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**For Immediate Release**

**Chicago Test Score Research Shows That  
School-Level Initiative, Not Top-Down Control,  
Leads to Greater Iowa Reading Test Gains**

CHICAGO, February 21, 2001 — A new study of Chicago Iowa Reading Test results, released today by Designs for Change, indicates that the high poverty schools that have made large consistent reading test score gains over the last decade are those schools with local initiative, leadership, teamwork, and creativity.

“These schools can point the way towards reaching Mayor Daley’s goal of teaching Chicago’s children to read,” said Dr. Donald Moore, Executive Director of Designs for Change.

Designs for Change had previously released a study that identified a group of 82 elementary schools that were low-achieving in 1990, but made substantial consistent gains on the Iowa Reading Test through 1997. These schools increased on the average from 23% of students at or above the national average in 1990 to 38% by 1997.

“What is extremely encouraging,” said Moore, “is that these schools have continued to improve their achievement, and now have nearly reached the national average of 50%. In spring 2000, these schools had 46% of their students at or above the national average. Furthermore, teacher and student survey data collected by the Consortium on Chicago School Research has enabled us to identify distinctive practices of these substantially improved schools.”

The Designs for Change analysis also refutes the recent claim by school system leaders that “the probationary schools, the schools where we intervene and go in and dictate models, are the ones making the most significant gains.” This

claim has been the basis for central administration plans to intervene in the 200 lowest-achieving schools.

The DFC study looked especially at the 82 elementary schools placed on probation in fall 1996 and 1997 and concluded that:

- These probation schools, in which the central office dictated curriculum, still had 79% of their students reading below the national average in spring 2000.
- Probation schools gained about the same between 1995 and 2000 as other low-achieving schools that were not placed on probation (about 11%).
- If school system leaders now dictate the curriculum in the 200 elementary schools that had the lowest Iowa reading tests in spring 2000, 76 of the 82 elementary schools that were placed on probation in 1996 and 1997 will be on this list of sanctioned schools.

“The previous probation strategy can hardly serve as a model for helping schools to teach all children to read,” Moore said. “A much more promising strategy is to draw on the research about the distinctive practices of inner city elementary schools that made steady substantial test score progress from 1990 to 2000.”

The Designs for Change research compared the practices of these “Substantially Up Schools” to other schools that were low-achieving but showed no trend of test score improvement from 1990 to 1997. Statistically significant differences were found between 14 practices of the Substantially Up Schools and the No Trend Schools, based on teacher and student survey data collected by the Consortium on Chicago School Research in 1994.

Key differences fell under Five Essential Supports for Student Learning:

- School Leadership. Substantially Up Schools had significantly more effective Local School Councils (as rated by teachers), principals who were instructional leaders and closely supervised the change process, and teachers who were more involved in decision making.
- Family-Community Partnerships. Substantially Up Schools reported significantly more outreach to families.

- School Environment/Culture. Students in Substantially Up Schools reported higher levels of personal safety, and teachers reported a much stronger commitment to their particular school.
- Staff Development and Collaboration. Teachers in Substantially Up Schools felt that they worked in an atmosphere where innovation and initiative were encouraged and reported significantly higher levels of teacher collaboration, collective responsibility, shared norms, and trust.
- Instructional Program. Teachers in Substantially Up Schools reported a significantly higher staff priority on student learning.

A common thread that distinguished the Substantially Up Schools across all Five Essential Supports was the high level of cooperative effort to improve educational quality among all of the adults involved in the school community. Cooperative Adult Effort was vastly higher in the Substantially Up Schools than in elementary schools that were placed on probation in 1996.

“Recent studies by the Consortium on Chicago School Research expand our understanding of what makes these schools effective,” said Moore. The Consortium studies indicated that when teachers placed strong emphasis on “interactive instruction,” rather than solely focusing on drill and practice, students posted substantially higher Iowa reading results. The benefits occurred for both low-achieving and high-achieving students.

Moore questioned the effectiveness of the Central Board’s initial response to Mayor Daley’s challenge to “think outside the box” in teaching Chicago’s children to read. “The research released today provides further evidence that the inner city schools that take initiative, have strong local leadership, build effective teamwork, and are creative are the schools that fundamentally improve reading achievement.” Moore criticized several aspects of the Central Board’s past reforms and current proposals, which have emphasized more top-down control, instruction that stresses drill, and separate classes for low-achieving students. “These directions are not supported by local or national research,” said Moore.

Instead, he urged the Central Board to consider how they can help expand the successful practices of low-income elementary schools that have substantially

improved achievement over the past decade to more and more schools. Based on existing research, he recommended that:

- The overriding priority should be on investing to improve the core educational program, not expanding after school and summer school programs.
- There is a growing crisis in the city because many teaching positions are unfilled or have uncertified teachers in them. Schools can't improve if they don't at least begin with a qualified staff.
- Ineffective schools need skilled help in building leadership and teamwork, not just a requirement to pick a curriculum from a menu of choices.
- Students with learning problems should typically be taught in the regular education program, not in separate classes.
- Teachers need coherent sustained staff development that includes long-term workshop experiences, time to plan and share with colleagues, and follow-up help in the classroom.
- The best source of expertise to help other schools will come from principals, teachers, and Local School Council members at schools that have successfully boosted achievement over the last decade.

## Reading Achievement in All 109 Schools That Were Substantially Up — Sorted by Gains in Achievement Between 1990 and 2000

Rank	School	Achievement Level in 1990	% of Students At or Above National Average in Reading											Gain in % of Students At or Above National Average 1990 to 2000 Gain
			1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
1	ORIOLE PARK	low	22.60	24.50	30.60	41.20	39.00	47.70	55.30	60.00	70.30	77.80	89.60	67.00
2	DORE	low	24.60	32.10	39.20	58.90	56.10	63.00	69.70	70.70	77.50	76.60	71.80	47.20
3	WILDWOOD	low	25.50	22.70	31.30	42.60	39.70	50.70	54.00	50.00	56.60	69.30	68.60	43.10
4	NORWOOD PARK	low	31.40	29.30	25.90	31.80	43.40	43.40	47.10	52.10	67.20	77.40	73.60	42.20
5	CARPENTER	low	12.90	12.50	11.40	17.00	21.90	24.10	28.30	32.50	41.10	49.80	54.70	41.80
6	BEETHOVEN	low	5.00	4.80	5.10	5.80	10.90	12.60	21.30	19.00	35.20	30.20	46.60	41.60
7	EBINGER	low	33.60	37.10	35.20	42.90	44.90	48.90	60.50	62.70	70.70	67.30	73.70	40.10
8	BEAUBIEN	low	37.20	26.90	28.40	35.00	33.20	39.60	43.00	68.80	73.70	73.30	77.00	39.80
9	EARHART	low	33.00	28.40	31.50	46.10	60.00	60.00	79.30	74.50	80.40	70.90	72.30	39.30
10	MCCORMICK	low	13.30	13.40	17.10	32.00	26.60	32.50	28.00	22.30	37.40	42.90	52.00	38.70
11	HAINES	low	19.40	11.50	19.30	21.10	17.70	20.30	24.30	33.30	37.90	44.20	55.50	36.10
12	PRUSSING	low	34.90	35.30	41.30	46.80	51.00	49.00	69.10	71.70	72.60	72.90	70.80	35.90
13	PIRIE	low	24.50	29.60	30.80	37.40	36.00	40.90	36.50	43.20	41.70	51.30	60.20	35.70
14	SAUGANASH	low	38.20	34.80	31.50	37.70	42.60	46.30	45.70	56.80	60.90	70.20	73.70	35.50
15	BLAINE	low	23.90	20.50	28.10	30.80	33.90	32.00	35.30	36.90	48.10	54.90	58.00	34.10
16	JACKSON A LANG ACAD	high	49.50	53.10	53.80	61.30	68.30	69.20	72.20	73.90	82.10	82.30	83.60	34.10
17	COLUMBUS	low	11.60	15.70	22.10	25.50	26.30	25.00	33.60	30.60	37.80	41.80	45.50	33.90
17	EDGEBROOK	high	55.60	54.30	60.00	71.70	68.60	68.20	73.50	77.80	82.90	86.50	89.50	33.90
17	OWEN SCHOL ACAD	high	45.10	45.90	52.50	62.10	61.40	59.70	60.10	67.10	74.60	75.00	79.00	33.90
18	WOODSON S	low	10.30	16.20	20.00	17.60	27.30	39.10	35.50	29.10	31.90	40.00	42.90	32.60
19	GRISSOM	low	33.30	34.00	25.00	42.80	51.30	40.60	55.10	55.10	58.60	66.40	65.80	32.50
20	MARSH	low	25.20	17.40	16.10	29.30	34.40	31.70	32.40	39.50	48.40	54.80	55.70	30.50
21	HAMILTON	low	31.00	28.50	34.80	44.50	47.90	52.40	48.30	45.90	66.40	50.00	61.00	30.00
22	WARD JAMES	low	20.60	18.90	13.00	23.40	39.30	24.80	28.40	37.00	50.90	53.10	50.30	29.70
23	WASHINGTON ELEM	low	39.30	38.40	43.60	61.60	63.60	65.70	77.90	63.10	67.80	68.90	67.90	28.60
24	KINZIE	low	31.70	37.90	35.40	40.70	43.10	46.70	58.20	53.70	59.60	65.10	59.70	28.00
25	HIBBARD	low	20.60	15.60	21.50	26.80	29.70	26.20	30.40	35.60	48.40	49.40	48.50	27.90
26	DEVER	low	35.30	32.80	36.20	39.30	40.50	42.60	47.70	51.10	55.60	55.60	63.10	27.80
27	GRAHAM	low	13.80	12.30	17.90	22.90	19.20	23.90	34.60	31.30	39.10	42.10	41.50	27.70
28	SOLOMON	high	44.00	40.80	42.10	50.90	50.90	58.10	59.90	56.60	66.40	72.80	71.60	27.60
29	STONE SCHOL ACADEMY	low	38.20	31.80	36.50	42.50	46.80	51.10	51.30	56.00	61.50	68.30	65.70	27.50
30	PORTAGE PARK	low	32.20	36.70	41.80	49.70	48.20	47.70	56.80	61.00	62.00	60.00	59.40	27.20
31	TWAIN	low	34.30	37.00	35.60	49.10	50.20	48.50	58.50	54.50	64.10	59.60	61.00	26.70
32	GARVY	high	43.40	40.40	48.30	54.40	60.10	62.40	64.00	63.40	64.00	64.30	69.30	25.90
33	HEALY	low	37.80	38.00	41.00	47.40	48.40	45.10	53.80	54.80	59.20	60.00	63.30	25.50

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			1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
34	OTIS	low	14.40	13.20	13.50	22.00	21.70	25.10	27.90	27.90	36.20	34.40	39.80	25.40
35	HERZL	low	12.00	11.50	11.40	13.10	16.00	16.00	23.30	21.80	43.70	26.30	35.90	23.90
36	WHITTIER	low	7.50	7.20	6.90	8.80	12.80	11.90	20.80	17.60	22.30	26.80	31.30	23.80
37	CARNEGIE	low	21.10	16.50	19.80	20.50	19.10	20.30	30.50	36.00	41.00	40.20	44.80	23.70
38	BELDING	high	41.20	43.60	53.40	56.20	54.00	47.90	54.40	58.40	63.00	68.60	64.30	23.10
39	GOETHE	low	16.80	17.40	19.00	22.00	21.10	25.80	28.00	25.90	38.60	39.50	39.80	23.00
40	ADDAMS	low	35.20	33.20	39.80	34.80	38.10	36.90	45.90	45.60	56.00	55.70	57.90	22.70
41	SMYSER	high	41.10	40.80	46.60	47.20	50.60	49.60	54.60	62.00	69.30	64.80	63.50	22.40
42	LINNE	low	16.40	16.00	16.20	18.80	21.70	28.90	31.80	34.50	40.50	42.50	38.40	22.00
43	RUIZ	low	15.00	10.70	10.90	23.10	22.90	21.10	28.00	22.60	33.20	32.40	36.70	21.70
44	EDWARDS	low	25.10	31.70	29.70	33.70	34.80	35.30	40.60	41.60	48.80	48.30	46.50	21.40
45	TAYLOR	high	47.50	34.10	39.80	57.40	58.80	60.20	64.40	54.80	68.40	59.60	68.80	21.30
46	CANTY	high	44.20	39.50	46.00	48.70	55.10	58.30	67.70	67.20	66.80	70.60	65.30	21.10
47	HOYNE	low	29.90	18.30	28.90	29.20	28.90	32.10	44.10	43.20	41.40	45.70	50.90	21.00
48	DIRKSEN	high	41.40	34.40	38.70	48.20	46.10	53.60	55.50	58.60	60.30	73.90	61.80	20.40
49	SUTHERLAND	high	55.80	57.80	59.60	69.50	71.60	68.70	70.00	74.50	73.30	78.40	76.10	20.30
50	PASTEUR	high	41.10	35.00	39.30	49.20	48.50	47.50	51.70	58.50	57.50	64.60	61.20	20.10
51	IRVING	low	16.60	16.20	13.90	22.20	22.80	30.00	30.70	30.90	34.70	46.80	36.50	19.90
51	SAUCEDO MAGNET	low	27.10	23.60	22.20	32.40	32.70	32.30	33.80	35.70	39.50	46.10	47.00	19.90
52	DVORAK	low	16.40	12.70	14.60	18.80	21.90	21.90	25.70	25.10	33.30	35.30	36.10	19.70
53	PILSEN COMMNTY ACAD	low	14.10	15.10	17.10	26.40	24.20	22.10	29.00	24.20	32.40	31.70	33.50	19.40
54	NINOS HEROES MAGNET	low	21.70	18.00	18.70	18.40	21.30	28.90	31.80	29.90	33.80	33.40	41.00	19.30
55	MCCOSH	low	13.40	16.10	13.70	17.30	24.30	17.50	24.70	24.20	31.10	32.90	32.20	18.80
56	WALSH	low	22.20	21.30	22.50	23.00	17.60	27.20	33.30	36.30	34.50	42.20	41.00	18.80
57	PALMER	high	45.50	37.70	45.50	53.90	55.40	56.60	59.50	68.40	68.90	71.90	63.90	18.40
58	HOLDEN	low	24.70	21.20	24.90	33.50	28.70	27.30	30.60	36.20	42.50	44.80	43.10	18.40
59	STEVENSON	low	34.40	31.70	32.30	39.50	40.30	43.60	52.30	50.60	58.80	56.30	52.70	18.30
60	NEIL	low	31.50	33.30	30.40	37.20	39.00	33.30	44.50	43.40	56.00	41.10	49.40	17.90
61	MT GREENWOOD	high	44.90	47.80	48.00	57.10	53.00	60.00	60.60	57.70	61.80	62.90	62.50	17.60
62	PETERSON	high	48.80	46.80	45.60	54.30	58.30	58.00	60.90	63.50	65.90	64.00	66.20	17.40
63	GRAY	low	35.20	34.80	37.40	45.00	43.50	49.40	46.50	47.50	50.60	52.80	52.50	17.30
64	SWIFT	low	22.40	16.60	18.80	20.90	22.30	22.10	27.70	34.70	32.00	41.70	39.50	17.10
65	MOLLISON	low	14.20	14.60	15.30	24.30	23.80	21.90	25.20	25.60	29.40	36.90	30.70	16.50
66	MELODY	low	14.30	13.40	16.40	17.10	20.10	20.00	21.00	25.60	22.60	24.40	30.70	16.40
67	GARVEY M	low	15.00	16.90	18.90	23.30	22.90	25.70	28.40	26.50	34.60	34.90	31.10	16.10

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68	REINBERG	low	36.50	28.20	39.00	46.10	37.30	49.50	51.00	49.60	51.00	50.50	52.60	16.10
69	PECK	low	35.00	31.60	32.20	44.60	40.10	42.20	44.90	39.80	44.90	49.10	51.00	16.00
70	GRIMES	low	29.00	28.60	34.80	41.40	38.10	36.60	42.70	45.70	44.90	48.10	44.60	15.60
71	MONROE	low	20.60	17.30	18.40	28.10	27.50	28.10	28.60	27.90	30.80	34.50	35.90	15.30
72	MCCUTCHEON	low	20.30	12.60	12.70	17.50	17.10	23.60	25.30	25.70	27.50	35.30	35.50	15.20
73	CHAPPELL	low	32.80	28.90	33.30	40.20	43.70	36.60	39.50	44.40	47.70	46.90	47.70	14.90
74	DOUGLAS COMMTY ACAD	low	14.10	14.30	22.70	27.00	30.40	26.90	25.40	23.90	27.30	33.20	28.90	14.80
75	MURRAY LANG ACADEMY	high	70.10	63.90	59.60	73.20	72.30	74.70	75.10	79.30	82.60	84.60	84.70	14.60
76	DIEGO COMMNTY ACAD	low	25.90	25.60	26.60	33.90	33.50	35.30	33.10	37.70	43.10	45.30	40.40	14.50
77	LEMOYNE	low	19.80	16.10	20.40	21.60	30.20	27.70	24.00	29.30	29.00	33.50	33.90	14.10
78	GRESHAM	low	16.80	15.30	17.40	19.50	26.00	21.80	25.80	25.30	32.90	33.40	29.60	12.80
79	INTER-AMERICAN MAGNT	high	47.80	40.60	38.50	47.20	51.20	49.00	53.10	57.70	62.70	64.30	60.20	12.40
80	RYDER	low	19.90	21.00	18.20	23.20	22.30	27.50	31.10	30.20	29.70	29.00	32.30	12.40
81	LINCOLN	high	73.00	74.80	72.60	76.50	79.30	82.10	82.50	84.00	83.60	83.10	84.90	11.90
82	BANNEKER	low	12.50	12.80	14.40	21.10	14.50	15.40	21.20	25.50	22.40	23.10	24.40	11.90
83	EVERS	low	25.40	21.70	26.00	35.60	39.20	33.80	32.10	38.80	39.40	44.50	37.30	11.90
84	CLEVELAND	low	25.00	22.40	23.50	40.40	36.50	31.40	32.50	34.10	40.50	35.40	36.50	11.50
85	HUGHES LANGSTON	low	20.00	16.70	15.40	23.00	22.00	20.80	28.90	28.40	28.00	29.40	31.20	11.20
86	LEE	high	45.90	44.40	42.10	47.10	51.10	54.30	54.70	56.60	59.80	53.50	56.80	10.90
87	LOCKE	low	28.30	23.80	17.30	24.10	26.60	31.30	38.30	35.20	41.90	36.70	39.00	10.70
88	WACKER	low	34.30	29.60	18.60	32.50	32.40	39.80	35.80	46.20	47.10	47.40	44.70	10.40
89	HENDRICKS COMM ACAD	low	23.10	17.90	17.60	23.40	31.60	27.60	37.90	24.20	33.30	39.20	32.90	9.80
90	BARRY	low	29.50	26.40	31.10	34.00	36.40	28.50	39.50	41.30	36.70	46.10	38.90	9.40
91	PERRY	low	18.50	14.50	14.70	20.90	20.10	20.90	26.90	27.50	31.40	33.50	27.70	9.20
92	JAHN	low	22.30	19.00	19.90	27.00	30.90	28.90	26.30	32.10	30.80	28.50	30.60	8.30
93	THORP O A SCHOL ACAD	high	59.80	57.80	65.00	66.20	69.90	68.30	71.50	71.20	71.40	72.10	68.10	8.30
94	ROBINSON	low	15.10	11.00	13.60	16.20	20.00	22.80	23.80	28.00	26.20	24.80	23.20	8.10
95	SABIN MAGNET	low	34.00	25.00	27.80	32.50	30.70	31.90	34.60	34.70	36.20	42.20	42.10	8.10
96	PARKSIDE COMMTY ACAD	low	18.80	20.20	18.20	21.80	21.70	28.30	27.80	28.40	29.30	28.40	26.80	8.00
97	CUFFE	low	20.20	22.30	18.30	21.50	27.70	23.50	34.50	31.10	36.30	34.00	27.70	7.50
98	CASSELL	high	48.10	49.60	59.00	63.40	63.90	57.30	62.50	66.10	66.10	63.70	55.40	7.30
99	HALE	high	46.90	41.40	43.00	45.20	45.70	48.10	52.70	55.70	54.00	55.90	53.00	6.10
100	BROWNELL	low	20.60	15.40	15.00	17.20	24.60	25.20	25.70	26.90	26.40	34.50	25.00	4.40
101	REED	low	14.90	13.40	10.50	10.40	9.60	16.70	18.50	29.60	15.60	23.90	19.20	4.30
102	NETTELHORST	low	25.00	27.90	21.60	34.20	35.80	38.80	35.10	36.80	37.60	40.70	28.40	3.40

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103	GUNSAULUS SCHOL ACAD	high	59.80	58.00	62.20	72.60	71.90	70.40	71.00	68.40	70.30	68.00	63.00	3.20
104	ESMOND	low	29.80	19.10	20.90	19.20	25.10	23.10	29.10	27.80	31.80	29.80	28.30	-1.50
105	COPERNICUS	low	16.20	10.20	9.70	12.10	15.40	14.20	24.60	21.10	23.80	18.30	13.10	-3.10
106	KELLOGG	high	71.00	61.90	66.10	73.20	74.80	75.00	78.30	81.40	80.20	78.10	67.70	-3.30