Time, Teachers and **Tomorrow's Schools**

A COLLABORATIVE REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE VIVA TEACHERS CHICAGO IDEA EXCHANGE

Prepared for: Jean-Claude Brizard, CEO, Chicago Public Schools
Prepared by: Members of The VIVA Project Chicago Teachers Idea Exchange Writing Collaborative on behalf of their peers in the Idea Exchange
Delivered: Monday, December 12, 2011

Abstract & Summation: Classroom teachers from Chicago's public schools spent hundreds of hours together exploring questions regarding the use of time in their schools, from the vantage point of their classrooms. Empowered by cutting-edge technology and informed by their classroom experience, ordinary teachers collaborated to produce a set of recommendations for how to use time better to prepare Chicago's public school students for success after high school. A small group of active teachers then worked together to organize all the teachers' collective thoughts, ideas and wisdom about how to make the most of a Chicago public school student's time in school.

Partners: National Louis University provided invaluable input, resources and expertise to the teachers and to The VIVA Project process.

the VIVA project

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THE VIVA PROJECT OF CHICAGO

Introduction

The VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Project of Chicago and National Louis University invited Chicago Public Schools instructional personnel—classroom teachers, librarians, technology resource specialists and others—to share their ideas, their voice and their classroom experience for imagining better, more productive uses of time spent during the school day, week and year. This Idea Exchange occurred during a pivotal time in Chicago Public School history as Chicago grappled with implementing a new state law that allows CPS to extend the school day. At this crucial time, almost 600 teachers across schools and grades at CPS shared their ideas for better ways to use the time in school to improve student outcomes.

The online Idea Exchange, made possible by a Web-based technology operated by The VIVA Project, was open to any CPS teacher who wished to join the conversation for 20 days, from October 11-31, 2011. The online conversation was facilitated by Cindy Richards, a longtime Chicago journalist who covered education for both the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune.

The VIVA Project Chicago Idea Exchange was conducted in three phases:

During **Phase I**, all CPS teachers were invited to share their ideas in answer to the question:

> *"We strive for our students to succeed in a technology-driven, global world, yet we currently rely on a 19th century structure for our schools. If you could redesign the school structure to best fit the needs of your students at this 21st century moment of rapid change, what would the school day, week and year look like?"*

In response, the nearly 600 teachers offered more than 137 different ideas and exchanged hundreds of comments with each other.

During **Phase II**, a group of 11 teachers—whose active participation in Phase 1 was clear in terms of both of quantity and quality—were invited to join The VIVA Project Chicago Writing Collaborative. Their assignment: Take the ideas presented during Phase I and summarize and synthesize them into discrete, workable recommendations for how to structure time for students, their teachers and administrators in CPS. Working with the support of two National Louis University faculty members, Professor Tema Okun and Professor Tina Nolan, the writing collaborative developed practical recommendations based on their professional judgment, daily classroom experience and research.

Phase III of the process will begin on December 12, 2011, when the members of the Writing Collaborative meet with CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard to present their recommendations. They also will discuss their report with Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis. They will then engage in a series of community conversations throughout Chicago about the ideas in their report.

We believe in the inspiration that grows from pragmatic experience and in the power of individual voices to make big change. VIVA teachers are an example of that power in action. We are inspired by their example and grateful for their positive contribution to the strength of our public schools and America's democratic process. Many thanks to the Chicago VIVA teacher leaders: elementary teachers **Brian Graves, Sharon James, Kori Milroy, David Quanz, Karon Stewart and Lindsey Terrill**, and high school teachers **Xian Barrett, Allan Fluharty, Frances Staniec, Gin Thomas and Jeanne Walker**, whose bios are listed at the end of this report. The innumerable hours these teachers spent grappling with big ideas and small details made this work possible.

We at The VIVA Project are grateful for the generous partnership of many others who helped make sure the members of the VIVA/NLU Chicago Teachers' Idea Exchange had access to information, data, research and intellectual resources as they crafted their ideas. Thanks to **Mark Larson, Tina Nolan** and **Tema Okun**, our partners at National Louis University, for their countless hours and gracious wisdom, and to **Ben Lummis** and **Megan Britt** from the National Center on Time and Learning for sharing their expertise with us.

The VIVA Project would not be possible without support from the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and the **Walton Family Foundation**.

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Proposed solutions for all schools

1. Allow individual schools the autonomy to determine how to use time in the extended day to best serve their own students.
2. Adopt a block scheduling and parallel scheduling approach, particularly for core courses such as language arts and math.
3. Consider scheduling teachers to work a staggered shift.
4. Institutionalize a daily, 45- to 50-minute common planning time for teachers across each grade level.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Alter the School Year to Maximize Student Learning and Retention

Proposed solutions for all schools

5. Place all schools on a year-round (Track E) schedule.
6. Set intercessions (year-round school breaks) at the conclusion of each quarter rather than after the eighth week.
7. Use intercessions to provide remediation, enrichment and gifted programs.
8. Devote the professional development day at the end of each quarter to a collaborative review of student data.
9. Require students to attend school on holidays such as Pulaski Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Columbus Day and Veteran's Day.
10. All high schools should offer a wide range of electives each semester, with a special focus on computer and business classes.

RECOMMENDATION 3
Ensure All CPS Students a Well-Rounded Education, Including Art, Music and Physical Education

Proposed solutions for elementary schools

11. A minimum of 20 percent of each elementary school week should be directed toward ancillary classes, including art, music, physical education and library or technology.
12. In schools where indoor space is a concern, PE teachers can assist classroom teachers in finding appropriate activities that can be done inside the school building.
13. Schools can implement additional PE classes using their current staff by having classroom teachers teach a portion of their own PE classes.
14. Increase staffing from one half-time art or music teacher (depending on enrollment) to two full-time positions—one for art and one for music.
15. Students should continue to receive library instruction on a weekly basis, and any "empty" library slots should be made available for classroom teachers to use on a flexible basis.

Proposed solutions for high schools

16. Start the school day with club and co-curricular activity meetings, particularly in low-income and under-performing schools.
17. Recruit community organizations to work both within the school day and before and after school.
18. Use extra time in school to focus on and serve all the needs of students, from their personal health to their academic needs.
19. Adopt a restorative justice model of discipline that addresses the root causes of student behavior while limiting the lost learning time.
20. Create a before-school health club, sponsored by community partnerships.
21. Offer elective courses focusing on personal health and wellness.

22. Institute Communities in Schools for low-income schools to coordinate enrichment and social supports in multiple classrooms and across disciplines.
23. Fully integrate the arts into the high school curriculum.
24. Encourage community partners to work in all classrooms for project-based learning.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Ensure All children Have Time for Free Play in the School Day

Proposed solutions for all schools

25. Ensure all elementary school students have at least 20 minutes of recess daily.
26. Recruit parents, volunteers, teachers and others to ensure adequate playground supervision.
27. Take advantage of philanthropic resources to ensure all schools have the funds to build a playground by August 2012.
28. Use creative approaches to ensure students can have indoor recess on foul weather days.

RECOMMENDATION 5
Empower Students and Teachers with Technology

Proposed solutions for all schools

29. Require that students take at least one credit in technology during their freshman year of high school.
30. Open all computer labs to students at least 30 minutes before school, during lunch periods and for an hour after school.
31. Unblock YouTube and other educational sites at all CPS schools.
32. Offer electives in Web design, accounting, Photoshop, marketing, entrepreneurship and basic business.
33. Incorporate technology lessons into the longer school day to ensure all elementary students learn the technical skills they will need in high school.
34. Develop a CPS pilot program that provides digital tablets to every student and teacher in the pilot schools.

Proposed solutions for teachers

35. Use modern communication avenues such as e-mail, Twittter and Facebook to reach parents and students.
36. Replace IMPACT or train teachers to use it more effectively.
37. Equip all classrooms with a digital projector, up-to-date personal computer or laptop, and fast Internet connection or Wi-Fi.
38. Create one technology position for each 600 students in every school.
39. Offer technology-oriented professional development to teachers and integrate the use of these skills into the teacher evaluation rubric.
40. Develop a list of recommended online learning programs and encourage schools to use them.

RECOMMENDATION 6
Eliminate the Time Wasters

Proposed solutions

41. Commit to a program that lets students know by the end of 8th grade where they will attend high school in the fall.
42. Ensure every classroom has a teacher assigned, ready to teach, on the first day of school.
43. Adjust testing schedules so standardized tests are given in late spring and finals are given the last week of school.
44. Ensure teachers have common planning time each day.
45. Balance the need for assessments with instructional time.
46. Extend the latest date for educational field trips.
47. Stop interrupting instruction for visiting dignitaries or guests.
48. Develop transparent assessment plans that account for all time spent on assessment and preparation, especially high-stakes testing and prep.
49. Audit plans for the amount of instructional time devoted to testing.

Overview

As CPS struggles with ways to raise achievement among all of its 435,000 students, we believe an increase in the amount of time spent in school is one answer, but it is not the sole answer. This report includes **49 recommendations** for better uses of time in school. **Among them:**

- Use whatever time we have with students more efficiently, from improving learning by ensuring our youngest students have time for free play to using alternative methods of discipline that focus on treating the root causes of disruptive behavior to ensure students continue learning.
- Change the systemwide mentality from one that says more time spent focusing on math and language skills is the only way to raise test scores to one that accepts that core instruction for all students is bolstered by non-core instruction, physical education and recess.
- Get rid of the inefficiencies that plague the system, exhaust teachers and take valuable time away from instruction.
- Understand that technology, while expensive, can pay for itself many times over in terms of the increased efficiencies it offers as well as its potential to excite students, keep them in school and allow them to graduate more prepared for life in the 21st century.
- Look for additional ways to increase time in school, including making school holidays such as Pulaski Day attendance days.
- Recruit community organizations to support and supplement instruction in school as well as after school.

What an ideal elementary school week should look like

We realize that the length of the 2012-2013 school day is not yet set in stone. For the purpose of making these recommendations, we have assumed that 90 minutes will be added to the current elementary school day, giving students 450 minutes on campus per day (including noninstructional time), for a total of 2,250 minutes per week.

The charts on page 7 include suggested time allotments for language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, library or technology, lunch and recess. Two things are missing from our charts: world languages and teacher prep/common planning time. We chose not to include world languages because we believe the choice to offer students a foreign language should be left to individual schools. Since foreign language instruction includes reading, writing, spelling, speaking and listening, schools that choose to offer a world language curriculum should be free to devote a portion of their language arts minutes to foreign language instruction. As for teacher prep/common planning, it is not included in this chart because it is not direct instructional time. Students will continue to learn—albeit under the supervision of a “specials” teacher, playground manager or cafeteria worker during the expanded time devoted to non-core instruction in our recommended time allotment. Meanwhile, their regular classroom teachers will work together as education professionals to plan the best strategies for teaching their students.

Common planning time is so critical to the success of students and school communities that we recommend all teachers meet:

- At least once a week for 40 minutes to discuss curriculum development.
- At least once a month for 40 minutes to discuss assessment.
- At least twice a quarter for 40 minutes each session (progress reports and report cards) to discuss student growth, analyze data and make decisions based on that data.

In addition, special and general education teaching partners should meet for a minimum of 15 minutes daily before student arrival to discuss daily activities and goals, and should meet once a week for at least 60 minutes to co-plan.

The charts on the following page show the percentage of total weekly time that we believe should be spent in each content area. This information is not listed on the current CPS chart, but as teachers we found it very useful to quantify and visualize the "balance" of the curriculum for each group of grade levels.

Our proposed time distribution differs from the current CPS in several critical ways, including:

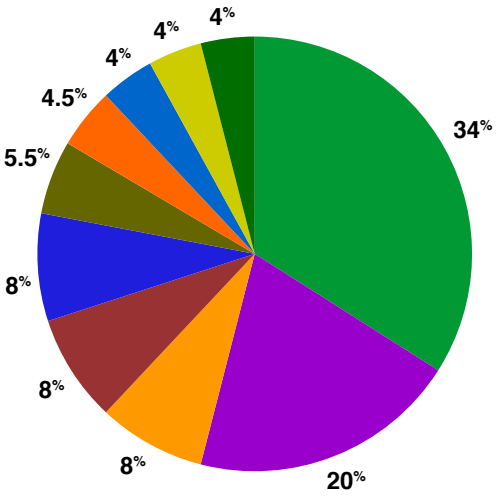
- Time allotments are suggested for groups of grade levels rather than having different allotments for each grade. This makes it easier for schools to implement consistent schedules, and increases the likelihood that schools will actually meet the targeted time allotments and teachers will have the common planning time they need.
- Language arts minutes are increased for grades 3–8, from an average of 585 minutes per week to an average of 607 minutes per week.
- Math minutes are almost doubled for all grades, increasing from an average of 252 minutes per week to 450 minutes per week.
- Social studies and science minutes are more than doubled in the primary grades, from an average of 82 minutes for these subjects in the current schedule to 180 minutes per week. In grades 3–8 they increase from the current average of 181 minutes to an average of 259 minutes.
- Art and music minutes are increased from an average of 60 minutes per week to 90 minutes per week in all grades.
- Physical education minutes are more than doubled for all grades, increasing from an average of 71 minutes per week on the current schedule to 180 minutes per week for all grades.
- Lunch is allocated 25 minutes per day.
- Recess is allocated 20 minutes per day.

Suggested Weekly Time Allotments for Elementary Schools

All numbers shown on the pie charts below should be read as a percentage of the 2,250-minute school week.

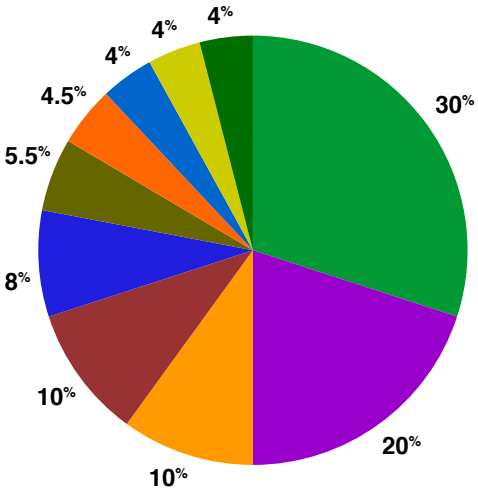
GRADES 1 & 2

Suggested Weekly Time Allotments **as a Percentage** of 2,250 Weekly Minutes in School



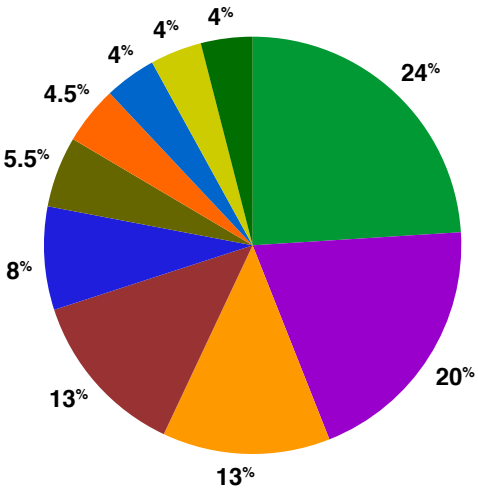
GRADES 3, 4 & 5

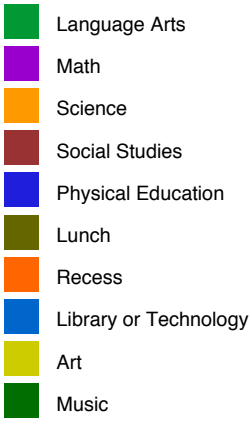
Suggested Weekly Time Allotments **as a Percentage** of 2,250 Weekly Minutes in School



GRADES 6, 7 & 8

Suggested Weekly Time Allotments **as a Percentage** of 2,250 Weekly Minutes in School





RECOMMENDATION 1

Use Alternative Scheduling to Get the Most Out of an Extended School Day

Statement of the problem: Every teacher knows that connecting with and engaging students in learning is not only a matter of the length of time allotted, but also when and how that time is structured. We all make nuanced adjustments to our instruction based on time of day and week or how much time we have for a particular lesson. Lower student achievement is caused in part by lack of instructional time, but also by ineffective transitions between noninstructional time and on-task time. This is greater in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) areas or experiential learning where more significant set-up is necessary.

Proposed solutions:

1. CPS should create a needs-based assessment for each school to allow teachers, staff, parents and community members to survey and understand what approach will translate theory into classroom-by-classroom student success. Then, school-based teams composed of a mixture of the concerned groups should integrate the collected feedback to design a school-based extended day structure.

2. Adopt a block scheduling approach that allows adequate time for each subject area, particularly core courses such as language arts and math. We use parallel scheduling for grades K–5 and 90-minute time blocks for grades 6–12.

3. Consider scheduling teachers to work a staggered schedule—for example, an early shift from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. and a later shift from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

4. Institutionalize a daily, 45- to 50-minute common planning time for teachers across each grade level.

Why we believe this will work

The culture of each school is unique and any plan to introduce effective, sustainable change must be crafted within the context of that specific school culture. What works well at one site may have a different impact at the site down the street. Students, parents and educators are always the ones who know their community's needs and students' learning styles best.

Allowing schools the autonomy to customize the school schedule to fit their own students' needs would make it possible for each school to pursue innovative approaches such as inquiry-based project classes, remedial classes, apprenticeships between master and intern teachers, enrichment courses and schoolwide RTI (Response to Intervention) time.

CPS' role would be to set standards and offer support. For example, the Central Office should provide a subset of block schedule options, with some brief notes as to best practices for various grade levels. Our recommendations for each grade level follows.

Ultimately, each of our suggested strategies would work best with a healthy balance between the freedom to implement programs to address the school community's specific needs and the accountability of justifying how the particular school's plan fits the cross-system recommendations for the new schedule.

Daily schedules for elementary schools (grades K–5)

Block scheduling should be used for core classes such as language arts, math and science. This would give teachers the time necessary to reach students with all learning styles and abilities, from students who need remedial help to enriched learning opportunities for advanced students. In addition, schools with two or more grade-level teachers and schools with resource or special education teachers should institute parallel scheduling in reading, math and science. This would provide longer instructional time within the core subject areas for inquiry-based based project learning and reach multileveled learners. Students and teachers could travel between same grade level classrooms and more time would be available for co-teaching.

Daily schedules for middle schools (grades 6–8)

We recommend adopting 90-minute reading/literacy and math/science blocks that are consistent from day to day, reserving Fridays for enrichment or remediation.

Daily schedule for high schools (grades 9–12)

Classes should shift to 90-minute class blocks on a Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedule. That way, students could receive more focused, extended instruction while also growing accustomed to the collegiate environment. Fridays would be reserved for enrichment or remediation, as needed.

A note about staggered start times

Staggering start and end times for faculty and staff would address the demand for extended student learning time in the best interests of students. Under this approach, there would be no additional pay or diversion of focus for educators, but more student needs would be met. For example, having the overlapping work hours would significantly increase teachers' capacities for differentiation, team teaching and common planning time. In addition, it would help reduce the total student load for educators and provide adults to cover additional needs such as playground supervision and intense remediation or supplemental instruction.

Individual school sites would be granted the autonomy to determine how to structure the schedule to best serve their students. For example, under one staggered schedule, the first teacher shift would be from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. while others could work a 10 a.m.-5 p.m. shift. Faculty and staff would work the same number of hours in an extended day as they do currently.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Alter the School Year to Maximize Student Learning and Retention

Statement of the problem: In the 19th century, urban school calendar years ran between 251 and 260 days, while in rural communities, the school calendar averaged 144 days. Near the turn of the century, many large cities joined rural counterparts in observing a two-month holiday in July and August. The question we face is whether these historic structures best fit the needs of our students.

Harris Cooper of Duke University along with his colleagues analyzed 39 studies and found that summer learning loss was affecting low-income students and increasing the gap between middle-class and poorer students. Furthermore, student learning loss during the summer equated to a month of lost instruction, a problem often compounded in September through the introduction of new material. Also, there is insufficient and poorly targeted time for effective professional development and collaboration. By restructuring the school year, our schools can provide a supportive framework for teacher planning and development, and propel improvements in student achievement.

Proposed solutions

5. To reduce learning loss and provide consistency for families who attend or work across multiple schools, all CPS schools should be placed on a Track E schedule, also known as year-round schooling. We understand that this proposal is controversial. Not even all of the members of our small writing team support it 100 percent, but we believe it is in the best interests of students. A Track E schedule requires students to attend school the same number of days, but in shorter spurts with more frequent, and shorter, school breaks. This would require CPS to ensure that every school has proper cooling and heating systems so students have a humane environment conducive to learning.

6. Restructure the Track E schedule so that school breaks (intercessions) occur at the conclusion of each quarter rather than after the eighth week. This will provide teachers time to review quarterly data, work on report cards, and plan and create authentic learning experiences that will meet student learning needs.

7. Provide remediation, enrichment and gifted programs during intersessions. According to NEA Reviews of the Research on Best Practices in Education, schools that offer such programs during school breaks showed student learning improvements over time. Community partnerships also should be pursued to supplement and enrich these programs.

8. Devote professional development time to effective common planning and the professional development day at the end of each quarter to a collaborative review of student data. **In this additional common planning time teachers should be encouraged to:**

    a. Create consistent team policies and procedures.

    b. Establish and work toward team goals.

    c. Examine student work in cohorts.

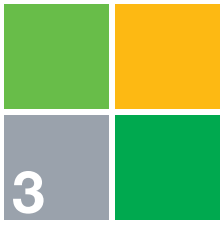
    d. Plan cross-curricular thematic units or lessons.

    e. Reflect as a grade level or department team.

9. Current holidays such as Pulaski Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Columbus Day and Veteran's Day should become attendance days for schools. Having students attend these days will allow for more time in the classroom and provide opportunities to educate students about the traditions behind some of these lesser or incompletely known historical figures.

Specific recommendation for high school

10. Offer a wide range of electives in all schools, with a special focus on computer and business classes. Adding the option for students to enroll in semester rather than full-year classes allows them to take additional electives and grow more accustomed to a college environment. By allowing students to pursue interests in a wider range of disciplines, they are also more likely to discover their passion and stay in school.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Ensure All CPS Students a Well-Rounded Education, Including Art, Music and Physical Education

Statement of the problem: The traditionally measured academic achievement gap is important, and addressed through the other areas of our report. Another large gap remains in non-core subjects. In many cases, this is the starkest disparity of all: Schools of highest socioeconomic status integrate non-tested areas into almost every subject of instruction, while those courses are all but missing from schools of highest need. The lack of an equitable, engaged and well-rounded education actually may be the greatest contributor to the traditional achievement gap; research suggests that broader instruction in the arts, physical education and library science lead to improved student outcomes. Disengagement from learning causes students to lack enthusiasm for school and can lead to truancy, tardiness, gang involvement and violent or destructive behaviors. Such disruptive behaviors from a small percentage of students reduce instructional time for every student in a classroom.

We recognize that some schools already offer a wide variety of enrichment options to their students. Our recommendations should in no way be interpreted as a suggestion to reduce enrichment options at those schools to the levels suggested here. Our intention is to provide equity to all CPS students by offering a well-rounded enrichment curriculum districtwide.

Proposed solutions for elementary schools

11. A minimum of 20 percent of each elementary school week should be directed toward ancillary classes, including art, music, physical education and library or technology. Based on an anticipated 450-minute school day and 2,250-minute school week, we recommend that students enrolled in elementary schools receive a minimum of:

    a. 180 minutes per week of physical education instruction.

    b. 90 minutes per week of art instruction.

    c. 90 minutes per week of music instruction.

    d. 90 minutes per week of library or technology instruction.

12. In schools where indoor space is a concern, PE teachers can assist classroom teachers in finding appropriate activities that can be done inside the school building, such as yoga, dance, calisthenics, stair climbing and a brisk walk through the halls. To make indoor PE even easier for classroom teachers, each school should invest in audiovisual equipment and a library of children's exercise, yoga and dance DVDs that teachers can borrow as needed.

13. State law allows elementary school classroom teachers to teach their own physical education classes. Schools can implement additional PE classes using their current staff by having classroom teachers teach a portion of their own PE classes. PE teachers can be used as a resource to assist teachers in planning PE time for their classes.

14. Increase staffing from one half-time art or music teacher (depending on enrollment) to two full-time positions—one for art and one for music. This modest increase in manpower will allow schools to offer art and music education more regularly, making it more likely to result in higher math scores.

15. Students should continue to receive library instruction on a weekly basis, and any "empty" library slots should be made available for classroom teachers to use on a flexible basis. We do not recommend any increase in library staffing levels.

Proposed solutions for high schools

16. Schedule a wide variety of club and co-curricular activity meetings at the start of the school day, particularly in low-income and under-performing schools, as a way to get students to school on time and give them a reason to be excited about coming to school. Students should be given a choice between going to advisory/student development or to a club or extracurricular activity run by a teacher, coach or community group.

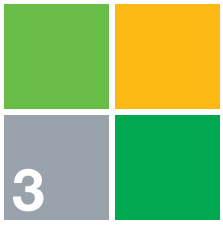
17. Aggressively recruit community organizations to work both within the school day and before and after school to increase opportunities for students and address unmet student needs.

18. Use extra time in school to focus on and serve the needs of students, such as their need for health information and support, or academic supports. By working with community groups, schools can meet their students' needs more effectively and at a lower cost.

19. Adopt a restorative justice model of discipline that addresses the root causes of student behavior while limiting the lost learning time that results from student suspensions and the disruption to the entire classroom caused by angry students who return from a suspension.

20. Create a before-school health club, sponsored by community partnerships, that meets various needs. CeaseFire and Youth Guidance can work with students on safe passage and family issues; Rush Hospital interns can teach healthful eating habits and provide tips for improving mental health; and coaches can instruct students on physical health, such as stretching or walking.

21. Offer elective courses focusing on personal health and wellness, targeting students who demonstrate a need for more support. Multiple types of resources are available and can be co-taught with a teacher and a trained community partner. Students can be divided by demographic and need-based groups along gender, exposure to substance abuse and other needs.



22. Institute Communities in Schools for low-income schools to coordinate a combination of enrichment and social supports in multiple classrooms and across disciplines. This program would be integrated into other school programs and instruction throughout the school day.

23. Because of the more rigid structure of a high school day, it is critical that we fully integrate the arts into the curriculum. **For example:**

    a. Art, music, drama and dance teachers should be encouraged and given time during PD days, common planning time and the extended day to collaborate with elective and core class teachers.

    b. Core class teachers should be encouraged and given time and training to collaborate with art, music, drama and dance teachers to develop differentiated and interdisciplinary learning.

    c. All teachers should be trained in project-based learning.

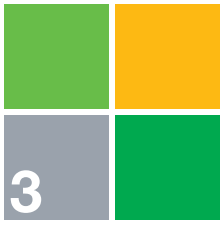
24. Community partners should be allowed to work in all classrooms for project-based learning to integrate real-world problem-solving skills and service learning. For example, Mindful Practices would work with PE to teach yoga, with English and math teachers to use breathing and stretching to assist students with better focus and concentration, and with music and art teachers to do movement and music, movement and drawing, and classroom management.

Why we believe this will work in elementary schools

Studies show that the so-called non-core classes—physical education, art, music and library instruction—are critically important to student learning. Aside from its benefits to learning, at a time when 50 percent of Chicago's children are overweight and 28 percent are obese (CLOCC 2010), we cannot morally neglect our students' physical health. Many students also suffer from chronic stress, fatigue, lack of focus and disruptive behavior. Research shows that an increase in physical education can alleviate all of these problems as well as support student learning.

Arts education also leads to improved student outcomes. Studies show it causes changes in the mirror neuron system of the human brain, helping students learn empathy and caring, and stimulates cognitive growth (Jeffers 2009). In fact, studies have shown that more arts education results in higher math scores.

Meanwhile, the Illinois School Library Media Association's 2005 study "Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners" found that students who had regular access to a fully staffed library posted higher test scores in reading and writing.



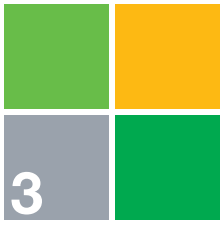
Why we believe this work in high schools

Our proposed solutions for high schools come from the knowledge that people who succeed in the 21st century will need to be creative, know how to communicate and be able to use technology effectively. Students from low-income backgrounds receive relatively less instruction in the arts, civic engagement, healthful lifestyles, physical education and technology as compared to middle- and upper-class students.

Research shows that engagement in school extracurricular activities leads to decreasing rates of early school dropouts in both boys and girls, and provides marginal students an opportunity to create a positive and voluntary connection to their school (Mahoney and Cairns 1997). Similarly, when students have health risks it is "less likely they will succeed in school or graduate on time. Each health risk that can be removed has the potential to positively influence academic behaviors," according to *School-based Health Interventions and Academic Achievement*.

Recognizing that CPS resources are limited and teachers can be expected to do only so much, schools must take advantage of community resources to meet these nonacademic but still critical student needs. **To do that, we recommend all schools:**

- Create a Teacher Voice Council, Parent Voice Council and Student Voice Council to define needs and make recommendations for partnerships and provide ongoing input about effectiveness and refinements of programs, enrichment activities and extracurricular activities. These councils meet regularly with the administration and the school family and community engagement specialist. Student Voice Councils meet during advisory. Non-core classes, AVID, and elective courses can establish Student Voice Councils as part of their service learning projects (i.e., Mikva Issues to Action).
- Develop university partnerships in which college students join community partnerships and teachers in project-based learning.
- Employ a family and community engagement specialist whose duties include:
    - Outreach to community organizations in the neighborhood, which would be invited into the school to run weekly programs in the arts, health and extracurricular activities.
    - Working closely with high school service learning coaches to use and expand existing partnerships.
    - Working with the administration to find space and in-school partnerships (i.e., social workers, health clinic or school nurse, library, English language learners and literacy coaches, security, discipline, etc.).
    - Working closely with teachers/teacher teams to facilitate community partnerships in the classroom.



A note about using a restorative justice approach to discipline

Restorative justice allows schools to maximize instructional time and reduce the cumulative, negative impact of suspensions, expulsions and dropouts. Under this model of discipline, administrators find the root cause of the problem and then refer the student to the appropriate community partner, which counsels and advises the student in behavior modification. In-school and out-of-school suspensions are the last (not first) resort. Using this approach, chronically disruptive students learn modified behaviors that benefit them and, by extension, their peers in order for more learning to occur in all classes.

Many buildings devote large amounts of student time toward noninstructional discipline. For example, in many schools hundreds of student days are lost to out-of-school suspensions or in-school suspensions or detention hours with no instructional value. This reduces student growth and due to racial disparities in application, may be a denial of students' human rights. While the district should be praised for its recent strides away from models based on reactive punishment, many schools continue to focus on punishments that take students away from instructional time. These measures have high recidivism rates so students not only miss instruction in the present, but are likely to miss more time in the future. Also, while there is a push to reduce the data on punitive discipline, the absence of sustained positive intervention incites some schools to game the data rather than address the initial off-task or destructive behavior with more effective methods.

To address these problems:

- More time and resources should be invested in the development of restorative justice models rather than punitive disciplinary models. The funding for these programs should be diverted from the current expenditures for in-school policing and other punitive initiatives.
- The combination of service learning with restorative practices would provide students with learning opportunities as they work through their disciplinary issues.
- Students must receive instruction during in-school suspension or detention.
- Out-of-school suspensions and expulsion should be avenues of last resort.

4

RECOMMENDATION 4

Ensure All Children Have Time for Free Play in the School Day

Statement of the problem: In some Chicago public schools, students arrive early in the morning, receive breakfast in the classroom and, beyond a short period for lunch, spend the balance of their days at their desks in a single room. This is unhealthy and actually inhibits many students' ability to effectively process instruction. Under the status quo, students in elementary school do not receive enough daily physical activity, time for free play or breaks. The absence of a regular recess period manifests itself in increased levels of obesity, disruptive behavior and low academic achievement. As we look to an extended, more effective school day and year, we consider modeling effective student learning and living practices a critical component of the new school day.

CPS already encourages schools to implement daily recess. The recent publication of the CPS guide *"Developing a School Recess Plan"* (2011) strengthens the push for recess by helping parents, teachers, Local School Councils and principals work together to create a school recess plan that can be approved and implemented by the principal. According to the guide, principals see a shortage of time in the school day as one of the main barriers to giving children daily recess. A longer school day will remove that barrier, giving principals much more flexibility in scheduling recess time.

We consider recess to be a human right for children, much like workers have the right to regular breaks from their jobs (Dubroc 2007).

Proposed solutions

25. All elementary school students should have a daily recess period at least 20 minutes in length during the extended school day. It should be noted that recess is "unstructured free play" (Ramstetter 2010). Recess must take place during noninstructional time and cannot replace structured physical education class.

26. Provide adequate playground supervision through a combination of the following options:

    a. Involve parent and community members to supplement recess supervision for little or no cost by volunteering. An administrator can organize a parent recess supervision schedule and parents can be asked to volunteer at recess one day per marking period. Those who cannot afford the time can be asked to contribute a small amount to a fund that can be used to offer a small stipend to staff members who give up their lunch break to supervise recess.

    b. Add a half-time position of playground monitor at each school. That person also can provide support as an aide or clerk.

    c. Principals can assign teachers a recess supervision schedule, with each teacher supervising recess once per week.

d. Teachers who have more than the usual number of preparation periods in their schedule on a particular day can be asked to supervise recess and take their lunch break during their preparation period on that day.

27. Ensure that schools without playgrounds have the funds to install them by August 2012.

    a. The following organizations offer financial support for schools in need of playground equipment: Home Depot Community Impacts Grants Program, BCI Burke Playground Grant Resource Center, Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) Grant, Liberty Mutual Responsible Sports Community Grant, Cartoon Network National Recess Week Grant and Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant.

28. On days when the weather prevents outdoor recess, children will need to have recess indoors. **To best facilitate indoor recess, schools should:**

    a. Use a rotating schedule to share gymnasium space. Students can otherwise spend indoor recess time in their homeroom classrooms.

    b. Provide supervisors with audiovisual equipment and dance, yoga or other children's exercise videos for use during this time.

    c. Plan an early fall professional development workshop led by physical education teachers to educate recess staff on ideas for safe indoor recess. This time also can be used to train staff on how to manage indoor PE classes.

Why we believe this will work

Numerous studies strongly suggest that daily recess can have a positive impact on behavior, increasing on-task time and reducing levels of fidgeting, defiance and aggression. **Various studies have found that:**

- Play can improve language, literacy and problem-solving skills (Isenberg and Jolongo 2011).
- Exercise causes changes in the brain that enhance students' ability to pay attention in class (Jensen) (Jarrett).
- Recess stimulates brain development, decreases obesity and fosters social skills (Waite-Stupiansky 2001) (Dubroc 2007) (Ginsburg and The Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health 2007).
- Recess does not have a negative impact on student outcomes (Dills, Morgan, Rotthoff 2011).
- Recess augments cognitive function and helps children adjust to school (Pellegrini and Bohn, 2005).

RECOMMENDATION 5

Empower Students and Teachers with Technology

Statement of the problem: We are educating children for a 21st century world in which those who are technologically savvy will succeed. Meanwhile, our schools continue to use antiquated technology—or worse, no technology at all—that wastes valuable instructional time and frustrates teaching professionals who want to spend their time teaching, not collecting lunch money. To solve both of those problems, educators must effectively integrate technology into their daily instruction and work practices, and students must learn technological skills to succeed in their education and in society.

Proposed solutions for students

29. Require that students take at least one credit in technology during their freshman year of high school, giving students adequate time to learn the basics of commonly used applications: word processing, presentation software, spreadsheets, Internet browsers, research software and communication tools.

30. Open all computer labs to students at least 30 minutes before school, during lunch periods and for an hour after school. Computer lab time is essential for giving students structured technology lessons, and it also gives students the ability to conduct research and work on projects for other content areas.

31. Unblock YouTube and other educational sites at all CPS schools. They contain excellent educational content and have special educational channels or spaces for students.

32. Offer specific courses such as MOS, CIW, Web design, accounting, Photoshop, marketing, entrepreneurship and basic business to high school students as electives. These are skills that can land students a job right out of high school. These courses are typically not taught outside of the career academy high schools.

33. Incorporate technology lessons into the longer school day to ensure all elementary students learn the technical skills that they will need in high school. All middle school students need keyboard training before high school. In addition, they should be able to use the Internet to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information effectively. They should receive instruction in Internet safety. All of these should be completed prior to eighth grade graduation.

34. Develop a CPS pilot program that provides digital tablets to every student and teacher in the pilot schools. Students would use them as replacements for paper-based notebooks, calendars and digitally available textbooks. This would improve organization and teach students means of reducing paper output, benefiting the environment. Teachers would use Google Calendar to share assignments and deadlines with the students. Students would be held personally responsible for what happens to their tablet. Families should have the option of buying insurance that will cover the cost of

repairing or replacing tablets that are lost or broken, and a cost-sharing program would be available for students of economic need. Schools would keep the tablets' software up to date and install a Wi-Fi network that has the bandwidth to handle the increased data consumption of HD video streaming or educational content on YouTube.

Proposed solutions for teachers

35. Save time in the school day and in teachers' after-school responsibilities by improving communication between teachers, students and parents using modern communication avenues such as e-mail, Twitter, Facebook and websites. These communication venues are mostly free to use. Just like learning to replace the light bulb in an overhead projector, teachers need to learn how to develop their own class website and class blog. These 21st century tools allow educators to communicate with students outside of class. The time and cost commitment to train teachers on how to develop these communication tools would be offset by the efficiency and effectiveness of communication that results. Many teachers are already using these tools. To leverage scarce resources, we suggest that those teachers who are using these tools successfully create professional development instruction for their fellow teachers who need training.

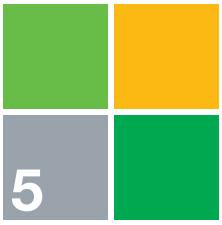
36. Either replace IMPACT with a cheaper, more efficient system or improve the training of teachers to effectively use the IMPACT system. Either approach would result in increased productivity and increased time for instruction and lesson planning.

37. Update all classrooms with technologies essential for delivery of educational content. At a minimum, this includes a digital projector, an up-to-date personal computer or laptop, and a fast Internet connection or Wi-Fi. We understand that there will be a cost to implement this recommendation, but we believe that the return in student engagement and increased understanding more than justifies the investment. Many dedicated teachers now purchase a Wi-Fi-capable laptop and a digital projector using their own funds because they know that these are necessary tools that address several learning preferences.

38. Create one technology position for each 600 students in every school to help support and integrate technology into the classroom. Teachers would receive professional development sessions to optimally use the new technology at their disposal and to integrate technology into their curriculum. Teachers would be trained during the summer months, intersessions and the beginning of the school year in all schools to be fully prepared to use the technology with the students from the first day of school.

39. Offer technology-oriented professional development to teachers to develop the capacity to use online resources that optimize instructional goals. Following effective professional development, these skills should be integrated into the teacher evaluation rubric.

40. Develop a list of recommended online learning programs and encourage schools to use them. There are many online learning applications available that can be used by imaginative teachers to enhance instruction and student learning, thereby making



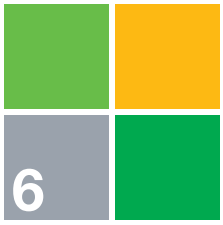
lesson planning and instruction time more efficient. The great advantage of these Internet-based applications is that students access them outside of the classroom, giving them control of their learning and expanding learning time well beyond the confines of the school day. This, however, would require that every student have access to a computer and high-speed Internet. It is possible that this can be accomplished through a partnership with one of the larger Internet service providers to furnish the needed Internet access and low-cost computers to CPS students.

Why we believe this will work

The International Society for Technology in Education states in its *"Standards for Global Learning in the Digital Age"* that in order for people to fully participate in and contribute to modern society, they must be able to:

- Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- Communicate and collaborate.
- Conduct research and use information.
- Think critically, solve problems and make decisions.
- Use technology effectively and productively.

Our challenge is to ensure equity in access to technology. It is evident that suburban districts purchase more equipment for instruction than urban school districts. Without additional investment in technology, CPS risks producing graduates who are underachieving and unprepared for college or the technological work force of the 21st century.



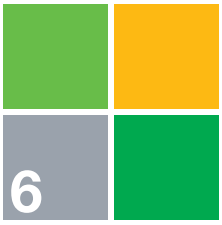
RECOMMENDATION 6

Eliminate the Time Wasters

Statement of the problem: It is foolhardy to pour water into a leaky bucket. For students to realize the greatest benefit from the school day, it is vital to maximize the utility of all school time—not just additional time. There are massive holes in our systemic CPS bucket. Some of the largest holes we have the ability to address directly are the ineffectual policies that detract from student learning. By reducing wasted and ineffectual time, we can improve student learning and growth by a factor far beyond any increase in the length of the school day. Research has shown that the most important quality shared by successful extended day schools is the ability to hold each minute of the day as a precious commodity, maximizing time on-task and preventing attendance issues.

Proposed solutions

41. Improve the high school assignment process so students know by the end of 8th grade where they will attend high school in the fall. (CPS is to be commended for its efforts already under way to explore this possibility.)
42. Change the school staffing protocol so teachers are in school, ready to teach, on the first day of school, and create a specific mechanism for documenting and publicly disseminating information about vacancies.
43. Adjust testing schedules so standardized tests are given in late spring to allow additional time for teaching the content, with finals given the last week of school.
44. Ensure teachers have common planning time each day.
45. Balance the need for assessments with instructional time.
46. Extend the latest date for educational field trips so students may continue to access every possible educational opportunity through the end of the term.
47. Vow never to interrupt instruction for visiting dignitaries or guests unless students are involved in an educational event with the guest.
48. Develop transparent assessment plans that account for all time spent on assessment and preparation, especially high-stakes testing and prep.
49. Audit plans for the amount of instructional time devoted to such activities, their alignment with educational research on the effectiveness of various assessments and the resource cost of the assessments.



Why we believe this will work

Many students wait beyond the beginning of the instructional term at their neighborhood school before enrolling. Furthermore, many schools do not receive their full allotment of positions until well into the school year. At that point, entire schedules must be reworked, so full instruction does not stabilize until late in the first quarter or later. This results in significant disruptions in students' learning and losses in instructional time. The most at-risk subgroup—high school freshmen—can become so frustrated with their educational setbacks that they dropout entirely.

Additionally, much of the scheduling in the district is structured around the administrative, testing and software programs rather than the needs of students. ISAT tests are often given early in the second semester when students have not had a full opportunity to learn the skills tested. With the slow turnaround time on the assessment data, it is not apparent why they are scheduled in this fashion. Grades are due well before the end of the term and educational field trips are restricted through nearly half of the last grading period. In many schools, teachers still distribute meal tickets and other documentation by hand, while in other areas, teachers are slowed down by expensive software systems that are not up to industry standards. Finally, in many schools common planning is minimal or poorly allocated and counteracted by practices that disrupt educators' cooperation. While not directly student on-task time, common planning is necessary to maximize the utility of instructional time across all disciplines.

Assessment of student learning is a vital component of understanding the best instructional approaches to reach each and every student. It is important to maintain a balance between the need to assess, and the potential pitfall of overtesting and avoid "teaching to the test."

Endnotes

Alternative Day Resources

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CONCLUSION

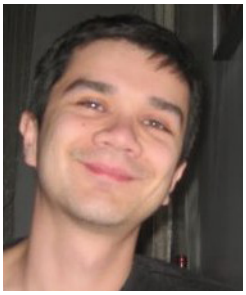
Time, Teachers and Tomorrow's Schools

As we charge into the 21st century, education must adapt and incorporate skills and knowledge to compete globally. Our students need technology, creativity, collaboration, communication and civic engagement skills. While we understand the push for higher test scores, given the persistent achievement gap we propose that the arts, technology, business and 21st century skills better meet the learning styles of many diverse learners.

A longer school day at CPS provides an opportunity to ensure that rigorous, enriched course work is a part of the educational experience of every student. Not only do we have additional minutes each day, but the teachers of CPS want to use the minutes they already have more efficiently. We have looked at alternative scheduling that allows flexible start and end times for students and teachers, to yearlong schools that allow for consistency across all grade levels. Many of our recommendations include intentional and organized collaboration between schools and community organizations to provide enrichment and real-world learning.

Bios

VIVA Task Force of Chicago Members



XIAN BARRETT is a ninth-grade world studies instructor at Gage Park High School. He began teaching English and Human Rights Education in Namino, Japan in 2000 through the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme. He was a founding member of Chicago Youth Initiating Change, a citywide student social justice organization and of the Caucus of Rank and File Educators. He was the CPS 2008 Service Learning Teacher of the Year, 2008 CPS DRIVE award winner and 2009-2010 U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellow. Most recently, he was the Political Director and Policy Director for the Chicago Teachers Union.

ALLAN FLUHARTY has been teaching science at Prosser for seven years. After a career in industry, he pursued his dream to become a teacher. He earned a MSEd from Northwestern University in 2004. Allan retired from the Navy Reserve as a Captain after serving a tour of duty to rebuild Iraq in 2006. For several summers, Allan has worked as a Research Fellow at UIC's Institute of Environmental Science and Policy whose focus is to investigate the environmental impact of technology. Allan is creating a Biodiesel Club at Prosser using a Toyota Tapestry grant. He achieved National Board Certification in 2010.

BRIAN GRAVES is in his 13th year of teaching. He knew in 5th grade that he wanted to be a teacher when he grew up. Going into work each and everyday he has a plan, but never really knows where the learning and rich discussions with students will take him. Children give such a honest perspective on life and learning. He loves teaching in the public sector because he believes everyone should give back to society. He sees the VIVA Chicago Project as just the start of a grassroots effort for educational reform in the city of Chicago.

SHARON D. JAMES has more than 10 years' experience in the field of education. She earned her B.A. in Liberal Arts at DePaul University, and her Master's in Special Education at Saint Xavier University. Sharon is currently a special education teacher at Paul Cuffe MST Academy in Chicago, and is in the process of pursuing her Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Walden University. She enjoys teaching and believes that all children have the ability to learn. It is her mission as an educator to tap into those abilities in order for her students to gain success.

Bios

VIVA Task Force of Chicago Members

KORI MILROY is a science teacher at Skinner West Classical, Fine Arts, and Technology School. She has been teaching since 2004. Her education includes a Master of Science Education degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology, where her studies focused on middle school physics education. Ms. Milroy is very interested in inquiry-based learning, and truly believes that scientific thinking empowers learners for life.

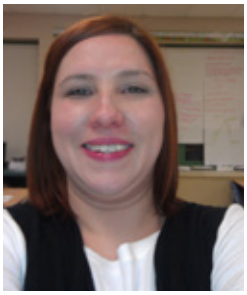
As the Technology Coordinator for James Monroe Elementary School, **DAVID QUANZ** brings 8 years of teaching experience to the VIVA project. He has a combination of classroom teaching experience in 2nd and 3rd grade and 4 years as a Technology Resource teacher. David enjoys the daily challenges and surprises of working with youth and the opportunities that can be presented to them. He enjoys introducing students to new technology and seeing how they integrate technology into their life in and outside of school.

FRAN STANIEC is a technology and IB teacher at Taft High School. She has taught for 26 years, the last 11 with CPS teaching CTE Information Technology, Freshman Computer Information Technology and IB - Information Technology in a Global Society. Fran has an MA in Adult and Continuing Education from National Louis University and an MA in Instructional Technology from University of Missouri-Columbia. She has led numerous technology-based professional development sessions with Taft teachers, including sessions on GradeQuick, Microsoft Office and IMPACT. She most enjoys helping her students learn to use technology responsibly and proficiently.

KARON STEWART is a National Board Certified Math Teacher. She has worked for 16 years at Chicago Public Schools. She has received grants from the Illinois Arts Council, the Chicago Foundation for Education, and DonorsChoose. Last year, her students competed in the Future City Competition and won two special awards which included a first place award from the Chicago Planning Commission. She is currently teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math at Bond Elementary School.

Bios

VIVA Task Force of Chicago Members



LINDSEY TERRILL is a fifth grade special education teacher at McAuliffe Elementary in the Hermosa/Humboldt Park neighborhood. This is her first year teaching with CPS. Lindsey enjoys teaching because she wants to have a positive impact on the lives of her students and challenge them in order to maximize their potential. Seeing the joy on the face of a student who has mastered a task that they previously struggled with is one of the most satisfying aspects of teaching.

GIN THOMAS-HOOKS is a Chicago native and proud alum of Chicago Public Schools. She earned a B.A. in English from Bradley University in partnership with the School for International Training (Battleboro, Vermont) and the University of Ghana at Legon. She earned a Masters of Library Information Science from Dominican University and a Masters of Educational Leadership from the American College of Education. She is the Librarian and Resource Coordinator at Austin Business & Entrepreneurship Academy. She is a Teach Plus Chicago Education Policy Fellow. She and her husband, Pastor Joffrey Hooks, live in the Roseland community on Chicago's south side.

JEANNE S. WALKER has taught Art and Sculpture for 12 years. Ms. Walker currently teaches at Orr Academy High School. Her passion for education includes using the arts, action civics, and service learning as a means of expression and platform for developing solutions around Peace, Social Justice, and Restorative Justice.

New Voice Strategies

New Voice Strategies, an Illinois nonprofit corporation, operates the VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Project. The VIVA Project is the creation of a group of seasoned, passionate advocacy professionals who believe in the power and wisdom of individual citizens in the public arena. VIVA taps into the power of technology to bring together individuals with a passion for finding practical solutions to complex problems and gives them a new way to build consensus around ideas for change. Through our web-enabled platforms, we create opportunities for people with expertise earned by training and day-to-day work experience to collaborate, exchange ideas and influence public policy. Our first online collaborations—we call them Idea Exchanges—launched in September 2010. These Idea Exchanges engage classroom teachers directly in one of the most important discussions our country is having now: the future of American public schools. The VIVA Idea Exchange is powered by SocialSphere proprietary collaboration technology, ARENA™.

Board of Directors

JOSE CERDA III, chair, is the vice president for public policy and strategy at IFF, a Midwest regional CDFI. Jose has over 20 years of experience in public policy and government. He served on the domestic policy staff in the Clinton White House, was chief of policy for the City of Chicago, and worked on Chicago's Empowerment Zone.

JILL BASS taught in the Chicago and New York City public schools for 14 years. She has a master's in instructional leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has been a professional developer, curriculum writer, educational consultant, and instructional coach. She is currently director of the Mikva Challenge's National Center for Action Civics, overseeing curriculum development and teacher training.

MATTHEW BREWER is an associate with the law firm of Bartlt, Beck, Herman, Palanhar & Scott, LLC. He is a graduate of Stanford University, where he served as student body president, earned his JD from Yale University and MBA from Harvard University.

ELIZABETH EVANS, founding CEO, is a recognized national leader in building unconventional alliances and bringing innovative approaches to solving difficult policy problems. For the last decade, her work has focused on education reform, and she has spent her career promoting the interests of children. She was executive director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), where she was the chief architect of a successful statewide campaign that culminated with Illinois being the first state in the nation to enact comprehensive charter law reforms in 2009. Before joining INCS, Elizabeth was part of the Illinois Facilities Fund leadership team, where her responsibilities focused on Illinois government relations, communications, and advocacy. Elizabeth also worked at the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago and was a political organizer in Washington, DC and Michigan. She practiced law from 1990 to 1998 for the US Securities and Exchange Commission Enforcement Division and as a staff attorney in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

KIPLUND "KIP" KOLKMEIER is of counsel to the Political Law and Government Relations practice groups of Perkins, Coie, LLC & Kolkmeier Consulting. His legal practice focuses on state legislative lobbying in Illinois, corporate and governmental ethics issues, administrative rulemaking and executive agency lobbying, PAC management, state and federal campaign finance issues, and association management. He previously was a partner at the following law firms: Sidley & Austin, Altheimer & Gray, and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon.

ASHLEY WARLICK teaches elementary school in the Cambridge, MA Public Schools. She has a concentration in teaching students with special needs and brings a strong interest in the arts to her work. She serves on the Board of Directors of her school's affiliated nonprofit organization, which brings urgently needed resources to the students at the school.

Partners

National Louis University

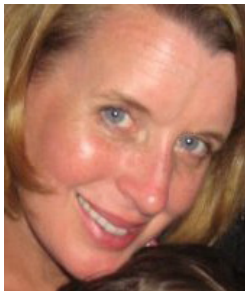
In 1886, founder Elizabeth Harrison took the idea of early childhood education and built around it National Louis University, one of the first four-year colleges for teachers. Today, in the process of educating students, faculty in the National College of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, and College of Management and Business continue to act on some of the most urgent problems of our time and our society. They are innovators, animated by an intense dedication to their students and a commitment to building more effective and more caring schools, communities and societies. For more information, visit **www.nl.edu**. The President of the University is Nivine Megahed, Ph.D.

In March of 2010, **DR. NIVINE MEGAHED** was named the 11th president of National Louis University, a 125-year-old institution recognized for its leadership in teacher preparation. Prior to this role, she served as President of Kendall College in Chicago. Dr. Megahed has worked in higher education for over twenty years. She has served as a faculty member, a dean, and a president. In addition, she has overseen the administration of operations of multiple campuses for a number of proprietary institutions. Megahed has demonstrated a track record of success relative to institutional growth and development. She sits on the board of Tricoci University, Restoring Sight International, the Association of Urban School Leadership (AUSL) and Illinois Campus Compact. She is a member of The Economic Club of Chicago and The Chicago Club.

ALISON HILSABECK has served as dean of the National College of Education (NCE) at National Louis University since 2005. Her leadership of the 125-year-old college has brought NCE's strengths in teacher preparation and the evaluation of teaching effectiveness to a number of signature partnerships, including the nationally acclaimed Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP). The college also offers degree-granting and research collaborations with Chicago Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, and New Leaders for New Schools. Under Hilsabeck's leadership, NCE also partnered with the Chicago Public Education Fund to extend national board certification support for teachers in the Chicago Public Schools. She recently completed a term as co-chair of the Council of Chicago Area Deans of Education, which established a shared research agenda focused on improving teacher preparation and works closely on state-wide issues of education policy.

National Louis University

MARK LARSON is an assistant professor in Educational Leadership and Director of Partnerships for National Louis University. Previously, he worked in educational capacities at Lincoln Park Zoo and The Field Museum and taught English at Evanston Township High School. In 1995, he received the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has served as Chair of the Golden Apple Academy and helped found Polaris Charter Academy in Humboldt Park. He is the author *Making Conversation: Collaborating with Colleagues for Change*, co-author of *Situations: A Casebook of Virtual Realities for the English Teacher* and is working on a third, *Once and For All*, about staying the course in school reform over the long haul.



TINA R. NOLAN joined National Louis University in 2006 as Associate Director of Partnerships. In this capacity, she works to establish coherence among existing partnerships, create new partnership models, develop partnership assessment strategies, and advocate for social justice through education. Dr. Nolan created the Multilingual Schools Network partnership model through her work with Skokie School District 73½. Prior to joining NLU, she was Director of Education at the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Dr. Nolan has an M.Ed in Administration and Supervision from National Louis University, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from National Louis University.

TEMA OKUN is an Assistant Professor in the Educational Leadership Department at National Louis University. She previously spent more than 25 years working with and for social justice organizations, most recently with the DRworks collaborative as a trainer and facilitator helping leaders and groups address racism. Tema is also the author of *The Emperor Has No Clothes: Teaching About Race and Racism to People Who Don't Want to Know*, winner of the American Educational Studies Association Critics Choice Book Award in 2011, which draws on her experience working with leaders, organizations, and students to understand and address racial inequity and oppression.

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