

# Comment

Prepared by  
Donald R. Moore, Ed.D., Executive Director  
Designs for Change

**Comments on:** Jenny Nagaoka and Melissa Roderick (2004, March). *Ending Social Promotion in Chicago: The Effects of Retention*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Elaine Allensworth (2004, March). *Ending Social Promotion: Dropout Rates in Chicago after Implementation of the Eighth-Grade Promotion Gate*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

The two studies discussed in this Comment assess the impact of Chicago’s nationally-watched grade retention program on (1) student achievement on the Iowa Reading Test and (2) student dropout rates.

In this Comment, I highlight and analyze some key findings from the two studies and discuss their policy implications for Chicago and other school districts. This comment also draws on previous analyses of grade retention in Chicago that have been carried out by the Consortium on Chicago School Research and by Designs for Change.

## The Chicago Grade Retention Program: A Brief Overview

In the 1996-97 school year, Chicago initiated a massive effort to improve student achievement on standardized tests through the use of retention (requiring students to repeat a grade) and the threat of retention. In third, sixth, and eighth grades, students who failed to achieve a minimum test score in spring 1997 on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in either reading or math or both were required to attend summer school (the Summer Bridge program). At the end of summer school, students again took the Iowa Test in reading and math. If they still did not achieve the minimum test score in the subject or subjects they had failed in the spring, they were required to repeat their grade (that is, they were “retained” or “flunked”) — unless they received a “waiver” from the central administration.

The Chicago policy was intended to have an impact not only on the retained students, but also on other students who would, it was hoped, work harder to avoid going to summer school or (if they were sent to summer school) to avoid having to repeat a grade. Further, the retention/promotion policy generally discouraged “social promotion” at all grades, and evidence presented below indicates that retention typically doubled at the grades for which a formal test-based promotion standard was not established (i.e. grades K, 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7).

The heart of the policy was the common sense notion that if low-achieving students were given extra instruction through participating in summer school and repeating the grade that they had “failed,” they would “catch up” and be prepared to succeed in the rest of their school experience. As a result, students would not only achieve better, but also be less likely to drop out later on.

## **Who Has Been Retained?**

Based on a Designs for Change analysis of the racial composition of those students who were retained in September 1997, 4% of white students were retained, 18% of African American students were retained, and 11% of Hispanic students were retained.<sup>1</sup> Thus, an African American student was more than four times more likely to be retained than a white student, while an Hispanic student was nearly three times as likely to be retained as a white student.

Nagaoka and Roderick conclude that higher rates of retention for specific racial and ethnic groups result from their lower achievement test scores.<sup>2</sup> Of course, if singling out students of color for grade retention based on their test scores benefits them, these racial disproportions are not problematic. However, if the impact of retention is harmful, racial disparities raise significant civil rights concerns.

Designs for Change previously presented evidence that retained students were heavily concentrated in those Chicago elementary schools serving the highest concentrations of low-income students.<sup>3</sup> Of the 100 elementary schools that retained the highest percentage of students in 1997, 84 of them were 90% or more low-income, and 14 of them were 80% to 89% low-income. Adding to this picture of concentrated retention in the schools with extremely high poverty rates, Nagaoka and Roderick found that fifty percent of retained third graders in 1998 were retained in 100 Chicago elementary schools and nearly two-thirds were retained in 150 elementary schools.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, retention is disproportionately concentrated in those elementary schools that serve almost entirely students of color, have extremely high concentrations of poverty, and have long-term patterns of low achievement. These are also schools with chronic teacher shortages and high rates of teacher turnover.

## Consistently Negative Past Research Findings about Retention's Impact

The grade retention strategy has been tried repeatedly over the past several decades, and extensive research has been carried out about the impact of grade retention on the students who are held back.<sup>5</sup> As a previous Consortium study has stated, this research indicates that:

- Retained students do not achieve any better, after a few years, than similar low-achieving students who are not retained.<sup>6</sup>
- Retained students are much more likely to drop out later on than similar low-achieving students who are not retained.<sup>7</sup>

These results have held true, according to past research, even when the retained students were given substantial special help in summer school and during the year of their retention. In the early 1980s, for example, New York City initiated a massive retention program (called Promotion Gates), which bears a striking resemblance to the retention program now being carried out in Chicago.<sup>8</sup> Students who failed to achieve a minimum test score at grades four and seven were required to attend summer school. If they still didn't reach the minimum test score by the end of summer school, they were required to repeat their grade.

Most significant, the New York City school system made a major commitment to teach the retained students differently and more effectively. New York reduced class size to 18 or less for the retained students (at a time when the average class size was 43), hired 1,100 new teachers, and prepared teachers to use four methods of instruction that the school system judged were effective in teaching low-achieving students.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, the New York City evaluation showed the same results as other evaluations of retention: no long-term improvements in student achievement for retained students and a higher dropout rate later on.<sup>□</sup> Professor Ernest House, who served as the main auditor for an evaluation of the New York City Promotion Gates program, was asked to review the structure of the Chicago retention program and compare it with New York City's program in 1998. He labeled the Chicago grade retention program a "predictable failure" and commented that:

Research about the negative effects of retention is so overwhelming that Chicago's student retention program should never have been carried out...there is nothing unique about the Chicago retention program that suggests that the ultimate results will be any different in Chicago.<sup>10</sup>

One of the reasons that retention has a negative impact is that young people view retention as an extremely stressful event. In a series of studies that asked students to rate 20 potentially stressful events in their lives, Yamamoto found that only "losing my

mother or father” or “going blind” were rated as more stressful than “being kept in the same grade next year.”<sup>11</sup>

Researchers who have studied retention also raised two further objections to the type of program that Chicago began to carry out at grades three, six, and eight in 1997:

- First, using test scores as the primary basis for making promotion decisions is invalid, because the wide margin of error in a single test score for an individual student means that many students will be misclassified.<sup>12</sup>
- Second, when scores on a particular test become the primary basis for determining whether students will be promoted, the school curriculum comes more and more to focus on drilling students to prepare for the particular types of questions and the particular format of the questions that appear on that specific test.<sup>13</sup> Yet there is evidence that such narrow test preparation for a particular test (like the Iowa Test that is used in Chicago) does not translate into better achievement on a somewhat different test that focuses on the same general area of skills and knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

For these reasons, many educators and researchers expressed opposition to Chicago’s effort to “end social promotion” when it was launched, arguing that there were better alternatives for raising student achievement.<sup>15</sup> However, school officials discounted the negative research about retention and high stakes testing, and asserted that the Chicago retention initiative was different from previous retention efforts. As one reporter observed in August 1997, “Some experts say Chicago’s promotion policy — with its multi-layered safety nets — is a whole new animal.”<sup>16</sup>

The core of the Chicago retention program described above has been carried out from the 1996-1997 to the present. As detailed by Nagaoka and Roderick, some changes have been implemented over time with respect to the cutoff scores needed for promotion, the extent to which waivers have been granted to students who did not meet the cutoffs, the extent to which other factors besides test scores have been taken into account in deciding whether students will be retained, and the nature of supportive services offered to retained students.<sup>17</sup>

## **The Growth of Chicago Retention Over Time**

In summer 1995, only 1,624 students were retained in grades 3, 6, and 8.<sup>18</sup> By 1997, 9,908 students were being retained (about a six-fold increase).<sup>19</sup> By summer 2000 and 2001, the number of retentions dropped, compared with the previous three years. However, in summer 2002 and 2003, the numbers of retentions increased dramatically again. Approximately 12,000 students were retained at grades 3, 6, and 8 in 2002, the highest percentage of students retained at these grades since the retention policy started.<sup>20</sup> If the school system had not decided to provide waivers for students who did not meet the

math cutoff at the end of the 2003 summer school, the number of students retained in summer 2003 would have increased yet again, compared with 2002.<sup>21</sup>

Further, the number of students who were retained at each of the non-promotion gates grades roughly doubled from 1997 on (compared with summer 1995), even though there were no specific systemwide standards for promotion at these grades.<sup>22</sup>

## **The Cost of Grade Retention**

Grade retention is an enormously expensive policy. For each year that a student is retained, the school district is taking on the obligation to provide that student with an extra year of schooling. The additional cost of a year of schooling in Chicago is currently \$8,400. Of course, some students will transfer out of Chicago or drop out without completing this extra year. However, if even two-thirds of the nearly 19,000 Chicago elementary school students retained in summer 2002 eventually participate in an extra year of schooling, the additional cost to the school district for an extra year of schooling will be more than \$100 million over time.

In addition, Chicago has committed substantial additional funds to its retention program in the form of summer school, after-school programs during the regular school year, and other services for retained students.

As discussed below, one of the critical policy issues in thinking about grade retention is the need to envision other alternatives besides retention or social promotion, and to analyze how the substantial costs of retention can be invested more productively so that low-achieving students actually learn, rather than simply drifting through school as a result of social promotion.

## **The Impact of Chicago's Retention Program on Student Achievement**

### **Impact on Retained Students**

Results for the 1998 cohort of retained students (reported in an earlier Consortium study) illustrate the fact that retained students continued to struggle academically after they were retained:

- Only 53% of the 1998 cohort of retained third graders met the minimum promotion standard, even after attending summer school, repeating a grade, and often attending summer school again.
- Only 55% of retained sixth graders met the minimum promotion standard, even after attending summer school, repeating a grade, and often attending summer school again.

- Only 38% of retained eighth graders met the minimum promotion standard, even after attending summer school, repeating a grade, and often attending summer school again.<sup>23</sup>

Further, retained students were placed in special education at very high rates:

“Approximately 7 to 12 percent of retained third graders and 9 to 12 percent of retained sixth graders were placed in special education during their retained year...retained students were placed in special education at nearly five times the rate of the average third grader and nearly seven times the rate of the average sixth grader...Retained students, particularly those who did not meet the cutoff at the end of their retained year, continued to face high rates of special education placement. Two years after their initial retention, between 17 and 20 percent of retained third and sixth graders had been placed in special education...within two years after retention, retained students were placed in special education at three times the rate in third grade and six times the rate in sixth grade of other post-policy low achieving students who had narrowly missed being retained as well as pre-policy low-achieving students.”<sup>24</sup>

A substantial portion of the paper by Nagoaka and Roderick focuses on applying three models to assess the achievement of retained students when judged against the achievement of three different comparison groups. For example, the researchers compared the achievement of students who were just above and just below the cutoff score on the Iowa Reading Test standard that was set for promotion. While these three models produced some modest differences in results, the basic pattern of the findings from all three models was consistent:

- “...in third grade, we find little evidence that students who were retained did better than their low-achieving counterparts who were promoted.”<sup>25</sup>
- “In the sixth grade, the question is how much did retention hurt? In all three models, we find that retention...was associated with a negative growth in achievement, with that effect being larger two years after the gate grade.”<sup>26</sup>
- “Students who were double-retained and those who were placed in special education after retention by virtue of that status were struggling in the year after retention...it is clear that neither placement in special education nor a third year in the same grade were effective educational strategies...Consistent with other research, there is little evidence that these students benefited academically from being placed in special education.”<sup>27</sup>

One final step that the researchers took was to examine the “achievement gap” (difference from the average test score for all the students in their “cohort”) for three groups of students: (1) students who had very low test scores at the end of Summer Bridge (very low-achieving), (2) students who were just-below the reading test-score cutoff for promotion, and (3) students who were just-above the test score cutoff for

promotion. The researchers reached the following conclusions about these three groups of students:

- “Low-achieving students in all groups started school substantially behind their classmates and had fallen further behind before the promotional gate. Neither promotion nor retention led to a significant closing of this achievement gap for those who had low but not the lowest tests scores.”
- “Students who were the lowest achievers in the school system (the majority of whom were retained) experienced a deterioration in their relative performance after retention.”<sup>28</sup>

One point that this finding underscores is that both retention and social promotion left these three groups of low-achieving students far below acceptable achievement levels that would facilitate these students’ subsequent academic success.

The authors conclude this analysis by stating in part:

In this report, we focused on the question: Did retaining these low achieving students help? The answer to this question is definitively no... We hope that the evidence presented in this report will spur debate both in Chicago and nationally over alternatives to social promotion and retention, as well as to more broadly identifying and managing the needs of low achieving students who are persistently struggling... If an expensive policy is simply not working, as concluded in this report, it would make little sense to invest more money in it rather than to redirect that money toward alternatives.<sup>29</sup> [Emphasis added]

## **Motivational Benefits of the “Threat of Retention” for Students Systemwide**

A group of students who might potentially benefit from Chicago’s grade retention program are students who were motivated to work harder during the regular school year in order to avoid having to attend Summer Bridge and to avoid being retained. What is the evidence about the motivational power of the “threat of retention”?

In the first three years under the promotion policy (1997, 1998, and 1999), the percentage of students citywide who achieved the cutoff score for promotion increased markedly (compared with 1995).<sup>30</sup> However, a National Research Council review of Chicago’s retention program “concluded that Chicago’s regular year and summer school curricula were so closely geared to the ITBS that it was impossible to distinguish between real subject mastery and mastery of skills and knowledge useful for passing this particular test.”<sup>31</sup>

The most credible evidence about long-term trends in test achievement in Chicago comes from an annual analysis of Iowa Test Trends, prepared by the Consortium on Chicago School Research.<sup>32</sup> The Consortium researcher explains that:

We report test scores by students' ages rather than grades to control for the impact of the retention policy adopted by the system in the 1995-96 school year. In the most recent years, classes have a larger percentage of students who were retained for one or more years, especially in the third, sixth, and eighth grades. Because retained students have been in school longer than other students in the same grade, tracking students by age allows us to compare groups of students who have received the same years of schooling over time.<sup>33</sup>

Applying this approach in the last year for which the Consortium has thus far published this annual test trend review (based on spring 1991 test results), Rosenkranz concludes the following:

The ITBS test results reported here are generally consistent with patterns noted in the Consortium's 1999 and 2000 test trend reviews. Beginning with the 1999 report, we raised a concern about possible stagnation in productivity improvements in Chicago elementary schools. Data for 2001 allow us to more firmly conclude that this is in fact the case. While the gain scores indicate that CPS made improvements in student learning throughout much of the 1990s, the improvements stalled after 1997. There is no evidence of significant productivity growth in elementary schools since that time.<sup>34</sup>

Still another disquieting piece of evidence concerning the "threat of retention" hypothesis is that the number of retained students in grades three, six, and eight increased dramatically in 2002 and 2003 (as discussed earlier). If students who failed to meet the math cutoff in summer 2003 had not received waivers, the number of students retained would have reached an all-time high.<sup>35</sup> The increasing number of retentions in the past two years contradicts the hypothesis that Chicago student achievement for low-achieving students is being boosted by the threat of retention.

Finally, the strategy of using the threat of retention to motivate students raises significant ethical concerns. If the Consortium's research had shown that retained students benefited from retention, the "threat of retention" might be considered a legitimate public policy tool for improving student achievement. Yet even if some students who pass the test cutoff scores are being motivated by the threat of retention, the negative impact of retention underscored by the Nagaoka and Roderick study raises severe ethical concerns about using the threat of retention as a motivator. It is unethical to use 11,000 retained students as "sacrificial lambs" to motivate others students to pass tests. Consideration of a similar approach that might be applied in the medical treatment of children clearly indicates that this approach is unconscionable.

## **The Impact of Retention on the Dropout Rate**

The second study on which this Comment focuses is Allensworth's analysis of the impact of Chicago grade retention on the dropout rate.<sup>36</sup> Based on the original concerns of critics of the Chicago retention initiative, the most critical issue that needed investigation was

whether grade retention increased the dropout rate for retained students, as it had as a result of New York City’s Promotion Gates program.

In Allensworth’s study, she presents critical evidence about this key issue, but this evidence is often difficult to find in the text, because the study is organized around the issue of how the dropout rate for all students changed from the early 1990s to the present.

## **The Impact of Retention on Dropping Out for Retained Students**

It is well established that there is a strong correlation between grade retention and dropping out. (Being “overage for grade” is frequently used as a proxy for grade retention). However, low achievement is a second factor that is highly correlated with dropping out. Thus, one plausible line of argument is that retention is simply a consequence of low achievement and other student attributes, and that there is no independent contribution of being retained to the likelihood of dropping out.

To disentangle the relationship between achievement and dropping out, several researchers who studied dropout rates in the Chicago Public Schools in the 1980s examined, in various ways, the likelihood that students with similar achievement test results would drop out, to see whether being retained had an independent impact. These researchers concluded that retained students had a significantly higher likelihood of dropping out, even if they had substantially higher levels of achievement than students who had not been retained. For example, Rice, et al. found that the dropout rate was 37% for normal-age students with 7.1 to 8.0 Grade Equivalent scores on the Iowa Test, while the dropout rate was 55% for an overage student with the same level of test achievement.<sup>37</sup>

To gain an accurate assessment of the impact of retention under Chicago’s systemwide retention policy, Allensworth focused on analyzing the impact of retention as a result of the implementation of the eighth grade promotion gate. She followed three cohorts of students from age 13 to 19 who were not subject to the eighth grade promotion gate, and four cohorts who were subject to the eighth grade promotion gate after the policy was put in place. (Two of the four post-policy cohorts were only followed through age 17.)<sup>38</sup>

After controlling for other variables (such as student achievement), she concludes that:

Modeling dropout rates by age 19, without the last two postpolicy cohorts, produces an estimate that the dropout rates among students retained by the [eighth grade] promotional gate were 13 percentage points higher than among similar non-retained students — 57%, compared to 44 percent, which is a 29 percent increase in the likelihood of dropping out.” [i.e. 13 percent divided by 44 percent equals 29 percent].<sup>39</sup>

In other words, nearly 60% of students retained at Chicago’s eighth grade promotion gate dropped out. Thus, Allensworth confirms the pattern that has been reported with respect to other test-based grade retention initiatives in New York City and in Chicago in the

1980s.<sup>40</sup> Chicago's grade retention program has substantially increased the dropout rate for those students who were retained at the eighth grade promotion gate.

Allensworth also analyzed the dropout rates for those students who were already overage for their grade at age 13 (the age when they would normally be in eighth grade) and were then either retained in eighth grade or sent to a transition center. Thus, these students were retained more than once. She concludes that "By 19, 78 percent of the students old-for-grade at age 13 who were retained by the [eighth grade] promotion gate had dropped out of school."<sup>41</sup>

This finding is particularly alarming because the number of students retained in every elementary grade has dramatically increased since 1997 (as discussed earlier). Thus, the number of students who have been retained more than once before reaching high school has been rapidly escalating since 1997. Further, as Nagaoka and Roderick's study indicates, retained students typically make poor academic progress and are at risk of being retained again. A continuation of the school system's current promotion policy, which leads to about 10,000 new retentions each year, will ensure that this multiple-retention problem continues.

## **The Impact of Retention on the Overall Dropout Rate**

Allensworth documents a slight overall improvement in the systemwide dropout rate after the retention policy was implemented, which she credits primarily to the fact that the achievement levels of elementary school students entering high school substantially improved during the 1990s. However, she cites multiple possible causes for this increased student achievement (ranging from the eighth grade promotion gate to the long-term pattern of improved elementary achievement throughout the 1990s documented by Rosencranz<sup>42</sup>). She indicates that the study did not attempt to disentangle these possible causes.<sup>43</sup> To the extent that the threat of retention caused students to improve their achievement and thus stay in school, any benefit of this threat of retention comes at the cost of making "sacrificial lambs" of the vulnerable students who dropped out because of the promotion gate.

Allensworth concludes that:

While the overall dropout rates decreased with the promotion gate, the gate had adverse effects on the most vulnerable students and, at best, only modest beneficial effects on other students' likelihood of completing high school. This is not strong support for the policy.<sup>44</sup>

## **Key Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Predictable Failure**

In November 1998, Professor Ernest House called Chicago's retention program a "predictable failure" and concluded that it would lead to the same damaging outcomes for

Chicago's students that had occurred as a result of other large-scale retention programs: a lack of long-term achievement gains for retained students and substantially higher dropout rates later on. The two research studies released today confirm that both these results have taken place in Chicago:

- Retained students are doing no better and often worse than students who were simply socially promoted and got no systematic additional help. Retained students are much more likely than other low-achieving students to end up in special education, where their achievement does not improve.
- Students who failed to pass the eighth grade promotion gate increased their chances of dropping out from a 44% dropout rate to a 57% dropout rate. Further, students who had previously repeated a grade and then failed the eighth grade promotion gate dropped out at the rate of 78%.
- Both retention and social promotion left low-achieving students far below the levels of academic achievement that they needed to succeed in school.

The authors of both studies conclude that their research does not support the continuation of the retention policy. Nagaoka and Roderick state this conclusion most bluntly: "If an expensive policy is simply not working, as concluded in this report, it would make little sense to invest more money in it rather than to redirect that money toward alternatives."

## **Looking Beyond the Twin Failures of Retention and Social Promotion**

In defending the Chicago school system's current policy, Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan constantly asserts that anyone who is in favor of replacing the current grade retention policy is in favor of returning to "social promotion."

However, Designs for Change and many others have recommended ways in which money that is now being wasted on retention can be redirected to research-based alternatives to both retention and social promotion, such as improving the effectiveness of schools during the regular school day, early individualized intervention with students who have learning problems, and, as a last resort, promoting students but giving them intensive special help, rather than retaining them.<sup>45</sup>

## **A Real Change in Chicago's Retention Policy**

The latest revision in Chicago's retention policy has two basic defects:

- The revised policy will still result in approximately 10,000 of the city's most vulnerable students being retained each year. The research released today indicates that these students face a predictable pathway to failure: no academic improvement and an increased likelihood of dropping out. A meaningful revision

of the retention policy should cut the number of retentions back to 1995 levels (when 1,600 students were retained at grades 3, 6, and 8).

- The revised policy pays lip-service to a number of desirable reforms, but contains no credible plan for implementing them. For example, the school system is being threatened with receivership for the ineptness of its special education program (for which it has hundreds of millions of dollars available). However, the new promotion policy promises “individualized personal learning plans” for low achieving students that resemble the individualized educational plans of special education students. However, Chicago has not allocated significant additional funding to implement this process and has no clear implementation plan. Only a radical cutback in the number of students retained will begin to free up the funds that will allow such empty words to be transformed into action.

## **Other Cities Should Not Repeat Chicago’s Costly Mistake**

The Consortium studies of the impact of Chicago’s grade retention program add to a consistent body of research that documents the fact that grade retention harms, rather than helps, vulnerable students. Other school districts should invest in alternatives to both retention and social promotion and should not repeat Chicago’s costly mistake.

## **NOTES**

---

<sup>1</sup> Donald R. Moore (2000, April). *Chicago’s grade retention program fails to help retained students: Better alternatives exist to Chicago’s costly mistake*. Chicago: Designs for Change., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Nagaoka and Melissa Roderick (2004, March). *Ending Social Promotion: The Effects of Retention*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Moore (2000, April), p. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> Nagaoka and Roderick (2004, March), p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Lorrie A. Shepard and Mary Lee Smith, eds. (1989). *Flunking grades*. London: Falmer Press; Jay Heubert and Robert Hauser, eds. (1999). *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington: National Academy Press; Stuart Luppescu, Anthony S. Bryk, John Q. Easton, and Yeow Meng Thum (1995). *School reform, retention policy, and student achievement gains*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>7</sup> Shepard and Smith (1989); Melissa Roderick (1994). Grade Retention and school dropout: Investigating the association. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(4), 729-759; Melissa Roderick (1993). *The path to dropping out: Evidence for intervention*. Westport, CN: Auburn House.

<sup>8</sup> Ernest R. House (1998, November). *The predictable failure of Chicago's student retention program*. Paper presented at the Conference on Rethinking Retention to Help All Students Succeed. Chicago. (Available at [www.designsforchange.org](http://www.designsforchange.org))

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Kaoru Yamamoto (1979). Children's ratings of the stressfulness of experience. *Developmental Psychology*, 15: 581-582. In a second U.S. study by Yamamoto and her colleagues that employed the same methodology, "hearing my parents quarrel and fight" ranked third behind "losing my mother or father" and "going blind," while "being kept in the same grade next year" ranked as the fourth most stressful event. See Karou Yamamoto and D.A. Byrnes (1984). Classroom social status, ethnicity and ratings of stressful events. *Journal of Educational Research*, 77: 283-286.

<sup>12</sup> Heubert and Hauser (1999), pp. 124-127.

<sup>13</sup> BettsAnn Smith (1988, December). *It's about time: Opportunities to learn in Chicago's public schools*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel M. Koretz et al. (1991). The effects of high stakes testing on achievement: Preliminary findings about generalizations across tests. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, April 3-7); House (1998, November), p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Designs for Change (1998, November). *Rethinking retention to help all students succeed: A resource guide*. Chicago: Designs for Change.

<sup>16</sup> Rosalind Rossi (1997, August 25). Holding students back: Pass or fail? *Chicago Sun-Times*. pp. 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> Nagaoka and Roderick (2004, March), pp. 13-15.

<sup>18</sup> Donald R. Moore (2000, September). *New data about Chicago's grade retention program provides further proof that neither retention or social promotion works*. Chicago: Author, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Nagaoka and Roderick (2004, March), p. 18.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Rosalind Rossi (2004, March 25). Chicago schools back off policy requiring students to pass math. *Chicago Sun-Times*. pp. 24.

<sup>22</sup> Donald R. Moore (2000, September), p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Melissa Roderick, et al. (2000, September). *Update: Ending social promotion*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Nagaoka and Roderick (2004, March), pp. 25-27.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-53.

<sup>30</sup> Melissa Roderick, et al. (2000, September). p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Heubert and Hauser (1999), p. 132.

<sup>32</sup> Todd Rosencranz (2002, June). *2001 CPS test trend review: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Rossi (2004, March 25).

<sup>36</sup> Elaine Allensworth (2004, April). *Ending social promotion: Dropout rates in Chicago after implementation of the eighth-grade promotion gate*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>37</sup> James B. Griffin and Lorrie A. Shepard (1989). Repeating and dropping out of school. In Lorrie A. Shepard and Mary Lee Smith, eds. *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention*. London, Falmer Press, pp. 35-63.

<sup>38</sup> Allensworth (2004, April), pp. 4-6.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Grant Pick (1998, April). Strict retention comes, goes; LA, NYC wary. *Catalyst*: IX, 7, pp. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup> Allensworth (2004, April), p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Rosencranz (2002, June).

<sup>43</sup> Allensworth (2004, April 2004), pp. 9-13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Designs for Change (1998, November). *Rethinking retention to help all students succeed: A resource guide*. Chicago: Author.