

Dr. Marta Pérez, Member

SUBJECT: THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY CREATING A "SCHOOL AUTONOMY MODEL" COMPARING AN EQUAL NUMBER OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS WITH A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL BASED AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY BOTH EDUCATIONALLY AND FISCALLY

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Providing the highest quality of education for students in Miami-Dade County is the primary responsibility of the School Board. Financing education in a manner that makes the best and most efficient use of taxpayers' moneys is our fiduciary responsibility. For these reasons, the School Board should always be proactively willing to explore new reforms that allow for greater student achievement and maximum financial efficiencies.

Large urban school districts throughout the United States have for some time been implementing educational innovations that free up the most dollars to be used for the classrooms.

One such reform has recently been created in the New York City School District through what is called an "autonomy zone" (please see attached research on this initiative). This educational innovation allows for schools that have met specific performance goals more latitude with less oversight from local Superintendents or administrative bureaucracy. With this move, the New York City School District seeks to reduce \$200 million from central and regional administrative budgets and free at least 150 schools from the oversight of the bureaucracy.

Many high performing schools in our district may benefit from such a reform. With a school centered model, principals, as the true educational leaders, arguably have more insight and control over the necessary programs to be used within their schools. At the same time, the district benefits from moneys saved which may be used to enhance programs, ultimately putting more dollars in the classroom.

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Similarly, national research has documented even greater educational student gains by utilizing a “school autonomy model” in low student performance schools. A feasibility study comparing an equal number of high and low performing schools utilizing a “school autonomy model” would allow the School Board to set much needed educational reform policy.

This model needs to focus on leadership, school based autonomy and accountability both educationally and fiscally.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study creating a “school autonomy model” comparing an equal number of high and low performing schools focusing on leadership, school based autonomy and accountability both educationally and fiscally.

January 20, 2006

Schools Chancellor Says New Overhaul Will Give More Principals More Autonomy

By **DAVID M. HERSZENHORN**

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein said yesterday that he would undertake another sweeping reorganization of the school system bureaucracy, seeking to cut \$200 million from central and regional administrative budgets and freeing at least 150 more schools from the oversight of superintendents provided they meet specific performance goals.

The chancellor's plans make clear that 30 months after the Bloomberg administration carried out the largest overhaul of the school system in a generation, Mr. Klein and his top advisers are still trying to cut layers of bureaucracy and are not convinced that they have created the best management structure.

He said that a \$5 million private donation would pay outside experts to analyze the system and propose further refinements, including possible job cuts.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Klein touched on broad themes that echoed several priorities of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's first term, including a focus on improving principals, empowering them with greater authority and heightening accountability at all levels of the system. He also announced that he had hired a Columbia law professor to fill the new position of chief accountability officer.

"I firmly believe that managerial and organizational issues are a core and indispensable aspect of effective school reform," Mr. Klein said, seated in a classroom in the Education Department's headquarters. "If you don't get those things right, you won't succeed."

"What we are seeking is a system comprised of great schools, not a great school system," Mr. Klein said, repeating a refrain that he adopted early in his tenure.

But while Mr. Klein spoke generally, his aides laid out a vision of a school system run more from the bottom up than from the top down, one in which regional superintendents and central administrators function more as service providers to principals and educators on the front lines than as nitpicking supervisors. "Imagine a system with schools at the top," said Kristen Kane, Mr. Klein's chief of staff.

As an example, Ms. Kane said the system would most likely seek to reinvent the way it handles teacher training and professional development, which is now managed by the central administration and by regional offices. Those administrators currently devise the training programs; principals and teachers are encouraged and, in some cases, required to attend.

But a more school-centered administration would take its cues from principals, allowing them to request certain types of training and decide who should attend. The administration would then be responsible for coordinating between schools seeking similar types of programs, to make the training more cost-effective and create other

efficiencies, Ms. Kane said.

Mr. Klein stopped short of announcing specific administrative changes. But he said that the move to put at least 150 more schools into an "autonomy zone" with wide freedom from oversight would probably result in fewer local instructional superintendents, who report to the city's 10 regional superintendents and serve as the direct supervisors of principals. The job of local instructional superintendents was created by the Bloomberg administration's initial overhaul.

The 58 schools already in the "autonomy zone" are overseen by about 10 officials at headquarters.

Labor unions representing principals and teachers have long criticized what they say is heavy-handed, top-down management by the Bloomberg administration.

The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, which represents principals and assistant principals, offered a surprisingly muted response to the outline yesterday, given that it is locked in a bitter contract dispute.

"The chancellor has made it clear that he believes effective school leadership is a central pillar of the school system and an absolute prerequisite to success," Ernest Logan, the union's executive vice president said in a statement. "We couldn't agree more and that is why school leaders need a contract now."

Randi Weingarten, the president of the teachers' union, praised the plans to give schools more freedom. "The autonomy zone, which gives schools a degree of latitude, is the one place where teachers by and large feel more respected than in any of the regions," she said. "So this notion of making the bureaucracy responsive to the school is a very good notion."

Ms. Weingarten said Mr. Klein had stressed a different model yesterday than the administration had created when it replaced the city's 32 community school districts with 10 instructional regions. "This is a very different way of running the school system than a top-down, regional structure," she said.

While some schools will get more autonomy, Mr. Klein said all schools would soon face more sophisticated attempts to measure their performance. And he announced that he had hired James S. Liebman, a professor at Columbia Law School, to serve as chief accountability officer.

Professor Liebman will be responsible for carrying out a more sophisticated data-driven approach to evaluating school performance, which Mr. Klein unveiled in a speech last spring. As the chancellor announced his plans yesterday, officials from Las Vegas were in New York to learn more about Eric Nadelstern, the autonomy zone's chief academic officer, who is one of two finalists for the superintendent's job in Clark Council, Nev. The chancellor did not name the schools that will get new latitude.

Mr. Klein was joined yesterday by three principals of schools in the autonomy zone who said they were thrilled to be a part of it. Alexandra Anormaliza, of the International High School at Prospect Heights in Brooklyn, said that autonomy-zone meetings take place after school, so she is not pulled away during the school day, a persistent complaint among principals citywide.

The Autonomy Zone: Building on the first phase of Children First

New York City has laid a strong foundation with the first phase of the Children First reform. But we have much more to do if we are to achieve the ultimate goal – a system of 1300+ effective, autonomous, and accountable schools. To this end, Chancellor Joel Klein has initiated a strategic planning effort to explore the combined promise of principal accountability and autonomy as a way to attract high-caliber school leadership, improve student performance, and act as a catalyst for the rest of the system to accelerate movement toward achieving the goals of the Children First reform agenda.

The Autonomy Zone is a school management strategy through which schools are granted the decision-making authority that otherwise resides in the Central and Regional offices, and are held directly accountable through performance contracts with mutually agreed upon goals for:

- high levels of student achievement, encompassing high levels of attendance, retention, course and exam pass rates, promotion and graduation rates and, at the high school level, college acceptance.
- educational equity, serving the full range of students in the same proportions as they exist in the community, including Special Education and English Language Learners;
- fiscal integrity, ensuring that funds provided be used in the best interest of the students served, and

Schools are responsible and accountable for meeting value-added benchmarks of progress.

The Zone strategic planning initiative also examines how to streamline the Department's institutional structure in a way that places the locus of control in the hands of principals and teachers, provides them with the necessary support, and then holds them accountable for the results.

For the 2005-6 school year, there are 45 schools in the Zone. Participating schools sign a five-year performance agreement through which they are granted greater degrees of instructional and operational autonomy in exchange for meeting high-levels of student achievement, educational equity, and fiscal integrity. Achievement of these targets is required to avoid a ladder of consequences that includes required action plans, leadership changes, and ultimately, school closure.

By identifying and generalizing effective school management principles, the Zone provides a significant research and development opportunity for every division and office within the Department of Education.

Zone strategic planning involves all parts of the Department of Education in considering the implications of this strategy and planning for possible expansion and evolution of the existing pilot in the future. Our hope is to fully utilize this opportunity to leverage increased accountability for student learning in return for enhanced autonomy for principals and schools. In the process, we expect to transform the Department's practices for supporting higher levels of student achievement.

At its core, the Children First reform agenda is about creating a system of great schools, not a great school system. The end state of the Children First vision is 1,300+ high functioning, autonomous, and accountable schools. The Zone will have a powerful and positive catalytic impact on the rest of the system.

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FIRST PRINCIPALS

Why Joel Klein is letting an elite few schools run free of the bureaucracy.
> By Sylvia Maria Gross

In his first few years as a high school principal, David Banks filled out so much paperwork that he heard the whir of the fax machine when he went to sleep at night. Every couple of weeks, a principals' meeting would last all day. First he'd be lectured to for a few hours about policies and practices. Then he and the other grown men and women in the room might sit in small groups and solve high school math problems, as a training exercise. He would leave with a pile of papers to sort, fill out, file, fax and distribute.

"There's a growing recognition that if you want to find the best available educators, you have to create opportunities that attract those people."

"I know enough about the system to do what I need to do," says Banks, who founded the much-admired Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice, part of the Bronx County Courthouse complex. What he didn't need was a bureaucracy piled on top of him. Even under the newly streamlined Department of Education, he still has to report to an instructional superintendent and a regional superintendent, who have the power to tell him what to do and how to do it.

This year, Banks opened a second public school in the same building, the Eagle Academy for Young Men. And this time around, he has been relieved of much of the bureaucratic baggage that plagued him in the past. Eagle Academy is one of 29 schools the Department of Education is cutting loose from the supervision of its management hierarchy.

They call it the "autonomy zone." Eagle Academy will have greater administrative freedom than Bronx Law and the other schools in Region 1, in exchange for greater accountability for student performance. It's Chancellor Joel Klein's newest strategy to lure entrepreneurial leaders like Banks into the public school system.

Klein desperately needs new leadership talent. Over the last two years, 1,400 of the city's principals, assistant principals and administrators have retired. (In the two previous years, just 375 did.) Today, half of the city's 1,300 principals have less than three years' experience on the job.

The city's reorganization of large high schools into small, theme-based academies is only increasing the demand for skilled new leadership. Each big-school breakup calls for four or five principals to

replace one.

But as far as Klein is concerned, the small schools are at the heart of the solution. His department is pushing hard to recruit educational entrepreneurs—dynamic leaders who in the past might have spent their careers crusading for reform, set up their own little pockets of resistance, or just given up on teaching entirely. Klein wants these young idealists on his team, and the city's new Leadership Academy is paying top dollar to hire and train them.

The enticements don't stop there. These new principals are being encouraged to question almost everything about how New York City schools are run, and to come up with their own creative solutions. For the select cadre in the autonomy zone, the latitude, and responsibility, is even more extreme.

"There's a growing recognition that if you want to find the best available

educators, you have to create opportunities that attract those people," says Eric Nadelstern, a former principal who's in charge of this new wave of experimental schools. "If a principal is simply expected to implement the best thinking of the administration, we won't attract people who want to exercise their own best thinking."

It used to take at least 20 years to become a school principal in New York City. Aspirants had to pass through the ranks of teacher, staff developer and assistant principal. And until now, teachers were promoted for being team players, strong organizational managers and

strict disciplinarians.

A typical principal of a large high school might have had as many as 10 assistant principals—one to do the scheduling and the budget, one in charge of guidance and discipline, and the rest supervising teachers in various subject areas. Decisions about curriculum, hiring and school procedures were made by people higher up in the administration. But because they were not involved in those important decisions, recalls Nadelstern, principals were not blamed for poor results. Their institutions simply continued to flounder. "Schools have the quality of leadership they are designed to attract," Nadelstern declares.

The new regime is focused intensely on generating direct accountability. In order to hold principals responsible for their students' success, Nadelstern maintains, they need to be given the power to make meaningful management decisions. The principal's most important job now, according to Nadelstern and the Klein administration, is being the head teacher or, in the current lingo, "instructional leader."

Many of the city's newest principals come straight from the ranks of teachers. Marie Prendergast remembers always questioning the way her Brooklyn high school, Paul Robeson, was run. "Why is the guidance office so far away from the classrooms?" she asked herself. "Why do announcements take 12 minutes every day? Why are there fire drills during Regents exams?" A former playwright and poet, Prendergast was wired to think creatively. She envisioned not just a collection of classrooms but a think tank on educational issues.

Last year, she matriculated with 89 other aspiring principals in the first class at the New York City Leadership Academy. A highly competitive institution—there were 1,300 applicants for the second class—the academy is a privately financed nonprofit organization run by the former CEO of Covad Communications, Bob Knowing. Time Warner CEO Richard Parsons and former General Electric CEO Jack Welch sit on the advisory board, as does former schools chancellor Anthony Alvarado.

Behind the corporate logos, the educators responsible for training new principals are icons of progressive education in New York. They give their students a 15-month crash course in school leadership, emphasizing pedagogical philosophy more than bureaucratic procedure.

Leadership Academy instructor Jill Herman developed her own leadership skills working alongside principal Debbie Meier, who founded the pioneering experimental public school Central Park East. Herman remembers the 30 credits she took in educational supervision at Hunter College as mostly irrelevant to the job. "Thank God I wasn't doing brain surgery," she says, "because no one would

have lived."

Herman also found herself fighting the tide when she served as principal of East Side Community High School. It's now regarded as a model for the new wave of small schools, with excellent college acceptance rates and a strong humanities curriculum, but back then in the 1990s she had to negotiate with her supervisors for more autonomy over student assessment and the hiring of teachers. When she could get away with it, she just evaded them entirely. "We really were the counter-culture," Herman says. "Now small schools are the culture."

At the academy, the principals-in-training focus on the battles that really matter: the endless series of trials that fill a school manager's day. Four days a week, trainees assist a principal. On the fifth, they go through simulations, such as an "in-basket" assignment. Arriving at school at 7 a.m., they face 25 urgent situations at the same time: an irate parent waiting in the office, the teacher's parking lot closing unexpectedly, a student who must be disciplined before he goes to class, and on and on. The student principals have to sort the tasks and explain their rationale.

Some of the lessons on management and systems analysis come straight from the business world. There are weekend retreats at Jack Welch's estate. When media magnate Rupert Murdoch spoke at the academy over the summer, he compared his founding of the Fox television network to the creation of a new high school.

But though the casework in small teams is reminiscent of business school assignments, the Leadership Academy is actually modeled on medical training, explains Herman. Students spend most of their time in the field. They do not study the details of the school system's regulations or educational law. They are taught to budget according to their philosophical beliefs. Trainees say it makes sense. "You can always look up rules," says Nancy Gannon. She graduated in August and started her own school in September.

Ninety-one new schools opened this fall, and each needed someone to run it. The Department of Education recruited 16 of the Leadership Academy principals to write proposals.

They were encouraged to dream. The principals-to-be drew pictures of their ideal schools. One had flat-screen monitors built into the walls. Big pillows were strewn about another. "Don't just tweak your own experience," Ken Baum remembers being told. He used his love of math to dream up the Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science. Marie Prendergast's interest in adolescent brain theory led to the High School for Youth and Community Development. And Nancy Gannon designed the School for Democracy and Leadership, emphasizing civic engagement.

Each small school needed an outside partner, such as a community organization or arts institution. At big meetings, open to the public, principals seeking an affiliation shopped around for partners. Marie Prendergast met Marie Louis of Community Counseling Mediation, a nonprofit located in Crown Heights. More than just a first name, they found they shared a belief that developing one-on-one relationships with young people is key to their emotional and intellectual development.

Louis has discovered that Prendergast's lack of experience as an administrator is an advantage. "She comes straight out of the classroom, working with young

people," Louis explains. "She's critical but not jaded by experience." Previously, Louis had worked with principals who just accepted the rules whether or not they agreed with them.

Principals still have to be skilled and flexible managers. They not only need to supervise their own staffs but maintain a relationship with their partner organizations, which sometimes have full-time employees on the premises. The new principals typically share space with three or four other schools. Where there used to be a central authority in each school building, principals now engage in delicate negotiations over cafeteria space and gym time, and they split supervision of custodial and food services.

But because these new schools are so much smaller than the old—typically they have around 400 students each, and start out with 100 in their first class—the new leaders also have time to get to know young people individually. They also spend a lot of time with teachers, many of whom are brand new and require a lot of support. Prendergast prioritizes her role as "instructional leader," ready to give a sample lesson or advice on curriculum and classroom management.

And what about the paperwork? Prendergast says she could do it all only if she hid behind her desk all the time. "Every day," she boasts, "I celebrate the deadline of the day I blew off."

The bureaucracy, however, has not let up. Regional supervisors have significant management power, and they each wield it differently. They might mandate a 90-minute math period or a standardized report card. They could train the teachers according to a different methodology than the one a principal prefers. All high school students now must take a battery of state Regents exams to graduate, and some regions have come up with detailed plans each school must follow to prepare their students.

Above all, regional supervisors always have to worry about the prime directive from local and federal government: At all but the top-performing schools, standardized test scores must consistently improve. Many of the regions have implemented sweeping policies to hike student performance. For the Leadership Academy principals who've spent a year perfecting schedules, grading systems and teaching methods at their fantasy schools, moving from a creative institution back into a bureaucratic one can be a rude awakening.

Eric Nadelstern knows how easily bureaucracy can snuff out innovation. In the mid-1980s, he founded International High School, which immersed recent immigrant students in English and in creative academic projects that helped them learn the language. His school used portfolio evaluations instead of the Regents examinations to assess students' qualifications to graduate. They had a strikingly good track record at getting into college, and International became the inspiration for several similar schools.

Nadelstern had to hustle for years to circumvent restrictive city and state requirements for testing and evaluation. By 1999, he'd had enough: He turned International High into a charter school, receiving funding directly from the state. Just two years later, he had to return to the Board of Ed when he found that state funding was inadequate and management demands too restrictive. Soon after, Nadelstern led a band of renegade principals in a lawsuit against the state education agency, seeking to permit portfolios as an alternative to the Regents exams.

They lost in court. But in the new Department of Education, the former foe of the system has been put in charge of reforming it. "Until the Klein administration," Nadelstern says, "the way in which I exercised professional judgment and independence was to challenge if not

threaten people in the administration. The fact that I've been invited to serve in this administration is an acknowledgment of the kind of independent, entrepreneurial professionals that the chancellor wants to see, primarily as principals."

As deputy superintendent in the Bronx, he facilitated the opening of 50 small schools. Last year, he became chief academic officer of the Office of New Schools, helping seed them citywide.

He was also put in charge of the autonomy zone. In this experiment in independent school management, principals will have far greater control over curriculum, schedules and teacher training than most schools have under regional supervision. In return, they will have to maintain high performance among their students: 90 percent attendance (the average is currently 89 percent), 80 percent graduation (53 percent systemwide complete high school in four years), and 80 percent of courses passed. And they can't cherry-pick the best pupils—they must do it while including "a population that reflects the full range of students throughout the city."

Since it is a voluntary experiment, the only repercussions for principals who fail to meet the goals will be leaving the zone. But this test run paves the way to greater consequences—bonuses and pay cuts, firing and hiring. The principals' union, the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, is ready to fight those tooth and nail. "I think these are gutsy guys," Nadelstern says. "Few, if any of us, have been held accountable."

Some of the schools were nominated for the zone by their regional superintendents—in effect saying that these principals don't need their supervision. The shining stars of the small-school movement in New York City are represented: Nadelstern's own International High School, Urban Academy, Beacon High School and City As School. All have progressive curricula focused on students' interests as well as excellent reputations, graduation rates and college acceptances. Graduates from the Leadership Academy who were designing new schools were also invited to join; a handful of them jumped right in.

Most of the schools have less than 500 students. Three are charter schools. The hiring of teachers is still subject to union rules, though some principals signed on with the hope that they will have more control over staffing decisions. How far the autonomy will extend has yet to be determined. Nadelstern and Klein are even considering giving principals the opportunity to choose food vendors and custodial services.

David Banks says he doesn't need that much autonomy. He is happy just to be left alone. He does question, however, the inclusion of schools led by new principals.

"The newbies—I hope they don't fall so much on their face that they blow up the whole zone," Banks says. As a new principal, he read every piece of paper carefully. It's easy to fall behind, he says, and regional supervisors and meetings are there to remind principals of what they need to do. Some of it is not meaningless drudgery. For instance, principals need to document that special education students and English language learners are receiving the extra services to which they are entitled. In the excitement over interesting activities

and hands-on learning, some small-school principals fail to keep accurate records of their students' grades.

But the Department of Education is committed, and staking a lot on the autonomy zone's success. At the end of the year, more schools will be given a chance to apply to be in the zone. Nadelstern says there are no plans yet to expand the zone system-wide but that Klein will pay close attention to the results.

"It's at the heart of the school system, part of the Chancellor's planning initiative," Nadelstern says. "The truth is, we're in this to change the world. Anyone who has any lesser goal should not be here."

Nancy Gannon is trying to change the world by spending as much time as she can with her students and teachers. In the autonomy zone, Gannon has been able to establish her own curriculum based on democracy and leadership, work with teachers she chose personally, and train them right in the school.

Marie Prendergast decided to hold off on entering the zone; she decided she needed the regular supervision. But next year, she plans to apply. So far, her school averages 94 percent attendance. She says she is ready to be judged by the performance of her students.

"There's no excuses," Prendergast says. "There's no reason for me not to do this. I cannot put it on the kids. They're showing up. It's entirely up to me. This is absolutely radical." •

Sylvia Maria Gross taught at a small public school in the Bronx. She is now a public radio reporter at KCUR-FM in Kansas City, Missouri.

Let freedom reign

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From The Economist print edition

Smaller proves better in the Big Apple

THE Evander Childs High School in the Bronx has long been one of New York City's worst. It is violent, unruly and woefully ineffective: less than a third of its 2,500 students graduate within four years and, even after seven, only 54% manage to earn a diploma.

So in early February New York's mayor, Michael Bloomberg, announced that Evander, along with a handful of similarly troubled schools, would be gradually shut down. Taking their place will be a throng of 200 new "small schools" and charter schools, with the number of pupils capped at 500-600. On February 15th, Mr Bloomberg's mission was given a boost by the announcement of another \$32m in grants from the Gates Foundation, founded by Microsoft's Bill Gates, to go towards 35 new small schools.

The rambling brick building that is home to Evander is already the site of both the old and new order. Evander still limps along, but shares its hallways and facilities with six small-school upstarts. Among these, one stands out: the Bronx Laboratory School, which occupies just four classrooms on Evander's crowded second floor. It is one of 29 small schools that are part of the "autonomy zone", a pilot programme launched quietly by the city's Department of Education (DoE) last autumn.

The idea behind the zone is simple. In order to hold schools accountable for pupils' academic performance, principals must be free to make decisions that matter. In practice, this means that high schools in the autonomy zone—a hodgepodge of start-up schools, charter schools and highly regarded, longstanding public schools—can opt out of many of the rules that weigh on the rest of the system. For the moment, these are mostly curricular and teacher-training rules, but in future teachers may be given freer rein over budgetary and purchasing decisions. (Union contracts and testing requirements, which are state-mandated, are not on the table.)

In exchange, autonomy-zone schools agree to be held to strict five-year performance targets. These include attendance rates, over time, of 90% (which small schools managed to achieve last year) and graduation rates of 80%—a high bar in a city where the average four-year graduation rate is just over half.

The autonomy zone stands in sharp contrast to the "centralising" trend of school reform under Joel Klein, the schools chancellor. One of Mr Klein's first acts was to rationalise New York's diffuse school system: stripping community school boards of much of their decision-making power, collapsing 40 school districts into ten, and adding another layer of "local instructional superintendents" (LISs) below this to oversee schools directly.

Mr Klein also pushed through a mandated curriculum for English and maths, which the DoE hopes to expand to other subjects. This prescribes what schools must teach,

how they should teach it, even how long instruction should be (one-and-a-half hours a day for each subject, broken down into smaller modules). To many teachers, it all seems a bit much.

Autonomy-zone schools are happily free from both these reforms. They lie outside the normal school hierarchy, reporting not to LISs but directly to Eric Nadelstern, the part-time head of the pilot programme at the DoE and a former charter-school principal. Mr Nadelstern leaves them free to teach what they like in the way they like.

Teachers and principals in the zone say this flexibility is crucial if they are to succeed. But the DoE says that the mandated curriculum and other reforms lend much-needed discipline to a school system that has floundered for decades. Autonomy may be the future but, in New York City's gargantuan public-school system—over 1.1m children and 1,350 schools, bigger than many state systems—the DoE believes it is better to take things slowly. Elsewhere, too, the smattering of school districts that are experimenting with similar autonomy schemes—Boston, Chicago, Oakland—are taking their time. Pupils and parents may well wish they were going faster.

**CITYWIDE AUTONOMY ZONE
HANDBOOK
2005-2006**

Welcome to the 2005-2006 Citywide Autonomy Zone!

You are participating in the second year of an innovative pilot program designed to improve school and student performance by granting principals and schools increased autonomy in exchange for accountability. By joining the Autonomy Zone, you will be part of an ongoing research and planning project to test this concept.

This handbook is designed to provide you with a complete overview of what you can expect as an autonomous network principal in the Citywide Autonomy Zone. It is primarily designed to describe in detail the parameters of the autonomy you will be granted and the support we will provide as a member of the Citywide pilot. It also includes information related to your accountabilities. Region 1 will also be hosting an autonomous network with similar autonomies and accountabilities.

The specific details surrounding the autonomy, support and accountability may be further developed throughout the course of participation in an autonomous network. Any changes or clarifications be clearly communicated to you as they unfold and added to an updated version of this handbook.

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AUTONOMY

As an Autonomous Network Principal and in return for agreeing to accept certain accountabilities including specific student achievement targets, you have increased freedom and flexibility over curriculum and instruction, scheduling, professional development and budgeting. What follows is a brief description of the parameters of each area of autonomy. Please note: all autonomies subject to legal and contractual requirements.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

You have the freedom to choose curriculum and instructional methodologies and to set interim assessment strategies from Department of Education (DOE) standard curriculae or other models.

STAFFING

To maximize your ability to influence staffing (within the constraints of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) contract) schools in a Citywide Autonomous Network are strongly encouraged to obtain and maintain School Based Option (SBO) or 18G status.

SCHEDULING

You have the ability to schedule the school day to maximize educational goals within the constraints of all collective bargaining agreements and in coordination with the transportation office. This flexibility extends to summer programs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As an instructional leader, you are in charge of developing and carrying out a professional development plan for your school based on your assessment of the needs of your school community. To do this you have the freedom and flexibility to design, schedule and implement pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities within your school community, in conjunction with your network or in partnership with any service provider. You also have an open invitation in 2005-06 to opt into any Regional or Central professional development offering with proper advance notice.

BUDGETING

Your school will be assigned a budget before the start of the school year to fund instruction and related services in your school as defined by your educational plan. Through participation in an Autonomous Network, your school will be granted additional control over specific elements of your budget. Many DOE mandates directing the use of these funds will be lifted, and in some cases funds usually spent centrally will be allocated to school budgets.

Released mandates on school funds may include:

- Coaches
- Project Arts Classes
- Elementary/middle grade intervention funding, if applicable

Schools that opt out of the following central and regional programs will receive an allocation for their share of those funds:

- Uniform Curriculum
- Summer school Preparatory Academies
- Teacher Mentoring (under certain conditions)
- Other program allocations made to regions

Your school will also be given direct funding for Professional Development. You are invited to participate in DOE or regional Professional Development programs for a charged-back cost and can also purchase these services from third party providers.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

LEADERSHIP

Your Superintendent for the 2005-2006 academic year is Eric Nadelstern. Your Superintendent and his designees will oversee and monitor your school's progress through a variety of performance measurements including school visits and regular review of data including metrics for student achievement, fiscal integrity and educational equity, as outlined in the Performance Agreement. Your school will be affiliated with your assigned district and region for all other legal and state accountability purposes and select school operations (including student enrollment, and CSE special education evaluations). If your school is governed by a Community Superintendent, that person continues to exercise his/her legal responsibilities.

VOLUNTARY NETWORKS

As an Autonomous Network school you will select and are encouraged to actively participate in your choice of network of Autonomous Network schools organized by member principals around shared educational needs and priorities. Networks are an integral component of Children First and the instructional support for Autonomous Network schools and offer you an opportunity to collaborate, share best practices and support your colleagues. Participation in an Autonomous Network also affords you an opportunity to share and learn about best practices within and outside of your Network.

Networks may also choose to pool resources to create professional development opportunities for school staff. To support and facilitate this work, each Autonomous Network may choose to affiliate with an approved external organization that provides professional development and other support services. Your Superintendent can help your network to identify appropriate sources of support, as needed.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT

You will also be supported by a cross-functional team of staff specially-trained to assist Autonomous Network schools with budget, human resources, Special Education and ELL instructional support, and youth development needs. This cross-functional team will also actively help you to identify resources and resolve issues with all other DOE operational and instructional support functions. The team and its individual members will be measured on your level of satisfaction and on the timeliness and quality of their response to your requests.

Your Superintendent and cross-functional team will also minimize requirements on you to leave your building during school hours. Occasional meetings of Autonomy Zone principals will be conducted after school, and attendance will be voluntary. E-mail communications will be designed to keep you informed as needed. Autonomy Zone support staff is committed to minimizing paperwork and especially short-turnaround requests. Moreover, to further reduce the administrative burden on schools, requests for information and redundant school plans will be kept to a minimum.

ACCOUNTABILITY

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The standards listed below are based on preliminary data analysis and will be finalized for each participant before you sign your performance agreement.

High schools will meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement and close at least 10% of the remaining gap between past performance¹ and the standards by the end of each academic year. Schools with past performance that is already at or above these standards will have customized improvement targets.

- 90% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- No more than 4% of all students enrolled drop out annually
- 75% annual course pass rate across all students in English, Math, Science and History
- 90% of students in the 9th and 10th grade will be promoted to a higher grade level
- 80% Regents cohort pass rate for ELA and Math Regents Exams
- Choice of either A) 70% of each cohort graduates after 4 years, or B) 55% of each cohort graduates after 4 years and 75% graduate after 5 years
- 90% of all graduating students are accepted to 2 or 4 year colleges

High schools in the first three years of start-up will meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement. The first year your school has a graduating class, standards and gap closing goals will be reset to those applying to all high schools listed above.

- 90% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- No more than 4% of all students enrolled drop out annually
- 75% annual course pass rate across all students in English, Math, Science and History
- 90% of students in the 9th and 10th grade will be promoted to the next grade level
- Improvement targets TBD on value-added tests for ELA, Math

Schools with middle school grades meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement and close at least 10% of the remaining gap between past performance and the standards by the end of each academic year. Schools with past performance that is already at or above these standards will have customized improvement targets.

- 92% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- Meet AYP targets for ELA, Math & Science in all subgroups in 4th and/or 8th grade

¹ "Past performance" will be defined using performance from the previous academic year

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

As the performance agreement describes, in order to meet your accountabilities for educational equity, you are expected to attract a mix of students that reflects citywide averages for all high schools. However, if the mission of your school requires a different mix of students, or if your school serves a significantly higher proportion of one of the special needs groups, agreements that reflect this individualized need may be negotiated (e.g. a stronger concentration of ELL in an International School).

Schools with choice enrollment processes are expected to participate in the citywide and if applicable regional student enrollment processes and to attract an entering class that represents a similar mix of students by achievement and special needs as all high schools (or other grade level or group of students from which you are drawing, if applicable). As a guideline², students on the 9th grade register at choice schools should reflect the following³:

- No less than 10% of all students are English Language Learners
- No less than 10% of all students are Special Education students
- No less than 25% of all students enter at Level 1 in either ELA or Math

You will also be expected to annually, and at the end of the term of this agreement, show that you made positive progress over your school's prior performance on test scores and graduation rates for English Language Learners, students entering at Level 1 and Special Education students.

While you are expected to fully utilize and comply with the citywide student enrollment process to attract this mix of students to your school, processes will be developed to provide Autonomous Network schools advanced notice of and formal opportunities to offer feedback on the placement of over-the-counter (OTC), safety and other transfer students.

FISCAL INTEGRITY

You are accountable for expending resources consistent with your education plan for your students and within approved budget levels. In addition, your spending must comply with contracting and purchasing procedures.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

You will be asked to provide certain performance data that cannot be tracked centrally to Zone leaders on a pre-determined schedule (including for example course pass rates, college acceptance rates and other preliminary performance data before final audited results are available centrally). On-time reporting will be required to enable all schools to benefit from robust management information.

² New schools or schools with high proportion of one of these special needs groups may negotiate alternative guidelines with the school's superintendent.

³ These figures are based on preliminary data analysis and will be finalized before the opening of the school year

Data on leading indicators of success and tools for you to assess your own progress will be provided to all Autonomous Network schools to help you make day-to-day decisions that will lead to successful achievement of your performance agreement. Comparisons among Zone schools and other similar DOE schools may be made to help you benchmark your progress. Success can be recognized and celebrated by the networks and zone overall.

As frequently as it is useful and available we will provide you with the following information:

- Teacher data (attendance, turnover, qualifications, experience, diversity)
- Safety data (suspensions, incidents all levels)
- Fiscal (spending patterns)
- Student engagement survey results
- Parent satisfaction survey results
- Enrollment demand in high schools (applicants per seat)
- Additional student profile data (percent eligible for free lunch, stability)

Your cross-functional support team will also be available to help you to navigate any challenges that you may have accessing, updating or defining data. To aid you in this process, complete definitions of each metric for which you are accountable are listed in "Glossary of Terms."

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions help to explain your accountabilities and offer some guidance on the ways in which you can access the data from central DOE systems to determine your school's achievement in each area.

ACCOUNTABILITY: NO MORE THAN 4% OF ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED DROP OUT ANNUALLY

ANNUAL DROP OUT⁴

Definition: The proportion of students who, over the course of the academic year, leave the school for any reason unless they can be documented to have died, left the United States or re-enrolled in diploma or GED granting school. Students should be counted as dropouts in the year in which they did not re-enroll. Beginning in 2003-04 Event Dropout rates reflect a change in policy requiring exit interviews for students who were over 17, and going to be discharged as dropouts. While additional students may drop out after their exit interviews, other students may reconnect with school and stay enrolled and even eventually graduate. Only students who are first-time dropouts during the school-year are counted. It is important to note that this calculation differs from DAA's measure of student mobility (labeled "stability") reported in the Annual School Report.⁵

Formula:
$$\frac{(\# \text{ of First Time Dropouts})}{(\text{School Wide Enrollment in June 2004})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: January or February of the Following Year

⁴ Annual dropout rate is referred to as "Event Dropout Rate" in the Annual School Reports.

⁵ Stability (%), as defined in the Annual School Reports, captures students who have left the system as well as students who have transferred to another school or left the state.

ACCOUNTABILITY: 90% OF STUDENTS IN THE 9TH AND 10TH GRADE WILL BE PROMOTED TO A HIGHER GRADE LEVEL

9TH GRADE PROMOTION RATE

Definition: The percentage of the students who were promoted to a higher grade by October 31st (10th grade or higher) that were active and enrolled in the 9th grade in June of the prior school year. Note: new admits and students who leave your school over the summer are not included in this calculation.

Formula:
$$\frac{(\# \text{ of Students who moved to } 10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade (or higher) in the current school year})}{(\# \text{ of Students enrolled in the } 9^{\text{th}} \text{ grade at your School on the last day of school the previous school year})} * 100$$

10TH GRADE PROMOTION RATE

Definition: The percentage of the students who were promoted to a higher grade by October 31st (11th grade or higher) that were active and enrolled in the 10th grade in June of the prior school year. Note: new admits and students who leave your school over the summer are not included in this calculation.

Formula:
$$\frac{(\# \text{ of Students who moved to a } 11^{\text{th}} \text{ grade (or higher) in the current school year})}{(\# \text{ of Students enrolled in the } 10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade at your School on the last day of school the previous school year})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: November of the Following Year

ACCOUNTABILITY: 90% SCHOOL-WIDE AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE EXCLUDING LONG TERM ABSENCES

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE

Definition: The attendance rate is the ratio of the total number of days that all students were present divided by the combined number of total days present and absent. This measure excludes the absences of students designated an LTA (long term absences) at the time attendance is recorded.

Formula:
$$\frac{(\# \text{ of Days* Attended})}{(\text{Total \# of Days All Students Attended} + \text{Total \# of Absences})} * 100$$

*Students not designated as LTAs

LONG TERM ABSENCE (LTA)

Definition: Students who have been absent for one full PAR period (twenty consecutive school days in a single month). If students are present for one day in a PAR period they are not considered an LTA for that month.

DOE Results Reported: Monthly results available throughout the year. Final audited results will be available at the end of the summer. Note: Because this calculation excludes LTAs, these figures will not match publicly reported attendance figures from DAA.

ACCOUNTABILITY: **MEET ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) TARGETS FOR ELA, MATH & SCIENCE IN ALL SUBGROUPS FOR GRADES 3 THROUGH 8**

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)

Definition: Each accountability group⁶ must meet the following requirements on an annual basis: 1) 95% of students in each accountability group are tested in ELA and math; and 2) each accountability group makes either Effective AMO or Safe Harbor/progress targets in ELA, math and science.

Achieving AYP is a core element of the NCLB law. The definitions listed below are based on the policy guiding this accountability for the 2004-05 school year. Next year, AYP goals will be extended to grades 3 through 8. While the basic structure of the accountability measures will remain similar to those described below, final determination of the ways in which AYP will be calculated is forthcoming. Preliminary information concerning anticipated changes is listed at the end of this definition. Mabel Payne in the DOE Department of Assessment and Accountability is also available to answer your questions and will communicate further updates to schools as decisions are made. She can be reached at: 212-374-3954 or mpayne@nycboe.net.

There are three different sets of AYP goals for schools:

I. Each accountability group must achieve the 95% participation rate requirement. Accountability groups with 40 or more students must have had 95% of the students tested in the subject to pass the 95% participation rate requirement.

- The first AYP goal for schools is to achieve the ELA and math test participation rate requirement. At least 95% of all the students in Grades 4 and/or 8 enrolled in the school must take the state ELA and math tests. If the participation rate of an accountability group fell below 95% in 2005, the enrollment shown is the sum of the school's 2004 plus the 2005 enrollments, and the percent tested is the weighted average of the participation rates over those two years. Students who were excused from testing for medical reasons are not included in the enrollment count.

II. All accountability groups must meet or exceed their AMO, or Safe Harbor testing targets in ELA and math.

- The second AYP goal is that each accountability group must have a performance index that meets or exceeds certain ELA and math testing targets, known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). The AMOs were established in order to track whether each accountability group is making satisfactory progress toward the goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-2014. Please note that your school is only required to meet an *effective* AMO which takes each accountability group's size into account by calculating a confidence interval around these scores (available at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/school-accountability/confidence-intervals.htm>)
- A performance index (PI) is calculated using student performance levels from the ELA and math test results. The PI indicates the degree to which an accountability group met or exceeded the State standard on required State test:

$$\left[\frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{Number of continuously enrolled tested students scoring at Levels 2, 3 \& 4} \\ + \\ \text{Number of continuously enrolled tested students scoring at Levels 3 \& 4} \end{array}}{\text{Total \# of Continuously Enrolled Tested Students}} \right] * 100$$

⁶ There are nine NCLB accountability groups: Native American, Asian, Hispanic, Black, White, Special Education, English Language Learners, Low Income, and All Students.

- If an accountability group does not meet its effective AMO in ELA or Math, it can still achieve AYP if it meets its Safe Harbor target and if the group meets the state science qualification. Safe Harbor testing targets, which are not based on 2005 test scores but rather the change in test scores from 2004 to 2005, are generally lower ELA and math testing targets than the regular AMO targets. Safe harbor targets are calculated as follows:

$$\text{Previous Year's PI} + [(200 - \text{Previous Year's PI}) \times 0.10]$$

III. Schools with 4th grade and/or 8th grade enrollments must meet or exceed the state science standard.

- The third AYP goal for each school is to achieve specific state science testing targets. A certain percentage of all continuously enrolled fourth and/or eighth grade students must meet either the State Science Standard, which is based on the 2005 test results, or the Science Progress Target, which is based on the change in state science test results from 2004 to 2005. [For schools qualifying for AYP in ELA and math using the Safe Harbor provision, the science test results of the relevant accountability groups must meet either the State Science Standard or the Science Progress Target.]
- If an accountability group does not meet its state science standard, but does meet or exceed its science progress target, and the group meets the ELA and math qualification for safe harbor, it will make AYP for the year.

Title I schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years risk federal sanctions and losing their Title I funds.

- After two consecutive years of not making AYP, a Title I school is designated a School in Need of Improvement (SINI 1) and must offer parents the choice to transfer their child to a school that is meeting standards, and/or a non-Title I school.
- After more than two consecutive years of not making AYP, a Title I school must offer parents two choices: either transferring their child to another school or additional instructional services (Supplementary Educational Services [SES]).

Changes effective in 2005-06 school year or beyond:

1. NYSED will be testing in Grades 3 through 8 rather than solely in Grades 4 and 8; therefore, NYSED will have to set new AMO targets for each school level and subject area. Other changes regarding 3-8 performance indices, AMOs, etc. may affect the accountability rules for the 2006-07 school year.
2. In 2005-06 districts/schools that do not have valid science scores for at least 80% of its enrolled students in each accountability grade will not make the science AYP progress target even if they make the science AMO.

DOE Results Reported: Final results reported in September of the following year through LEAP reports from the State Education Department

ACCOUNTABILITY: ANNUAL COURSE PASS RATE ACROSS ALL STUDENTS FOR ENGLISH, MATH, SCIENCE AND HISTORY: 75% FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADES

ANNUAL COURSE PASS RATE

Definition: The course pass rate is the ratio of students passing divided by the total number of students enrolled in the specified course – ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

Formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of Students Passing Each Course})}{(\text{Total } \# \text{ of Students Enrolled in Each Course})} * 100$$

ACCOUNTABILITY: 80% REGENTS COHORT PASS RATE FOR ELA AND MATH

COHORT REGENTS EXAMINATION PASS RATE

Definition: The Cohort Regents pass rate is calculated for ELA and Math. It is the ratio of students in the Regents cohort who scored at least a 55 divided by the number of students in the cohort. The highest score, either the 12th grade score or the highest score earned before 12th grade, is used for accountability purposes. If a 12th grader in the cohort takes a Regents exam in the same subject more than once only the first score is used to record a 12th grade score regardless of whether the second score was higher (but the student can use the higher score for the purposes of graduation).

Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{\# of Students in the Regents Cohort Scoring 55 or Greater})}{(\text{Total \# of Students in the Regents Cohort})} * 100$$

Reporting Resour:

DOE Results Reported: September of the following year

REGENTS COHORT

Definition: The following explanation uses the Class of 2004 cohort (also referred to by NYSED as the 2001 Regents Cohort⁷) as an example. The same rules and formulas apply for other cohorts. For a more detailed description and for updated regulations regarding inclusion on the Regents cohort, please see the "Regents Cohort Memo" distributed by DAA each Fall.

The cohort is designed to capture data for students who entered ninth grade for the first time in the same school year. For purposes of state and federal accountability, a school's performance is based on the performance of the students who were enrolled in the school on BEDS day of the 3rd year of the cohort and on the day before the June Regents exams of the 4th year of the cohort.

The 2001 school accountability cohort consists of all students, regardless of their current grade status, who were enrolled in the school on October 8, 2003 (BEDS day) and met one of the following conditions:

- First entered grade 9 (anywhere) during the 2001-02 school year (July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002); or
- In the case of ungraded students with disabilities (ATS grade code of 900), reached their seventeenth birthday during the 2001-02 school year.

The State will exclude the following students when reporting data on the 2001 school accountability cohort (though these students must be included in your file):

- 1) Students who transferred to another high school, criminal justice facility, or to a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma after BEDS day 2003;
- 2) Students who left the U.S. and its territories after BEDS day 2003; and
- 3) Students who died after BEDS day 2003.

Students who transferred into the school after BEDS day 2003 (October 8, 2003) will not be included in the 2001 school accountability cohort.

⁷ Note that NYSED labels the Regents Cohort by the year of entry, while NYCDOE labels the Regents Cohort by the expected graduation year.

Students who have dropped out may NOT be excluded from the 2001 cohort. A dropout is any student (regardless of age) who left your school prior to graduation for any reason except death and has not been documented to have entered another school or high school equivalency preparation program.

Limited English proficient students and students with disabilities eligible to take the New York State Alternate Assessment are not excluded from the 2001 cohort.

The 2001 graduation-rate cohort includes all members of the 2001 school accountability cohort plus students who were excluded from the school accountability cohort solely because they transferred to a program leading to high school equivalency diploma.

To earn a regents-endorsed high school diploma, with certain exceptions, students in this cohort must earn a score of 65 or higher (55 with approval of the local school board) (or earn a satisfactory score on a Department-approved alternative assessment) on the following examinations:

- The Regents examination in comprehensive English;
- A Regents examination in mathematics;
- A Regents examination in global history and geography;
- The Regents examination in United States History and Government; and
- A Regents examination in science.

Reporting Resources: The ATS report "RCRL" provides a list of students in each cohort at your school. The ATS report, SRCO, is the update function that allows schools to edit the cohort based on local knowledge for accountability purposes

ACCOUNTABILITY: **70% OF EACH COHORT GRADUATES AFTER 4 YEARS, OR 55% OF EACH COHORT GRADUATES AFTER 4 YEARS AND 75% GRADUATES AFTER 5 YEARS**

NEW YORK CITY COHORT

Definition: This following explanation uses the graduating class of 2004 as an example. This cohort captures graduation data for any general education student that entered 9th grade four years earlier.

Your New York City cohort includes students who entered any high school in the appropriate year (e.g. for the class of 2004 the cohort would include 9th graders who entered in September 2000, 10th graders who entered in September 2001, 11th graders who entered in September 2002). Students receiving a diploma, drop-outs, students who left before graduating and did not enroll in another school, students still enrolled and students continuing to work toward a high school diploma are all included. Part-time special education students and English language learners are also included. Students who were discharged to other school systems with confirmation of enrollment were omitted from the cohort as are students who aged out of the school system (i.e. reach the age of 21 before completing high school).

COHORT GRADUATION RATE

Definition: The cohort graduation rate is the percentage of students in your New York City Cohort who graduated by June or by the end of the summer of that year. (i.e. August graduates are included)

4-year Formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of students in NYC cohort who graduated within 4 years})}{(\text{Total number of students in NYC Cohort})} * 100$$

5-year Formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of students in NYC cohort who graduated within 5 years})}{(\text{Total number of students in the same NYC Cohort used for 4-year})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: January of the following year

ACCOUNTABILITY: 90% OF ALL GRADUATING STUDENTS ARE ACCEPTED TO 2 OR 4 YEAR COLLEGES

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE RATE

Definition: The college acceptance rate is the percentage of graduates who were accepted to either a four-year or a two-year college.

Formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of Graduates Accepted to 2 or 4-Yr College})}{(\text{Number of Graduating Students})} * 100$$

ACCOUNTABILITY: IMPROVEMENT TARGETS TBD ON VALUE-ADDED TESTS FOR ELA, MATH

TO BE DETERMINED

ACCOUNTABILITY: NO LESS THAN 10% OF ALL STUDENTS ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL)

Definition: Students who have limited English proficiency. ELLs are eligible to receive bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) instruction and must take the NYSESLAT annually until they achieve a proficient level for their grade or a 55 on the English Regents exam in the same year. ELL is NYC's term for NYSED's Limited English Proficient students (LEP). These students are one of the NCLB ACCOUNTABILITY groups.

Formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of ELL students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})}{(\text{Total number of students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: For high schools, preliminary data available from the Office of Student Enrollment in April, or after the second round of admissions. In November, after registers are complete, a complete profile is available.

ACCOUNTABILITY: NO LESS THAN 10% OF ALL STUDENTS ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Special Education includes any student with an Individualized Education Plan, referred to on the Annual School Report as either full-time or part-time special education depending on the level of services a student receives, (described below).

FULL-TIME SPECIAL EDUCATION

Definition: Special education students/students with disabilities who receive instruction with other special education students for most of their school day. These students are part of the special education/disabled students NCLB accountability group.

PART-TIME SPECIAL EDUCATION

Definition: Students who receive special education services for part of their school day, such as resource room instruction, related services, and consultant teacher services. These students are part of the special education/disabled students NCLB accountability group.

Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{\# of full \& part-time SPED students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})}{(\text{Total number of students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: For high schools, preliminary data available from the Office of Student Enrollment in April, or after the second round of admissions. In November, after registers are complete, a complete profile is available.

ACCOUNTABILITY: NO LESS THAN 25% OF ALL STUDENTS ENTER AT LEVEL 1 IN ELA AND/OR MATH

LEVEL 1

Definition: Students with level 1 proficiency on either or both the ELA and Math 8th grade tests

Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{\# of Level 1 students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})}{(\text{Total number of students in your entering 9}^{\text{th}}/10^{\text{th}} \text{ grade})} * 100$$

DOE Results Reported: For high schools, preliminary data available from the Office of Student Enrollment in April, or after the second round of admissions. In November, after registers are complete, a complete profile is available.

Value Exchange: Summary Autonomy for Accountability

<p align="center">PRINCIPALS ACCEPT: 5-year Performance Agreements</p>	<p align="center">PRINCIPALS RECEIVE: Control and Support</p>
<p>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-year standards with a minimum annual gap-closure target: - Average daily attendance: 90% HS; 92% MS/ES - 80% Regents cohort pass rate for ELA and Math Regents Exams - 4-year cohort graduation rate: 70% OR 55% 4-year and 75% 5-year - 2 or 4-year college acceptance: 90% of graduating students - Annual drop-out rate: No more than 4% of HS students enrolled - Annual course pass rate: 75% HS - Meet AYP targets for ELA, Math & Science in all subgroups for grades 3 through 8 	<p>AUTONOMY (within legal and contractual requirements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice of curriculum, instructional models and interim assessments - Membership in school-led networks organized around shared educational philosophies - Choice of professional development - Flexibility in scheduling of school day - Maximum flexibility in staffing decisions within contract - Greater flexibility in school budget - Opportunity to develop new approaches to educate special populations
<p>EDUCATIONAL EQUITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All student groups (ELL, SPED and Level 1) make educational gains on test scores and graduation rates - For choice enrollment schools, attract an equitable entering class mix that I close to citywide HS average for ELL, SPED, level 1 (no less than 10% ELL; 10% SPED, no less than 25% Level 1) 	<p>CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated team from ROC/Admn, Human Resources, Youth Development, Special Education/ELL - Voice in selecting LIS and setting coaching/support priorities - Reduction in administrative/paperwork burden on principals - Timely, useful data about all aspects of school performance: accountability metrics and other management information - Optional attendance in any professional development or other DOE forum
<p>SHARED LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document, share best practices, accept visits 	
<p>FISCAL INTEGRITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expend resources consistent with education plans and within approved budget levels. In addition, spending must comply with contracting and purchasing procedures 	
<p>INCENTIVES & CONSEQUENCES</p>	
<p>Consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renewal/non-renewal with or without conditions - School closure 	<p>Incentives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibility of results to peers, public

AUTONOMOUS NETWORKS PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT 2005-2006

As a participating principal in an Autonomous Network, you are agreeing to join a pilot designed to improve school and student performance by granting principals and schools increased autonomy in exchange for accountability. This performance agreement will be in effect through the 2009-2010 school year unless terminated as provided for below. Further elaboration on the autonomy granted, support provided and other useful information is included in the Handbook for your group of Autonomous Networks. In exchange for increased autonomy for instructional and budget decisions in your school, you will be required to make annual progress towards five-year goals for student achievement, educational equity and fiscal integrity, as outlined below.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT¹

High schools will meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement and close at least 10% of the remaining gap between past performance² and the standards by the end of each academic year. Schools with past performance that is already at or above these standards will have customized improvement targets.

- 90% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- No more than 4% of all students enrolled drop out annually
- 75% annual course pass rate across all students in English, Math, Science and History
- 90% of students in the 9th and 10th grade will be promoted to a higher grade level
- 80% Regents cohort pass rate for ELA and Math Regents Exams
- Choice of either A) 70% of each cohort graduates after 4 years, or B) 55% of each cohort graduates after 4 years and 75% graduate after 5 years
- 90% of all graduating students are accepted to 2 or 4 year colleges

High schools in the first three years of start-up will meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement. The first year your school has a graduating class, standards and gap closing goals will be reset to those applying to all high schools listed above.

- 90% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- No more than 4% of all students enrolled drop out annually
- 75% annual course pass rate across all students in English, Math, Science and History
- 90% of students in the 9th and 10th grade will be promoted to the next grade level
- Improvement targets TBD on value-added tests for ELA, Math

Schools with middle or elementary school grades will meet these standards by the end of the performance agreement and close at least 10% of the remaining gap between past performance and the standards by the end of each academic year. Schools with past performance that is already at or above these standards will have customized improvement targets.

- 92% school-wide average daily attendance excluding Long Term Absences
- Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets for ELA, Math & Science in all subgroups for grades 3 through 8

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Autonomous Network schools are expected to serve a population that reflects the full range of students throughout the city. Schools with choice enrollment processes are expected to participate in the citywide and if applicable regional student enrollment processes and to attract an entering class that represents a similar mix of students by achievement and special needs as all high schools (or other grade level or group of students from which you are drawing, if applicable). As a guideline³, students on the 9th grade register at choice schools should reflect the following:

- No less than 10% of all students are English Language Learners
- No less than 10% of all students are Special Education students
- No less than 25% of all students enter at Level 1 in ELA and/or Math

¹ The standards listed are based on preliminary data analysis. TBD metrics will be inserted and all standards will be finalized before Principals are asked to sign the 2005-6 agreement.

² "Past performance" will be defined using performance from the previous academic year

³ New schools or schools with high proportion of one of these special needs groups may negotiate alternative guidelines with the school's superintendent.

You will also be expected to annually, and at the end of the term of this agreement, show that you made positive progress over your school's prior performance on test scores and graduation rates for English Language Learners, students entering at Level 1 and Special Education students.

FISCAL INTEGRITY

You are accountable for expending resources consistent with your education plan for your students and within approved budget levels. In addition, your spending must comply with contracting and purchasing procedures.

ASSESSMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

School performance will be formally assessed annually and at the end of the contract term. Informal reviews can happen at any time and will increase if trends deteriorate. The following consequences will apply depending on the degree to which your school's five-year goals have been met:

<u>School Performance</u>	<u>Consequences⁴</u>
Met or exceeded all targets	Renewal of performance agreement for another term
Mixed performance: Met or exceeded some targets, but missed others	Possible renewal of the performance agreement for less than a full term and/or with conditions including interim action plans and additional monitoring
Missed all targets, but showed progress over past performance on most metrics	Possible non-renewal of the performance agreement or renewal with conditions such as loss of autonomy after a thorough review of the school's performance on a range of educational indicators
No progress or decline in performance as compared to past performance on most metrics	Non-renewal and possible school closure after a thorough review of the school's performance on a range of educational indicators

COMPLIANCE

Nothing in the autonomy or accountability section of this agreement is meant to release you from applicable contractual and legal mandates, all of which apply with equal force in Autonomous Network schools. You are responsible for ensuring your school's compliance with all of these requirements. Furthermore, nothing herein shall be deemed to abrogate the powers and duties of Community Education Councils and Community Superintendents, where applicable.

CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT

Principals in an Autonomous Network who wish to opt out of this performance agreement and leave the Autonomous Network may do so by notifying your Superintendent between July 1 and July 15 of each year. The Department of Education also reserves the right to cancel this performance agreement and remove a participating school from an Autonomous Network at any time. By signing below you are agreeing to accept the autonomy for accountability value exchange just described and to work with your entire school community to leverage its power to improve student achievement.

New York City Department of
Education

School Name	Intermediary Organization (if applicable)		Region
Principal Name	Intermediary Representative Name	Chancellor	Regional Superintendent Name
Principal Signature	Intermediary Representative Signature	Chancellor Signature	Regional Superintendent Signature
Date	Date	Date	Date

⁴ To the extent that the targets contained in this agreement are also contained in your Principal Performance Review, failure to meet the targets may also result in disciplinary action pursuant to applicable contracts, laws and/or regulations

Application of Planned Consequences for 2004-5

- There are no consequences for the 11 schools that have met all targets.
- Level 1 consequences will be applied for the 11 schools meeting most targets
The 11 schools that met most targets will participate in a Level 1 conference with the Zone Rating Officer to discuss results and jointly develop strategies to meet or exceed all performance targets in the next school year.
- Level 2 consequences will be applied for the 4 schools with mixed performance
 - Fannie Lou Hamer High School: Principal will meet with the Zone Rating Officer, develop action plans, and submit quarterly progress reports to improve Regents results, increase the performance of special education students, and improve graduation rates. Action plans are subject to the approval of the Zone Rating Officer, and the goals within them will be reflected in the Principal's PPR.
 - International Arts and Business School: Principal will meet with the Zone Rating Officer, develop action plans, and submit quarterly progress reports to increase course pass rates and improve performance on Regents examinations. Action plans are subject to the approval of the Zone Rating Officer, and the goals within them will be reflected in the Principal's PPR.
 - Middle College High School: Principal will meet with the Zone Rating Officer, develop action plans, and submit quarterly progress reports to improve Regents performance and graduation rates. Action plans are subject to the approval of the Zone Rating Officer, and the goals within them will be reflected in the Principal's PPR.
 - Urban Assembly Academy of History and Citizenship: Principal will meet with the Zone Rating Officer, develop action plans, and submit quarterly reports to improve attendance and increase course pass rates. Action plans are subject to the approval of the Zone Rating Officer, and the goals within them will be reflected in the Principal's PPR. The Principal will also be advised to use his professional development allocation to maintain mentoring services into his second year, and the Zone Rating Officer will guide and coach the Principal on his selection of an Assistant Principal.
- Level 3 consequence will not be applied in 2004-5 since no schools failed to meet most of their targets.
- Level 4 consequences will not be applied in 2004-5 since no schools failed to meet all of their targets.

Horace Talks with Eric Nadelstern: New York City's Autonomy Zone

Type: Horace Feature

Source: *Horace* Summer 2005, Vol. 21 No. 3

To learn more from a uniquely informed perspective on how Essential schools can thrive in large urban districts, Jill Davidson, *Horace's* editor, interviewed Eric Nadelstern, the Chief Academic Officer for New Schools at the New York City Department of Education in charge of the city's thirty-school Autonomy Zone. The founding principal of the International High School at LaGuardia Community College, a longtime Essential school, Nadelstern has also served as the Deputy Superintendent of New and Small Schools in the Bronx, the Deputy Regional Superintendent of Region Two in the East Bronx, and citywide Senior Instructional Superintendent for school improvement and restructuring at the city's Department of Education.

Horace: What can districts do to increase the success of Essential schools?

Eric Nadelstern: School districts have exactly the kinds of schools they're designed to have. If you want something different to take place at the school level, then something different has to take place at the district. We encourage our new small schools to create cross-functional interdisciplinary teams responsible and accountable for a cohort of students. This is opposed to the more traditional high school model where subject area departments stand in isolation with little articulation across disciplines, which leads to something less than a coherent experience. School districts are organized similarly, as different departments that don't articulate with each other. And when you ask people in those organizations which schools they are accountable for, the likely response is, "All of them." We are finding ways to create much more clearly defined lines of responsibility and accountability. When I was Deputy Superintendent in the Bronx, we were creating district office cross-functional teams that were responsible and accountable for no more than four to six schools. After initial resistance, the people involved felt much more connected to the reality of what kids and teachers were experiencing.

Horace: Tell me about the Autonomy Zone.

Nadelstern: We opened in September with 30 schools in autonomy zone: 14 new small schools, 13 existing schools, all secondary schools. The remaining three were charter schools that already had autonomy and chose to work with us because they wanted to be part of something larger with like-minded schools. Those schools recognized the value of affiliation, an interesting development in history of charters in the city.

The charters already had contracts with the state, but the other 27 schools signed contracts that made them accountable for student achievement, educational equity, fiscal integrity, equity - they should represent the population, not skew toward better prepared students -

and academic achievement. What they get is freedom to choose their own methodologies - they can create longer instructional periods and deviate from curriculum sequencing dictated by citywide curricular mandates. They can figure out within state parameters the broadest possible flexibility to grant credit for project-based work and non-seat time school experiences.

Horace: So the schools in the Autonomy Zone have supportive expectations?

Nadelstern: They want to be held accountable - they're professionals. And there are broader conversations about nature of accountability. Principals of older Coalition schools would like a more descriptive, less quantifiable form of accountability based on more complicated forms of assessment. The older small Coalition schools have had a very hard time adapting from a non-high stakes testing environment to a high-stakes testing environment. That's easy to understand - we felt what we were losing something seminal in what made our high schools effective and unique. But the Autonomy Zone isn't an initiative to forward everyone's agenda. What it is, most narrowly defined, is an opportunity to demonstrate that if you give principals a chance to make the important decisions that they and their teachers need to make about how kids learn best, then more kids will be more successful. It's an opportunity for school faculty to be prepared to be held accountable for those results.

Horace: The success of the schools in the Autonomy Zone seems to depend heavily on skilled leaders.

Nadelstern: If you want a proactive leadership where school leaders exercise their best judgment, then you have to create the circumstances for that to happen. Perhaps there isn't a leadership shortage - perhaps there's a shortage of opportunities to exercise effective professional judgment and leadership. As a principal, I learned that the position where people bring their problems to you and you spend your day solving their problems is very seductive and powerful, but in the final analysis, it's not the job of an educator. The job of an effective educator is to provide people with the encouragement, opportunity, and moral support needed to understand that they and their colleagues hold the solution to most of their problems. To support that, we then have to create positions and organizational structures outside of schools that don't drain the schools of resources.

Horace: Is the Autonomy Zone the right structure for all schools? Could all schools function with this level of autonomy?

Nadelstern: That's the 64 thousand dollar question. Is autonomy a reward or a prerequisite? Most of my colleagues believe that autonomy is a reward, that you have to earn it. I believe that autonomy is a prerequisite, that the people closest to kids and the classroom - principals, teachers in consultation with parents, and at high school level, the kids themselves - are the people who are best positioned to determine what kids need to learn, how they can best learn it, and how to assess that learning. This needs to be scalable

to the entire school system. There is no school that would not benefit from this relationship, even if it means that as a result of this construct it was determined within a few years that a school doesn't deserve to exist and should be closed down to give other people an opportunity to do a good job. Even that is a valuable contribution.

Horace: Is the Autonomy Zone a threat to the existing bureaucracy?

Nadelstern: The mistake most people in my position make is that we come in thinking that if we're only smarter, better intended, and more hard-working, then we will do a better job than the people who came before us. The people who came before us were also smart and hard-working. The resulting structure isn't a result of people interfering with what's going on in schools. It's what happens when people attempt to support what's going on in schools. The Autonomy Zone demonstrates an entirely different way of thinking about the legitimate role of the school district. The Autonomy Zone has only four administrators, all of whom have other responsibilities. Nobody has fulltime direct commitment to the autonomy zone and that's how it should be - we're using our resources effectively.

Horace: So what is the legitimate role of a school district if a school has the structures in place to govern itself and evolve?

Nadelstern: The Chancellor says he's not interested in creating a successful school system - he's interested in creating 1,300 successful schools. If you follow that thought through, the legitimate role of the school district would be to channel available resources directly to the schools as much as possible. Anything you create in terms of structures outside of schools diminishes resources available to schools. The current New York City restructuring initiative to transform 40 districts into 10 regions has saved a quarter of a billion dollars a year that now go directly to schools. The purpose of the district is to channel the resources available, recruit the best people we can find to be school leaders, hold them accountable for results, support them, incent them, and protect them.

RELATED RESOURCE

For more on the New York City Public Schools' Autonomy Zone, see http://www.insideschools.org/nv/NV_autonomy_feb05.php