

The Annenberg Challenge
Impact
on Student Learning

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Mrs. LEE KIMCHE MCGRATH

**INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL
COMMUNICATIONS**

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1998

Mrs. Lee Kimche McGrath
International Cultural Communications
3600 M Street, NW
Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Lee:

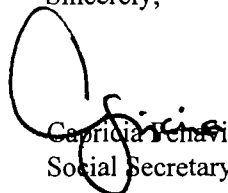
I just want to thank you for the great conversation over our recent lunch. It was very informative for me to talk to you.

I am in the process of putting together lists to send to you. I will also look at a time we can schedule a meeting with Nancy Clarke and the person from Tiffany's. In addition, I am waiting for the budget from the Chief Usher, Gary Walters, regarding the FAPE event. As soon as I compile all this information, I will be back in touch with you.

I wanted you to know that I sent "The Annenberg Challenge Impact on Student Learning" to Jennifer Klein who works on domestic policy issues for the First Lady. I know she would be very interested in seeing it.

Thanks, Lee, for all your help and I will be in touch soon with the information we spoke about.

Sincerely,


Capricia Vanovic Marshall
Social Secretary

The Annenberg Challenge **Impact** on Student Learning

Level 1: Student benefits

1. Academic benefits

- basic skills acquisition and improvement
- “new basic” skills or “higher-order skills” acquisition
- willingness to make challenging academic choices
- interest and participation in intellectual work
- meeting state university admission requirements
- college admissions
- school-to-work placements

2. Personal benefits

- self-esteem
- sense of autonomy
- aspirations beyond school
- pro-social attitudes
- appreciation of human diversity

3. Engagement in school

- good attendance
- interest in classwork
- completion of assignments or homework
- participation in co- and extra-curricular activities
- promotion and graduation

Level 2: Schools

1. High instructional quality

- intellectual richness of curriculum
- challenging tasks
- high expectations for all students
- coherence of curriculum
- coherence of instruction within classes
- appropriate pacing
- gender and racial fairness

2. Personalization

- beneficial adult-student ratio
- attention to individual learning differences
- pedagogical responsiveness and flexibility
- longitudinal monitoring of student progress (grade to grade)
- extended daily mentoring (e.g., an advisory system)
- multi-year mentoring (e.g., multi-age classrooms or “looping”)

3. Student safety

- absence of violence (within school and enroute)
- freedom from harassment (within school and enroute)
- healthy disciplinary climate

4. Student experience of community

- students’ sense of membership in a purposeful community
- good peer relations
- tolerance for human differences (gender, racial, cultural, etc.)
- students’ sense of the larger community’s investment in the school

5. Provision of other student supports

- access to physical and mental health services
- provision of social services
- sustained family involvement
- extended-day or summer opportunities

6. Beneficial stability

- continuity in leadership
- stability in staffing
- clarity and consistency of reform vision
- coherence of reform efforts

7. Professional community in school

- shared educational priorities
- active discourse about teaching and learning
- common conceptions of good teaching
- sustained collegial relations
- connections to professional networks

8. Professional resources

- sufficient subject-area expertise across staff
- other relevant expertise (e.g. bilingualism) across staff
- reform-sensitive recruitment and hiring practices

9. Availability of other organizational resources for reform

- effective leadership
- stability in staffing and student population
- parental and community support
- sufficient material resources (e.g., money for professional development activities, new books, technology infrastructure)

4. Equity or benefits

- distribution of student benefits across racial groups
- distribution of student benefits with respect to gender
- distribution of student benefits across native and non-native English speakers

Level 3: Intermediate structures

(Externally sponsored networks, feeder-pattern clusters, regional cross-school affinity groups, etc.)

1. Organizational salience

- awareness of the structures among teachers and other stakeholders
- express purpose and function of the structures
- regular cross-school meetings
- clear operating procedures
- stable governance

2. Value to schools

- enhanced availability and use of cross-school expertise
- enhanced availability and use of external expertise
- enhanced access to and use of research-based knowledge
- enhanced capacity for organizational learning
- development of shared discourse
- enhanced accountability (e.g., schools holding each other accountable for program quality and/or student benefits)

3. Durability beyond Challenge funding

- integration into district structures and culture
- assumption of functions ordinarily performed elsewhere (e.g., by district or county)
- impact on school identity
- impact on transitions (e.g., with respect to crises or changes in leadership)

Level 5: Mobilization of support

1. Public engagement

- school openness to public input
- public confidence in schools
- public interest in school events
- public support for change
- public tolerance for the stress and pace of change

2. Coalition building

- parent activism for reform
- local cultural involvement and support (by ethnic communities, religious groups, artists, etc.)
- constructive engagement with and by the press
- philanthropic interest and support
- business involvement and support

- compatible labor contracts

10. Organizational learning capacity

- shared and explicit goals
- capacity for collecting and analyzing data relative to organizational performance
- systems for reflecting on organizational problems
- tolerance for conflict in organizational inquiry
- habit of making organizational changes based on organizational inquiry

11. Community links to instruction

- "sense of place" in curriculum and instruction (e.g., teaching about community history and culture, using the community as a reference point in teaching about the larger world)
- use of community as a resource for learning (e.g., internships and community-based learning projects)
- contributions of school to community (e.g., community service projects, or projects that contribute economic benefits to the community)
- use of parents as in-school resources and mentors
- business and community partnerships for learning
- school-to-work mentorships
- school links to institutions of higher education

Level 4: Larger and intersecting educational systems

(District, county, union, region, state)

1. Institutional and policy impact

- salience of Challenge in district and state policies
- procedural realignments (e.g., management, budgeting, fiscal reporting)
- district or regional restructuring
- policy changes at district, regional, or state levels
- impact on union behavior and labor agreements
- impact on the relationship between schools and higher education

2. Resource impact

- redirection of public funding streams
- leverage on philanthropy
- reduction of public funding inequities
- spread of Challenge-generated expertise across systems

3. Professional mobilization

- diffusion of reform rhetoric across schools, districts, region, or state
- spread of teaching practices across schools, districts, region, or state
- impact on professional development offerings and practices
- replication of structures beyond funded schools or districts

4. Management of the larger systems' impact on the Challenge

- surviving leadership shifts
- co-opting policy shifts
- maintaining optimal program flexibility
- negotiating appropriate program adjustments

Can \$500 Million Make a Dent?

Expectations Diminishing for Gift to Public Education

By Rene Sanchez
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO—Every morning here at Galileo Academy, Mary Ellen Garcia is on the move, darting from one reading class to the next, gently pushing teachers to push students who have all manner of odds against them.

It is a trying task. "You just can't go in and start telling everyone what to do, but we really have to fix these problems," said Garcia, the public school's new reading director, whose salary is paid entirely by private money.

The rigors of that job are one small measure of a much larger struggle unfolding throughout the schools of this city and those in urban settings nationwide: to make sure they do not squander the biggest financial gift public education has ever received.

Whether they succeed is still in doubt—and time is running out.

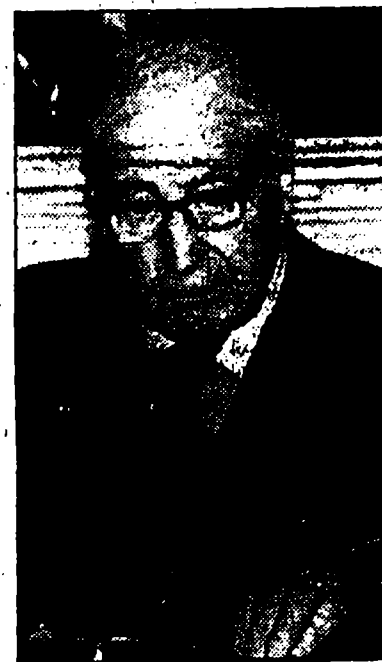
Nearly four years ago, billionaire Walter H. Annenberg, one of the richest men in America,

pledged \$500 million of his publishing fortune to improving education. It was an extraordinary offer, targeted mostly at beleaguered schools in the nation's largest cities, and heralded by the White House and many educators as a profound new source of hope for students who needed it most.

But today, the expectations for what Annenberg's money ultimately will achieve in schools have diminished, even among officials guiding the project. Signs of success are emerging in some cities, but there are also growing fears that the gift has become so tangled in the politics of big-city school systems, or divided among so many groups for so many purposes, that overall the benefits may be marginal.

To some, the uncertain fate of Annenberg's charity offers another stark illustration of how difficult it is, even armed with a half-billion dollars, to make progress in the tumultuous world of urban public education. And it may hold important lessons as well for the growing number

See GIFT, A8, Col. 1



FILE PHOTO

In 1993, Walter H. Annenberg pledged a record gift to improve education.

Schools Confront Problems In Utilizing Record Cash Gift

GIFT, From A1

of philanthropists—from Ted Turner to Bill Gates—who are also writing huge checks with dreams of revitalizing other declining public institutions that have no place but the private sector to turn for financial help.

"In the beginning, a lot of people had hoped this gift would lead to some fundamental change in public schools," said Paul Hill, who directs a center on public education at the University of Washington. "It hasn't quite worked out that way yet."

Annenberg, the 89-year-old former U.S. ambassador to Britain who earned much of his fortune as publisher of TV Guide magazine, has said he wanted his money to be used primarily to fight the violence and low student achievement that plague many urban public schools. He has said little about the donation since he announced it, and declined to be interviewed.

"He wants the work to speak for itself," said an aide at his foundation office outside Philadelphia.

Annenberg is dividing about \$300 million of his gift among more than a dozen cities whose public schools have serious problems, including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia. The rest of the money is being used either to help rural schools or to aid education groups

that are developing new strategies for teaching. The District's public schools are not part of the project.

In each city, Annenberg project officials are working with a panel of community leaders to decide exactly where the money goes. Schools receiving it have to pursue general objectives, such as involving parents more in education or adopting teaching practices that have had success helping even the neediest children learn.

But each city's strategy is unique. Some are using Annenberg's money to create experimental schools, others are revamping how students are taught. Resolving how to spend the money, however, has not been easy. It has taken more than a year in some places to settle that issue. Other sites have scaled down their plans for the gift.

Here in Chicago, where Annenberg grants now reach almost half of the city's 550 schools, dividing the \$49 million gift has become a monumental task.

When Annenberg officials first asked schools here to apply for money, a disturbing pattern emerged: Better schools made better proposals, and won a sizable portion of the grants. Some of the worst-performing schools needed help crafting strong plans for classroom change. Getting money to those who needed it most took time.



First-time teacher Catherine Mugnolo assists Quiana Harrell and Travis Ansted with reading at Chicago's Galileo Academy. The public school has a full-time reading supervisor whose salary is covered by the Annenberg grant.

BY TODD BUCHANAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Some schools here also have struggled to balance the work they're doing with Annenberg money with other demands from the Chicago school system, which is embarked on its own overhaul of teaching. Since Annenberg's money flows directly to individual schools and not through the district's central administration, each site's priorities

for a school at times have been a bit different.

Some Chicago schools working with Annenberg are only now hitting their stride. At Galileo, Garcia did not become the full-time reading supervisor until this fall. Other schools have been overwhelmed by the unpredictability of life in an urban system. One school near Galileo had several hundred more students enroll this fall than it anticipated, forcing adjustments in how its Annenberg grant could be used.

Yet even with those troubles, educators familiar with the Annenberg project say its work in Chicago shows promise, with grants helping cultivate projects from new programs in reading and math to more training for teachers and parents.

"Yes, some of this has been difficult," said Ken Rolling, the executive director of Annenberg's Chicago projects. "But we're not talking about repairing a few windows. We're trying to change a culture."

Annenberg's leaders say they anticipated a struggle because when deciding how the money should be managed—a crucial question for any philanthropic venture—they chose local, grass-roots control. Instead of requiring every city to adhere to the same strict plan, Annenberg decided to let communities spend the gift largely on their own terms. He is intentionally trying to minimize the role of school bureaucracies, which have a reputation of grinding reforms into nothing.

But Annenberg's gift is evolving so differently that skeptics also wonder if its goals are too vague. In New York, the money has been used to create small new schools that emphasize certain academic themes. In Philadelphia, it has been poured—some say lost—into the school superintendent's plan for higher academic standards. In Los Angeles, schools in the same neighborhoods are forming partnerships to share resources and deal with problems of student attendance.

Vartan Gregorian, the former president of Brown University and a close adviser to Annenberg, called the project's variety a healthy sign. Forcing school systems to use the same model would have been a doomed strategy, he said. In his judgment, the choice Annenberg made has forced competing interests in public education to find common ground on how to help students—or risk losing heaps of free money.

"No one has been excluded, and the dialogue about improving schools, which was once absent, is now incredible," Gregorian said. "This is a real catalyst for change. Even at sites that have fallen behind, it's certainly not from lack of effort."

Still, he is realistic about the obstacles that lie ahead for the project. "If we succeed only 30 percent of the time, that will still be a remarkable gain."

When other education officials look at how Annenberg's fortune is being spent, however, they see wasted opportunities. Some call Annenberg's wariness about working too closely with school system leaders a serious mistake.

Mildred Casserly, the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, which represents the nation's largest urban districts, said that choice has created "mistrust and distractions" in some cities working with Annenberg.

"A lot of their agenda is on target, it's just how they're pursuing it," Casserly said. "It would be more helpful if they were working in harmony with school systems."

Annenberg has made donations to schools for decades, but the scope of his latest gesture is unrivaled. He also has challenged other philanthropists to give to public education, and some have responded. In San Francisco, another city receiving Annenberg money, the Hewlett Foundation has donated \$25 million to the cause.

Some of the cities with Annenberg grants are already past the midway point of their projects. Others are only just now beginning their work.

But in most places, there is growing clamor to see more results.

Here on Chicago's west side at Galileo Academy, an elementary and middle school where most students are poor, teachers say they are confident the money will help.

What Annenberg is buying for Garcia, the full-time reading supervisor—is a luxury it has never been able to afford. And it also has given an outside partner, the nonprofit group Designs for Change, that is assisting students with reading.

"You can have all the good ideas in the world, but if you don't have someone coordinating all of it, it's not going to happen," said Alfonso Valtierra, Galileo's principal. "This is a whole new scenario now."

Last year, Garcia had to juggle reading duties with teaching. This year, since the stipend for Annenberg grew, she is working full time on the subject. Her role in classes is still evolving and at times that creates friction. "That's the hardest part," she said. But many teachers say they welcome her help.

Garcia focuses on students who are falling behind in reading. She works with community groups that want to supply books or tutors. She questions teachers like a coach about the rigor of their lessons.

Those are all only small steps, but at this school, like so many others in urban public education, progress is measured in even the slightest increments.

"Annenberg is expanding our horizons," said Jack Beven, a first-grade reading teacher. "We have a lot to go, but it's valuable to have another voice, another eye there helping you when you're trying to get these kids to learn."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read a profile of Annenberg and a list of his philanthropic projects, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's Web site at www.washingtonpost.com

Reviving Arts in Schools: Seeking Millions to Fulfill Mayoral Promise



Edward Keating/The New York Times

Alan Bates teaches second graders in Public School 314 in Brooklyn about percussion instruments as part of the Music Outreach Program. Some classes in the school also study operas and even create their own, writing librettos and composing the music.

By **PAM BELLUCK**

Cobbling together money from city coffers and businesses, some of it in hand and some of it simply a promise, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani last week assembled a package of several hundred million dollars to improve reading, computer education and the arts in the public schools.

The computer and reading programs seem fairly certain. The commitment to restore arts education is strong, but the financing is, at the moment, a work in progress.

The plan comes after several years of school budget cuts by the Mayor and his predecessor, and it comes as Mr. Giuliani, running for re-election this year, is bent on reversing his image in some quarters as an education obstructionist. It also follows his announcement last fall of a plan to provide \$70 million for textbooks, and to contribute city dollars to school repairs and construction. Unlike many education plans, which have put money in only the neediest schools, the Mayor's programs are explicitly intended to give some help to every school.

The reading and computer programs will start in a matter of months. The return of the arts will take longer, starting gradually and spreading to each school only if the city makes millions of dollars available.

THE ARTS

In his State of the City address last week, Mayor Giuliani said that he would work to "restore arts education to all of our public schools."

It is a goal that schools and cultural institutions have been demanding for a long time, ever since arts and cultural programs in the schools were gutted by cuts during the city's fiscal crisis of the 1970's.

To realize that goal will take money — a still undetermined amount, but one that could reach more than \$100 million. The Deputy Mayor for Operations, Randy M. Mastro, said last week that in the next few months, the city and Board of Education will allocate money for arts classes and curriculum in each of the city's approximately 1,100 schools. He said it was not yet clear how much that would cost.

"The Mayor explained with great passion the importance of the arts to children's education, and he is committed to seeing a full arts curriculum and he is going to make that a reality," Mr. Mastro said. "It will be a major financial commitment to full arts education and it will be funded both by the city and by the board."

Even if that financial commitment is met, and is adequate to the task, it will take time to build back the arts in the public schools.

"This is not something that will happen overnight," said Hollis Headrick, executive director of the Center for Arts Education, the organization that is in charge of the most significant effort in years to try to put arts back in the schools.

That plan, endorsed by the Mayor in his speech, is a \$36 million program announced last year that would pair schools with orchestras, museums, art studios, dance groups and other cultural institutions, which would develop courses, train teachers and work directly with students.

The Annenberg Foundation has donated \$12 million to the program. The rest of the \$36 million will be raised from private and public institutions, which have so far given \$4 million, including \$1.25 million from the Board of Education. The Mayor's office has pledged to contribute \$2.5 million toward the Annenberg program, and according to Mr. Mastro, the city will spend whatever it takes to revive arts instruction in nearly three-quarters of the schools that the Annenberg program cannot reach.

It is not clear how much that would cost, but if the Annenberg formula was applied to all schools, the system would need \$100 million more.

The return of the arts to the public schools will take years. The Annenberg program, which will begin distributing its money in April, is expected to take about five years to reach 200 to 300 of the city's 1,100 schools, where it would try to make the arts a systematic part of the curriculum.

"It's meant to be a catalytic effort," Mr. Headrick said. Such a program, he said, would motivate other schools to see the need for an arts curriculum and to seek money, teachers and cultural institutions that could help them bring the arts to classrooms.

Until 1975, each school district had its own licensed music and art specialists, and the Board of Education coordinated it all with music and art departments. At one time,

board staff members were even assigned to work as liaisons in city museums. But in 1991, in the last systematic survey of arts education, two-thirds of the city's elementary schools had no art or music teachers.

In that vacuum, institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, concerned about maintaining New York's status as a cultural mecca, have spent millions on arts education. And private organizations like Arts Connection and the Studio in a School have taken over the role of teaching the arts by arranging class visits to museums and concert halls, training teachers and creating lesson plans.

Next month, Mr. Headrick's organization will screen applications from schools that have hooked up with museums, theater groups, musicians or dancers and proposed specific programs. Fifty to 75 schools will get grants this year, some to start new arts programs and some to build on existing ones. He said the intention is to increase arts instruction in the traditional sense, with music lessons and painting classes, for example, and to infuse the arts into other classes, like math and social studies.

"Teachers in every subject will be trained to see how they can use the arts as another tool in their toolbox," Mr. Headrick said. "We want the math, science and English teachers to begin to use the arts in a different way. We want the social studies teachers to say, 'Wouldn't it be valuable to learn about this historical period by taking a trip to the Brooklyn Museum or the Met or the Guggenheim?'"

The money might finance a program like the one at Public School 314 in Brooklyn, where, helped by the Metropolitan Opera, classes study operas and even create their own, writing librettos, composing the music, building the sets. This year, fifth graders are studying "Aida" and "Faust."

In 1989, P.S. 314 was placed on the state's list of poorly performing schools because of its low math and reading scores. But partly as a result of its arts programs, reading and math scores in P.S. 314 increased to the point where it was taken off the list in 1993.

"Academics do not suffer as a result of this," the school's principal, Jo Ann Asciutto, said. "Everything generates writing and reading. All subject matters are integrated."

Arts proponents and education experts said that in addition to city money, the Mayor's public promotion of an issue that has long been neglected would be useful.

"The Mayor has the bully pulpit," said Robert Berne, vice president for academic development at New York University. "He has the ability to try to direct resources in different directions. Clearly he's latched onto the arts."

READING

With the Chancellor putting priority on getting children to read at grade level, the Mayor last week announced a \$125 million program that would give some reading help to every elementary school in the city.

The city aid, to be financed by the Municipal Assistance Corporation — which will vote on the project in the coming weeks — would provide an average of \$200,000 to each of the city's 600 elementary schools, the rough equivalent of three or four teachers' salaries per school.

Lewis H. Spence, the school system's deputy chancellor for operations, said that high-performing schools would be allowed to use the money as they chose, for reading programs up to the third grade. Poorly performing schools would have little choice: the Chancellor would exert more direction, ordering the school to use the money in a particular way.

Mr. Spence said most of the reading money would be spent in one of three ways: to train parents how to help their children learn to read, to teach reading to small afterschool classes for two hours three times a week, or to arrange for reading specialists to give extra help to children in their regular classrooms. Mr. Spence said that some new reading teachers would be hired, but that the Chancellor would consult with the teachers' union about assigning some special education teachers to be reading instructors, a shift allowed by a recent change in state law.

Mr. Spence and Mr. Mastro said the Chancellor had initially requested only about \$60 million to finance reading programs for the lowest-performing 25 percent of schools. But, Mr. Mastro said, "the Mayor wanted to do something that would help every school. He felt that every student should have the opportunity to participate in a program to improve reading scores."

COMPUTERS

If the reading money is geared for elementary schools, the Mayor's \$150 million computer program will focus primarily on middle schools.

Mr. Spence said the plan was to put four computers in each of 10,000 fourth through eighth grade classrooms. That would cover most of the 12,000 classrooms in those grades. The idea is that fourth through eighth graders could use computers in all their academic subjects, not simply for a class period in a school computer lab.

The money would come from the city budget, but Mayor Giuliani has appointed two business leaders to help raise private money to offset about \$50 million of the total. One of the business executives, Stephen Robert, the chairman of Oppenheimer & Company, said he was also hoping to get companies to donate computers.

Putting computers in schools is more complicated than merely bringing in the machines, since old school buildings may have to be rewired and teachers must be trained to use the technology and to integrate computers in their lessons. Mr. Spence said that \$35 million of the money would be spent on teacher training, computer maintenance and wiring, and a program to train students in the city's vocational high schools to repair computers in the classrooms.



DEAN COPPOLA/TIMES

ALISHA SAUNDERS, left, Kris Larsen and Casey Kimmel edit videotape in a class at Concord High School on Tuesday.

Concord High program 'personalizes education'

By Maria E. Camposeco

TIMES STAFF WRITER

Concord High School is taking its cue from elementary schools under a new program that began this fall.

Rather than assigning students to teachers, teachers will be assigned to a class, much like schools do in the lower grades.

The high school hopes the program will allow students of the class of 2001 to bond with each other, their teachers and their school.

"We're really trying to personalize education for kids," said Principal Bonnie Warner. "We think they ought to stay here with us and know high school is relevant to their lives."

New to California, the program — which is limited to math, English and science — is designed to keep students at Concord High.

Only 270 of the 400 freshmen who enroll each fall graduate. Many

See PERSONALIZE, Back Page

Personalize

FROM PAGE A1

transfer to other schools. Teachers of the core subjects will work in teams to coordinate lessons. The teams should be better able to track student progress and problems.

The program sounds like a good plan to education experts.

"Having small groups of students with identifiable clusters of instructors in the early years sure makes a lot of sense," said Gerald Hayward, co-director of Policy Advocacy for California Education, a Northern California think tank.

Although similar programs have sprung up in other parts of the country, they are unusual in California, according to education experts. In addition, few schools try to tackle an entire freshman class at once.

"For California this is a very bright and innovative approach," Hayward said.

The program is modeled on a 9-

year-old state-funded pilot program at Concord High called Start Now. It has helped 150 students a year improve attendance and develop an interest in school.

The approach worked well for sophomore Kris Jukich, who had little regard for school, teachers or grades when he started at Concord High.

In the past year his grades went up and his attitude improved. He now sees college and accounting in his future.

"It was a year that changed my life," said Kris. "Right off the bat you're one group. You know everyone, and you basically get the attention you need."

Concord High is expanding its pilot program with a four-year grant of up to \$1 million that will pay for teacher training and materials.

Beginning this fall, 75 freshmen were clustered into classes of 25 students led by a team of three teachers.

As sophomores, the ratio will increase to 105 students per three

teachers, but the concept stays the same.

"You can care when you have 190 kids coming through, but there's not much you can do," said Kathy Prasch, vice principal and former Start Now director. "When you have 25 kids in a class, you can connect and do more."

Juniors will take core classes in their preferred careers, such as health and sciences or human services. They'll also take classes at Diablo Valley College based on their choices. In their senior year, they will also get a mentor in their field of interest.

"We're making changes so students feel more connected to each other and their teachers," said Prasch. "There has to be systematic reform and we have to make major changes."

Concord High won the Hewlett and Annenberg Foundation grant through the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, which is made up of roughly 250 schools, organizations and districts trying to reform education.

Executive Director Merrill Vargo said Concord's program is ambitious. It will force teachers to rethink how they see their careers and how students view school.

"They're trying to do something they've tried and that works," she said. "It's not just about feeling good at the end of the year, they'll be able to measure their success" if they keep more kids at the school.

Maria E. Camposeco covers schools and education. You can reach her at 943-8249 or P.O. Box 5088, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Annenberg Boon for Art Education

The Annenberg Foundation has launched an ambitious \$36-million, five-year grant program to support arts education in New York City's 1,100 public schools. The plan is designed to encourage the city's arts institutions to link up with individual schools and develop new ways of including the arts as an integral part of the curriculum. The program, called the Arts Education Challenge, is to be overseen by a new private organization called the Center for Arts Education. Under the scheme, the Annenberg Foundation will supply \$12 million, which will be matched two-to-one by other sources, largely businesses and private foundations. The proposal has been endorsed by New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, by schools chancellor Rudy Crew and by teachers' union president Sandra Feldman, among others.

The Annenberg project was developed by Artsvision, a company headquartered in Rhinebeck, N.Y., which has designed arts curriculums in Chicago, Detroit and Toronto and is presently working on a new San Francisco School of the Arts. "The idea is to train teachers to use the arts, to train artists to teach and to help principals to assess their progress," said Artsvision president Mitchell Korn. Artsvision expects to begin settling up the Center for Arts Education in the coming months, with a staff of 7 to 10 people and a five-year budget of \$3.25 million. The project should be under way in time for the next school year.

Since system-wide arts education was eliminated from the New York public school system after the municipal fiscal crises of the 1970s, a variety of individual programs have been developed. The Studio in a School, founded in 1977 by collector and Museum of Modern Art president Agnes Gund, sponsors an award-winning visiting-artist program for public schools. The Metropolitan Museum reports that it spends about \$2 million annually on school programs. The Brooklyn Museum's education department helped establish the New York City Museum School in Manhattan last year [see "Front Page," Oct. '94]. MOMA expects to participate in the Annenberg program, according to director Glenn D. Lowry, though he cautioned that "the real solution is to make arts education an integral part of the core curriculum. Until that time all we can do is apply Band-Aids."



Donald Lipski's vandalized *American Flag Ball #3*.

Flag Sculpture Slashed

Donald Lipski's 1990 *American Flag Ball #3*, an 8-foot-high sculpture made from bolts of nylon printed with the American flag, was vandalized in late December or early January on the grounds of the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University, where it was installed in 1992. (Created during a residency at the Fabric Workshop, *Flag Ball* was originally shown at Beaver College in Pennsylvania.) An unknown party assailed the work with enough vigor to hack away about half its outer layer of knotted nylon, revealing an inner core of dacron batting, and leaving heaps of torn and unraveled fabric lying beside it.

Flag Ball first became an object of controversy last summer, when an out-of-state visitor happened upon the sculpture and was sufficiently offended to write more than a dozen letters of complaint. He hit pay dirt with Republican congressman Peter King of Seaford, who wrote to L.I.U. president David Steinberg inveighing against the "appalling and senseless act of flag desecration" and urging the work's immediate removal. King also participated in a protest on campus, along with five Long Island veterans.

Steinberg staunchly defended the sculpture, however, and the "flag flap," as local pressed dubbed it, was soon literally buried under mounds of snow. When it melted, the vandalism emerged. Little progress has been made in determining how, by whom, or even when the attack occurred. A university spokesperson said the sculpture had been put in storage, and confirmed that there were no leads on the perpetrators.

Lipski notes that *Flag Ball* had been ready for relocation. Originally bright as

"a new leisure suit," it had been outdoors long enough to fade to a more resonant shade. Before the protest started, arrangements were under way for a spring exhibition at the Whitney Museum's Philip Morris branch. Lipski remains eager for the piece to be seen. As a "visual representation of intolerance" the slashed sculpture is, he believes, more powerful than ever.

According to Barbara Handman of People for the American Way, which is helping Lipski investigate his legal options, the number of cases of "harassment against the arts" has increased by about 30 percent in each of the four years the group has been keeping track of politically based vandalism. Though an amendment criminalizing flag desecration was once again narrowly defeated by Congress in December, use of the American flag in art remains a political lightning rod.

When Lipski embarked on his series of flag sculptures in 1990 [see A.I.A., May '91], the Corcoran Gallery had just canceled a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition and Chicago art student Dread Scott's sculpture *What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag?* had prompted an avalanche of complaints the year before. Five years later, on the occasion of the protest at C.W. Post, Lipski posed his still unanswered question in a letter to the editors of *Newsday* (it ran Dec. 31). "What is a flag?" he asked. "I remember when Abbie Hoffman was arrested for wearing a flag shirt. I remember when George Bush gave the President of Mexico flag boots. What are we so afraid of?"

—Nancy Princenthal

Michelangelo's Cupid Found on Fifth Ave.?

Is a marble cupid that has stood more-or-less unnoticed in the French Embassy cultural center at 972 Fifth Avenue, near the Metropolitan Museum, an early work by Michelangelo? The 3-foot-tall sculpture of a curly-haired youth, missing its arms but with a quiver carved as a lion's paw, was attributed to the Renaissance Italian master by Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, a professor at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts and an authority on 16th-century Italian sculpture (as special consultant to the Vatican, she spent much time up on the scaffold during the restoration of the Sistine Chapel ceiling). Before the flurry of media attention had subsided, a number of Renaissance experts were supporting her call, including Met director Philippe de Montebello, Met curators James Draper and Everett Fahey, Nicholas Penny of London's National Gallery and Sydney J. Freedberg, curator emeritus at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

The sculpture's provenance only extends back to 1902, when it was offered at a London auction and described as a Michelangelo. It failed to sell and was purchased in 1905 by architect Stanford White from a dealer in Rome, who said it had been recently dug up and did not attribute it to Michelangelo. White brought the work to New York and placed it in the Fifth Avenue building, which he had designed for the Payne Whitney family. The work presumably had gone unnoticed because of the poor lighting in the foyer. It has suffered some chips and water erosion and also bears traces of the attention of earlier restorers.

Brandt suggests that the work dates from 1495, when the artist was 20. She said it resembles, in particular the early wooden crucifix of Santo Spirito discovered by art historian Margaret Lisner in the early 1960s. The cupid has "resonance to all the early works in body type, pose, carving technique, in the details of the way the face and hair are cut, in the way the muscles are cut, in the attitude toward the body," Brandt said.

Brandt will publish her research on the work in a forthcoming issue of *Burlington Magazine* and has been asked by the Metropolitan to organize an exhibition featuring the sculpture, once permission of the French government has been obtained.

New Funding Flows into NY School Libraries

The financially strapped New York City school system just got two big infusions of library money.

With \$5 million from Time Warner, 25 city schools will develop state-of-the-art media centers. Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, 12 schools will share a \$750,000 grant from the Brooklyn Borough President.

The recipients of the Time Warner monies are reform-minded schools created as part of the national reform effort launched by the Annenberg Foundation. Many are small institutions that lack the resources of larger high schools to create top-notch library programs, said Sheila Salmon, a library specialist with New Visions for Public Schools, a private group that runs many school reform programs in New York.

"We're trying to find a model for small schools to have excellent library services," Salmon said.

Under the Time Warner grant, New Visions and three other school reform organizations will decide precisely how to dole out the money to the 25

schools in the next three years. The schools in turn can use the funds to pay for books, computer hardware and software, and training for teachers, students, and parents.

The Brooklyn grant came in large part due to the success of Library Power, said Salmon, who also runs New York City's Library Power program. After Brooklyn's Borough President, Howard Golden, visited several Library Power sites, he became a believer in the link between good school libraries and high student achievement.

As a result, Golden allocated \$750,000 from his 1997 capital budget to pay for renovating or creating school libraries in each of Brooklyn's 12 school districts. (Brooklyn is one of five political subdivisions, or boroughs, in the City of New York.) The winners of the grants will be announced this spring.

"It's a very encouraging sign," said Salmon, of the new funds. "Libraries in New York have not been on the front burner."—A.G.

New visions of success

By DAVE SALTONSTALL

Daily News Staff Writer

WHEN NEW VISIONS opened its first public schools in New York in 1993, the idea was a radical one: Take a group of average city ninth-graders, build a few small, specialized high schools — and let the students grow.

Four years later, the results are in. This week, the first 534 seniors from 11 of these New Visions schools — all of which are public, Board of Education schools — will graduate at ceremonies throughout the city.

But here's the kicker: 81% of these grads have already been accepted to college, a rate well above that of high schools in the rest of the city or state. And many of the schools are among the most competitive in the country, including Syracuse, Mount Holyoke, Wesleyan, Barnard, Colgate and Vassar.

"Surprised is not the word," said Beth Lief, president of the nonprofit New Visions for Public Schools, which set up many of the schools with small grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 from the Annenberg Foundation but otherwise relies on tax dollars to keep them going. "Delighted is more like it."

Coming at a time when many are pushing for higher academic standards in New York City schools, the New Visions experience suggests there is reason to hope that good ideas can lead to good schools.

The lessons learned at each are as varied as their curricula, which specialize in areas as diverse as art, engineering and community development.

But interviews with dozens of teachers, students and administrators at the schools re-

veal several common themes, starting with teachers unafraid of overtime, high expectations and, most important, small school sizes. No New Visions high school has more than 650 students, and some are as small as 120, compared with more than 5,100 in some city high schools.

"Like the show 'Cheers,' everyone knows your name," said Robert Weisenfeld, 18, a senior at the 300-student School for the Physical City in Manhattan who will attend Bard College in the fall. "Over the past four years, we have grown up into a family."

Like all New Visions Schools, Physical City is focused on a theme — in this case, the belief that New York is the greatest classroom in the world.

A class on physics, there-

fore, might take students to the Manhattan Bridge to study its immense support beams. Students have spent time with Con Ed workers to learn about energy, and city museums are frequent destinations. Teachers call this project-based education.

"Book reports copied from the encyclopedia just don't hack it anymore," said Mark Weiss, the principal of Physical City, which is closely aligned with Cooper Union. "Reading that is not connected to important ideas and experiences is reading that isn't remembered."

The performance of these New Visions schools also helps to combat another time-worn theory: that schools filled with low-income kids can never compete with those

in richer districts.

A soon-to-be-released study by researchers at New York University and other city colleges has found that New Visions' students are more likely to be of color and more likely to be poor than students in the city's system as a whole.

All 22 New Visions schools — there are now 11 elementary and middle schools in addition to 11 high schools — accept students based on lotteries. Each school is established only after a review by the city Board of Education and the city's teachers union, a process that is technically open to any community group interested in educating children.

The city's often rough streets are by no means a at in these schools. At El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, for instance, one boy was killed last April by cross-fire from a shootout. Bobby Stoudmire, 18, was a bystander.

But Stoudmire will be remembered Friday when El Puente holds graduation ceremonies for its first 33 seniors, 92% of whom will be going to college next year.

"Until I got here, I never liked school," said senior Jessica Santiago, 18, who went to Intermediate School 33 in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. "It was always students running around, teachers not caring, violence, fights."

Today, Santiago is class valedictorian, and in the fall she will attend SUNY-Binghamton with the help of a \$1,000 merit scholarship.



"Until I got here, I never liked school. . . It was always students running around, teachers not caring, violence, fights."

JESSICA SANTIAGO

from The Boston Globe
October 19, 1997

Philadelphia puts school head to test

By Michael Grunwald
GLOBE STAFF

PHILADELPHIA — David Hornbeck inherited a classic urban disgrace when he was named Philadelphia's schools superintendent in 1994. Less than half the students were graduating. Less than a fourth could do basic math or science. So Hornbeck announced a stunning reform plan, the most ambitious and comprehensive in the nation, with sky-high standards for all 215,000 students.

Trust me, he said. And trust the kids.

Hornbeck, a high-profile consultant who had helped reform schools in a dozen states but had never run his own, has had a stormy three years trying to revive Philadelphia's. The teachers union has fought him all the way. The board members who hired him have turned against him. A judge even threatened to throw him in jail.

It sounds like a typical story of shattered illusions in the inner city, except for one thing: Philadelphia's test scores, while still appallingly low, are starting to rise. The idea of strict school standards may have stalled in Congress, but it has begun to thrive here in a district where 80 percent of the children are poor and 80 percent

SCHOOLS, Page A22

Schools face challenges

Superintendent finds critics in Philadelphia

■ SCHOOLS
Continued from Page A1

are ties.

"America has never had a city where a vast majority of the children achieve at high levels," says Hornbeck, a former Maryland education superintendent who earned a reputation as "Mr. Fixit" as an independent consultant for states ranging from Kentucky to New Jersey to Washington. "We've got a long way to go, but we're going to do it."

Last month, Hornbeck announced that Philadelphia's fourth-, eighth-, and 11th-graders had improved their reading, math and science scores on the rigorous Stanford 9 test. Meanwhile, the district offers full-day kindergarten for the first time in 25 years, attendance is improving, the number of parent volunteers is up from 7,000 to 12,000, and the number of students per computer is down from 30 to 12.

Hornbeck has vowed that by 2003, an unheard-of 95 percent of Philadelphia's students will rate "proficient" — even better than "basic" — on the Stanford 9. It is quite a stretch, since only 15 percent of now qualify in reading, only 6 percent in science, and the national rate is only 40 percent.

Still, far-fetched as the 95 percent goal may seem for a dysfunctional urban system, Hornbeck — whose \$160,000 salary can swing 15 depending on student performance — insists the main obstacle to high standards is lack of faith.

"If you don't have real faith that every child can succeed, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," said Hornbeck, who has two divinity degrees and sometimes preaches in local churches. "I know a lot of these kids have problems in their lives, but they can still do it. I just need people to believe in them."

First, Hornbeck needs people to believe in him. He is a charismatic leader, but a dogmatic and often abrasive one. He says he left the consulting world because he longed to resurrect a failed urban school system, and he has little patience for anyone who would stand in the way of his radical reforms.

His most frequent adversary has been the teachers union, and their dispute is a proxy of sorts for the national debate over standards. He has told teachers that working hard is not enough, that he holds them responsible for student performance. Union leaders say that if he had ever worked in a classroom — Hornbeck was trained in law and divinity, not education — he would understand that faith is not enough.

The push to help every child achieve may sound good, but it protects who should be expelled, said Harris, grievance director for the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. She complains that the bad apples disrupt good students, drive away middle-class families, and make teachers' jobs impossible.

"Hornbeck doesn't realize how much baggage these kids bring to



Kearny School first grade teacher Eunice Pratt took a question from one of her students earlier this month.

school," Harris said. "We can't control what happened to them their first five years. We can't control all the poverty and violence and dysfunction in their lives. How can you hold us responsible for their achievement?"

Brightening outlook

The sun beamed down on Kearny Elementary School one recent morning, and the first-graders seemed to know it. In Tony Lapin's class, student of the month Craig Long wrote in his journal: "Today it is sunny and warm." In Eunice Pratt's class down the hall, Ryana Laitya volunteered to use "sun" in a sentence. "The sun is bright!" she chirped.

That's not all that's bright at Kearny. Of the 257 schools in Philadelphia, it showed the sharpest improvement on this year's Stanford 9. Its neighbors include three subsidized housing projects as well as a fourth that will soon be razed; 90 percent of its students are black, 92 percent are poor, and 69 percent are on welfare. Yet the attendance rate is 97 percent, and 75 percent of the students now perform at basic levels.

Under Hornbeck's formula, Kearny made eight times as much

progress as it needed to meet its 1997 goals. But it defies stereotypes of inner-city public schools in other ways as well.

The 75-year-old building has no graffiti, and the grounds are spotless. Children arrive early in navy and light blue uniforms, earning the right to play On-Time Bingo. They walk silently through the halls with their fingers on their lips, hoping for Quiet Points that could win their class a pizza party. And the average class size is only 24, because Principal Eileen Spagnola uses almost all her federal grant money to buy extra teachers.

"This isn't Utopia, but the kids do very well here," Spagnola said. The trick at Kearny seems simple: lots of reading, lots of writing, lots of preparation for Stanford 9. Last year, the school launched the 100 Book Challenge, with medals and other goodies for students who reached the plateau. This year, 14 students were already wearing medals by October. Meanwhile, the students began doing at least an hour of writing under test conditions every week, and teachers began assigning open-ended homework questions like the ones on the Stanford 9.

Kearny parents are delighted, and many have been motivated to get involved in their children's work. Celeste Smith, a single mother on welfare who is vice president of Kearny's school council, says her time and effort paid off when her son read 200 books last year.

"I wanted to see results, and I'm seeing them," she said. "Hornbeck is putting pressure on the staff and us parents to do more for the kids, and I think that's great. I don't want to hear any more excuses about how hard it's supposed to be."

In fact, Hornbeck could probably learn something from the progress at Kearny. Spagnola is dynamic and forceful, and there is never any doubt that she is in charge, but she also works closely with teachers and is quick to share credit. In fact, union representative Carolyn Smith almost canceled her last monthly meeting with Spagnola because no one had any complaints.

"We feel like we're all in this together," said Smith, a fifth-grade teacher. "We're all following Hornbeck's lead, and we're proud of what we've accomplished."

Hornbeck earned national attention when the federal judge overseeing the school system threatened him with jail if he did not follow one of her orders. But his nastiest fight came when he tried, and ultimately failed, to transfer the faculties of two underperforming high schools, infuriating union leaders who accused him of blaming teachers for society's failings.

But Smith respectfully parts ways with the union, accepting responsibility for the performance of all her students. "Sure, we've got a hard job," she said. "These kids get beat up at home, or they come to school hungry, or they don't get a good night's sleep. But they all have the potential to do better. We need to do the best we can for them."

Mixed report card

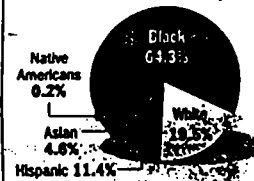
After three years of nonstop controversy, opinions about Hornbeck

At a glance

A look at the Philadelphia public school system.

Students	217,383
Schools	257
Employees	22,509
Teachers	11,664
Per-pupil expenditure	\$4,857

Race breakdown



Students eligible for free or subsidized lunches	80.0%
Students who graduate	49.2%

Improvement

	1996	1997
Students who read at basic level	40.7%	48.1%
Students who do math at basic level	25.6%	29.8%
Students who do science at basic level	25.0%	31.4%

SOURCE: School District of Philadelphia

GLOBE STAFF CHART

are still deeply divided. The white members of the school board have deserted him, but the black members have crossed the aisle. The Inquirer supports him, but The Daily News blasts him. Mayor Edward Rendell is behind him, but the governor and the state Legislature in Harrisburg opposes him.

Unfortunately, even though Philadelphia has raised more private money than any other school district in the country, Harrisburg controls the public money. Hornbeck plans to sue the state for racial discrimination for funding suburban districts more generously than Philadelphia, but there is no relief in sight. The average class size is over 30 students, and there is almost no money for afterschool or summer school programs. If the state does not come up with an extra \$185 million next year, Hornbeck says he may have to shut down the schools early.

"It's a national outrage: Democrats and Republicans just don't believe that poor African-American children can achieve," he said. "Well, I'm drawing a line in the sand. I'm not going to pretend that I can keep doing this without money."

The battle has high stakes, not only for the future of standards, but for the future of America's public schools. A voucher plan to allow students to attend private schools with public dollars narrowly failed in the Legislature, and a poll in Philadelphia found that most voters supported it. After years of underachievement, this may be the last chance to make free, noncompetitive public education work in Philadelphia. "This could be the last stand," Hornbeck said. "If we fail, it's hard to believe that they'll give it another shot."



Malachi Watson (left) and Mike Smart, both age 7 and students at the Kearny School in Philadelphia, counted out a math problem in their computer class.

GLOBE PHOTO / BRAD BOWER

from: LA TIMES

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1997

B3

LAAMP Gets High Marks for Reforms

■ **Education:** School program has helped increase parental involvement and improve teacher training in its first year, participants say.

By DUKE HELFAND
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Educators seeking to reform schools across Los Angeles County issued their own glowing report card Thursday, saying the first year of a multimillion-dollar academic overhaul has helped involve parents, train teachers and engage students in learning.

The teachers and administrators spent the day evaluating reforms initiated at 13 school "families," the first of 28 batches of campuses to receive grants from the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project. Funds have been provided by a \$53-million donation by billionaire media magnate Walter H. Annenberg.

Subsequent grants were made to 15 other groups of schools. LAAMP has awarded \$38 million, with the remainder of the money to be used for operating costs, evaluations and other expenses. The schools are required to match all grants with public or private funds.

Campuses have installed computers, opened parent centers and established teacher-training programs with the help of area universities over the last year, the first of the five-year project.

Although LAAMP officials said it was too soon to accurately measure results, the schools cited several indicators of success: improved attendance, lower dropout rates, fewer student suspensions, more students taking rigorous courses and increased parent participation.

"We're trying to create a community of learners that extends beyond the traditional school doors," said Constance Gibson, principal of Lemay Street Elementary School in Van Nuys and a member of the Birmingham "school family" in the San Fernando Valley.

The Birmingham cluster of 12 schools—serving Van Nuys and Reseda—used its nearly \$300,000 to buy computer equipment for each campus and to establish "Saturday school" for students and parents alike, among other things.

Gibson said teachers sought to curb a troubling trend: Parents who were uninvolved in their children's education because they were too busy working.

The schools decided to offer classes on Saturday mornings at a middle school. Now, 300 children and 80 adults show up every Saturday at 9 a.m.

The children study everything from math and science to art, dance and karate. Parents learn how to operate computers and take English classes, and they sign a pledge to volunteer with their schools one hour for each three-hour Saturday session they attend.

Meanwhile, counseling is offered on Saturdays for families with children in any of the 12 Birmingham schools and a caseworker is available to help locate medical services.

"Research shows that if parents
Please see LAAMP, B6

LAAMP: High Marks for Reforms

Continued from B3

are involved in schools, children get better grades," Gibson said.

Some observers were impressed by such reforms but said they want more proof of academic success.

"I think it shows incredible progress for building families of schools," said David Tokofsky, a member of the Los Angeles Board of Education who served as a panelist for the conference in Burbank. "While it is too early to say what's the empirical proof that the system works, that has to be moving up the agenda of these [school] families quickly. You can be a happy family and still not go to college."

Of the 13 initial school clusters, five are in the Los Angeles Unified School District—with three in the Valley, one on the Eastside and one in the San Pedro area.

The others include the Santa Monica-Malibu, Pasadena and Long Beach unified school districts. Officials from several of the districts said the LAAMP program has enabled them to build collaborative relationships among students, teachers, administrators, parents and others whose input is crucial to carrying out broad reforms.

Administrators in Pasadena district are using part of their \$2.2-million grant for a summer academy in which veteran teachers model their methods for novice colleagues in hopes that both will learn from the experience. The academy also is being funded by the Ford Foundation and has been developed with Cal State Dominguez Hills.

"LAAMP has helped us focus, expand and improve our efforts," said Kathy Lesley, the Pasadena district's director of secondary instruction and its LAAMP coordinator.

The Boston Globe

At last, schools that mean business

It wasn't so long ago that fear shaped the urban strategies of Boston's downtown bank presidents, insurance executives and utility heads. Hale Champion, who headed the Boston Redevelopment Authority under former Mayor Kevin White, once described Boston's business leaders as a "quivering mass of money" eager only to stave off the next urban riot or mute harsh rhetoric in the inner city.

Today, knowledgeable executives are neither nervous nor naive about the ways of the city. They see consumers and potential employees where their predecessors saw trouble. Rather than creating funds for entertainment or schoolyard hoops, they favor sound plans for improving educational quality.

And they are more than checkbook warriors. On Tuesday, executives from John Hancock Financial Services, the Liberty Mutual Group, Massachusetts General Hospital, BankBoston and dozens of other companies and institutions reached out to more than 70 Boston schools, both listening and offering advice and technical help. Some executives have been involved in partnerships with individual schools for more than a decade. But few have seen the levels of commitment, professionalism and energy that characterize the current leadership of the School Department under Superintendent Thomas Payzant.

"In the past, it was a constant effort to get all parties to play," said William Boyan, president of John Hancock Financial Services. "Now they are all together, including the union and the School Committee."

Fractionousness, whether rooted in labor problems with teachers and staff, community control or politics, is the enemy of the Boston public schools. Both money and brainpower flow to peaceable systems with a plan.

Proof of that also arrived this week with the announcement of a five-year, \$10 million matching grant to the Boston public schools from the Annenberg Foundation. Just two years ago, Annenberg, which provides \$500 million in school reform funds nationwide, wouldn't consider Boston. The foundation requires a "relentless focus on children and schools," and it didn't find that in the prior administration, where teachers stymied innovation through archaic work rules and former Superintendent Lois Harrison-Jones measured success in

dropout reduction rates, not improvements in teaching and learning.

Things are different now, thanks to a mayor who has linked his legacy to public education, an appointed school board that values children more than politics, a flexible teachers union contract and renewed partnerships between individual schools and businesses. It was this "alignment of business, educational and political leadership" that convinced the foundation that major school reform is possible in Boston, said Vartan Gregorian, the president of Brown University and an adviser to the foundation.

No Bostonian should undervalue the significance of the Annenberg challenge grant. Similar grants are being used around the country in transformative ways, including efforts to ensure that urban students will enter the workplace or college without needing remedial course work and the funding of schools with full autonomy regarding hiring and budget decisions. Boston's grant will be used primarily for the professional development of teachers to ensure that citywide academic standards are met in more than 50 schools.

Boston voters are reminded to protect this investment on Nov. 5 by voting no on Question 2, which asks if the city should return to the old format of a 13-member elected School Committee. The seven-member, mayorally appointed school board is vastly more education-minded and in sync with current reform efforts.

Over the next several years, the pressure will be on students, teachers and School Department officials to meet both the state's graduation standards and Annenberg's challenge to create an educated citizenry. In the next few months, however, the pressure is on John Hancock's Boyan, who is leading the private effort to raise the \$10 million matching requirement for the Annenberg grant. He deserves generous support, in the form of major donations, from the city's financial and manufacturing institutions. "They know who they are," says Boyan.

Boston awaits new educational partnerships with businesses, new instructional approaches and new graduates with the ability to think critically, communicate effectively and take their rightful positions in companies that either feared or ignored their parents.

LEARNING TO S

Blending a
community
and its past
with the
classroom
may mean
hope for the
future of
small towns
across
America.



Jeremy Schulz, a 15-year-old art student at Howard High School, paints an autumn scene on a business window in town.

SURVIVE



Howard, S.D.

Standing among the splintered timber and waist-high grass that is the ghost town of Vilas, S.D., 16-year-old Nick Wolf peers into the past.

Just over a century ago, Vilas was full of hope. It had 500 residents, two banks, a pool hall, and two grain elevators. But in 1882, Vilas lost its bid for the county seat. In 1936, the high school closed. Next, the two railroad tracks that intersected in town were abandoned, and Vilas' fate was sealed.

Wolf turns his back on the chilly fall wind blasting at his orange-and-black letterman's jacket and contemplates the future of his hometown, just six miles away. There is talk of moving the county seat out of Howard to a town 20 miles away. The shift could cripple Wolf's community, which is already fighting to retain businesses and residents.

Nodding his head slowly, he concedes that his chance to run the family farm could be lost if Howard withers away. When he stops nodding,

Schools & Communities

Looking Beyond the Classroom

concentration gathers like a storm in his crystal-blue eyes. "But I don't think it will," he says. "People are working to make sure it doesn't."

Wolf is pinning his hopes on teachers and classmates at Howard High School, which recently became a part of the Annenberg Rural Challenge, a national effort to strengthen rural schools and their communities. Rural Challenge schools create curricula specific to the history and resources of their communities. And schools become the center

Text and Photos
By Robert C. Johnston

of the communities—places where students, educators, and residents come together to study and address local concerns.

For example, Howard students are researching community spending patterns, and housing problems of senior citizens. They also want to help local retailers by selling them low-priced produce from the high school's new orchard. Wolf hopes these efforts will revive his town and encourage his friends to continue living here.

Through grants and technical help, the Rural Challenge is planting similar seeds across the country. There are 27 Rural Challenge programs in 250 schools from Alaska to Maine.

And interest is growing, especially in towns with struggling economies and shrinking populations. "This is about the simultaneous renewal of schools and communities," says Larry Rogers, the associate director of the Program for Rural School and Community Renewal at South Dakota State University in Brookings, which oversees the state's Rural Challenge programs. "Schools are not just bit players in somebody else's drama, but schools are engines of change."

*"The difference between success
and failure is vision funded
by a small grant."*

LARRY ROGERS, S.D. STATE UNIVERSITY

In 1993, retired publisher and diplomat Walter H. Annenberg pledged \$500 million to improve America's schools. But that effort, which became the Annenberg Challenge, focused on reform in urban schools.

Rural school advocates lobbied for a rural education counterpart of between \$10 million and \$50 million. The Annenberg Foundation announced early in 1995 that it would provide \$50 million over five years in matching grants for such a program. It was the biggest private investment ever in rural schools.

"Going from \$10 million to \$50 million was one of the most important if not the most important step toward looking at rural education in the United States," says Joe Nathan, the director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. "It immediately vaulted the importance and visibility of rural education in a way not done before."

The program was launched that fall when Paul Nachtigal and his wife, Toni Haas, both longtime rural educators with national research and foundation experience, agreed to lead it.

Working from a former hunting den in the Rocky Mountain town of Granby, Colo., the couple oversees a network of projects in 30 states. So far, \$20 million has been awarded, half of which has gone to low-income sites. A third of the programs involve predominantly minority communities.

"We're getting the right ideas out at the right time with the right people," Nachtigal says. "It's stimulating wonderful conversation and giving people permission to talk about issues that matter and make sense to them."

While some large established programs initially were funded, the Rural Challenge now looks for small but promising projects. Participation is by invitation only. Nachtigal and Haas coordinate 10 regional field workers, or "stewards," who scout potential projects and promote the program's objectives.

"We're about reform, and we're serious," says Belinda Laumbach, a professor of education at New Mexico Highlands University who is on the Rural Challenge's board of directors. "One of our goals is not to do business as usual. That's why there are no requests for proposals."

And the Rural Challenge is not about making students better test-takers or encouraging schools to see academic standards as education's Holy Grail. It wants students, through their schools, to become active, knowledgeable citizens. Says Haas, "People are



hungry to talk about what kind of life we want for our children, rather than a technocratic approach to improve achievement by five points in five years."

*"There's more to education than
what's in the textbook on page 28. ...
If we fail, we will have gone down
fighting to do what's right."*

RAYMOND PARRY, TEACHER, HOWARD, S.D.

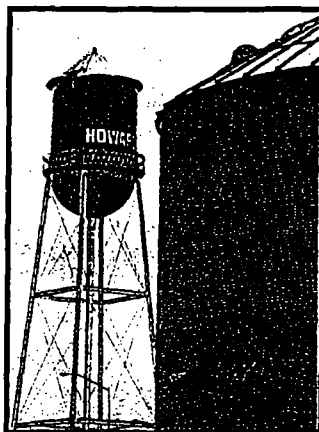
One of the program's rising stars is the 567-student Howard school district, which sits about 50 miles northwest of Sioux Falls on the eastern edge of the state. Working through its two elementary schools and one secondary school, Howard students, teachers, and town leaders are trying to create a community where young people will live, start businesses, and raise families.

It is a bold effort, says Jim Lentz, the school district's superintendent. But, he says, such are the demands of survival in today's rural America. Howard is the seat of government for Miner County, a 456-square-mile section of rolling earth that has been as blessed with rich farmland as it is cursed with bitterly cold winters. Once home to more than 8,000 people and eight towns, Miner County now has three towns and 2,862 people. Fifty-three percent of the county's households have annual incomes below \$20,000. Two years ago, the district had 600 students.

"Not everyone embraces [the project] because change is tough," Lentz says in a soft voice that contrasts with his bearlike frame. "But I tell them to think about it this way: 'The school and community



Howard High School student Nick Wolf stands near the remains of Vilas, S.D., a once-promising town that is now in ruins. Wolf hopes the efforts behind the Annenberg Rural Challenge will save his town, just six miles away, from a similar fate. Former school teachers LuLu Anderson, left, and Leta Trusty volunteer at the Rural Resource Center in a Howard High School classroom. "We need to look at the young people to help, and that's one of the reasons we're here," Anderson says.



Silos are a common part of the scenery in Miner County, S.D., but residents are leaving the county's rich farmland behind as towns die off. Howard Mayor Larry Gauger, left, and Howard High School vocational education teacher Raymond Parry are among the residents working to keep the community together.



are so tightly linked that if one goes down, so does the other. And that means jobs."

The district begins with the credo that through active democracy, nothing is inevitable. Here's how the philosophy is applied:

- English students read about the decline of family farms in America and then write to elected officials. U.S. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., responded last year with a personal visit to Howard High.
- Students will help design a center where senior citizens can live and participate in a variety of activities.
- Art students spruce up downtown by painting seasonal artwork on the windows of local businesses.
- Students will market apples and strawberries as early as next summer from their new two-acre orchard behind the high school.
- The district has applied for a \$65,000 federal grant to build a greenhouse on campus. Local gardeners would help students develop a wholesale plant and flower business.

One of Howard's most dramatic projects was a county cash-flow study started two years ago with a one-time, \$600 Rural Challenge planning grant.

Howard High School vocational education instructor Raymond Parry led the project. Working with community members, Parry and his students developed a survey of spending patterns and sent it to 1,000 residents. They had a stunning 64 percent response rate.

They used computers to analyze results, which included individual federal income-tax data. Next, they convened local business leaders and published reports in local papers that said Miner County could boost retail sales by nearly \$2.4 million a year if residents would spend 10 percent more of their disposable income locally.

In the year that followed, those sales rose 27 percent over the previous year, bringing nearly

\$30,000 in new revenue to the county.

Jim Mutziger, Howard's school board president and the general manager of the Howard Farmers Cooperative Association, saw revenue for his co-op increase \$3.5 million in fiscal 1997 over the previous year.

He says that the co-op deserves credit for marketing itself better. But, he adds, "Raymond Parry told people if they spent just a little more in Howard, South Dakota, it would make a difference. I really think that's had a tremendous impact on what's happened here."

"I've always thought that the school was a building taxpayers paid for and they should be able to use it."

HOWARD MAYOR LARRY GAUGER

Parry didn't stop there.

After the successful cash-flow project, Howard was awarded a three-year, \$75,000 Annenberg implementation grant from South Dakota State's Program for Rural School and Community Renewal, which oversees 18 Rural Challenge projects statewide.

The grant pays half of Parry's teaching salary so that he can run Howard's Rural Challenge program. One of his first tasks was to turn a classroom at Howard High School into a rural resource center for the town.

Maps, county records, and photographs from the local historical society are available at the center for student research. And Howard Mayor Larry Gauger shows up from time to time to explain local zoning laws or agriculture trends to students.

The center has displayed exhibitions on local veterans and the history of Miner County rural schools, which once numbered 73. Now, there are only four schools countywide. Town residents are always welcome during school hours, and town meetings have been held at the center. "This kind of relationship never existed before," Parry says.

Local volunteers have personal reasons for staffing the center. "We're going to lose some more people because families aren't as big as they used to be, and you begin to wonder what's going to happen to us," says LuLu Anderson, a retired former school teacher. "We need to look at the young people to help, and that's one of the reasons we're here."

"People need time to swallow and then digest. You can't just shove something down people's throats out here."

BETH FUNK, KOOSKIA, IDAHO

But not every community takes to the program as smoothly as Howard has.

For nearly five years, concerned residents in the north-central Idaho towns of Elk City and Kooskia, which have 1,200 residents combined, have studied ways to expand local cultural and business opportunities.

"We were just trying to find out how the hell to survive," says Beth Funk, a resident of Kooskia and a former forest ranger. "The logging industry isn't what it was when we moved here."

A scout for the Rural Challenge program last winter

contacted Funk and other interested town residents about their work on arts education. To the residents, the Rural Challenge seemed a way to help schools develop an arts-based language arts curriculum and raise money for other projects.

But when the scout came to town in the spring, he received a cool welcome.

Several residents were worried that the Annenberg work was linked to federal school programs and school-based workforce development. That concern was intense, Funk says, because the scout also worked for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, an education research and technical assistance center in Portland, Ore., funded by the U.S. Department of Education. "They were trying to get him to say how the Rural Challenge was connected to the government," Funk recalls.

Some people were also taken aback by the program's central tenet.

"The school has not and never should be the center of the community," says Jamie Edmondson, a member of a group of town residents who organized to oppose participation in the Annenberg program. "There's too much now that takes away from education."

To Edmondson, the effort reeks of social engineering and is potentially damaging. "There's nothing wrong with saying you have a good community. But if you educate them just about their communities, then you're limiting their horizons."

The Rural Challenge will also try to lobby for the support of elected officials and others who set public policy.

The Rural Challenge has contracted with longtime Nebraska agriculture lobbyist Marty Strange to develop a public-policy agenda for the program. Strange works out of a converted barn in Randolph, Vt. He is focusing on academic standards, equity and finance, facilities and infrastructure, and governance.

Rural educators want rigorous academic standards, he says. But those developed so far don't accurately reflect today's rural America, Strange argues.

"If you read the standards and what you need to do to meet them, you'll learn that rural is yesterday and someplace else," he says. "We don't believe that. Standards need to be rooted in the place the school serves."

School finance and equity issues will likely focus on funding for rural communities that, hamstrung by shrinking tax bases and aging facilities, are often



Jim Mutziger is the president of Howard's school board and the general manager of the Howard Farmers Cooperative Association. "Raymond Parry told people if they spent just a little more in Howard, S.D., it would make a difference. I really think that's had a tremendous impact on what's happened here," he says.

forced to close schools or consolidate with neighbors. In 1940, there were 117,108 school districts nationwide. By 1990, there were 15,367, an 87 percent decrease. Consolidation is not all bad, but it should be a local choice, Strange says.

Rural schools might get more respect if they were evaluated less on their size and more on their academic performance. For example, students in rural schools score higher than their nonrural peers on many national tests. On the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress 8th grade math test, students in rural and small towns averaged 276 out of a possible 500 points. Suburban and large-town test-takers averaged 273 points, and central-city students averaged 259. The good showing was also true for poor rural students. The average scores of students from the same groups who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program were 257, 247, and 244, respectively.

The Rural Challenge's board of directors is expected to vote on the policy agenda Strange is working on by the end of the year. If adopted, local projects will be expected, but not required, to advocate the new priorities.

"They'll get into it as much as they want, but we

want grantees to be central to it," Strange says. "We want to see a national rural education network, but it's too soon to say what the focus will be."

"It's their place. They're writing about their home. Nobody has told them that's important."

MARY STANGOHR, TEACHER, HOWARD, S.D.

Ultimately, the Rural Challenge's strongest hope for the future is in curricula that integrate rural schools and their communities. And if Howard students are any indication, such changes will have an impact.

It's the Thursday of a big football game, but all attention in Howard High's 5th-period English class is on the final projects of a seven-week session based on the novel of Iowa's farm crisis and rural poverty, *Broken Heartland*, by Osha Gray Davidson. A \$1,000 Rural Challenge grant paid for resources for the class, such as the book and videotapes.

The project was an emotional journey for some students, many of whom know all too well about the perils of family farming when it runs into competition with massive corporate operations.

"What are you going to do with your learning? Are you willing to take some risks?" asks their teacher, Mary Stangoehr. "Like it or not, the fate of the nation is in your hands. I'd like you to stand up and make sure that nobody makes you a serf on your own land."

Tiffany Feller and Melinda Alfson, juniors at Howard High School who have known each other throughout childhood, are going to document how their lives are intertwined with the agriculture industry.

Feller's family farm was hit hard last winter when early freezes damaged crops and caused the deaths of several cattle. Tears well up in her eyes as she recalls tracking two dozen cattle early one winter morning with her father, only to find half of them dead. The cattle discovered some stalks of corn and, driven by hunger, gorged themselves until they died.

"It was really hard to deal with. We decided to sell out," she says. Her family retained some of its acreage, but sold the farmhouse and moved into town this fall. "I don't understand how this happened. The banks and the government didn't do as much as they could have."

Meanwhile, Alfson's grandparents recently sold the family's service station after 40 years, largely because patrons, like the Fellers, couldn't bring them business when the hard times hit.

"People complain that we closed, but you would them in another town buying gas," Alfson says. "Well, I tell them, 'You can go there now.'"

Schools & Communities is underwritten by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

EVALUATING THE RURAL CHALLENGE

The Annenberg Rural Challenge is to be praised for its bold objectives and rapid growth, but sometimes suffers from unclear objectives, says a review of the program by Harvard University evaluators.

The first review of the 2-year-old program was released earlier this month by a group at Harvard University's graduate school of education.

The 60-page document praises the program's progress, largely by sharing the observations of the evaluators during their visits to several Rural Challenge sites.

"While not the first rural-education reform movement, it is well on its way to making a significant difference in the ways schools and communities carry out their work," writes Vito Perrone, the director of teacher education at Harvard.

But the report also points to the program's sometimes shifting objectives.

"It is the vision of a fuller integration of community and school that seems in need of greater clarity," the report states.

The document is chock-full of brief stories, including ones about students and adults in Big Springs, Neb., restoring an old hotel as a bed-and-breakfast, and schools building a marine science lab in Lubec, Maine.

"The initial openness to sharing developed into a stronger sense of reciprocity between communities and schools," the report says of these and other local efforts.

Rural Challenge participants also talk about the difficulty of defining "classroom" to include the community. Others say that they have sold their communities short as a potential place for students to live.

"I don't talk much about my love for the community, the beauty, the safety, the warm feelings, but I should," says one teacher.

The evaluators will issue four more reports, with the next due out in January.

Copies of the new report are available from Carla Fontaine, Annenberg Rural Challenge, 14 Story St., Second Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 495-5191.

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Challenge to the Nation: A Progress Report

Walter H. Annenberg's
Challenge to the Nation

A PROGRESS REPORT

Annenberg Challenge

PRESS RELEASE
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UPDATE ANNENBERG CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL REFORM

On December 17, 1993, President Bill Clinton announced the single largest gift ever made to American public education: a five-year, half-billion dollar challenge grant made by the Honorable Walter H. Annenberg, former U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain. The gift provided a badly needed boost to the nation's public schools and to the efforts of all those endeavoring to improve them-- teachers, administrators, policy makers, educational reformers, community groups, business representatives, and foundations.

Befitting its name, the Annenberg Challenge was intended from the outset to be a challenge on many fronts: educational, moral, political, and financial. Mr. Annenberg hoped to support schools in those places where they seemed most threatened: notably, major urban areas--places that tested acutely our commitment as a democratic nation to educate all students well. And he hoped to help create in these places ever-growing numbers of good schools--schools where teachers and principals, joined by the surrounding community, know their students well, challenge all children academically, and value thoughtful citizenship.

As of February 1998, virtually all of Mr. Annenberg's extraordinary gift has been allocated. A total of \$113.1 million has been awarded in outright grants to New American Schools (NAS), the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (AISR). Approximately \$370 million has been awarded to eighteen matching grants for urban, rural, and arts-driven school reform, promising to generate an additional \$650

million in new public and private matching investments. In the four years since the White House announcement, the Challenge has generated more than \$375 million to date, and in every city receiving a matching grant, private giving to public education is up.

Believing that there is no single solution for fixing what ails our nation's most troubled schools, the Challenge has refrained from advocating one reform strategy over another. Because the culture in which each grant operates is different, emphasis is placed on local authority and control. Governing boards--drawn from local foundations, universities, community groups, business leaders, people working in schools, and those active in local reform--and a small staff of professionals handle the work for all of the matching grants. National organizations and institutions partner to lend their support as well.

Annenberg funds are supporting reform work in close to 2,700 schools, covering over 300 districts in virtually every state in the country. This number includes the approximately 250 schools in which the Annenberg Institute is carrying out programs, the 750 schools that are part of New American Schools, and the nearly 1,700 schools currently receiving funds through Challenge matching grants. From the Baranof Elementary school in Sitka, Alaska to the urban sprawl of P.S. 30 in the Bronx, N.Y.C., schools receiving support come in all types and sizes.

UPDATE
ANNENBERG CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL REFORM
(CONTINUED)

SELECT IMPACTS OF ANNENBERG CHALLENGE TO DATE

- In the Bay Area, several school districts, including Oakland and San Francisco, have adopted as a district wide accountability tool a system of school portfolios modeled on that of the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (the Bay Area's Challenge project).
- Superintendent Tom Payzant recommended that the Boston School Committee adopt a one-page plan, citywide, for whole-school change prepared by Annenberg partners in Boston.
- In Chattanooga, an entirely new set of standards, curriculum, and assessments have been created with Challenge dollars. In addition, the Hamilton County School District has agreed to devote 1% of its total budget this year and 2% within the next five years to professional development, which previously received no funding at all.
- The Chicago Annenberg Challenge has joined hands with the Chicago School Board to start a \$2.65 million effort to help Chicago schools choose an estimated 230 principal positions open in spring 1998. The four-year contracts of almost all of Chicago's 557 school principals expire in the next two years.
- The Detroit Board of Education approved a plan for "fundamental reform" spearheaded by William Beckham, the chair of Detroit's Annenberg board. The Board of Education also asked Beckham to lead the seven-member implementation team heading the reforms.
- The Los Angeles Challenge and the LAUSD, LEARN (the professional development arm of the LAUSD), the Long Beach Unified School District, the Pasadena Unified School District, and the California State University system have introduced a new professional development initiative called DELTA.
- New York City's Chancellor Rudy Crew, in addition to responding to the call of the New York Networks for School Renewal (the city's Annenberg project) for a "Learning Zone," recently created a new position within his leadership team--Director of Support for New and Developing Schools, suggesting increased support for innovative initiatives.
- The Rural Challenge has launched a full-fledged campaign to influence state and national policy for rural schools. The campaign is all-inclusive from pushing for legislation that gives schools and libraries discounted rates to maintaining a grants program for policy action.
- The South Florida Annenberg Challenge awarded a grant to the Quantum Foundation and the Palm Beach County schools for developing model literacy standards for the entire state in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Encouraging preliminary impacts of Challenge Grants on students

- The Chicago Comer School Network, a member network of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, has tailored curriculum to the strengths and learning styles of students. While many Comer schools started from low performance levels on tests, they are quickly closing the gap between their state test scores and the national norms. Comer schools, on average, are achieving over a year's progress during a year's time--a rate faster than the city standard.
- With a student population of 45% Latino, 35% African-American, and 20% white, the Pasadena School Family, involved with the Los Angeles Challenge, can boast an increase in third grade students reading at grade level, an increase in students taking pre-algebra in the eighth grade, and a decrease in limited-English-proficient drop-outs.
- At 11 New York Annenberg schools, 81% of the first graduating classes were accepted into college, a rate well above that of high school students in the rest of the city or state. The Frederick Douglass Academy established in Harlem in 1991, boasted the highest reading and math scores in its district and the third highest SAT scores among New York City Schools; 95% of its first graduating class were headed to prestigious four-year colleges.

- Student achievement is on the rise in Philadelphia. Two hundred and eight (82 percent) of Philadelphia's schools improved over last year's baseline, with seventy-one of these schools meeting their two-year performance targets in one year. Fourth graders posted the highest gains showing significant increases in reading, math, and science. In addition, the number of volunteers in Philadelphia schools increased to a grand total of 12,021. The district exceeded its five-year goal of 10,000 volunteers in just three years.
- As part of a business class at Howard High School (one of the funded partners in the Rural Challenge), students performed a cash-flow study and found that an increase in local retail sales of 10 percent would generate an additional \$7 million in local revenues. Since the study was completed, sales in the county have jumped more than 25 percent.
- Two Challenge schools—Chicago Vocational High School and Central Park East Secondary School in New York City—were among five nationwide honored by the U.S. Department of Education as New Urban High Schools.

It should be noted that since some grants were only awarded during the past year, predictably, center stage here has belonged mostly to those who have been at their Annenberg work the longest. In subsequent updates this balance will certainly shift.

A SUMMARY OF ANNENBERG CHALLENGE GRANTS

Large Urban Grants

1. Bay Area (San Francisco)

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC)—supported by \$25 million from William R. Hewlett and the Hewlett Foundation, \$25 million from Mr. Annenberg, and an additional \$50 million in matching funds—spans 740,000 students in over 1,200 schools from 118 school districts across six counties. This vast project has two main objectives: to support and encourage a core group of 100 schools and their districts to take a leadership role in whole-school reform and to create a formal Learning Collaborative comprised of Bay Area schools, districts and support organizations. Because BASRC believes that schools will improve only once those working in and around them *learn* new, different and better ways of operating, the Collaborative sponsors "learning communities" of schools, districts, support providers, and funders that conduct "cycles of inquiry"—an approach that generates and uses evidence to discover new ways of improving schools.

In order to qualify for BASRC "leadership" funding, schools and their districts must first become members of the Collaborative. Applicants submit a portfolio that documents both a vision of reform consistent with BASRC's and the concrete steps already taken towards that vision. Panels of peer reviewers evaluate admission portfolios using criteria developed collaboratively by teachers, administrators and local school reformers. Praised by both applicants and reviewers as a valuable learning opportunity, the portfolio process also reflects BASRC's belief in the importance of engaging in real work: in this case, of transforming the administrative task of selecting members to the Collaborative into a productive professional development experience. To date, membership in the Collaborative includes 208 schools, fifty-seven districts, twenty-seven support providers, and two county offices of education.

BASRC also sponsors four research and development initiatives in areas of critical importance to schools. The first effort, conducted jointly with the University of California-based National

Center for Research in Vocational Education, focuses on ways school-to-career programs can provide a lever for whole-school change. The second, Technology and School Change, helps schools explore the potential of technology to transform teaching and learning and to effect systemwide school reform. It includes the newly-instituted Bay Area National Digital Library project, which works closely with the Library of Congress National Digital Library, to use the Internet to provide high quality primary sources about American history and culture. A third initiative, School/University Partnerships, explores possibilities for coordinating university programs with those offered by schools and for designing a comprehensive approach to teacher training. Lastly, the Leadership Connection Initiative links leadership development workshops to the goal of improving student literacy in San Francisco schools.

2. Boston

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

The common goal of each of Boston's four Annenberg initiatives is for all students to meet the city's new (and more rigorous) learning standards. The critical step in this process requires schools to identify a single, school-wide instructional focus, one that drives all decision-making with regard to instruction, curriculum, scheduling, staff professional development, and the allocation of both human and monetary resources. This single focus—be it literacy, technology or bi-lingual education—is designed to eliminate what Superintendent Payzant has dubbed "projectitis": the previously fragmented approach to reform by which one new program was heaped upon another in a piecemeal, incoherent fashion. Instead, each school determines its instructional focus after a detailed examination of student work and other school data, so the actual needs of students (and not the inclinations of adults) dictate the course a school follows.

3. Chicago

Growing out of Chicago's long tradition of strong, vital neighborhoods, the Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) features schools and community groups working together to improve teaching and learning for all students. The \$49.2 million, two-for-one matching grant supports networks of three or more schools and an external partner—a community group, a nonprofit organization, cultural institution, or university—collaborating to address three key obstacles to reform: size, time and isolation. In practice, this includes creating small learning communities where all students are well known, providing more opportunities for teachers' planning and professional development, making the most effective use of teaching time, and forging close relationships with parents and the community as well as with other teachers and schools. To date, CAC has awarded nearly \$22 million to 250 schools in sixty-one networks.

In Chicago, the strategy for improving schools rests on the belief that small, intimate learning communities best promote the academic, social and psychological development of all students. In small settings with low adult-student ratios, teachers know their students—their strengths, weaknesses, interests, learning styles—and use that knowledge to shape their instruction and to provide individualized learning opportunities. Small learning communities also allow for more

flexible allocations of time, enabling teachers to plan, train, reflect, and work collaboratively to improve their teaching practices and instructional programs.

Including the community to break down the isolation of schools is the third element of the CAC strategy. Grouping schools together in networks and with external partners is a way of connecting schools to each other and to their larger communities that encourages the sharing and dissemination of outside resources and support. Ideally, schools become actors in community life, and the culture of parents and neighborhood residents remain essential to the education of young people.

4. Detroit

Unlike other Annenberg grants, Detroit's Challenge project, the Schools of the 21st Century Initiative, has been planned from the outset as a ten-year, \$100 million effort, with Annenberg funds (\$20 million to be matched two-for-one) supporting only the first five years of the program. A broadly collaborative effort of educators, parent and community organizations, foundations, and business interests, the Initiative aims to institutionalize comprehensive systemic reform to ensure high levels of academic performance and healthy growth and development for all students.

The major goals of the Initiative target three critical relationships necessary for achieving and sustaining comprehensive reform: personalizing the relationship between teachers and students to improve teaching and learning, enhancing the relationship between schools and community members (especially parents) to better meet the learning and developmental needs of students, and redefining the relationship between schools and the district administration to allow schools to reshape themselves and be directly accountable for improving student performance. This focus on rebuilding relationships reflects the loss of community confidence in the public schools, along with the recognition that recapturing it is an essential element in improving public education.

The grants program currently under design calls for ten clusters of three to five schools to develop and implement creative school improvement plans aimed at achieving the Initiative's goals. In keeping with the emphasis on community involvement, a major component of the grants program is a comprehensive and inclusive all-school planning process to build the understanding and support necessary for carrying out reform. In addition, the Challenge will support school clusters by providing ongoing technical assistance and training. Though grants will be awarded to a relatively small percentage of schools in the district, the Initiative is preparing a communications and engagement strategy to enable all schools, along with their wider constituencies, to participate in the dialogue about school reform in Detroit.

5. Houston

Supported by a \$20 million, two-for-one matching grant, the Houston Annenberg Challenge works with the six school districts that have a majority of their students living within the city limits, a student population totaling nearly 400,000. Reform efforts focus on improving three fundamental areas: student learning (by personalizing the learning environment), teacher learning (through professional development and training), and community involvement (by partnering schools with local businesses and/or community-based organizations).

Through a competitive request for proposal process, the Challenge funds four different types of grants to two categories of schools. Beacon schools, with proven-track records of improving student achievement, making positive changes to school culture, connecting to their community, and acting as mentors to other educators, are eligible for development grants of between \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year. Copernican schools, those making their way toward Beacon school status, are teamed with a mentor school and two community-based organizations as

they move through a process of exploration, planning, and implementation grants. During the Challenge's first funding cycle this past fall, grants totaling \$1.4 million were awarded to eleven Beacon schools.

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

6. Los Angeles

Los Angeles's \$53 million, one-for-one matching Challenge grant supports the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP), which includes both the L.A. Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest in the country, and the eighty-one districts in surrounding Los Angeles County. LAAMP's goal is to foster high levels of student achievement for all the region's children through the creation of stable learning communities. Schools participating in LAAMP are required to form "families"—a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools—that design and implement "learning plans" focused on one or more critical area such as K-12 literacy, students with limited-English-proficiency, or coherent standards and assessments. LAAMP then helps each School Family develop a clear vision, a professional school climate, an inclusive and effective decision-making structure, and a set of strategies for regular, public accountability that all relate to the family's chosen area of focus. Having completed its grant making, LAAMP supports a total of twenty-eight School Families, fourteen within the LAUSD and fourteen from districts in Los Angeles County, representing nearly 200,000 students in 247 schools.

In a region of extraordinary and debilitating mobility among students and their families, the creation of School Families is hoped to promote a degree of stability and continuity—at the very least, from grade to grade and from school to school—through resource sharing, improved communications and greater coherence among teachers regarding their expectations, curriculum and instructional practice. The centrality of School Families in the LAAMP program also reflects an attempt to deepen existing reform and disseminate it regionally. Hoping to acquire strength through numbers, School Families represent an effort to gain a more powerful voice for member schools vis-a-vis their districts. LAAMP negotiates a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each School Family's sponsoring district to ensure that it will support the schools' restructuring efforts. Using MOUs as a way to influence district practices, LAAMP hopes to provoke system-wide change within the LAUSD and other districts across the county, so all schools—and not just those funded by LAAMP—will benefit from its efforts.

7. New York City

The first of the Annenberg Challenge urban grants awarded, the New York Networks for School Renewal (NYNSR) is a \$25 million, two-for-one matching grant with three central goals: to increase the number of small, excellent schools of choice in New York City, to change the educational system so that it better supports and maintains such schools, and to effect systemwide public school reform. The NYNSR project has advanced the concept of a Learning Zone—a mechanism to reduce bureaucratic regulation, thereby giving schools greater autonomy to improve student learning and achievement. Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew has adopted the Learning Zone, which necessarily requires changing policies with regard to budgeting, school-based governance, and curriculum and assessment. In exchange, schools will shoulder increased public accountability for the areas of student achievement, equity, and fiscal integrity.

NYNSR currently consists of more than twenty-six networks, representing 140 schools, that have been organized for a variety of purposes. Some networks serve discrete geographic areas while others unite schools with common philosophies from all across the city. Networks can be

organized by grade level; they also reach across the K-12 spectrum. Composed of as few as three and no more than eight member schools, networks remain small so that schools can know each other well and build the necessary trust for working together effectively. Participating network schools receive NYNSR funds to fulfill their annual work plans as well as to support network activities—such as regular meetings, dinner groups, inter-school visitations, and joint professional development experiences—that will further the common guiding principles established by each network.

NYNSR places a premium on networking because it is a proven strategy for leading the expertise of established schools to new ones. Educators in networks are able to engage and focus on real situations in schools and to share successful strategies for meeting common challenges. Moreover, since systemic reform means that schools in the process of innovation need to change the system instead of merely circumventing it, networking also offers opportunities for negotiating alternatives to standard district policies and procedures that would be difficult to obtain one school at a time. Implicit in NYNSR's structure and activities is a firm belief in the importance of school-level authority and accountability.

8. Philadelphia

The Children Achieving Challenge—Philadelphia's \$50 million, two-for-one Challenge grant—is unique among the major Challenge initiatives; its scope is district-wide. Launched in the fall of 1994 by Superintendent David Hornbeck, the ambitious and comprehensive 10-point agenda involves all segments of the community, addressing a host of issues: school readiness, school-to-career needs, standards and assessments, improved classroom practice, professional accountability, local school governance, and technology, among them. Improved student achievement for *all* kids in the city is the ultimate goal.

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

The Children Achieving Challenge assigns new roles to the district and the schools. With a dual-focus on equity and accountability, the district's major function is to set clear content, performance and opportunity-to-learn standards, with an accompanying system of incentives and sanctions for schools. At the same time, however, the district also speaks of getting out of schools' way: of giving SLCs significant autonomy to share resources and to shape and articulate teaching and learning across the K-12 continuum, allowing those closest to students—parents, teachers, principals—to make the decisions that most affect them.

9. South Florida

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

Challenge funds “partnerships for public education”—newly composed groups of three or more schools, a local business, and a parent or community organization—that develop innovative approaches to issues such as school readiness, technology, teacher training, and parent involvement. Stressing the need to envision new and customized solutions to long-standing problems, the Challenge does not consider proposals for additional monies for existing programs. To help assure the endurance of reform, SFAC requires participating schools to devise plans for sustaining their reform efforts beyond the period of the grant.

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

Rural Education

The Rural Challenge

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

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

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

Arts Education Grants

1. Minnesota Arts

A \$3.2 million, two-for-one matching grant supports the Arts for Academic Achievement, a partnership of the Minnesota Center for Arts Education (MCAE) and the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). One of the few districts in the country to include the arts as part of the core curriculum, MPS is working with MCAE to assure that all students reach or surpass the new content standards and to use the arts as a means to further reform. The approach calls for revamping the individual arts disciplines as well as integrating the arts into other curricula through partnerships between schools and arts organizations, businesses, or community groups. The initiative builds upon several strong foundation blocks—partnerships already at work in Minneapolis, including Partners: Arts and Schools for Students (PASS) and the original eleven schools in the Minnesota Arts and Education Partnership.

Recognizing that schools in Minneapolis have varied experiences with the arts, MPS is encouraging each school to pursue reform activities at a pace appropriate to its own starting point. Three categories sort schools as they begin their reform efforts: “exploration” schools are those with few experiences in the arts and only one arts specialist on staff; “committed” schools are those actively working towards integrating the arts across curricular areas, with two or more arts specialists on staff; “deep partnership” schools also have more than two arts specialists but have developed long-term partnerships with arts organizations, businesses, or community groups as well. In this first year of the initiative, MPS expects to work with twenty-five schools: five in the exploration category, fifteen in the committed group, and five in the deep partnership category. The goal is to move an increasing number of schools to the partnership group each year, ending in four years with thirty deep partnership schools (roughly half the district) and another twenty exploration and committed schools.

2. National Arts Education Consortium: Transforming Education through the Arts Challenge

A \$4.3 million Challenge grant, matched one-for-one by the Getty Education Institute for the Arts, supports the National Arts Education Consortium (NAEC), which is made up of six regional consortia members in California, Florida, Ohio, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Texas. Composed of representatives from school districts, universities, museums, and other arts and cultural organizations, the consortium members have selected a total of thirty-six partner schools to participate in the effort. From eight states and a diverse range of urban, suburban, and rural communities, participating schools receive instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and technical assistance to serve as demonstration sites for implementing a comprehensive approach to arts education linked to whole-school reform strategies. Called Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE), this approach combines four basic disciplines—art production, art history and culture, art criticism, and aesthetics—into a holistic learning experience for students. Works by experienced artists from many cultures are central to the organization of the curriculum and offer student artists inspiration and ideas for their own emerging artistic styles and understandings.

The Consortium members offer training programs throughout the year to prepare teachers to develop and implement a DBAE approach across their curriculum. Resources include samples of lessons authored jointly by teachers and museum educators and a video series featuring real-life examples of ways the curriculum can be adapted to a variety of teaching techniques and student learning styles.

3. New York City Arts

A \$12 million, two-for-one matching Challenge grant supports the Center for Arts Education (the Center), an independent nonprofit organization working in collaboration with the New York City

Board of Education, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the United Federation of Teachers to administer and provide leadership for a New York City Arts and Education Initiative. This unique public/private partnership is designed to address the uncoordinated and inequitable access to arts education that has resulted from drastic cutbacks in arts education programs throughout the city's public schools. The Center's role is to help the Board of Education and its partners move from a patchwork of arts education efforts to a collective focus that can sustain itself beyond the five-year life of the Challenge.

The Center has developed a grants program that pairs public schools (either individually or in networks) with colleges, community organizations, or cultural institutions such as museums, musical groups, or dance companies. Schools and their partners develop customized approaches for fulfilling the Center's guiding principles: namely, institutionalizing arts instruction as part of a school's core curriculum and using the arts as a catalyst for whole-school change. To date, thirty-seven schools and sixty-three partner organizations have been awarded \$3.4 million in planning and implementation grants. Two additional funding cycles are intended to bring the total number of schools involved in the project to approximately 100.

In addition to administering the grants program, the Center acts as a liaison among the various players in the initiative: schools and their partners, districts, superintendencies, the Board of Education, the Department of Cultural Affairs, corporations, and other private funders. It also provides professional development for all participants and will generate a public awareness campaign to help sustain the efforts of schools and their partners beyond the life of the grant.

Special Opportunity Grants

1. Atlanta

The Urban Atlanta Coalition Compact, a \$1.5 million, two-for-one matching grant, is a partnership among Atlanta's colleges, universities, and public schools to improve education for disadvantaged African-American students. Seven Atlanta schools, in which at least 80 percent of the faculty have agreed to participate in the Compact, are working with college and university professors to deepen the reforms already underway. At the same time, the Compact will help "co-reform" higher education teacher preparation programs by developing new ones, particularly for African-American males from Morehouse College, as well as by restructuring existing ones. Plans also call for establishing a Saturday school, in which pre-service teacher candidates are trained by University fellows to help teach Compact school students on weekends.

2. Chattanooga, Tennessee

Chattanooga's \$2.5 million two-for-one matching Challenge grant supports the efforts of the Public Education Foundation (PEF) to organize, launch, and support the new Hamilton County school system, designed to replace and combine Chattanooga's formerly separate urban and suburban districts.

In order to achieve its ultimate goal of high achievement for all students in Hamilton County, the Foundation has established three priority areas. The first is "Children Succeeding," the implementation and attainment of high learning standards and use of appropriate assessments for all children. The second, "Getting a Good Start," seeks to improve teaching and learning for young children to ensure their reaching an acceptable standard of literacy by third grade. The third priority, "Families, Communities and Schools," is an effort to promote meaningful partnerships of parents and community members with their public schools to increase student achievement.

The Foundation provides New Visions grants to schools that address whole-school change, as well as to the school system for initiatives promoting increased student achievement. In addition to grant making, the Foundation convenes other organizations within the community in building bridges in support of improved public education, provides research and fact-finding opportunities, and offers professional development experiences to improve instruction.

3. Chelsea, Massachusetts

A \$2 million, one-for-one Challenge grant supports the partnership between Boston University and the public schools of Chelsea, a community of 50,000 that borders Boston and ranks as one of Massachusetts' poorest. Since 1989, Boston University has acted as the legal custodian of Chelsea's public schools by providing faculty and students with leadership, resources, and an array of innovative programs. It is the only partnership in the country in which a university has accepted responsibility for the administration of an entire public school system. Last year, Chelsea's school board voted unanimously to extend the original ten-year partnership for an additional five years.

Guiding the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership are three broad principles: that children must be ready to learn, teachers must be ready to teach, and subject matter must be of enduring value to students and the larger society. Chelsea's Challenge grant provides the funds for professional development for teachers at all grade levels, an intergenerational literacy program in which adults and their young children learn and practice reading skills side by side, and an arts initiative with a special focus on music.

4. Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City's \$4 million matching Challenge grant addresses the city's rapidly changing demographics and the accompanying challenges for the school system. Economic disparity, with poverty increasing from 26 percent in 1991 to 47 percent in 1996, an increasing ethnic minority population, and a rise in the number of children whose first language is one of seventy-seven different languages spoken in the schools, have reinforced the need to change teaching and learning strategies dramatically.

Challenge funds support three major elements of the district's reform efforts. The first is the creation of the Vanguard Institute, a districtwide organization for teacher professional development that aims to foster a professional culture of inquiry, to uncover and spread best teaching practices, and to focus resources more effectively on improving student achievement. Second is to restructure schools into K-12 clusters to allow for greater continuity of services for families and to help students move cohesively from subject to subject, grade to grade, and level to level. Third is enlisting community support and involvement by coordinating the efforts of social service agencies, businesses, and community-based organizations that work with schools in order to better understand and meet the needs of all students in a diverse city.

5. West Baltimore, Maryland

A \$1 million, two-for-one Challenge grant supports a project of the Baltimore New Compact Schools in which three elementary schools serve as the focus of a larger community improvement effort in the city's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood. With 90 percent of Sandtown-Winchester's elementary school students failing to meet statewide academic standards, these New Compact Schools have set an ambitious goal: ensuring that 50 percent of their students entering middle school in 2001 meet or surpass state standards as measured by the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program. The schools hope to achieve this goal through several major vehicles: increasing parental involvement in schools, implementing curricular reform and accelerated learning (e.g., by instituting E. D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Curriculum and Direct Instruction), improving and refocusing professional development opportunities, and encouraging lifelong learning—from school readiness for young children to continued learning by adults.

Complementing this work in schools is an ambitious partnership between the Enterprise Foundation and the Sandtown-Winchester community, aimed at revitalizing all of the systems—from housing and health care to public safety and employment—in this struggling neighborhood where half of all families have incomes below \$12,000. Challenge funds also support competitive planning grants to schools in the larger Empowerment Zone of which Sandtown-Winchester is located.

SNAPSHOTS OF CHALLENGE SUPPORTED SCHOOLS

1. New York Networks for School Renewal: A Seed Grows in the Bronx

A few years ago, when teddy bears hung by their necks from the trees at St. Ann's Avenue and East 139th Street, the Mott Haven public elementary school around the corner rarely allowed its students to venture outside. The dangling toys effectively communicated a silent warning from local drug traffickers that these South Bronx streets were no place for children.

Today that same corner marks the outer reach of a campus-like string of play areas and outdoor classroom spaces rich in plant life. Bronx history—the 19th century church behind the school was built by descendants of a signer of the Declaration of Independence—and community-building possibilities are the norm, not the exception. Children watch their dry seeds turn to flowers, their caterpillars turn to butterflies, and the empty lot next to the school blossom into a garden open to community concerts, lessons in photosynthesis, or even quiet hours of reading with friends.

The students who graduate from the Mott Haven Village School, mostly from Spanish-speaking families, graduate as articulate, creative problem-solvers who can successfully compete for seats in the city's most selective high schools. Annenberg Challenge funds support the addition of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes, a new Time-Warner Media Center, art exhibits and performances, an extra academic period each day for teaching more reading, as well as political, artistic, and horticultural classes that have transformed a derelict neighborhood lot into a bountiful garden.

2. The Rural Challenge: Rural Renewal from Alaska to Georgia

At the Baranof Elementary School in Sitka, Alaska, first grade teacher Pauline Duncan has introduced a curriculum that uses the Tlingit language. She finds ways for students to actively learn the language, thereby cementing their ties to the history of the community. It is a comprehensive program where the youngsters learn about plants, the five senses, math, health, cooperative learning, language arts, technology, and art.

In Blackduck, Minnesota, students in grades 4 through 6 who participate in *Kids Quest* are actively involved in their community. Early in the school year, the students visited several local cemeteries, carefully recording tombstone birth and death information, and putting to work knowledge about perimeters and distance as they took measurements related to the cemeteries' size and the location of the plots. Students also interviewed families of those buried in the cemeteries. Since local records are sometimes sketchy, the students plan to present township offices with a written account of their findings, including paragraphs about the people who once lived and worked in the area.

The small community of Springs, Nebraska galvanized itself to renovate its 1885 Phelps Hotel, a landmark for early pioneer families, railroad workers, and cowpunchers traveling through this prairie town. What began as an architecture project in a school technical drawing class turned into a major town cause over several years, with volunteers painting the building and

transforming it into a bed-and-breakfast, cafe, museum, and gallery. The high school's Class of 1997 adopted and restored the hotel's Sage Room; other students, staff, families, and business people raised money to fix up the original fire stairs, hot water tanks, even an old "two-bit bathtub," the locked lid of which guests once paid a quarter to open.

At Eastside Elementary School in Douglas, Georgia, a butterfly garden, which has been created in formerly unused space, serves as a springboard for integrated learning. Students can observe the garden through a glassed corridor and outdoor nature trail. The garden, which attracts butterflies and a variety of other wildlife, is a learning laboratory for students and teachers. Students maintain and care for the garden, and through information provided by the garden habitat, study science, math, social studies, art, reading, and language.

3. South Florida Annenberg Challenge: Taking Technology Home

When it comes to homework time, Maria Rivera must set a timer for her three children. She's not worried they'll quit too early—she's concerned they just won't stop.

The Riveras are among sixty-five families that received home computers last year as part of a program called *Citibank FamilyTech*. The program provides computers for students in need, drawing on funds from the South Florida Annenberg Challenge, the Citicorp Foundation, and the P.L. Dodge Foundation, and will serve a minimum of 1,000 families in ten low-income Dade County Schools.

According to Maria Rivera, "They all want to use the computer for homework. They're more interested in it now. This wouldn't have happened without the computer, and we couldn't have afforded a new computer ourselves." Now, the parents are trying to learn enough about computers to keep up with their kids. *Citibank FamilyTech* is focused on the entire family, with parents receiving computer training to improve their own skills and help their children learn.

Dade County school leaders hope the program will help bridge the technological gap between rich and poor families. "The effect on families that have received the computers already has been dramatic," said John Hunt, technology specialist at Miami Gardens Elementary School. Although it is too early to see academic gains, increases are evident in attendance, morale, parent-child interaction, and parent participation, and such side-benefits as fostering inter-cultural relations among the participating families. The grant typifies the Challenge spirit—to reach beyond traditional boundaries to create partnerships and programs that result in improved student achievement.

Attachments

- Who We Are
- Overriding Goals of the Annenberg Challenge
- Characteristics of Annenberg Challenge Grants
- Progress in Fundraising of Matching Grants
- Local Distribution of Challenge Funds by Individual Sites
- Challenge Contact List

Who We Are: Challenge Matching Grants

Large Urban Grants

<u>Site</u>	<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Grant Award</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
Bay Area (San Francisco)	Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC)	\$25 million	August 1995
Boston	Boston Annenberg Challenge	\$10 million	October 1996
Chicago	Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC)	\$49.2 million	March 1995
Detroit	Schools of the 21st Century Initiative	\$20 million	October 1996
Houston	Houston Annenberg Challenge	\$20 million	January 1997
Los Angeles	Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP)	\$53 million	December 1994
New York City	New York Networks for School Renewal (NYNSR)	\$25 million	November 1994
Philadelphia	Children Achieving Challenge	\$50 million	April 1995
South Florida	South Florida Annenberg Challenge (SFAC)	\$33.4 million	January 1997

Rural School Reform

<u>Site</u>	<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Grant Award</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
(National)	Rural Challenge	\$50 million	August 1995

Arts Education Grants

<u>Site</u>	<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Grant Award</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
Minnesota	Arts for Academic Achievement	\$3.2 million	July 1997
(National)	National Arts Education Consortium	\$4.3 million	April 1996
New York City	Center for Arts Education	\$12 million	July 1996

Special Opportunity Grants

<u>Site</u>	<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Grant Award</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
Atlanta	Urban Atlanta Coalition Compact	\$1.5 million	June 1997
Chattanooga	Success for All Students	\$2.5 million	May 1995
Chelsea, Mass.	The Boston University/Chelsea Partnership	\$2 million	July 1996
Salt Lake City	Vanguard Initiative	\$4 million	December 1996
West Baltimore	Baltimore New Compact Schools	\$1 million	March 1996

Overriding Goals of the Annenberg Challenge

1. **To promote**, in some of the nation's most urban and rural areas, an unprecedented number of public schools which, in collaboration with their immediate community:

- arrange their resources so that each child is known well and then use this knowledge to shape each child's schooling;
- set uncompromisingly high academic expectations for all children;
- respectfully assess the progress of each student by means of a careful and continuing review of that child's actual work and then use that assessment to improve the child's learning;
- exhibit daily the ideals of acting as a democratic and thoughtful learning community.

2. **To unite** these changing schools in a diverse array of small "systems of schools"—through networks, clusters, K through 12 pathways, collaboratives—and thereby encourage member schools to learn from and support one another. To pursue these networks as a vehicle for both strengthening and accelerating progress within individual schools, creating a critical mass of restructured schools, and exercising accountability across schools.

3. **To provoke** the larger, formal systems—local, county and state—of which these smaller "systems" are a part to provide participating schools with the autonomy, flexibility, resources, and time they need to become genuinely good schools (i.e., to fulfill the principles listed under Goal #1).

4. **To mobilize** the local community supports—political, moral and financial—and the local broad-based coalitions—including funders, community groups, college and university leaders, public officials, business representatives, school reformers, and practitioners—necessary to:

- sustain these individual schools and the networks of which they are a part;
- help the best ideas and practices emerging from these schools—and the partnerships they forge—to spread;
- deepen the public resolve to demand and invest in public schools where all children are known well and use their minds well.

Characteristics of Annenberg Challenge Grants

All Challenge grant recipients share the following characteristics.

- *A relentless focus on children and schools*
All Challenge recipients continually evaluate their plans, strategies and programs with a vigilant eye to the needs of the most important of the many players in school reform: our children and their teachers.
- *A broadly-based planning process*
Although school districts have participated in the planning process in the cities invited to submit a proposal, the plans that have emerged from each site are the product of broad-based collaboration involving local foundations, school reformers, universities, community groups, business leaders, and people working in schools.
- *An independent governing structure*
All grants have been awarded to an independent, nonprofit entity and not to local school authorities. Overseeing the implementation of each grant is a newly constituted governing board, composed locally from the same array of groups who engaged in the planning. It is these local Challenge governing boards that decide which schools and external partners receive Challenge funding within their site.
- *An emphasis on collaboration and partnerships*
The Challenge encourages whole-school reform through partnerships in which individual schools often group themselves into clusters, families or networks; schools also link with "external partners" such as a university, cultural institution, community group, local business, or reform organization.
- *Faith in the inventiveness and judgment of schools and teachers*
Unlike the usual funding pattern in which money is given to groups who in turn recruit schools interested in their particular brand of reform, Challenge dollars flow directly to schools demonstrating the capacity and willingness to reform and that then recruit organizations to support their efforts. Moreover, the terms of each Challenge grant stipulate that no more than 10 percent of the funds awarded by the Annenberg Foundation may be spent on administration, ensuring that at least 90 percent of Challenge moneys go directly to schools and their partners.
- *Explicit political support*
Because a basic tenet of the Challenge is that strong community coalitions are necessary to ensure sustained progress, local elected and appointed officials must publicly pledge their support for the Challenge and promise to help remove obstacles to schools' reform efforts.

Progress in Fundraising for Matching Grants
(as of 12/97)

Site	Annenberg	To be Raised*	Amount Raised
Atlanta	\$1.5 million	\$3 million	\$620,000
Bay Area	\$25 million	\$75 million**	\$52 million**
Boston	\$10 million	\$20 million	\$11.4 million
Chattanooga	\$2.5 million	\$5 million	\$8.3 million
Chelsea, Mass.	\$2 million	\$2 million	\$1.5 million
Chicago	\$49.2 million	\$98.4 million	\$29.5 million
Detroit	\$20 million	\$40 million	\$17.7 million
Houston	\$20 million	\$40 million	\$21.9 million
Los Angeles	\$53 million	\$53 million	\$35.6 million
Minnesota Arts	\$3.2 million	\$6.4 million	\$240,000
National Arts Education Consortium	\$4.3 million	\$4.3 million	\$2.6 million
New York City	\$25 million	\$50 million	\$45.9 million
NYC Arts	\$12 million	\$24 million	\$8.5 million
Philadelphia	\$50 million	\$100 million	\$96.5 million
Rural Initiative	\$50 million	\$50 million	\$26 million
Salt Lake City	\$4 million	\$8 million	\$5.5 million
South Florida	\$33.4 million	\$66.6 million	\$11.5 million
West Baltimore	\$1 million	\$2 million	\$1.1 million
Total	\$366.1 million	\$647.7 million	\$376.3 million

* Includes both private and public sources

**Includes \$25 million Hewlett pledge

Local Distribution of Challenge Funds by Individual Sites

Site	Funded Entities	Amount Pledged to date	Number of Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers*	Number of Students*
Atlanta	7 schools	\$30,000	3	7	360	3,700
Bay Area	72 Leadership Schools, 8 School/University Partnerships	\$9.2 million	57	72 8	2,325	58,100
Boston**	62 schools, Center for Leadership Development	\$10 million	1	62	1,800	27,000
Chattanooga**	82 Hamilton County schools	\$2.5 million	1	82	3,000	45,000
Chelsea, MA**	district-wide	\$739,700	1	8	300	5,500
Chicago	61 networks, 3 Leadership Development Grants	\$21.7 million	1	250	10,515	170,100
Detroit	first grants expected 11/98	—	1	—	—	—
Houston	11 schools	\$1.4 million	5	11	660	9,300
Los Angeles**	28 School Families	\$36.2 million	15	247	8,600	199,700
Minnesota Arts	first grants expected 1998	—	1	—	—	—
National Arts Education Consortium**	6 clusters (36 schools)	\$2.6 million	31	36	1,540	24,700
NYC Arts	37 schools, 63 partner organizations	\$3.4 million	19	37	1,000	28,400
NY Networks**	26 networks, 7 planning and new school grants, 140 school grants	\$10 million	32	140	3,555	50,000 +
Philadelphia**	22 clusters (district-wide)	\$87.1 million	1	257	12,000	217,000
Rural	32 projects	\$20 million	(30 states)	300*	2,100	102,000
Salt Lake City**	district-wide	\$2 million	1	36	1,350	25,000
S. Florida	53 exploratory, 1 planning and 2 implement. grants	\$773,000	3	137	8,050	184,900
W. Baltimore**	3 schools	\$301,500	1	3	75	1,400
TOTAL	—	\$207.9 million	174 districts	1,693 schools	57,230 teachers	1,151,800 students

* Approximate number

** School selections completed

January 29, 1998

Challenge Contact Information

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- **Boston**

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- **Chattanooga**

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- **Education Commission of the States**

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- **Minnesota Arts**

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- **National Arts Education Consortium**

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- **New American Schools**

New American Schools; 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 2710; Arlington, VA 22209; (703) 908-9500
www.naschools.org/home.htm

- **New York City Arts**

Hollis Headrick, Executive Director, Center for Arts Education; 225 West 34th Street, Suite 820; New York, NY 10122; (212) 971-3300

- **New York Networks**

Iris Morales, Executive Director, New York Networks for School Renewal; 1573 Madison Avenue, Room 318; New York, NY 10029; (212) 369-1288
www.nynetworks.org

- **Philadelphia**

Vicki Phillips, Executive Director, Children Achieving Challenge; Greater Philadelphia First; 1818 Market Street, Suite 3510; Philadelphia, PA 19103-3681; (215) 575-2200
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- **Rural Challenge**

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- **Salt Lake City**

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- **South Florida**

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- **West Baltimore**

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What should our children know and be able to do?

How will we tell if they know it?

What are we going to do if they don't?

Looking at Learning Across the Map: How to Tell If Schools are Changing

THEY HUNKERED DOWN intently to the second-grade language arts test, pencils sometimes slippery with nervousness, the clock ticking away as they figured which answers of the multiple choices were most likely to be right. The schoolroom in this California district was quiet but charged; for these few dozen test-takers, this marked an important moment in their education.

But these were no seven-year-old children. Parents, community members, teachers and administrators, they had gathered for an afternoon's intense dialogue about the most important questions facing schools today: What should our children know and be able to do? How will we tell if they know it? What are we going to do if they don't?

And they started their education with the basics: by experiencing first hand the range of ways by which their district assesses student learning, then chewing over whether those measures yielded what this diverse crowd—the people we call “stakeholders”—actually wanted to know.

“This is fine as far as it goes,” one parent said after several hours of trying out a standardized test, a directed writing assessment, a benchmarked reading task, and more. “But there’s a lot it doesn’t show. Are you getting any information, for example, on whether

my child *likes* to read?”

As the dozen-plus sites of the national Annenberg Challenge gird themselves for several years of intensive work on raising student achievement, the question has a haunting resonance.

Public pressure to show success largely focuses on standardized test scores, and more districts are now using those scores to punish schools that fail to raise them. But many of those tests are not even based on the new standards states have adopted. And their largely multiple-choice questions typically fail to provide a range of methods for students to demonstrate their learning.

Though the rhetoric of “accountability” often centers around student work, the processes it employs rarely look at that work in context. And rarely do the scorecard keepers follow the many factors that contribute to higher student achievement but are difficult to quantify—parent involvement, teacher reflectiveness, supportive connections with other schools, and a host of others.

From coast to coast, Challenge sites are attempting to right this, each with its own views on how to ascertain success in quite different political contexts. As they assess their own progress—and still relatively early in the five-year arc of their funded work—they must balance realism with resoluteness, educating both school people and the public to identify and watch for important signs that schools are

getting better. Without losing heart, they must also publicly recognize how long such efforts take—and make long-term plans that can later carry forward the initiatives launched in the Challenge years.

This may mean choosing between “the pressure to finish things predictably and the drive to really engage people at deep levels in ways that are messy, unpredictable, and hard to measure,” says Merrill Vargo, who directs the San Francisco Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC). It was with BASRC support that the San Mateo-Foster City district, aided by the Western Assessment Collaborative, launched its extraordinary “Accountability Dialogue” above.

Such events, Vargo says, characterize the “learning organization,” which is “always in the habit of reflecting on our actions and asking, ‘to what end?’ and ‘what were the results?’” As that habit grows, Challenge organizers hope, deep and sometimes subtle changes will permeate the many layers of action that affect student achievement, nourishing a growth in learning that will eventually show up plainly.

The evaluation teams linked with every Challenge site, in fact, are helping to chart these changes with a complex “impact map” (reprinted here on pages 6 and 7). The map portrays the whole range of possible Challenge impact, but aims to suggest how the layers of impact must work together.

“In the end, it’s the invisible processes that really matter—like

by Kathleen Cushman

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By supporting learning that grounds itself firmly in the local sense of place, the Rural Challenge aims to make school the engine of community renewal, and vice versa.

Challenge Journal

What Rural Schools Can Teach Urban Systems

ONE TEACHER I know likes to imagine a TV game show that would set down its contestants in a McDonald's anywhere in the world and challenge them to name its location before the buzzer sounds. The very difficulty of the task would make a rude reminder, he observes, of what we are losing in our headlong rush to a world economy—the countless, precious idiosyncratic differences that tell us where we are, and who we are, and why it matters what we do together in that place.

In out-of-the-way communities around the country, a steady conversation around that theme is emerging, which challenges conventional wisdom about the relation of school and community, the purpose of academic studies, and the past and future of the nation itself.

And though it has begun in rural places—whose students have long been marginalized, dismissed, or in a few cases scooped into the mainstream of “success” away from home—the ferment has found like-minded friends in central cities, who are struggling with the very same issues.

“When schools focus only on how education benefits the individual, they become the enemy of community,” says Paul Nachtigal, who with Toni Haas directs the national Rural Challenge from a

mountain perch in tiny Granby, Colorado. “They educate young people to leave, and so fulfill the prophecy that these places are doomed to poverty, decline, and despair.”

Through funding a laboratory of living examples that show otherwise, the Rural Challenge intends instead to rally communities to reinvent their schools as engines of renewal for the public good. Launched with a \$50 million matching grant from Walter Annenberg, it has scouted out some of the most forward-thinking activists this country has to offer, in some of its least accessible places.

A school in Howard, South Dakota has created a community resource center, for example, where students and other citizens archive materials on the area's rich history, environment, and culture and take political action to save the region's family farms.

In remote Alaskan villages, tribal elders from five ethnic groups are teaching children and educators how native “ways of knowing” can infuse profound traditions into the study of science, mathematics, social and cultural studies, language, and literature.

Students in Cedar Bluff, Alabama have launched a thriving computer assembly and software development business that takes orders from the public, serves a network of rural schools, and has won a grant to connect the entire county's school system.

People in each of these small communities gathered their resources and organized their schools so as to reclaim rural places and traditions facing economic or political eradication. But in a hard-pressed, ethnically divided section of Brooklyn, the same impulse united students and other residents against a toxic waste incinerator that threatened their neighborhood, and a vital community school grew out of their effort.

In fact, most of the policies and practices that distinguish Rural Challenge sites make perfect sense in urban settings as well. But the philosophy of this initiative goes well beyond the innovative practices common in systems today—multi-age classrooms, site-based management, interdisciplinary studies, peer tutoring, and communities as learning resources—that have long been staples of rural schooling.

It reaches instead to the heart of cultural survival—the tough business of maintaining identity, autonomy, and pride in any community marginalized by the mainstream. To succeed, the Rural Challenge vision requires school people to join forces with others in the place they inhabit, and work through their disagreements toward the common good. And a look at this vision's six salient elements can shed useful light on other reform efforts, no matter how far from the fields they might be taking place. (See sidebar, page 3.)

by Kathleen Cushman

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Annenberg Challenge *News*

SUMMER/FALL 1997

The Annenberg Challenge

officially began in late 1993, when Walter H. Annenberg announced a gift to public education of a half billion dollars, the largest such gift in

philanthropic history. In late 1994 through the summer of 1995, the Annenberg Foundation announced an initial set of large grants to support reform plans in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay area, greater Los Angeles, and across the rural U.S. through the Rural Challenge. Later, during the fall of 1996 and winter of 1997, the Foundation awarded a second round of large urban grants to Boston, Detroit, South Florida, and Houston. Also supported by the Challenge are four arts-in-education projects (one in New York City, one in Minnesota and two national efforts) and several smaller grants to reform activities in Atlanta, Chattanooga, Chelsea (MA), Salt Lake City, and West Baltimore (MD).

As the initial Challenge sites reach the halfway mark in their projects, evaluation matters take a more prominent seat. This edition of the Annenberg Challenge News introduces elements of the Challenge cross-site evaluation—the collective assessment of all the Challenge sites—along with demographic data for Challenge schools and news from the sites.

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Challenge Cross-Site Evaluation, Sharing and Learning

Overriding Strategy: Place-based Design

As it unfolds, the Annenberg Challenge has come to embrace a singular vision of good schools—one where teachers and principals, joined by the surrounding community, know their students well, challenge all children academically and value thoughtful citizenship—along with multiple strategies for bringing such schools to fruition and expanding their numbers.

The multiple reform strategies have grown from the urban and rural places invited to apply for Challenge funds. They are the product of local conversation and circumstances, strengths and needs, priorities and leadership, experience and capacity. Animating these place-based designs, as well, are differing assumptions about how organizations and the people within them change, along with a multitude of actors, ranging from county or regional alliances to school districts to business groups to funders to university faculty to citizens groups to schools working in small groups with other schools to schools working with parents and neighborhood organizations—to name some but not all.

The Challenge is built on the hypothesis that this local design and the diverse strategies it has spawned are strengths. The New York plan is uniquely New York, a result of its extensive experience with small alternative schools, whereas the Philadelphia plan is uniquely Philadelphia, a result of its extraordinary effort to create a standards-based big-city school system. The Rural Challenge speaks of creating a pedagogy of place, recognizing the umbilical chord that connects rural schools and their communities; it seeks to stem the traditional exodus of "bright" students from rural areas by creating genuinely good, genuinely rural schools that uplift their communities along with their graduates.

This does not mean, though, that Challenge sites are united only by a common vision of good schools. Like members of a

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Annenberg Challenge *News*

SUMMER 1996

On December 17, 1993, in a ceremony at the White House, President Bill Clinton announced the single largest gift ever made to American public education: Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg's half-billion dollar, five-year challenge grant designed to energize and support promising efforts at school reform throughout the country. This news bulletin reports briefly on the initial progress of the "sites" that have received Annenberg Challenge matching grants. For more information, readers are encouraged to contact each site directly.

Bay Area

Project Description

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) – supported by \$25 million from William R. Hewlett and the Hewlett Foundation, \$25 million from Annenberg and an additional \$50 million to be raised – covers 118 school districts in six counties. It has two main objectives. The first is to support and encourage a core group of 100 to 200 schools and their districts to take a leadership role in whole-school reform. The second is to create a formal Learning Collaborative made up of Bay Area schools, districts and support organizations dedicated to exploring together various school improvement strategies and conducting "action research" on critical educational issues.

BASRC is governed by a 22-member Board of Trustees and administered by a staff of 15.

News

- On June 18th, BASRC's board approved over \$1.4 million in grants to 15 schools, including a cluster of five elementary schools from three different districts. To qualify for this leadership funding, schools and their districts must first submit a portfolio to become members of the Collaborative and then present a budget and work plan that detail a focused plan for reform aimed at whole-school change. Additionally, Leadership Schools make a commitment to work with other schools undertaking reform efforts. In the coming year, BASRC will oversee three series of portfolio reviews for both leadership funding and membership in the Collaborative; the next review is scheduled for November, with subsequent Board decisions expected in January 1997.
- The recently funded Leadership Schools will be eligible for annual renewal of their grants, contingent on sufficient progress made toward their stated goals and

visions. Since July, BASRC staff and key advisors have been negotiating with the Leadership Schools to develop an effective process for assessment and accountability. The discussions have focused on creating a procedure that allows school to assess their own progress towards improving student learning, to guide future work and to hold themselves accountable to their stakeholders. Meetings will continue throughout September, and BASRC staff anticipate having in place by October sets of specific benchmarks by which schools can assess their progress.

- In May, the Collaborative Assembly – the entire BASRC membership – met to address governance issues and to plan for the coming year. Participants divided themselves into newly-created affinity groups according to areas of interest that range from literacy, diversity and assessment to public engagement, whole-school change and the district's role in school reform. The various affinity groups will begin meeting in early fall and will report to the entire membership at the Assembly's next annual gathering in May 1997.
- As part of its professional development effort, BASRC sponsored in late June and early July a Leadership Institute for teams of five to seven representatives from Leadership and Development Schools (members of the Collaborative that are working toward, but have not yet achieved, Leadership school status). Approximately 130 teachers, administrators, students, peer facilitators, and BASRC staff attended the week-long retreat to discuss the implications of playing a leadership role in school reform and to build cohesion within individual schools and among the group of Leadership Schools.
- Summer activities for the BASRC staff included assessing the year's accomplishments, planning future undertakings and discussing the technology needed to support the work ahead. Also, staff and board members are finalizing an evaluation design that will provide feedback and data to BASRC and its members in addition to answering larger questions about the overall impact of the initiative.

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