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Governance Changes in Four Urban School Systems: A Comparative Analysis of Preconditions for Adopting Reforms

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GOVERNANCE CHANGES IN FOUR URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRECONDITIONS FOR ADOPTING REFORMS

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Abstract

There is an almost universal belief that our school system is failing to educate its students. At the same time there is little agreement regarding what the problems are and how to correct them. Many urban school districts are turning to drastic reform measures, oftentimes attempting one major reform after another. This paper will address the question of whether cities which have opted to significantly change their educational system share any common characteristics related to this decision. In particular this paper will focus on four cities: Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. Given the current problems with education, and the difficulty of sustaining reforms, this question is highly relevant at the present moment.

Chapter 1:
INTRODUCTION

National State of Education

According to Frederick Hess: "One of the few points of unanimity in contemporary American politics is the belief that urban schooling is in dramatic need of improvement (1999, 3)." The phrase "dramatic need of improvement" echoes a sentiment found in most of the literature dealing with the American school system. This sentiment is also echoed by the media and in everyday conversations regarding schools.

Many academics have dedicated themselves to studying the American school system and the reasons for its supposed failure; yet they all arrive at many different conclusions. Local, state, and federal leaders have all attempted to institute reforms, often with little or no success. At the individual level, many parents with the resources to do so have simply chosen to exit the system by enrolling their children in private institutions. In fact, school board members in large urban districts have often been criticized for placing their students in magnet schools or private schools.

"Despite being the wealthiest country on Earth, America maintains a public education system in which 30 percent of high school students don't graduate, one out of every four reads below basic grade level, and, compared to students from more affluent backgrounds, few of their low-income counterparts are adequately prepared for college (Daly 2006, 42)." For the most part, there is a universal belief that our school system is failing to educate its students. At the same time there is little agreement regarding what the problems are and how to correct them. School systems go through a variety of reforms in a short period of time. This is due in part to the belief that change is the solution, and the political environment does not allow reforms sufficient time to show any results (Hess 1999).

Turnover is a major problem in urban school systems; in fact, the average superintendent only stays in office for three years (Hill & Celio 1998). This is simply not long enough for their policies to show their true effectiveness, or ineffectiveness.

New superintendents are often disinclined to continue the reforms begun by their predecessors; instead, they often craft their own reform proposals and terminate previous programs. This creates a cycle often referred to as policy churn, in which new reforms are constantly being introduced and no one reform is ever fully implemented or given sufficient time to truly show its effects. An additional effect of policy churn is a reduction in teacher and administrative buy-in to new programs, as those within they system become tired of having to learn and implement new reforms (Hess 1999).

This perception of failure is particularly strong in the business sector, which has begun to pressure local leaders toward action. "A poll of more than 301 private business employers, conducted during Sep. 1991, found that 59% rated recent high school graduates as more poorly prepared than graduates of ten years before (Henig 1994, 30)." The business agenda is most often focused specifically on science and math education, both considered crucial to success on the job.

An often expressed concern is that underperforming schools will place the United States at an economic disadvantage in the future. Studies have shown that those countries which are currently the most successful, such as China, are those which have treated investments in education as a part of their economic policy (Daly 2006, 43). In fact, one of the issues brought up most often in the 2004 presidential election was the threat posed by outsourcing.

It is important to consider, however, the very unique structure of the United States as a nation. For the most part, states are considered to be responsible for educating their residents, yet the federal government controls a great deal of funding and often attempts to regulate education policy. Within the states themselves, there are various regional and local controls over the school districts, such as school boards.

This high level of complexity makes it rather difficult to assign responsibility for the school system's performance. The various stakeholders, across all levels of government, often disagree on how best to repair the educational system. Smaller countries, or more autocratic countries, do not face these same obstacles. They are often able to institute, and maintain, changes to their educational systems (Daly 2006, 46).

Despite the many claims made about the failure of American public education, not all theorists agree that the school system is truly failing. Henig points out that the crisis mentality is often used to justify drastic change, and can actually serve to detract from other societal concerns which negatively affect student achievement (Henig 1994). According to Maranto: "big city schools struggle with crime, racial division, and teacher unions and entrenched bureaucracies that more often hinder than help learning (2005, 151)."

The use of the word "crisis" can be very powerful and tends to frame the current situation in dire terms. It is undeniable that many students are not currently receiving an adequate education, and that they are less able to succeed in modern society as a result. Yet, some measures of attainment have improved, and others are holding steady, despite the increasing challenges placed on the system (Henig 1994).

A larger percentage of American youth now receive an education than in the past, particularly minority and impoverished youth. The larger number of test takers, many of whom are at a disadvantage for socioeconomic reasons, can account for the perception of a drop in national test scores. Many of these individuals were not tested in the past; therefore, it is impossible to make a true comparison over time (Stone 2001).

According to Lieberman "as many white families moved to the suburbs, school districts in the large central cities enrolled higher proportions of children from disadvantaged minorities (1993, 176)." This change in the demographic characteristics of urban cities has further increased the burden on urban school districts.

Henig worries that "By wrongly placing schools at the center of the matrix of social and economic problems, moreover, the focus on an education crisis may misdirect our attention from other problems, some more readily solved or having broader consequences if solved (1994, 11)." Stone et al. (2001) also discuss these other factors and the role they may play in education. They point out that urban schools are more likely to be affected by these factors than those located within suburban areas; even within the same state[1]. Urban areas are experiencing a growing level of disparity including loss of power in the state and a decreasing tax base. Additionally, larger districts are more likely to need to focus on teacher unions and administration issues (Lieberman 1993).

Research Question

This paper addresses the question of whether cities which have opted to significantly change their educational system share any common characteristics related to this decision. A sub-question is what these shared characteristics might be, and how they relate to the type of reform selected. In particular the paper will focus on four cities: Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and Philadelphia.

Given the current problems with education, and the difficulty of sustaining reforms, this question is highly relevant at the present moment. The research tends to focus on specific reforms and their results, not on the reform process. Identifying the specific characteristics which play a role in the policy process will greatly enrich the debate.

This paper begins with an overview of the history of school governance in the United States, current problems in the realm of education, and reform trends. This is followed by a review of pertinent literature in the field. The literature is organized by type of reform and also includes a section on policy change.

The literature review is followed by a discussion of the methodology used within the study. This section includes the basis for selection of the four cities, operational definitions of terms, and threats to validity.

[1] This is largely due to the higher prevalence of these problems within urban areas as opposed to suburban areas. Rural areas are not often discussed within the literature referenced by this paper, although a separate body of literature on rural education exists.

The following section covers the results of the study on a city by city basis. The cities are then analyzed in relation to each other in the conclusions section. The final section of the paper proposes avenues for future inquiry. The hope is that this discussion will lead to future studies and make strides towards an understanding of how to create and implement a lasting reform measure.

Brief history of school governance in the United States

In looking at the current trends in school governance structures, it is useful to begin with an overview of the history of school governance in the United States. This history can best be understood in terms of Kaufman's cycle between three objectives in government: representativeness; technical, non-partisan competence; and executive leadership (Kaufman 1963, 34).

During the late 19th century, and early 20th century, urban school systems tended to be governed by large boards composed of 50-100 members. These boards were based on the ward system and were often used by the mayor as a form of patronage.

The resulting public outcry against corruption[2] led to a change in governance structure; boards were significantly reduced in size, with all members elected in city-wide elections and a professional superintendent chosen to work with the board. Technical, non-partisan competence was the primary objective of this particular change and was seen as a means to eliminate the patronage system (Howell 2005).

The next significant change in governance, marking a shift towards a focus on representativeness, occurred in the 1960s as issues of racial disparity and the growth of various interest groups, including the rising power of unions, led to a desire for greater representation and greater community control. School boards began to be elected in sub-districts and the superintendents were given increased oversight over the actions of the boards (Howell 2005). These changes resulted in an increased role for minority groups in school politics.

[2] This corruption stretched across the various mayoral administrations, and was not specifically a problem with school governance. In fact, it was during this time period that the Tweed Ring scandal, in which William Tweed was finally arrested for years of corruption and kickbacks, occurred.

The most recent change has been the growing role played by mayors in school governance[3]. As cities continue to lose their middle class tax base, more and more mayors are deciding that better performing schools are necessary in order to improve their economies.[4] As a result of this shift in perception, the late 80s and early 90s have witnessed an increase in mayoral control over school systems and a shift towards executive leadership. Henig and Rich state that "This generation is seen as more pragmatic, technocratic, and managerial and less partisan, ideological, and beholden to racial, ethnic, and public employee constituencies than its predecessors." (Henig & Rich 2004, 14) Additionally, the new image of a professional, business oriented mayor has relieved some of the fears from the Tammany Hall era.

Current Trends

Reforms can be split into two categories: programmatic and institutional (Stone 2001). Programmatic reforms focus on curriculum, teaching methods, professional development, and school calendars. These reforms do not drastically change the system, but are much easier to implement than institutional reforms (Hill & Celio 1998). Institutional reforms focus on governance and the decision-making structure. These are the types of institutional reforms discussed within this paper; they include the decentralization of authority, influx of market force, and centralizing authority.

While this paper focuses on institutional reforms, it is worth mentioning that the most recent programmatic focus has been on accountability, with No Child Left Behind serving as the primary example. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLBA) was passed on January 8, 2002. The legislation was designed to ensure that all children in the country receive an equal education, regardless of race, economic status or disability. It was the most ambitious and far reaching educational reform bill ever passed, and was met with mixed feelings. NCLBA was heralded as both the savior of our educational system and a harbinger of the demise our public schools. To this day, there is no consensus on the matter. Some feel that the legislation will lead to great improvements, while others feel that there are simply too many problems with implementation (Goertz 2003).

[3] Kirst (2002) differentiates between four different levels of mayoral control: low, low-moderate, moderate and high. Mayors with a low level of control may attempt to influence education reform by backing a particular slate of candidates for the school board, or may threaten to take over the current board if certain reforms are not made. Low-moderate mayoral control involves the appointment of some board members, but not enough of them to constitute a majority; this form of control is often the least effective, as the board tends to split into factions and becomes unable to function. Moderate mayoral control provides mayors with the ability to appoint most, if not all, of the school board members; however, the mayor is not the primary public figure in education. The final category, a high level of control, is very similar to the Chicago governance model; the governor appoints the board and CEO, along with being one of the most visible public figures in education. (Kirst 2002)

[4] The underlying theory is that better schools may help to lure the middle class back to the cities along with attracting more business to the areas, due to the improved applicant pool.

NCLBA, which also reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was based on four pillars: increasing options for parents, allowing for greater local control and flexibility, holding states accountable for specific results, and establishing a basis in scientific research. States are given very specific requirements, along with a great deal of leeway.

In an effort to ensure that state assessments are sufficiently rigorous, all states are required to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This assessment must be completed, for math and reading, every two years by all fourth and eighth grade students. Results are then analyzed to see if there is a discrepancy between proficiency on the NAEP and the state exams.

The progress from year to year, as dictated by the each state in its action plan, is referred to as "adequate yearly progress." Adequate yearly progress is defined in the legislation as minimum levels of improvement, measured through student performance, within a pre-set timeframe.

NCLBA provides an action plan for Title 1[5] schools, a category set forth by ESEA. Title 1 schools are those schools which are currently serving the disadvantaged and in need of improvement. The designation was already in existence prior to NCLBA, and includes over half of all US public schools.

According to the action plan, a Title 1 school which does not meet the adequate yearly progress requirements for two consecutive years is defined as needing improvement. School which are thus labeled must develop a two year plan to get out of needing improvement status, offer current students a transfer to another public school and receive technical assistance from a local education agency as dictated by the state.

There are further requirements for schools which continue to fail. A school which does not meet the requirements for a third year must also provide all low income students with Supplemental Education Services (SES). SES are typically in the form of tutoring or some similar state approved program. An SES provider can be either state run, or a qualifying non-profit. After four years, the penalties become more severe. The school enters corrective action and must either replace certain staff or implement a new curriculum.

The final tier in the action plan for Title 1 schools is reached after the fifth consecutive year of failure to meet adequate yearly progress requirements. At this point the school may choose to reopen as a charter school or replace all staff. It must also turn operations over to either the state or a private company that has a demonstrated record of achievement. This phase is known as restructuring.

[5] Title 1 of ESEA: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

When a school is failing, parents must be notified and informed of all available options. They may then select whether to take advantage of these options or not. This includes transferring a child to another public school which is not failing, when one is available, or beginning SES.

The teacher competency requirements set forth by NCLBA are as follows: all teachers of core academic subjects must meet the requirements to be considered highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 year. This rating can be achieved by teachers who have a bachelor's degree, are certified and can demonstrate subject matter competency. The law is vague only in the area of competency requirements. These include a degree or passing certain tests, but many variations are allowed within the states.

While NCLBA is mostly a programmatic reform, it does include provisions for systematic reform if the initial efforts at improvement prove insufficient. This paper focuses on institutional reforms, as these reforms constitute a more significant change to the school system.

These reforms can be divided into three categories: school choice; city and state takeovers; and mixed reforms. Each of these categories includes some programmatic reforms, but taken as a whole, the change is systematic. These will be discussed in detail in the literature review below.

Chapter 2:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review focuses on the following areas: school choice, city and state takeovers, mixed reforms, policy change, and civic capacity. Of these sections, the first three deal with types of reform and the last two deal with how the reform passes through the policy process.

The books and articles discussed below were selected through an in depth review of the relevant literature. This paper focuses primarily on those authors who were most often cited, are very well known in their field, or present a relevant theory not seen elsewhere within the literature.

School Choice

School choice reforms aim to improve education through the influx of market forces. Traditionally, proponents of school choice have focused on voucher systems and charter schools as the primary methods for the introduction of market forces into the educational system. More recently, however, privatization has arisen as an alternative method.

It is difficult to completely distinguish between these three school choice strategies. In fact, may theorists do not truly distinguish between them and simply discuss school choice as its own reform. The same basic principles, primarily that it is necessary to completely exit our current system and that market forces can serve as a more effective regulator than political forces, underlie the arguments made for each one.

Choice theories portray a very negative vision of democratic governance: "In place of a vision of governance as the pursuit of a collective public interest, pluralism and public-choice theory emphasize the ways in which government is enmeshed in a political battle among individuals and groups with fundamentally conflicting interests" (Henig 1994, 8).

This viewpoint underlies Chubb and Moe's theories, and serves as a significant part of their justification for completely abandoning the current system. Chubb and Moe are often cited as the authorities on school choice. Their 1990 book *Politics, Markets & America's Schools* describes a "scholarship" plan which is best summarized by Henig in the following table:

Table 2.1

The Chubb and Moe "Scholarship" Plan[6]

A. *Schools*

1. Schools will be chartered under state law based on minimal criteria currently used to accredit private schools.
2. Existing private schools can choose to participate.
3. States decide whether religious schools are included.

B. *Funding*

1. The state establishes a Choice Office in each district. Schools are compensated through this office.
2. "Scholarship" amounts would be allowed to vary among districts based on district choice; states may choose to undertake equalization policies to supplement revenues available to poorer districts.
3. "Scholarships" could also vary within districts to compensate poorer families and students with special needs.

C. *Student Choice Among Schools*

1. A student will be free to "attend" any school within the state.
2. Choices and applications will be handled by the district Choice Offices, within which there will be Parent Information Centers.
3. Transportation will be provided "to the extent tax revenues allow."

D. *School Choice Among Students*

1. "Schools will make their own admission decisions, subject only to nondiscrimination requirements."
2. "Schools will set their own tuition." They are free to accept students with different-sized scholarships and they can keep scholarship money above the tuition amount. It is "unwise" (but apparently not prohibited) to allow schools to accept supplementary out-of-pocket payments from families.
3. Schools will be free to expel students or deny them readmission when they believe the situation warrants.
4. Students not selected by any school after two applications will be assigned a school based on a "safety net" procedure that could include lottery assignment to neighborhood schools.

E. *School Governance and Organization*

1. "Each school must be granted sole authority to determine its own governing structure."
2. This specifically includes all personnel policies, curriculum, textbook choices, preparation time, and homework standards.
3. Teachers will have the right to belong to any unions and bargain collectively, but the unit will be the school and teachers need not join the union or be bound by union bargains.
4. "Statewide tenure laws will be eliminated."

F. *The Role of the State*

1. "The state will continue to certify teachers, but requirements will be minimal – corresponding to those that, in many states, have historically been applied to private schools."
2. The state will hold schools responsible for meeting procedural requirements of the choice process.
3. The state *will not* have any say in school organization, in governance, or in assessing student or school achievement.

[6] Table 4.1 Henig pp. 88-89

In his book, *Rethinking School Choice*, Jeffery Henig provides a brief overview of the history of school choice initiatives. He goes on to rebuff many of the claims commonly made about the role of market forces in education. Henig also discusses the work of Chubb and Moe, often considered the authorities on school choice, and refutes many of their points. He is not opposed to school choice but instead feels that there is insufficient evidence to support their claim that it is necessary to completely shift over to a market model.

Unlike Chubb and Moe, Henig believes that democratic governance is necessary for any successful reform. He states that government must play a regulatory role in order to implement and maintain the change. Government is also necessary to ensure fairness.

The creation of a school choice proposal within a democratic system also requires civic mobilization, which will be discussed in detail further below. Without a significant amount of civic mobilization, it is impossible to create the circumstances under which a broad social transformation can occur (Stone 2001).

It is necessary to recall that democratic government has a vested interest in the school system. The function of a public school system is not only to educate, but is also to be instrumental in encouraging future civic engagement and participation. Operating from that premise it becomes necessary to question whether the private sector can fulfill this role (Henig 1994). This is an issue which Chubb and Moe fail to address.

The primary issues which arise when school choice proposals are discussed are: separation of church and state, mostly expressed through the question of whether religious schools should be included; inequality, whether all sectors will reap equal benefits; administrative feasibility, how exactly the reform can be instituted and managed; and the undermining of public schools, mostly a concern in a system which does not completely abandon the current model (Henig 1994).

School choice reforms, unlike the other reforms discussed, are not always implemented system wide. Many districts allow for the existence of some charter schools, for example; or, may allow certain parents to use vouchers under specific circumstances. However, this is not typically viewed as a true implementation of a school choice reform; but is instead, seen as compromise or a step in a longer process (Henig 1994). Most theorists fail to consider the potential benefits of a partial choice program which may, in fact, be a feasible alternative for some districts and could eliminate some of the problems surrounding choice initiatives.

Henig (1994) advocates further research and consideration in nine areas: curriculum requirements, teacher qualification, admission/discipline, health/safety, tuition/fees, order/stability, intrafamily disputes[7], data collection/reporting, and truth in advertising

[7] An example of this might be disagreement between two parents regarding the best school for their child.

School choice programs became closely tied to racial segregation efforts after the 1950s. Many southern states attempted to use vouchers to allow white students to transfer to primarily white schools. Often a school was "desegregated" only to lose all of its white students and essentially re-segregate (Crain 1969).

This perception remained through the 1960s and 1970s and made it very difficult to garner minority support. This began to change with the creation of magnet schools, originally intended to promote desegregation and prevent white flight. By the 1980s, the role of magnets had expanded and these schools began to be recognized for their educational successes.

In the late 1960s, the US Office of Economic Opportunity worked on the creation of a voucher proposal. The goal was to design an experiment which could be run in a few different districts. The proposal was widely resisted and immediately challenged by local administrators and teacher groups (Henig 1994).

Only six districts elected to accept funding and participate, with only Alum Rock, California, actually completing the program. The other five districts dropped the experiment under local and state pressure. Even in Alum Rock, the amount of conditions applied at the local level seriously compromised the experiment and led to the termination of the program as soon as federal support ended.

In the 1990s, the arguments in favor of school choice shifted back towards a competition based model and focused primarily on economic theories. By mid-1994, eighteen states had enacted legislation allowing choice within a district; thirteen of these also allowed choice across districts. Half of the remaining states had legislation pending or introduced (Henig 1994, 224). Each of the four cities researched by this paper at least considered a choice program at some point and all have at least a few charter schools within the district.

City and State Takeovers

As cities and states struggle to reform their school systems, more and more policy makers are turning to takeover strategies as a means of reviving a failing school district, or even just a failing school. These changes in governance structure reveal the rapidly spreading belief that the problems facing schools cannot be resolved under the current political structure and involve centralizing authority. The policy makers, along with their constituencies are deciding that the current school board system is unable to enact the necessary changes, and is at times a major part of the problem (Wong & Shen 2002).

Most takeovers, however, do not eliminate the school board; instead, they move away from an elected board to an appointed board. Often times the takeover is not intended to be permanent, but is regarded as a drastic intervention to improve the educational attainment of students and eliminate mismanagement of the district (White 1999).

There are currently twenty-four states which allow takeovers, of various kinds, of drastically underperforming school systems; eighteen states have actually implemented some kind of takeover (Howell 2005). However, many of these takeovers were short term and narrowly focused.

Some takeovers are purely financial, as many urban school districts face financial difficulties. Other takeovers are broader and longer term in nature; they tend to deal with a variety of issues, particularly issues of accountability. The trend over time has been a shift from financial, or managerial based takeovers, to a greater focus on academic goals (Cuban 2003).

NCLBA advocates the use of takeovers for schools which are classified as failing for three years in a row. According to the legislation, each particular school, and by extension the local school district, is given only a short time frame in which to begin making improvements. Under the increased pressure many states are beginning to hold the specific school districts more accountable for the performance of their schools. This is both to ensure that the state is meeting its responsibility to educate the children, and to relieve the pressure from the federal government.

Many theorists do not really differentiate between city and state takeovers, choosing to view both as outside interventions. The majority of the research which does distinguish between city and state interventions is focused on mayoral control. However, some of the research considers mayoral takeovers to be a type of state control[8], and most theorists who write solely about city takeovers do not include their position on this issue. The few existing comparisons of the effectiveness of the two methods appear to indicate that mayoral control has better results (Wong 2002).

It is important to note that the data indicate that non-contentious takeovers, those which generate a minimal amount of political controversy and system-wide opposition, have much less of a negative impact on students during the transition period. Considering the fact that state imposed takeovers are often the most contentious, as they involve a more distantly removed player stepping in and taking control, it is not surprising to find a higher effectiveness in mayoral takeovers (Henig 2004).

There is very little evaluation information available within the literature that deals with the true impact of a takeover, for several reasons. To begin, most takeovers have not been in place long enough for an accurate evaluation to be conducted. Additionally, large differences present in the situations within the various cities, despite the similarities between the trigger points, make it almost impossible to truly compare their results. Finally, it is very difficult to isolate the variables in a study because there are too many other factors which could affect school performance.

[8] According to (NASBE n.d., 18) there are five different forms of state takeovers. These are: state management, state/district partnership, third party management, mayoral control, and reconstitution on a school by school basis. The final form of state takeover, reconstitution, are more often done at the district level, although more and more states are creating a provision for a school by school takeover.

Under a takeover the most academic improvement is found in the lowest performing schools. This could be accounted for, in part, by regression to the mean or by the fact that these particular schools may receive a greater level of attention in a reform environment[9]. Even though all grade levels appear to suffer during the period of adjustment, more academic gains are found at the elementary level[10] and most high schools show very little, or no improvement. No further information on the effects of a takeover is, as yet, available.

Most current research regarding takeovers has focused on academic advancement; however, many takeovers have succeeded in various other areas[11]. Financial management, for example, often improves under mayoral or state control. The consolidation of power under a takeover also makes it easier to hold all students to a similar standard. In fact, most mayoral takeovers have instituted some additional standards and assessments than those set by the state.

A further advantage is the recruitment of non-traditional leaders. These individuals are able to bring a wealth of managerial and business experience into the realm of education[12]. Some districts have even chosen to replace the title of Superintendent with that of CEO[13]. The position is essentially the same, but the title carries a different symbolism, and likens a school district to a corporate entity.

There are many difficulties inherent in a mayoral takeover of a school system. Even if a political window is open and a mayor is given control of the school[14], there still remains the issue of sustainability. In order to be successful, a takeover requires that the various parties involved cooperate with each other. The governance change must take root within the school system and then provide a framework for future mayors and stakeholders. "Meeting this challenge [a long term change in governance] involves two key tasks: developing a supportive constituency for reform, and creating an institutional arrangement to sustain reform over the long term." (Portz n.d., 2)

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[9] This increase in attention, particularly if it is obvious to teacher and students, may lead to the Hawthorne Effect, in which improvement is a direct result of increased observation.

[10] Traditionally elementary schools show more improvement than high schools under most types of school reforms. This is often believed to result from the lack of an educational foundation among many high school students in underperforming school districts as they have spent longer within the system and may have significant gaps in their knowledge.

[11] It is impossible to separate the educational achievement of students from the various other problems faced by a failing school system. Most reforms, while their end goal may be to increase student learning, must foucs on many other factors as well. These factors include the financial management of the district, human resources, and more (Stone 2001).

[12] This is exemplified by the creation of the Superintendent academies designed to train retired corporate executives for a second career in education. The Broad Superintendents Academy, for example, was founded in 1999 and offers a curriculum which focuses on the translation of corporate strategies to the field of education. The academy is very competitive, accepting only 17% of candidates; 12 graduates have already been appointed to superintendent positions in large urban districts (Daly 2006, 46-47).

[13] New Orleans chose to do this temporarily with CEO Al Davis, but then decided to return to a more traditional superintendent and dropped the CEO title.

[14] There are three primary ways in which a mayor can gain the power to appoint the school board: a vote to change the city charter, a referendum vote during an election, or through cooperation with the state legislation and governor. (Howell 2005, 85)

The first task, to develop a constituency which could also be termed civic mobilization, can be quite difficult within the realm of education. It is important to recall that only a small percentage of urban households have children within the public school system[15]. Additionally, most governance reform movements meet strict opposition from teachers and administrators who are afraid of the change process. The final difficulty lies in the necessity to have some cooperation from the area business leaders; they must first consider the urban schools as a source for future employees, or at least consider school improvement to have some sort of positive impact on their relative fields. In an area in which the suburbs are drawing more and more of the middle class, it can be difficult to attain this (Stone 2001).

The second task, to sustain the reform over time, can also be quite complicated. In fact, many reforms only last through the next election period. Many incoming politicians feel the need to adopt a new set of reforms, in part due to political pressure to "do something," if no positive results are yet visible. Unfortunately, it takes more than four or eight years to determine the true success of a program and to make the necessary changes to improve that program. This task can be simplified through the creation of formal structures and organizations, a task which can often be accomplished through an amendment to the city charter or the passage of legislation at the state level (Wong 2002).

It is important to note that mayoral and state takeovers often occur in conjunction with another reform. The Mayor, or Governor, may use his or her newly acquired power to appoint a school board, in which case the basic structure of the district remains the same. The primary difference is the increased role played by the city or state, and the supposed removal of "politics"[16] (Wong 2002).

Some takeovers result in privatization, as in the case of Philadelphia in 2001. In this scenario the takeover was the means to an end, and the state chose not to run the school itself[17].

[15] In Boston, for example, twenty-seven percent of all school aged children do not attend public schools (BPS 2005). Considering the fact that there are over 200,000 household and only around 40,000 students in the public schools, the majority of families do not have students in the public school system and have no vested interest in the quality of education.

[16] This view assumes, perhaps naively, that an appointed board member will not feel the same political pressures to the majority as one who is elected. However, the new board member is still accountable to a political leader, who is in turn accountable to his electorate.

[17] Philadelphia first experienced a mayoral takeover followed by the state takeover when results were not immediately forthcoming.

Mixed Reforms

More recently, some theorists have suggested new models for school reform which take certain elements from the reform structures discussed above. Most of these models begin by decentralizing authority and providing individual schools with greater autonomy. One model which has been recently discussed in New Orleans, is that proposed by Paul Hill, Christine Campbell, and James Harvey (2000). This model actually consists of three different strategies, each of which includes different incentives, investments in capability, and freedom of action at the individual school level.

The first strategy is named the "CEO – strong schools" strategy. Under this particular reform, the superintendent is given a significant amount of power. He or she forms yearly agreements with each individual school, laying out the specific strategies to be used and the performance measures and benchmarks to be applied. These are, of course, based on state standards. The superintendent also has the power to close schools, something which is currently very difficult to do[18], or to open schools (Hill, Campbell & Harvey 2000).

In terms of investments in district capability, funds are set aside to be used on teacher training, new methods, and materials. The superintendent is actively involved in this process. Individual schools are held accountable for fulfilling their particular agreements with the superintendent, but are allowed a great deal of freedom. A school may choose its own teachers and transfer staff.

The second strategy is the "diverse providers" strategy, which, as its name implies, treats the schools as an individual entity. As with the first strategy, each school has its own contract. These contracts set goals for students and describe the educational approach to be used; unlike the first strategy, these contracts are not necessarily based on state standards. The superintendent has very little power, and the system relies heavily on parental choice (Hill, Campbell & Harvey 2000).

Parents are given the freedom to select the school their child will attend and schools which are not performing must make adjustments to their contracts. The district is involved in an advisory role; providing teacher training, materials, and some curricular advice. However, individual schools may decide which of these resources they wish to utilize.

The schools themselves are given greater power under this strategy. Not only can they control the hiring process, but they also control funding. Under this model, teachers may unionize if they so wish.

[18] The difficulty faced by school leaders in closing schools has recently sparked a great deal of media attention. Several schools are reaching their sixth year as a designated failing school under No Child Left Behind. The law mandates that these schools be closed or significantly restructured, however, it does not provide a means for doing this.

The third, and final, strategy presented is labeled "community partnerships." Under this model, a public board controls the school system. This board serves to encourage the development of additional schools and is charged with providing licensing to charter schools, preferably run by a variety of different organizations. This board provides funding on a per pupil basis and parents dictate which school their children will attend.

The district is primarily involved in a fundraising role. Any school which needs resources may request assistance. The district works toward increasing community participation, and financial contribution, to the particular schools. The schools have all the freedoms offered by the second model, but their finances are limited by the number of students they attract.

This is one of the only theories which acknowledges the amount of variation between different cities. Each of these strategies is suited for a particular situation, and cannot simply be applied to any city which has failing schools. Many other models presented, are treated as if they could be successfully implemented in any setting.

Hill, Campbell, and Harvey (2000) also discuss the importance of putting in place an administrative infrastructure which will allow the reform to remain in place. This is crucial as so many reforms are abandoned at the next election.

In an earlier book, Paul T. Hill and Mary Beth Celio (1998) provide an analysis of what they term the "zone of wishful thinking" for each of the most popular reform theories[19]. This zone is comprised of the events which are necessary for a particular reform to succeed but cannot exist under that particular reform. The existence of these zones is the primary reason why Hill and Celio (and later Hill, Campbell, and Harvey 2000) advocate for the use of elements from various reform strategies. In fact, they state that "some reform proposals are specifically designed to cause the events that are found in other proposals' zones of wishful thinking (Hill & Celio 1998, 23)."

One example of these zones is the need under a voucher proposal for "mechanisms to guarantee supply of good schools in areas serving less-demanding parents" (Hill & Celio 1998, 22). This issue is also raised by Henig (1994) in his discussion of choice models and their shortcomings. However, Henig does not advocate a mixed reform model, instead he proposes caution in the use of a choice model.

Some of the political science literature regarding the policy process can be useful in understanding how certain reforms get selected. This is further discussed in the following section.

[19] According to Hill and Celio these are: professional development / teacher networks, vouchers, standards, school designs (New American Schools), decentralization, charters, and contracting (1998, 22).

Policy Change

According to John Kingdon (1995), there are three streams which align to create policy windows. "These policy windows, the opportunity for action on given initiatives, present themselves and stay open for only short periods (Kindgon 1995, 166)." In turn, these windows allow for major changes in public policies or governance structures. These streams are: the problem stream, policy stream, and political stream. In looking at any particular issue, each of these streams, or the perceptions of these streams held by key players in the political process, may serve as either an impetus for action or a constraint.

The problem stream influences the agenda when a major crisis occurs, indicators repeatedly show a major problem, or feedback indicates that an issue is gaining importance. The policy stream also influences the items which are on the decision agenda[20] through proposals by specialists, popular ideas within academia, and new technological developments. Finally, the political stream serves to increase, or decrease, the priority of an item already on the decision agenda: this includes the national mood, the arrival of a new administration, and election results[21].

Table 2.2

Summary of Streams	
Problem Stream	Influences the agenda when: - a crisis occurs (focusing event) - indicators repeatedly show a problem - feedback indicates and issue is gaining importance
Policy Stream	Influences the decision agenda through: - proposals made by specialists - popular ideas within academia - new technological developments - changes in the composition of the community of specialists - policy entrepreneurs
Political Stream	Increases or decreases the priority of an item through: - national mood - arrival of a new administration - election results - organized political forces

[20] In his book, Kingdon states that the "agenda setting process narrows this set of conceivable subjects to the set that actually becomes the focus of attention." (Kingdon 1995,3)

[21] In this context, election results refers not only to the actual outcome of the election, but also to the various issues which are brought up by the candidates.

This theory provides a very useful framework for an analysis of the various trigger points for major governance changes in urban education. All of the trigger points for city and state takeovers can be placed into one of Kindgon's three streams and, in each city, it was the formation of a policy window, through the alignment of the streams, that led to the change in governance structure (Kingdon 1995).

One analysis of the Chicago school system focuses completely on the creation of a policy window by the convergence of the three streams (Leiberman 2002). However, there is no other mention of this theory in the rather limited literature on mayoral and state takeovers of school districts. Yet each of these streams, and the changes within them, played a major role in the decisions by various stakeholders, in all four cities, to shift to mayoral or state control.

Problem Stream

According to Kingdon, "Conditions become defined as problems when we come to believe that we should do something about them (Kingdon 1995, 109)." This particular stream is composed of three elements, each of which plays a significant role in bringing the deficiencies in public education to the attention of a wide audience and placing educational reform on the decision agenda. These are: indicators; focusing events, crises, and symbols; and feedback.

Indicators play a very important role in education, particularly in our current standards-based accountability environment. Routine monitoring activity, in the form of standardized test scores and other educational statistics, is the primary measurement tool for school and student achievement. The passage of NCLBA legislation has increased the amount of routine monitoring activity through the addition of district and school report cards and made the results readily available to the public.

Indicators attract the most attention when they are fluctuating, or very poor. Unfortunately, a steady state, even if it is highly indicative of a problem, does not draw as much attention. Indicators also serve as a useful measure, or means to quantify a problem. According to Kingdon, they are used to "assess the magnitude of a problem and to become aware of changes in the problem" (Kingdon 1995, 91). Quite often a study or an evaluation is undertaken with the intention of serving as an indicator. It is important to note, however, that interpretation of results has a significant effect on the usefulness of an indicator.

Focusing events, crises, and symbols also play a major role in education policy and reform, as they bring widespread attention to the problem. Kingdon states that this particular category is the most important when dealing with policy domains which are not very visible to the public. This fact is particularly significant in education, since only a small percent of city residents have school age children[22]. Additionally, those parents whose students are enrolled in private or parochial institutions do not have a perceived vested interest in the quality of public education (Kingdon 1995). According to Daly, the lack of national action relating to school reform is due to the "…lack of a single calamitous moment (2006, 43)."

Crises in particular have an effect on educational reform. In fact, most school systems which have undergone a takeover were experiencing, or had experienced, some sort of serious financial crisis. However, the occurrence of one crisis is typically not sufficient in and of itself. Often, a second crisis is necessary in order to prevent the dismissal of the first event as a fluke. These events, in combination with indicators serve to draw a lot of public attention to a problem (Kingdon 1995).

The final element, feedback, refers to both formal and informal channels. In the realm of education both types of feedback are equally important. Formal feedback includes cost, beaurocratic experience, and the result of evaluations. In educational policy, cost is important both in terms of the projected costs of ignoring a problem[23] along with the cost of a possible solution. Beaurocratic experience refers to the feedback that comes from within an organization, such as the opinions of the School Board members. Evaluations have already been discussed within the description of indicators, and may be placed into either category, depending on what is being evaluated and who has requested the evaluation (Kingdon 1995).

Informal feedback involves casework, citizen complaints, and what is reported in the media[24]. In New Orleans, for example, the local newspaper often carries editorials on the state of the schools and the internal politics of the school board; school board meetings are televised and can be viewed by the public. Citizens are able to write letters to local politicians and the media, or to attend school board meetings and voice their concerns. However, the media portrayal of schools is often criticized as being too harsh and detrimental to reform efforts (Wong 1999). Additionally, the most vocal parents or community leaders can monopolize the agenda and prevent other voices from being heard.

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[22] In Boston, for example, there are 239,258 households but only 52,270 students enrolled in public schools (FedStats Boston 2000). Assuming one student per household that would only be twenty-one percent, however many households will have siblings in the home.

[23] This is particularly relevant when the problems involve mismanagement of funds, as the costs to the state can be quite high. Cost is typically considered in terms of the budget, but the concept can be expanded to include the negative effects of, for example, having an uneducated workforce (Kingdon 1995).

[24] Media organizations are often criticized for their failure to hire individuals with a background in education (Wong 1999). Instead, those journalists assigned to the education column must learn as they go and often need to turn to outside organizations and specialists for information. As a result, the media often presents information which is biased by the views of the particular professional or organization that was consulted; and do not explicitly state this within the text.

Policy Stream

The policy stream is composed of a community of specialists and constantly has ideas floating around. These ideas are continuously being edited, combined with each other, or eliminated. Kingdon refers to this process as the "Policy Primeval Soup"[25] (Kingdon 1995, 116). Ideas which survive this process then have an opportunity to be combined with a problem and eventually make it into a policy.

The actual composition of the policy community does not change much, although certain individuals may rise and fall over power; this is particularly true of administration changes. Fragmented systems[26], such as education, tend to result in a fragmentation of policy and make it very difficult for problems to be matched to solutions. The existence of a multitude of potential solutions, all considered incompatible to each other, can result in the inability of the policy community to sufficiently support any one solution.

Often a policy entrepreneur, an individual willing to advocate a certain proposal or idea, is necessary (Kingdon 1995). In Boston, Mayor Thomas M. Menino played a crucial role in pushing the reform agenda and in the schools themselves. "While there is no assurance that the recent mayoral involvement in Boston or elsewhere will translate into enhanced student achievement, there is little question, at least in Boston, that the strong leadership role being played by the mayor has stabilized the system and established the essential conditions for educational improvement to occur (Cuban 2003, 42)."

Political Stream

The political stream is completely separate from the problem and policy streams; it is composed of national mood[27] and organized political forces. Unlike the other two streams, the political stream does not play a significant role in placing items on the agenda; instead, it serves to increase or decrease the priority of items already on the agenda. In other words, having a favorable political climate for one particular initiative will significantly increase the likelihood of it been acted upon.

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[25] This comparison refers back to the biological concept of a primordial soup in which various elements coexisted in a constantly fluctuating environment and eventually spontaneously generated life as we know it. In terms of the policy process, this analogy refers to the coexistence of various ideas which constantly merge, separate and otherwise affect each other. This eventually produces stronger and more effective ideas which can later be combined with a related problem.

[26] A policy community is considered to be a fragmented system when its members disagree about the correct solutions to the problems. In education, for example, there are many different viewpoints on how to save our failing schools, none of which are particularly compatible with each other (Kingdon 1995).

[27] Kingdon's analysis focused primarily on the decision making process in the federal government. It is necessary to consider the local mood as well as that of the nation as a whole when operating at a city or state level.

Kingdon also mentions a "coattail effect" in which an issue can be linked to a more prominent issue and become more politically feasible. For example, linking education to economic development or national security may make it more likely that policies will be acted upon. However, this has not been the case thus far. There is little doubt that a poor educational system is damaging to the economy, but this has failed to spark national action.

The national mood, or in this particular case the local and state mood, can occasionally serve to make policy makers more receptive to a particular idea. Politicians are often unwilling to act upon a piece of legislation which appears to be unpopular with the public. It is impossible, however, to truly quantify a concept such as mood; therefore, the actual affecting factor is often the perception of public mood held by those in power[28]. The media often plays a role in either characterizing the mood, or at times, creating it. For example, a report which designates a particular school as failing may affect an individual's perception of that particular school's performance; regardless of their previous experience with the school in question.

Organized political forces, such as interest groups and unions[29], are often resistant to change of the status quo, particularly when the previous situation was beneficial to their interests. Too much organized opposition can frighten politicians away from action, just as organized support can help to move an item further up the agenda. As a result, the political arena is often best navigated through consensus building, or bargaining. Various political actors will decide to lend their support to a proposed policy when they feel that their interests are being furthered. The teachers' unions are a primary example of this phenomenon and are often vilified for their reactions to certain policies.[30]

A final effect from organized political forces comes from within the administration itself. A change in political leadership, or simply a change in personnel, often brings new priorities.

[28] As with indicators, the strongest effect is seen when there is a major change. A sudden outcry over allegations of fiscal mismanagement, for example, may lead to a shift in public perception of a proposed takeover. Accounting scandals have, in fact, played a role in many of the districts which have been taken over.

[29] In fact, most takeovers of school districts have been preceeded by a significant decline in union power. This decline is often the result of the passage of new legislation or a loss at the bargaining table.

[30] The teacher's unions are often blamed for the failure of reforms which might be considered to weaken the position of teachers and local administrators.

As previously mentioned, the three streams combine to form a policy window. For example, a drop in test scores combined with the increasing demands of NCLB may combine to raise public awareness of a problem. If a mayor, for example, then steps forward as a policy entrepreneur with a well thought out plan for a takeover, and a strong coalition backing his or her call for a changed governance structure, then it is quite possible that the necessary change to the city charter will pass. This combination creates the opportunity for change, and if acted upon, will result in that change. This does not mean, of course, that there will be no resistance to the new policy. There may be, and often is with takeovers, significant opposition, but it is still possible to enact the changes. The existence of significant community support, backed by civic action, can greatly ease this process. In fact, a successful reform will become more popular once it begins to show results.

Civic Capacity

Over the last century, school reform agendas have focused on separating school governance from politics. Cities and towns went to great lengths to de-politicize school board elections, going so far as to ensure that these elections would not take place at the same time as other, more politically contentious, elections.

These efforts succeeded to a large degree, and were a reaction to the influence peddling that characterized local elections prior to the Progressive Era. Stone et al. (2001) argue, however, that the de-politicization may have gone too far and has resulted in low levels of civic participation in school elections.

They state: "Politics, in America though, has come to be too closely associated with the wheeling and dealing, backroom maneuvering, and sometimes cynical corruption of the machine-style politics that dominated many large cities around the turn of the last century (Stone 2001, 3)."

Like Henig (1994), Stone et. al. believe that political involvement is required in order to improve local schools. Effective implementation of a reform agenda requires the use of political and social capital. Institutionalization requires a "broad and sustainable coalition of support," (Stone 2001, 1) which cannot be accomplished without politics.

Under our current system, most reform efforts are short lived. Typically, a coalition forms around the time of elections, but quickly dissolves without ever having achieved any of its goals. Public pressure, and internal conflict, quickly tear the coalition apart once the campaigning has ended (Stone 2001).

The solution to this problem, they argue, is civic mobilization; essentially defined as the creation of civic capacity. Civic capacity is built when the various sectors of the community mobilize behind one common goal. It requires that fundamental relationships be altered and trust be built. Most importantly, it requires the complete replacement of the existing policy subsystem (Stone 2001).

Unfortunately, this is not always easy to accomplish. "Internal divisions among participants, for example between factions of residents or between residents and officials, may paralyze the group or allow someone to dominate. Or, even in the absence of conflict, groups may be unmotivated to utilize local discretion to innovate and advance public ends through problem-solving (Fung 2004, 7)."

Effective civic mobilization requires the participation of all levels of school officials and takes to implement. Cities which have created local school councils, such as Chicago, have often found that results are dependent on the amount of support provided by official institutions. In Chicago, for example, the local school councils suffered from a lack of training or support from the school board (Fung 2004).

Education functions similarly to other policy subsystems, with the institutionalized core resisting any change. As a result, major reforms must come from outside the system.[31] Civic mobilization can serve as a catalyst for this change, and has often proven effective in pushing for downtown revitalization programs[32] (Stone 2001). However, it is necessary to ensure that all sectors of the community are able to participate, as civic action can easily concentrate among the wealthy and more highly educated residents (Fung 2004).

[31] Research has shown that change in a subsystem is often disjointed, occurring in spasms between long periods of stability. These periods of change, which begin and end quickly, are one of the factors accounting for the high level of policy churn within the subsystem.

[32] A community is only able to mobilize around one or two issues at a time, and can often switch focus. The creation of a policy window depends, in part, on grabbing and holding, the public's attention on education.

Chapter 3:
METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a description of the methodology used within this paper. The chapter begins with the rational for the selection of a comparative case study methodology including the hypothesis and null-hypothesis. The chapter also includes the reasoning behind the selection of the four cities, operational definitions of all terms, and a discussion of threats to validity.

Comparative Case Studies

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this comparative case study is that there are indeed certain common characteristics between the four cities which have undergone a significant change in their educational system. The characteristics which are expected to be the most similar are demographics, structure of local government, and economic challenges. The types of educational institutions and race dynamic are also expected to be fairly similar, but allow for greater regional variety.

Null-hypothesis

The null-hypothesis for this comparative case study is that there are no similarities between the four cities which relate to their having undergone a significant change.

Structure of the study

The methodology used for this paper is an explanatory multi-case study. This method has been selected due to the qualitative nature of the research, the types of data available, and the fact that the focus is on the process through which the significant change takes place. According to Yin, case studies are appropriate to: "(a) define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) to cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables, and (c) to rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence (Yin 2003, xi.)."

A case study, following the same basic model, has been developed for each of the four cities. These case studies have been compared and analyzed in terms of the research question. Each case study describes the process through which a particular reform was selected and then implemented, in light of Kingdon's policy stream theory.

The case studies focus on a particular set of characteristics, allowing for a more detailed comparison between the cities. Additionally, the case studies present any other information which may have been relevant to the significant change, but is unique to that particular situation. According to Stak, case studies "are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases (1994, 237)."

The resulting data is used to test the hypothesis, that there are indeed certain common characteristics shared by the four cities which have undergone a significant change in their educational system. Furthermore, these characteristics may reasonably be assumed, although further study would be needed, to have influenced the decision, or need, to undergo said significant change as well as the type of reform selected.

The data is also used to test the null hypothesis, that there are no similarities between the four cities which correlate to their having undergone a significant change.

Selection of the 4 cities

Each of the four cities selected was facing very similar problems at the time in which they elected to undergo a significant change. The four cities were selected for a variety of reasons including their relevance to the study and the availability of data. These problems included low performing school systems, public discontent with the current state of affairs, and other difficulties shared by big cities such as poverty and the flight of the middle class tax base.

A more detailed rationale for selection is provided below.

Boston

Boston's experience with significant change in educational governance in the form of a mayoral takeover serves as an excellent example of political action through the creation of a policy window. As such, it is particularly suited to an analysis based on Kingdon's theories.

The city of Boston was selected, not only for its particularly good fit to the study, but also because of the availability of data. Boston underwent its change in the early 1990s, and as a result, figures prominently in much of the literature. Like Chicago, Boston is often cited as a classic example of a mayoral takeover (Henig 2004).

Chicago

Chicago is often cited as a model for successful school governance changes as a result of its experience with local school councils and a mayoral takeover (Wong 2002). The city, and its particular path to mayoral control, is mentioned frequently across the literature. As a result of this, there is a great deal of information available, including multiple case studies. While this alone is not sufficient to justify its inclusion in this paper, it is sufficient to prohibit its exclusion.

Chicago's experience is particularly interesting because the city experimented with Local School Councils (LSC) before electing to undergo a mayoral takeover. As a result, it is possible to view the two reforms independently and search for the particular factors that led to them. Additionally, it is also possible to analyze the reasons for which the LSC system was abandoned. In fact, of the four cities, Chicago has the longest history of school reform and is the only city to have undergone two significant changes.

Philadelphia

The city of Philadelphia was selected due to the availability of data and the uniqueness of its particular situation. Philadelphia is the largest school district ever taken over by a state, as well as the largest scale attempt at privatization, to date, in this country.

As a result of this, there is a great deal of data available on the city's experience, including a recent study which focused solely on the educational gains from the experiment with privatization (Gill et. al. 2005).

Philadelphia's experience with privatization is often cited as a success and has been used as a model for other cities (Eva 2003). In fact, the Bring New Orleans Back Commission[33] based several of their recommendations on this city. This relationship to the changes being considered in New Orleans, is another reason for the inclusion of Philadelphia

New Orleans

The city of New Orleans is in some ways quite different from the other three cities included in this study. To begin, New Orleans is the only Southern city in the sample. While this study is not meant to compare North and South, such a distinction must be mentioned as it may have some effect on the data. Of particular importance is the possibility that New Orleans' particularly difficult experience with school desegregation may still inform the debate surrounding school reform.

[33] The Bring New Orleans Back Commission (BNOBC) was created following Hurricane Katrina to serve as an advisory body to the mayor's office. BNOBC and its recommendations are described in greater detail in the New Orleans chapter.

New Orleans is also the only city in this sample which has not yet settled on one particular reform. This makes it difficult to conduct a full comparison with the other cities, but it also provides valuable insight into the exact process by which various reform ideas are suggested and then either dropped or pursued.

The author's location, as a student at the University of New Orleans, allows for increased access to first hand information. This information is available via the media, the insights of the faculty, and the information released by various local government agencies. Additionally, the reforms currently being discussed in New Orleans embody a mixture of best practices from various reform strategies. This alone, makes New Orleans of particular interest.

However, New Orleans also shares much in common with the other three cities. The dismal state of education has long been recognized and continues to lead to calls for reform. Hurricane Katrina has served to expedite this process, although one particular reform has not yet been adopted.

Collection of Data

The data for these case studies was collected through a review of the literature, local and national educational performance data, and a search for newspaper articles. A content analysis has been conducted looking for the following variables: mention of race, call for reform, problems mentioned, proposed solutions, stakeholders mentioned, and the source. Race was selected as a means of determining the role of race in the educational debate; call for reform was selected to gauge the tone of urgency presented by the articles; problems mentioned was selected to see what range of problems were discussed and if they mirrored those found in the literature; proposed solutions were selected to wee what range of solutions where discussed, is they directly corresponded to the problems cited, and if they mirrored those mentioned by the literature; and, stakeholders mentioned was selected to determine which actors were most often in the public eye. A document summary form will be prepared for each article as recommended by Miles and Huberman (Miles 1994).

The current literature has been surveyed for case studies, and other analysis, relating to the four cities in question. These case studies serve as the primary tool for data gathering. While there are not many such case studies available, and a wide disparity in the number available from city to city, this paper endeavors to focus on information for which there are multiple sources of evidence.

Local and national performance data have been used to compare the educational attainment within the cities prior to the reform, and in some cases following the reform. These data were gathered from nationally recognized sources and local educational agencies. The focus is on national data as it allows for a more direct comparison.

The final source of data is local newspaper articles. Whenever possible, these articles span a five year timeframe beginning before the reform and culminating shortly after its implementation. All articles were taken from nationally recognized newspapers, preferably the primary paper in the city.

Operationalization of Terms

Significant change

For the purpose of this study a "significant change" is defined as a change in the governance or structure of the school system. This change must occur as a result of legislation or a change to the city charter.

Characteristics related to this decision

Demographics

*Operationalization***:** For the purpose of this study demographics are defined as the list of characteristics included in the census under this same heading.

*Measurement***:** The demographics for each city have been gathered from the most recent census data available. The census provides demographic snapshots for all American cities, and allows for an equivalent comparison from city to city.

*Importance***:** The demographics for the particular city are a means to compare the populations of the four cities with the same measurement tool. Additionally, the demographics may influence some of the other variables. For example, the racial makeup of the city will have an effect on the racial climate.

Educational Institutions

Operationalization: For the purpose of this study educational institutions refers to the school governance model in place in the city at the time of the decision to make a significant change. This category includes an analysis of the relationships between school board members, the schools and city government.

Measurement: Data on the types of educational institutions has been gathered from first hand accounts in current newspapers and from information found in other case studies. An in depth analysis of the particular institutions in place prior to the significant change can be found in the literature for most of these cities. It is worth noting, however, that the data for New Orleans, due in large part to the fact that the city has not completed the reform process, will be more reliant on newspaper accounts and recommendations made to the city by stakeholders.

Importance: The structure and type of educational institutions in place before a major reform can reasonably be assumed to have a major impact on the decision to reform and on the type of reform chosen. It is the failure[34], real or perceived, of the current institutions which leads to the decision to attempt a different form of educational governance. The original institutions may also serve as the starting point for the reform, as is it is usually much easier to adapt the current system than to fully create another one.

Structure of local government

Operationalization: For the purpose of this paper local government structure is defined as the type of government in place at the city level. In particular, this focuses on the role of the mayor and/or city council in the decision making process. The three primary forms are mayor-council, commission, and manager-council.

Measurement: The structure of the local government has been deduced from information available in the appropriate literature, the newspaper articles, and the city website.

Importance: The structure of the local government can reasonably be assumed to have an effect on the ability of different individuals to influence the policy making process. In particular, the role played by these city leaders in the realm of educational reforms may depend in part upon their role in city government. The relative amount of power held by the mayor, in particular, may influence the type of reform selected.

Economic challenges

Operationalization: For the purpose of this paper, economic challenges are defined as those economic issues, negatively impacting the city, which appear repeatedly across the literature and newspaper articles. These are economic issues which are recognized by the city, the media, and independent researches as having a negative effect on the particular city.

Measurement: Information regarding the economic challenges facing each of the cities, in education and in general, has been gathered from the relevant literature and newspaper accounts. Economic issues have been a major concern in each of these cities, as they have been in all cities in recent years, and as such, much information is available. It is important to note, however, that the definition of an economic challenge can be quite subjective. It is for this reason, that the case studies rely on triangulation to substantiate the selection of the various challenges for each city.

[34] Failure can be defined in many ways by the various stakeholders in an educational system. For the purpose of this study failure is considered the inability for a school system to provide what is expected of it, primarily to sufficiently educate its students.

Importance: The economic challenges facing a city can be assumed to have an effect on educational initiatives for many reasons. To begin with, most educational reforms require an influx of funds which the city, or state, must be able to support. Additionally, educational reforms are often considered a means of increasing the wealth of the city and, as such, are supported by the business community. The theoretical basis for this, is the idea that a more educated population will attract higher paying corporations which will in turn increase the middle, and upper, class population in the city.

Race dynamic

Operationalization: Race dynamic is defined as the relationship between the races, primarily black and white, in each of the four cities.

Measurement: The race dynamic in each city is described through an analysis of the city's experience with desegregation and the role of race in the debate over education. This has been be determined primarily through a content analysis of newspaper articles and a review of case studies.

Importance: Race often plays a major role in the political discourse surrounding education, and educational initiatives. School boards often vote along racial lines and accusations of racism, whether accurate or not, are often voiced. The school district is often the principal employer of African American middle class professionals in a big city (Hill & Celio 1998). Additionally, most school districts are not truly racially integrated; with poorer, and lower performing districts, enrolling a majority of minority students. As a result of this, it is reasonable to assume that the race dynamic in a city will have an effect on the policy process surrounding a significant change.

Threats to Validity

Internal Threats to Validity

*History***:** History poses a threat to validity in two ways. First, each of these cities underwent their particular change during a different time period. Therefore, different national and local events may have played a role in the policy process. Secondly, there may be other significant factors which have not been considered such as events not mentioned by the newspaper or events which only affected a particular school, and therefore not measured, by this paper.

Maturation: Maturation is not a significant threat to the internal validity of this study, because the units being studied, classrooms or districts, change their membership, in terms of students progressing to later grades, on a yearly basis.

Statistical Regression: Statistical regression is one of the main threats to internal validity, when looking at the effects of a reform measure on student test scores, that this study faces. While this study does not explicitly focus on the success, or failure, of the particular reform implemented in the city, it is still important to note that these scores may not be an accurate reflection of student performance.

Each of the four cities was chosen, in part, because their school systems were failing; a fact proven in large part by low test scores. As a result of this, the cities' scores are already outliers and are prone to regress toward the mean. Additionally, the school districts themselves, if they are an outlier in terms of national school district performance, may also regress toward the mean and show some small improvement, regardless of any changes made.

Statistical regression would be especially problematic in any follow up studies which do attempt to assess the success of the significant change.

Selection: The selection of the four cities, based mostly on the availability of data and accessibility for the author, leads to significant threat from selection. These cities, all of which have been the focus of academic and media attention, may have been more likely to undergo a significant change as a result of this increased exposure.

As a result of this, these cities may have other, unknown, factors which affected the decision to change the school governance model.

Experimental Mortality: Experimental mortality is not a threat to validity for this study as the cities are being analyzed retrospectively and are not actively participating.

Testing: Testing is not a significant threat to validity for this study. The test scores in the cities are not a major focus of the cases, beyond establishing that the educational system was indeed failing. Even if the test scores were a more significant factor, the same students are not usually tested twice. Instead, scores are compared for year groups, each of which is composed of different students.

There may be some natural improvement from a 4th grade aptitude test to an 8th aptitude test, due to increased familiarity with the material. However, different grade levels are seldom compared relative to each other.

Instrumentation: This study will attempt, whenever possible, to ensure that the measuring instrument is consistent between cases. Any exceptions to this rule will be noted. However, there may be some difference in test scores due to the administration of the tests. This difference would present a greater problem in a study which focused exclusively on the educational results of the reform; for this study, which is more focused on the policy decision process, this is not a significant threat.

Design Contamination: It is difficult to determine whether any of these cases will suffer from design contamination. On the one hand, the students and teachers were never formally part of a study. On the other hand, the media focus on a proposed change and the effects it could have, may lead some teachers or students to act differently. For example, the belief that more students are likely to be held back following a reform, may cause some teachers to be more lenient in their grading.

External Threats to Validity

External validity will necessarily be low in this paper, as the study is using a comparative case study methodology. The focus of the study is on the description and comparison of the policy process without aiming to generalize for all cities. Such a study would require greater resources than those currently available to the author, but may be a reasonable extension of this work.

Chapter 4:
RESULTS

The results of this study, for each individual city are shown below. A comparison of the cities is provided in chapter five.

Boston

Demographics

Table 4.1

Population Statistics[35]	
Population 2000	589,141
Percent Change in Population : 1990-2000	2.6%
Persons Under the Age of 18	19.8%
Land Area (square miles)	48
Persons per Square Mile	12,165.8
Households	239,528

Table 4.2

Racial Composition Statistics[36]	
White	54.5%
African American	25.3%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	7.5%
Hispanic / Latino	14.4%
Other	0.1%
Language other Than English At Home	33.4%

Table 4.3

Educational Attainment Statistics[37]	
High School Graduates (Age 25+)	78.9%
Bachelor or Higher (Age 25+)	35.6%

[35] (Quick Facts Boston 2000).
[36] (Quick Facts Boston 2000).
[37] (Quick Facts Boston 2000).

Table 4.4

Economic Statistics[38]	
Homeownership Rate	32.2%
Mean Value of Owner Occupied Units	$190,600
Median Household Income (1999)	$39,629
% of Persons Below Poverty Level (1999)	19.5%

Table 4.5

Crime Statistics[39]	
Serious Crimes	35,870
Serious Crimes per 100,000 Population	6,283
Property Crimes	28,548
Violent crimes	7,322

Table 4.6

School Enrollment Statistics[40]	
Elementary	20,630
Middle School	12,770
High School	18,870

Compared to the other three cities, Boston has one of the smallest populations, almost one sixth the size of that found in Chicago, the most populous city. However, Boston is experiencing a small amount of population growth, unlike most cities which are instead experiencing a decline in population. Boston also has the lowest percent of persons under the age of eighteen.

Despite its low population, Boston's population density is one of the highest. In fact, it is six times as high as the lowest population density, found in New Orleans. This can be explained by the fact that Boston covers the smallest land area of the four cities. Despite having one of the lowest number of households, Boston still maintains a high population density.

Of the four cities, Boston's racial composition includes the highest percent of white residents and the lowest of African American residents. However, the city has a significant Latino population and a high percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home. The presence of a non-English speaking minority, creates new challenges for the school district that are not necessarily found in districts such as New Orleans which has a very low Latino population[41].

[38] (Quick Facts Boston 2000)
[39] (FedStats Boston 2000)
[40] (DP-2 2000) These statistics are available for the entire state and are not available at the city level.
[41] This may, however, change following Hurricane's Katrina and Rita and the resulting Hispanic worker influx.

The city of Boston has the most highly educated population, thirty five percent of which holds a college degree or higher. This may be due to the high concentration of colleges and universities in the Boston area which far exceed that in the other cities. However, the percentage of the population with a high school education is similar across the four cities.

Boston also has the highest median household income, but has the lowest homeownership rate. This can be accounted for by the high price of homes, which far exceeds that of the other three cities. The city also has the one of the lowest poverty rates, although at almost twenty percent the rate is still rather high.

All four cities have a fairly similar crime level in terms of total population, although Boston does have a lower level of crime than most of the cities. Boston has a much lower number of students than Chicago and Philadelphia which is to be expected given its lower number of households.

Race Dynamic

Desegregation

Table 4.7

1855	Earliest calls for school desegregation in Boston.
1954	*Brown vs. Board of Education*
1961	School Committee enacts Open-Enrollment policy.
1963-1973	A white supremacist movement arises in response to calls for school desegregation.
1972	*Morgan et al.* v. *Hennigan et al.* filed by the NAACP.
1965	Racial Imbalance Act passes. It prohibits any school from being over 50% minority, but does not affect schools which are 100% white.
June 1974	A district court rules that deliberate policy and practice led to the segregation of public schools.
1974	Judge Garrity calls for the creation of a plan to integrate schools by December.
May 1975	A new plan is created by a panel put in place by Judge Garrity.

Boston's public schools were not only highly segregated; they were also highly unequal. In the 1960s and 1970s the district did not provide sufficient supplies to the African American schools and students rarely had complete textbooks (Kaufman 1991). Teachers had very low expectation of their African American students and often gave A's simply for good behavior. This led many parents to believe their students were doing quite well, when in fact they were significantly behind grade level (Kaufman 1991).

Extensive busing was also used in Boston in an effort to maintain the segregation of neighborhood schools. In 1972, for example, the city had to charter 172 busses and give out over 30,000 mass transit tokens (Dentler 2001, 12). The scope of this effort was a major factor in a 1975 court decision that Boston's school segregation was intentional.

A great deal of effort was put into maintaining a segregated school system. The School Committee went so far as to enact an open-enrollment policy in 1961 which allowed students to transfer to any school with available seats; provided they could secure their own transportation. On the surface, the policy appeared to encourage integration, but in reality it was intended to assist white students in transferring away from schools with a significant minority population. The African American students who tried to avail themselves of the opportunity to transfer were strongly discouraged and often told that there were no openings. As a result, very few African American students were able to take advantage of the policy; mostly those who were fortunate enough to have highly informed and persistent parents (Kaufman 1991).

Racial tensions existed in Boston before the desegregation movement, particularly around the school system. Boston's schools had been in a state of disarray for many years, with most affluent families electing to send their children to private schools. A 1960s plan to improve the school system, which only benefited white schools, had angered the African American community.

The African American community soon became very vocal in demanding equal access to an education. A group of mothers in the Roxbury neighborhood formed a group during the 1970s known as the Concerned Higgins Parents which was instrumental in focusing media attention on the inequalities in the district.

Even the NAACP became involved in Boston, filing suit in 1972. The lawsuit, *Morgan et al*. v. *Hennigan et al*. (1972) claimed that African American students were being denied their fourteenth amendment right to an equal education.

At the same time a white supremacist movement arose in response to the threat of desegregation including many protests and organized violence. However, the violence was in fact concentrated only in two neighborhoods. Most areas of the city were able to desegregate, although never fully, without any major incidents.

Boston's experience with school desegregation left behind many unresolved issues. One of these problems was the lack of teacher training in how best to teach in a more diverse classroom environment. The need for a teacher education program was recognized by school administrators at the time of desegregation, but their requests were denied (Kaufman 1991).

According to Dentler, Boston's schools remain mostly segregated; in part because over 5,000 white students fled the school system between 1974 and 1978 following the implementation of Judge Garrity's plan (2001, 16). African American students continue to lag behind white students in Boston and often attend the city's worst schools.

Role of Race in Education Debate

The minority community was highly supportive of the elected School Committee and felt slighted by the decision to shift over to an appointed committee. However, the appointed committee was actually more representative of the racial makeup of the city than the African American dominated elected committee had been. Racial tensions often surfaced in the political dialogue and were a factor in the election of committee members and the selection of a superintendent by the committee. Racial tensions were also present in city wide elections and city politics.

Economy

The city of Boston experienced a shift from manufacturing jobs to Information Technology (IT) sector and service jobs in the 1990s. The city also experienced significant population decline in the 1970s and 1980s, but has begun to see a slight increase in the 1990s. Boston is considered to be one of the top financial cities in the country and has a great deal of tourism and convention business.

Structure of Local Government

The city of Boston has a mayor-council form of government with a "strong mayor", in which the mayor functions as the executive and the city council as the legislative branch. Mayors are elected to four year terms and council members are elected to two year terms. The city council has thirteen members of which nine are elected by district and four are elected at large.

Educational Institutions

The city of Boston had an elected School Committee prior to 1990 and a superintendent chosen by the committee. The school district ran a yearly deficit and racial tensions were high. The mayor and city consistently engaged in political bickering with the committee and there were consistent calls to abolish the elected committee.

Content Analysis

The content analysis for Boston spanned the period from 1990 until 1995. This time frame was selected because it covers the shift to an appointed school committee as well as the supporting legislation passed in 1993 further increasing the mayor's power.

A search for Boston Globe articles using the terms 'school' and 'reform' yielded 237 articles within the relevant time period. Some articles which included the search terms, but in fact did not discuss Boston schools, were excluded from the analysis. Also excluded, are articles which discussed reform in a context not related to the issue of school reform, such as sports.

The majority of articles appeared from 1990 until 1993, the four years during which the governance change was taking place. The break down by year is as follows.

Table 4.8

1990	34
1991	44
1992	67
1993	60
1994	15
1995	17

Of the articles, only twenty-six percent mention race within the text or title. This percent was slightly lower than anticipated and may indicate that race does not play a significant role in the discourse surrounding the public school system in Boston. However, it is also possible that the Boston Globe is avoiding any mention of race as it is such a divisive issue in the city. Another possibility is that the race is simply assumed to be a factor, and does not need to be mentioned.

It is important to remember that while Boston is twenty-five percent African American and fourteen percent Hispanic, forty-four percent of students in public schools are African American and thirty-three percent are Hispanic. The high percentage of minority students in the public school system means that any discussion of the schools carries an implicit racial bent. The breakdown of mention of race is shown in the following table.

Table 4.9

Mention of Race	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Yes	21	10	10	15	3	3	62	26%
No	13	34	57	45	12	14	175	74%

Ninety-two percent of the articles found in the search mentioned an urgent need for reform. The remaining eight percent, while they did mention reform, did not do so with any urgency. This indicates that the newspaper is actively speaking out against the current state of education in Boston. The following table shows the yearly breakdown.

Table 4.10

Call for Reform	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Yes	32	42	63	53	13	14	217	92%
No	2	2	4	7	2	3	20	8%

The Boston Globe articles mention a variety of problems, both within the school system and in terms of specific schools. The problem mentioned most often was financial issues which appeared in thirty-five percent of all articles. The term "financial issues" refers mostly to a shortage of funds for the district as well as concerns regarding the state's role in funding education. Mention of financial issues is almost non-existent after 1993, but there is no obvious reason for this to be the case.

The term failing schools covers any mention of the poor state of schools or education in the city of Boston. This problem is mentioned in thirty-one percent of the articles, but is assumed to be an issue in most of the articles which deal with the need to reform schools. The problem is mentioned most often between 1990 and 1993 the years in which the shift to an appointed committee was made.

The state funding formula, and its failure to provide an equitable distribution of resources across districts, appears in fourteen percent of the articles. Closely tied to this issue is the prevalence of poverty among Boston school children which also appears in fourteen percent of all articles. These issues are often blamed for the city's failure to educate its students and provide an external source of blame.

The remaining problems mentioned are listed below in order of incidence.

Table 4.11

Problems Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Financial Issues	10	21	24	20	3	3	82	35%
Failing Schools	12	14	15	10	5	7	73	31%
State Funding Formula / Inequity	4	5	12	7	2	3	33	14%
Poverty	7	2	11	10	0	2	32	14%
Union	5	2	6	15	1	1	30	13%
Cuts	6	7	9	5	0	0	27	11%
School Committee	8	9	5	3	0	1	26	11%
Politics	4	3	9	8	0	1	25	11%
Bureaucracy	5	5	1	6	0	3	20	8%
Tenure	0	5	11	2	0	0	18	8%
Dropout Rate	5	5	1	0	0	2	13	<5%
Choice Models	1	3	1	7	0	0	13	<5%
Low Test Scores	4	1	4	1	1	1	12	<5%
Teacher Contract	5	0	2	4	0	0	11	<5%
Testing	5	2	0	2	0	1	10	<5%
Crime	1	2	1	3	1	2	10	<5%
Non-English Speakers	4	2	1	1	1	1	10	<5%
Racial Issues	4	1	1	1	1	0	8	<5%
Poor Teachers	0	4	2	1	0	1	8	<5%
Turnover	5	0	0	1	0	1	7	<5%
Administration	2	0	1	1	1	1	6	<5%
Resistance to Change	1	0	1	3	0	1	6	<5%
Societal Problems	1	0	2	1	0	2	6	<5%
Tracking	1	1	2	0	1	0	5	<5%
Mayor	1	2	0	2	0	0	5	<5%
Superintendent	0	1	3	1	0	0	5	<5%
Policy Churn	2	1	1	0	0	1	5	<5%
Facilities / Supplies	0	1	1	1	0	1	4	<5%
Reading	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	<5%
Declining Enrollment	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	<5%
Achievement Gap	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	<5%
Mayor / Superintendent Relationship	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	<5%
Mayoral Control	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	<5%
Corruption	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	<5%
Micromanagement	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Truancy	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Mayor / Committee	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Retention	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	<5%
Court Action	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	<5%
Overcrowding	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<5%
Charter Models	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<5%
Governor	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	<5%
Centralization	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	<5%
Vocational Education	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<5%
Math/Science Ed.	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

Most of the Boston Globe articles mentioned possible solutions to the problems facing the Boston Public Schools. However, some of the articles only discussed problems and did not discuss any corresponding solutions. Even those articles which did mention both problems and solutions often provided them separately from each other and did not offer solutions to all of the problems mentioned.

The solution which appeared most often, in thirty-two percent of all articles, is additional money. This solution mostly referred to additional funding from the state and corresponds to the thirty-five percent of articles mentioning financial issues as a problem. The need for more money was cited most often in 1992 also the year in which financial issues were cited most often.

School choice models were cited as a potential solution in sixteen percent of all articles, but such a model was never truly instituted in the city of Boston. The state did adopt a limited choice plan, but it did not truly affect the city of Boston. Choice models were primarily mentioned in 1993 while the state legislature was working on an expansion of the original choice bill passed earlier on. The passage of the expansion did have a bit more of an effect on Boston students.

School based management, which resembles the call for greater autonomy in other cities, was mentioned in fifteen percent of all articles as a solution. The majority of these mentions occurred in 1990 during which time the city was contemplating adopting school councils, a reform which was no longer focused on as much once mayoral appointment of committee members was instituted.

Parental involvement and teacher training both appeared in thirteen percent of all articles as a solution. However, these two solutions were not portrayed as completely repairing the problems facing the school system and were instead shown as pieces of a broader reform package.

The remaining solutions were mentioned in less than ten percent of articles and are listed below.

Table 4.12

Solutions Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Additional Money	7	15	25	19	4	5	75	32%
School Choice	8	7	3	18	1	0	37	16%
School Based Man.	13	9	6	4	2	1	35	15%
Parental Involvement	7	11	3	3	3	3	30	13%
Teacher Training	4	5	10	5	1	5	30	13%
Change State Funding	2	7	8	4	0	2	23	10%
New Teacher Contract	6	1	2	11	1	0	21	9%
Mayoral Control	5	10	4	1	0	1	21	9%
Autonomy	1	6	3	5	2	4	21	9%
Vocational Education	5	1	4	8	0	1	19	8%
Testing	1	8	4	3	1	0	17	7%
Business Involvement	2	5	3	4	0	2	16	7%
Accountability	2	6	3	2	0	2	15	6%
Longer Day/Year	1	5	4	3	0	0	13	<5%
Pre-K / Head Start	1	1	4	4	2	0	12	<5%
New Superintendent	7	0	0	2	0	3	12	<5%
Ease Firing	0	3	6	2	0	0	11	<5%
Bilingual Education	2	4	1	2	1	0	10	<5%
Technology	0	4	3	2	1	0	10	<5%
New School Committee	3	5	1	1	0	0	10	<5%
Restructure District	3	2	3	1	0	0	9	<5%
Com. Involvement	3	1	2	1	1	0	8	<5%
Charter Schools	0	0	0	4	2	2	8	<5%
Focus on Students	2	1	4	1	0	0	8	<5%
Teacher Certification	0	4	3	1	0	0	8	<5%
Court Action	3	2	1	0	0	1	7	<5%
Leadership	0	3	2	1	0	1	7	<5%
Teacher Raises	1	0	2	3	1	0	7	<5%
Alt. School Models	1	2	0	1	2	1	7	<5%
Cuts	2	1	2	2	0	0	7	<5%
Vouchers	0	0	5	0	0	1	6	<5%
Higher Ed Partnerships	1	3	0	1	0	1	6	<5%
Smaller Classes	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	<5%
Additional Time	0	0	1	3	0	1	5	<5%
Mentoring	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	<5%
Change Personnel	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	<5%
State Takeover	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	<5%
Merit Pay	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	<5%
Capital Improvements	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	<5%
Privatization	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	<5%
After School Programs	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	<5%
Strike / Protest	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Blueprint	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
New Mayor	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Discipline	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<5%
School Committee	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<5%
Tutoring	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	<5%
Court Action	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	<5%
Art/Music	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	<5%
Math/Science	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

A large variety of stakeholders in school reform were mentioned within the articles, some implicit in the problems or solutions discussed[42]. However, only explicit mention of stakeholders was considered for this analysis.

The stakeholder which appeared the most often in the newspaper articles, in seventy percent of them, is students. Mention of students was the highest in 1992 and 1993 both years during which there was concern that the students would be adversely affected by the city's financial problems.

Schools were mentioned in sixty-six percent of the articles, following a similar pattern to mention of students. Considering the fact that school choice was one of the solutions mentioned most often, it is not surprising that schools were so often cited. The schools are an inherent stakeholder in most of the possible reforms mentioned.

Teachers, much like schools, are also an inherent stakeholder. However, most of the mention of teachers centered around their contract and not on the students or education. Teachers were mentioned in forty-six of the articles.

The remaining stakeholders are listed below in order of incidence.

Table 4.13

Stakeholders Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Students	25	32	47	39	11	12	167	70%
Schools	22	35	43	33	12	11	156	66%
Teachers	18	23	27	23	11	7	109	46%
State Legislature	3	22	36	33	0	2	96	41%
Governor	9	23	33	21	0	1	87	37%
Mayor / City Hall	11	11	17	28	5	11	83	35%
Parents	13	19	18	12	9	10	81	34%
Union	11	11	19	26	6	5	78	33%
School Committee	14	14	20	17	4	7	76	32%
Superintendent	9	14	15	10	5	7	60	25%
Businesses	7	16	12	11	3	6	55	23%
State Board / State	8	12	14	6	2	3	45	19%
Administration	6	8	9	5	4	3	35	15%
Community / Voters	5	3	8	6	1	4	27	11%
Courts	5	3	2	7	0	0	17	7%
Private Schools	2	2	3	3	1	1	12	<5%
Higher Education	2	5	1	2	0	1	11	<5%
Federal Government	4	3	1	1	1	1	11	<5%
City Council	2	3	0	2	1	1	9	<5%

[42] Mention of school choice, for example, assumes that parents and students are stakeholders.

Table 4.14

Reform Timeline	
1940s	Calls to abolish the elected school committee begin.
1986-1990	The city continuously runs a budget deficit.
1980s	A coalition of corporate and civic leaders makes the first attempt at an appointed school board.
Early 1990s	The city's mood shifts towards a more drastic reform measure.
1991	The city council approves an appointed committee.
1993	Massachusetts passes legislation raising funds to the city, granting greater powers to fire school administrators, and raising education standards.
1996	A public vote goes in favor of the new governance structure.

Discussion

Boston's educational reform serves as a very good example of political action through the creation of a policy window. Many of the relevant case studies clearly outline the convergence of the three streams leading up to the reform. Henig states that "mayoral control of public education in Boston emerged from a local history of tensions and discord around school governance that focused on the ineffectiveness of the school committee and concluded with a local referendum and state legislation creating a mayoral-appointed board (2004, 96),"

The problem stream included very low academic achievement, financial mismanagement, and problems with patronage. The district continuously ran a deficit from 1986 until 1990, needing last minute emergency funds from the state each year. The school district also suffered from racial-tensions and political infighting, resulting from a highly fragmented policy community. All the indicators pointed to the existence of a serious problem, although the persistence of the negative indicators, along with the feeling that no solution was available, also served to decrease the public's sense of urgency. Many studies and committees were constantly releasing their findings and demanding change in the school system (Henig 2004).

The yearly deficit added to the fragmentation of the policy community and only served to increase political tensions. The school committee blamed the city for inadequate funding, while the city felt that the school committee was mismanaging the funds they already had[43]. This arrangement led to a self perpetuating cycle in which there was a yearly threat of operational shut down hanging over the students, and a political environment that consisted of passing blame instead of compromising on a solution.

[43] The legal arrangement was that the mayor and city council set the education budget, while the committee allocated resources.

The policy stream, besides containing a wide range of contradictory suggestions, had included some calls for a change in governance for quite some time. In fact, there had been calls to abolish the elected school committee since the 1940s and Mayor Flynn was a proponent of mayoral control. However, the first attempt at making the shift over to an appointed council did not occur until the 1980s. A group of corporate and civil leaders formed a coalition and began calling for an increase in mayoral control, including an appointed school committee and the hiring of a superintendent who would be able to work closely with the mayor's office. They failed, however, to correctly judge the political environment[44], and only received 37% of public support.

Unlike the 1980s, the political stream in Boston was at a perfect point to accept mayoral control in the early 1990s: "The city's economy was bustling, downtown construction was burgeoning, the mayor's commitment was unequivocal, the teachers union and the private sector were supportive, and the appointed school committee provided a legitimate supportive authority for the new superintendent" (Cuban 2003, 40).

The mayor was willing to stake his reputation on the city's education, the union was not in opposition, and the private sector was behind the governance shift. In 1991, the city council, working in combination with the state legislature and governor, approved the creation of an appointed committee. The situation was originally quite tense, as the Superintendent, Louis Harrison-Jones, had just been hired by the elected school committee and did not get along with the mayor (Cuban 2003).

A 1993 piece of legislation, passed by the state, was instrumental in the success of the takeover. It raised funding to the city, made it easier to fire underperforming school administrators, and raised the standards. The hiring of Payzant as Superintendent, following the expiration of Harrison-Jones' contract, also helped the takeover to run more smoothly as tension between Harrison-Jones and Mayor Menino had been detrimental to the school reform efforts.

In fact, the great working relationship shared by Mayor Menino and Superintendent Payzant is often cited as one of the primary reasons for the successes of the takeover as it greatly increased the cooperation between the various players and lowered the level of racial tension present(Cuban 2003).

Although it is too soon for a true assessment of the results of the takeover, a 1996 public vote went in favor of keeping the new governance structure. The political stream remains favorable for the initiative with Mayor Menino stating in his 1996 State of the City Address that he wished to be judged by the performance of the school system.

[44] The mood in the city was not supportive of an increase in mayoral control, nor did the mayor step up and declare his desire to increase his involvement in school politics. This failed attempt actually made it more difficult to pass mayoral control later on, as there was already a history of such initiatives failing to pass a referendum.

Chicago

Demographics

Table 4.15

Population Statistics[45]	
Population 2000	2,896,016
Percent Change in Population : 1990-2000	4%
Persons Under the Age of 18	26.2%
Land Area (square miles)	227
Persons per Square Mile	12,750.3
Households	1,061,928

Table 4.16

Racial Composition Statistics[46]	
White	42%
African American	36.8%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	4.3%
Hispanic / Latino	26.0%
Other	0.1%
Language other Than English At Home	35.5%

Table 4.17

Educational Attainment Statistics[47]	
High School Graduates (Age 25+)	71.8%
Bachelor or Higher (Age 25+)	25.5%

Table 4.18

Economic Statistics[48]	
Homeownership Rate	43.8%
Mean Value of Owner Occupied Units	$132,400
Median Household Income (1999)	$38,625
% of Persons Below Poverty Level (1999)	19.6%

[45] (Quick Facts Chicago 2000).
[46] (Quick Facts Chicago 2000).
[47] (Quick Facts Chicago 2000).
[48] (Quick Facts Chicago 2000)

Table 4.19

Crime Statistics[49]	
Serious Crimes	No data
Serious Crimes per 100,000 Population	No data
Property Crimes	169,699
Violent crimes	No data

Table 4.20

School Enrollment Statistics[50]	
Elementary & Middle	269,021
High School	106,093

Chicago has the highest population out of the four cities, twice as high as the next highest which is Philadelphia. The city also has one of the highest percentages of persons under eighteen, the highest number of households, the largest land area and the most persons per square foot.

In terms of racial composition, Chicago has the highest percent Hispanic population, almost twice as many as the next highest, Boston. Additionally, Chicago has the highest number of persons who speak a language other than English at home. The largest percentage of the population is white, although the percent African American is not much lower and the total minority population exceeds the white population.

The level of education received by those living within the Chicago is fairly similar to that of the other cities.

Chicago also has the second lowest home ownership rate and the second highest home values which may account for the high number of renters. In terms of income, Chicago is one of the highest and has the lowest poverty level. Crime data was unavailable for Chicago with the exception of property crimes which exceeded those in other cities. However, considering the relative population size, the crime rate may not actually be higher.

Chicago has the largest number of students in the public schools, more than doubling that found in Philadelphia, the next highest. The magnitude of the district presents organizational challenges not necessarily seen in the other cities.

[49] (FedStats Chicago 2000)
[50] (CPS 2004)

Race Dynamic

Desegregation

Table 4.21

1963	Massive demonstrations arise in response to Superintendent Willis' segregationist policies.
1966	James Redmond becomes superintendent and attempts to develop an integration plan, but is unable to overcome opposition.
March 1977	Chicago Board of Education founds a Citizens Advisory Committee and hires a desegregation consultant; both tasked with the creation of a desegregation plan.
1980s	Chicago undergoes a court ordered desegregation program, but almost no white students remain in the school system.

Chicago experienced an influx of African Americans following World War II which led to the expansion of neighborhoods and the need to redraw school boundary lines to prevent integration. This effort brought to light the many funding inequalities between white and black schools and sparked opposition to the policy of segregation.

The superintendent at the time, Benjamin Willis, was a fierce opponent of integration. His policies, which were often at the expense of African American schools and blatantly racist, led to massive demonstrations in 1963 (Encyclopedia n.d.). Yet these demonstrations did not represent the majority opinion which was still opposed to integration.

The US department of Health, Education and Welfare stated its intention to withhold federal funds if Superintendent Willis did not change some of his policies. However, Mayor Richard J. Daley was able to block this threat and maintain the status quo.

The next Superintendent, James Redmond, attempted to develop an integration plan but was unable to gather sufficient support. In fact, his plan was greeted with a series of hostile demonstrations; illustrating the point that the city of Chicago was very much split on the issue of desegregation.

In the 1980s Chicago was finally forced to accept a court ordered integration plan, but most of the city's white students had already fled to suburban schools. Between 1970 and 1990, the white portion of the school population fell by 75% (Encyclopedia n.d., 1). As a result, schools remain mostly segregated to this day.

Role of Race in Educational Debate

The minority community was highly supportive of the new LSC structure, particularly the Hispanic community which found itself in a new position of power. However, the firing of many white principals by Hispanic dominated LSCs had significantly increased the racial tensions in the city. The mayor and School Board Nominating Committee made an effort to ensure that the board had a good racial distribution, but tended to bias towards African Americans. In fact the superintendents were traditionally African Americans as were many administrators. Racial tensions often surfaced in the political dialogue and were a factor in the selection of board members and the selection of a superintendent by the board. Racial tensions were also present in city wide elections and city politics.

Economy

The city of Chicago is a major financial center and a regional transportation hub. However, the city's unemployment rate is much higher than the national average and the population experienced a significant decline during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The economy has moved away from manufacturing and the city has increased its dependence outside of the immediate region.

Structure of Local Government

The city of Chicago has a mayor-council form of government with a "strong mayor", in which the mayor functions as the executive and the city council as the legislative branch. Mayors are elected to four year terms. The city council consists of fifty aldermen all of which are elected by ward. The city council has the power to enact ordinances and must approve the city budget.

Educational Institutions

The city of Chicago had already seen a governance change with the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act in 1988. The act created a School Board Nominating Committee which prepared slates of candidates for the mayor to select from, replacing the elected Board of Education. The mayor and Nominating Committee often engaged in bickering with Mayor Daley refusing to approve any candidates on several occasions. The act also created the Chicago School Finance Authority which was required to approve the yearly school budget, which must be balanced before classes could begin. The school board had the authority to select the superintendent and often made decisions based on race.

Content Analysis

The content analysis for Chicago spanned the period from 1990 until 1995. This time frame was selected because it covers both the initial years of the Chicago School Reform Act (CSRA) as well as the events leading up to the amendment of the CSRA in 1995 increasing the mayor's control.

A search for Chicago Tribune articles using the terms 'school' and 'reform' yielded 835 articles within the relevant time period. Some articles which included the search terms, but in fact did not discuss Chicago schools, were excluded from the analysis. Also excluded, are articles which discussed reform in a context not related to the issue of school reform, such as sports.

The majority of articles appeared in 1990 and 1991, the two years immediately following the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act. In fact, many of these articles discuss the implementation of the CSRA. The break down by year is as follows.

Table 4.22

1990	182
1991	189
1992	125
1993	125
1994	98
1995	116

Of the articles, only twenty percent mention race within the text or title. This percent was much lower than anticipated and may indicate that race does not play a significant role in the discourse surrounding the public school system in Chicago. However, it is also possible that the Chicago Tribune is avoiding any mention of race as it is such a divisive issue in the city. Another possibility is that race is simply assumed to be a factor, and does not need to be mentioned.

It is important to remember that Chicago is thirty-six percent African American and twenty-six percent Hispanic. In fact, almost fifty percent of public school students are African American and thirty-eight percent are Hispanic. Therefore, any discussion of the school system carries an implicit racial bent. The following chart illustrates the breakdown by year.

Table 4.23

Mention of Race	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Yes	58	43	16	20	16	18	171	20%
No	124	146	109	105	82	98	664	80%

Seventy-nine percent of the articles found in the search mentioned an urgent need for reform. The remaining twenty-one percent, while they did mention reform, did not do so with any urgency. This indicates that the newspaper is speaking out against the current state of education in most of its articles.

Table 4.24

Call for Reform	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Yes	149	125	99	86	89	109	657	79%
No	33	64	26	39	9	7	178	21%

The Chicago Tribune articles mention a variety of problems, both within the school system and with the CSRA. The problem mentioned most often was financial issues which appeared in forty-one percent of all articles. Financial issues mostly referred to a shortage of funds for the district and the constant need to request additional funds from the state to avoid an operational shutdown. Other issues mentioned included mismanagement of funds and declining property taxes in the city. The mention of financial issues peaked in 1993 as the budget crisis came to a head and the city was forced to take out bonds.

Politics and political wrangling between the various entities involved in running the school district appears in thirteen percent of the articles as a problem. Most of these articles called for increased cooperation and for placing the needs of the students before political concerns. Most of the articles discussed the mayor and governor, as opposed to school board or LSC members. Mention of politics also peaked in 1993, paralleling the financial issues of the time.

Bureaucracy, failing schools, poverty, and social factors appear in between ten to twelve percent of all articles. These issues are consistently blamed for the abysmal state of education in Chicago, but no solutions are offered within the articles. All other problems were mentioned in ten percent or less of all articles. The breakdown of problems mentioned by year is shown in the following table sorted by order of occurrence.

Table 4.25

Problems Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Financial Issues	20	78	70	85	44	42	339	41%
Politics	20	21	14	27	16	7	105	13%
Bureaucracy	19	18	20	9	11	26	103	12%
Failing Schools	24	11	14	12	12	23	96	11%
Poverty	16	13	21	17	12	12	91	11%
Societal Problems	10	5	1	7	8	2	83	10%
Low Test Scores	14	9	15	15	15	9	77	9%
Union	23	4	8	23	9	9	76	9%
Crime	13	10	10	12	15	12	72	9%
Cuts / School Closings	7	17	16	12	4	8	64	8%
Dropout Rate	13	9	10	8	11	8	59	7%
State Funding Formula	15	7	7	10	10	6	55	7%
Protests / Strikes	0	25	5	7	1	10	48	6%
School Board	3	13	10	4	5	12	47	6%
Administration	9	8	8	6	4	7	42	<5%
Teacher Contract	4	24	5	7	0	0	39	<5%
Candidate Shortage	12	10	1	7	3	1	34	<5%
Racial Issues	20	5	2	4	3	0	34	<5%
CSRA	5	11	5	5	1	2	29	<5%
Truancy	3	4	5	4	8	4	28	<5%
Overcrowding	10	2	1	4	3	5	25	<5%
Corruption	5	2	3	3	5	7	25	<5%
Superintendent	0	8	7	3	2	4	24	<5%
LSC Election Process	0	23	0	0	0	0	23	<5%
Lack of LSC support	13	7	1	0	1	1	23	<5%
Court Action	19	1	0	0	0	1	21	<5%
Fired Principals	19	1	1	0	0	0	21	<5%
Turnover	0	2	6	4	6	2	20	<5%
Poor Teachers	5	1	2	2	3	7	20	<5%
Court Ruling	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	<5%
Facilities / Supplies	1	5	2	3	1	5	17	<5%
Media	3	6	2	3	1	2	17	<5%
LSCs	9	1	3	0	0	3	16	<5%
Declining Enrollment	1	6	3	1	1	2	14	<5%
Superintendent / Board	1	6	6	1	0	0	14	<5%
Board Nom. Com.	2	1	0	0	6	5	14	<5%
Mayor	9	1	0	1	1	0	12	<5%
Blueprint for Reform	3	6	2	0	0	0	11	<5%
Vouchers	1	1	5	0	1	2	10	<5%
Non-English Speakers	1	2	1	2	2	2	10	<5%
Testing	4	0	2	0	2	1	9	<5%
Principal / LSC	2	1	1	0	1	3	8	<5%
CSFA	0	0	1	1	0	6	8	<5%
Achievement Gap	1	1	2	2	2	0	8	<5%
Resistance to Change	2	2	2	0	1	0	7	<5%
School Board / LSC	5	1	0	0	0	0	6	<5%
Superintendent	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	<5%
Reading	4	1	0	0	0	1	6	<5%
Deputy Mayor of Ed.	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	<5%
Tenure	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	<5%

Table 4.25 Continued

Magnet Schools	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
Superintendent / LSC Relationship	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	<5%
Governor	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	<5%
Mayoral Control	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	<5%
Mayor / School Board	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	<5%
Policy Churn	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	<5%
Micromanagement	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	<5%
Economic Impact	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
LSC / School Relationship	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	<5%
Central Takeover	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	<5%
Mayor / Superintendent	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	<5%
Choice Models	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	<5%
Charter Models	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	<5%
Centralization	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%
Vocational Education	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	<5%
Math/Science Ed.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%
Private Schools	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%
Low Expectations	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

Many of the Chicago Tribune articles did not mention possible solutions to the problems facing Chicago Public Schools and only focused on the problems facing the system. However, some articles did mention some possible solutions although these solutions did not necessarily correlate to the problems discussed within that article.

Of the various solutions discussed additional money was mentioned most often, appearing in twenty-three percent of all articles. This solution was mentioned consistently throughout the six years, in response to the consistent financial crisis faced by the school board. In almost all of these articles the additional money was expected to come from the state, although a few mentioned the federal government and private foundations.

Autonomy, or increased decision making power at the local school level, appeared in fourteen percent of all articles. This solution appeared most often in the early 1990s as the LSCs were first coming into being, declined significantly in 1993 and 1994, but then rose again in 1995 under the threat of mayoral control.

Cuts to programs and bureaucracy were mentioned in eleven percent of all articles. These cuts represented an alternative solution to the financial problems facing the city which did not involve requesting additional money from the state. In fact, the state required some cuts in order to provide additional funds. Mention of cuts appears most often in 1991, as the first major financial crisis during this time period began.

Other solutions were mentioned in under ten percent of all articles and are listed by order of incidence in the following table.

Table 4.26

Solutions Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
Additional Money	24	40	34	38	22	33	191	23%
Autonomy	23	14	29	13	13	21	113	14%
Cuts	0	40	27	17	0	10	94	11%
New Teacher Contract	11	14	11	33	5	7	81	10%
Parental Involvement	18	13	5	9	11	9	65	8%
LSC	21	18	5	9	4	5	62	7%
Teacher Raises	8	23	8	7	1	8	55	6%
Change CSRA	16	26	2	0	2	1	47	<5%
CSRA	17	10	5	4	6	3	45	<5%
Mayoral Control	1	6	4	4	4	25	44	<5%
Focus on Students	6	13	10	5	4	5	43	<5%
Com. Involvement	10	12	3	9	3	5	42	<5%
Accountability	5	6	7	4	10	7	39	<5%
Smaller Classes	5	4	7	5	7	11	39	<5%
Court Action	11	4	5	16	2	0	38	<5%
Teacher Training	8	2	6	4	9	6	35	<5%
Alt. School Models	3	5	5	6	8	5	32	<5%
Change State Funding	3	6	5	1	10	4	29	<5%
Vouchers	3	3	1	6	6	8	27	<5%
Restructure District	11	1	3	2	7	3	27	<5%
Change Board	14	0	8	0	5	0	27	<5%
LSC Training /Support	11	6	3	1	1	4	26	<5%
Discipline / Security	9	2	0	4	10	1	26	<5%
Change Personnel	13	2	1	0	3	2	21	<5%
Longer Day/Year	2	3	2	4	2	7	20	<5%
Ease Firing	0	0	1	8	1	9	19	<5%
Charter Schools	0	0	0	0	8	10	18	<5%
Privatization	5	0	1	1	4	7	18	<5%
Technology	3	3	2	1	6	2	17	<5%
Business Involvement	5	2	3	3	0	3	16	<5%
Testing	3	7	2	0	2	1	15	<5%
Leadership	4	3	3	2	1	2	15	<5%
Tutoring	2	4	2	4	0	2	14	<5%
School Choice	5	5	0	0	0	3	13	<5%
New Superintendent	0	2	6	5	0	0	13	<5%
Strike / Protest	3	8	0	2	0	0	13	<5%
Audit	1	1	0	5	4	2	13	<5%
Bilingual Education	1	1	0	2	1	7	12	<5%
Pre-K / Head Start	4	2	3	1	1	1	12	<5%
Capital Improvements	2	0	1	3	2	3	11	<5%
Remediation	0	0	0	0	4	5	9	<5%
Vocational Education	2	0	2	1	3	0	8	<5%
Higher Ed Partnerships	0	1	1	1	0	5	8	<5%
Additional Time	0	1	1	2	2	0	8	<5%
Desegregation	0	3	0	2	1	2	8	<5%
Teacher Certification	2	1	1	0	1	3	8	<5%
Mentoring	2	1	2	1	2	0	8	<5%
Change LSC Voting	0	7	0	0	0	0	7	<5%
Social Services	1	1	0	2	2	0	6	<5%

Table 1.26 Continued

Elected Board	0	3	0	0	1	1	5	<5%
After School Programs	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	<5%
Mini-Districts	0	0	1	1	2	0	4	<5%
CSFA	0	2	0	1	0	1	4	<5%
CEO Model	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	<5%
New Deputy Mayor of Education	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
Student Input	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	<5%
Reading	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	<5%
Blueprint	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
Motivate Students	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
Magnet Schools	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
LSC Organization	0	2	0	0	0	2	4	<5%
Boarding Schools	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	<5%
Central Takeover	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	<5%
State Takeover	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	<5%
Arts / Music	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	<5%
Middle Schools	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	<5%
Merit Pay	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	<5%
Superintendent	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	<5%
Technology	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	<5%
Summer School	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
New Mayor	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

A large variety of stakeholders in school reform were mentioned within the articles, some implicit in the problems or solutions discussed[51]. However, only explicit mention of stakeholders was considered by the analysis.

The stakeholder which appeared most often in the newspaper articles, in fifty-two percent of them, was the School Board. This is somewhat surprising as only six percent of all articles cited the school board as a problem and almost none of the articles cited the board as part of the solution. Also surprising is the fact that mention of the board peaks in 1991. However, one could reasonably expect that the Board would be an implied stakeholder in any discussion of the area school system.

The schools are also mentioned in fifty-two percent of the articles. However, the schools are an implied stakeholder in all of the articles which discuss school reform. Mention of the schools as stakeholders is fairly consistent over the six years. Students, also implied stakeholders, are mentioned in forty-seven percent of the articles. Mention of students is fairly spread out over the six years.

[51] A discussion of the need for more money, for example, assumes the state to be a stakeholder.

Teachers are mentioned in thirty-nine percent of the articles, most often in term of the union and the contention over raises. However, mention of teachers does not peak during the years which represent the greatest conflict with the union, and are instead spread out evenly over the years. Teachers are also mentioned in terms of their role in the classroom, although this is not as prevalent as mention of the labor issues. This focus highlights one of the problems in the district, the failure to focus on the students in favor of political considerations.

Other stakeholders mentioned are listed below in order of incidence.

Table 4.27

Stakeholders Mentioned	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total	Percent
School Board	53	114	98	82	44	44	435	52%
Schools	39	80	86	90	65	73	433	52%
Students	50	85	52	85	63	59	394	47%
Teachers	45	81	55	59	39	47	326	39%
State Legislature	17	73	36	73	39	50	288	34%
Parents	37	65	31	47	33	37	260	31%
Superintendent	33	91	68	26	29	13	260	31%
LSC	56	83	38	30	23	28	258	31%
Mayor / City Hall	29	70	41	49	18	48	255	31%
Union	17	56	37	63	24	28	225	27%
Administration	32	40	48	31	42	29	222	27%
Governor	12	30	21	42	24	32	161	19%
State Board / State	11	28	23	20	22	15	119	14%
Chicago School Finance Authority	1	37	34	20	5	12	109	13%
Community / Voters	9	29	11	24	12	14	99	12%
Businesses	13	14	13	7	5	7	59	7%
Courts	5	22	4	21	5	1	58	7%
School Board Nominating Committee	16	4	7	2	7	5	41	<5%
CEO	0	0	0	0	0	28	28	<5%
Private Schools	2	6	4	3	5	2	22	<5%
Deputy Mayor of Education	9	5	3	2	0	0	19	<5%
Higher Education	3	4	2	1	2	5	17	<5%
Police Department	6	2	1	2	4	0	15	<5%
Private Foundations	0	0	3	0	2	9	14	<5%
Federal Government	6	3	2	2	1	0	14	<5%
Media	4	3	1	2	2	1	13	<5%
City Council	9	0	2	1	0	1	13	<5%
African American Community	3	5	1	2	1	1	11	<5%
Hispanic Community	3	4	0	1	1	0	9	<5%
UNO	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	<5%
Archdiocese	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	<5%

Discussion

Table 4.28

Reform Timeline	
1970s & 1980s	Chicago schools are functioning in a constant state of emergency.
1979	The city undergoes a major financial crisis.
1988	Chicago School Reform Act is passed.
1993	A study shows the failure of the Chicago School Reform Act
Mid 1990s	The political climate in the city begins to favor a drastic change in educational policy.
1995	The mayor is given the power to appoint a CEO and school board members

Chicago is often cited as a model for successful school governance changes. Since 1995, the mayor has had the power to choose the CEO and appoint all of the board members; however, the mayor is also held accountable for the success or failure of the school system. The district administration has been given increased power over finances and the ability to hold individual schools accountable for educating students (Wong 2001).

Chicago's public schools were in a state of emergency during the 1970s and 1980s: "Its mangled and unaccountable governance structure, poor financial and management controls, political strife, and labor-management conflicts, and the persistent woes of poor housing, health care, and disjointed and ineffective social welfare programs all contributed to substandard school performance and student achievement (Hess 2002, 379)."

The problem stream included all of the above and more. The school system was failing to adequately educate the city's children, suffered from frequent strikes[52], and had lost all credibility. A constant stream of negative indicators[53], along with the occurrence of a financial crisis in 1979[54], made it very clear to all parties involved that there was a definite problem with Chicago's educational system (Leiberman 2002).

[52] Chicago experienced eight strikes in fifteen years (Vallas 1999, 1).
[53] Indicators included abysmal test scores, increasing truancy and a very high dropout rate.
[54] The business sector had to step in to save the school system from bankruptcy; as a result, the sector was given oversight over district finances along with partial control over tax receipts. This oversight lasted until 1995, although it was initially intended to last for only 3-5 years, and was modeled after a similar experiment in New York.

The policy stream included a large variety of special interest groups, most of which used their power to halt potential reforms. Unfortunately, as a result of the policy community's fragmentation, there wasn't enough power consolidated behind any single reform idea. One advantage, despite this fragmentation, was that Chicago never truly had an elected board[55]. This fact minimized a great deal of the opposition from individuals who felt that their democratic rights were being challenged.

In 1988, Chicago's legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act (CSRA) which both raised the expectations for achievement, and created the Local School Council (LSC) system. The members of each LSC, representing a wide array of stakeholder groups, were elected by community members and parents. These councils were given a large amount of power, including the ability to hire and fire school administrators, over the individual schools they represented (Hess 2002).

The various LSCs were very different from each other, depending primarily on their particular memberships. According to Hess, the LSCs ended up exhibiting four different types of governance patterns. These are: limited governance, in which the council is strongly dominated by the school principal; moderate governance, in which there is significant discussion at meetings, but decisions are generally dominated by the principal; balanced governance, in which leadership is shared equally within the council; and excessive governance, in which there is too much conflict between the members and micromanagement of the school occurs. Additionally, any particular LSC might go through a series of governance styles over its lifetime.

This high level of variation within the LSC system makes it quite difficult to accurately gauge the effectiveness of this particular school reform. However, a study conducted in 1993 showed the failure of CSRA to make significant improvements in the level of educational attainment of the students. The study showed some limited success with elementary students, and even less with high school students (Hess 1999).

This failure served as an added impetus in the problem stream, as well as having an effect on the types of reforms being considered within the policy stream. The political stream, around the early to mid 1990s, was set for change. Mayor Daley had close ties to the business community and was willing to take responsibility for the educational system. The state legislature was under Republican control, and in favor of a mayoral takeover; this made it relatively simple to pass the appropriate Legislation. In fact, the Republican legislature was highly anti-union and eager to hold Mayor Daley accountable for the school system, whether or not he succeeded in improving it (Lieberman 2002).

The takeover brought with it a clearer and more accountable government structure, increased the public perception of stability, and quickly put the finances in order. The city was quickly able to present a balanced budget, something the School Committee had consistently struggled with.

[55] The school committee in Chicago was traditionally selected by the mayor from a slate of candidates provided by the School Board Nominating Committee.

New Orleans

Demographics

Table 4.29

Population Statistics[56]	
Population 2000	484,674[57]
Percent Change in Population : 1990-2000	- 2.5%
Persons Under the Age of 18	26.7%
Land Area	181
Persons per Square Mile	2, 684.3
Households	188, 251

Table 4.30

Racial Composition Statistics[58]	
White	28.1%
African American	67.3%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.2%
Asian	2.3%
Hispanic / Latino	3.1%
Other	0.9%
Language other Than English At Home	8.3%

Table 4.31

Educational Attainment Statistics[59]	
High School Graduates (Age 25+)	74.7%
Bachelor or Higher (Age 25+)	25.8%

Table 4.32

Economic Statistics[60]	
Homeownership Rate	46.5%
Mean Value of Owner Occupied Units	$ 87,300
Median Household Income (1999)	$27, 133
% of Persons Below Poverty Level (1999)	27.9%

[56] (Quick Facts New Orleans 2000).
[57] Year 2000 Census data is provided in order to ensure an equivalent comparison between the cities. The effects of Hurricane Katrina have significantly reduced the population in the New Orleans area, and it is too early to say what the final population count will be.
[58] (Quick Facts New Orleans 2000).
[59] (Quick Facts New Orleans 2000).
[60] (Quick Facts New Orleans 2000)

Table 4.33

Crime Statistics[61]	
Serious Crimes	34,001
Serious Crimes per 100,000 Population	7,217
Property Crimes	28,671
Violent crimes	5,330

Table 4.34

School Enrollment Statistics[62]	
Total	67,922

The city of New Orleans has the lowest population of the four cities and is experiencing a two and a half percent decline. However, New Orleans does have the greatest number of persons under eighteen, at a little over twenty-five percent.

New Orleans has a larger land area than most of the cities, but has the lowest persons per square mile and total households; one sixth that of the other cities. However, it is worth noting that a significant portion of New Orleans is actually water.

Of the four cities, New Orleans has the lowest percentage of white residents and the highest percentage of African American residents at over half of the total population. No other minority group has a significant presence in the city and only eight percent of residents speak a language other than English at home[63].

The level of educational attainment within New Orleans is similar to that of the other cities.

Compared to the other three cities, New Orleans has the second highest home ownership rate, along with the second lowest mean house value; less than half of that found in Boston. New Orleans also has the lowest income level and the highest poverty rate, at almost thirty percent.

New Orleans has the highest crime level per population, but does not actually have the highest number of crimes.

New Orleans has the second lowest school enrollment of the four cities with only Boston having a lower figure. The enrollment is considerably lower than that of Philadelphia and Chicago.

[61] (FedStats New Orleans 2000)
[62] (GNOCDC 2003)
[63] The influx of Latin American workers following Hurricane Katrina, along with the many residents who have not returned, is expected to change the demographic characteristics of the city.

Race Dynamic

Desegregation

Table 4.35

May 17, 1954	*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*
1954	Louisiana adopts an amendment requiring segregation in schools.
1956	Archbishop Rummel announces the integration of Catholic schools, but meets too much opposition to do so.
1956	Louisiana passes laws which would remove any State employee who supports integration.
1956	A federal court orders the city to integrate. State officials respond by filing a Statement of Opposition and the city does not comply with the court order.
1958	Louisiana authorizes the closing of any desegregated school.
1958	Parents are surveyed to determine if they would prefer closed schools over minor desegregation. 82% respond affirmatively.
1959	A federal court orders the city to file a plan for integration by March 1, 1960.
May 1960	In response to the city's failure to come up with a plan for desegregation Judge Wright drafts a plan himself.
June 20, 1960	The New Orleans School Board asks Governor Davis to take control of local schools and enforce segregation.
July 29, 1960	A State court files suit against the Orleans Parish School Board to prevent integration.
August 13, 1960	Mayor Morrison publicly states that a small amount of integration may be the best solution.
August 1960	As a result of this statement, Governor Davis moves to take control of New Orleans schools. He orders that they open on September 9 and remain segregated.
August 27, 1960	The Federal court retaliates with an injunction nullifying the seizure and ordering desegregation.
September 1960	Some school board members begin to meet with Judge Wright in an attempt to draft a plan. They are granted a delay until November 8.
November 8, 1960	Two New Orleans schools, both in the ninth ward, integrate.
December 15, 1960	The city's economic elite speaks out in favor in integration.

The city of New Orleans was originally expected by many to serve as a model of successful school desegregation. The city had a long history of racial mixture and an image, promoted by Mayor Morrison in the 1950s, of a progressive city (Crain 1969).

However, once the conflict began to escalate, city leaders refused to act against the growing opposition to desegregation. In short, no one stepped forward to lead the transition and the city suffered as a result. Desegregation resulted in mob violence, school boycotts, threats to individuals involved, and more. The conflict lasted an entire school year and left many teachers unpaid for months.

The State of Louisiana desperately fought against the integration of local school systems. At one point the Governor even threatened to close schools in order to prevent their desegregation. There was also a great deal of vocal opposition within the city itself. Even business groups, which had pushed for change in other cities, chose not to give public support. In fact, "New Orleans had not one white moderate group publicly supporting school desegregation (Crain 1969, 264)."

The city of New Orleans was ordered to draft a plan for the integration of the school system by March 1, 1960. However, no school board member was willing to be involved in its creation. Even those individuals who did support the creation of such a plan were unwilling to openly participate. As a result, Judge Wright created a plan himself. This plan was the first court-initiated plan in the United States; an unexpected development in a city expected to be a model of successful desegregation (Crain 1969).

The city went so far as to request a state takeover and attempt to remove itself from the issue entirely; but the state refused to do so. Instead, a State court sued the school board to prevent integration. As earlier, the city was once again torn between conflicting state and federal mandates.

Eventually Mayor Morrison made a public statement in support of token integration. His decision to do so spurred Governor Davis to issue a takeover order, and the federal courts to prevent it. Desegregation was beginning to appear inevitable, and Mayor Morrison's choice to endorse it led to the appearance of a few other supporters (Crain 1969).

Four members of the School Board, all moderates, began to meet with Judge Wright to discuss how best to integrate. At first, even these meetings were kept secret but they led to the first true signs of progress. The School Board requested the delay of integration until November 8, 1960 and this was granted. They received no real public support, were denied a request for public support from the economic elite, and were constantly threatened. The members attempted to distance themselves from all decision making, adopting complex rules to show that a scientific process was being followed.

In the end, desegregation was limited to two schools in the Ninth Ward, and only ten students were selected for the first year. These two schools, McDonough 19 and Frantz, already felt neglected by the city and were highly opposed to this decision. They were the best scientific choice, but not the best political selection (Crain 1969).

McDonough 19 was completely boycotted by whites and Frantz was mostly boycotted. The few white students who remained were often harassed and most did left before the end of the school year. Demonstrations and violence were commonplace outside the schools, and police did not attempt to prevent its occurance.

Racial tensions escalated in the city and eventually African American students began to retaliate. New Orleans suffered socially and economically eventually forcing the economic elite to speak in favor of integration.

The many problems faced during the integration process created racial tensions which affect school politics to this day.

There were many reasons for the conflict generated by the integration process. To begin, the School Board refused to act until tensions had already escalated. The schools to be integrated were not wisely selected and there was a failure of leadership at all levels. Finally, the economic elite did not assist in the process (Crain 1969).

Role of Race in Educational Debate

School Board politics in New Orleans were highly contentious with frequent accusations of racism. African American's held many of the higher level administrative positions and typically held a minority in the board. Racial tensions often surfaced in the political dialogue and were a factor in the election of board members, with most of those residents who participated voting along racial lines. The selection of a superintendent by the board was largely based on race as well. Racial tensions were also present in city wide elections and city politics.

Economy

The city of New Orleans is a major port and tourist destination. However, there is a glaring disparity between the rich and poor along with an increasing loss of those students who do complete a college education. Many residents have left the cities and moved to the suburbs over the last thirty years.

Structure of Local Government

The city of New Orleans has a mayor-council form of government with a "strong mayor", in which the mayor functions as the executive and the city council as the legislative branch. Mayors are elected to four year terms. The city council has seven members of which five are elected by district and two are elected at large (cityofno 2006).

Educational Institutions

The city of New Orleans had an elected School Board and a superintendent chosen by the committee, although the city had at one point experimented with a CEO. The school district ran a yearly deficit and racial tensions were high. The School Board was often accused of corruption and alternative governance structures were often discussed.

Content Analysis

The content analysis for New Orleans spanned the period from 2000 until August of 2005, immediately before Hurricane Katrina struck the area. This time frame was selected because it represents the six years leading up to the beginning of serious reforms. Post-Katrina newspaper articles were used as reference material for the paper, but are not included in the content analysis due to the magnitude of the event.

A search for Times Picayune articles using the terms 'school' and 'reform' yielded 375 articles within the relevant time period. Some articles which included the search terms, but in fact did not discuss New Orleans schools, were excluded from the analysis. Also excluded, are articles which discussed reform in a context not related to the issue of school reform, such as sports.

The majority of articles appeared in 2003 and 2004, both years in which education appears to have been in the public eye. The number of articles in 2005 is actually much higher if post-Katrina articles are included. The breakdown by year is as follows:

Table 4.36

2000	59
2001	57
2002	53
2003	85
2004	88
2005	35

Of the articles, only eleven percent mention race within the text or title. This percent was much lower than anticipated and may indicate that race does not play a significant role in the discourse surrounding the public school system in New Orleans. However, it is also possible that the Times Picayune is avoiding any mention of race as it is such a divisive issue in the city. Another possibility is that race is simply assumed to be a factor, and does not need to be mentioned.

It is important to remember that New Orleans is sixty-seven percent African American and that the public schools are mostly attended by minority students; ninety four percent of students are African American. Therefore, any discussion of the school system carries an implicit racial bent. The breakdown by year is shown below.

Table 4.37

Mention of Race	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	Percent
Yes	9	4	8	11	9	2	43	11%
No	50	53	45	74	79	31	332	89%

Ninety percent of the articles found in the search mentioned an urgent need for reform. The remaining ten percent, while they did mention reform, did not do so with any urgency. This indicates that the newspaper is actively speaking out against the current state of education in New Orleans.

Table 4.38

Call for Reform	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	Percent
Yes	55	55	51	77	70	30	338	90%
No	4	2	2	8	18	3	37	10%

The Times Picayune articles mention a variety of problems, both within the school system and in terms of specific schools. The problem mentioned most often was failing schools which appeared in eighteen percent of the articles. The term 'failing schools' is often used as a general way of describing the district's failure to adequately educate students; at other times, it is used in terms of test scores or NCLBA. The high usage of the term is due to its more generic application.

The School Board as an institution, as well as squabbling among members, was mentioned in eleven percent of the articles. Some news stories called for specific solutions, such as replacing members or instituting some type of takeover strategy. However, most of the articles did not mention any specific solutions to the problem. This shows a general consensus that the School Board is a source of conflict, but little agreement on how best to resolve the situation.

The School Board was mentioned most in 2004, three times as much as in any other year. This appears to correlate with the public's frustration surrounding the public argument between the School Board and Superintendent Amato, discussed further in the following section.

Two different problems, low test scores and financial issues, were both mentioned in eight percent of the articles. Articles which cited low test scores mentioned the scores themselves as a problem, not testing as a practice. Low test scores appeared as a concern most often in 2001, the first year in which failure of the LEAP test led to student retention. It is unclear if the articles indicate concern with the scores themselves, or with the consequences of the low scores; such as a potential state takeover.

Articles which cited financial issues as a problem include those which discussed lack of funds and faulty accounting practices. These articles were almost entirely found in 2003 and 2004, a time period during which accounting errors and lost grants came to light. The financial crisis faced by the district over these two years lead to a temporary financial takeover by the state. The takeover may account for the decline in mention of this problem in 2005.

All other problems were mentioned in five percent or less of the articles and are shown in the following table by order of occurrence.

Table 4.39

Problems Mentioned	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	Percent
Failing Schools	17	32	25	34	26	10	144	18%
School Board	8	14	11	6	33	9	81	11%
Financial Issues	4	6	1	16	22	10	59	8%
Low Test Scores	14	16	12	12	3	2	59	8%
Focus on Testing	11	4	5	12	5	1	38	<5%
Crime	8	5	2	7	5	0	27	<5%
Corruption	2	11	3	6	2	0	24	<5%
Teacher Quality	5	5	4	4	3	1	24	<5%
Facilities	6	3	3	6	3	1	22	<5%
Administrators	4	3	1	7	6	1	22	<5%
Poverty	5	8	3	2	0	0	18	<5%
Turnover	1	1	7	2	3	4	18	<5%
Teacher Shortage	3	4	2	4	2	1	16	<5%
Policy Churn	0	1	2	3	2	7	15	<5%
Middle Schools	0	3	5	2	2	2	14	<5%
Racial Inequality	3	2	1	5	3	0	14	<5%
Media Portrayal	1	1	2	4	6	0	14	<5%
Absenteeism	2	3	2	3	3	0	13	<5%
Senate Act 193	0	0	0	0	11	2	13	<5%
High drop out rate	2	2	3	2	2	0	11	<5%
School Takeover	0	1	0	7	0	2	10	<5%
Union Contract	0	3	2	2	2	0	9	<5%
School Choice	0	0	0	9	0	0	9	<5%
Bureaucracy	2	1	2	2	1	0	8	<5%
Magnet Schools	4	2	0	1	0	0	7	<5%
Social Promotion	5	1	0	1	0	0	7	<5%
Contention Between Super/ School Board	0	2	0	0	2	2	6	<5%
Resistance to Change	3	0	1	1	1	0	6	<5%
Declining Enrollment	1	1	1	2	0	0	5	<5%
Lack of Parental Inv	1	1	0	1	2	0	5	<5%
Lack of Accountability	1	1	0	2	0	0	4	<5%
Insufficient Reading	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	<5%
Superintendent Amato	0	0	0	1	2	1	4	<5%
Lack of Com Inv	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	<5%
NCLBA	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	<5%
Teacher Education	0	0	2	1	1	0	4	<5%
Societal Problems	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	<5%
Economic Impact	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	<5%
Low Teacher Pay	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	<5%
Privatization	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	<5%
State and Local Policies	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	<5%
Lack of Autonomy	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	<5%
Segregation	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	<5%
Charter Schools	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	<5%
K-8 Schools	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	<5%
Teach For America	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	<5%
Private Schools	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	<5%
Insufficient Math Courses	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

Most of the Times Picayune articles mentioned possible solutions to the problems facing the New Orleans School District. However, some articles only discussed problems and others only discussed solutions. Even in those which included both problems and solutions, the two did not necessarily correlate to each other.

The solution which appeared most often, in thirteen percent of all articles, is greater accountability. This solution included mention of the state accountability plan, LEAP testing, and NCLBA; although some of the articles used the term in a more general sense. Mention of accountability was most prevalent in the years 2000, 2001 and 2003. These years correlate to major accountability initiatives by the state, as well as the growing role played by LEAP testing in 2001 and the threat of a takeover in 2003.

Takeovers, including partial and temporary takeovers, appear in nine percent of all articles. Many of the proposed takeovers involved only certain schools, such as those failing to meet the state standards. Other articles proposed taking over only certain processes such as the financial management of the district.

This solution was mentioned most often in 2003, over twice as much as in any other year. The elevated mention of takeovers is probably due to the fact that Louisiana passed a constitutional amendment allowing state takeover of failing schools in 2003.

Professional development, mostly for teachers, but also for board members and administrators, is mentioned by six percent of the articles. The listing of professional development as a solution is fairly consistent over the six years. This illustrates a fairly consistent awareness of the need for improvement in teacher quality. It is also one of the few solutions which does not involve altering the current system.

Other solutions were mentioned in under five percent of all articles and are listed by order of incidence in the following table.

Table 4.40

Proposed Solutions	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	Percent
Accountability	22	20	9	31	4	1	87	13%
Takeover	0	6	13	20	9	9	57	9%
Prof. Development	9	6	8	11	5	2	41	6%
School Choice	8	5	3	16	0	2	34	<5%
Parental Involvement	11	7	3	5	7	0	33	<5%
Teacher Certification	5	7	7	5	2	0	26	<5%
Cooperation between Board / Superintendent	1	3	1	1	15	5	26	<5%
Superintendent Amato	0	0	0	10	13	2	25	<5%
Personnel Changes	4	7	2	3	6	2	24	<5%
Charter Schools	1	3	13	3	2	0	22	<5%
Tutoring / Mentoring	4	6	3	7	0	1	21	<5%
University Partnerships	3	3	3	9	2	0	20	<5%
After School Programs	2	4	0	3	11	0	20	<5%
Smaller Class Size	3	4	0	3	8	1	19	<5%
Com. Involvement	4	2	3	3	7	0	19	<5%
Teacher Pay Raises	4	6	0	2	2	0	14	<5%
Financial Reforms	0	1	0	3	7	3	14	<5%
Vocational Education	2	0	0	6	5	0	13	<5%
Technology	3	1	3	2	4	0	13	<5%
Restructuring	1	1	4	1	2	2	11	<5%
Learning Academies	1	9	1	0	0	0	11	<5%
Business Involvement	2	0	1	2	5	0	10	<5%
Focus on Literacy	3	1	1	5	0	0	10	<5%
Facilities Maintenance	2	3	1	2	2	0	10	<5%
Bill 159	0	0	1	5	4	0	10	<5%
New School Board	0	0	1	5	2	1	9	<5%
Math/Science Ed	2	1	1	3	2	0	9	<5%
Larger Budget	4	3	0	2	0	0	9	<5%
On-Site Security	1	3	2	1	1	0	8	<5%
Focus on Students	0	2	1	2	3	0	8	<5%
Mini – Districts	0	0	8	0	0	0	8	<5%
More Time	0	0	1	7	0	0	8	<5%
Nat. Reform Models	0	3	0	3	1	0	7	<5%
Audit	1	2	0	1	3	0	7	<5%
Alternative Schools	2	1	0	3	1	0	7	<5%
Strong Leadership	2	1	3	0	0	0	6	<5%
Pre-School	1	1	0	3	0	0	5	<5%
Less Focus on Testing	1	0	0	1	2	1	5	<5%
School Autonomy	1	2	0	0	2	0	5	<5%
K-8	0	0	0	2	2	1	5	<5%
Test Preparation	0	1	0	2	0	1	4	<5%
Close Schools	0	1	0	2	0	1	4	<5%
Summer School	0	2	0	1	1	0	4	<5%
Legal Action	0	1	0	1	2	0	4	<5%
School Social Workers	1	1	0	0	2	0	4	<5%
Home Visits	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	<5%
Art / Music Education	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	<5%
Increased Attendance e	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	<5%
Teach for America	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	<5%

Table 4.40 Continued

Outside Specialists	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	<5%
New Union Contract	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	<5%
Merit Pay for Teachers	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	<5%
Greater School Board Control	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	<5%
Drastic Change	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	<5%
Social Promotion	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	<5%
Site Visits	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	<5%
Student Input	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%
Teacher Strike	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	<5%

A large variety of stakeholders in school reform were mentioned within the articles, some implicit in the problems or solutions discussed[64]. However, only explicit mention of stakeholders was counted by the analysis.

The stakeholder which appeared most often in the newspaper articles, in sixteen percent of them, was the School Board. This is not surprising considering the fact that eleven percent of all articles cited the School Board as one of the problems facing education. Mention of the Board nearly doubled in 2004, the year in which contention between the School Board and Superintendent Amato was at its highest.

Students were mentioned as stakeholders in ten percent of all articles. However, it is worth noting that students are an implied stakeholder in any discussion of education. Mention of students was highest in the years 2000, 2001 and 2003; all years in which accountability, and testing, figured prominently. Many of the articles discussed the effects of LEAP testing and student retention.

Superintendent Amato was also mentioned in ten percent of the articles. This is rather high considering that he did not become Superintendent until early 2003. However, mention of Amato is highly concentrated in 2003 and 2004, the two years in which he served as Superintendent. One reason that his name appears so often is the highly contentious relationship he shared with the School Board.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the state, often used interchangeably in news articles, are also mentioned in ten percent of the articles. Their mention as stakeholders occurs fairly consistently across the six years. This shows that the state is considered to be an active participant in the reform discussion.

Schools and teachers are both mentioned in eight percent of articles; although, like students, they are implied stakeholders in the discussion of educational reform. Both are mentioned most often in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. The decreased mention of these stakeholders in 2004 and 2005 is attributable to the increased attention to the relationship between Superintendent Amato and the School Board.

[64] A discussion of teacher training, for example, assumes teachers to be a stakeholder.

All other stakeholders are mentioned in less than five percent of the articles and are listed by order of incidence in the preceding table.

Table 4.41

Stakeholders	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	Percent
School Board	23	33	34	39	63	23	215	16%
Students	37	33	11	32	16	2	131	10%
Superintendent Amato	0	0	2	49	54	19	124	10%
BESE / State	17	20	24	34	18	10	123	10%
Teachers	24	21	23	27	10	2	107	8%
Schools	20	30	17	22	7	2	98	8%
Parents	17	10	10	15	9	1	62	<5%
CEO Al Davis	19	27	13	0	0	0	59	<5%
Union	6	8	15	20	4	1	54	<5%
Local Universities	4	5	15	14	3	0	41	<5%
Legislators	6	3	4	14	10	4	41	<5%
Voters	7	0	1	9	20	1	38	<5%
CAO Ollie Tyler	3	8	16	0	1	1	29	<5%
Governor	6	2	1	11	3	2	25	<5%
Administration	6	7	3	2	6	0	24	<5%
Business Community	4	2	6	6	3	0	21	<5%
State Superintendent	7	2	1	2	1	3	16	<5%
Mayor	0	9	3	0	1	3	16	<5%
Greater New Orleans Education Foundation	8	4	0	0	0	0	12	<5%
Private Schools	4	1	0	7	0	0	12	<5%
Community	0	5	4	2	0	0	11	<5%
Media	1	2	1	3	2	0	9	<5%
Federal Government	0	3	0	5	0	0	8	<5%
All Congregations Together	2	2	0	0	3	0	7	<5%
Police	1	3	1	1			6	<5%
CBNO/MAC	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	<5%
African American Students	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	<5%
Archdiocese	0	0	0	3	0	1	3	<5%
City Council	3	0	0	0			3	<5%
NAACP	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	<5%
Judiciary	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	<5%

Discussion

Table 4.42

Reform Timeline	
1999	Governor Foster institutes a State Accountability Plan which will rate schools and provide them with improvement goals.
2000	Under the new accountability plan fourth and eighth graders begin to be held back for failing the LEAP test.
2001	Mayor Marc Morial begins advocating increased city hall involvement in education, but is against an outright takeover.
2002	CEO Al Davis resigns and Ollie Tyler assumes role of acting Superintendent until a new Superintendent can be selected.
2003	State legislature considers a voucher program and state takeover. Superintendent Amato is hired by the School Board
August 2003	State Legislature passes a Constitutional Amendment which allows for the takeover of failing schools. These schools will constitute a Recovery District and can be managed by outside providers provided they are not for profit.
April 2004	The state takes over Capdau Elementary and allows UNO to administer the school.
June 2004	Following an attempt by the School Board to fire Superintendent Amato, the state legislature passes House Bill 1659 increasing Amato's control over the district.
April 2005	The state institutes a temporary financial takeover. Superintendent Amato resigns
June 2005	Another voucher bill gains momentum in the legislature, but does not pass.
August 2005	Hurricane Katrina strikes New Orleans.

Of the four cities, New Orleans is the only one which has not yet completely undergone a significant change. However, there is a change in progress at the present time as the school district recovers from the damage wrought by Hurricane Katrina. Even prior to the Hurricane's landfall, a policy window was beginning to open as the three streams aligned for change. However, the favored reform at that time appeared to be mayoral control or a voucher system.

The problem stream included many of the same indicators seen in the other three cities. The school district was in the middle of a financial crisis and was facing accusations of financial mismanagement and corruption. Scandals, such as the discovery that the father of ex-Schools CEO Al Davis was paid $70,000 as a janitor had seriously eroded public trust in the School Board. Many students were being forced to repeat a grade after failing the LEAP test and a high number of schools had been rated academically unacceptable by the state. Superintendent turnover was a constant problem, with eight superintendents having served in ten years.

The policy stream focused around takeover plans and choice plans. The state had passed an accountability plan in 1999 which had instituted additional testing and was the source of many of the negative indicators. Various business groups in the city were pressing for a mayoral or state takeover and the University of New Orleans had presented a plan to run ten charter schools.

In the political stream, Mayoral Marc Morial had begun to advocate greater city hall involvement in education, although he specifically spoke out against a full takeover. His successor, Mayor Nagin, was initially not as vocal regarding the school system; focusing instead on city hall corruption. By early 2005, however, Mayor Nagin had begun calling for an overhaul of the school system and had offered to take over the ten worst performing schools and turn them around.

At the state level, the legislature had a new choice or voucher bill yearly, but none of these passed. In 2003 a constitutional amendment was passed which allowed the state to take over any failing schools and place them under private management. This new power was first exercised with Capdau Elementary which was given to the University of New Orleans to run as a charter school.

Hurricane Katrina, in late August of 2005, served as a focusing event for educational reform in New Orleans. While the city had been seriously considering changing the educational system, and the state had in fact already taken over the financial management of the district, the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina rendered change inevitable. The storm left 126 schools severely damaged, over half of which will need to be completely replaced; as well as causing a drastic decline in the school age population (Robelen 2005). Many of those residents with children chose to remain in other cities, such as Houston, which they considered to have a better school system.

Many educational theorists, such as Hill and Haycock, have come to the city to advise the Bring New Orleans Back Commission on how best to recreate the Orleans Parish school system. Major political players, such as Governor Blanco, have stated their support of sweeping changes and view the storm as an opportunity to begin anew. The policy stream had already been full of competing ideas, mostly focusing on charter schools and takeover strategies. The occurrence of a focusing event, along with the drastic change in the political stream are creating a window of opportunity for a reform measure.

In November of 2005, the state announced a plan to takeover most New Orleans schools. Under this plan, initiated by Governor Blanco, the state will use a 2003 Constitutional Amendment allowing the takeover of failing schools and the creation of a recovery district to take control of most New Orleans schools. However, the threshold for failure was lowered and the takeover made automatic, instead of requiring a review process. Under this plan 110 schools will be taken over, many of which will become charter schools and the School Board will control only thirteen schools. The final details of this plan are still being determined as the Recovery District prepares for the 2006-2007 school year.

Philadelphia

Demographics

Table 4.43

Population Statistics[65]	
Population 2000	1,517,550
Percent Change in Population : 1990-2000	-4.3%
Persons Under the Age of 18	25.3%
Land Area (square miles)	135
Persons per Square Mile	11,233.6
Households	590,071

Table 4.44

Racial Composition Statistics[66]	
White	45.0%
African American	43.2%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.3%
Asian	4.5%
Hispanic / Latino	8.5%
Other	Not Available
Language other Than English At Home	17.7%

Table 4.45

Educational Attainment Statistics[67]	
High School Graduates (Age 25+)	71.2%
Bachelor or Higher (Age 25+)	17.9%

Table 4.46

Economic Statistics[68]	
Homeownership Rate	59.3%
Mean Value of Owner Occupied Units	$59,700
Median Household Income (1999)	$30,746
% of Persons Below Poverty Level (1999)	22.9%

[65] (Quick Facts Philadelphia 2000).
[66] (Quick Facts Philadelphia 2000).
[67] (Quick Facts Philadelphia 2000).
[68] (Quick Facts Philadelphia 2000)

Table 4.47

Crime Statistics[69]	
Serious Crimes	98,000
Serious Crimes per 100,000 Population	6,752
Property Crimes	75,188
Violent crimes	22,812

Table 4.48

School Enrollment Statistics[70]	
Elementary	100,392
Middle	31,145
High School	52,807

Philadelphia has the second highest population, three times that of the two lowest. However, the city also has the largest percent decline. The percentage of the population under eighteen is similar to that found in the other cities.

The land area covered by Philadelphia is one of the smallest of the four, although Philadephia's persons per square mile figure is fairly high and the city is home to the second highest number of households.

In terms of racial composition, Philadelphia has an almost even split between white and African American residents with a small Latino and Asian population as well. However, the city has the second smallest percentage of residents who do not speak English at home, at seventeen percent.

The city's educational attainment is the lowest of the four cities, and is almost half that of Boston.

Philadelphia has the highest home ownership rate, a fact which can partially be explained by the low home values; lower than those in the other three cities. The city has one of the lowest income levels and highest poverty levels.

Philadelphia has the highest number of total crimes, but one of the lowest crimes per population.

The city of Philadelphia has the second highest school enrollment, over twice that of the next highest, New Orleans.

[69] (FedStats Philadelphia 2000)
[70] (About Us 2004)

Race Dynamic

Desegregation

Table 4.49

1971	Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission imposes busing to address segregation
1970s	School District institutes a voluntary desegregation plan which has little effect.
1981	Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v. School District of Philadelphia
1990s	Discourse shifts to reducing the achievement gap and onto Superintendent Hornbeck's reform plan
2001	State court declares itself satisfied with the District's efforts at integration

Unlike the other three cities, desegregation litigation in Philadelphia focused on the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, and not on the provisions in the 14th Amendment.

The Act created a Human Relations Commission which brought all of the cases against the district in state courts. The first case, in 1971, mandated the use of buses to eliminate segregation. However, the district appealed arguing that the commission had overstepped its power as the segregation was de facto and not de jour. The court agreed that the segregation was in fact de facto and due to housing patterns. Additionally, the court found that some schools could not be desegregated by bussing because the distance traveled would be too great; imposing a forty-five minute limit on school bus rides.

The court battle continued for some time and the district was eventually allowed to institute a voluntary integration plan. The plan allowed parents and students to decide whether they wanted to change schools as well as creating some magnet schools to entice students. As expected, the plan was unsuccessful at integrating public schools.

By 1981, schools remained highly segregated and the commission once again filed suit. The end result was the continuation of the voluntary integration plan, along with the combination of some elementary schools and purposeful re-assignation of certain students to assist in the process. In the end, Philadelphia was never truly integrated and minority schools remain the lowest performing.

In fact, desegregation efforts mostly stopped in the 1990s as the focus shifted to reducing the achievement gap and Superintendent Hornbeck's reforms. The final attempt at a legal challenge by the Commission, in 2001, resulted in a declaration by the court that the district had made a satisfactory effort.

Role of Race in Educational Debate

Within the educational debate race was mostly discussed in terms of the achievement gap. African American's held many of the higher level administrative positions and typically held a majority on the board. Racial tensions often surfaced in the political dialogue and were a factor in the election of board members, with most of those residents who participated voting along racial lines. The selection of a superintendent by the board was largely based on race as well. Racial tensions were also present in city wide elections and city politics.

Economy

The city of Philadelphia experienced a decline in population over the last forty years as many residents relocated to the suburbs. The loss of production jobs, as the economy shifted away from manufacturing in the 1980s and 1990s has also had a detrimental effect on Philadelphia's economy with the percentage of the population living in poverty increasing drastically. The city currently has a more diverse economy with growing technology, banking and tourism sectors. However, the city's economic growth continues to lag behind that of the nation.

Structure of Local Government

The city of Philadelphia has a mayor-council form of government with a "strong mayor", in which the mayor functions as the executive and the city council as the legislative branch. Mayors are elected to four year terms and have all been members of the Democratic Party since 1952. The city council has seventeen members of which ten are elected by district and seven are elected at large.

Educational Institutions

The city of Philadelphia had an elected School Board until 2000 when the Mayor was given the power to appoint board members. The School Board was responsible for selecting a Superintendent and was constantly battling with the state legislature for additional funds. The School Board was often accused of corruption and alternative governance structures were often discussed.

Content Analysis

The content analysis for Philadelphia spans the period from 1998 until 2002. This time frame was selected because it represents the four years leading up to the state takeover and the first year of implementation. Unfortunately, full text versions of these articles were not available for 1998 and 1999; no articles were available for 2000. This lack of data makes it difficult to accurately compare Philadelphia's newspaper articles to those of the other cities.

A search for Philadelphia Inquirer articles using the terms 'school' and 'reform' yielded 56 articles within the relevant time period. Some articles which included the search terms, but in fact did not discuss Philadelphia, were excluded from the analysis. Also excluded, are articles which discussed reform in a context not related to the issue of school reform, such as sports.

The majority of articles appeared in 2001 and 2002, the two years during which the state takeover was implemented as well as the only years for which full text articles were available. The breakdown by year is as follows:

Table 4.50

1998	13
1999	4
2000	0
2001	16
2002	23

Of the articles, only thirteen percent mention race within the text or title. This percent was much lower than anticipated and may indicate that race does not play a significant role in the discourse surrounding the public school system in Philadelphia. However, it is also possible that the Philadelphia Inquirer is avoiding any mention of race as it is such a divisive issue in the city or that the full text of the article might mention race without it being a term in the abstract. Another possibility is that race is simply assumed to be a factor, and does not need to be mentioned.

It is important to remember that Philadelphia is forty-three percent African American and that the public schools are mostly attended by minority students; sixty-five percent of students are African American and fourteen percent are Hispanic, particularly surprising considering that only four percent of the population Hispanic. Therefore, any discussion of the school system carries an implicit racial bent. The breakdown by year is shown below.

Table 4.51

Mention of Race	1998	1999	2001	2002	Total	Percent
Yes	0	0	2	5	7	13%
No	13	4	14	18	49	87%

Ninety-one percent of the articles found in the search mentioned an urgent need for reform. The remaining nine percent, while they did mention reform, did not do so with any urgency. This indicates that the newspaper is actively speaking out against the current state of education in Philadelphia, at least in the articles found. The findings are shown below.

Table 4.52

Call for Reform	1998	1999	2001	2002	Total	Percent
Yes	13	4	16	18	51	91%
No	0	0	0	5	5	9%

The Philadelphia articles found mention a variety of problems, both within the school system and in terms of specific schools. The problem mentioned most often was financial issues which appeared in forty-three percent of the articles. Financial issues referred mostly to the financial management of the district and to a shortage of funds.

Failing schools were mentioned in thirty-six percent of all articles mostly as part of a discussion of the district's failure to adequately educate its students. However, this problem was mostly mentioned independently of any solutions with some articles taking a very hopeless tone.

The possibility of a takeover by Edison Schools, as well as the report completed for the state by the for profit company, was mentioned as a problem in thirty percent of the articles. This problem is unique to Philadelphia as none of the other cities attempted this particular reform style.

Low test scores, mostly as an indicator of failing schools, appeared in twenty-seven percent of all articles. A takeover, or privatization, was occasionally mentioned as a means to raising scores. However, there was often no solution mentioned within the article.

The remaining problems were mentioned less often and are listed below.

Table 4.53

Problems Mentioned	1998	1999	2001	2002	Total	Percent
Financial Issues	1	0	11	12	24	43
Failing Schools	5	3	6	8	20	36
Edison Schools	0	0	9	8	17	30
Test Scores	0	0	12	3	15	27
Privatization	0	0	2	4	6	11
Politics	0	0	4	1	5	9
Poverty	0	2	0	3	5	9
Turnover	0	0	3	1	4	7
School Board	0	0	2	1	3	<5
Declining Enrollment	0	0	1	2	3	<5
Protests / Strikes	0	0	2	1	3	<5
Crime	0	0	0	3	3	<5
Vouchers	0	1	0	1	2	<5
State Takeover	0	0	0	2	2	<5
Teachers	1	1	0	0	2	<5
Union	0	0	1	0	1	<5
State Funding Formula	0	0	1	0	1	<5
Charters	0	0	1	0	1	<5
Truancy	0	0	0	1	1	<5
Mini – Districts	1	0	0	0	1	<5
Non – English	0	0	0	1	1	<5

Some of the Philadelphia Inquirer articles mentioned possible solutions to the problems facing the Philadelphia schools. However, the abstracts were quite short and mostly listed problems without solutions. Even in those articles which included both problems and solutions, the two did not necessarily correspond to each other.

The solution which appeared most often was a state takeover. This is rather surprising due to the highly contentious nature of the takeover. The fact that thirty percent of all articles cite a state takeover as a solution would appear to indicate some level of public support for this reform. However, the reform was very unpopular when it was first instituted.

Privatization appeared in thirty percent of all articles. This is also surprising as it was the method selected by the state to implement the takeover. As with the state takeover, the many articles citing privatization as a solution would appear to indicate some amount of public support. However, the privatization was highly unpopular and protested even more than the state takeover. This may indicate that the media is not reflecting the public's views.

Charter models and increasing funding to the district are mentioned as solutions in twenty percent of all articles. These two solutions correspond to the problems of a lack of autonomy and financial issues. The remaining solutions are shown below in order of incidence.

Table 4.54

Solutions Mentioned	1998	1999	2001	2002	Total	Percent
State Takeover	0	0	14	4	18	32
Privatization	0	0	8	9	17	30
Charter Model	2	1	1	7	11	20
Increased Money	0	0	5	6	11	20
Community Involvement	0	0	7	3	10	18
Edison Schools	0	0	5	5	10	18
Commission	0	0	5	3	8	14
Court Order	1	0	3	2	6	11
Teacher Training	0	1	1	4	6	11
CEO	0	0	2	3	5	9
Accountability	1	1	2	0	4	7
Vouchers	1	2	0	1	4	7
Higher Education Partnerships	0	0	1	2	3	<5
Protest / Strike	0	0	1	2	3	<5
More Time	0	0	1	1	2	<5
Superintendent	2	0	0	0	2	<5
Smaller classes / schools	1	1	0	0	2	<5
Children Achieving	2	0	0	0	2	<5
Parental Involvement	0	0	1	1	2	<5
Cuts	0	0	2	0	2	<5
Capital Improvements	0	0	2	0	2	<5
Business Involvement	0	0	0	2	2	<5
Reconstitution	0	0	0	2	2	<5
Site based management	0	0	0	2	2	<5
Focus on Students	0	0	1	0	1	<5
Increase Expectations	0	1	0	0	1	<5
Alternative Schools	0	0	0	1	1	<5
Discipline	0	0	0	1	1	<5
New Union Contract	0	0	0	1	1	<5
Merit Pay	0	0	0	1	1	<5
Audit	0	0	0	1	1	<5

A large variety of stakeholders in the school reform process were mentioned within the articles, some implicit in the problems or solutions discussed. However, only explicit mention of stakeholders was considered for the analysis. The abstracts, due to their short length, did not often mention stakeholders directly.

The stakeholder which appeared most often in the newspaper articles, in seventy-seven percent of them is the schools; appearing most often in 2002. This is not surprising as the reforms were instituted at the school level with privatization and charters.

Edison Schools, the private firm which took over a large number of Philadelphia schools, is mentioned in seventy-one percent of the articles. Like the other stakeholders, Edison Schools are mostly mentioned in 2001 and 2002. These two years coincide with the implementation of the reform, but also with the years for which full text articles were available.

The other stakeholders are shown below.

Table 4.55

Stakeholders Mentioned	1998	1999	2001	2002	Total	Percent
Schools	4	3	10	26	43	77
Edison Schools	0	0	15	25	40	71
Commission	0	0	6	21	27	48
Governor	0	1	13	7	21	38
Mayor	0	1	13	6	20	36
Community Partnerships	1	0	10	9	20	36
Students	0	1	7	11	19	34
Teachers	3	1	3	9	16	29
State	1	0	10	5	16	29
Parents	1	0	3	7	11	20
Legislature	0	2	4	3	9	16
Business Involvement	1	0	4	3	8	14
CEO	0	0	0	8	8	14
Higher Ed Part.	0	0	2	5	7	13
Teachers Union	0	0	4	3	7	13
Court	1	0	4	2	7	13
School Board	0	0	6	1	7	13
Superintendent	4	0	2	1	7	13
Administrators	1	0	2	2	5	9
City Council	0	0	0	2	2	<5
Private Schools	0	1	0	1	2	<5
Police	0	0	0	1	1	<5
Fed. Government	0	0	1	0	1	<5

Discussion

Table 4.56

Reform Timeline	
1993	Philadelphia passes a law freezing district funding for education.
1994	Hornbeck initiates Children Achieving
1998	Hornbeck confronts the state and threatens to adopt an unbalanced budget
1999	Mayor Street is elected on a school reform platform.
2000	Goldsmith replaces Hornbeck
2001	Philadelphia hires Edison Schools to evaluate the district and make recommendations for improvement.
Dec 2001	The state agrees to increase funding for education.

The reform in Philadelphia was perhaps the most contentious out of the four cities. The state actually attempted a limited mayoral control structure, before deciding to simply step in and use an outside service provider. In fact, Philadelphia remains the largest school district ever taken over by a state, as well as the largest scale attempt at privatization, to date, in the country. As with most recent takeovers, it is too soon to judge the final results of the change in governance structure. However, the difficulty of the transition has had a lasting negative effect on the students; one which cannot be ignored by an evaluation. In fact, Philadelphia is still experiencing lawsuits resulting form the takeover process.

The problem stream in Philadelphia is very similar to that in the other cities. The schools were suffering from chronic low scores and a very high drop out rate. Pennsylvania itself was suffering monetarily and had passed a law in 1993 which froze district funding. Unfortunately, the number of school children in Philadelphia's public school system continued to rise, along with the special needs population. This meant that the schools were becoming significantly under funded.

In 1994, Superintendent Hornbeck initiated Children Achieving, a complex reform program which required a significant increase in funds. Despite having some limited success, the program was under funded and was a source of contention between Hornbeck and the state. The initiative was often cited as a failure, and served to contribute to the problem stream. However, some of the theory behind the initiative, such as increasing school autonomy, remained in the policy stream.

In 1998 Hornbeck threatened to adopt an unbalanced budget in an attempt to force then Governor Ridge to increase funding to the district[71]. Ridge responded by passing Act 46 which allowed the state to takeover any district which was in danger of shutting its schools. The passage of Act 46 forced Hornbeck to borrow money from area banks in order to avoid the state takeover, and had a very negative political effect. Hornbeck was replaced by Goldsmith in 2000, although he resigned in protest once the state takeover took effect.

The political stream in Philadelphia was set for change. Governor Ridge had been a strong proponent of privatization for some time, and he wanted to experiment with private management. The key policy makers in the city shared Governor Ridge's market focus; but, it was Governor Ridge who served as the key policy entrepreneur. The political wrangling within the city, along with the failure to show in any improvement in the schools and the ever increasing contention between the state and the city, all contributed to the desire for change.

Awareness of the situation was widespread throughout the city, to the point that the 1999 mayoral election centered primarily on school reform issues. The new leader, Mayor Street, was given an ultimatum by the state in 2000. He now had only three years in which to improve the state of education or the city would face state control.

Also in 2001, the state hired Edison Schools[72] to evaluate the district an make recommendations for improvement. The resulting report generated a great deal of controversy; there were many questions regarding the selection of Edison Schools along with the validity of the recommendations. The report suggested replacing the existing school board with an appointed body, hiring a CEO to manage the schools, and placing one hundred schools under private management.

As one of the primary national providers of privatized school management, and considering the current relationship with the state, Edison Schools stood to gain a great deal from their suggestion that several schools be placed under private management. Many individuals within the policy streams questioned the validity of the recommendations due to the possible conflict of interest.

[71] This tactic was actually a threat to shut down city schools, as the budget would not allow them to remain operational for the entire year without increased state funds.

[72] Edison Schools is a for profit entity which specializes in educational administration. At the time, however, they had just experienced a failure in another district and had never attempted to operate on such a large scale.

There was a shift in the political stream following the ultimatum and the controversy generated by the Edison Schools report. The mood in Philadelphia, regarding a state imposed takeover was very negative. Many blamed the inequitable financing form the state for the city's current problems. Additionally, many felt that Hornbeck's 1994 initiative, Children Achieving, would have proven effective if given more time and resources. As a result of the strongly negative swing in public opinion, the state agreed to increase funding in December of 2001. The state also followed some of the recommendations made by the Edison Schools report; the legislature created an appointed board, with three members selected by the governore and two selected by the mayor, along with hiring a CEO to manage the school system.

Chapter 5:
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a comparison of the four cities for the variables analyzed as well as the content analyses. This comparison is followed by a discussion of overall results as well as avenues for further inquiry.

Demographics

Table 5.1

Population Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
Population 2000	589,141	2,896,016	484,674[73]	1,517,550
Percent Change in Population : 1990-2000	2.6%	4%	- 2.5%	-4.3%
Persons Under the Age of 18	19.8%	26.2%	26.7%	25.3%
Land Area (square miles)	48	227	181	135
Persons per Square Mile	12,165.8	12,750.3	2, 684.3	11,233.6
Households	239,528	1,061,928	188, 251	590,071

There is a great deal of difference in the population statistics of the four cities. Chicago and Philadelphia are the largest, although Chicago's population is almost twice that of Philadelphia. New Orleans and Boston both have a significantly lower population level, although the population figure for New Orleans had decreased significantly since Hurricane Katrina. However, in terms of person per square mile, Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia have very similar populations. New Orleans, however, is still significantly lower.

Boston and Chicago have an increasing population, while New Orleans and Philadelphia have a decreasing population. Philadelphia's decreasing population parallels its declining economy. However, there does not seem to be a relationship between the population statistics and the type of reform selected, or even the decision to undergo a significant change.

[73] Year 2000 Census data is provided in order to ensure an equivalent comparison between the cities. The effects of Hurricane Katrina have significantly reduced the population in the New Orleans area, and it is too early to say what the final population count will be.

Table 5.2

Racial Composition Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
White	54.5%	42%	28.1%	45.0%
African American	25.3%	36.8%	67.3%	43.2%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	7.5%	4.3%	2.3%	4.5%
Hispanic / Latino	14.4%	26.0%	3.1%	8.5%
Other	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%	N/A
Language other Than English At Home	33.4%	35.5%	8.3%	17.7%

Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia all have a similar minority population of close to fifty percent. New Orleans has a much higher minority population of almost seventy-five percent. This difference may account for the increased difficulty experienced by New Orleans in attempting to institute a reform as proposed reforms are often seen as being imposed by the white minority.

Boston and Chicago both have a significant Hispanic population, whereas the minority population in New Orleans and Philadelphia is mostly African American. Both cities also have a little over thirty percent of their population which speaks a language other than English at home. The lack of English proficiency among some students leads to additional educational difficulties not experienced by the other two cities.

Table 5.3

Educational Attainment Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
High School Graduates (Age 25+)	78.9%	71.8%	74.7%	71.2%
Bachelor or Higher (Age 25+)	35.6%	25.5%	25.8%	17.9%

All four cities have a similar level of educational attainment.

Table 5.4

Economic Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
Homeownership Rate	32.2%	43.8%	46.5%	59.3%
Mean Value of Owner Occupied Units	$190,600	$132,400	$ 87,300	$59,700
Median Household Income (1999)	$39,629	$38,625	$27, 133	$30,746
% of Persons Below Poverty Level (1999)	19.5%	19.6%	27.9%	22.9%

Of the four cities, Boston has the lowest home ownership rate but also the highest mean value of homes. New Orleans and Chicago both have a similar home ownership rate, but the mean value of the average home is much lower in New Orleans. The median household income is lowest in New Orleans, which also has the highest poverty rate. However, all four cities have a high poverty rate of between twenty and thirty percent. The high poverty rate is often cited as a contributing factor to the low quality of education, one which is outside the control of the school district.

Table 5.5

Crime Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
Serious Crimes	35,870	No data	34,001	98,000
Serious Crimes per 100,000 Population	6,283	No data	7,217	6,752
Property Crimes	28,548	169,699	28,671	75,188
Violent crimes	7,322	No data	5,330	22,812

The lack of complete crime data for Chicago makes a true comparison difficult. The other three cities, however, have a similar ratio of crimes per population, with the more populous cities experiencing a greater number of crimes. Chicago's property crimes, while much higher than those of the other cities, may be due to the larger size of Chicago's population.

Table 5.6

School Enrollment Statistics				
	Boston	**Chicago**	**New Orleans**	**Philadelphia**
Elementary	20,630	269.021	N/A	100,392
Middle School	12,770	N/A	N/A	31,145
High School	18,870	106,093	N/A	52,807
Combined	52,270	375,114	67,922	184,344

The total school enrollment varied widely across the four cities, with the pattern paralleling that found in the general population figures.

Race Dynamic

Desegregation

Each of the four cities experienced difficulty in desegregating their public schools; in fact, none of the cities was every truly able to integrate. There did not appear to be a significant difference between New Orleans, the only southern city, and the other three cities. New Orleans took slightly less time to officially integrate, but the end results were the same. Each city required court action and experienced a worsening in race relations as a result of the desegregation experience.

Role of Race in Educational Debate

The role of race in the educational debate is similar in all four cities. The minority community was supportive of the elected board or committee, and opposed, at least initially, to the change in governance. In Chicago, the Hispanic minority was most supportive of the LSC system as it allowed Hispanics to achieve greater power in the school district. Overall, however, the minority communities were reluctant to relinquish their power base within the schools and racial issues often arose in the debate.

Economy

All four cities have experienced the phenomenon known as white flight and have lost a significant portion of their middle class tax base. However, while there are some similarities between a few of the city's economies, there does not appear to be any major factors shared among the cities which could contribute to the decision to undergo school reform measures.

Of the cities, all but New Orleans have experienced a shift from production jobs to service or IT jobs. This shift includes the presence of workers who commute from nearby suburbs and whose children do not attend city schools. Boston and Chicago are both considered major financial centers; New Orleans and Chicago are transportation hubs for goods. Of the four cities, New Orleans and Philadelphia appear to be struggling the most, with Chicago and Boston showing some small amount of improvement.

Structure of Local Government

All four cities share a mayor-council form of government. This similarity may indicate that a strong mayor, particularly one who seeks involvement in the school system, can lead to a significant change. However, this may simply be a coincidence due to the prevalence of mayor-council government in urban cities.

The main difference between the four cities local government structures is the composition of the city council. Chicago has the greatest number of aldermen, all of whom are elected from the various wards. The other three cities, have a mix of district and at-large council members. This difference did not appear to affect the decision to undergo a significant change in school governance.

Educational Institutions

All four cities had an elected school board, or school committee, prior to the institution of reforms. This appears to follow a national pattern in which elected boards are replaced with nominated, or partially nominated, board. The board was empowered to select the superintendent in all four cities as well.

There does not appear to be a significant difference between the educational institutions of the four cities. This may show that an elected board, along with the problems that such a board presents, is a contributing factor to the decision to undergo a governance change. However, most cities have elected boards and there may be no true relationship.

Content Analysis

It is important to note that a true comparison of the four content analyses is not possible. The articles were all obtained from different sources, and only the Chicago Tribune articles were obtained directly from the newspaper's archives. This may in fact explain why there were such a high number of articles from the Chicago Tribune when compared to the other papers. Philadelphia's data is particularly suspect as so few articles were found and only abstracts were available for many of them.

Mention of Race

Racial tensions were mentioned most often in the Boston Globe, appearing in twenty-six percent of all articles related to school reform. This was unexpected, as Boston has the lowest minority population of the four cities. Conversely, New Orleans, the city with the highest minority population, also experienced the lowest mention of racial issues; with race being mentioned in only eleven percent of all articles. This may indicate that race is simply assumed to be an issue in New Orleans, or that a smaller minority population may need to be more vocal than a larger minority population. There does not appear to be a relationship between the four cities and how often race is mentioned.

Call for Reform

Of the four newspapers, all wrote about the need for reform in most of the articles. The Times Picayune, Boston Globe, and Philadelphia Inquirer all advocated drastic change in over ninety percent of all articles. The Chicago Tribune called for reform in seventy-nine percent of all articles. This may be explained by the fact that Chicago had already undergone one major reform in the form of the CSRA.

The high percentage of articles calling for reform in all cities may indicate that a media which actively calls for change is instrumental in bringing such a change about. This theory is supported by Kingdon's work as he discusses the role of the media in creating a policy window.

Problems Mentioned

The Chicago Tribune cites financial issues and politics as the top two problems facing schools. Financial issues is also one of the top two problems mentioned by the Boston Globe and the Philadelphia Inquirer, as well as being fairly high on the list for the Times Picayune. This indicates that the presence of financial concerns within the system may lead to a significant change.

Another problem which is mentioned consistently is failing schools which appears in the top two for three of the cities. The failure of the schools to provide an adequate education, and the widespread public perception of this failure, also appears to lead to school reform.

Solutions Mentioned

The need for additional money is the only solutions which appears within the top two for multiple papers; appearing in the Boston Globe and Chicago Tribune. This solution corresponds to the financial issues problem which is also mentioned quite often. While not in the top two for New Orleans, the need for additional money is still mentioned quite often. This indicates that the feeling that the school system requires additional financing may lead to school reform. However, none of the reforms instituted truly increased the funding to the school districts.

Stakeholders Mentioned

As previously mentioned, there are implied stakeholders in each problem and solution discussed above. However, in terms of stakeholders directly mentioned within the articles the schools were the stakeholder mentioned most often, appearing in the top two for three papers. The School Board and students were also mentioned frequently, appearing in the top two for two newspapers. The mention of these stakeholders is not surprising in a discussion of school reform. Mention of the board, in particular, is to be expected in cities in which the reform involves a governance change.

Discussion

This paper set forth to answer the question of whether cities which have opted to significantly change their educational system share any common characteristics related to this decision. The results show that certain of the characteristics studied were indeed shared. However, many of the characteristics were dissimilar and many possible characteristics were outside the scope of this study. Overall, the findings show that certain shared characteristics exist, but it is not possible to determine if these characteristics were at all involved in the decision to undergo a significant change. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence to determine a relationship between the particular characteristics shared and the type of reform selected.

Of the demographics studied there was no relationship found between the population size of the four cities, economic statistics and school enrollment. Some similarities were found in racial composition, in terms of the total percent minority, educational attainment and crime; although Chicago did not have crime data available.

All four cities had a similar race dynamic, although Chicago and Boston had a significant Hispanic minority not found in the other two cities. The economic issues, structure of local government, and educational institutions were all similar. This may simply be due to the case that all four are relatively large urban cities.

A comparison of the content analyses finds some shared characteristics as well as some differences. In particular, none of the cities had a very high percentage of articles discussing race and all had a high percentage of articles calling for reform. Regarding race, New Orleans had the lowest percent despite having the highest minority population.

Financial issues was a problem which was often cited, corresponding to the solution of additional funds. Yet, many more articles mentioned problems than solutiosn and rarely mentioned the two together. However, the four papers may not play the exact same role in their particular cities and can be difficult to compare.

Further Inquiry

This paper would be greatly enriched through a more in depth study with greater manpower and funding. A survey, for example, might find additional similarities between the four cities which relate to the significant change. For example, the history of the city's governance or additional socioeconomic factors.

The study might also benefit from the inclusion of a greater number of cities and the purchase of the full text Philadelphia Inquirer articles which proved too expensive for this endeavor.

A more in depth study, including additional cities, might find similarities between the different cities which chose a particular reform; not only all cities which choose to reform. It is hoped that this research will lead to further research in the future and inform the ongoing debate over school reform.

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