Using Well-Qualified Teachers Well

The Right Teachers in the Right Places with the Right Support Bring Success to Troubled New York City Schools

Premium pay is necessary to attract and keep highly qualified teachers in our nation's most troubled schools. But it is not sufficient. As the previous article makes clear, monetary incentives will not induce teachers to take on "undoable" jobs; other changes that make student success possible must be undertaken as well. In New York City, the Extended Time Schools show that when a strategic battle is waged on low achievement, the results can be dramatic and sustained—even in the toughest schools, even with the most academically disinclined students.

—EDITOR

By Julia E. Koppich

Overburdened, inexperienced teachers; students who live in poverty; parents with limited facility in English; inadequate textbooks and supplies. No matter what descriptor is applied—"low-performing schools," "high-priority schools"—the facts are starkly the same. Schools with these characteristics are the nation's most troubled. These are the schools in which academic progress is grindingly slow, when it occurs at all.

But higher achievement is possible. New York City's Extended Time Schools, an initiative designed for struggling elementary and middle schools, has for four years been changing the conventional wisdom about troubled schools, demonstrating that improvement is possible. It's a long story, but largely it comes down to six key ingredients: extra time for students; well-qualified teachers; strong principals; professional development; a required, effective curriculum; and smaller classes—all embedded in a clear system of standards and accountability.

Julia E. Koppich worked for the San Francisco Federation of Teachers and taught at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education. Now, she is president of Julia Koppich and Associates, which specializes in education policy. Koppich is author of numerous reports and three books, including United Mind Workers: Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society, *co-authored with Charles T. Kerchner and Joseph G. Weeres.*

* * *

New York City public schools, a system of more than a million students, has taken dramatic steps to confront the problems of struggling schools. In 1995, newly appointed school system Chancellor Rudy Crew (chancellor from 1995 to 1999) began looking for a fresh approach to improving the city's worst-performing schools. After months of meetings with key players such as then-Deputy Chancellor for Instruction Judith Rizzo, then-United Federation of Teachers (now-AFT) President Sandra Feldman, and UFT Vice-President David Sherman, Crew decided on a bold move. Breaking away from NYC's tradition of independent community school districts, in 1996 Crew won approval from the Board of Education to establish the "Chancellor's District" for schools in which students' academic performance hovered at the bottom. Although other districts that compose the city's school system are the result of contiguous geography, the tie that binds Chancellor's District schools is

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE GILBERT

the combination of grievously low student-performance levels and an observable lack of internal school or home district capacity to bring about improvement.* Crew and his colleagues knew the road ahead would be a difficult one.

Bringing about improvement in the city's lowest performing schools would not be a matter of a new program here, an educational tweak there, and a swift declaration of victory. No quick fix would do for these overwhelmed schools. There was a deep need to change the basic way of doing business. Crew, his staff, and union officials continued to meet regularly to map out a strategy. Recalling those early meetings, David Sherman says, "We all had a mutual concern...that if you didn't raise the bottom schools up, they would hold the whole school system down."

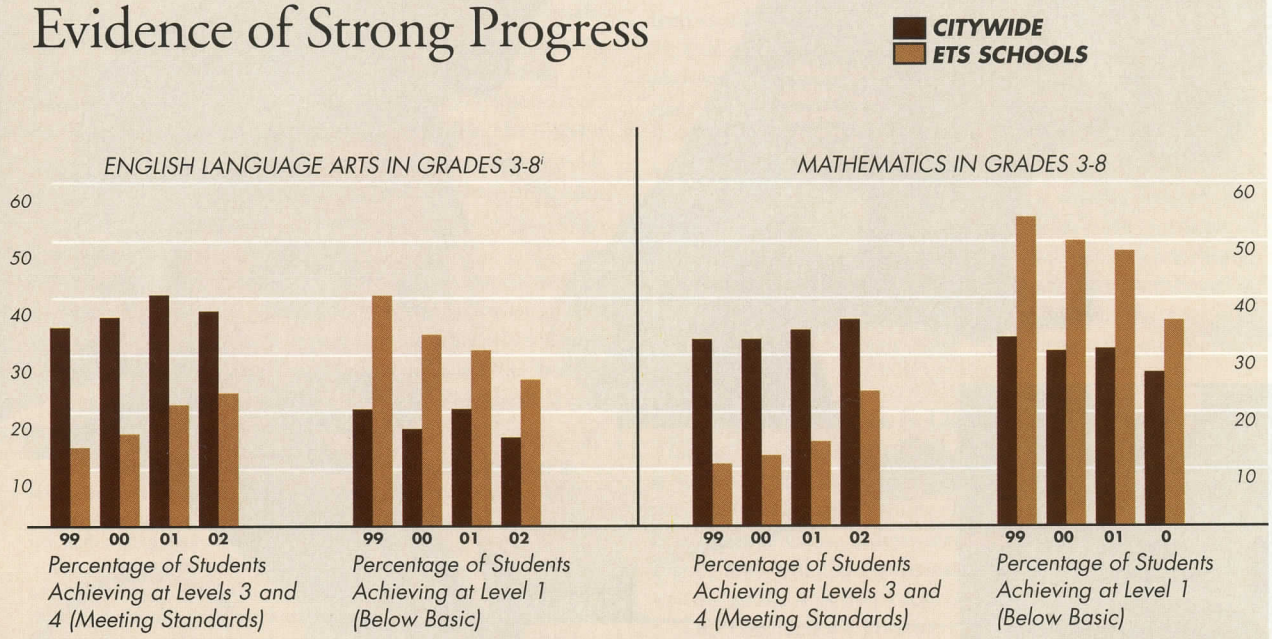
The initial task of unpacking the problems of the elementary and middle schools in the newly named Chancellor's District fell to then-Deputy Chancellor Rizzo. She found that among the difficulties from which these low-performing schools suffered was too expansive an array of specialized curricular programs. Few of the programs seemed to be selected for their strategic academic value. Students were proficient in neither literacy nor mathematics—most could barely read, write, or count—and yet these schools had failed to establish educational priorities. Moreover, like many low-performing schools in other systems, Chancellor's District schools had high rates of teacher turnover and a disproportionate number of both unlicensed and inexperienced teachers.

A cooperative effort of the New York City Department of Education, the Chancellor's office, and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) resulted in a specially designed educational program under which all elementary and middle schools in the Chancellor's District would operate. The program included five components:

- a research-based curriculum focused heavily on literacy and mathematics;
- a staffing model designed to ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom;
- a strong principal for every school;

* To further clarify, when the Chancellor's District began, New York City had a unique governance structure in which the overall school district was subdivided into 32 neighborhood or "home" districts, each with substantial governance authority. The Chancellor's District's non-geographic jurisdiction was an exception to this general structure. In the past year, the state legislature changed the governance structure of NYC's public schools; as part of this change, the 32 districts no longer have the exceptional governance authority they once did.

Evidence of Strong Progress



Scores in the ETS schools are rising faster than those elsewhere.

The student achievement data presented above compare scores from the city as a whole to those from the Extended Time Schools from 1999 to 2002.[ii] Although the ETS schools still score below the citywide average, they are consistently making greater gains than the city and slowly closing the achievement gap.[iii]

[i]Grade 6 ELA scores omitted for 1999-2001 at test publisher's recommendation due to anomalies in 2000 scores. Grade 7 ELA omitted for 2002 for similar reason.

[ii]Board of Education's analysis 1999-2001 and UFT's analysis in 2002. (Comparisons could vary slightly depending upon the board's inclusion or exclusion of some ETS schools outside the Chancellor's District.) Originally published in McAdoo, Maisie (2002). "Test Scores Surge in Extended Time Schools." *New York Teacher, City Edition,* Vol. XLIV, No. 2, p. 7.

[iii]While these data demonstrate the considerable success of the extended time program, it is important to note that eight ETS schools, the slowest-improving of the group, were closed between 1999 and 2002. Their exclusion from the later data may slightly inflate the achievement increases of ETS schools. But, according to Sandra Kase, the superintendent of the Chancellor's District, all of those eight schools were making progress.

- high quality professional development for teachers and administrators; and
- smaller classes with added dollars for materials and supplies.

Within a couple of years of implementing the new program, schools in the Chancellor's District were beginning to make progress. The union and school system, however, believed improvements could—and should—be made more quickly. Students' test scores were increasing, but many children were still far from meeting state and school system standards. The union and district soon concluded that there were two pressing, unmet needs: more time for professional development and extra learning time for the students. According to David Sherman, "Teachers were dealing with new programs; they needed time to learn. The other major need was to help the lowest performing students. The majority of the kids in these schools scored at level one, the lowest level. We needed additional time to get the kids out of the lowest level."

Enter the Extended Time Schools initiative.

Time To Learn

Starting in 1999, a sixth Chancellor's District component—an extra 40 minutes per school day to be used for both small group instruction and professional development—was added for schools that current UFT President Randi Weingarten calls, "the most academically challenged." These Extended Time Schools (ETS) represent what Weingarten describes as, "a more refined strategy of the original conception of the Chancellor's District."

Critical to developing the plan and support for these schools was the collaboration between the school system and the union. The school system was making a public statement that dedicating a specific package of human and fiscal resources to the neediest schools could cause those schools to turn around. The union, not content to sit back and simply see how things would play out, took an up-front and central role in shaping the initiatives, concurring with the school system that, with the right complement of supports, schools in the deepest academic doldrums could improve.

The collaborative endeavor has paid off handsomely.

As the student achievement data in the sidebar opposite clearly show, scores in reading and mathematics have increased *every year* since the extended time model was first implemented. What's more, ETS schools are helping all of their children learn more: The percentage of students scoring at the lowest level has decreased and the percentage scoring at

These and all photos depict children from CS 214 and MS 246 enjoying small and individual group instruction during extended time; and teachers in professional development.

the highest levels has increased. The rates of gain have also been impressive: Though ETS schools still have a considerable way to go, the achievement gap between them and the city as a whole is closing.

Currently, 26 of the 32 elementary and middle schools in the Chancellor's District participate in the Extended Time Program. (In addition, there are 15 extended time schools scattered throughout the rest of New York City, including several that were once in the Chancellor's District.) Three days a week, the extra 40 minutes are devoted to additional student instruction in literacy and mathematics. Two days a week for 40 minutes, or once a week for 80 minutes (the school is allowed to choose), teachers participate in school-based professional development.

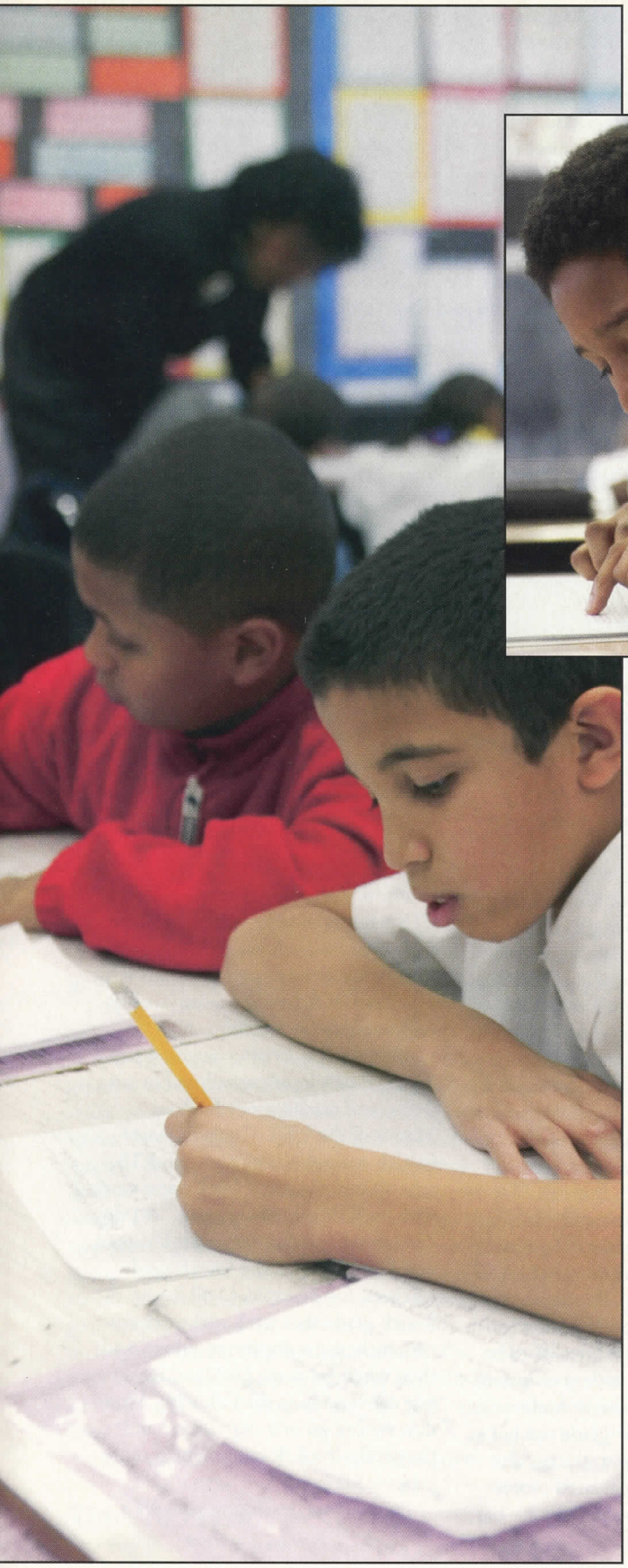
Using the Added Time: Instruction

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, kindergartners and first- and second-graders at ETS schools are dismissed at 2:20 P.M., the regular end of the school day. Elementary students beyond grade two remain at school for added instruction from 2:20 P.M. until 3:00 P.M. During this time, teachers work with groups of five to 10 students.[1] Often, teachers also have the help of a paraprofessional. With such small groups to instruct, teachers are able to use this time to give struggling students individualized attention. For the first two years, the exclusive focus of this added instruction was literacy. More recently, some schools have begun to use the time to improve students' math skills as well.

For middle-school students, the routine is much the same. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, students arrive at school 40 minutes earlier than the start time for other New York City schools. They spend from 8:00 A.M. until 8:40 A.M. in small group instruction and individual tutoring. Students are divided by proficiency level; they work on skills that their teachers identify as targets of learning for them. As with the elementary schools, the extended time originally focused on literacy; now some schools are concentrating on math, as well, during these extra minutes.

Using the Added Time: Professional Development

In ETS schools, 80 minutes a week are vouchsafed for teacher professional development. There is a commitment to making these minutes as productive as possible—in contrast to conventional professional development, which often has little relationship to what teachers actually do. The professional development program is focused on helping teachers to understand and teach the curriculum and to develop increasingly sophisticated instructional strategies for conveying it. Much of the training is unique to each school, where it is developed by a school professional development team made



up of the principal, a staff person from the UFT Teacher Center (the union's professional development wing), instructional specialists (in reading, mathematics, and special areas such as bilingual education) assigned to the school, and the UFT chapter leader. The team meets weekly to assess teacher needs and plan professional development for the following week. The professional development activities may include small group sessions on a single topic, follow-up coaching with a single teacher, modeling lessons in a classroom, or faculty discussion analyzing student work and school achievement data. (For a fuller account of how professional development is offered in ETS schools, see the sidebar on page 28.)

Staffing Extended Time Schools

Research-based curriculum, added instructional time, and time for professional development are crucial components of the ETS initiative. Another is ensuring that schools have principals who are up to the challenge and teachers who want to work in these challenging environments, are qualified to do so, and are willing to commit to the instructional program and time requirements.

Leadership is a critical part of all school reform efforts. Without the right principal, even the most dedicated, talented staff cannot turn around a low-performing school. The ETS schools required principals who could withstand the stress of this closely-watched effort and knew how to support and nurture high-quality instruction. As the extended time was being implemented, the district replaced roughly half of the principals in the newly designated ETS schools. In exchange for the added work that came with the extended time, new and remaining principals earn an extra $10,000 annually.

To compensate ETS teachers for their longer work hours (40 minutes a day plus five days preceding the start of the school year), the school system and the union negotiated a 15 percent pay boost for them.[2]

With this additional pay as a modest incentive, it was now crucial to staff ETS schools with teachers who had appropriate levels of experience to deal with the educational challenges they would face, a genuine desire to work in low-performing schools, and a commitment to the programs and students in these schools. At the same time, the district and the union agreed to a concerted effort to transfer uncertified teachers out of these schools.[3]

It was further determined that while any certified teacher at a newly-designated ETS school could continue to teach there, he or she would need to commit to the ETS program: working longer hours (for pay), faithfully implementing the required curricula, and enhancing their skills through professional development. This was a difficult and emotional

time for teachers in the newly designated ETS schools; ultimately a number of them decided to transfer. These teachers for whom ETS was not a good professional fit received priority consideration for other teaching openings in the school system. No one lost a job.

To fill the 702 vacancies created by teachers who left the schools, a joint school/union personnel committee was established at each ETS school. These committees were charged with filling teacher vacancies in their respective schools based on the School-Based Option Staffing and Transfer Plan provision of the contract between the school system and the UFT.[4]

Staffing Based on School Need

This contract provision is designed to give schools significant discretion in selecting their own staffs as a way to "match" teachers with schools' particular needs.

Under the School-Based Option, each school establishes a personnel committee composed of the principal, teachers (who form the majority of the committee), the UFT chapter leader, and parents. The committee is charged, according to the contract, with establishing criteria for filling teaching vacancies *based on instructional needs*; implementing a process (including interviews) for determining candidates' fit with the criteria; and selecting faculty to fill vacancies.

Professional Development That Works

We know from research what effective professional development looks like. It centers primarily on subject matter and the standards to which teachers need to teach. It's practical, based on what teachers need to do in their classrooms. And it's largely (though not necessarily exclusively) school-based. "Effective" is too rarely what most teachers experience.

Across the United States, professional development is typically delivered in isolated sessions offered after school or on weekends to large, heterogeneous groups of teachers. Inevitably, these sessions offer generic strategies, little time to absorb the ideas behind the strategies, and even less time to understand just what the strategies will look like in the classroom. For too many teachers these sessions are simply a periodic ritual to be endured. For others, those lucky enough to hear about a strategy they would like to try, these sessions are enticing but frustrating. Little or no classroom follow-up or support is provided. No feedback is offered on which aspects of the new strategy are being done well. No suggestions come about what could be done better.

Professional development offered through the extended-time model is specifically designed to be different. First, time for professional development at ETS schools is built into the workday. It is "job-embedded" in the best sense of the term, a natural and essential complement to classroom teaching. Classroom-based, grade-level, and subject-area professional development is offered in small and large group sessions and is followed up with classroom-based observations, demonstrations, and feedback.

Second, ETS professional development is targeted to what teachers need to know to be more successful in their classrooms—familiarity with the curriculum and a working knowledge of a variety of instructional strategies. To customize the professional development, each school has a professional development team composed of the principal, a staff person from the UFT Teacher Center (the union's professional development wing), instructional specialists (in reading, mathematics, and special areas such as bilingual education) assigned to the school, and the UFT chapter leader. The team meets weekly to assess teacher needs and plan professional development for the following week. For example, one required curricular program is Success for All (SFA). Teachers first receive small group assistance from an SFA specialist, followed by small group and classroom-based assistance from appropriate members of the school-based professional development team.

In this way, teachers learn the required curriculum and are able to become proficient in a variety of instructional strategies. Kimberly Ambrecht, for example, a second-grade teacher at P.S. 180, believes that a strategy she learned through SFA-related professional development—modeling—has made her a much more effective teacher. Kimberly explains:

> Let's say I'm doing a reading comprehension lesson, which is the beginning 20 minutes of SFA. I'll "model" or think aloud for the children to show them that when you read, you ask questions about the pictures—you relate it to your life, etc. If they see me doing that, they pick up the strategy. When I come to an unfamiliar word, I say "Mmm, I don't know what that means, let me re-read the sentence, or let me decode it, or let me look at the pictures for context clues." I'm modeling strategies that they need to use while reading.

Third, professional development in ETS schools allows teachers to shape their own professional growth. Through continual conversations with teachers and frequent professional-development team meetings, ETS schools are able to offer ongoing professional development tailored to students' and teachers' needs. Roni Messer of the UFT Teacher Center (which maintains a site at each ETS school) describes Teacher Center work with an ETS school this way: "If I do something on Monday in professional development with the fourth-grade teachers, for example, I will live in the fourth grade that week and work with the teachers on implementation. And then when we come back and have our conversations the following Monday, we can go one step deeper and the professional development is more purposeful."

Professional development at ETS

What's key here is that teacher selection is based primarily on qualifications and fit with the school's mission, not seniority. (Seniority remains a deciding factor if more than one teacher meets the school's qualifications and criteria.) The premise of the School-Based Option is that while using seniority as a primary criterion for assignment derives from justifiable historical antecedents, it also carries with it some limitations.

Unions fought in the last century to establish the principle of seniority as a reaction to systems in which patronage and discrimination were the order of the day. In many school districts, before seniority systems were put into place, overtly subjective characteristics, such as friendship, family relationship, personal politics, or even mode of dress heavily influenced teacher assignment. In some places this is still the case.

Seniority offers the attractive feature of objectivity. While there may be disputes, legitimate or not, about an individual's personal characteristics or professional attributes, there can be no dispute about date of hire. Thus, seniority eliminates cronyism and personal taste as the factors by which a teacher's qualifications are judged.

Moreover, seniority goes hand-in-hand with the definition of employment as an accrued property right. It is a

schools has ranged from classroom management for newer teachers to topics such as designing a print-rich classroom, author study, poetry study, analyzing student-achievement data to guide instruction, and examining student work. One advantage of this school-based system is that, where conventional professional development offers a limited number of sessions on a particular topic, the school's professional-development team can keep working with teachers until results are evident in the classroom and in students' work.

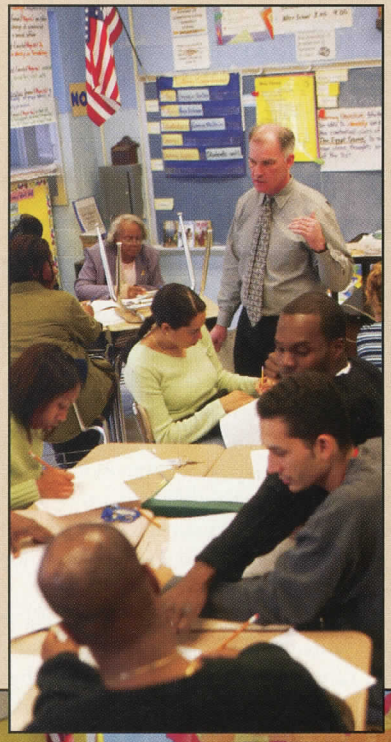
The added professional-development time also creates space in the school day for teachers to consult with colleagues. The professional-development team at P.S. 180, where Kimberly Ambrecht works, helps teachers find others to work with. Ambrecht recalls, "There was a new teacher in the school who observed me a few weeks ago ... because she was having a hard time with classroom management and I run a tight ship. It's her first year teaching so she observed me for an entire morning; she saw different ways that I get children engaged in learning. Afterwards we had a ... conference and then she went back to her classroom." This kind of informal mentoring happens as a matter of course at ETS schools.

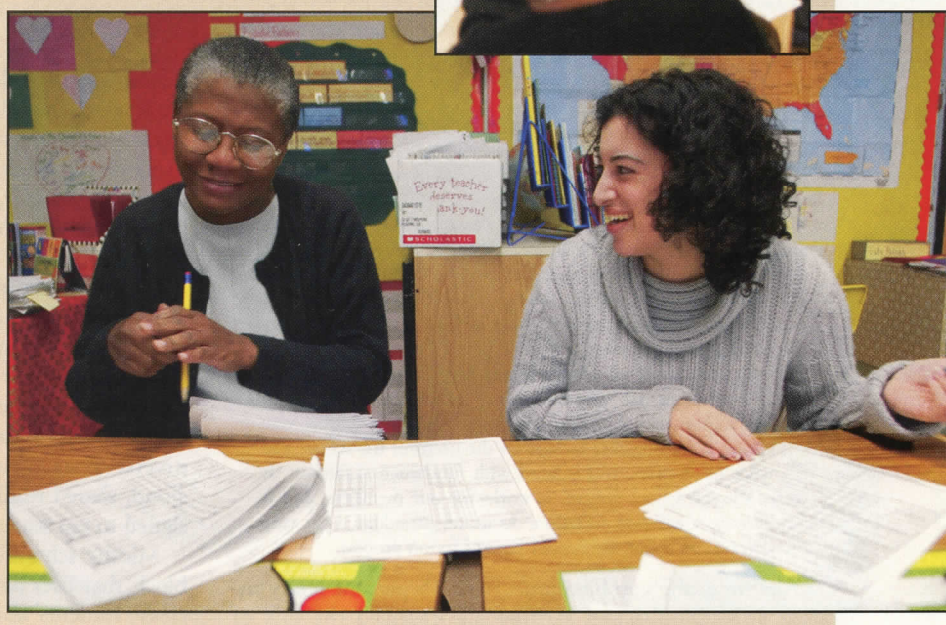
Portia Jones, a teacher at P.S. 96, explains it this way:

> Professional development is getting better and better. When I started to teach, I think many teachers (particularly those who had been teaching many years) had a sense of, "I can close my door, do my job, and I don't have to listen to anybody else. I can do what I do best." When we were mandated to get involved in professional development, there was some resistance. But as teachers opened up, I think many of us realized that there's always something new to learn. Through our professional development we hear each other, we listen to each other, we get new ideas, new approaches, and new strategies. And I think it has helped tremendously.

Finally, the added time for professional development also changes the conversation among teachers. Says Hal Lance, Teacher Center specialist at M.S. 246, "Teacher dialogue is now driven by data and by student work."

—J.K.





widely held societal expectation that increased length of service carries with it benefits that include some measure of employment security, such as the right of due process if dismissal for cause is threatened; a steady stream of income, usually at an increasing rate of pay; and continuing revenue following retirement.

Whatever the advantages, however, using seniority as the primary factor in teacher assignment also creates dilemmas. As noted in Cynthia Prince's article (see page 16), teachers generally prefer to work in less stressful, higher-achieving schools. As teachers gain experience and seniority, and school systems face greater shortages of qualified teachers, the more experienced teachers tend to gravitate to less difficult schools, leaving the schools with the neediest students to less experienced teachers who are learning to teach at the same time as they are confronted with the most challenging teaching environments. Further, when seniority is the primary criterion, it can allow a more senior teacher to "bump" a more junior colleague from a position for which both are qualified. This can result in disruption of instruction with little educational justification. Further, even where bumping is not an issue, using seniority as a key assignment criterion prevents "matching" teachers with schools' instructional needs and programs.

Altering the place of seniority in teacher assignment requires an important balancing act. On the one hand, teachers' individual interests need to be served. Teachers ought to be protected from arbitrary and capricious placement and transfer and should have some reasonable choice about their school assignment in the name of fairness and in the interest of teacher retention. On the other hand, there is a fundamental obligation to consider the interests of the institution. What makes good educational sense for the school and its students?

New York City's School-Based Staffing Option accommodates both institutional and individual need. Seniority as a chief factor in assignment is replaced by a school-based process that allows schools to find teachers who are the best fit with their improvement efforts. As UFT President Weingarten explains:

> The reason that the union historically advocated seniority as the main criterion [in teacher assignment] is because it was fair, particularly in a top-down factory model of schooling where teachers were perceived as interchangeable parts.
>
> But once you move to a system where teachers have a voice and where you can derive other criteria that are equally fair, then you should look at those criteria....With School-Based Options, the presumption was that teachers in the school would make the decisions with the principal about the prospective staffing of the school....
>
> It can only work in schools where there's trust between the faculty and principal, where there's a mutual commitment to creating a great school. It is a very professional and mature way of looking at staffing that focuses on the needs of the school and the voice of teachers, and is laced with fundamental fairness. It works for the school system, it works for our members, and it has become a win-win situation. As union president, I get very few complaints about the School-Based Option process.

Over time, the combination of the 15 percent salary increase and school-based staffing has changed the mix of teachers at ETS schools. In the first operational year, 702 teaching positions needed to be filled in ETS schools. Ultimately, 191 of those openings were filled with experienced teachers; the rest were filled with newly licensed teachers. As of the 2001-2002 school year, just above half (52 percent) of elementary- and middle-school teachers in Chancellor's District schools (81 percent of which are ETS schools) had five or more years of experience. In a system in which only about 58 percent of the teachers have five or more years of experience, this is encouraging. The question remains, however, whether ETS's particular mix of extra pay and improved teaching tools and conditions that make it a more doable job has resulted in an adequate number of well-qualified, experienced teachers.

Rounding Out the Picture: The Chancellor's District Program

The ETS additions to the Chancellor's District program—added instructional and professional development time, school-based staffing, and added pay for staff—do not, of course, exist in isolation. Extended Time Schools, like other Chancellor's District schools, make a comprehensive assault on the troubles of low-performing schools with smaller class sizes, more resources, and an intensive literacy- and mathematics-focused curriculum.

Throughout the Chancellor's District, schools are guaranteed smaller classes—20 students per class in grades K-2 and 25 students per class in grades 3-8. These smaller classes are also well supplied through extra dollars for books and materials.

The instructional program in Chancellor's District schools centers on literacy and mathematics. All of the other usual school subjects are taught—social studies, science, art, music—but, these schools devote considerable portions of the school day to reading, writing, and math, underlining that unless students can master literacy and mathematics, they will not be able to master other subjects. The goal is to enable students to meet New York's state and city performance standards.

Building a Foundation in Literacy and Mathematics

The daily schedule at all Chancellor's District elementary schools includes two literacy blocks. The first spans 90 minutes, the second 60 minutes. The intent is that students will become proficient, independent readers by the end of third grade, and will then continue to build their reading and writing prowess as they progress through school.

The Chancellor's District adopted Success for All (SFA) for elementary students' first daily literacy block. Developed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, SFA offers materials, instructional strategies, and a system for managing literacy-focused time. The second daily literacy block focuses on an approach called "balanced literacy," which employs a diverse array of instructional strategies (such as reading aloud, shared reading and writing, and literature circles) designed to tap students' different strengths and interests.

Middle school students have a daily 90-minute literacy block that uses balanced literacy strategies that work to increase students' ability to think more deeply and write about

(Continued on page 51)

Extended Time

(Continued from page 30)

what they are reading in a more focused way. In-depth discussions of fiction and non-fiction trade books, as well as other reading materials students select themselves, serve as the core materials. Middle-school students in Chancellor's District schools also have a scheduled skills-building period twice a week to enhance their ability to comprehend and enjoy more sophisticated literature, including complex texts from content area subjects.

Mathematics instruction in Chancellor's District schools centers on a required curriculum tied to New York state and city performance standards. In addition to the mathematics block, students have designated skill-building math periods—30 minutes three days a week for elementary students, one period twice a week for middle school—to help them extend their content knowledge and their understanding of core mathematical concepts.

To be sure, structured curricula have their critics. Educators and researchers who find fault with these programs rail against their rigid schedules and scripted approach to teaching. However, both the teachers and principals interviewed for this article are positive, even enthusiastic, about the Chancellor's District curriculum. At P.S. 180, Kimberly Ambrecht attributes much of her students' success to the 90-minute SFA block and its emphasis on decoding and reading comprehension skills. "The biggest change over the past four years is that most of the kids are now reading on grade level. And that's a huge change from when I first started. The kids are starting to really be successful."

Less experienced teachers say the literacy and mathematics programs help them to gain a better handle on instructional strategies and techniques as they build their own instructional repertoire. More experienced teachers acknowledge that the literacy programs in particular are quite structured, but say there is room for teachers to be creative. "We can change the literature [with the approval of the SFA facilitator] as long as we maintain the pacing and techniques," says Yvette Vasquez, UFT chapter leader at P.S. 212. The creative challenge for the teachers is that, "It's up to the teacher to keep it fresh and fun."

Similarly, Ambrecht notes that she's been given the autonomy to make sure she is meeting her students' needs. In the second literacy block, Ambrecht says, "the kids are supposed to write twice a week, but in my class the kids write every day; they are phenomenal writers. I think writing equals success: If you can write it, you can read it."

Most importantly, both principals and teachers praise the literacy and mathematics curricula for contributing to students' academic progress. Says David Harris, principal at M.S. (middle school) 246, "Our reading and math scores have gone up every year [since we've been part of the Chancellor's District]. And every year we've met our performance targets."

Lessons Learned

New York City's Extended Time Schools represent one school system's serious effort to break the academic logjam and turn around struggling schools. The formula is not magic, but the combination of elements seems key.

ETS schools embody a package of reforms; there is no attempt to impose a simple solution on a complex problem. Rather, ETS combines multiple strategies to form a coherent improvement package. To begin with, ETS schools are anchored in the Chancellor's District, which was created for the sole purpose of helping struggling schools succeed. Within the Chancellor's District, the issue of principal leadership has been taken seriously; at the launch of the Chancellor's District, all but one of the principals were replaced, and at the launch of ETS, nearly half of the principals were replaced.

Further, ETS schools are focused with a laser-like intensity on improving demonstrable student achievement, particularly in the areas of reading and mathematics, and the Chancellor's District has selected curriculum with that goal in mind. The point is not that the specific curricular programs used by the Chancellor's District are the only ones that might produce results. What is important is that these curricula were selected because they have a sound research base and track record.

Qualified teachers are central to the Extended Time Schools. In many districts across the country, individuals with little background in or preparation for teaching form the bulwark of teaching staffs in low-performing schools. The ETS schools rejected this approach. In addition to being assured of licensed teachers, school-based staffing enables schools to hire those professionals who can best meet the educational needs of the schools' students.

Targeted professional development contributes to enhancing the knowledge and skills that teachers need to be effective. In Chancellor's District schools in general and in ETS schools in particular, professional development is structured with a keen eye to education's bottom line: helping students to learn more and better.

Finally, in those schools that operate on the extended-time schedule, more time is not simply provided for the sake of having more time. Time is purposefully targeted and distributed.

The Chancellor's District program, as thoughtfully constructed as it is, nonetheless points up dilemmas that continue to plague low-performing schools. It is hard to attract experienced teachers to these schools that have reputations as difficult places to teach. Altering those reputations, and transforming these schools into desired teaching assignments, may require yet additional investments and incentives.

Further, it is unclear how long ETS schools will maintain their extra support. Three, four, even five years of support may or may not be adequate to sustain the improvement momentum. It is reasonable to assume that much (not all) of ETS schools' increased achievement is due to the added resource support that is part of ETS, such as higher salaries, added time, smaller classes, and professional development tied to an effective curriculum.

The natural temptation of a school system is to serve as many schools as possible by removing the extra resources

from a given set of schools as soon as they start to succeed. But the fear is that removing the supports will result in schools losing the progress they have made. Says the UFT's Weingarten, "If we just rest on our laurels and say [the problems are] solved, we'll go backwards." So far, no ETS schools have lost their special programs.

Going forward, it will be important to examine the schools that are able to sustain progress and determine what factors are central to their continued success. Likewise, if ETS resources are pulled back from current schools, it will be essential to identify schools that find themselves in danger of academic backsliding before progress is lost.

For other districts contemplating comprehensive programs aimed at low-performing schools, New York City's Chancellor's District offers an important learning laboratory. The lesson to be taken is that it is possible, through hard work, collaborative relationships, and strategic investments, to place struggling schools on an upward trajectory. □

Endnotes

[1] This is the typical ETS program. There can be some school-by-school variation. For example, some teachers interviewed for this article indicated that their pre-K through second-grade students also stay for the extended time period.

[2] In 2002, a new contract was negotiated. All schools now have a longer day and all teachers received corresponding raises; consequently, the pay differential between ETS and non-ETS teachers is now 9 percent.

[3] Over the past few years, almost all uncertified teachers have been replaced with teachers licensed through traditional programs as well as those who earn licensure through New York State's alternative certification routes.

[4] Some ETS schools already had these committees and were already filling vacancies based on this contract provision. The School-Based Staffing Option is available to all NYC schools and is adopted when 55 percent of a chapter (which consists of all UFT members in a school) so votes. Currently, nearly one-third of NYC schools hire staff through a personnel committee established under the School-Based Staffing Option.