



I. RESEARCH ON RAISING ACHIEVEMENT IN POORLY PERFORMING SCHOOLS

THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL ON URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM CHICAGO

Elaine M. Allensworth, Anthony S. Bryk, and Penny Sebring; paper presented at the 2010 Meeting of the American Sociological Association

In recent decades, the Chicago Public Schools have undertaken massive reforms, including decentralization as a means to spur the improvement of low-performing schools. This paper examines the social conditions that led schools in some communities to show dramatic improvements in student outcomes while others did not. The authors examine the data using indicators of the socio-economic conditions and social capital in school communities and the concentration of students living in extraordinary circumstances as factors underlying racial and economic differences in school improvement. Although not immutable, these differences were large and significant.

IMPROVE TEACHING, FROM TEACHING AND ITS PREDICAMENTS

David K. Cohen, Harvard University Press, 2011

This insightful chapter from David Cohen's new book, *Teaching and its Predicaments*, offers a powerful summary of what's wrong with the implementation agenda for education reform (that is, to the degree that there is one at all). Most fundamentally, American education is not organized to make any consistent demands upon both students and those who are supposed to deliver on them, and it offers no infrastructure of supports to build on the fragmented expectations we have now, much less the new ones put forward in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). A roadmap for real change aligned to the CCSS, he says, would require, "nothing less than the development of new systems of educational media, curriculum, professional development, assessment, management and quality control – the key elements of educational infrastructure."

TURNAROUND SCHOOLS THAT WORK: MOVING BEYOND SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

Richard Kahlenberg, *The Agenda*, The Century Foundation, November, 2009

Rick Kahlenberg believes that at least part of the answer to educating poor kids is to create schools that are integrated by class – schools that include a meaningful proportion of economically disadvantaged students ("... it is unmistakably black and Latino students who overwhelmingly bear the brunt of attending high-poverty schools. . ."). He argues that school quality is determined more by its community of students, parents and educators than the overly popularized school governance models – most notably model charter schools – that would be impossible to take to scale even when they do work. Nor are teacher unions the problem, he says. What low achievers need is to be surrounded by high achieving peers and everything that goes with them. There is no question that they can learn, but the better school surroundings found in middle class schools – or class-mixed magnet schools, for example -- would emphatically help them. This does not mean that curriculum, assessments, professional development, tutoring, counseling and wrap-around services don't matter, rather that effective models for their use are more likely to occur in middle class schools – schools that start off better than poor schools, but

would also need a hefty compliment of these, especially if they are to take on low-performing students.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FINAL REQUIREMENTS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Federal Register, Vol. 73, No. 208, October 28, 2010

RESEARCH BEHIND THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL FOR REAUTHORIZING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)
Ed.gov Blog, May 4, 2010

TURNING AROUND CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS
What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences

MORE AND BETTER CHOICES IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
Sarah Rosenberg, *Accountability*, Education Sector, October 14, 2011

These four documents offer both a map for what the regulations require for School Improvement Grants, the research back-up offered by the U.S. Education Department and the What Works Clearinghouse for the models sanctioned by the regulations, and a summary of the proposed revisions to these regulations contained in the Harkin-Enzi ESEA reauthorization bill (see Section V for the actual text of this bill).