

**Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago**  
**Revised Mission, New Purpose and Core Values**  
**January 17, 2007**

**Mission**

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago conducts research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. We seek to expand communication among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners as we support the search for solutions to the problems of school reform. CCSR encourages the use of research in policy action and improvement of practice, but does not argue for particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school reform by identifying what matters for student success and school improvement, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working.

**Purpose**

To conduct in-depth, rigorous studies on critical educational issues facing public schools in Chicago and across the nation disseminated to diverse audiences to further the improvement of education policy and practice.

**Core Values**

- Building the knowledge base about school reform
- Collecting and developing the best data possible
- Using multiple methods to produce high-quality research
- Listening to diverse voices in CPS and the school reform community
- Providing data and technical assistance to the school district and others working to improve urban schools
- Promoting a work environment where people collaborate and challenge each other
- Developing an independent research agenda that is informed, but not determined, by the priorities of CPS

# **The Steering Committee of the Consortium on Chicago School Research MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE RULES**

*Revisions proposed June 1, 2011*

*Approved June 1, 2011*

**Purpose.** The Steering Committee exists to provide intellectual guidance from diverse perspectives to the research projects of the Consortium. Functioning as both an advisory body and an active work group, the Steering Committee helps formulate general Consortium policy and counsels Directors on studies and other projects to be undertaken. Members contribute time and resources to Consortium projects, facilitate the multipartisan nature of the Consortium's work, and assist in the dissemination of its findings.

**Decision making.** Consortium policy is discussed and set at Steering Committee meetings. Most decisions are made on a consensus basis. In the rare instance when the Steering Committee votes on an action or policy and the Directors oppose it, the Directors register their disagreement, explain their reasons, and ask that the discussion be continued until an agreement can be obtained. Thus, in a formal sense, the Directors are not bound by Steering Committee votes, but every effort is made by both Directors and members to reach agreement, and Directors work to be responsive to the Steering Committee.

**Criteria for membership.** Members should have an interest in contributing to the research of the Consortium. The primary consideration for membership is the capacity to contribute methodological and substantive expertise to the research process related to student learning, school improvement, and urban education policy. Specific areas of desired expertise include learning sciences, education policy enactment, school finance and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, and education leadership and human resources. Additional criteria may also be considered, including active involvement with research and/or policy on school improvement.

Pluralism is also key to the Steering Committee so that the research process may complement the pluralistic nature of public education. Members should represent a variety of perspectives on the problems of Chicago's schools and how to improve them; they should be affiliated with a range of organizations and institutions across Chicago, they should also be diverse in terms of racial and ethnic identity.

**Steering Committee Composition.** The Steering Committee of the Consortium on Chicago School Research is composed of as many as 26 members. Seven of these members are *institutional members* who represent the following four organizations: the Chicago Public Schools, which has three representatives; the Illinois State Board of Education; the Chicago Teachers Union; and the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association. These organizations have perpetual membership on the Steering Committee and the organizations themselves appoint persons to represent them. Although appointed by their organizations, these persons should also meet the criteria for membership.

The remaining members (up to 17) are *individual members* who meet the criteria described above. The individual persons are the members and not their employer or affiliate organization as is the case with institutional members. An implication of this distinction is that when individual members move from one organization to another, they maintain their membership as long as they continue to meet the membership criteria noted above. The exception to this is individuals who become employed by (or whose primary work arrangement is with) the Chicago Public Schools or another institutional member. These persons are not eligible to remain on the Steering Committee unless they are appointed as representatives by their organizations.

**Co-Chairs.** The Steering Committee will be co-chaired. The term of office for each of the co-chairs will be two years, with staggered terms. The term of each co-chair will begin at the first meeting in early fall.

**Nominations to the Steering Committee.** Each year in the winter or early spring, the Co-chairs, in consultation with the Directors, are responsible for initiating a process to fill Steering Committee vacancies. They are to bring a list of proposed members and co-chairs for approval to the Steering Committee no later than late spring; so that new members and co-chairs can be seated at the first meeting of the early fall.

**Terms of membership.** Individual members are appointed to three-year terms. At the conclusion of a three-year term, a member may be renominated and reappointed to the Steering Committee. Any member may serve up to three consecutive terms. After a two-year hiatus off the Steering Committee, a member may be appointed to one additional term.

**Orientation.** An orientation for new members will take place prior to the first Steering Committee meeting in the early fall. If feasible, this will occur on the same day as the Steering Committee meeting.

**Attendance.** Individual members are required to attend or send a designated alternate to at least one-half of the Steering Committee's meetings each year. Provisions are made for special circumstances, such as illness, sabbatical leaves, etc. If a member fails to meet this requirement, his or her membership may be terminated. Institutional members are exempt from this requirement.

**Alternates and guests.** If a member cannot attend a meeting, he or she may send a designated alternate who should meet the criteria for membership. The member has the responsibility to remain informed about missed meetings through communication with his or her alternate. Members may invite guests to Steering Committee meetings, space permitting, but are requested to consult Consortium staff ahead of time.

## **Qualifications for Chair of the Steering Committee Consortium on Chicago School Research**

- Someone who has leadership capabilities and intellectual ties to education research issues.
- Someone who can confidently represent the Consortium at public or media events.
- Someone who can build consensus, who can engender enthusiasm and confidence for the Consortium.
- Someone who can strengthen the Steering Committee as a body and look for possible new members to recruit.
- Someone who can commit two years to this leadership position.
- Someone who can commit about two days per month to this responsibility. We will provide staff to support the Chair.

## Consortium on Chicago School Research

### Steering Committee Role in Development, Preparation and Distribution of Consortium Sponsored Research

July 2000

From the Consortium's Mission Statement:

*The Consortium is a public research and informing organization. It has deliberately structured a multi-partisan membership that includes faculty from area universities, research staff of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Illinois State Board of Education, researchers in advocacy groups, as well as other interested individuals and organizations. The Consortium seeks to ensure that a diversity of perspectives shape the research agenda, especially in terms of the questions asked and the interpretations offered.*

*The Consortium views research not just as a technical process of gathering data and publishing reports, but as a form of community education based on sustained public discourse. The Consortium does not argue a particular policy position. Rather it believes that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained. We work to produce such evidence and to ensure that the competition of ideas remains vital.*

The Directors of the Consortium have engaged in several conversations among themselves and during Steering Committee meetings reflecting on what it means to foster a “genuine competition of ideas” in the context of our research. We continue to endorse the idea that the Steering Committee of the Consortium should be a forum for expressing and advocating diverse ideas during all phases of our research, including the agenda setting process, while studies are designed, and during the initial analyses and writing phase.

The Directors reiterate their endorsement of the various aspects of the Mission Statement that guides how we conduct our work. Key among these are:

- Seeking diversity and multi-partisanship among the members of the Steering Committee
- Soliciting diverse concerns and multiple questions in the development and planning of research agendas and study plans
- Designing studies that draw on multiple data sources and multiple analytic methods
- Generally avoiding policy recommendations, but to the extent that reports offer policy interpretations, insuring that plural views shape how these are reported.

The Directors also continue to believe that good policy results from a competition of ideas informed by the best available evidence. Consortium studies do and will continue to produce such evidence to keep debate around policy decisions vital and informed. We view the proper role of the Consortium, however, as insuring that the best evidence is obtained and presented to the public, not as being primarily responsible for structuring the policy debate.

Rather, these activities belong in the external environment – not within the Consortium. In fact, the Consortium needs to create and then maintain a “firewall” between its research functions and the broader policy-making debate. Our strength lies in giving voice to multiple perspectives during the creation of research questions, the design of research studies, and the analysis of study findings. Others are better able to use the relevant research findings to engage in the policy debate. Though on occasion, our results may be misstated or reported selectively, we cannot and should not be responsible to police or censor all use of our work. We rely on the self-correcting tendencies of the democratic process for our findings to be portrayed in a balanced way.

Based on our operational experiences at the Consortium, the Directors have strong views about why this separation is essential.

- We must maintain good working relationships with the Chicago Public Schools in order to conduct our research over the long term. Though CPS often views our reports as critical, it is incumbent on us to maintain civil and productive discourse with school system leadership. Others may take a more adversarial stance, but we must distance ourselves from policy positions in order to maintain the communication and cooperation needed for our work to endure and to be considered seriously by CPS.
- The Consortium must be able to assure its researchers of their ability to distribute their analyses and communicate their findings unencumbered by immediate partisan critiques. Our researchers remain firmly committed to the Consortium’s pluralist processes, yet they also need to be guaranteed that their research will be circulated and presented to the public on its own merits and not obscured by commentaries that may be more focused on policy implications than on communicating the actual study results.
- The Consortium operates under the fiscal and legal auspices of the University of Chicago. Those Directors who are full-time university employees must retain final authority over Consortium products and publications since they bear the responsibility for them. Moreover, none of us wants the role of “censor” over individual Steering Committee members.

## **Operating Policy and Procedures Governing Preparation and Distribution of Consortium Sponsored Reports**

Members play an important role in the preparation of Consortium sponsored reports.

- Steering Committee members have at least two opportunities to provide feedback and make recommendations during the preparation of Consortium sponsored reports. First, during the early stages of analysis, report authors present their findings to a Steering Committee meeting and request input. Second, authors distribute the penultimate draft of the report and request written feedback within ten days (48 hours for a data brief).
- Drafts of Consortium sponsored reports are confidential to Steering Committee members, their employees and consultants.
- Authors are required to respond to all Steering Committee members who provide written comments or critiques on the draft report. They are expected to make efforts to incorporate or respond to comments from Steering Committee members as they write the final version of the report. Final editorial authority and responsibility, however, rest with the authors. When authors disagree with the comments of Steering Committee members, they are obligated to explain why.
- Steering Committee members are free to use any and all of report results in their own re-analyses and interpretations of results, and to distribute such commentaries on their own. Consortium staff will provide access to data within confidentiality requirements and reasonable assistance in preparing these commentaries. We will be happy to refer to these reports on our Web site. However, we will not be responsible for their publication and distribution.

The provision for Steering Committee member commentary is retained in the special case of reports that have Steering Committee endorsement. On only three occasions in our ten-year history has the Steering Committee voted to endorse all or part of a report (our first Research

*Agenda, A View from the Elementary Schools, and Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Schools*). These endorsements represent a consensus on the part of the Steering Committee. Should the Steering Committee choose to endorse future reports without full consensus, a member may elect to write a dissenting opinion, which would be distributed with the report. Directors, however, would still retain final editorial authority over the content of these commentaries. The Steering Committee will develop guidelines for this process.





**REVISED**

8/25/2004

**Materials Produced by the Consortium on Chicago School Research  
REVIEWS, APPROVALS, & DISCLAIMERS**

November 2001

**Introduction**

The Consortium on Chicago School Research believes education policies and practices benefit when they are rooted in the best possible evidence about factors that affect student learning. We work to increase understanding of the instructional practices that affect student achievement and the strategies and organizational characteristics that support those practices in classrooms, within schools, across the Chicago public school system, and in the community. In the course of our substantive research we also work to improve or develop new analytic methods and skills, for our and others' use. As a result, expanding the base of analytic activity focused on improving education in Chicago is another important part of our organizational mission.

We are committed to the broadest possible dissemination of the results of our research, the data on which it is based, and the skills and expertise our research staff acquire as they conduct our research. As a result we not only publish our own reports, we occasionally publish reports in which we have assisted other organizations and routinely respond to requests for advice and assistance on educational research – a diverse set of activities we describe as ‘public informing.’

This document describes the products and services we provide. It also describes the review and approval procedures we have developed as part of our efforts to ensure both the quality of our work, and that the research assistance we provide is consistent with our organizational mission and priorities.

In reading this document it is important to remember that the Consortium has a special relationship with Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is both a partner in and the subject of the Consortium's many research projects. The Consortium receives unprecedented access to CPS data and its students, teachers, and principals so that we may collect our own independent data. At the same time, CPS, like many other organizations, turns to the Consortium to supplement its own data and analyses, and from time to time the Consortium undertakes specific projects at CPS's request.

The Consortium has a strict “no surprises” agreement with CPS; the school system is always made aware of the contents of Consortium reports prior to public release. This is done through CPS's institutional membership on the Steering Committee and through specially arranged in-

person briefings. The Consortium regularly consults with CPS leadership and staff on various aspects of its work at all stages of the research process. The Consortium also routinely notifies CPS leadership when data is made publicly available in response to externally-generated information requests. Final decisions about the research and content of reports are made by Consortium staff.

### *Reports of the Consortium Steering Committee*

Members of the Steering Committee participate in the design and development of reports of the Steering Committee, published by the Consortium. They review one or more drafts and endorse the report as a collective body. Although these reports are limited in number, they are an essential part of the multi-partisan, collective nature of research conducted by the Consortium. They have the following characteristics:

- The idea of the report is initiated and endorsed by the Steering Committee. Generally, Steering Committee members subsequently operate as a work group for the report.
- Pre-notification and review. Prior to the report being written, stakeholder groups or *ad hoc* work groups are briefed on the preliminary results. The penultimate draft is reviewed by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee endorses the report before it is released. Should the Steering Committee choose to endorse reports without full consensus, a member may elect to write a dissenting opinion, which would be distributed with the report. Directors, however, would still retain final editorial authority over the content of these commentaries.
- Primary authors are Consortium staff and/or Steering Committee members.
- Funding is provided or solicited by the Consortium.
- Data become part of the Consortium's Data Archive.
- Dissemination plans (which include a press conference) are developed and media enquiries are handled by Consortium staff.

To date, the Consortium has published three reports of the Steering Committee:

*Achieving School Reform in Chicago: What We Need to Know* (1991)

*A View From the Elementary Schools: The State of Reform in Chicago* (1993)

“Recommendations of the Steering Committee,” *Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools* (March 1998)

## *Reports Sponsored by the Consortium*

The majority of the Consortium's published materials fall into this category. The Steering Committee advises on the design of the research, comments on preliminary findings, and helps interpret findings for our diverse audiences. As the work proceeds, stakeholder groups also have opportunities to react to the developing research and emerging findings. At the completion of a project, the Consortium employs multiple dissemination strategies.

"Reports Sponsored by the Consortium" contain the following disclaimer on or near the front of the report:

This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. Although the Consortium's Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed an earlier version of the report, no formal endorsement by these individuals, their organizations, or the Consortium should be assumed.

"Reports Sponsored by the Consortium" have the following characteristics:

- The idea of the report. The report idea may come from a variety of sources – Directors, outside organizations or individuals, or the Steering Committee. The idea is discussed and endorsed by the Steering Committee.
- Pre-notification and review. Steering Committee members have at least two opportunities to provide feedback and make recommendations during the preparation of Consortium sponsored reports. First, during the early stages of analysis, report authors present their findings to a Steering Committee meeting and request input. Second, authors distribute the penultimate draft of the report and request written feedback within ten days (48 hours for a data brief, as detailed below).

Authors are required to respond to all Steering Committee members who provide written comments or critiques on the draft report. They are expected to make a good effort to incorporate or respond to comments from Steering Committee members as they write the final version of the report. Final editorial authority and responsibility, however, rest with the authors. When authors disagree with the comments of Steering Committee members, they are obligated to explain why.

Drafts of Consortium sponsored reports are confidential to Steering Committee members, their employees, and consultants. Embargoed drafts may be circulated by the Consortium prior to the public release of the report.

- Primary authors are determined by the Directors.

- Funding is provided and/or solicited by Consortium staff.
- Data become part of the Consortium's Data Archive.
- Dissemination plans are developed and implemented by Consortium staff. Press conferences and other major activities may or may not be undertaken, at the discretion of the Consortium and the report authors.

Steering Committee members are free to use any and all of the report results in their own re-analyses and interpretations of results, and to distribute such commentaries on their own. Consortium staff will provide access to data within confidentiality requirements, and reasonable assistance in preparing these commentaries. We will be happy to refer to these reports on our Web site. However, we will not be responsible for their publication and distribution.

**Data briefs.** Data briefs are short sponsored reports, focusing on a single topic, designed to provide new data, with minimal inference, on a particular issue in a timely fashion. Drafts are circulated to Steering Committee members, typically via FAX or e-mail, with short (but no shorter than 48 hour) turnaround times. (NOTE: With the exception of the shortened period for comment, all other characteristics of "reports sponsored by the Consortium" described above apply to data briefs.)

Examples of **sponsored reports** include:

*Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* (1991)

*Charting Reform in Chicago: The Students Speak* (July 1996)

*Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools* (March 1999)

*It's About Time* (December 1998)

*Ending Social Promotion: Results from the First Two Years* (December 1999)

The following is an example of a **sponsored data brief**:

*Annual CPS Test Trend Review, 2000* (January 2001)

### *Reports with Major Assistance from the Consortium*

The Consortium periodically publishes the results of studies in which we have played a major role, assisting other organizations in the conduct of their research. In such cases, Consortium staff devote considerable intellectual resources to defining, conducting, analyzing data collected as part of, and/or reporting the results of the study; and the Consortium as an organization is closely associated with the research and resulting report(s). The Consortium may also assist other organizations by undertaking research under contract.

When the Consortium publishes reports on which it has provided major assistance, the Consortium is acknowledged on the cover of the report, and the following disclaimer appears on or near the front of the report:

This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. Although the Consortium assisted in the development of this research, no formal endorsement by its Steering Committee members, their organizations, or the Consortium should be Assumed.

“Reports with Major Assistance from the Consortium” have the following characteristics:

- The idea of the report comes from outside the Consortium. Before agreeing to provide the assistance, the Consortium obtains Steering Committee approval.
- Pre-notification and review. No fewer than three members of the Steering Committee will be asked to sit on an *ad hoc* advisory committee that will be asked to review and comment on interim findings, and to provide comments on the penultimate draft of written reports of findings. Editorial responsibility rests with the authors and their sponsoring organizations.
- At least one primary author is a Director or senior staff of the Consortium.
- Funding may come from any source.
- Data may or may not become Consortium data, depending on agreements reached with the external organization.
- Dissemination plans. Consortium Director(s) or Associate Director negotiate co-dissemination and media strategies with the assisted organization.

Examples of reports previously classified as “Reports with Assistance from the Consortium” that meet the criteria of “Reports with Major Assistance from the Consortium” include:

*Access to Magnet Schools in Chicago* (August 2000)

*School Instructional Program Coherence: Benefits and Challenges* (January 2001)

### *Reports with Technical Assistance from the Consortium*

Occasionally the Consortium participates in studies in which we have provided on minor (typically technical) assistance to other organizations. The Consortium's assistance may take many forms (e.g. providing data, editorial or technical support, and/or funding). The distinguishing characteristics of reports produced with technical rather than major assistance from the Consortium are: the (limited) extent of Consortium staff involvement in the research project, and the (limited, if any) extent to which the Consortium as an organization is identified with the research.

When the Consortium publishes reports for which it has provided limited, technical assistance, the Consortium is acknowledged on the cover of the report, and the following disclaimer appears on or near the front of the report:

We acknowledge the assistance of the Consortium on Chicago School Research in [insert description of assistance provided]. This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. No formal endorsement by the Consortium, its Steering Committee members or their organizations should be assumed.

“Reports with Technical Assistance from the Consortium” have the following characteristics:

- The idea of the report comes from outside the Consortium.
- Pre-notification and review. The Steering Committee will be briefed about the progress of the work. Whether or not the Steering Committee is involved in the review process depends on agreements reached with the external organization. Editorial responsibility rests with the authors and their sponsoring organizations.
- Senior Consortium staff are *not* primary authors of study reports.
- Funding may come from any source.
- Data may or may not become Consortium data, at the discretion of the assisted organization.
- Dissemination plans. Consortium Director(s) or Associate Director negotiates co-dissemination and media strategies with the assisted organization.

Examples of “Reports with Technical Assistance”

*Teacher and Principal Perceptions of Elementary Reading Specialists in Chicago Public Schools*, CPS Office of Literacy



***Data Requests and Research Assistance Provided to Others***

The number of requests the Consortium receives for data and for assistance with data has increased dramatically. At the same time, the complexity of these requests has increased. These are generally two types of requests:

<p><b>PREPARING AND TRANSFERRING DATA FILES</b>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• school level public data files</li><li>• individual level files (with CPS permission)</li><li>• other public data (e.g., census, state report card)</li><li>• file preparation that entails complex data management</li></ul>	<p><u>Comment:</u> These requests do not entail any analysis, nor are there “findings.” The Consortium prepares data files for others to analyze, though these range greatly in terms of complexity.</p>
<p><b>ANSWERING RELATIVELY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS</b>; e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• simple, original analysis – creating a “tailored table”</li><li>• providing minor technical assistance in analysis</li></ul>	<p><u>Comment:</u> These requests require some data analysis, but the topics are focused and there is little room for judgment in how to go about the analysis. In this category of data requests, we provide the “answer” rather than the data for others to analyze.</p>

Requests for data or analysis in this category have the following characteristics:

- The analysis addresses a fairly narrow set of questions.
- The idea of the analysis comes from outside the Consortium.
- There is no notification or review of the Steering Committee.

- Consortium researchers are not primary authors on any work that is published from the request.
- Funding comes from outside the Consortium, and the Consortium may request funding for the assistance that is provided from the external organization.
- Data may or may not become Consortium data, depending on agreements reached with the external organization.
- The Consortium is not involved in dissemination of the work by the assisted organization. The Consortium may post the data or tables that have been prepared by the Consortium for the assisted organization on the Consortium website, or distribute it in whatever manner deemed appropriate by the Directors of the Consortium. Data prepared by the Consortium for an external organization is available to any other organization that requests it, within limits of our confidentiality requirements.
- The external organization will acknowledge the specific assistance of the Consortium in any published work that uses the data or analysis provided by the Consortium.

In general, Consortium staff attempt to fill all data requests as staff capacity allows. Requests for assistance which require a substantial commitment of time or resources from the Consortium are discussed by the Directors.

The Consortium adheres to all applicable confidentiality requirements when responding to requests for research assistance; for example:

In no cases are we permitted to release **student level** data that originated from the Chicago Public Schools without their written permission.

The Consortium guarantees confidentiality to **school level** survey results. The Consortium will not provide survey results for specific schools without their written permission.

The Steering Committee will be asked to formally endorse the Consortium's Participation in this research effort. The Steering Committee will be briefed about the progress of the work. Whether or not the Steering Committee is involved in any review process depends on agreements reached with the external party. If reports of this research are published, editorial responsibility rests with the authors and the requesting individual(s)/ organization(s).

The pre-notification policies in place for *Reports with Major Assistance from the Consortium* apply to Category D assistance; i.e.,

No fewer than three members of the Steering Committee will be asked to sit on an *ad hoc* advisory committee that will be asked to review and comment on the penultimate draft of written reports of findings. If reports of this research are published, editorial responsibility rests with the authors and their sponsoring institutions.

Consortium staff follow established procedures for determining whether or not they are able to fill a data request or provide assistance to an individual or organization. In general, Consortium staff attempt to fill all data requests as staff capacity allows. Requests for assistance, which require greater commitment from the Consortium, are discussed by Directors.

The Consortium adheres to all applicable confidentiality requirements when responding to requests for research assistance; for example:

In no cases are we permitted to release **student level** data that originated From the Chicago Public Schools without their written permission.

The Consortium guarantees confidentiality to **school level** survey results. The Consortium will not provide survey results for specific schools without their written permission.

Any time the Consortium provides research assistance to other organizations Or non-Consortium staff, we may ask for acknowledgement of our specific Assistance in a statement that includes an appropriately worded disclaimer.

## *Evaluation Research Reports*

While the Consortium's research agenda focuses on broad policies, initiatives, and conditions of the Chicago Public Schools, sometimes local organizations request assistance in investigating the implementation and outcomes of particular programs, such as principal training courses. Since the Consortium often has the most extensive data available to examine such programs, there is a compelling argument for responding to such requests, as long as research staff is available and the work is in some way related to the research agenda of the Consortium. Conducting evaluation studies, along with providing data and technical assistance, generate revenue and often provide the foundation for larger studies or enhance ongoing studies. Consequently, CCSR envisions that its portfolio will contain a limited number of such studies at any given time, known as its Evaluation Research Series.

The title page of these reports should show the CCSR logo and that of the organization commissioning the evaluation research. In addition, the subtitle should be: "CCSR Evaluation Research Series."

The following disclaimer appears on or near the front of the report:

This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. Although the Consortium assisted in the development of this evaluation research, no formal endorsement by its Steering Committee members, their organizations, or the Consortium should be assumed.

"Reports of the Evaluation Research Series" will have the following characteristics:

- The report address a fairly narrow set of questions about a particular program or initiative
- The idea of the report comes from outside the Consortium. An organization or institution commissions the Consortium to undertake the study, and the Executive Director decides whether or not to do it.
- Pre-notification and review. The Executive Director informs the Steering Committee of the evaluation study, and requests that two Steering Committee members review the penultimate draft of the written report. The evaluation study receives the same level of internal review as all other studies.
- At least one primary author is a Consortium researcher.
- Funding may come from any source.
- Data may or may not become Consortium data, depending on agreements reached with the external organization.
- Dissemination plans. Consortium director(s) negotiate co-dissemination and media strategies with he assisted organization.

Examples of “Reports of the Evaluation Research Series:”

*Principal and Teacher Leadership in Chicago: Early Evidence on Two Initiatives* (2004)

*Chicago High School Redesign Initiative: A Snapshot of the First Year of Implementation* (2003)

Date: 7/7/03

To: Steering Committee Members

From: Directors of the Consortium on Chicago School Research

Subject: **Feedback on Reports Sponsored by the Consortium**

The majority of the Consortium's published materials fall into the category of "Reports Sponsored by the Consortium." The role of the Steering Committee in this work is to advise on the design of the research, comment on preliminary findings, and help interpret findings for diverse audiences. In the end, the authors have final say on content, and a disclaimer is included in the report stating that the Steering Committee provided advice on the research, but no formal endorsement by individual members should be assumed. Steering committee members have two opportunities to provide recommendations to Consortium researchers in this process.

### **Early Stage**

During the early stages of analysis, Consortium researchers present their findings at a Steering Committee meeting and request feedback. At this time, it is helpful for researchers to hear alternative interpretations of their initial findings and suggestions to make the results more meaningful to a broad audience. Initial research often leads to new questions, and it is appropriate for additional analyses to be suggested.

At this point, we recommend that Steering Committee members consider the following questions:

- Are the appropriate questions being asked?
- Are the appropriate types of analyses being performed?
- Are there reasonable alternative interpretations of the initial results?
- How might this work be useful to different actors in the Chicago educational community?

### **Late Stage**

A second opportunity for feedback comes when the authors distribute the penultimate draft of the report and request written feedback within a specified time period. Authors must respond in writing to these comments, and explain how they are addressed in the report, or why they are not addressed. We appreciate the time that it takes to read and comment on these reports, and encourage Steering Committee members to focus their efforts on the following: the clarity of the arguments, interpretation of results, and suggestions for outreach to appropriate groups. We do not expect Steering Committee members to edit the penultimate draft for grammar/typos, as reports go through an editing process before publication, after incorporation of Steering Committee feedback. Generally, requests for new analytic work or additional tables/figures should not be made at this time. Because the report is close to its final stages towards publication, such requests often substantially delay publication if addressed. Instead, suggestions may be made for future work.

For the penultimate draft, the following feedback would be helpful:

- Is the research presented clearly, and in a manner that will be helpful to a broad audience?
- Are the results interpreted accurately, or are there reasonable alternative interpretations that are not addressed?
- How might we use this research to engage different actors in the educational community, and what is the best way to share the information with them?

# The Consortium on Chicago Schools Research

Attribution and Affiliation in Relation to Public Statements  
April 18, 1994

As a natural consequence of our work, the Consortium has been gradually formulating a set of policies regarding authorship and attribution. Up to this point, we have developed policies for two kinds of reports- reports produced by a group of authors under the sponsorship of the Consortium and reports of the Steering Committee itself. Recently the issue of attribution had arisen in relation to public statement made by Co-Directors and Steering Committee members. Below we review current policies and suggest a policy for public statement.

*Charting Reform: The Teacher's Turn* and *Charting Reform: The Principals' Perspective* are examples of the first report type. The attribution policy for these reports are contained in the following caveat which appears in the reports:

This report reflects the interpretation of authors. Although the Consortium Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed an earlier version of the report, no formal endorsement by these individuals, organizations or the full Consortium should be assumed.

*A View from the Elementary Schools: The State of Reform in Chicago* is the second report type. The Steering Committee provided extensive advice throughout the course of the study, and due to its comprehensive nature, the report was deliberately developed as a report of The Steering Committee. Consequently, individual members of the Steering Committee endorse the contents of the report, but endorsement by the organizations whom the Steering Committee members represent cannot be assumed.

Another issue concerning attribution arises when Co-Directors and Steering Committee members draw on Consortium research to make public statements that convey a policy preference or position. These may be statements which Consortium representatives make on their own initiative or comments and opinions which are solicited by the media. An inherent ambiguity is that, while Consortium representatives may be asked for public comment, they cannot really speak for the Consortium Steering Committee or membership. The Consortium was formed with the express purpose of being multi-partisan, so that multiple perspectives could inform the research process and products. This diversity is strength of the Consortium.

At the same time, the Consortium wants to bring visibility to the research results and encourage public discussion. When Co-Directors or Steering Committee members find themselves in the position of making public statements, perhaps they should clarify that they are drawing on evidence collected by the Consortium, but their opinions do not necessarily reflect those of other Consortium Co-Directors and Steering Committee

members. More generally, we need to remind both ourselves and others of the basic Consortium mission statement.

The Consortium does not argue a particular policy position. Rather, it believes that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained. We work to produce such evidence and to ensure that the competition of ideas remains vital.