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For Immediate Release

Chicago Central Bureaucracy Grossly Inflates Performance Ratings for Principals Who Are Failing

High Schools at Which the Central Board Appointed Principals Have Shown Virtually No Academic Progress

CHICAGO (APRIL 7, 2008). Only 2% of the 485 Chicago principals for which Chicago released performance rating data for the 2005-2006 school year received an unsatisfactory rating from their Area Instructional Officers. The Area Instructional Officers (or AIOs) are supposed to be the principals' key evaluators and mentors in an expensive bureaucracy created by the Chicago Central Board in 2002. As reflected in Table 1, 12 of the 23 Area Instructional Officers gave every single principal in their Area a satisfactory rating. Yet 50% of Chicago's public schools are failing to make "adequate yearly progress," based on federal standards.

The discrepancy between principal ratings and student achievement is widest at the high school level, where only 2% of high school principals were given unsatisfactory ratings, while 85% of high schools failed to make adequate yearly progress on state achievement tests in 2005-2006. (The 2005-2006 school year is the most recent school year for which the Chicago school system agreed to release principal rating data to Designs for Change, in response to Freedom of Information requests for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years results.)

“These dismaying results, which the Chicago Board has now been forced to release, indicate that the expensive layer of bureaucracy that the Chicago Board put in place to improve schools is rating 98 of every 100 principals as doing a satisfactory job,” said Dr. Donald R. Moore, Executive Director of Designs for Change. “Principals’ performance ratings are wildly inflated, compared with their schools’ academic achievement.”

"These realities are starkly different from the image that the Central Board has sought to convey that highly skilled Area Instructional Officers are carefully monitoring the performance of their principals in the 23 Areas into which the Central Board has currently divided the system. (Some Areas have been eliminated since this new system was put in place.) What motivation does the Central Board give principals to improve, when 98% of them are rated as doing a satisfactory job?" asked Moore.

Local School Council also rate their principals and are required to complete the evaluation by May 1 each year," said Valencia Rias, Senior Leadership Development Associate at Designs for Change. "The LSC evaluation must be completed by the beginning of May, so that it can serve as the basis for planning for the next school year," said Rias. "Yet the school system's Freedom of Information Officer stated in writing to Designs for Change that the Area Instructional Officers do not complete their evaluations until September or October of the following year. How can these evaluations be used effectively for planning after the school year is already well underway?"

"We are constantly told that the school system needs more money. We agree. However, new money should be spent to support the schools, not to support a bureaucracy that determines that 98% of principals are succeeding, while 50% of Chicago's schools are failing to meet state achievement standards," said Rias.

The largest discrepancy in results for 2005-2006 occurred in Area 25, which was created to assist small schools across the city, and is headed by Dr. Cynthia Barron. In Area 25, not one school made adequate yearly progress, but every principal was given a “Meets Standards” rating (55%) or “Exceeds Standards” rating (45%) by Dr. Barron. Not one principal was given an unsatisfactory rating.

One of the schools that Ms. Barron has been responsible for overseeing is Mose Vines Preparatory Academy, which was opened by the Central Board in 2003 as one of

Orr's three small schools. CEO Arne Duncan appointed Patricia Woodson as Interim Principal of Mose Vines, one of these three small schools at Orr.

In spring 2006, 80% of Mose Vines students failed to meet state standards in reading, and 91% of students failed to meet state standards in math. Yet Ms. Woodson was given a satisfactory rating by Dr. Barron.

A newly-elected Local School Council at Mose Vines decided to replace Ms. Woodson as the school's Interim Principal, and cited "her lack of ability to control violence in the school and her failure to retain good teachers at the school" as major reasons for dismissing her, according to Reverend Charles Walker, a member of the Local School Council.

Defying the Local School Council, Arne Duncan reappointed Ms. Woodson and asserted that the Mose Vines Local School Council lacked the authority to remove Ms. Woodson, because Mose Vines is a "small school."

However, in February 2008, the Central Board completely reversed course and pronounced the small schools initiative that the Central Board had created at Mose Vines and two other small schools within the Orr High School Building as failures, eliminating Ms. Woodson's position.

"The Board of Education has now made the same decision that our LSC made two years ago, and our students have suffered needlessly for two more years. However, the Board has also abolished our Local School Council, which enables them to experiment further with our children, while locking out the voices of parents and the community," said Reverend Walker. Working with other schools where the Board has illegally eliminated Local School Councils, we are now fighting in the courts for the right to have a Local School Council in the new Orr High School that has real decision making authority."

Last spring, Board President Rufus Williams backed unsuccessful state legislation that would have forced Local School Councils to rehire their principals if their Area Instructional Officer had given the principal a satisfactory rating. This would have forced 98% of LSCs to renew their principal's contracts, even if their principal was blatantly failing, as was the case at Mose Vines," said Rias.

Unlike Board President Williams, Miguel del Valle, former Chair of the State Senate Education Committee and current Chicago City Clerk has strongly defended the contribution of Local School Councils. "Show me a school that's progressing, I will show you a school with a Local School Councils that is strong, that is involved, that is connected, that is fully engaged," del Valle said at the recent 20th Anniversary Celebration of Parents United for Responsible Education.

High Schools in Which the Central Board Appointed Principals Show Virtually No Academic Progress

A related analysis being released by Designs for Change today, indicates that 20 high schools in which the Central Board has directly chosen the principal and taken control of the school improvement plan and budget have shown virtually no academic improvement and remain at very low achievement levels. As Table 4 indicates:

- In the median school among these high schools, only **12%** of the students in these high schools met or exceeded state standards in reading in **2001** at eleventh grade, and only **14%** of students met or exceeded state standards in reading in 2007.
- In the median school among these high schools, only **4%** of the students in these high schools met or exceeded state standards in math in **2001** at eleventh grade, and only **6%** of students met or exceeded state standards in math in 2007.

"These abysmal results were achieved despite the fact that nearly half of the students at these schools had dropped out of high school before the eleventh grade test was given," said Moore.

"Taking the low graduation rates and achievement rates in combination, only 6% of the students in these schools controlled by the Central Board who entered ninth grade and were part of the Class of 2006 both graduated and met state achievement standards. 50% dropped out. 40% graduated with skills that are below what the Illinois State Board of Education has identified as the levels necessary to succeed in further education or to get a job with a future," said Moore.

"In contrast, a large number of Chicago elementary schools that serve 100,000 students made major academic achievement gains between 1990 and 2005, according to

studies by the Consortium on Chicago School Research and Designs for Change. These studies have pinpointed the practices of the schools that have improved," said Moore. "One of the distinguishing characteristics of these schools is that they have an effective Local School Council, as judged by teachers."

"The same practices that have led to major gains in achievement in a sizable portion of Chicago's elementary schools can be applied to turn our high schools around," said Moore.

"Yet Board President Rufus Williams wants to take the authority to select principals away from LSCs, despite the Central Board's failure to critically evaluate principals or to appoint principals who have demonstrated the ability to turn schools around when the Central Board had that chance."

"We agree with former State Senate Chairs Miguel del Valle and Arthur Berman that the current responsibilities of the Local School Council should be retained," Rias said.

TABLE 1.
Percent of Schools in Area Not Making "Adequate Yearly Progress"
vs. Percent of Principals in Area Receiving "Does Not Meet Standards" Rating
from Area Instructional Officer — 2005-2006

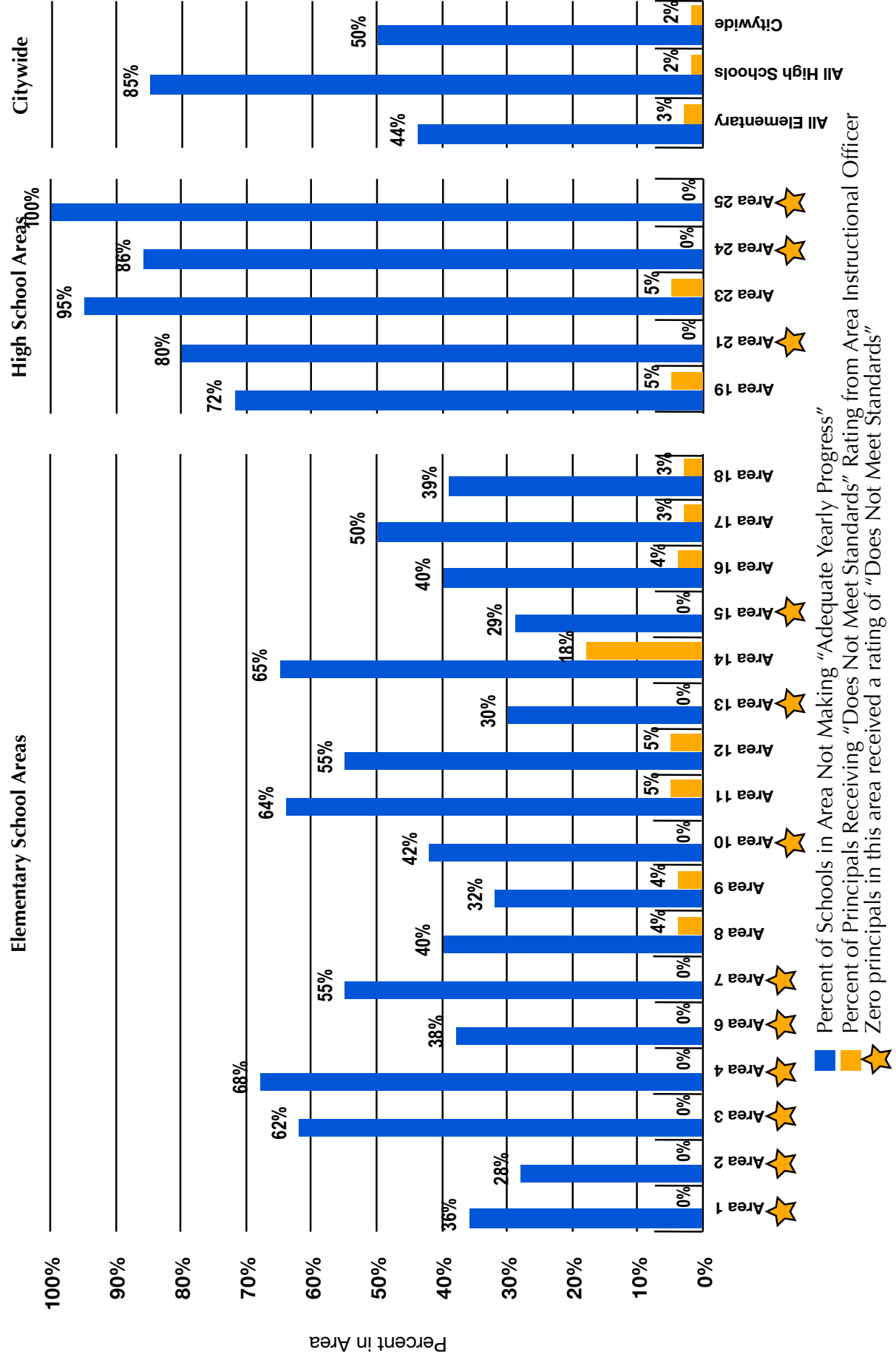
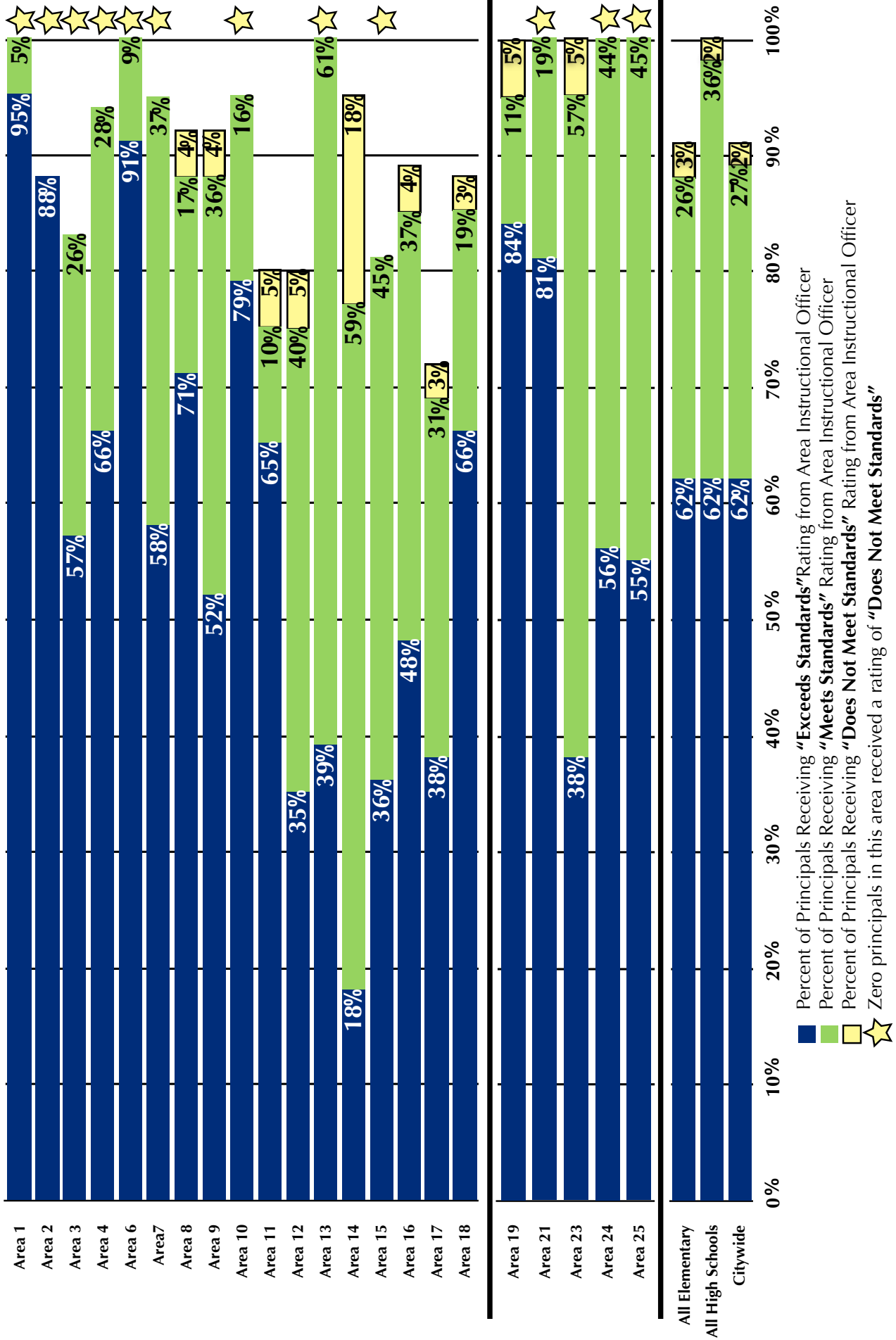


TABLE 2.

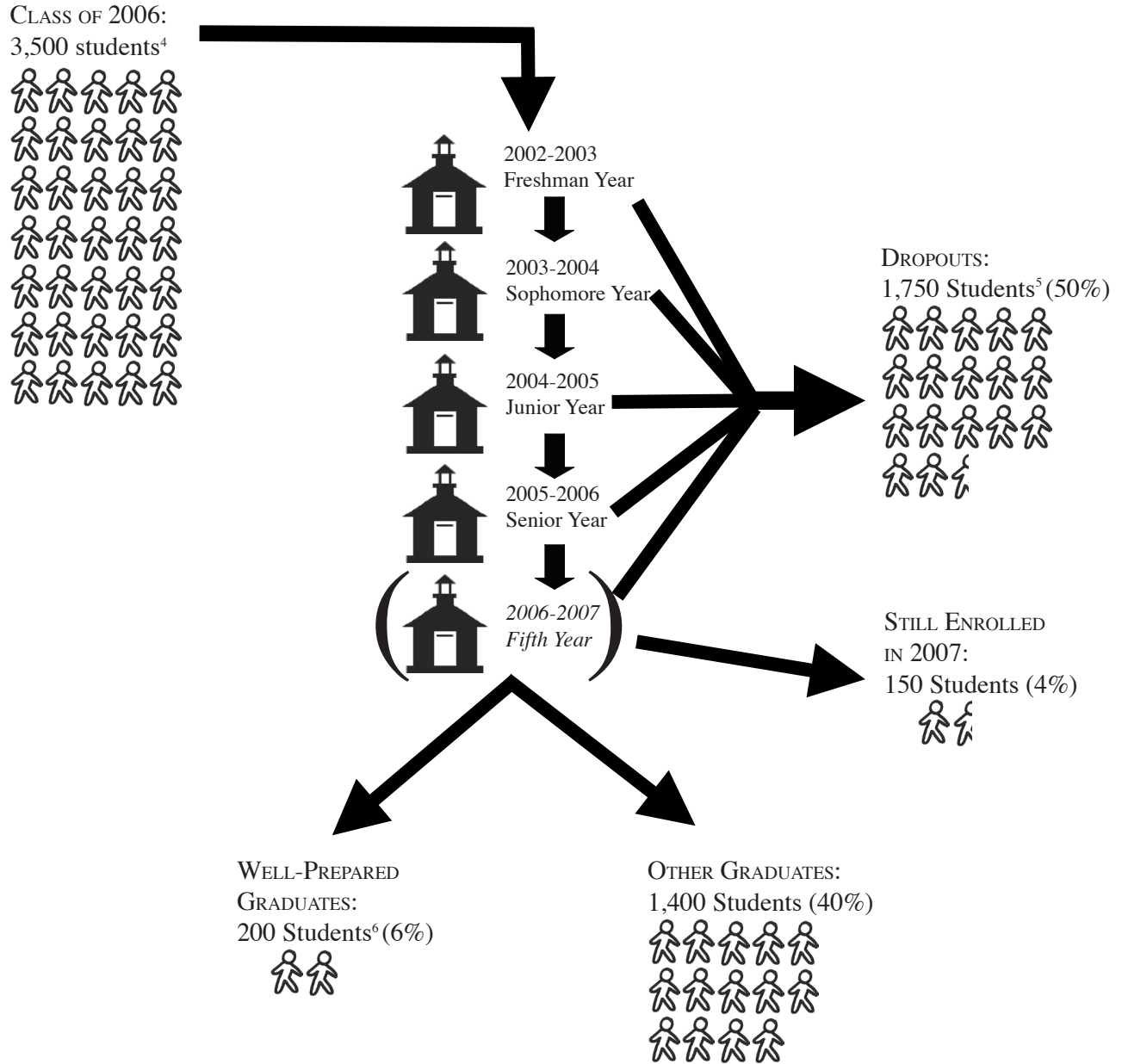
Percent of Principals Receiving “Exceeds Standards,” “Meets Standards,” and “Does Not Meet Standards” Ratings from Area Instructional Officers—2005-2006



NOTE: Area totals may not add up to 100% due to several schools for which data was “Not Available.”

TABLE 3.
Class of 2006¹
Numbers² of Well-Prepared Graduates, Other Graduates, and Dropouts in
CPS High Schools Where Central Board Named the Principal³

 = 100 Students



¹Data indicates student status five years after the entry of the class of 2006 into high school.

²Rounded to the nearest fifty students.

³Complete data not available for: AASTA, Du Sable, EXCEL, School of Technology, School of the Arts, or Mose Vines. This analysis includes data from the 14 remaining Board-controlled schools: Bowen Environmental, Carver Military, Chicago Discovery, Englewood, Fenger, Gage Park, Harlan, Harper, Kelvyn Park, Marshall, Phillips, Robeson, School of Entrepreneurship, and School of Leadership. Thus 3500 freshman from 14 schools are included. The approximate freshman enrollment for the six schools not included, was about 750 students based on enrollment data at these schools from other years.

⁴Number of students does not include students who were repeating 9th grade in 2002, or students who transferred out of CPS before 2007 and were verified as enrolled in another regular high school.

⁵Dropouts do not include verified transfers out of CPS or students who were still enrolled in CPS for a sixth year (in 2007-2008).

⁶"Well-prepared graduates" is the total number of students from this cohort who met or exceeded State standards on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) in their junior year (2005).

TABLE 4. Principal Leadership, Prairie State Achievement Examination Results, and Graduation Rates for High Schools in Which the Central Board Assumed Principal Selection Control

School Name	Enrollment Fall 2007	Current Principal	Beg. Date	Previous Principal	Beg. Date	End Date	Notes	Reconstituted (1997)
AASTA HS	488	Collins-Ayanlaja, Carole	Summer 04	n/a	n/a	n/a	Small School at Orr, Opened 2003	R (Orr)
BOWEN ENVIRONMENTAL	317	Woods, Jo	Summer 04	n/a	n/a	n/a	Small School at Bowen, Opened 2003	
CARVER MILITARY HS	495	Thomas, John	Summer 04	Johnson, William	Spring 02	Summer 04		
CHICAGO DISCOVERY HS	391	Farr, Kathy	n/a	Nuzzo, Lynne	Summer 04	n/a	Small School at Bowen, Opened 2003	
DUSABLE HS	n/a	CLOSED	n/a	Briggs, Carol	Fall 02	Fall 05	Closed Fall 2003	R
ENGLEWOOD HS	161	Kizer-Balfour, Deborah	Summer 07	Jackson, Diane	Summer 01	Summer 07	Closed June 2008	R
EXCEL HS	431	Whaley-Anobah, Marva	Summer 04	n/a	n/a	n/a	Small School at Orr, Opened 2003	R (Orr)
FENGER ACADEMY HIGH	1189	Johnson, William	Summer 04	Hodges, Phyllis	n/a	Fall 04		
GAGE PARK HS	1591	Andrews, Anita	Summer 06	McGreal, Martin	n/a	Summer 06		
HARLAN HS	1415	Evans, Reginald	Summer 06	Hill, Gertrude	n/a	Fall 06		
HARPER HS	1258	Butler-Stansberry, Kenyatta	Summer 07	Gibbs, Ronney	Summer 03	Summer 07		R
KELVYN PARK HS	1559	Fontanez, Sandra	Summer 02	n/a	n/a	n/a		
MARSHALL HS	1270	Gardner, Juan	Summer 06	n/a	n/a	n/a		
PHILLIPS HS	800	Burton, Euel	n/a	Buchanan, Bertha	n/a	Summer 04		R
ROBESON HS	187	n/a	Summer 07	Breashears, James	Summer 97	Summer 07		R
SCHOOL OF ENTRP HS	513	Edwards, Everett	Winter 07	Gerstein, William	Summer 01	Winter 07	Small School at South Shore, Opened 2003	
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP	441	Lewis, Jewel	Summer 07	Patrick, James	Summer 03	Summer 07	Small School at South Shore, Opened 2003	
SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY	466	Redden Thomas, Krystal	Summer 07	Johnson, Therese	Spring 06	Summer 07	Small School at South Shore, Opened 2003	
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS H	464	Maclin, Douglas	Fall 01	n/a	n/a	n/a	Small School at South Shore, Opened 2003	
VINES HS	456	Woodson, Patricia	Summer 04	n/a	n/a	n/a	Small School at Orr, Opened 2003	R (Orr)

School Name	PSAE Reading										PSAE Math										5-Year Cohort Grad Rates									
	% Meet/Exceed										% Meet/Exceed																			
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007							
AASTA HS	20	15	15	7	4	4							
BOWEN ENVIRONMENTAL	34	17	23	5	9	7							
CARVER MILITARY HS	15	14	14	10	21	18	12	7	4	7	12	6	5	5	5	30	42	38	41	53	53	49								
CHICAGO DISCOVERY HS	.	.	20	27	27	22	15	.	.	24	24	19	12	10								
DUSABLE HS	12	6	23	14	17	.	.	8	4	11	4	1	.	.	.	41	29	32	35	46	40	48								
ENGLEWOOD HS	17	15	17	11	16	12	8	0	4	5	4	2	4	3	29	31	31	33	33	40	40	40								
EXCEL HS	.	.	.	.	32	17	20	.	.	.	.	.	.	7	10	7						
FENGER ACADEMY HIGH	11	12	14	13	15	18	9	3	5	8	7	3	9	4	41	32	38	40	34	35	33	33								
GAGE PARK HS	16	19	14	19	18	10	16	5	9	8	6	4	11	13	45	46	49	51	51	47	48	48								
HARLAN HS	12	16	14	20	25	20	20	4	5	9	14	5	7	8	38	35	46	43	48	44	60	60								
HARPER HS	9	9	14	11	17	8	8	2	5	1	2	1	2	2	25	29	36	33	38	37	33	33								
KELVYN PARK HS	17	16	15	13	18	15	16	6	5	3	7	7	10	12	39	45	45	45	46	52	51	61								
MARSHALL HS	12	11	9	9	15	13	7	3	3	4	3	5	4	2	36	37	43	47	43	41	40	40								
PHILLIPS HS	15	13	9	17	18	10	13	4	4	4	4	4	6	10	30	28	31	39	52	47	49	49								
ROBESON HS	11	9	7	13	14	8	5	6	3	4	5	5	5	2	25	35	33	35	39	34	40	40								
SCHOOL OF ENTRP HS	.	.	14	23	22	17	.	.	.	.	4	5	8	10	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	43
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP	.	.	13	30	14	14	.	.	.	.	3	3	2	0								
SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY	.	.	.	.	18	15	.	.	.	.	.	.	5	6								
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS H	.	.	13	.	14	14	6	.	.	3	.	3	6	8	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	47	
VINES HS	.	.	12	20	21	14	.	.	.	.	4	3	9	4								
MEAN	14	14	13	14	19	14	12	4	5	6	7	5	7	6	34	36	40	41	44	43	46	46								
MEDIAN	12	13	14	13	18	15	14	4	4	5	4	5	6	6	36	35	38	40	46	41	48	48								



Picking principals? Chicago doesn't know how, group says

BY ROSALIND ROSSI

Education Reporter

Chicago Public School officials have an "abysmal" record at picking principals to invigorate ailing high schools, especially at 20 such schools where reading and math scores sank or showed little progress, a school reform group charged Monday.

"I would give them an F," Donald Moore, executive director of Designs for Change, said of CPS' success at picking principals in challenging schools.

In 2007, the Designs for Change study indicated, only 4.7 percent to 22.7 percent of students in the 20 high schools in which CPS controlled principal selection passed state reading tests. Zero to 12.8 percent passed state math tests.

At Marshall High, for example, CPS handpicked a new principal and gave an experienced principal a signing bonus to mentor him, yet state reading scores fell from 12.7 percent passing to 7.0 percent.

CPS high school chief David Gilligan said junior-year state test scores may not tell the entire story. CPS only takes over principal selection from local school

councils when a school has chronic problems. Freshman measuring sticks, violence data and other school-wide indicators may be a fairer measure, he said.

The study also charged that only 2 percent of Chicago high school principals were given unsatisfactory ratings by their supervisors in 2006, even though 85 percent of their schools failed to meet state progress targets. Gilligan said several of those supervisors have since retired, and the principal rating system considers things the state progress target doesn't.

Also Monday, members of the City Council Education Committee pounced on School Board President Ru-

fus Williams and CPS for keeping aldermen out of the loop during important decisions about schools in their wards.

"You have taken it upon yourself to be the king," said Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th), who blasted CPS plans to use tax increment financing money from her ward to build a school in another ward.

"Are our opinions valued? Because it seems you do what you want to do," said Ald. Isaac Carothers (29th), who said he received a one-day notice of school boundary changes in his ward.

Williams assured aldermen he would work on keeping them informed.

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