

Case Study No. 1

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

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Linking Resources to Results:

The Chicago Public Education Fund's
Master Teacher Initiative

by CAROLINE KING

MARCH 2006

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

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| Discipline & Focus | Knowledge | Resources Linked to Results | Effective Grantees | Engaged Partners | Leverage, Influence & Collaboration | Persistence | Innovation & Constant Learning |
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Grantmakers for Education's mission is to strengthen philanthropy's capacity to improve educational outcomes for all students. We achieve this mission by:

1. Sharing successful strategies, effective practices and lessons that exemplify responsive and responsible grantmaking in education.
2. Creating venues for funders to build and share knowledge, debate strategies, develop leadership, collaborate and advocate for change.
3. Gathering and interpreting data to illustrate trends, highlight innovative or proven educational approaches and support informed grantmaking.

Grantmakers for Education developed this case study as a reflection and discussion tool. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of successful or unsuccessful grantmaking. In addition, to help make the case a more effective learning tool, it is deliberately written from one foundation's point of view, even though other foundations may have been involved in similar activities or supported the same grantees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | <i>ii</i> |
| FOREWORD | <i>iii</i> |
| CASE STUDY | 1 |
| LINKING RESOURCES TO RESULTS: The Chicago Public Education Fund's Master Teacher Initiative | |
| LESSONS FOR EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY | 23 |
| SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS | 24 |
| Questions to consider while reading this case about effective education grantmaking | |
| EPILOGUE | 25 |
| The Chicago Public Education Fund's observations on grantmaking strategy, changing school systems and its impact as a funder | |
| PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING | <i>inside back cover</i> |

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Case Study Jury

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James Canales, president—*The Irvine Foundation*

Susan Hanson, president—*Glikbarg Foundation* (liaison to the jury from GFE Communications Committee)

Ted Lobman, former president—*Stuart Foundation*

Hayes Mizell, former program director—*Edna McConnell Clark Foundation*

Gabriella Morris, president—*Prudential Foundation*

Robert Schwartz, former director of education—*Pew Charitable Trusts*

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Ruby Takanishi, president—*Foundation for Child Development*

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Authors and Contributors

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We appreciate the help Janet Knupp and her team at the Chicago Public Education Fund provided in facilitating the development of this case. This case study focuses specifically on the Master Teacher Initiative, the fund's effort to nurture and strategically use existing teacher talent in Chicago's public schools.

FOREWORD:

A Roadmap for More Effective Education Philanthropy

The mission of Grantmakers for Education, a diverse national network of over 200 grantmaking organizations, is to strengthen philanthropy's capacity to improve educational outcomes for all students.

In June 2005, we announced eight education grantmaking practices—drawn from the experience and wisdom of our members—that we think lead to results in education. These Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking seek to promote the wisdom, craft and knowledge education funders need to achieve maximum results.

As a complement to the principles, Grantmakers for Education is developing this series of case studies designed to encourage foundation trustees, leaders and program staff to reflect more deeply on what these principles mean for their own grantmaking and how they might be integrated into their efforts.

With the help of a distinguished set of advisors from our field, we have chosen case studies that we believe represent rich, thought-provoking examples of how funders might aspire to use these principles in their education grantmaking. Hindsight is always 20/20, and while we think these cases showcase exemplary efforts in education philanthropy, we also chose them because each sheds light on the careful work a funder must invest to make a grant effective, the challenges that crop up along the way, and the messiness inherent in grantmaking despite the best-laid plans.

In the end, we hope these principles—and the cases that help illuminate them—affirm a set of positive attitudes about the future: philanthropy, done wisely, can contribute solutions to the problems that prevent too many students from learning and achieving.

LINKING RESOURCES TO RESULTS:

The Chicago Public Education Fund's Master Teacher Initiative

Caroline King

Introduction

As Chicago Public Education Fund President Janet Knupp received news in November 2005 that an additional 95 Chicago teachers had earned prestigious national board certification, a process designed to recognize accomplished and effective teachers, she felt mixed emotions. On one hand, Knupp felt proud of what the fund's efforts to identify and reward master teachers had accomplished:

- The number of national board certified teachers in the Chicago Public Schools had increased from 11 in 1999 to 472 in 2005.
- The Education Fund's initial \$2.1 million investment had leveraged an additional \$14.3 million from the district, the state and other organizations to help certify more master teachers.
- More fundamentally, with national board certification now accepted throughout the district as a legitimate signal of talent, the fund had begun to improve the school system's ability to identify, compensate and deploy teachers based on their performance.

On the other hand, Knupp realized that even greater challenges loomed ahead. Through its grantmaking, the Chicago Public Education Fund had committed in 2004 to increasing the number of national board certified teachers to 1,200 by 2008 and to ensuring that at least 15 percent of the teachers in 25 high-poverty schools held the prestigious credential within the same time frame. While key stakeholders backed the fund's work—including Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, district leadership and the Chicago Teachers Union—Knupp knew that achieving results would require more than rhetoric.

Furthermore, Knupp was interested in accomplishing much more than these specific goals by 2008. Believing that talent was the key to high-performing organizations, the fund wanted the district's new crop of national board certified teachers to help catalyze school- and districtwide improvement. Knupp explained, "We embarked on this initiative with a theory of change that identifying and rewarding master teacher talent was the first step to systemically leveraging that talent in a new and ambitious way. I won't be satisfied until that happens."

Effective education grantmaking: Resources linked to results

The Chicago Public Education Fund operates as a venture philanthropy: It raises capital from individual and institutional donors and then provides grant funding and direct, hands-on assistance to grantees. With a grantmaking budget totaling \$25 million between 2000 and 2008, it seeks to recruit and develop high-potential new teachers and aspiring principals by supporting alternative certification and mentoring programs, such as Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools; this case study focuses specifically on the fund's effort to nurture and strategically utilize existing teacher talent—its Master Teacher Initiative.

As part of the Master Teacher Initiative, the Education Fund has worked since 2000 both to recognize accomplished and effective teachers through the prestigious national board certification process and to help these teachers become school reform leaders. This case study explores the fund's deliberate approach—including specific goals, a clearly articulated grantmaking strategy and benchmarks for measuring progress—to help Chicago's public schools recognize, reward and deploy master teachers.

This case study is intended to help grantmakers see ways to more deliberately *link their resources to desired results*, which is one of Grantmakers for Education's Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking. The case illustrates the importance of making explicit assumptions about how a funder's efforts will create change, specifying measurable outcomes, deploying a funder's resources in addition to money, and being realistic about what can be accomplished under the best of circumstances.

What is a theory of change?

As part of the discussion about how a funder links resources to results, this case study refers to a “theory of change.”

A theory of change is a statement or flowchart that explains how an organization's intended impact will actually happen—the cause-and-effect logic by which organizational and financial resources will be converted into the desired social results.

By enabling an organization's leaders to clarify what “success” will look like in the near-to-medium term, a theory of change creates a coherent framework for making strategic trade-offs.

—adapted from the Bridgespan Group (www.bridgespangroup.org)

The Chicago Public Education Fund

Founded in 1999, the Chicago Public Education Fund's mission is to “accelerate achievement for all Chicago public school students, especially our neediest, by building talented teams of principals and teachers.” The fund's origins were rooted in the \$49.2 million Chicago Annenberg Challenge, a multiyear endeavor to advance school reform efforts that ended in 1999 with mixed results. That organization committed its remaining \$2 million to launch the Education Fund, with the hope that a new philanthropic vehicle that would adapt venture capital strategies to charitable giving would reengage the business community in district reform efforts.

Strategy: Great leaders make great schools

The Chicago Public Education Fund's founding chairman, Tribune Publishing President Scott Smith, hired Janet Knupp to lead the organization in the fall of 1999. Knupp's initial task was to clarify the

fund's strategy, which quickly coalesced around strengthening principal and teacher leadership in the district. Smith explained the thinking behind this strategy: "In the business world, we recognize talent as the key lever for driving improved performance, and we believed the same paradigm would hold true in public education. In addition to dollars, our donors wanted to contribute their leadership and management expertise as the district began to tackle systemwide reforms at scale."

Indeed, issues of scale and performance loomed large in Chicago, the nation's third-largest school district, which at that time served over 426,000 students in 613 schools and employed 26,700 teachers. Nearly 60 percent of the city's students scored below national averages on standardized reading and mathematics tests in 1999 (*see Exhibit 1 for district facts and figures*).¹

The Education Fund aims to cultivate and develop leaders among three groups: new teachers, veteran teachers and aspiring principals. With a grantmaking budget totaling \$25 million between 2000 and 2008, it seeks to recruit and develop high-potential new teachers and aspiring principals by supporting alternative certification and mentoring programs, such as Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools. This case study focuses specifically on the fund's effort to nurture and strategically utilize existing teacher talent—its Master Teacher Initiative.

"While we wanted to create pipelines to bring talented new teachers and principals to help drive change in the Chicago Public Schools," Knupp explained, "we also believed that excellent teachers were already in our schools. These 'master teachers' represented a key resource waiting to be leveraged."

She articulated the fund's theory of change for its Master Teacher Initiative: "We thought if everyone—district and union leaders, teachers, principals and other stakeholders—could agree upon a mechanism to identify and reward 'master teachers,' the system could then think about how to use these teachers differently to accelerate school and student performance."

Money, management assistance and leverage

The Chicago Public Education Fund operates as a venture philanthropy: It raises capital from individual and institutional donors (referred to as "investors") and then provides grant funding and direct, hands-on assistance to grantees (referred to as "investees"). The Education Fund aggregates its contributions into a sizeable pool called a Leadership Fund, which supports specific programs and details desired results related to strengthening principal and teacher leadership, such as expanding the number of national board certified teachers in Chicago to 1,200 by 2008.

The Education Fund's staff conducts due diligence to identify promising programs or organizations that will help achieve desired results. The fund then invests its pooled dollars in a limited number of activities, which are known as "portfolio programs." It typically provides early-stage funding to promote start-ups or innovative ideas. Grants, which are referred to as "investments," are sizeable and staged over a one- to four-year period. Disbursements are contingent upon a portfolio program meeting mutually agreed-upon benchmarks.

¹ Based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills results for grades 3-8 combined. See http://research.cps.k12.il.us/pdfs/itbs_cw_read_overtime_a.pdf and http://research.cps.k12.il.us/pdfs/itbs_cw_math_overtime_a.pdf.

In addition to capital, staff and directors provide management assistance. For example, the Education Fund aids portfolio programs with strategy consulting, recruiting and fund-raising. Knupp explained, “We want to ensure that our investments produce results—a social return—but we also want the programs we support to develop the capacity to independently sustain their operations and finances.”

The fund strives to align its grantmaking/investment strategies with the district’s reform strategies. Its vice chairwoman, Penny Pritzker, explained that the fund’s grantmaking always emerges from “clear alignment with the district’s goals.” It engages district leadership and other stakeholders to identify needs and develop consensus around action areas—and, in fact, it pursues initiatives only after the district also agrees to allocate significant resources of its own. The fund’s board of directors approves all investment decisions and benchmarks.

In March 2000, the Education Fund announced its first \$10 million pooled fund, called Leadership Fund I. As a new entrant in the well-established Chicago philanthropic community, with a unique approach and no track record, the organization encountered some initial skepticism. However, by the time it launched a \$15 million Leadership Fund II in April 2004, it had become a respected education funder in Chicago. Several local and national foundations, including the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Wash., sought partnerships with the Education Fund because of the quality of its relationships with district stakeholders, its expertise and its results.

Leadership Fund I: Identifying and compensating the best teachers

Smith announced the creation of the \$10 million Leadership Fund I on March 28, 2000. The organization already had \$3.4 million in hand, including the \$2 million remaining from the Annenberg Challenge, and it raised the remaining dollars by 2003. Fund I investments were allocated from 2000 to 2004 to support three complementary efforts aimed at improving teacher and principal talent in Chicago’s public schools (*see Exhibit 2 for the Fund I strategy map*):

- Recruit and develop exceptional new teachers, with an emphasis on nontraditional talent, to address critical teacher shortage areas.
- Identify the best teachers and compensate them accordingly.
- Recruit and develop talented principals with management and education expertise to lead effective schools.

Of the \$10 million in Fund I, \$2.1 million was allocated to grantees who supported the fund’s goal of rewarding excellent teachers; these investments were called the fund’s Master Teacher Initiative. According to Knupp, the key goal for the Master Teacher Initiative was to “identify our best teachers and compensate them accordingly.” She explained, “Our objective for the Master Teacher Initiative in Fund I was to develop consensus around a mechanism to identify teacher talent and the allocation of performance-based rewards. These were not small tasks, given that defining excellence is a highly contested proposition in education and that the district’s salary scale had always rewarded teachers for years of experience, not expertise.” The fund’s assumption was that accomplished, high-quality teachers were essential to efforts to improve the performance of Chicago public school students.

Identifying an objective standard for master teacher talent

During the winter months of 1999-2000, Education Fund Program Officer Sonya Choe Miller reviewed various models used to identify excellence in teaching. Miller recalled, “We were looking for an objective standard of ‘master teacher talent’ that had national credibility. National board certification quickly came to the forefront.”

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards developed the certification in 1994. The board—a nonprofit organization founded in 1987—aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning by recognizing excellence. To that end, it established professional standards for accomplished teaching and then created a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards. To earn the credential, teachers demonstrate “accomplished teaching” by creating a portfolio of videotaped classroom teaching, lesson plans, and student work samples and by completing a series of written assessment exercises that measure knowledge of subject area content, classroom practices, curriculum design and student learning. The board now offers certification in 24 subject and developmental areas.²

The one-year certification process requires an average of 400 hours of work from each candidate; only 40 percent of candidates nationwide earn national board certification on their first attempt.

The program’s first comparative studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s indicated that board certified teachers significantly outperformed their noncertified peers in many dimensions of teaching expertise. For example, their teaching of content knowledge was more innovative; they more readily adjusted instruction to meet classroom needs; and they better understood reasons for individual student success and failure. These studies also suggested that students of board certified teachers gained a deeper understanding of what was being taught than students in other classrooms did.³

At the end of 1999, there were only 11 national board certified teachers among the district’s 26,700 teachers (*see Figure 1 on page 6*). Knupp and Miller surveyed leaders from the district and the Chicago Teachers Union about their interest in promoting national board certification. Knupp recalled, “Strengthening the quality of veteran teachers was one of the few areas of agreement between district and union leadership at that time.”

While the teachers union had established a program in 1997 to help prepare national board certification candidates, it served less than 10 candidates per year. Program Director Lynn Cherkasky-Davis recalled, “The fund allowed us the opportunity to build upon and expand our existing work to nurture teacher leadership.” Mayor Daley and Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas welcomed the fund’s “focus on leadership development and teacher quality” as “vital” for “build[ing] upon the Chicago Public Schools’ track record of progress.”⁴

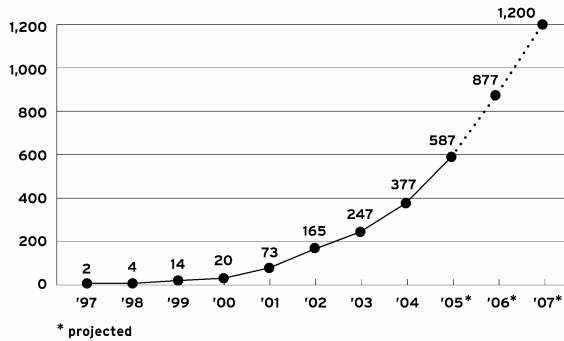
² More information about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and its certification process is available at www.nbpts.org.

³ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, “A Distinction That Matters” (October 2000).

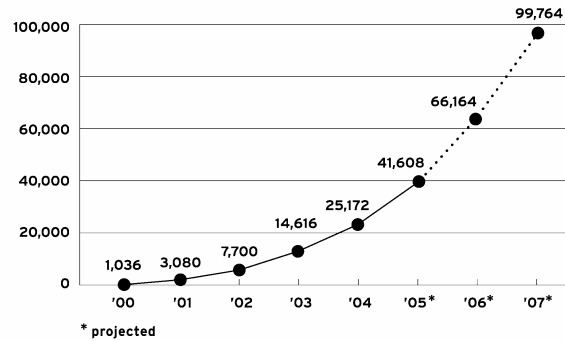
⁴ Chicago Public Education Fund News Release (March 28, 2000).

Figure 1
National Board Certified Teachers and Students Impacted in Chicago Public Schools
 (1997-2007)

Total number of National Board Certified Teachers



Students Impacted by National Board Certified Teachers



Source: Chicago Public Education Fund, *2004 Annual Report*.

In selecting national board certification as the vehicle for identifying and rewarding master teacher talent in Chicago, Knupp acknowledged that the Education Fund “took a gamble.” She recalled:

When we started, there was no research evidence to show that national board certified teachers improved student achievement, but there was significant consensus that teacher quality was the most important variable for affecting student outcomes. We were willing to take a calculated risk on national board certification based on its reputation as the teaching profession’s most prestigious credential.

However, the organization made a deliberate choice not to articulate desired results in terms of student achievement gains. Knupp explained, “We knew the four-year time horizon of Fund I would be too short and the sample size of national board certified teachers too small to show a direct impact on student achievement. Furthermore, the district did not have the information systems capable of tracking individual student outcomes by teacher.”

Bruce Rauner, chairman of the venture capital firm GTCR Golder Rauner, personally committed \$1 million to the Master Teacher Initiative and served on the fund’s board of directors. He commented on the selection of national board certification and the anticipated results:

One hallmark of any high-performing organization is a system for identifying and rewarding excellence. National board certification offered a way to introduce performance evaluation and compensation for teachers based on legitimate standards. Student outcomes are difficult to measure because of constant mobility and intervening variables, but the implementation of effective performance management practices is something we can measure today.

A three-pronged grantmaking strategy

As staff members evaluated potential investments for the \$2.1 million budget of the Master Teacher Initiative, they sought high-leverage opportunities to both expand the number of national board certified teachers and encourage performance-based compensation in the district. Accordingly, Fund I investments supported three primary activities (*see Exhibit 3 for all Fund I allocations*).

Financial incentives to individual teachers

Drawing upon the effectiveness of the use of monetary rewards to increase the number of national board certified teachers in North Carolina, Georgia and other states, the Education Fund allocated \$1.5 million for financial incentives to teachers from 2000 to 2004: Chicago teachers earning national board certification would be awarded a one-time bonus of \$3,000 from the fund, and the district created an additional \$2,500 salary bonus. In 2003, the fund and the Illinois Business Roundtable successfully lobbied the legislature to increase the state's annual budget for national board certification incentives from \$1 million to \$4.5 million; state funds paid for stipends to candidates (to help cover the high out-of-pocket costs of the national board certification process), for stipends to mentors who coached candidates during the application process, and for increased compensation for Illinois teachers with a national certificate.

The Education Fund also encouraged schools to form cohorts of national board certification candidates. Knupp explained, "We believed that candidates would complete and achieve national board certification at higher rates when they had the support of their peers, and that national board certified teachers could more effectively lead professional development and other school improvement efforts when they were working as part of a team." Through the fund's Give Back Incentive, schools forming a cohort of six or more national board certification candidates received a \$3,000 gift from the fund, followed by \$7,000 if at least five candidates completed the process and \$20,000 if at least four earned certification. The fund set a goal of having 10 schools form cohorts.

Candidate preparation and resource programs

The Education Fund, the district and the teachers union collectively identified the lack of awareness about national board certification and inadequate support for national board certification candidates as two major obstacles to increasing the number of national board certified teachers in the district. Thus, Leadership Fund I made three investments to expand the capacity of candidate preparation and support programs:

- **Chicago Public Schools Candidate Preparation Program⁵:** From 2000 to 2003, the fund awarded the district \$332,000 to establish a recruitment and preparation program for national board certification candidates. The nine-month program intended to serve 100-200 candidates each year by providing mentors, monthly professional development sessions and assessment support.

⁵ This effort was originally called the Chicago Public Schools Professionals Honored with Distinction Program.

- **Chicago Teachers Union Nurturing Teacher Leadership Program:** From 2000 to 2002, the fund awarded the teachers union \$250,000 to strengthen its existing preparation program, Nurturing Teacher Leadership. The program held a summer retreat and regular professional development workshops and paired candidates with mentors. While 86 percent of the participants achieved national board certification on their first attempt, the 11-month program cost nearly twice as much to run as the district’s program. The fund’s investment helped increase capacity from 10 to 25 teachers.
- **National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University:** From 2001 to 2003, the fund awarded Illinois State University \$399,760 to expand its national board resource center, one of five such centers in the country. The center managed the national board certification program in Illinois, including processing candidate applications, transferring state incentives and working with teacher training institutions to align curricula with national board certification standards.

Community and philanthropic support for national board certification

Lastly, the Education Fund labored to catalyze and sustain support for national board certification. According to Knupp, “We view our dollars as a seed investment that is intended to attract attention and leverage an even larger amount of dollars from the district and other stakeholders.” She continued, “We also work to build a diverse constituency who will provide the long-term revenue and support necessary for ensuring that the program becomes a systemic initiative after the fund exits.”

The increased financial commitment from Illinois lawmakers to encourage and reward national board certification offered a prominent example of the fund’s efforts to generate momentum and ensure sustainability. Additionally, the fund engaged key stakeholders. At its encouragement, Mayor Daley became the first mayor to join the board of directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Knupp and her team developed a close partnership with district CEO Arne Duncan after his appointment in June 2001. Duncan, who considered the fund a “high-value partner aligned with our core strategies,” embraced national board certification as “a perfect fit with our focus on improving the quality of instruction and human capital management districtwide.” Three successive Chicago Teachers Union presidents worked with the fund to promote national board certification.

Throughout the four years of Leadership Fund I, staff also regularly convened a group of local foundation and education leaders to solicit feedback on the Master Teacher Initiative’s theory of change, its activities and its impact. Paul Goren, vice president of the Spencer Foundation, observed, “The fund has shown an impressive openness to share what is working and where the bumps are along the road in order to foster collective learning and, ultimately, adjust and improve its investment strategy and initiatives.”

Clear and common goals with grantees

The Chicago Public Education Fund prides itself on its results-oriented approach to philanthropy. Knupp commented, “Since we do not have an endowment, our ability to continue fund-raising depends upon delivering a social return to our investors. We are extremely disciplined about clarifying what our funds will achieve and then working with our portfolio programs to achieve those results.” The fund tracks its programs’ performance on an ongoing basis, and—as its Fund I investments were winding down in 2003—Knupp took stock of the results to date.

The Education Fund views its portfolio programs as partners working toward a common goal. Before the fund makes an investment, the staff and each organization’s management team agree on the program’s mission, specific goals for the grant, desired changes and critical success factors for change. Next, they jointly develop a scorecard with performance measures that define acceptable achievements for the program, track actual achievements and establish next steps. The Education Fund’s investments are staged over a multiyear period and continued funding is contingent on achieving the quarterly performance benchmarks described in the scorecard.

Vice Chairwoman Pritzker observed, “The up-front time we spend with our portfolio programs is critical for achieving results. Both sides need to ‘own’ the goals, the performance measures and the benchmarks. With such an agreement on objectives, the portfolio programs know exactly what we are holding them accountable for, and we at the fund constantly ask ourselves if we are doing everything possible to help our programs accomplish their targets.”

The Education Fund’s focus on accountability for results impacted grant disbursements and program operations. For example, the district’s candidate preparation program failed to meet its recruitment target after 15 percent of the candidates withdrew in 2000-01. According to Tonika Terrell, who directed the program, the fund withheld cash disbursements until “its staff was convinced that we had adequately analyzed the causes of the high withdrawal rate and designed interventions to mitigate the problem in the future.” In response, Terrell developed more stringent application requirements, including a three-day pre-candidacy professional development session, an essay aligned with national board certification principles, and an interview.

Assessing the impact: Mixed results at end of Fund I

By December 2003, the number of national board certified teachers in Chicago had grown to 233 (*see Figure 1 on page 6*). Applications to the district’s and teachers union’s preparation programs had increased 10-14 percent per year and were continuing to rise. The union had maintained its 86 percent pass rate for achieving national board certification, while the district program’s pass rate reflected the national averages of 40 percent on the candidate’s first attempt and 70 percent on the second attempt. The Chicago Public Education Fund’s \$2.1 million investment had leveraged an additional \$14.3 million from the state, the district and other grantmakers.

However, the fund’s success in this area was tempered by the results of its incentive program for teacher cohorts to pursue certification. Only seven schools had formed teams of candidates, and only four received the full \$30,000 incentive. In hindsight, Knupp commented, “We did not have the

organizational capacity to recruit more cohorts, nor to help the cohorts we did have develop a strategy to lead change within their schools.”

The fund also examined the impact of the individuals and cohorts who successfully achieved national board certification. Miller remarked, “We learned that these teachers could not enact change on their own. In the schools where we saw national board certified teachers assuming greater leadership, there was a strong principal who encouraged ‘distributed leadership’ and a culture that facilitated teacher agency and collaboration.”

The fund’s investments in the district’s and the teachers union’s candidate preparation programs ended in 2002 and 2003, respectively. Miller explained, “The district’s program looked financially sustainable, and the union’s program seemed too small and expensive to really go to scale and justify our continued support.” Funding for the state resource center also concluded in 2003. The fund decided to end financial incentives for cohorts in 2002, but continued them for individuals.

Revisiting the fund’s strategy for master teachers

As the \$10 million Leadership Fund I neared its final allocations, the Chicago Public Education Fund evaluated the impact of its investments. In general, Knupp was elated with the results of the Master Teacher Initiative. She said, “We set out to develop consensus around a legitimate vehicle for identifying and rewarding master teachers, and we did it with national board certification.” Knupp was mindful, however, that the initiative had not yet achieved its broader goal of mobilizing these teachers to lead wider reform in schools.

As the fund’s board of directors contemplated the creation of a second fund, Knupp and her team conducted over 60 focus groups with investors, portfolio programs, district and union leadership, teachers, principals, local officials, foundation leaders and community groups. “Our primary question was ‘Are we still creating value or should we go out of business?’” Knupp recalled. She shared the response:

The consistent message we received was that a lot more work remained to be done in order to strengthen the quality of principal and teacher leadership in the district and that the fund was viewed as a key convener and partner. Regarding the Master Teacher Initiative, our stakeholders urged us to continue growing the number of national board certified teachers as quickly as possible. They also called on the fund to help the district find high-impact ways of utilizing national board certified teachers to benefit the most academically at-risk students.

Leadership Fund II: Building on success and confronting challenges

Building on its assessment of the successes with Leadership Fund I, the fund announced a \$15 million Leadership Fund II on April 29, 2004. At that time, the fund had already raised \$8 million, and by November 2005, Leadership Fund II contributions totaled \$11.5 million. Fund II investments would be allocated from 2005 through 2008.

Knupp explained how Fund II deepened and extended the Fund I investments:

To borrow an analogy from Jim Collins in *Good to Great*, Fund I was about getting the right people “on the bus,” or finding new and existing talent.⁶ Fund II was designed to focus on deploying, supporting and leveraging talent. Now that we are finding the talent, the challenge is getting these people in the right seats and providing the appropriate supports so that they can drive the bus.

In addition to a continued focus on recruiting and developing excellent teachers and principals, Fund II aimed to more strategically deploy teams of educators to create high-performing schools, help the district use data well, and create performance incentives and rewards (*see Exhibit 4 for the Fund II strategy map*).

The fund’s board approved \$4.85 million from Fund II to continue the Master Teacher Initiative. While the fund continued to see national board certification as the key strategy for identifying talented teachers, it also wanted to accelerate efforts to better use these master teachers as leaders of school reform. Thus, it set two clear numeric targets for its Fund II Master Teacher Initiative:

- Increase the number of national board certified teachers in Chicago to 1,200 by 2008.
- Ensure that 15 percent or more of the teachers in 25 high-poverty schools are national board certified by 2008.

Knupp commented:

By setting an ambitious goal—1,200 national board certified teachers by 2008—we felt that we could focus the system’s attention at a deeper level. Arne Duncan announced the district’s commitment to reaching 1,200 by 2008 jointly with us, but we knew that we would need the support of principals and their supervisors to make that goal a reality. Based on the Fund I experience, we also developed a theory that a school had to possess a critical mass of national board certified teachers for them to be able to lead schoolwide improvement efforts, so we articulated 15 percent as a “tipping point.” You never know if your theory of change is right if you do not put a stake in the ground and then measure your results against it.

Elaborating on the district’s commitment to the 2008 goals, Duncan remarked, “I was very pleased that the fund decided to extend its involvement with national board certification and did not try to take us in a different direction with Fund II. We are just getting started; even 1,200 is too low for a system our size. National board certification represents the excellent instructional practices that we want to see every teacher utilize in the classroom.”

An opportunity for redesign: Would different strategies achieve better results?

Knupp and her team worked from May 2004 to August 2005 to investigate opportunities for how Fund II investments could increase the number of national board certified teachers in Chicago and effectively leverage these talented teachers for greater school and student achievement.

⁶ Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, New York: HarperCollins (2001), page 41.

As fund staff began this research, more evidence of the ability of national board certified teachers to raise student performance emerged. In 2004, three new research reports evaluated the impact of national board certified teachers on student performance.⁷ Conducted in North Carolina, Arizona and Florida, the studies demonstrated that students of national board certified teachers posted higher gains on standardized achievement tests. Elementary, minority and low-income students particularly benefited from having national board certified teachers. Meanwhile, by November 2004, the number of national board certified teachers in Chicago increased to 377 (see *Figure 1 on page 6*).

The fund hired the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research to analyze the influence of national board certified teachers in Chicago. As compared to other teachers in the district, the consortium found, national board certified teachers were twice as likely to assume school leadership roles and were more favorably evaluated by principals for employing effective instructional practices. However, the consortium's study was unable to draw direct conclusions about the impact of national board certified teachers on student achievement, due to the district's limited information systems.

To help inform its Fund II investment decisions for deploying master teachers, the fund convened a national summit on national board certification and conducted two local-needs assessments:

- **National board certification summit:** In March 2005, the fund convened a four-city summit in Chicago to examine the best methods for increasing the number of national board certified teachers in low-performing schools. District and union leaders, teachers, policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders from Chicago attended, along with counterparts from the three school districts with the largest numbers of national board certified teachers in the country: Los Angeles, Miami and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.

With the Joyce Foundation, the fund commissioned a study on the four districts' efforts to recruit and retain national board certified teachers in low-performing schools. The study, and the summit itself, identified the need for policymakers, district leaders and principals to create incentives and supports for the teachers to accept challenging assignments. Joseph Aguerrebere, president of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, observed that the summit "elevated the fund's status as a national leader on the issue of cultivating and deploying national board certified teachers to serve where they are most needed."

- **Local-needs assessments:** From May to September 2005, the Education Fund conducted a market analysis to determine the level of awareness about national board certification within the district, factors influencing teacher participation and national board certified teachers' predisposition for leadership roles. The market analysis generated three conclusions: 1) financial rewards continued to be critical incentives; 2) peer-to-peer marketing and school-based presentations proved highly effective recruiting tools; and 3) principals and their supervisors were key levers for recruiting new candidates and enabling achievers to exert greater leadership in their schools.

In April 2005, the fund commissioned an audit of the three national board certification candidate preparation programs in Chicago: the district and union programs supported during

⁷ The three studies can be downloaded from the following Web sites: www.cpef.org/pdf/NBCT_research_brief.pdf, www.cpef.org/pdf/NBC-ASU-study.pdf, and www.cna.org/documents/CavaluzzoStudy.pdf.

Fund I and the Accomplished Teacher Alliance, which was jointly managed by the district and the union. After reviewing these programs, the audit concluded that “the current aggregate infrastructure is badly flawed and woefully inadequate to meet the 2008 challenge.”⁸ It highlighted three major concerns: the absence of a common vision within the district about how to align national board certified teachers with district needs, insufficient funding and the fragmented candidate preparation program structure.

Fund II grantmaking strategy

Based on these developments and new information, the fund revised its strategy and grantmaking activities for the Master Teacher Initiative for Leadership Fund II. In September 2005, its board approved \$3.67 million for two national board certification-related efforts (*see Exhibit 3 for all Fund II allocations*).

Continuing financial incentives

Leadership Fund II allocated \$3.5 million from 2005 to 2008 for financial incentives to teachers who pursue national board certification. Drawing upon its experience from Fund I, the fund tailored its new incentive package to accelerate the growth of national board certified teachers. Candidates completing the portfolio and assessment process within one year received \$1,000, and candidates successfully earning national board certification were awarded an additional \$2,000. Its budget also included \$40,000 for subsidies to support candidate “retake” fees and \$250,000 for recruiting incentives. The district maintained its \$2,500 bonus for achievers, and the state continued to allocate \$4.5 million in incentives and support for candidates, achievers and mentors.

Strengthening the candidate preparation programs

The Education Fund decided to renew investments in the district’s and union’s candidate preparation programs from 2005 to 2006. Amy Short, the fund’s finance and operations director, explained, “At the same time we had committed to reaching 1,200 national board certified teachers by 2008, the audit revealed capacity issues within the candidate preparation programs. In order to scale up and strengthen support for the increase in candidates, we felt we had to reinvest.”

- **Chicago Public Schools Candidate Preparation Program:** Fund II allocated \$473,000 to the district’s candidate preparation program. The majority of this amount (\$373,000) supported one-time costs associated with the design of online modules and guides to assist candidates to successfully complete the portfolio and assessment exercises. The remaining \$100,000 given to the district was intended to help design a more robust marketing plan. The total budget for the district’s preparation program was \$2.7 million, with the district contributing \$2.4 million.

⁸ Catalpa Inc., with the NBC Chicago study team, *Strengthening National Board Certification in Chicago Public Schools* (April 10, 2005), page 5.

- **Chicago Teachers Union Nurturing Teacher Leadership Program:** Fund II awarded the teachers union \$200,000 to double its Nurturing Teacher Leadership program’s annual capacity from 30 to 60 candidates. The investment also required the union to coordinate efforts, such as the development of online assessment modules and recruitment events, with the district’s candidate preparation program. Director Lynn Cherkasky-Davis commented, “We had a lot of conversations with fund staff about how much to grow our program because we would never want to sacrifice the quality or compromise the integrity of our program. The fund pushed us in a positive way to expand our capacity and share our knowledge and resources with the district’s program.”

With approximately just under \$700,000 of the \$4.85 million master teacher deployment budget remaining, fund staff continued to explore other potential investments that would be consistent with the fund’s theory of change and lessons learned from Fund I. Promising ideas for further advancing the Master Teacher Initiative included

- providing school-based incentives and supports to encourage national board certification in high-poverty schools;
- helping the district and the union develop a joint strategy for candidate preparation; and
- collaborating with the Chicago principals’ association to develop principals’ distributed leadership skills.

Meeting the Education Fund’s 2008 goals

As Knupp and her team looked ahead to 2008, they acknowledged that several formidable challenges would have to be overcome in order to meet the goal of 1,200 teachers with national board certification by 2008, including 15 percent of the faculty in 25 high-poverty schools. More broadly, they were concerned that these teachers’ potential to accelerate student and school performance was not yet fully leveraged.

Reaching 15 percent in 25 high-poverty schools

Knupp and her team puzzled over the design of incentives and other supports to build a critical mass of national board certified teachers in 25 high-poverty schools. To date, only one high-poverty school had met the 15 percent target. The school district’s chief human resources officer, Ascención Juárez, remarked on the district’s challenges:

Building a cohort in a high-poverty, low-performing school is difficult. To build successful cohorts internally in such schools, we must first reach out to the principals. We need to provide them with ways in which to encourage their teachers to strive for national board certification. We must also make sure that teachers seeking to become national board certified are provided with support and encouragement while pursuing this goal. Finally, we need to impress upon teachers who achieve national board certification the importance of serving as role models and mentors for their colleagues.

Concurrently, debate ensued as to whether national board certified teachers should be homegrown from the existing teaching faculty or strategically deployed to targeted schools—or whether a hybrid model could be utilized. Knupp shared one emerging idea for moving forward:

We learned from our prior cohort incentive that the principal and school leadership team must have a clear vision for how national board certified teachers can help improve instruction schoolwide. From the summit and related study, we found that these teachers are willing to go into challenging schools if they have the right supports: a principal who distributes leadership, collaborative colleagues and a student-centered culture of achievement. Therefore, we are considering an incentive to attract a team—a strong principal, national board certified teachers and promising candidates—into high-poverty, low-performing schools.

The team concept would allow the fund to draw upon the lessons learned from its three areas of grantmaking—recruiting new teachers, developing aspiring principals and rewarding master teachers—and to create synergies across its grantmaking portfolio.

Still, it remained unclear if anyone in the district had assumed responsibility for identifying and targeting 25 high-poverty schools for the 15 percent objective. The Joyce Foundation’s Gretchen Crosby Sims commented, “The promise of national board certification—here and nationally—is not being realized just by certifying lots of individual teachers. We need to think more systemically about building clusters of national board certified teachers to help turn around our lowest performing schools.” Indeed, the Joyce Foundation was considering ways to work with the fund to strengthen the district’s internal capacity around this issue.

Using national board certification for improving schools and student achievement

While the Education Fund was encouraged by cooperation from the district’s leadership for its Master Teacher Initiative, Knupp and her team hoped more progress could be made to ensure that national board certification led to real improvements in schools and student performance in Chicago. One clear priority was to strengthen the commitment of principals and their supervisors to national board certification. The audit and summit underscored that the district’s 613 principals and their 24 supervisors had the greatest role to play in the recruiting and supporting activities necessary to reach 1,200 national board certified teachers by 2008.

To date, only one supervisor had launched an ambitious recruitment campaign. Joe Kallas, the principal of Peterson Elementary and a national board certification candidate himself, noted, “The benefits of having national board certified teachers in your school are still unclear to many principals, so they worry about the candidates’ time commitment and that achievers will be recruited away.” The 2008 challenge grew all the more pressing as the number of national board certified teachers had only risen to 472 in 2005, far short of the fund’s original projection of 587 (*see Figure 1 on page 6*).

Furthermore, staff acknowledged that even with 1,200 national board certified teachers, less than 5 percent of the district’s teaching force would have undergone the certification process. Education Investments Associate Veenay Singla, who took over the management of the fund’s Master Teacher Initiative in August 2005, commented, “In a system as large as Chicago, many teachers may not pursue national board certification. However, given the professional development value associated

with it, we need to help the district find ways to integrate national board certification principles into the human resource strategies that affect all teachers.”

Activities were emerging on this front. For example, the district had assigned national board certified teachers to mentor promising undergraduates who came to Chicago as summer teaching fellows. The district’s math and science curriculum directors had achieved national board certification and were committed to integrating the principles into content-oriented professional development. However, it was not clear if these cross-departmental efforts were well-coordinated.

Securing adequate state funding

With 1,555 teachers earning national board certification in November 2005, Illinois boasted the eighth-largest number in the country. The state’s rapid growth from only three national board certified teachers in 1995 was fueled in large part by the swelling ranks in Chicago, which, at 472, now boasted nearly one-third of the state’s total. While Governor Rod Blagojevich and other elected officials lauded the national board certification expansion, the state’s allocation to support and reward candidates and mentors was under fire. Faced with a significant deficit in the state’s fiscal year 2005 budget, legislative leaders had been poised to slash the \$4.5 million national board certification allocation—an aggressive advocacy campaign by the Education Fund and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards prevented this cut from happening.

But the next year, as the fiscal year 2006 budget was being debated, the state’s national board certification allocation was again put in jeopardy. The fund had calculated that an additional 260 candidates would need to achieve national board certification each year from 2006 to 2008 in order to reach the 1,200 objective. Coupled with statewide projections for growth of the program, \$7.5-8 million in annual state funding would be required to cover promised national board certification stipends and bonuses. The fund worked closely with district and city leaders to craft a joint strategy aimed at preserving and increasing the state allocation.

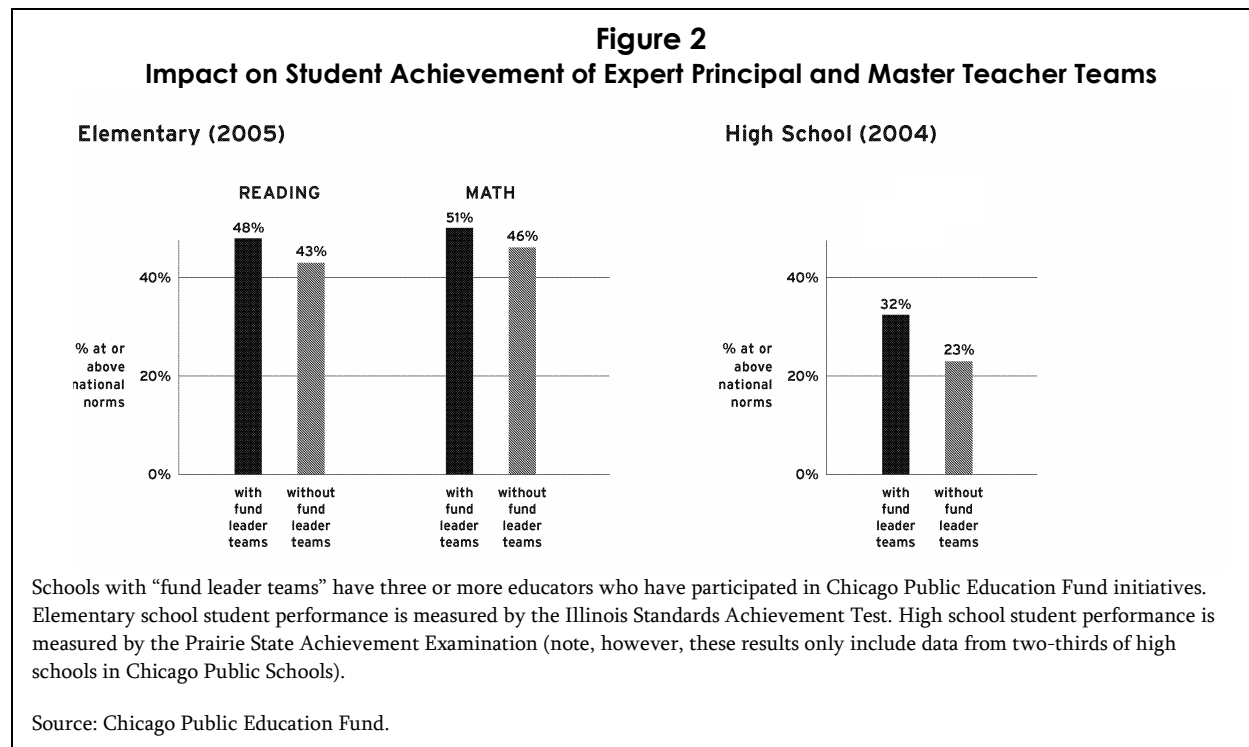
Demonstrating results

Knupp and her team were also under pressure to demonstrate the impact of national board certified teachers on student learning: Were these teachers truly better than other teachers and did they do a better job of improving student achievement? Juarez observed, “To truly get everyone in the district behind national board certification, a positive impact on student outcomes must be shown. We need hard numbers to convince the skeptics and to motivate the cautious.” Unfortunately, the implementation of a new student-information system that would allow student outcomes to be tracked by teachers had been delayed until 2007.

Crosby Sims explained the political necessity for Chicago-specific data: “Despite the robust evidence of national board certified teachers’ ability to improve student achievement provided by the Florida, North Carolina and Arizona studies, we need to show impact in Chicago and across the state if we’re going to have a chance of saving, let alone increasing, state funding for national board certification.”

In 2005, the fund analyzed performance trends in Chicago schools with a “fund leadership team”—schools with three or more leaders from its portfolio of programs (such as national board certified teachers or “expert principals” who had participated in a fund-sponsored principal preparation

program).⁹ The early results from this analysis looked promising. At the elementary school level, schools with a leadership team scored five percentage points higher on the state reading and math assessments than schools without a team. In high schools, the leadership team’s advantage increased to nine percentage points (*see Figure 2 below*).



Mobilizing national board certified teachers as leaders of school reform

Finally, Knupp felt deeply committed to ensuring that the potential of national board certified teachers to accelerate school- and districtwide performance—by leading changes that could help more students achieve—was fully exploited. She explained:

These teachers are the district’s best and brightest. I won’t be satisfied if they return to their classrooms and help only the students within their four walls, or even a few other colleagues in their building—while helpful, that is not ambitious enough. National board certification should be part of a career trajectory in which the district systematically taps these teachers to assume broader school and district leadership roles.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards President Joseph Aguerrebere observed that effectively leveraging national board certified teachers was a nationwide problem: “These accomplished teachers return to their schools and districts excited to share what they have learned

⁹ Leadership Fund I supported principal preparation and development through investments in New Leaders for New Schools, the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association’s Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago, and the University of Illinois Center for School Leadership. For more information, see www.cpef.org/op_fund1.htm#principals.

about how to reflect upon and improve their practice, but they often have a difficult time finding support from their principal or peers. Many find themselves all dressed up with no place to go.”

Spencer Foundation Vice President Paul Goren commented, “The fund started out with a nice testable hypothesis that teachers earning national board certification—an individual professional development credential by design—could lead school- and districtwide improvement. I give the fund a lot of credit for staying the course, adapting the initiative over time and measuring the results. Its carefully executed experiment with national board certification holds lessons for all education grantmakers.”

Looking ahead

As Knupp and her team contemplated their next steps with the Master Teacher Initiative, they reflected on their work. The Chicago Public Education Fund had made concerted efforts to articulate a clear theory of change and link resources to results through its grantmaking. Knupp felt proud of what the initiative had accomplished thus far, but recognized that delivering even more ambitious results and having a sustainable, systemic impact on the district posed the fund’s greatest challenges to date.

EXHIBIT 1

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACTS AND FIGURES, 2005

District Overview

District Area Demographics (Census 2000)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Total population | 2,896,016 |
| Per capita income | \$20,175 |
| Households below poverty level | 17.4 percent |

Student Demographics

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Number of students (PK–12) | 426,812 |
| African-American | 49.8 percent |
| Hispanic | 38.0 percent |
| White | 8.8 percent |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 3.2 percent |
| Native American | 0.2 percent |
| Low-income | 85.2 percent |
| Limited English proficient | 14.1 percent |
| Student mobility rate | 24.8 percent |
| One-year Graduation rate | 68.5 percent |

Schools and Staff (Largest district in IL)

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Number of schools | 613 |
| Elementary | 486 |
| High | 107 |
| Charter | 20 |
| Total positions | 45,792 |
| Teachers | 26,719 |
| Average teacher salary | \$62,985 |

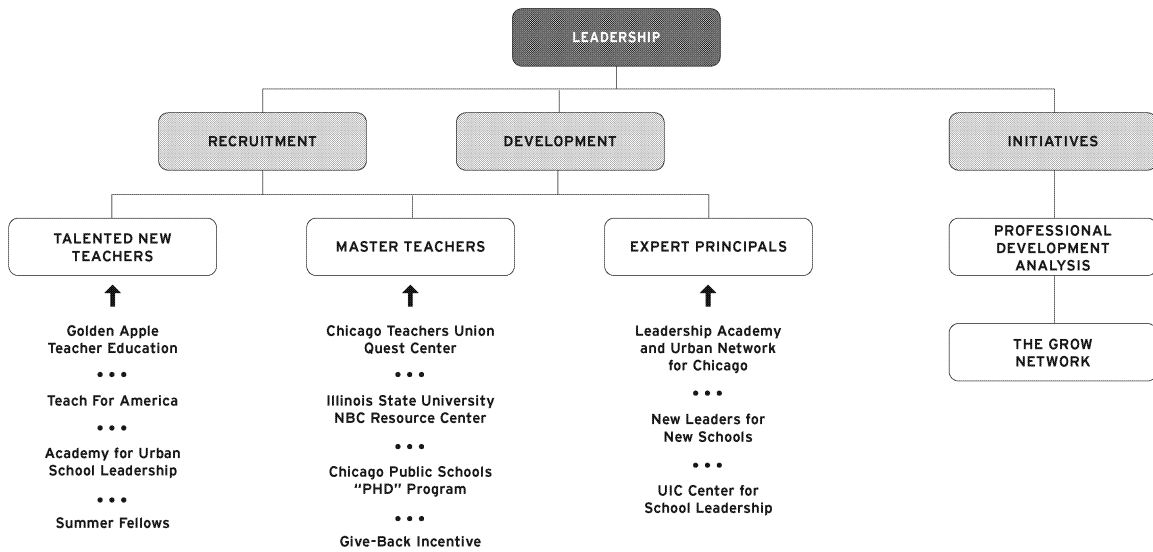
| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Annual District Budget | \$4 billion |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|

Sources: For district area demographics, see National Center for Education Statistics School Demographics System (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/singledemoprofile.asp?county1=1709930&state1=17>). For Chicago Public Schools student, staff, schools and budget information, see the district's "At a Glance" (www.cps.k12.il.us/AtAGlance.html).

EXHIBIT 2

LEADERSHIP FUND I STRATEGY MAP

LEADERSHIP FUND I
Building Leadership Capacity



Source: Chicago Public Education Fund.

EXHIBIT 3
FUND I AND FUND II INVESTMENT ALLOCATIONS
2000-05 (Actual) and 2006-08 (Projected)
 (as of September 2005)

| PROGRAM | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 (estimated) | Total 2000-2005 | Estimated Income 2006-2009 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pritzker Expert Principals | | | | | | | | |
| Leading to Great Principals Initiative | | | | 9,900 | 583 | 39,517 | 50,000 | |
| LAUNCH (Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago) | 200,000 | 50,000 | 150,000 | 145,000 | 25,000 | 150,000 | 720,000 | |
| New Leaders for New Schools | | 300,000 | 200,000 | 250,000 | | 40,000 | 790,000 | |
| Univ. of Illinois-Chicago Principal Program | | | | | 150,000 | | 200,000 | |
| Prof. Development & School Based Support | | | | | | 70,000 | | |
| Education Resource Strategies | | | | | | 349,517 | | |
| Total | | | | | | | 1,530,000 | 2,100,000 |
| Talented New Teachers | | | | | | | | |
| Teach for America | 120,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 75,000 | 25,000 | 50,250 | 470,250 | |
| Golden Apple Teacher Education Program | 100,000 | 100,000 | 59,000 | 100,000 | 95,000 | 5,000 | 459,000 | |
| Teacher Recruitment Initiative | 60,000 | | | | | | 60,000 | |
| Summer Fellows | | | | 75,000 | 200,000 | 129,000 | 404,000 | |
| Academy for Urban School Leadership ¹ | | | | 120,000 | 300,000 | 120,000 | 540,000 | |
| The New Teacher Project | | | | | | 304,250 | | 700,000 |
| Total | | | | | | | 1,933,250 | |
| Master Teachers | | | | | | | | |
| CPS Professionals Honored with Distinction Program | 100,000 | | 75,000 | 157,000 | | 200,000 | 532,000 | |
| Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center | 150,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 | | | 50,000 | 300,000 | |
| Illinois State University | | 150,000 | 175,000 | | 74,750 | | 399,750 | |
| Re-Take Fee Grants | | | | | | 40,000 | 40,000 | |
| Recruiting Incentives | | | | 250,000 | | 250,000 | 250,000 | |
| Complete/Achieve Incentives | 48,000 | 38,000 | 153,000 | 258,000 | 243,000 | 255,000 | 995,000 | |
| National Board Certified Teachers Initiative | | | | | 10,679 | 172,275 | 182,954 | |
| Community Based Organizations ² | | | | | | (2,432) | 7,568 | |
| Prof. Development Rubric Project: National Teachers Academy | | | | | | 964,843 | 2,707,282 | 3,641,000 |
| Total | | | | | | | 7,568 | |
| Leveraging Leadership | | | | | | | | |
| Rewards and Incentives | | 18,000 | 79,000 | 180,000 | 55,000 | | 332,000 | |
| Training and Deploying Teams | | | | | 7,413 | | 7,413 | |
| Total | | | | | | | 339,413 | 1,100,000 |
| Other Leaders | | | | | | | | |
| Local School Councils | | | | | | | | |
| CPS Fund Fellows | | | | | 48,000 | 48,000 | 96,000 | |
| Strategic Learning Initiatives | | 30,000 | 60,000 | | | | 90,000 | |
| Total | | | | | | | 186,000 | 202,000 |
| Using Data Well | | | | | | | | |
| The Grow Network | | | 50,000 | 150,000 | 192,000 | | 392,000 | |
| The Consortium | | | | 2,500 | 11,700 | | 39,530 | |
| Other Data-Driven Instruction | | | | | | 25,330 | 437,530 | 500,000 |
| Total | | | | | | | 437,530 | 500,000 |
| Total Grants and Investments | \$578,000 | \$461,000 | \$826,000 | \$1,192,260 | \$1,268,375 | \$1,691,940 | \$7,427,474 | \$9,243,000 |

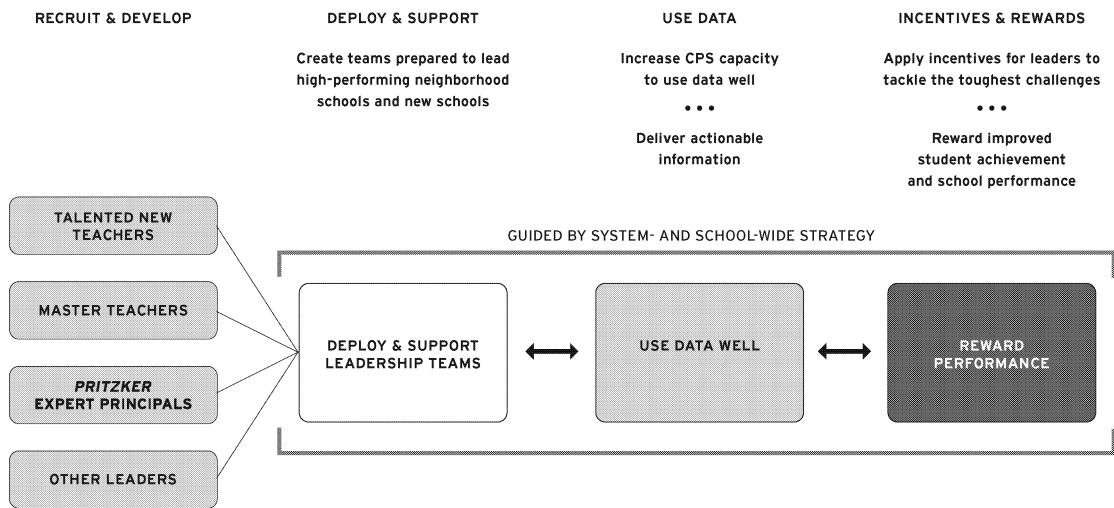
(1) Note that the 2004 payments made to AUSL includes a \$300,000 grant from The Boeing Company that was restricted for AUSL.
 (2) Funds for grants up to approximately \$167,000 to be made to community based organizations would come from funds raised during Fund I and restricted to such purposes.

Source: Chicago Public Education Fund.

EXHIBIT 4

LEADERSHIP FUND II STRATEGY MAP

LEADERSHIP FUND II Our Objectives



Source: Chicago Public Education Fund.

LESSONS FOR EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY

This case study suggests four important lessons for grantmakers seeking to increase their impact:

- **Make assumptions about grantmaking strategy explicit.**

Whether it's called a theory of change or logic model or strategy map, the discipline of vetting and thinking through different solutions to problems—including how certain activities will lead to certain outcomes and the resources needed to be successful—can help funders improve their effectiveness. The Chicago Public Education Fund built its strategy on the core assumption that great leaders make great schools, and its grantmaking is designed to identify, cultivate and deploy talented teachers and principals.

- **Ensure resources are adequate.**

Grantmakers should think carefully and honestly about whether their resources are sufficient for the problem they want to solve—or how they can bring added public or private resources to bear. “We view our dollars as a seed investment that is intended to attract attention and leverage an even larger amount of dollars from the district and other stakeholders,” explained the fund’s Janet Knupp. It used the management expertise of its board to work with grantees, and it pursued initiatives only after the district also agreed to allocate significant resources of its own. The fund also begins each grantmaking investment with an exit strategy in mind for how the work will be sustained. Through 2005, the fund estimates its \$11.5 million investments of money and management assistance have leveraged \$45 million in contributions from other sources.

- **Know what you want to measure—and make sure your grantees know it.**

The fund and each grantee jointly develop a scorecard with performance measures that define acceptable achievements for the program, track actual achievements and establish next steps. “The up-front time we spend with our portfolio programs is critical for achieving results. Both sides need to ‘own’ the goals, the performance measures and the benchmarks,” observed Penny Pritzker, the fund’s vice chairwoman.

- **Assess success, adjust assumptions and revise strategies.**

As a statement about assumptions and how they logically lead to a desired change, a theory of change is only a hypothesis—and thus should be revisited over time to see if each element is making anticipated contributions. “You never know if your theory of change is right if you do not put a stake in the ground and then measure your results against it,” said Knupp. Monitoring performance, seeking continuous improvement, seeking feedback at important junctures and making appropriate adjustments has enabled the fund to improve its grantmaking over time.

SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS

Questions to consider while reading this case about effective education grantmaking:

1. What was the theory of change—the assumptions, activities and expected outcomes—for the Chicago Public Education Fund’s Master Teacher Initiative? Were the initiative’s strategies and activities aligned with the intended goals that were set? If so, how? If not, why not? Do you think this theory was plausible: Were the fund’s strategies and grants reasonable ones for achieving the goals it set?
2. How would you characterize the link between resources and results in this grantmaking initiative? Did the link become stronger or weaker over time?
3. What is your assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Master Teacher Initiative, through both Fund I and Fund I activities?
4. Consider the fund’s goals in relationship to the goals of the Chicago Public Schools system, a large urban school system. What were the advantages and disadvantages of how the fund chose to work with leaders of the school system?
5. What advice would you offer Janet Knupp and her colleagues for the next round of grantmaking at the Chicago Public Education Fund? What are the greatest challenges that remain and how might the Chicago Public Education Fund best address them in the future?
6. In addition to *resources linked to results*, which of the other GFE Principles for Effective Grantmaking were illuminated in the case? (See inside cover for a summary of all eight principles.)
7. What is your organization’s strategy for using its resources to improve educational outcomes? How do you know the resources are deployed in the best way—and are sufficient to meet the goals you’ve set? What does “success” look like in your organization’s education grantmaking portfolio?
8. What specific lessons and insights did you gain from this case study and how might they apply to your grantmaking work in education?

EPILOGUE

In July 2006, Janet Knupp reflected on the fund's progress toward its goal of 1,200 national board certified teachers—and what this progress suggested for next steps:

In concert with Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan and Mayor Richard M. Daley, the Chicago Public Education Fund set a goal in 2005 of 1,200 national board certified teachers by 2008. Setting aggressive goals is common practice for the fund, as we use these goals to mobilize constituents and maintain school system focus amid competing priorities.

To date, 474 Chicago public school teachers have earned national board certification, and more than 400 teachers are awaiting the November 2006 test-score release by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Our analysis predicts that about 170 of those candidates will achieve certification, thereby creating the need for at least 450 and 625 first-time candidates to pursue NBC in 2006 and 2007, respectively.

Looking forward, I see several key opportunities and challenges:

Financial incentives to teachers

While we succeeded in more than doubling the state budget to support national board certification from \$4.5 million to \$9.5 million during the 2006 legislative session, the fund had to lead the lobbying efforts, as national board certified teachers do not independently mobilize as a group. As long as financial incentives (including both candidate fees and salary bonuses) for national board certification are wholly reliant on state budgets, I believe the success of the program will be held hostage to political winds, thereby requiring continual lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Thus, to complement the state-funded incentives, the fund is working to create a permanent placeholder for rewarding board certified teachers in the collective bargaining discussions now occurring between the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union.

Evaluation and impact of NBCTs

While national research on the impact of NBCTs on student performance has been generally supportive, considerable skepticism remains. As we await the release of additional studies commissioned by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the fund has continued to contract the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago to include specific questions about board certification in its biannual teacher surveys. Founded in 1990, the Consortium is a nonpartisan public research organization that conducts objective research to inform educational policy in Chicago's schools. A Consortium report examining both the fund's Master Teacher Initiative and its principal programs will be available in fall 2006.

Separate from the national research, the impact of Chicago's national board certified teachers, particularly on student learning, is difficult to quantify due to varying and limited means of data collection. To address this challenge, we are working with Ascención Juárez, the chief human resources officer at the school district, to improve data collection processes and create a central

database to track applicants as they progress through the certification process. Ultimately, the database will be able to connect board certified teachers to the students they teach and the corresponding data can be used to demonstrate the impact they have on their students.

Creating cohorts of NBCTs in low-income schools

While a recent fund analysis shows that national board certified teachers are largely working in low-income schools in Chicago, we need to strategically capitalize on opportunities that deliberately place and support the growth of these teachers in the schools that need them the most—as we’ve done with Sherman School: The school will reopen this fall as a newly reconstituted school (after closing in 2005 as a failing school) with six board certified teachers in leadership positions supporting a cohort of 15 new teachers trained by the Academy of Urban School Leadership, another fund grantee.

We also need to support the school system in creating conditions whereby board certified teachers can be used in formal leadership positions within the district and at schools; to date, the school district has informally created leadership positions for these teachers as teacher mentors.

Existing candidate support programs have been designed primarily to support individual teachers, rather than cohorts of teachers, thereby making it difficult for support programs to service the increasing number of candidates and reach a critical mass of board certified teachers in multiple schools. We are working closely with the Chicago Public Schools and the teachers union to strategically modify their respective support programs in order to meet the needs of multiple candidates at school sites in a way that does not have a significant impact on cost.

I also believe the fund must continue to work toward and further articulate its theory that teams of talented principals and teachers can accelerate student achievement by transforming schools and, ultimately, the district. While 43 schools currently have three or more board certified teachers, we should ensure that those schools also are led by high-quality principals who have been trained in fund-supported preparation programs and who recognize the value of national certification.

Advocacy

Nearly 1,000 people attended a fund-hosted celebration of board certified teachers and quality teaching in March 2006, including top leadership from the political, education, union and civic communities. State Superintendent Randy Dunn, Mayor Richard M. Daley, Arne Duncan and Chicago Teacher Union President Marilyn Stewart each made remarks about the certification process, as did several fund directors. The fund is delighted to participate in these celebratory events; however, we eventually will need to relinquish our role as the primary stakeholder.

Mayor Daley recently agreed to elevate the visibility of his support for national board certification as part of a larger Chicago teacher quality initiative campaign. This support is a critical component of the fund’s effort to create parent and community demand for board certified teachers. Mayor Daley’s term expires in 2007 and while I expect that he will successfully run for re-election, our efforts could be hampered by a change in mayoral administration.

Conclusion

The fund recognizes that its goal of 1,200 board certified teachers in Chicago by 2008 represents a small percentage of the total number of teachers in the district. However, I believe that achieving this goal will result in the following:

- board certification becomes synonymous with teacher quality in Chicago and has sufficient brand recognition to drive state and local legislators, as well as parents, to demand the certification in the schools that serve their communities;
- a critical mass of board certified teachers exists—including the number of first-time test candidates, re-takers and the existing pool of board certified teachers around Illinois—to lead the charge in advocating for state stipends and compensation differentials;
- teams of board certified teachers work together in schools throughout Chicago, transforming school culture in such a way that it is no longer a question “if” teachers will go through the certification process, but “when;” and
- at least 15 percent of the teaching faculty in 25 low-income schools become master teachers. National board certification becomes a meaningful mechanism for ensuring educational equity, with highly qualified teachers working in schools that need them the most.

NOTES

PRINCIPLES FOR

Effective Education Grantmaking

- principle
no. 1

Discipline and Focus

In education, where public dollars dwarf private investments, a funder has greater impact when grantmaking is carefully planned and targeted.
- principle
no. 2

Knowledge

Information, ideas and advice from diverse sources, as well as openness to criticism and feedback, can help a funder make wise choices.
- principle
no. 3

Resources Linked to Results

A logic-driven “theory of change” helps a grantmaker think clearly about how specific actions will lead to desired outcomes, thus linking resources with results.
- principle
no. 4

Effective Grantees

A grantmaker is effective only when its grantees are effective. Especially in education, schools and systems lack capacity and grantees (both inside and outside the system) may require deeper support.
- principle
no. 5

Engaged Partners

A funder succeeds by actively engaging its partners—the individuals, institutions and communities connected with an issue—to ensure “ownership” of education problems and their solutions.
- principle
no. 6

Leverage, Influence and Collaboration

The depth and range of problems in education make it difficult to achieve meaningful change in isolation or by funding programs without changing public policies or opinions. A grantmaker is more effective when working with others to mobilize and deploy as many resources as possible in order to advance solutions.
- principle
no. 7

Persistence

The most important problems in education are often the most complex and intractable, and will take time to solve.
- principle
no. 8

Innovation and Constant Learning

Even while acting on the best available information—as in Principle #2—a grantmaker can create new knowledge about ways to promote educational success. Tracking outcomes, understanding costs and identifying what works—and what doesn’t—are essential to helping grantmakers and their partners achieve results.

Grantmakers for Education improves the knowledge, networks and effectiveness of education philanthropy. By connecting effective education strategies with effective grantmaking strategies, we help foundations and donors leverage their investments to improve achievement and opportunities for all students. Founded in 1995, we are a national association of over 200 philanthropies that connects grantmakers with knowledgeable leaders, promising programs, experienced colleagues and actionable research.

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720 SW Washington, Suite 605, Portland, OR 97205 tel 503.595.2100 www.edfunders.org