wrote in the January 1997 issue:

The *West Wing* has been accused of being too negative by a number of people, including some administrators, the most vocal being principal Ted Alfaro. . . . However, the last issue of the *West Wing* contained 31 positive stories. Only five were negative. What causes such a misunderstanding? I suspect the perception of negativity in the paper is just a reflection of negativity going on in the school. [For example], Alfaro feels after lunch a lot of students do not return to school for their afternoon classes. Guess what? Locking the doors doesn't help the situation any. The students who don't want to attend afternoon classes still leave. . . . No one has tried to find out what makes them want to leave. . . . Now those who don't want to stay are called "problem students," which makes it easier to ship them off to god knows where after the weak attempt to make them stay doesn't work. . . . I believe the solution will come only when administrators start

²⁰⁷ The following incident suggests that attempts were being made to discredit the MHS teachers' position. At some point during this process, Gene Royale, a district liaison to MHS appointed by Rojas, phoned Jose Luis Pavlon, former student expelled in 1994, and asked him, "How would you like to fuck over those white teachers at MHS? There is a union hearing meeting coming up and we need you to come and get others to come to talk shit about the school. We are trying to get it reconstituted." Jose at first expressed interest but then realized that alienating the teachers would then make access to Mission High School virtually impossible. It was only the teachers that were letting him inside the school to organize student demonstrations and walk-outs (interview with Pavlon, 11/2/01).

talking to the people at this school, students and teachers alike. . . . Alfaro says he is planning to do a lot more to improve things at Mission, but most of those ideas are vague and in the future. And planning isn't really doing. I mean, I plan to clean my room. I plan to be an astronaut. Will either one happen? I don't know; I am still planning (Joey Guerrero, *West Wing*, January 28, 1997; reprinted in Aschenbrener, forthcoming.).²⁰⁸

Community Power as a Threat to the Political and Corporate Machines

The dramatic shift in the decision making process from one of arduous consensus- and relationship-building under Arabolos to one of decision-by-decree under Alfaro reflects a corporate/bureaucratic influence on the formation of school policy. When Rojas argued that he was “uncomfortable” with Arabolos because she was “too close to the culture of the school,” Rojas was expressing a lack of confidence in Arabolos’ reliability as a cog in the district’s bureaucratic machine. Rojas could no longer be assured that Arabolos would be responsive to his authority because she was also responding to the concerns and issues presented to her by those “below” her. She had divided loyalties. Ironically, in attempting to accomplish the goals of the BRT as they trickled down the bureaucratic hierarchy, Arabolos challenged the very nature of that hierarchy; she threatened to become or was, in fact, an unreliable part of the machine. She took “site-based decision-making” beyond the limits as defined by the BRT and unwittingly created a base of power from which she could have challenged Rojas’ authority. That she was truly interested in the fate of her students and not interested in power for its own sake probably never occurred to Rojas whose understanding of his job was that of head of a political or bureaucratic machine.

Bureaucracies and political organizations are often referred to as machines. The metaphor reflects the desire of those in charge to maintain the illusion or impose the

²⁰⁸ Vice Principal Eddings told Guerrero on February 6, 1997, that he would be transferred to a dropout prevention center at Pupil Services Academy in two weeks (Jeff Stark, *SF Weekly*, 2/12–18/97). Guerrero went before the Student Attendance Review Board and was returned to Mission High School. He continued to write for the *West Wing* until the end of the year.

reality that they are actually in control, whether they wish to be in control of a school district, city, society, nature, or history. A machine is composed of inert parts. One pushes a button or pulls a lever and the cogs and wheels turn on command. When they don't, they are replaced with new or used parts that will function within the larger machine. Carolyn Merchant argues in *The Death of Nature* (1990) that our institutions are dominated by a culture in which the machine is “the unifying model for science and society” (p. 192).

The machine has permeated and reconstructed human consciousness so totally that today we scarcely question its validity. Nature, society, and the human body are composed of interchangeable atomized parts that can be repaired or replaced from outside. The “technological fix” mends an ecological malfunction, new human beings replace the old to maintain the smooth functioning of industry and bureaucracy, and interventionist medicine exchanges a fresh heart for a worn-out, diseased one. . . . Moreover, as conceptual framework, the mechanical order has associated with it a framework of values based on power, fully compatible with the directions taken by commercial capitalism (Merchant, 1990; p. 193).

Merchant traces the origin of this cosmology back to the Scientific and Commercial Revolutions of sixteenth century Europe. Such a world view has been elaborated upon throughout the succeeding centuries. It would seem that the computer age has served to entrench further the paradigm of the machine as the reigning cosmology of the business world. Arabolos, however, had pursued the model of the organism, or to put it in more modern terms, holism or ecology and not the machine. Arabolos had become guilty of no longer being an interchangeable part of a machine. She was no longer controllable. However much she wanted to please her superiors, create career pathways to the health professions, increase the test scores based on a “dead” curriculum, Arabolos also knew she had participated in the creation of an ecosystem, a living system in which every part is essential and if removed weakens the system by threatening its stability. She was not only “close to the culture of the school” but an essential part, as essential as any of the other parts of the organism. Every time a teacher or student complained that Rojas was acting to destroy “our family,” “our community,” that was further evidence to the superintendent that he needed to remove Arabolos and her team.

Alfaro not only behaved as an interchangeable part but also attempted to transform the school into a machine through the destruction of the school's living, breathing connections to its culture, history, and community. Tracy Brown, a community activist, tells the following symbolic story. Rojas asked Salazar to help Alfaro develop relationships with the surrounding community, the same community that had so strenuously objected to the removal of Arabolos. Rojas set up a community advisory board and appointed its members. The advisory board, however, was in constant battle with Alfaro. Members of the committee objected to Alfaro's decisions to begin to dismantle the health clinic and to issue large numbers of "safety transfers." Brown didn't become involved in the battle between Alfaro and the community until she heard that Alfaro had ordered the removal of the school's graduation pictures from the walls of the schools. "That was the most disrespectful thing that he could ever have done to the community. That's when I said, 'okay, it's on. I'm calling in my favors.'" Brown explained that there were several reasons why the graduation pictures meant so much to the community. For many families, the person in those pictures was the first person in their family to have graduated from high school – a feat of which they were extremely proud. Another dimension was that one could walk down the hall and point out the musician, Carlos Santana in one picture, San Francisco Supervisor Leland Yee in another. These people are the community's role models, powerful symbols of the ability not only to succeed, but also succeed "at being true to yourself, being who you are." Brown explained, "I could walk down the hall and say, 'here's my aunts, here's Santana and here's me.'" By taking down the pictures, Alfaro was expressing no regard for the community and no regard for the history of the school (interview with Tracy Brown (10/15/01).

In the world of the machine, there is no need for history and no need for community.²⁰⁹ Rojas had recruited his team of "doers," like-minded people who owed their loyalty to him. Those parts that didn't function within the machine that Alfaro was fashioning at Mission would be replaced or simply removed. The first year Alfaro was principal (1996–97), Rojas placed Mission High School in the Comprehensive School

²⁰⁹ The events surrounding the replacement of Arabolos with Alfaro seem to suggest that the existence of community, horizontal networks of families, organizations, and individuals, is the greatest threat to those hoping to control others through a centralized, hierarchal bureaucracy.

Improvement Plan. The next year, Mission High School was reconstituted. Rojas wrote in his dissertation (1996):

[Reconstitution] is a dramatic and radical tactic for dysfunctional institutions which possess an organizational culture and system of organic deterioration . . . [it] *commits the persons in the school system to the rules and principles of excellence and equity* for all children. . . . [Reconstitution] places students and parents as institutional stakeholders of an educational facility and the *reculturing* of the institution through a new hiring process of all adult employees. . . . [It] provides an expeditious path for school change and the development of an educational structure that espouses the goals articulated by the district through the superintendent and the school board (pp. 4-6) [my emphasis].

Perhaps what Rojas meant by “reculture” was retool. For the development of a new culture involves the development of relationships over time, not merely hiring a new set of faculty who all “articulate a set of beliefs in success and high expectations for minority students” (Rojas, 1996; p. 25). It is also not clear how hiring a new set of faculty necessarily “re-cultures the entire school community” (p. 26).

Such assertions begin to make some sense if one assumes that people and the programs they develop and work within resemble inert machine parts (or reprogrammed computer parts) rather than complex organisms with histories and connections to other people and programs. Ironically, Rojas claimed to be in alignment with a “new ecology” model.²¹⁰ Yet, he operated within the BRT model of top-down, “data-driven” and reward/punishment reform.²¹¹ Rojas claims that reconstitution was a successful reform initiative during his tenure as superintendent because test scores went up (p. 92). It was successful because it was able to “ensure that all schools in the district are accountable for the academic growth of the student population they serve.” Rojas refers to the *New Ecology* in arguing that reconstitution begins the reculturing of a school which is “arrived

²¹⁰ Rojas cites this source in the two-page bibliography of his dissertation as: Hughes, J. T., & Richards, C. E. (n. d.) *The New Ecology of School Management: Theory, Tools and Cases*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

²¹¹ See Chapter 2: The heart of BRT’s agenda for the last ten years has been to move state governments to establish “rigorous standards” for *all* (their emphasis) students in core academic subjects (math, science, English, and social studies) that are measurable, and then adopt state-wide testing to determine whether the standards are being met. If the standards are not met, then students should not be allowed to graduate and the individual school in which those students are found should be “sanctioned.” That standards are measurable is crucial to knowing whether the standards are being met. Furthermore, measurable standards are the only way one can “have data that allows one to guide efforts to achieve higher standards”(BRT, 1996; p. 6). BRT decided to place the focus on standards because “standards drive curriculum, teacher training, and assessment” (BRT, 1996; p. 8). Or, in other words, “when standards are high and assessments are geared to such standards, teaching improves and student achievement rises” (BRT, 1998; p. 4).

at through painstakingly constructivist developments and the learning of collaborative systems within the school climate and organization” over the “long term” (p. 26). Yet Rojas gave Arabolos only two years to show “measurable gains” and Alfaro had one year to do so (Mission was reconstituted after Alfaro’s first year). After five years as principal, Alfaro was removed by Rojas’ successor, Arlene Ackerman, and the state government is presently considering taking over the school on the basis of its SAT-9 scores during the past two years.

Another way to understand why Rojas may have objected to Arabolos’ proximity to the school’s culture is provided by Polly Greenberg (1969). Greenberg was one of the founders of the first Head Start program in 1965, called the Child Development Group of Mississippi, which was run out of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The parents were organized to run the schools so that

instead of beginning with classroom quality and attempting to work toward “involving” parents and the community, we were going to try beginning with parents and the community — and then work toward quality in the classroom. . . . Stage one of solving the problem is to direct experimental work at the process through which, and the people through whom, the classroom and the system even come into existence. . . . We wanted to see if poor people and minority groups could develop their own educational systems and classrooms. We guessed they needed their own elected school boards, which would hire their brands of specialists and supervisors who would specialize and supervise according to their goals, exactly as middle-class people and the majority group now do. Until this had happened, we felt it mattered relatively little what kinds of ultra-subtle and super-accurate, sophisticated things went on in the classroom. These come later, these come in stage two. (pp. 101–102).

According to the participants in the program, both stage one and stage two were remarkably successful. Yet the OEO eventually decided to remove the very people who had engineered such success. Greenberg believed this happened because the staff had

acquir[ed] too much knowledge of a project. Too much knowledge leads to identification, and therefore to a conflict of loyalties. . . . [If one had “too much knowledge” then one] was generally considered to be “prejudiced,” thus contaminated [and] artfully kept [away from the project] (p. 307).

The staff had also become “overinvolved in and overemotional about [the] project” (p. 307).

From this point of view, one could argue that Rojas saw Arabolos as a threat to the compartmentalized structure of district administration. Arabolos was “too close to the

culture of the school.” She was “overinvolved,” “overemotional,” had “too much knowledge” of what the community’s goals were and what programs might effectively achieve those goals. By responding to the interests and needs of the community, Arabolos was no longer completely obedient to Rojas’ agenda. By promoting a community or family style “operation,” Arabolos put her team in direct competition with the machine-like, hierarchal, military, or business model that Rojas championed. Arabolos’ identification with her projects threatened to “interfere with [Rojas’] operation.” The “dominant tone” affecting Rojas’ decisions was set by the Business Roundtable’s pervasive campaign of using a single, state-mandated test to identify those schools requiring “intervention.” In 1996, Mission High School’s test scores were among the lowest of all comprehensive high schools. Other factors, especially ones visible to those who had intimate knowledge of the school, did not matter. Information about Mission High School programs that was not quantifiable was ignored. It did not fit into the blueprint established by Rojas from the beginning of his superintendency, a blueprint that was to be implemented with machine-like inevitability.

Those involved in creating reform at Mission High School were completely surprised and perplexed by Rojas’ decision to remove Arabolos, Hudson, and Long. Their inability to both anticipate the removal and fathom the reasons for such a decision arises out of their inability to see how many layers one needs to penetrate before a pattern emerges. Rojas was selected by a school board whose leadership was simultaneously frustrated by the lack of academic success by Latino students, frustrated with the teachers union’s opposition to reform (as defined by the BRT),²¹² and possibly hopeful that a strong and ambitious Latino superintendent could lead to some “fiscal love” directed towards the Latino community. Rojas arrived in San Francisco during the same year that the NAACP lawyers were beginning to increase the pressure on the district to improve the educational opportunities of students attending the poorest schools. At the head of a large bureaucracy that he was determined to control²¹³ and breathing the air produced by the Business Roundtable’s high-stakes testing campaign, Rojas fashioned the process of

²¹²Interview with Carlotta del Portillo by Mark McNamara (June 2001).

²¹³“Rojas wants new leadership . . . announces that 17 administrators will be laid off” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/16/95).

reconstitution so that it was in alignment with those who could further his personal ambitions.

That Rojas ended up used-and-discarded in the same manner he used and discarded others may have come as a surprise to him. Yet given the larger context in which he was a player, it does not seem surprising as much as predictable. The backlash that the BRT is experiencing today because of its tactic of “turning up the heat” is the same backlash that Rojas experienced. The teacher’s union that the NAACP lawyers found lacking in initiative was provoked into action by the expansion and ruthless implementation of reconstitution. The recommendation by the Institute for Responsive Education that when community activists find the superintendent impervious to influence, one should then campaign for his removal, was intuitively adopted by the teachers’ union and community activists such as those from Coleman Advocates for Youth.²¹⁴ Rojas’ refusal to test all children in San Francisco, perhaps to bolster his claim of raising test scores, did alienate important support among state legislators in Sacramento where the BRT principle of testing every child in English was written into the STAR program. Rojas overstepped his place in the hierarchy when he began publicly criticizing the state representatives from San Francisco. This resulted in the promise of a state audit of the SFUSD. It was perhaps this threat of exposure that prompted Rojas to suddenly resign from his position in San Francisco and accept an offer to run the Dallas, Texas, school district in 1999. During his first year as principal of Mission High School, Alfaro proceeded to oversee the dismantling of the health clinic, health “career pathways,” the Step-to-College program, and the network of community-based organizations that supported the educational reforms pursued at MHS from 1985 to 1996. The school then developed a partnership with the computer company, Cisco Systems, developed Law Academy courses, and allowed RAP to monopolize community access to the school. This, apparently, was part of the CSIP process. MHS was then reconstituted in 1997. Alfaro remained but many teachers did not. CSIP and Reconstitution were the means by which “equity and excellence” was to be brought to the 60,000 students of the SFUSD. Yet

²¹⁴ Coleman Advocates was able to organize 70 community-based organizations and the Parent Advocates for Change (PAC) also campaigned actively for school board members who would oppose Rojas’ policies during the November 1998 school board elections. As a result, a new, anti-Rojas school board majority was elected (Therese Moore, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11/4/98; p. A20,).

Rojas' intervention at Mission High School revealed just how narrow and distorted the definition of "equity and excellence" was. Furthermore, the nature of the intervention suggests that "equity and excellence" had little to do with the purpose of the reforms.

Instead Rojas and his loyal staff had managed to transform the original intent of the Consent Decree into a shape that would meet the approval of those directing educational policy at the state and national level. What students, teachers, parents, and community leaders believed and worked toward did not matter. What did matter was a top-down, test-score driven, reward and sanction reform model. This is what both the San Francisco NAACP and the school board members who hired Rojas supported. Teachers and community leaders worked hard to replace Rojas supporters on the school board, succeeding in 1998 and again in 2000. A new superintendent was hired and Alfaro was removed from Mission High School. But the damage had been done — the health center was gone, the community had been dispersed, the school population had shrunk, and the state was threatening the school with the II/UPS program. The newly constituted school board and the SF NAACP now supported a new superintendent, Arlene Ackerman, who is even more invested in top-down, test-score driven, reward and sanction reform than Bill Rojas was.

Conclusion

Arabolos' Mission High School planning team attempted educational reform in an environment of shrinking options due to a national business-led systemic reform movement. In 1992, the California state superintendent's office directed district high schools to adopt the CBR's "expand and focus" program outlined in *Second to None: A Vision of the New California High School*, a report of the California High School Task Force. The Mission Planning team dutifully incorporated the report's suggestions to create "career pathways" and a college-level courses for all students. The planning team also spent a great deal of time learning about "data-driven" decision-making in response to Rojas' use of reconstitution. The team pored over test scores, attendance rates, suspensions, and the percentages of A's and F's the teachers gave out every semester. They also exerted effort and time writing site plans that explained how the school's "instructional delivery system" "addressed the achievement of all students, especially Latinos and African Americans" (refer to Appendix F). These were the requirements imposed by the rewards and interventions program designed by Rojas' administration to ensure that all educational decisions were "outcome-based," the principle upon which systemic reform rested.

Yet, in spite of the sincerity with which the Mission team implemented systemic reform, they failed to adhere to the true goals of high-stakes testing. In successfully increasing the likelihood of academic success for the majority of minority students at MHS, Arabolos and her allies established a "family" atmosphere and "nourished" relationships. The principle driving their reform decisions was to build community and respond to its concerns. In other words, they interpreted and implemented the BRT's mandate to increase parental involvement and promote site-based decision-making very differently from how it was intended. Instead of focusing on a test-prep curriculum as BASRC promoted or as Linda McNeil witnessed in the Texas schools, the Mission team believed in college level, critical thinking seminars, and a literature and history of identity course. A health clinic was built in the basement, not just for students but also for the entire neighborhood. The students experienced real decision-making authority by participating on the planning committee, working on an uncensored newspaper, and

being elected to student government positions that had authentic representative power. Parental involvement was encouraged by individual conversations between parents, and the administration that were intimately connected to issues of the students' attendance. Arabolos and her team were responding to the interests and needs of students, parents and residents of the Mission High School neighborhood. The school had become part of a "place" in which the residents were bound together by psychological, sentimental as well as material ties.

This was not what Rojas or the BRT CEOs had in mind. Rojas may have fired Arabolos anyway, even if there had been no hovering BRT agenda. She was a threat to his control. Rojas needed to maintain control of the \$500 million system in order to deliver patronage and people in the service of the local corporate agenda. These were issues independent of the national corporate agenda. Nevertheless the limitations placed upon the Mission planning teams' options and the direction pursued by Arabolos' successor reveal the direct influence of systemic reform. From 1996 to 1997, Alfaro began the process of eliminating the college-level seminars of the Step-to-College program by requiring high test scores as a prerequisite for participation. Alfaro eventually replaced Step-to-College with the CBR-supported School-to-Career program. Alfaro reduced bilingual and multicultural academic courses and increased the number of standardized Advanced Placement courses. The degree to which Alfaro successfully dismantled community support for a Mission educational program can be seen by the absence of any neighborhood or community protest upon his removal in 2001.

The protests of Arabolos' supporters — the letters, the student walkout, and the packed school board meetings — failed to prevent a dramatic change in the educational program at Mission High School. The only way the community was able to influence school policy was with a citywide campaign directed against the superintendent's policy of reconstitution. Through campaigns during school board elections and pressure by the San Francisco teacher's union, the community was able to begin reversing the Rojas/BRT agenda. A new school board removed Alfaro and the union was able to eliminate the most egregiously harmful aspects of reconstitution. But these signs of community influence were rendered moot by the adoption of systemic reform in California. In spite of a new MHS principal who has begun to successfully rebuild community ties, the high

school is once again under threat of reconstitution. This time, however, the threat is not from the district but from the state. Furthermore, the new superintendent, Ackerman, is just as attached to test scores as Rojas was and equally insistent that the school board allow the superintendent to determine policy. Ackerman's policy, as articulated in the district's *Excellence for All* program, focuses on aligning district policy with state policy.

Based on a review of the research on school board responsiveness, Zerchykov (1984) gives the following advice to communities who wish to have influence over what happens in their schools: ensure that school board members are elected by district (instead of at large) and have one-term limits; if the superintendent is unresponsive, work to defeat the incumbent board members; or, supplement direct confrontation with the board with indirect relationship with the superintendent; or, try to play the superintendent and the board against each other instead of they giving you the run-around. While some or all of this advice was employed by communities in San Francisco during the Rojas administration, public influence over school board policy was still minimal. One reason for the powerlessness of communities during the Rojas regime was the court's decision to usurp the political process. As a result "experts" determined the fate of desegregation in San Francisco instead of the public. The district's schools remained segregated and unequal while systemic reform prevailed. Since 1999, Zerchykov's advice to communities seeking influence over educational policy has become moot. The passage of PSAA has turned the district superintendent into an administrative arm of state standards and tests. Local school boards, and therefore the public, have no power to alter the situation at the district and school-site level. It remains to be seen how effective local leaders are in overcoming the significant obstacles to organizing community opposition on a statewide basis.

The resources of communities, especially poor ones, can hardly compete with the money and personal access that corporate leaders and lobbyists have. This is especially true since the BRT has succeeded in creating a national network of organizations to support its agenda. Leading educational researchers at prestigious universities praise the implementation of systemic reform and continue to use test scores as dependent variables in their research. Public Agenda informs the press that the "public" is favor of "high standards for all." Editorialists berate those who oppose high-stakes testing for lowering

standards and expectations for poor and minority students. Nonprofit organizations offer training to teachers and administrators on how to use test scores to select effective instructional strategies and programs. State governors regularly convene and consult with the nation's corporate leaders about how to be the "education governors" of their respective states.

Such a widespread and interconnected web of people and organizations has generally succeeded in focusing debate over educational reform away from a discussion of goals to one of means. As the legislative analysts informed California lawmakers in 1994, the goals of education

once controversial and widely debated, are now generally accepted as the foundation of our reform efforts (Connor 1994a; p. 130).

The goal of increasing the numbers of high achieving students by means of high-stakes testing is still, however, "controversial" if not "widely debated." Other goals such as those achieved by integration have been displaced by the BRT agenda. The BRT network of organizations has muted debate over goals and eliminated the community's ability to influence the process by which goals are determined. The BRT believes that the growing "backlash" to high-stakes testing can be "handled" and they may well be correct. As long as the historical antagonism between parents and teachers continues, such a prediction certainly seems plausible.

Yet the expectation that systemic reform will increase the number of high skilled workers is equally problematic. To expect increasing numbers of students to achieve high test scores doesn't guarantee they will do so, nor will threatening teachers and administrators with "intervention" necessarily turn them into more effective test-prep coaches. The tests themselves are most strongly correlated with socioeconomic status, a variable that, if it can be altered, normally takes three generations to do so. Besides good test-takers don't necessarily make good computer programmers, engineers, and industrial designers. Rarely do the technical manuals for standardized tests provide any predictive validity correlation coefficients. If systemic reform is a response to a crisis of legitimacy in the public school system, it may have only raised expectations leading to an even greater crisis than it attempted to avert. If systemic reform was a response to the economic crisis posed by the Japanese challenge in the late 1970s, it seems not to have

been necessary after all, and perhaps high-stakes testing will pass with time as the backlash picks up steam. If systemic reform is the means by communities are to be denied all influence on what the goals of education should be, then it has already been successful and threatens to become even more so.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Creating the New Myth

The Education Trust (ET) is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. and part of the Business Roundtable's educational reform network. Funded in part by the Knight Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust, ET has teamed up with the National Association of System Heads to replace the old myth— Some-Can and Some-Can't— with the new myth -- Everyone-Can meet the “high academic standards” being institutionalized by the new statewide testing systems. In the document *Thinking K-16* (Fall, 1999), ET outlines what they hope to achieve.

The authors of *Thinking K-16* (Fall, 1999) argue that the purpose of ET is to “transform schools and colleges into institutions that genuinely serve all students.” They are “concerned with the quality of education provided to our neediest young people” and want to “focus on schools and colleges most often left behind in reform efforts” (p. 2). Their main concern is “excellence and equity” and “closing the education gap.” These broad ideals are in sharp contrast to the very narrow “action items” that the document details. Members of ET have teamed up with “State Education CEO's” to engineer an alignment of state tests required for high school graduation with state university admission requirements or placement tests (p. 4).

To do this, they believe, requires specifically defining and standardizing (at a “high level”) the content of a high school “knowledge and skills core curriculum” (pp. 3, 14) that, if mastered, allows students to enter college without “wasting valuable time” in remedial courses. For example, “admission without remediation” means at least mastery of Algebra 2 because this course is most commonly required by postsecondary institutions for placement into credit-bearing mathematics” (fn., p. 4). “Equity and excellence” means “educating all students as if they were bound for college and the workplace” (p.2). “Closing the Education Gap” will occur when standards are raised. Raising standards raises all students scores while closing the gap between whites and nonwhite students. The “evidence” that supports such a myth is “El Paso test scores” gathered by the El Paso (Texas) Collaborative for Academic Excellence from 1992 to 1998 (p. 9).

In spite of very little reality to support their theory of education reform, state and K–12 “system heads” seem to be going ahead with the implementation of curriculum alignment. *Thinking K–16* (Fall, 1999) documents the success that “K–12 and higher education CEOs “have had in promoting “high academic achievement for all students at all levels.” In New York, the high school graduation test (the Regents Exam) has been required of all students, cut-off scores have been raised and the City University System (soon to be joined by the State University System) has begun to use the Regents exam scores to place students in college courses. In Maryland, a plan is being formulated to develop a high school exit exam that will simultaneously be used as an admission and placement exam in the state university system. In Massachusetts, ET is delighted that the state’s colleges are using the writing portion of the MCAS for writing course placements (p. 4).

The movement for higher standards narrowly defined seems to have taken on some of the characteristics of a religious war. ET identifies four Commandments, uh, Commitments that need to be made by those pursuing “equity and excellence”:

Commitment A: We will ensure that all high school graduates meet high standards.

Commitment B: We will accept only teachers who can bring all students’ performance to high standards.

Commitment C: We will accept into college only students who meet high standards.

Commitment D: We will ensure that all teacher candidates we produce are prepared to bring student performance to high standards (p. 11).

The success of this strategy seems to rest upon the zealous worship of the myth that if the “ceiling becomes the floor” then all students will respond by learning all the same things since “college attendance will probably be near universal” (p. 11). Every One Can Succeed. Those who don’t? Then the failing must reside within the individual or the parents of that individual. If ET has its way, all high school students will not graduate from high school unless they can pass a test that qualifies them for admission into a college or university. The students must stay in high school until they learn what is needed to pass such a test.

Every Student Seen To Need College Prep

By Debra Viadero

Education Week, October 10, 2001

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=06high.h21>

"High school graduation should become the finish line for a rigorous learning experience and a launching pad for postsecondary study," said Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, the chairman of the 29-member National Commission on the Senior Year. The group, a public-private panel formed by then-Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, issued its final report here during a press conference held Oct. 4 at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

When the commission was called together 16 months ago, its charge was to study ways to keep students and schools from frittering away learning opportunities in the final year of schooling. But the group quickly concluded that the problems confronting high schools go deeper than "senioritis."

Underpinning the group's work all along has been the idea that students need more than a high school diploma to raise a family in a fast-changing, technology-driven economy. "We must put forth the radical idea that Americans, whatever their background, must have 15 years of education and training over the course of their lives," the report says. To remedy the problem, the panel calls on high schools to make the college-prep track the "default" curriculum for students. Educators should be required to obtain parental permission, the panelists say, before assigning a student to a less academic track — regardless of whether that student's future plans include a technical college, a community college, or an Ivy League university.

Eighteen states, from Georgia to Oregon, have established such "P-16" systems to increase access to higher education and align curricula at all levels of schooling. "It seems that only 10 states have aligned their high school graduation requirements in English and only two in mathematics," the report says.

To keep students from getting lost in the school pipeline early on, the commission also calls on teachers, administrators, counselors, students, and parents to draw up "formal learning plans" for every student, probably beginning as early as sixth grade, and to update them annually. If students reach tenth grade and they're still too far behind, the report suggests, schools may need to perform some academic triage and provide extra help and double doses of troublesome core courses.

Appendix B: Newspaper Database with FileMaker Pro

Below is a copy of one of the 740 records I made with a FileMaker Pro (3.0) application. Each record represents one newspaper article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* (from 1980-2001) unless otherwise noted in the “reporter” field. I coded each article based on the issues raised in the contents of the article. By doing “finds” on each issue, I was able to get a general sense of which of the issues represented significant trends and during which particular times between 1980-2001.

Appendix C: Washington State's 1998 Schedule of Communication Activities (BRT, 1998; P. 30)

Activities	Audience		
1. Broad Public Information	Opinion Leaders	Parents	Educators

Publications

Thematic quarterly newsletter	•	•	•
Parent's & teacher's guides: 4 th grade and 7 th grade test scores		•	•
Easy to read parent's brochure		•	
Flyers to parents		•	
Comparison guide to old vs. new tests	•	•	•
One-page overview of education reform	•	•	•
Business person's/employer's guide to education reform	•		
Explanations of certificate of mastery and new accountability	•	•	•
Postcard to "supporters" on PFL mailing list	•	•	•

Targeted Advertising

PSA campaign for Spanish-speaking parents		•	
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Media

Meetings with editorial boards	•		
Assorted op-eds: 4 th grade test scores and 7 th grade tests	•	•	•
Newsletter articles to community groups and businesses	•	•	•

Video/Internet

Video explaining 4 th grade and 7 th grade tests		•	•
Maintain and update web site	•	•	•

Research

Follow-up 1996 poll with 3-4 questions on standards and testing	•		•
Focus groups on communicating about accountability	•	•	•

**Washington State’s 1998 Schedule of Communication Activities
(continued)**

	Opinion Leaders	Parents	Educators
2. Community Support and Grassroots Development			
Community Outreach			
Community breakfasts (Everett, Spokane, Yakima, Tri-Cities)	•	•	•
Summer workshop for school district communicators		•	•
Fall workshop for new legislators	•		
Briefings to community leaders on accountability recommendations	•		
Meetings/follow-up with 30 chamber of commerce	•		
“Business Sector” meetings with Bergeson	•		
“Brown bag” lunches with employees on tests		•	
Community Advisers (8 cities)			
Local events to explain new tests	•	•	
Speaker’s bureau	•	•	
Outreach to local churches/minority groups	•	•	
Support for locally-developed communication plans	•	•	•

From Assessing and Addressing the “Testing Backlash” (BRT report, Spring 2001; pp. 23-24)

Washington: Making Standards Work

The centerpiece of the Partnership’s work is an annual study of rapidly improving schools — those making the greatest progress in helping students meet new standards, especially with disadvantaged student populations. An independent researcher performs the study, and the results show the steps schools take to help their students meet the standards. The research report helps communicate the positive ways many schools are using the new standards and tests to improve student learning. The report is disseminated broadly in the media and directly to elected officials, school leaders, parents, activists, and community leaders.

This year, the Partnership also prepared a companion video that, along with a discussion guide, was sent to all PTA chapters and every school principals. The video was designed carefully to address some of the most pressing concerns from teachers about the state standards and tests. Using the voices of principals and teachers at schools that have helped disadvantaged students improve test scores, the video contradicts the arguments that some kids cannot meet higher standards and that standards force teachers to be less creative or standardize their teaching.

Appendix D: Sample Alternative Perspectives on the Direction Education Reform Should Take

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Plato. Republic.

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Appendix E: IEL Grants and Contributors (from IEL Web page)

Corporate Funders

Aetna Foundation
American Express Foundation
Anheuser-Busch Companies
ARCO Foundation
Automatic Data Processing, Inc.
BellSouth Foundation
BellSouth Corporation
Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Inc.
Chemical Bank
Chrysler Corporation Fund
CIGNA Foundation
Citibank, N.A.
Computer Curriculum Corporation
Exxon Education Foundation
Fannie Mae Foundation
Ford Motor Company Fund
GE Fund
General Motors Corporation
General Mills Foundation
Hewlett-Packard Company
Honeywell Inc.
IBM Corporation
J.C. Penny Company, Inc.
Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies
Contribution Fund
Lockheed Martin Corporation
Mattel Foundation
Metropolitan Life Foundation
Mobil Corporation
The Proctor & Gamble Fund

Prudential Foundation
Rockwell International Corporation
Ryder System Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Scholastic, Inc.
Sears, Roebuck and Co. Foundation
SBC Communications Foundation
Sprint Foundation
Travelers Foundation
TRW, Inc.
U.S. West Foundation
Union Carbide Corporation
The Washington Post
Xerox Foundation

Foundations which provide IEL with financial support

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
The Commonwealth Fund
The Danforth Foundation
DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund
Ford Foundation
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
The George Gund Foundation
E.M. Kauffman Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Lilly Endowment, Inc.
MacArthur Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Pew Charitable Trusts
Rockefeller Foundation
E.C. Wareheim Foundation

Appendix F – The Reconstitution of Mission High School

The data below has been taken from a memo written by Superintendent Bill Rojas to all CSIP participants on June 19, 1997. The Memo, as a way of explanation, provided the data by which Rojas decided which CSIP participants were remaining in CSIP, which were “graduating” and which were to be reconstituted in the 1997–98 school year. Mission High School and Golden Gate Elementary were the last two schools to be reconstituted by Rojas. Lupe Arabolos was principal of MHS from 1994 to 1996. Ted Alfaro was principal of MHS from 1996-2001.

Enrolled in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan during the 1996-97 school year	Superintendent’s Recommendations for 1997-8	Total point count of both “qualitative” and “quantitative” indicators
Cleveland Elementary	CSIP	62.6
Fairmont Elementary	Graduate	80.7
Golden Gate Elementary	RECONSTITUTE	60
Marshall Elementary	Graduate	76.1
Sanchez Elementary	CSIP	60.2
Denman Middle	Graduate	86.6
McAteer High School	Graduate	79.4
Mission High School	RECONSTITUTE	60.5

Criteria by which schools evaluated to determine CSIP status	Mission High School	McAteer High School
QUALITATIVE INDICATORS		
A. School Site Plan (25%)		
1. approved by all departments and offices that have responsibility for its review and approval	5/5	5/5
2. degree to which activities of the Plan were implemented according to Plan’s target dates	5/10	7/10
3. degree activities of the Plan addressed the achievement of all students, especially Latinos and African Americans	6/10	9/10
B. Site Visitation by superintendent and advisory panel (25%)		
4. degree of congruence between what is observed by visit, portfolio presentation and on site plan	7/10	8/10
5. evidence that direction of school’s program is positive, especially for Latinos and African Americans	9/15	11/15

C. Portfolio (25%)		
6. degree it documents the school's program direction efforts, and plans to improve achievement for all students, especially Latinos and African Americans	11.7/25	22.5/25
D. Oral Presentation to Superintendent and Advisory Panel (25%)		
7. degree of effective communication of efforts, plans, commitment to improve achievement of Latinos and African Americans	18/25	20/25
TOTAL QUALITATIVE SCORE (out of 100)	61.7	82.5
QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS		
1. Four year CTBS scores 1993-1997 [formula by which test scores converted to 25 point scale not provided in Rojas' memo]	15.75/25	18.75/25
2. Writing Samples: grade 9, pre-test (October) and post-test (March). Points awarded based on improvement from Fall to Spring: 1.25 points for each tenth of a point gain in mean scores) At Mission High School: 113 samples (out of 354 9 th graders) At McAteer High School: 135 samples (out of 326 9 th graders)	16/25	13/25
3. Alternative Assessment as it exists at school sites. This falls within the purview of qualitative indicator and could best be evaluated through school visits and portfolios	NA	NA
4. Average Daily Attendance for Fall semester: 6.25 points for either (a) at or above 97.5% or (b) at least 1% higher than the previous year. Mission HS: March 1996 = 94%; March 1997 = 93.18%. McAteer: March 1996 = 92.98%; March 1997 = 95.61%.	0/6.25	6.25/6.25
5. Suspensions: no more than 8% of student body from 8/96-4/4/97 and the percentage suspended of each ethnic group must be proportionate to the percentage of that group within the school.	6.25/6.25	6.25/6.25
6. Reduction of D, F, I and N grades from Fall 1993-1996. MHS: 37%, 40%, 41%, 39% McAteer: 41%, 41%, 41%, 32%	3/12.5	12.5/12.5
7. Dropout Rate: less than 2.5% left the school without a trace. As of 3/31/97, MHS: .5% ; McAteer: 1.0% for 1996-7.	12.5/12.5	12.5/12.5
8. Referrals to Student Placement Committee from 8/96-4/16/97. [formula not provided by memo]	5.75/12.5	7.13/12.5
TOTAL QUANTITATIVE SCORE (out of 100)	59.3	76.4
Average of sum of total Qualitative and total	60.5	79.4

Quantitative		
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**Appendix G: From the Report of the Monitoring Team appointed
by the Federal Court to evaluate the degree of compliance by
SFUSD with the 1983 Consent Decree**

(Biegel, 1997; p. 35)

**The Nine Racial/Ethnic Categories of the Consent Decree
and Percentages of Each Group**

(at Ida B. Wells, Lowell, O’Connell and Lincoln High Schools
as well as the district at large)

L*	OW	AA	C	K	AI	F	ON W	J	
23	7.5	36.8	15	2.1	1.3	3.8	11.7		Wells 1997
20.4	6.9	39.4	15.7	0	0	3.3	13.5	0	Wells 2001
5.6	17.8	2.3	52.9	1.9	.3	4.9	11.9	1.4	Lowell 2001
68	7	9.5	4.4	0	0	4.9	5.1	.4	O’Connell 01
6	14	5	52	1.6	.5	4.5	13	1.7	Lincoln 2001
17.2	16.9	23.1	19.5	1.0	0.6	8.7	11.9	1.1	SFUSD 1983
20.9	13.1	17.1	26.9	1.1	0.7	7.4	11.8		SFUSD 1997

*L= Latino; OW = other white; AA = African American; C= Chinese/American; K= Korean/American; AI = American Indian; F = Filipino/American; ONW = other non-white (mostly Asian Pacific ethnicity); J = Japanese/American

Achieving Student Desegregation

Paragraph 13

Alternative Schools Out of Compliance with the "No More Than 40%"
Requirement

The following alternative schools with enrollment percentages of a particular

race/ethnicity over 40% were out of compliance either on October 12, 1996 or on May 6, 1997. It should be noted that out of the eight schools listed below, only five were out of compliance by the spring, with three of these five by less than 2 percentage points apiece.

SCHOOLS	Oct. 12, 1996	Race/Ethnicity	May 6, 1997
Lowell High	42.3%	Chinese	42.7%
Ida B. Wells	43.3%	African American	39.9%
John O'Connell	41.5%	Hispanic	39.6%
Gloria R. Davis MS	41.6%	African American	42.2%
21st Century	42.5%	African American	41.9%
Buena Vista Alt.MS	40.1%	Hispanic	39.3%
Harvey Milk ES	39.6%	Hispanic	40.6%*
Downtown	39.5%	African American	41.7%*

Regular Schools Out of Compliance with the "No More Than 45%" Requirement

The following regular schools with enrollment percentages of a particular race/ethnicity over 45% were out of compliance. It should be noted that nearly half of the schools that are out of compliance are within less than one percentage point of the required figures (Biegel, 1997; p. 36-37). [E = elementary]

SCHOOLS	Oct. 12, 1996	Race/Ethnicity	May 6, 1997
Francisco Middle	47.0%	Chinese	46.7%
Bessie Carmichael E	46.3%	Filipino	45.2%
Bryant E	46.6%	Hispanic	46.3%
C. Stockton	46.4%	Chinese	46.7%
Cabrillo E	45.5%	Chinese	44.9%
Edison E charter	45.4%	Hispanic	45.1%
Francis Scott Key E	46.9%	Chinese	46.0%
Fairmount E	46.0%	Hispanic	45.3%
Garfield E	52.1%	Chinese	50.7%
G. Moscone E	46.7%	Hispanic	45.3%
G. W. Carver E	47.3%	African American	48.7%
George Peabody E	45.5%	Chinese	44.1%
Jean Parker E	49.0%	Chinese	48.3%
Leonard F. Flynn E	45.9%	Hispanic	44.9%
Malcolm X E	50.5%	African American	50.1%
Marshall H	46.8%	Hispanic	45.0%
R.L. Stevenson E	45.8%	Chinese	45.0%
Redding E	45.3%	Chinese	45.0%
Sheridan E	46.2%	African American	43.7%
Sherman E	45.2%	Chinese	44.6%
Spring Valley E	48.5%	Chinese	49.6%
Sutro E	45.4%	Chinese	45.5%
Ulloa E	45.5%	Chinese	45.3%
V. Valley Elementary	46.1%	Chinese	45.3%

SCHOOLS	October 12, 1996		May 6, 1997
Cesar Chavez E	44.9%	Hispanic	45.6%
Glen Park E	44.9%	Hispanic	45.3%
Jefferson E	44.9%	Chinese	45.6%
John Y. Chin E	44.1%	Chinese	45.6%
Junipero Serra E	44.6%	Hispanic	45.1%
Abraham Lincoln High	44.7%	Chinese	45.3%

Appendix H: Ten Point Framework of the Local Education Fund Network and corporate funders

The Public Education Network (PEN) is partnered with state BRT organizations and exists to support Local Education Foundations. These LEFs are the vehicles through which local business groups pursue Standards-Based Reform in their cities. Below is the *Ten Point Framework* which guides the work of LEFs as well as a list of those corporations who contribute to PEN.

Ten Point Framework

(<http://www.publiceducation.org/about/ten2.htm>, viewed 8/20/2002)

- 1. Commitment:** Everyone in the community must believe, and act as if they believe, that all children can learn at high levels.
- 2. Standards and Outcomes:** We must measure educational outcomes, rather than just inputs.
- 3. Assessments:** In order to reach these outcomes, we must have appropriate assessments in place to measure students' progress.
- 4. Accountability:** We must establish "consequences of success." If we don't have consequences, no one will take seriously the striving for success.
- 5. School-Based Management:** If we intend to hold school staff accountable, we must move decision-making down to the school level.
- 6. Good Teachers:** Recruitment, Licensing, and Continued Learning Teachers' licensure should be based on what children need to know, not on outdated credentialing programs.
- 7. School Readiness:** We must establish quality, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten programs for all children.
- 8. School Community Links:** Health and social services must be a part of any quality school reform.
- 9. Technology:** Technology must be included in teaching, special education, and information management.
- 10. Public Engagement and Support:** Public engagement is critical. Significant change can only be achieved with the understanding, agreement, and participation of a broad base of community members.

Corporate Donors to PEN

Corporations in boldface have been specifically mentioned in this study

(<http://www.publiceducation.org/about/funder.htm>, viewed 8/20/2002)

ABC, Inc. Foundation	Microsoft Corporation
Alabama Power Foundation	New York Times Company Foundation
American Express Foundation	Pew Charitable Trusts
Annenberg Foundation	Prudential Foundation
BET Holdings, Inc.	Qwest Foundation
BP Amoco Foundation	Rapides Foundation
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Joseph E. Seagram & Sons
Chevron Products Company	Sulzberger Foundation
Citigroup Foundation	Tides Foundation
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	UPS Foundation
Epson America, Inc.	US Department of Education
Ford Foundation	US Department of Health & Human Services
Harcourt Educational Measurement	Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds
Heinz Family Foundation	Washington Mutual
James Irvine Foundation	William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
JP Morgan Chase Foundation	Working Assets
Metropolitan Life Foundation	

Appendix I: 1999 High-stakes testing status reports from state Business Coalitions to the National BRT

(data taken from BRT, 1999; pp. 7-52)

Many of the state business organizations listed below were started by the state's business roundtable organization as part of the BRT's 1990 "50-state initiative." States in boldface have passed high-stakes legislation (tests, standards and accountability measures).

State	Business Coalition (date established)	Status of State Systemic Reform Legislation	Current and Future Projects
Alabama	A+ Education Foundation (1991)	Systemic reform passed in Senate but defeated in the House	"Working closely" with state government to provide information and recommendations
Arizona	Arizona Business Leaders for Education (1991)	1994 – est. site councils, school report cards, open enrollment and charter schools	Disbanded after passage of 1994 legislation
	Motorola, Inc.	State standards established, state test (AIMS) undergoing pilot testing 1998 – Teacher Certification Standards	"Students to be required to pass the assessments to receive a high school diploma"
Arkansas	Arkansas Business and Education Alliance (1990)		Arkansas Scholars program – slide show to 8 th grade students that "provides information on employment trends, achievement expectations and income potential for different jobs"
California	California Business Roundtable California Business for Education Excellence	1999 – high-stakes testing, high school exit exam	Alignment of state standards and tests Development of Master Plan
Colorado	Public Education and Business Coalition (early 1980s)	1993 – state standards and development of state test (CSAP)	Planning to host a forum of business leaders from North Carolina, Texas, and Maryland
Connecticut	Connecticut Business for	State mastery tests (first introduced in 1986)	Tie 10 th grade mastery test to high school graduation

	Education Coalition (1990)	Individual schools must provide annual performance profiles to public	requirement State reconstitution of low-performing schools
Delaware	Business/Public Education Council (1990)	State standards and tests	Rewards and sanctions High school exit exam Teacher recertification requirements
Florida	Business/Higher Education Partnership (1994)	1999 – “significant advances in the state’s standards and accountability systems”	Task Force on closing the “Achievement Gap”
Georgia	Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (1990)	1993 – Next Generation School Project programs	Develop consensus on rewards/sanctions and local control
Hawaii	Hawaii Business Roundtable (1990?)	Site-based management in 90% of schools	Further decentralization Implement state-wide accountability system
Illinois	Illinois Business Roundtable (1989) Illinois Business Education Coalition (1994)	1996 – high-stakes testing and prohibition of social promotion 1997 – rewritten teacher certification requirements	Benchmark new state assessments to ensure alignment between tests and state standards
Indiana	Indiana Chamber of Commerce (c. 1900)	“Accountability legislation that holds schools and students accountable for meeting achievement standards”	“It will take a few years to put [achievement and accountability] in place”
Iowa	Iowa Business Council	Work Keys – a workplace skills assessment test implemented in early 1990s	“Help teachers understand the skills needs of young workers”
Kansas	Kansas Business Education Coalition (1995)		Get business to commit to systemic reform
Kentucky	Partnership for Kentucky Schools (1991)	High-stakes testing	“Keep continuous academic improvement on track and moving ahead in the face of continuing opposition”
Louisiana	Council for a Better Louisiana (1962)	State standards and test Accountability Commission to create a statewide accountability system	“Since 1989 . . . CABL has placed education reform at the top of its reform agenda” Remediation for low-performing students
Maine	Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education (1991)	1997 – state standards	“Adequate funding for full implementation of the new academic standards”

Maryland	Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (1992)	1991 – standards and tests	New standards and assessments to be used as high school exit criteria
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (1988)	1993 – high-stakes testing	“Revision and updating of the school finance formula, development of a sophisticated accountability system, and improving teaching quality” Close the achievement gap
Michigan	Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence (1990)	GAP Analysis Reports (1992, 1995, 1998): identifies differences between state education system and BRT’s nine essential components	Improved professional development policy Accountability system
Minnesota	Minnesota Business Partnership (1977)	1996 – high school exit exam	“Refine and scale back to the cores subjects” the high school exit criteria” Expand testing and standards programs
Mississippi	Public Education Forum of Mississippi (1989)	High-stakes testing	Increase numbers of qualified teachers
Missouri	Missouri Partnership for Outstanding Schools (1994)	1993 – high-stakes testing (to be implemented in stages)	Implement 1993 Outstanding Schools Act provisions
Nebraska	OMAHA 2000 (1991)	1994 – pilot testing of Work Keys tests (workplace skills assessment) 1998 – state standards	Implementation of an “assessment system”
Nevada	Nevada Manufacturers Association (adopted education as issue in 1992)	1998 – state standards	Adopt testing and accountability “Change the elected state board of education—currently dominated by members of the teachers’ union—to an appointed board and require representation from the business community”
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Business Roundtable on Education (1993)	1994 – standards and assessment	Accountability Pilot competency-based transcripts Use test scores to modify curricula

New Jersey	Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (1996)		“School-to-Career that promotes rigorous standards and the teaching of relevant workplace skills in all grade levels”
New York	The Business Council of New York State, Inc. (1980)	Tests and standards High school exit exam	Develop and accountability system
North Carolina	Education: Everybody’s Business Coalition (1994)	High-stakes testing	Grade-promotion policies High school exit exam Remediation programs
Ohio	Ohio Business Roundtable (1992)	Tests	High school exit exams Standards and accountability
Oklahoma	Business Council on Education (1994)	1990 – reform package 1999 – three of four proposals passed	Alter funding structure to support achievement
Oregon	Oregon Business Council (1990)	Standards and assessment	Accountability
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Business Roundtable	1999 – standards and assessment frameworks	Alignment of standards with tests Accountability
Rhode Island	Business Education Roundtable (1998)		“Firmly establish” the BER = “establish credibility with educators and the public” and recruit business leaders
South Carolina	South Carolina Chamber Excellence in Education Council (1998)	1998 – high-stakes testing	“Define and prioritize policies that address” factors influencing student achievement
Tennessee	Tennessee Business Roundtable (1983)	1992 – high-stakes testing 1994 – standards and high school exit exam	Ensure implementation of reform legislation End of course exams
Texas	Texas Business and Education Coalition Texans for Education (1989)	1993 – testing and accountability 1997 – standards (“most of the objectives in the BRT’s nine-point agenda”)	Exit exam Financial accountability Help schools adopt Total Quality Management
Utah	Utah Partners in Education (1990)	Statewide School-to-Careers Initiative	High-stakes testing
Vermont	Vermont Business Roundtable (1989 adopted education as issue)	High-stakes testing	School choice, teacher testing, and teacher evaluation
Virginia	Virginia ns for a World Class Education (1993)	1995 – standards Assessment	Accountability

Washington	Washington Roundtable (1983) Partnership for Learning (1994)	1993 High-stakes testing 1999 – new accountability system	Successful implementation of new accountability system Further alignment of policy with high-stakes testing
West Virginia	The Business Council for Education (1991)	High-stakes testing	“Determine the skills a school principal should have and how we can develop those skills” Create new relationships with new business leaders
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce	Standards and testing	Accountability Preventing the public from becoming complacent about school reform