

Standards 101: A Short Course for Parents

The Standards Movement

The standards reform movement was born out of the 1991 National Educational Goals panel, which sought new ways to improve schools and to hold them accountable for the education of all students. Prior to the convening of this panel, education reform efforts had concentrated, with marginal success, on various curriculum changes and assessment strategies in order to improve schools. The panel ultimately focused on high academic standards as critical to creating real school change. As Ruth Mitchell of The Education Trust wrote, "You can't know how to teach something or how to assess what has been learned until you know what it is you want students to know and be able to do."

Since 1991, 49 states and countless communities have adopted academic (sometimes called content) standards and have either implemented them or are in the process of implementing them. The entire process of setting and implementing high standards—of deciding what students need to know and be able to do—has engaged policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, students and citizens in important and, at times, highly charged conversations about what education means and how student achievement must improve.

Setting Standards

The first step in the standards process is for districts to set or adopt *academic or content standards*. Local school districts can draw on a variety of resources to create these standards. There are national standards, developed in the wake of the 1991 National Educational Goals Panel findings. These, however, are typically seen as a kind of rough starting point. In all states except Iowa, there are published standards in every major subject group. Often, these also serve only as a point of departure for local school districts. A number of non-profit, particularly subject-specific organizations have also released their own standards (e.g., the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and others). These can and do inform the standards local communities end up writing, as well.

The most important aspect of the standard setting process is ensuring that standards are set high enough. Good standards are not

minimum standards. Rather, they should describe what constitutes a good education for all students. As part of this work, a district must engage its community (including administrators, teachers, students, parents and other interested organizations and citizens) in a broad-based conversation about what the district's students must know and be able to accomplish, that is, what a "good education" actually means. Done sensitively and inclusively, this work can build broad community support for public schools and their efforts to raise student achievement.

This kind of community engagement, of course, takes time. Good, community-endorsed standards are not set in a day. If your district is just at the beginning of the process, it will take a year and likely longer to write, get feedback, revise (perhaps get more feedback, revise) and ultimately present strong academic standards to the broader community.

Putting Standards into Action

Once standards have been agreed upon and finally published for the school district and community, the next and often arduous phase of implementing these standards begins. This first requires districts to restructure their curricula and create a set of more specific *learning objectives or benchmarks* for each standard. These set out the actual subject matter teachers will teach and students will be expected to learn.

In turn, teachers must generally restructure their lesson plans and teaching styles to reflect the new standards and benchmarks. At the most basic level, teachers must ask of each activity in each period of each day, "Is this work



Standards were a hot topic at a recent convening to discuss best practices, a project funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Shown here are PPS of Memphis executive director, Mary Durham, and chapter president, Wanda Halbert. (PHOTO: Brewster Rhoads)

helping students to reach our district's standards?" Not surprisingly, this means that many lessons traditionally taught must be cut or modified, and new lessons designed. It is important to note that this does not mean that all teachers are expected to teach the same lessons in the same way. Rather, standards represent common learning goals towards which each teacher can design his or her own teaching strategies.

As administrators and teachers take on this work, they will also come together to write, revise and set *performance standards*, which describe what work is actually "good enough" to meet the academic standard at each grade or certain grades. All of this is a significant undertaking and can take several years before all schools and teachers are on the same page and performance standards are set.

With these performance standards in place, districts and teachers must align their *assessment methods* (e.g., tests, assignments, etc.) to ensure that students are reaching these performance levels. Perhaps even more radically, teachers must also develop new ways to ensure that each student ultimately

achieves to the standards. In standards-based classrooms, it is no longer sufficient for a teacher to present material and then test to see "who got it." Rather, teachers must find ways to work individually with students who didn't learn the first time until they ultimately do. This individualized attention must be balanced against the needs of the larger class, so good standards-based schools pledge extra-curricular help, summer programs, and additional care to under-performing students in order to ensure that no student falls through the cracks or wastes time waiting for classmates to "catch up."

In a standards-based environment, classes are ultimately judged not on how well or whether subjects are covered, but on how well or whether students actually learn. To make this kind of education work, therefore, teachers and principals generally require healthy doses of professional development along the way. This enables teachers to develop needed content knowledge and a broader range of instructional strategies. Principals can hone the skills they need to serve as instructional leaders (as well as building managers) and facilitate the academic efforts of their teachers. (continued)

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Letter from the Executive Director

Standards Are Here to Stay

January 2000

Everywhere you turn it seems, you read something about standards in public education. Districts are adopting new high stakes testing, ending social promotion, or instituting new summer school programs—all intended to challenge and enable students to reach higher levels of performance. These initiatives are not the whole story, however. There remains in many places a great deal of confusion (and some criticism) about standards and standards-based reform, a complex, hopeful process designed to improve public schools for all students. We trust this issue of Parent Press will help clear up some of these misconceptions.

One thing is certain; standards are not just one more fleeting school reform fad. I think this is good news.

Unlike any other reform measure, standards focus the business of schooling where it belongs—on teaching and learning. They focus instruction on content and skills and describe in very specific terms the knowledge and skills all students are expected to acquire. Effectively written and applied, standards improve classrooms and bring clarity and definition to what constitutes good teaching and learning. They can be a lever for creating better public schools.

At PPS, we encourage our chapters to take the lead in designing and implementing standards for their districts. We hope especially they will push for meaningful professional development directed at supporting and improving teaching practice—a key element of standards-based reform. If you are not sure how to begin or get involved, check out the Toolkit on page 4, and then consider what makes sense for your community and your schools.

PPS chapters can provide parents the information, training and preparation they need to play important roles in standards-based reform. This hard work is well worth the effort. Implementing high standards is part of a movement towards higher student achievement in public schools, part of the struggling renaissance in public education now underway. The continued, direct and intense involvement of parents is also part of this renaissance. As more districts adopt high standards, parents and the PPS chapters who represent them, must hold schools,



as well as teachers, administrators and their children, accountable not only for reaching, but exceeding the standards their community sets.

*Kelly Allin Butler,
PPS Executive Director*

PPS on the road. Kelly Butler spent a day in the classroom with Teach for America in the Mississippi Delta.
(PHOTO: Ron Nurnberg)

(Standards, continued)

Finally, districts must hold schools, teachers, and students accountable to the standards. This can mean a variety of things from pay increases for principals or teachers dependent on student achievement of standards, to graduation or promotion requirements that insist that students achieve to standards set by the district. These kinds of accountability measures put teeth behind the standards, and not surprisingly can raise considerable community concern and controversy—especially when they are put in place before the classroom implementation of standards and helpful remediation programs are well established.

Standards in the Classroom: An Example

As standards are implemented over time, what happens in some classrooms can begin to change quickly. Here's an example of a standards-based class activity, which likely differs significantly from a class you may have been in when you were in school.

Imagine that students in a standards-based classroom are learning about the history of Mesopotamia. First, in planning an activity (e.g., writing short paragraphs on trade and economy), the teacher will ensure that this work is related to a particular standard or standards, as well as to a specific learning objective. In class, the teacher will give his/her expectations for the paragraph and explain why the history of Mesopotamia is important and how that knowledge ties in to the relevant standard. In some classes, students may actually launch the process by doing research on the subject themselves. In either case, before beginning their assignment, students will look at a *rubric* (see glossary) or scoring guide. This shows them exactly what elements their paragraphs must contain in order to achieve a superior or satisfactory score—and exactly what they've done incorrectly if they do not achieve the score they hoped to make.

Once the students complete their paragraphs, the teacher reads through the work, often with other teachers, in a kind of standards-focused conference. The teacher then assesses each piece based on the rubric. Expectations for the assignment are clearly articulated so very little is arbitrary about the scoring process. Students know exactly what their work should contain. They are also aware of the scoring consequences if they fall short. After the teacher returns the assignment, he or she works with students whose efforts are not satisfactory and enables them to re-submit the assignment until they have demonstrated that they have learned the material. The point is not to "give" students the answer, but to help them take responsibility for the learning process and their ultimate success.

Making Standards Understandable to Cincinnati Parents

The Cincinnati school district contains 77 schools and approximately 46,000 students. At present, the district has implemented standards in every school—and every grade K-12—across the district. The work around standards, however, is just beginning. As Margaret Hulbert, president of Cincinnati's PPS chapter explains, there is much that parents and others can do to make standards more effective.

First, parent organizations, with help from professional education organizations, if necessary, must attempt to make standards understandable for all parents. "I read things that come home about my child, with regards to standards," Hulbert says, "and I just don't understand them." She and the local PPS chapter, therefore, are seeking foundation funding to develop training and help PPS members translate Cincinnati's standards into parent-friendly language.

Second, PPS in Cincinnati sees a clear need for teacher development around standards. "Some teachers are brilliant, some are okay, and some are completely unskilled at creating assignments that are clearly and explicitly linked to classroom standards," says Hulbert. Many teachers still don't make standards and rubrics readily available to students. In an ideal standards-based school, children, teachers and parents should know what standards they are working on and each assignment's expectations. This clear communication is critical.

Despite these challenges, Hulbert remains hopeful about standards in her district. "They're really pretty good, when you look at them," she says. "To make them work in Cincinnati's classrooms (and in schools across the country), however, there is a lot of work with teachers and parents that still needs to get done."



PPS Urban Pilot, funded by the Thomas L. Conlan Education Foundation, brought together PPS chapter leaders from Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio. (PHOTO: Brewster Rhoads)

Why Standards Are So Important to Parents—and Schools

Standards-based reforms radically redefine the way in which schools work. They place instruction and student achievement first. For parents, the practical benefits of standards-based reforms are manifold. First, standards take the guessing out of student work. Students can bring home assignments and scoring guides that parents can read and understand. This allows parents to help and monitor their own children. Knowing exactly what is expected of one's child goes a long way toward enabling parents to provide this support.

Standards also give parents a way to facilitate interaction with teachers and administrators about the performance of their children. Parents can conference with teachers using scoring guides and directly address the ways in which student work met or failed to meet an assignment's requirements. (Most parents who have experience with standards profess that even the most partial of parents can see when their own child's work has failed to meet a standard.)

At the school or district level, high academic standards provide a common set of expectations

about what all students should know and be able to do. They are a district's explicit promise to which parents can hold administrators and school board members accountable. In a standards-driven district, all means all, and administrators and teachers must provide the resources and develop the skills necessary to ensure that each and every student reaches the district's standards. Standards provide a powerful argument for greater fairness, for better teaching and for a more focused commitment to increasing student achievement.

There is still a lot of work to be done to implement standards-based reform in school districts, but the promise of standards to revamp public schooling in America remains strong. As Ron Wolk, the founder of *Education Week* magazine, said in a recent briefing on standards funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, "Standards-based reforms are the basket that most of us are putting all of our eggs in."

The question is not whether standards will be implemented—the question, really, is how. As the rest of this newsletter will explain, parents can and should be involved every step of the way as standards-based reforms begin to take hold in schools.

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Standards-Based Education: The Basics

A Standards Glossary

Academic (or content) standards are clear statements about what students should know and be able to do in certain subject areas and at certain stages in their education.

Benchmarks (or learning objectives) are sub-components of academic standards. They describe the specific subject matter knowledge and skills students must have at each grade (or set of grades) within each academic standard.

Performance standards describe how good a student's work must be, what level of mastery is required, to meet the academic standards.

Curriculum alignment/mapping is the process, conducted by teachers, principals and administra-

tors, to match what is actually taught in each class to the stated academic standards, benchmarks and performance standards.

Performance assessment is a general term for any kind of testing activity in which students answer questions, develop special reports or projects, create a portfolio or perform demonstrations to show off their knowledge and skills. It is how a teacher understands whether a student has mastered a set of skills or performance standard.

Rubric (or scoring guide) is used for grading performance assessments or any student work in a standards classroom. Rubrics describe to students exactly what their work must reflect to be considered excellent or satisfactory.

Standards and Student Work: An Example

To give you an idea of how standards actually work in the classroom, we've provided the following example, adapted from the Partnership for Learning in Washington State. This question is part of a test linked to Washington's English standards. It asks fourth grade students to respond critically to a poem by Langston Hughes.

This question is first of all designed with a standard and a particular benchmark in mind. Students earn two, one or no points based on criteria spelled out to students ahead of time. An example of how a student might respond is provided for each score. Discussions of assignments and examples of student work like these can help parents better understand how the standards process works. They can help parents get a handle on how their own children are doing and what is expected of their children in the classroom. Finally, these kinds of interactions allow parents to get a sense of the creativity and individuality that a teacher brings to his or her work, as well as the kind of rich and interesting learning environments standards-based schools provide.

Sample Question

- Standard:** Analyzes and interprets literature, and thinks critically
- Benchmark:** Demonstrate understanding of literary elements (genres; story elements, such as plot, character, setting; stylistic devices) and graphic elements/illustrations.
- Performance Assessment:**
- A.** These words might all be used to describe the rain in "April Rain Song" (see below). Circle the word you think best describes the rain in this poem.
- Musical Soft Gentle
- B.** Tell what it is in the poem that made you choose this word.

April Rain Song by Langston Hughes

*Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.

The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.
The rain makes running pools in the gutter.
The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at night—
And I love the rain.*

Scoring Guide: A **2-point response** receives full credit; it shows adequate evidence of interpretation. To receive this rating, the student response must indicate one circled word (all are valid choices) and give a solid reference to the poem or interpretation of the poem as explanation for the student's choice.

The response below meets these criteria.

Musical Soft Gentle

The rain sings to you. It gently beats against the window and roof in a lullaby sort of way.

Scoring Guide: A **1-point response** receives partial credit; it shows incomplete evidence of interpretation. To receive this rating the student response must indicate one circled word, but give a vague or superficial explanation for doing so.

The response below provides an example. Stating that the rain is "not hurting anybody" barely goes beyond a definition of the circled word.

Musical Soft Gentle

The rain is not hurting anybody.

Scoring Guide: A **0-point response** receives no credit; it shows no evidence of interpretation. It does not address the question. The response below provides an example. The explanation simply repeats the circled word.

Musical Soft Gentle

Because the rain is soft.

Looking at Student Work

Increasingly today, schools and their communities are using student work—whether it is a writing sample, a presentation or a scientific experiment—to see whether students can demonstrate that they understand what they are expected to know and do. Student work is therefore a critical aspect of standards-based education. In addition to looking at end-of-term grades or test scores, student work provides information on how a student is doing in the course for the year, when improvements are still possible. Student work, then, is another form of valuable data that parents and teachers can use to assess the progress of individual students and of the whole school.

In addition, the process of examining student work provides an important tool for engagement because it creates an opportunity for discussions that can lead to improvements in teaching and learning. In standards-based schools and districts, teachers who look at student work together have an opportunity to share and reflect on ways to improve classroom practices and environments that support good learning experiences. When parents and teachers look together at student work, they have an opportunity to create ways to encourage schools and communities to develop common expectations for student achievement.

El Paso Equation: Standards + Parents = Results

A recent visit to West Texas provided an opportunity to observe a quiet revolution moving through the El Paso, Socorro and Ysleta Independent School Districts. Students in three of the poorest districts in the nation are achieving at high levels due in great part to the implementation of standards. And disregarding their own economic or educational challenges, parents of these students are exercising their ownership of the public schools to ensure compliance by schools and students alike.

What's going on? We asked Myrna Castrejón, a professor at the University of Texas-El Paso and a former parent educator with the Ysleta school district and staff member of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. It began, she says, with a healthy dose of community organizing that built key relationships among parents and the professional learning community. This ultimately led to the public acknowledgement by all involved—administrators, teachers, students, parents, even business and community leaders—that their schools needed significant improvement.

Thanks to this groundwork, the El Paso Collaborative then brought everyone to the decision-making table as equal partners. Together, they developed a comprehensive and understandable set of academic standards. The core belief in all of this work was (and is) that every student can succeed at high levels, given two preconditions. First, these high achievement levels or standards are clearly defined. Second, students receive appropriate instruction and support.

Parent engagement has been critical to ensuring the effective implementation of standards. Schools printed English- and Spanish-language posters with the common standards for grades 4, 8, and 12 for every classroom and for all parents. Many parents even hung the posters in

their homes, serving as reminders of what was expected of their children in school. The districts developed a handbook in both English and Spanish called *A Parents' Guide: Your Child's Education and the El Paso Standards for Academic Excellence*. This booklet plainly defines standards in every subject area with examples of the kind of work students need to do.

To further involve parents, schools routinely hold Parent Academies. Each Academy lasts about one month. Teachers, principals and other parents recruit participants. Groups explore questions such as: What is quality work? What is leadership? What are standards and how do they affect your child? What do young people need to know to be successful in the 21st Century? As parents become a part of the learning community through these sessions, their participation in schools increases. Academy facilitators, says Castrejón, believe that every parent has something to offer and must be valued for what he/she brings to the educational process.

What's come of these efforts? Carmen VillaLobos, a parent activist at Ysleta Elementary School says, "Standards clarified everyone's expectations. They created a common language between parents and teachers." Now, she says, everyone knows what the vision for students' education is and how performance is measured. Quality is clearly defined.

In the district's high schools, enrollment in Algebra I and II, Geometry and Chemistry classes has almost doubled. Thousands now take these college "gateway" courses. Importantly, the district has significantly narrowed the achievement gap between ethnic populations, as well.

Parent participation has increased at all levels. For example, Ysleta Elementary parents successfully (continued)

Toolkit:

A. Questions Parents Can Ask About Standards

Standards provide a framework in which parents and PPS chapters can work with districts to help students achieve at higher levels. Here are a set of questions for parents to begin to engage administrators and teachers around this important issue:

- Does the district have a set of published academic or content standards? How are they distributed to parents, to community members, etc.? How do we get a copy?
- Are these standards “translated” into parent-friendly language? (Copies?)
- Does the district have related benchmarks or learning objectives? (Copies?)
- Does the district have performance standards related to the academic standards? (Copies?)
- How are the district’s standards related to the state standards and standardized tests?
- How are teachers now involved in developing curricula and lesson plans related to the district standards?
- Is students’ mastery of standards recorded on the report card? If so, how?
- What role can parents and PPS play in supporting better student achievement of standards?
- How will my child be evaluated? How are grades determined? How are parents kept informed on their students’ progress?

B. Helping Your Child with a Standards-Based Assignment

One of the ways individual parents can help students achieve at higher levels is to talk to their children about assignments they are working on or have completed. The following are questions parents can ask their children to help them improve their class work and ensure they understand what they need to do to achieve to higher levels.

Before the Work Has Been Completed

- What is the assignment? Is it clear to you? If not, how can you get a clearer understanding of the assignment?
- What content and/or performance standard is this assignment related to?
- Is there a scoring guide for this assignment? What do you need to do to get a (3, 4, 5, 6)? What score are you trying to achieve?
- What do you expect to learn from this assignment?

Once the Work Has Been Completed/Graded

- According to the scoring guide, what score do you think this work deserves? Why?
- What might you do to show you know more, that you fully understand the material?
- Is there any additional information or material you need to improve the work?
- When is the revised work due to the teacher?

C. Parent Checklist: What To Look For In A Standards-Based Classroom

When visiting your child’s school or teachers, take the time to look around classrooms. If your schools are implementing standards, classrooms should have many, if not all, of the following:

- Academic or content standards are displayed and are related to the day’s lesson.
- A scoring guide or assessment for the lesson is evident. What students have to do to achieve different grades is easy to understand.
- Multiple examples of student work that meet the standards are visible.
- A variety of resources beyond textbooks are available for students, including books, maps, computers, calculators, etc.
- Homework assignments are displayed.
- Class agenda/activities are on the board.
- Classroom is arranged in a way that allows students to work in groups, as well as individually, so that students learn to work in teams and take responsibility for learning.

(El Paso Equation, continued)

lobbied for a new school at a safer location. Then, dissatisfied with the initial architectural plans, parents sat shoulder-to-shoulder with architects and school administrators to design a state-of-the-art school, fully

wired for technology. Finally, they advocated for and received funding so that every student has a laptop from the school. Now, parents and teachers communicate via e-mail. Parents also monitor the school’s budget to ensure that teachers continue to receive needed staff development.

Simply put, in El Paso clear standards have led to improvement for all students and schools. Honest involvement of parents in the process has been an important factor in this progress. As Myrna Castrejón says, “the heart and soul of education is parent involvement.”



PPS welcomes Missouri. Shown here with National Board member Etta Green Johnson and Jackson chapter vice-president, Joe Bennett, is Sarah Read, founding member of PPS of Columbia, MO. (PHOTO: Brewster Rhoads)



Karen Mapp, executive director of the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston, joins Parents for Public Schools’ National Board. (PHOTO: Brewster Rhoads)

Resources

Below is a list of organizations and materials that can be helpful to parents looking for information about standards and their implementation. We’ve organized the list to cover different stages of standards implementation and the materials/organizations most suited to each stage. Many of the resources are online on web pages. Phone numbers are listed for those who don’t have access to the Internet. Tell them PPS sent you.

A. Creating/Testing the Rigor of Standards

• **Council for Basic Education:** The Council provides technical assistance to states and local districts in the implementation of standards. On their web page, they have a standards presentation kit and a discussion of the development and analysis of standards and assessments. *Council for Basic Education, 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004-1152. Phone: 202-347-4171. Website: www.c-b-e*

• **Achieve Website:** Achieve is an education reform non-profit organization created in 1996 by America’s governors. Its website offers a searchable database of standards from most states in math, English, science, and history/social studies. There is also sample student work and an annual report that documents the progress states have made in setting standards, developing assessments, and implementing accountability systems. *Phone: 1-888-200-0520. Website: www.achieve.org*

• **StandardsWork:** StandardsWork gives technical assistance to states, districts, organizations, and communities that wish to implement standards-driven reform. Its website offers an eight-step action guide for communities and schools implementing standards, in addition to a helpful list of what it deems to be the best state standards in each subject area. *StandardsWork, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: 202-835-2000. Website: www.goalline.org*

B. Implementing Standards

• **The New Standards Project:** Part of the National Center on Education and the Economy, the project provides examples of “higher” standards. On its website—in addition to examples of standards—one can find a parents guide to New Standards in the “Our Products” section. *NCEE, 700 11th Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001. Phone: 202-783-3668. Website: www.ncee.org*

• **The Education Trust:** EdTrust, as it is known, works with policymakers, parents, education professionals, and community and business leaders to improve schools across the coun-

try. The website is a repository of education information, from the impact of standards on professional development to standards-based resources and links. *The Education Trust, 1725 K Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006. Phone: 202-293-1217. Website: www.edtrust.org*

• **National Staff Development Council:** The NSDC focuses on the professional development of teachers and principals as a lever to the improved achievement of schools. *National Staff Development Council, PO Box 240, Oxford, OH 45056. Phone: 513-523-6029. Website: www.nsd.org*

C. Engaging Parents and Teachers Around Standards

• **The Education Trust:** EdTrust staff provides informational workshops about standards for schools and community groups, including school boards and parent organizations. Call to inquire. *See information above.*

• **Edna McConnell Clark Foundation Middle School Engagement Resource Kit:** The Clark Foundation, one of the leading supporters and innovators in standards-based reform, has created a web-based toolkit called “The Middle School Engagement Resources Kit,” which is a collection of tools, materials and supports. These include outlines for meeting agendas, structures for workshops, tips, talking points, articles and links to real people—all of which are intended to help build school and public support for the implementation of middle school standards. *Website: www.middleweb.com/clark/clark.htm*

Also available are two videos funded by Clark and created and distributed by Collaborative Communications Group — “Schools That Learn: High Standards for Teacher and Principal Performance” and “Expecting Success: How Standards Can Raise Student Performance”—that illustrate how teachers, principals, and parents are learning to use standards to increase and monitor student performance. Accompanying the videos are discussion guides for communities. *The Collaborative Communications Group, 1730 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20009. Phone: 202-986-4955. Email: kurtenbach@publicengagement.com*

• **Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform Toolkit:** Cross City has created a toolkit called “Making Good on the Promise: High Standards for All.” This includes a strong video about standards and a number of supporting materials—articles, resource lists, guides—about working with and implementing standards. They are also at work on a Parent Project on standards. *Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 407 South Dearborn, Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60605. Phone: 312-322-4880. Website: www.crosscity.org*