



Academy
for Urban
School
Leadership

Around AUSL

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It's working: AUSL test scores up again

For the fourth year in a row, AUSL schools improved more than the CPS average on the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT), the state standardized test for elementary school students. The scores indicate the percent of students in each school meeting or exceeding the state standard. While we have much work to do, these results are proof that our approach is improving student achievement quickly.

The Harvard School of Excellence, our second turnaround school, had the best improvement with 8.3 percentage point increase in students meeting or exceeding state standards. Two of our training academies also showed great improvement: Dodge Renaissance Academy and National Teachers Academy, with over 7.5 percentage point improvements. In the last three years, Dodge has improved from 25% to 72% and is now above the district average. Sherman, our first turnaround school also showed improvement of 5.3 percentage points, bringing it to 40% from 28% when we took the school over in 2006.

Enjoy our first AUSL Newsletter

We hope you enjoy AUSL's first quarterly newsletter. Many people give to AUSL through their time, or their generous donations. This newsletter is intended to keep you informed about our progress as we take on the hardest work in education.



We now have over 6,000 students enrolled in 11 AUSL schools. We also increased our residency program to 75 future AUSL teachers. It is only through your generous gifts that our program can continue to grow during these difficult financial times. Thank you for your commitment and generosity to our work.

Three new schools join AUSL network

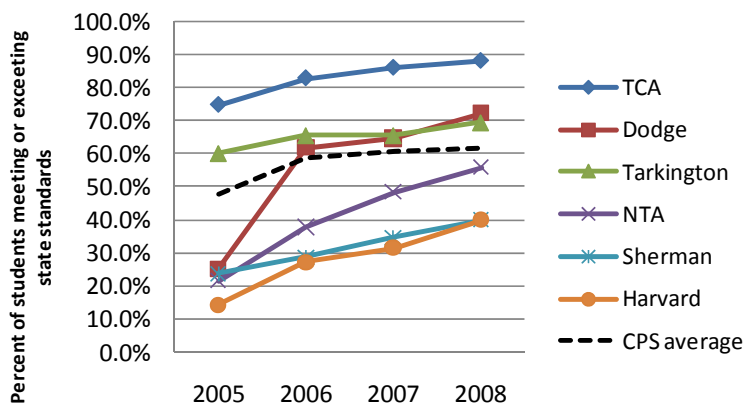
After months of preparation, three new turnaround schools joined the AUSL network this year: the Howe School of Excellence, the Morton School of Excellence (elementary schools) and Orr Academy High School. All three schools are on Chicago's west side.

The new principals of Orr, Howe and Morton spent the last seven months preparing themselves, their staff and faculty, and their communities for the first day of school.

AUSL's turnaround process is a complete transformation of people, programs and place. When the students leave in June, the work on the physical building begins. The same students return in September and are greeted by a new team, new curriculum and new-looking building.

The hiring process began in the spring when the three new principals were announced. They immediately began forming their team through a mix of AUSL graduates, teachers recruited from outside AUSL, and teachers who re-applied for their jobs at the turnaround schools. All of the potential teachers went through a rigorous screening and interviewing process to ensure they understood the special demands of a turnaround school.

AUSL ISAT Results



(Continued on page 4)

AUSL's Mission

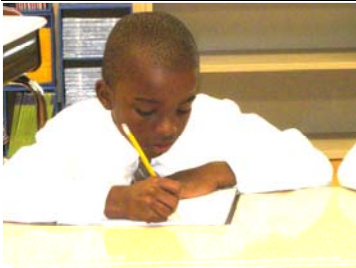
Our mission is to improve student achievement in Chicago's chronically failing schools through our disciplined transformation process, built on a foundation of specially trained AUSL teachers.

Visit our website
www.ausl-chicago.org

New AUSL teacher makes her mark

“There’s always something more you need to teach them. There’s always something more they need to learn.”

*Ashley Gilmore,
1st year teacher*



For Ashley Gilmore’s students, getting their education is serious work.

“I am getting my education!” Four weeks into the new school year at the Howe School of Excellence and you can’t help but notice the transformation. Ashley Gilmore, a new teacher and graduate of AUSL’s residency program, reflected on the obstacles she and her class have overcome in just 28 days. She talks about how her third graders are just starting to trust her, and how she is pushing them hard—to the point that she and her students are exhausted by 3:30. She tells the story of one boy who disrupted class. She had him stand in the hallway while they started their math lesson (his favorite subject). He quietly asked Ms. Gilmore if he could come back and she replied “only if you apologize to me and to your classmates.” He stood in front of the class and said he was sorry. One of his classmates replied “It’s okay. Now come get your education!” That’s the theme in Ms. Gilmore’s class: getting their education. Ms. Gilmore’s day at Howe starts at 6:30am when she comes to school and prepares for the day. She meets her students at 8:45am and leads them to their classroom where they follow the same routine: bookbags go under their desk, homework goes on the left side of the desk and they begin the morning work posted on the board. Between

then and 3:30 dismissal, Ms. Gilmore barely has time to eat a hasty lunch. Twelve hours after she arrives at Howe, she heads home. It is physically and emotionally exhausting, but she loves her class and wouldn’t be anywhere else.

Ms. Gilmore is from the south



Ashley Gilmore with her 3rd graders at Howe.

side of Chicago. She taught at a private school in Englewood after college, but didn’t feel ready to be a teacher. She worked in education non-profits until she became a program manager, working closely with the schools. A little more confident, a little more mature, she realized she wanted to be back in the classroom. She applied to AUSL because she wanted to improve her craft and to serve in a turnaround school.

Ms. Gilmore spent a year at AUSL learning how to manage someone else’s classroom, her mentor teacher’s first graders. Still, there was a bit of shock when she arrived in her classroom at Howe. She found desks, chairs and a small square of carpet, but the walls were bare. She spent a week buying supplies (over \$600 worth), hanging posters, and organizing books, crayons and markers. Now her classroom is full of bright artwork, lessons, and students’ work. When her students showed up on September 2, most did not have any school supplies so she ended up buying notebooks for them too. You get the impression there is nothing Ms. Gilmore won’t do to give her students the education they deserve.

“There’s always something more you need to teach them. There’s always something more they need to learn.” Today was the first time her students wrote a paragraph together and Ms. Gilmore shared that success with her neighbor, Ms. Wilson. “Little steps,” approved Ms. Wilson, a fourth year teacher at Howe. Each AUSL classroom has a teacher who is making little steps every day. If you would like to support our teachers by adopting a class, please contact baltenburg@ausl-chicago.org.

City Year Teams Up with Turnaround Schools



Three AUSL schools (Harvard, Howe, and Morton) are partnering with City Year Chicago this year to support enhanced literacy efforts at each school.

Through the City Year Literacy Initiative, City Year corps members will provide intense, one-one-one, pull-out literacy tutoring during the school day. Three teams of corps members are trained to accurately evaluate a student’s skill level and



tutor them accordingly so the child makes the most progress possible. City Year will also facilitate after-school programs and provide a leadership development program.

The Chicago site is part of the City Year national network. Their vision is that one day, a year of service will become an opportunity for and common expectation of every young person.

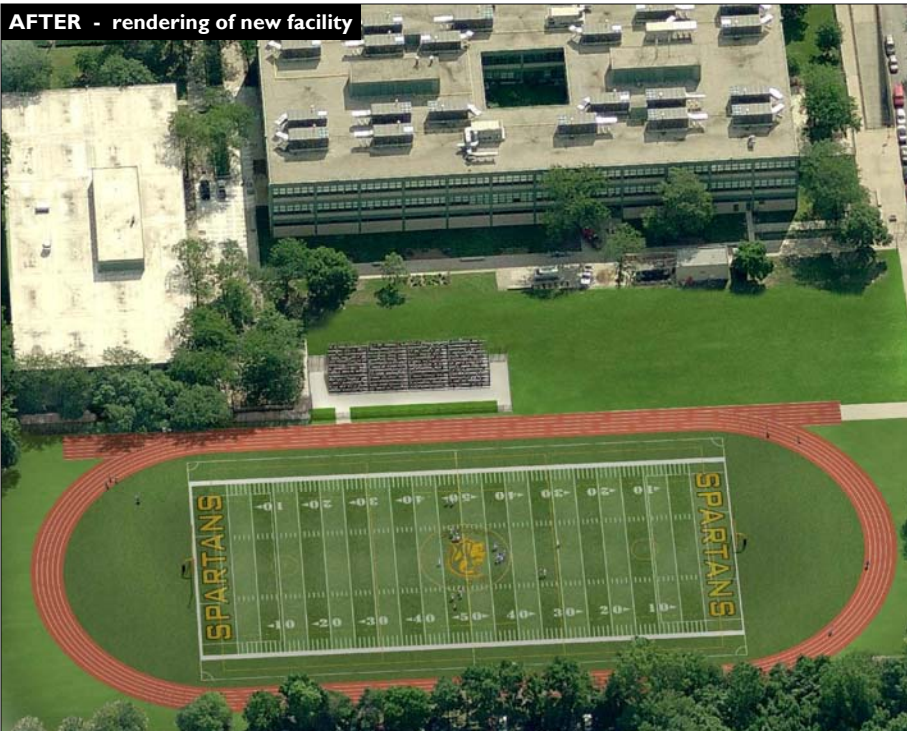
Private donors make new athletic facility possible



Thanks to private donors teaming up with the City and Park District, AUSL raised over \$2.4 million to upgrade the Orr Academy High School athletic facility. The new field will be artificial turf and will be lined for football, lacrosse and soccer, making it ideal for year-round sports. The athletic facility will also include the only regulation, all-weather track in the neighborhood. Construction on the facility began in early September and will be completed in late November, while the track will be completed in the spring.

“This new facility signals to the students at Orr that times are changing for the better.”

--Don Feinstein



We are grateful for generous donations from Bruce and Diana Rauner, the Pritzker Foundation, Mr & Mrs. Michael L. Keiser, Brian and Kelly Swette as well as public funds from the City and Park District made the new facility a reality. This project signals to Orr students and the community that AUSL is willing to invest in their future. “This project clearly demonstrates what can happen when city and wonderful, civic-minded individuals work together on behalf of the city’s students,” said AUSL Executive Director, Don Feinstein.

Motorola Employees Volunteer at Howe

Over 40 volunteers from long-time partner Motorola dedicated nearly 200 hours of volunteer service to the Howe School of Excellence on September 18. Teams of employees completed eight projects to improve the environment around the school.

AUSL & Motorola

The Motorola Foundation has partnered with AUSL since 2004 and currently supports math and science residents. We are grateful for the Foundation’s support and the growing multi-faceted relationship between our schools and Motorola employees.



Motorola employees high-five students at Howe during a break from their landscaping work.



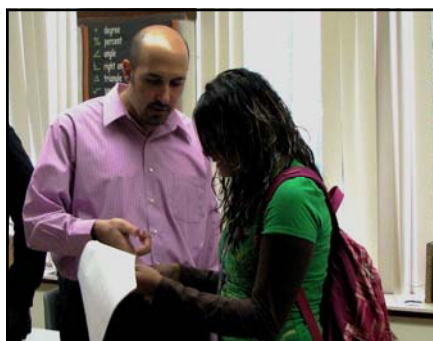
Over 40 employees from Motorola helped mulch, plant and clean up the front entrance at the Howe School of Excellence.



Thank you Motorola!



Name: Ariel White
 Hometown: Chicago, IL
 Placement: The Chicago Academy
 Grade/Subject: Fifth Grade
 Undergraduate: B.A. Elementary Education, Northern Illinois University
 Masters Degree Program: University of Illinois at Chicago (Golden Apple)
 Additional Certification: Seeking Reading Endorsement for K-9
 Why AUSL? *"AUSL starts at the root of the problem and finds people who want to get into the profession; trains them to be the best teacher they can be; puts them in schools that need good teachers; and changes students lives - academically, socially, and emotionally."*



Name: George Sour
 Hometown: Melrose Park, IL
 Placement: Chicago Academy High School
 Grade/Subject: Freshman - Algebra
 Undergraduate: B.S. Accounting, - DePaul University
 Masters Degree Program: National-Louis University
 Additional Certification: Seeking Middle School Endorsement
 Why AUSL? *"Because of the talent AUSL produces. The support system in place for the talent is unmatched."*

Do you know someone who would be a great teacher?

AUSL is always looking for talent. We are recruiting 85 new residents for our 2009-2010 training year. If you know someone who would be a great teacher, please let them know about us. Application deadlines are **December 15, 2008, February 15, and March 15, 2009.** Please check www.ausl-chicago.org for information session dates and locations or contact Jennifer White at jwhite@ausl-chicago.org.

You can help!

While most of our funding comes from Chicago Public Schools, AUSL relies on private donations for much of our programming. We raise private funds to cover each resident stipend of \$32,000 and for school programs in arts, music, dance and sports. For every dollar raised for AUSL, over \$0.90 goes into our residency or school programs. If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to AUSL, please send your donation to AUSL, 3400 N. Austin Ave, Chicago, IL 60634 or contact Bridget Altenburg at baltenburg@ausl-chicago.org. Your donation is tax deductible. On behalf of the children of Chicago, thank you!

AUSL opens three new turnaround schools

(Continued from page 1)

While the hiring of the new staff and faculty was the most important and most time-consuming part of the turnaround planning, the principals also faced the challenge of managing complete renovations of their new schools. Howe, especially required a great deal of work to make the building safe and inviting to students.

The new school staff and faculty prepared for the first day of school together through a five week professional development program. They agreed to the standards each of them would follow, including uniforms, hallway behavior and student discipline. They also built relationships in the community through meetings with local organizations and businesses and even a community walk to remind families about the first day of school. Many of the new staff and faculty were able to meet their students and their families for the first time at a back to school picnic in August.

On September 2, returning students

at Howe and Morton were led into their classrooms for the first time by their teach-

ers, quickly learning that misbehaving would not be tolerated by this new team. By the second day of school the students

were already used to the new routine.

Orr Academy High School is one of two high school turnarounds this year. CPS is managing the turnaround of Harper High School. Orr faced different challenges as the previous three small schools in the building were consolidated into one school with 1,183 students.

"We're excited to bring our whole school transformation model for school change to all three schools," said Don Feinstein, executive director of AUSL. This school year marks the first time that AUSL has operated more than one school turnaround in a school year (in addition to the first high school turnaround AUSL has operated).



The staff and faculty at Orr participate in a Back to School community walk to remind the families in the neighborhood about the first day of school.