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The Role of Social Capital in Academic Success:
A Case Study of the ACI Chicago Scholars Program

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ABSTRACT

Although numerous reports and investigations point to the ineffectiveness of inner-city schools in helping their students--who are likely to be poor and people of color--to receive a quality education, some often-overlooked students are excelling. This paper investigates the factors that affect the academic success of low-income, high-achieving students of color in such schools, using social capital as a theoretical framework. Secondary literature review and case studies (including grade analysis, surveys, and interviews) of 29 Chicago Public High School students who have been selected to participate in the ACI Chicago Scholars Program reveal that students who excel have support systems and a network of relations, in the family, community, school, and among peers. They are those students to whom attention is given through channels such as tracking and magnet schools, those students with access to resources, and those of whom much is expected (both from self and others). Preliminary results indicate that although some Chicago Scholars are struggling in high school, the majority, with support from school and family, seem well-prepared to continue their record of academic success and to attend college. The Chicago Scholars Program (designed to provide high school mentoring and subsequent college scholarships), while theoretically functioning to serve many various social capital needs of the students, has had difficulties in doing so, primarily because of organizational and subcontracting complications.

INTRODUCTION

Of any age group in the United States, today's youngsters have the highest rate of poverty. A very high percentage of these poor youngsters are people of color, and nearly half of all black[1] children are poor (Strickland and Ascher 1992). These poor black children, along with their Latino/Latina counterparts, are becoming increasingly concentrated in urban ghettos (St. John and Miller 1995; Strickland and Ascher 1992). For instance, 42 percent of Chicago's black children are poor, and 71 percent of these children live in high-poverty areas (cited in Strickland and Ascher 1992). Additionally, in the decade following 1980, the number of ghetto tracts in Chicago increased 35 percent, and the overall poverty rate in these tracts rose from 33 to 46 percent (St. John and Miller 1995).

This concentration of poverty, especially affecting people of color, undoubtedly has great effects upon the quality of education inner-city children receive as well as upon their ability to make use of the opportunities that they do have. In Chicago--the third largest school system in the United States--nearly 70 percent of the over 400,000 children in the public schools come from impoverished families, and the schools are nearly 90 percent nonwhite (Boaz 1991; Chicago Panel on School Policy 1996; Strickland and Ascher 1992). Vander Weele (1994) writes that the number of Chicago's students in the early 1990s who came from low-income families was approximately between 70 and 80 percent. Much has been written on these factors and on the state of education in inner cities, as well as on how to educate more effectively the youth living there (see Boaz 1991; Borman and Spring 1984; Flaxman 1973; Gottlieb and Ramsey 1967; Hummel

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[1] In this paper, the terms "black" and "African-American" will be used interchangeably.

and Nagle 1973; Lightfoot 1978; Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1990; Stromquist 1994; U.S. Department of Education 1987).

While most analyses agree that the "future of inner-city children and youth hinges on the quality of their schooling and the development of broad competencies that empower them to fully participate in 21st-century America" (Wang and Gordon 1994:x), the picture of these inner-city schools, painted by innumerable studies and reports, is often bleak. For example, while the Illinois high school graduation rate is in excess of 80 percent, in Chicago it has consistently hovered around 50 or 60 percent. In the early 1980s, a study of the Chicago Public Schools reported a dropout rate in excess of 40 percent, with blacks and Latinos/as having the highest rates (45 percent and 47 percent, respectively.) (Chicago Panel on Public School Finances 1985). These findings have been confirmed over and over in the years since then. Summing up their study, the researchers declared that the Chicago Public School System was essentially operating a two-tiered system, in which dropout-prone students were funneled into inner-city black and Latino/a schools. Furthermore, another report, this one in 1987, documented that over half of the Chicago Public Schools scored in the lowest 1 percent of schools nationwide on ACTs (college entrance exams); nearly 60 percent of this lowest tier was occupied by Chicago schools. Only seven of 64 schools' scores were above the tenth percentile (Hess 1991). Later data show that nearly two-thirds of the Chicago high schools fell in the bottom one percent of ACT scores in the nation; only two of the 64 Chicago high schools surpassed the national average (Lane Technical and Whitney Young) (Vander Weele 1994).

Nonstatistical data are often as grim, pointing to the inequality and ineffectiveness of urban schools in helping students to achieve (or enter higher education). In 1973, Rist wrote that urban schools were responsible for perpetuating class systems and maintaining inequalities. Part of this stems from unequal distribution of resources, which can be complicated by overworked staff and coupled with the life circumstances of the students. Because state aid to school districts is generally calculated by average daily attendance and because attendance is often very poor in areas of urban poverty, these school districts often receive less money in comparison to suburban schools (Strickland and Ascher 1992). This translates into less resources and supplies and poorer facilities. Other difficulties faced by schools, such as lack of funds and enthusiastic teachers and administration, may prevent the schools from providing the support that their students need (Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994). In addition, children and adolescents living in persistent poverty may adopt coping strategies which shield them from poverty but also prevent them from attaining academic success (Ensminger and Slusarcick 1992). Oftentimes, students living in problem-plagued urban areas lack enthusiasm for school, work, and the future (Bettis 1996). Therefore, these schools, possibly plagued with innumerable problems, may be unable to supply those students who manage to survive the rigors of these high schools with the information they need to enter or even apply for higher education. If students do enter higher education, they are often handicapped by the inferior education they have received in respect to their more advantaged suburban and rural peers.

Much research has focused on such failures of inner-city schools to provide the quality of education, the support, and the resources to allow children to succeed

academically. Research, journalism, and other forms of media have tended to highlight the problems of inner-city education. This preoccupation with failure, however, has made us overlook the successes of inner-city schools. Therefore, research is lacking on high achievers in these schools, and the importance of focusing on them has been lost. But, it is important to examine "success stories," to find out what factors are influential in the lives of high-achieving high school students and to use this knowledge to help more students excel.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

One program which has attempted to focus on some of these talented, high potential high school students is the ACI Chicago Scholars Program, established to mentor these students and provide them with access to higher education. In order to examine this program, the present study takes a two-pronged approach. One, it shall look at what factors influence academic success (primarily) for the student population that this program is intended to target (that is, low-income, inner-city students of color). The major framework for doing so shall be the sociological construct of social capital, which emphasizes the importance and significance of support systems and networks of relationships. This examination will focus on families and communities, including issues of low-income families, immigration, race/ethnicity, family cohesion, family size, mother's employment, schools, tracking, teachers, peers, and students' personal traits. Secondly, through the use of qualitative and quantitative measures, the paper shall determine how (and if) these ideas relate to the lives of the 29 Chicago Scholars. Finally, the paper shall examine whether the Chicago Scholars are achieving in high school and

how the Chicago Scholars Program is configured to create social capital for the program's students.

THE ACI/CHICAGO SCHOLARS PROGRAM: GOALS AND SET-UP

In 1996, the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) in coordination with the Chicago Public School district announced the beginning of the Chicago Scholars Program, a "pre-college enrichment and college scholarship program enabling low income students from Chicago to attend private liberal arts colleges and universities in Illinois." The stated purpose of the program was two-fold: to establish a high school mentoring program and to provide college scholarships for the students. The program would provide "an outstanding educational opportunity for students to reach their full potential as scholars in the classroom and as citizens of their respective communities." (1996-1997 Participation Agreement)

ACI cites multiple reasons as to why its schools are particularly suited for this type of program. ACI institutions boast a high four-year graduation rate: 51 percent as compared to 26 percent at state institutions (1994 data). In addition, they have a 25 percent higher graduation rate for African-American students than the Illinois average. Their low faculty-student ratio (13:1) ensures that students have access to faculty and that class sizes are small. Concentrating not only on academics, these schools aim to provide liberal arts knowledge with the learning of effective communication and problem solving skills and the ability to work in groups as well as personal character, leadership, respect for others, and responsibility to community. Thus, the ACI director, Jerry Fuller, has stated, "ACI colleges and universities are uniquely suited to working with inner-city

students because these campuses are smaller communities of scholars with nurturing

environments that help ensure students' success."

In order to be nominated for the program, a student was to meet the following criteria:

completion of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in the Chicago Public Schools,

attainment of an overall (minimum) 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) and 95 percent

attendance record, and recommendation from a school principal, counselor, and teacher.

Preference was also to be given to those with high scores (some records say fiftieth

percentile, some say eightieth) on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The students--all

of whom should have been low-income students of color--were selected by the Chicago

Public School system, which was also responsible for providing tutoring. Accordingly,

the students were selected from schools with tutoring programs already in place. In

selecting the students, attempts at gender balance were made. The racial/ethnic

composition of the final group (29 students) is 48 percent (14 students) African-

American, 41 percent (12 students) Asian-American, seven percent (two students)

Latino/a, and three percent (one student) Native American (see table 1).[2]

Table 1. Distribution of Chicago Scholars According to Various Demographic Characteristics.

	Number (n = 29)	Percent	Valid Percent
Sex			
Female	15	52	52
Male	14	48	48

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[2] While the original program goal was 30 students, only 29 actually started the program, as one of the original students moved out of Chicago during the first semester of high school. This student, according to tutor Masha Shtyenberg, had significant family problems (ACI Chicago Scholars Program 1997).

Table 1, Continued. Distribution of Chicago Scholars According to Various Demographic Characteristics.

	Number (n = 29)	Percent	Valid Percent
Race/ethnicity			
African-American	14	48	48
Asian-American	12	41	41
Latino/Latina	2	7	7
Native American	1	3	3
Number of Siblings			
0-1	7	24	28
2-3	14	48	56
4-5	4	14	16
Missing	4	14	---
Place within siblings			
Oldest	9	31	39
Middle	7	24	30
Youngest	6	21	26
Only	1	3	4
Missing	6	21	---
Number in Family			
3-4	12	41	48
5-6	10	34	40
7 or more	3	10	12
Missing	4	14	---
Parental Status			
Married	19	66	79
Divorced/Separated/ Not living together	5	17	21
Missing	5	17	---
Income			
Under poverty level	10	34	38
Working poor	3	10	12
Above working poor	13	45	50
Missing	3	10	---

In actuality, the conditions specified as requirements for program participation were

not met by all of the students. GPA calculations were based upon math and reading

grades. While the students' mean grammar math GPA was 3.34, only 90 percent (26 out of 29) had at least the required 3.0.[3] In reading, 79 percent (23 out of 29) had at least a 3.0. The mean GPA was 3.41. For attendance rates, 82 percent (22 of 27) were accepted with 95 percent or higher attendance in sixth grade, 82 percent (23 of 28) with at least 95 percent attendance in seventh grade, and 89 percent (25 of 28) with at least 95 percent attendance in eighth grade (the mean attendance percentages were 96.82, 96.54, and 98.18, respectively). All students were above fiftieth percentile on their math scores on the ITBS, and only one student was below eightieth percentile. The mean percentile was 87.62. On the other hand, while 27 of 29 (93 %) students were above fiftieth percentile on the reading score, only nine (31 %) were above eightieth percentile. The mean percentile was 70.48. Although the program professed to desire to serve low-income students, of the 28 for whom family income data are available, only ten are under the federal poverty level, three more come from families considered to be working poor (150 % of the federal poverty level), and two more are unknown (without family size information). Thus, while the mean family income for the 28 reporting families was $23,707, quite a few families were well above the poverty line (up to over $80,000 per year).[4] Of the nominated students, 17 of 28 (61 %) do not meet requirements (3.0 GPA, calculated by three years of grammar math and reading grades, 95 % overall grammar school attendance, fiftieth percentile on the ITBS math and reading sections, and low

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[3] See Appendix B for a table listing n's, means, and standard deviations for the calculations throughout this paper.

[4] Even though not all of the Chicago Scholars are low-income, the majority of this paper will focus on low-income, inner-city students of color, the group the program is designed to serve.

family income). If the working poor are not considered "low-income," then three more

students do not meet the requirements, totaling 71 percent overall (with one student's

information incomplete). (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Students Meeting Conditions Specified as Requirements for Nomination.

	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
	(n = 29)*		
Completed sixth, seventh, eighth grades	29	100	100
3.0 math GPA	26	90	90
3.0 reading GPA	23	79	79
95 percent attendance			
Sixth grade	22 (n = 27)	76	81
Seventh grade	23 (n = 28)	79	82
Eighth grade	25 (n = 28)	86	89
Recommended by school faculty	29	100	100
ITBS			
Fiftieth percentile math	29	100	100
Eightieth percentile math	28	97	97
Fiftieth percentile reading	27	93	93
Eightieth percentile reading	9	31	31
Low Income			
Poverty level	10	34	37
Working poor	3	10	11
Unknown	2	7	---
Students of color	29	29	29

* Except when specified in parentheses

In order to challenge and motivate the nominated students to achieve their full potential, the students and their parent(s)/guardian(s)[5] signed a performance standard contract. This contract stated that in order to receive the full-tuition and fees scholarship to the assigned ACI school for eight semesters (12 quarters), the student had to have a minimum ACT score of 21, a minimum 3.0 GPA, and a 95 percent attendance record throughout the four years of high school. The student also had to take the following college preparatory classes: four years of English, at least three years of math, at least three years of history or social science, and at least two years of biological or physical science. Students were also encouraged to take foreign language, computer literacy, and fine and performing arts classes.

Responsibilities and obligations were divided among the students, colleges/universities, ACI, and the Chicago Public Schools. Selected students were randomly assigned to one of the 13 (of 24) ACI colleges/universities which had decided to participate in the program. After choosing how many students it could financially support, each of these schools was responsible for sponsoring programs to familiarize students with college life. The ACI office was responsible for producing a newsletter and for sponsoring activities, for instance, a summer academy held at Illinois Wesleyan University which had classes on such topics as the physics of basketball and Egyptian hieroglyphics. These summer institutes (week-long camps at one of the colleges/universities) were scheduled for each summer. Students were responsible for

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[5] In this paper, "parent" or "parents" will be used as terminology, even though the author recognizes that many children may live with grandparents or other guardians (as well as single parents). Of the Chicago Scholars, two live with extended families (one in addition to biological parents).

turning in family income/tax forms and their quarterly report cards. If they received below Bs in any core course (English, math, science, or social studies), students were required to attend tutoring. The tutoring program was supposed to be set up through the public schools, but problems with the district's Sylvan contract meant that the students did not necessarily receive tutoring. The tutoring was then subcontracted out of the ACI office. Attendance at the tutoring sessions that were held was sporadic (meaning that not all students were fulfilling their obligations): in the spring of 1997, 17 of 29 students (59 %) attended any sessions, but only 14 (48 %) attended at least half of the sessions. The mean attendance rate was 34.5 percent. For the summer tutoring, 12 of 29 students (41 %) attended, with only three (10 %) attending at least half of the sessions. The mean attendance rate was 17 percent.

All of the above programs and responsibilities were intended by ACI to provide a powerful motivation for the students to take high school seriously. They also fulfill another purpose. In a study in 1988, the William T. Grant Foundation stated that it was particularly important for low-income students to consider college before their senior year and to understand the processes involved with applying to and achieving in college. Because the ACI program focuses students on college starting at the beginning of high school, it is fulfilling this process. In interviews with the students, it is evident that they have learned a great deal about what college is, how to apply, what to expect, and about many other aspects of college life. Students stated that they try harder because they now know that colleges have high expectations. One student wrote, "the program gave me a lot of information earlier than if I hadn't been in the program, like visiting the college, and the program told me what to expect about college and how to choose a college."

Thus, it appears that the program is successful in preparing these students to apply for and attend college.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

James S. Coleman (1988:S98) writes that "social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible." Social capital consists of the structure of relations both between people and through social structures and additionally how these structures facilitate the actions of the individuals within them. Accordingly, social capital incorporates both individuals (and their traits) and the social contexts in which they are embedded (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995). Social capital thus involves obligations, information channels, norms, and sanctions. It is a resource that can be drawn on or accessed, especially when needed to achieve goals or interests (Boisjoly, Duncan, and Hofferth 1995).

An Example: Social Capital Within Families

Coleman (1988) posits that most studies regard "family background" as one variable. But, he argues, family background should be divided into at least three different components: financial capital, human capital, and social capital. Financial capital is generally measured by family income or wealth, as well as physical resources. Human capital is "created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them act in new ways." (Coleman 1988:S100). This is generally measured by parents' education. Social capital involves relations between children and parents, between children and their siblings, and additionally between the family and its community. However, much of the literature on the background variables that affect how and what

children learn in the educational process ignore social capital. Social capital, Coleman contends, is nevertheless extremely important in a child's intellectual development, a conclusion which is supported by Furstenberg and Hughes (1995), who found that social capital can help disadvantaged youth. (Marjoribanks's (1991) study of the effects of social and human capital on educational attainment also confirms these relationships.) Focusing solely on financial or human capital cannot capture the full view of how families help shape the lives (in an educational context) of their children.

In addition to examining these three factors, the interplay between them, especially between human and social capital, is particularly important: "if the human capital possessed by parents is not complemented by social capital embodied in family relations, it is irrelevant to the child's educational growth that the parent has a great deal, or a small amount, of human capital." (Coleman 1988:S110) Social capital, that is, relations, gives children access to the parents' human capital. This access depends on both adult presence and strong relations, which involve time commitments. Therefore, supportive parents build social capital within the family (Coleman 1988). This parent-child connectivity is associated, for example, with higher probabilities of graduating from high school (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996).

PARENTS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL:
HOW FAMILIES INFLUENCE HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Parents are likely the most influential people in high school students' lives, even more so than friends or schools. For example, a study of black adolescents by DeSantis, Ketterlinus, and Youniss (1990) found that these students cared more about their parents'

perceptions of their academic abilities than about their friends' perceptions. Peng (1994) hypothesizes that family support has a stronger impact upon students than does their school environment. The ACI Chicago Scholars Program (1997) also recognizes the significance of parents and families upon students: "Family support is important to the Scholars. It is their parents, siblings, and relations who encourage them to continue to achieve." In a survey of the Chicago Scholars taken in August 1997[6], a large number of students identified their families as being very important. In defining success, one student wrote that having your "family support you in what you do" was crucial. Another student reported that it was her parents who encouraged her to work harder by emphasizing that "knowledge is from cradle to grave." Because of the strong relationships and interactions between parents and students and the subsequent influences these have on students' actions and perceptions, parents constitute a very prominent form of social capital.

One way parents create this social capital is through fostering intellectual growth, including the ways in which parents utilize financial, human, and social capital. This occurs partially through providing physical resources, such as access to age-appropriate learning materials. Homes which have educational resources available (such as books, newspapers, or a place for students to study) have children who succeed academically (see Downey 1994; Greenberg and Davidson 1972). This type of environment fosters academic growth and enhances behavior conducive to learning. In addition to these

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[6] ACI, through a subcontracted firm, conducted student surveys (biographical sketches) in August 1997. Additionally, the author of this paper conducted interviews with eighteen students in March and April 1998.

financial capital resources, human and social capital in the form of the provision of

parental interpersonal resources are key, especially the ways and extent to which a family

is able to create social capital from its human capital. Many facets of child-parent

interaction are associated with high academic achievement, including discussing school

with children, making plans, helping with homework, monitoring activities, reading

together, and parental involvement with school (see Downey 1994; see Reynolds and

Gill 1994). High levels of these activities and involvements facilitate achievement by

creating more positive attitudes toward school, improving homework habits, and reducing

absenteeism (Strickland and Cooper 1987; Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994; see also

Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996). For most of the Chicago Scholars, good relationships

with parents provide a large amount of social capital. The parents of the Chicago

Scholars, according to the students, encourage their children to succeed through methods

such as the above--one student even named this parental interaction and guidance as the

reason why he excelled more than other students. In other studies, however, parental

help on homework or parental attendance at school conferences was not related to

positive outcomes, perhaps because parents tend to help lower-achieving students in these

manners (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; see also Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996).

An additional factor that many studies have consistently found to be related to

achievement is an authoritative style of parenting, which combines warmth and firmness

with a sense of democracy (for examples, see Christenson, Rounds, and Gorney 1992;

Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown 1992). Parents who use this style provide goal

directions and management skills and foster self-reliance and independence while still

exercising firm guidance. Parents of high achievers also use rational discipline and have a greater degree of structure and orderliness in the home (Greenberg and Davidson 1972).

In addition to physical resources and interpersonal relations, high parental expectations for children are also related to positive outcomes (Allen 1980; Astone and McLanahan 1991; Bryk, Lee and Smith 1990; Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; Strickland and Cooper 1987; Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994; see also Christenson, Rounds, and Gorney's 1992 and Seginer's 1983 review articles). High achieving children tend to come from families which have high expectations for their students and which set standards and goals. In most studies, parents who hold these types of attitudes are themselves more highly educated.

Low-Income Families: Other Factors

When discussing low-income families of color, however, stereotypes abound regarding the environments and attitudes that people of this background hold. It is often believed that the students from these families do not (and cannot) succeed academically, partially because their parents do not hold high expectations for their children and are not involved with their schooling. Furthermore, these children are not expected to attend college because they have not succeeded and do not have the resources. Multiple studies, however, refute all of these notions. In one study, for instance, low-income parents of high achievers demonstrated significantly more concern for education and more awareness of their children's strengths and weaknesses than the parents of low achievers (Greenberg and Davidson 1972). The research of Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) concluded that parents with low SES are not less involved with their children's schooling than other parents. The data from the Chicago Scholars also refute the idea that low-

income, people of color cannot succeed academically (by the very fact that these students have already shown academic potential). However, categorical analysis of Chicago Scholars' data appeared to show that students with low family incomes (below $15,000 per year) were likely to have dropped in GPA from grammar to high school.[7] For those with high incomes (at least $30,000 per year), there were no differences in changes in GPA.

Studies and examples such as some of the above demonstrate that low-income students of color do have families which are involved with their education and that they can achieve. These students who achieve do not confirm the stereotypes that college attendance is not a possibility. Baker and Vélez (1996) have found that the importance of SES is declining in relation to academic ability, although young adults from low-income families are still less likely to enter college directly from high school than their counterparts from middle- and high-income families. They found that SES was **not** important for the most academically talented students. Further, for students with similar academic aptitude, lower-class students of color actually had higher rates of college attendance than their white counterparts. They also state, however, that for economic and psychological reasons, African-Americans are less likely to borrow to pay for their children's higher education. Danziger (1983) also explains that high achievers are less likely to be deterred by the high cost of education. Similarly, Rosenbaum (1980) writes that social class is less influential on the fulfillment of college plans than upon the

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[7] When referencing Chicago's primary grades, I shall use the term "grammar school" since this is how they are referred to in Chicago. When writing of secondary literature, "elementary school" will be used.

formation of such plans. Therefore, it may be that a family's low income is not as important a determinant in high academic achievement and college attendance as is believed.

Looking at specific studies of low-income students of color provides further examples and clarifications that refute traditional stereotypes and also demonstrates ways in which these families and students may differ from their more economically privileged counterparts. In a study of low-income, black families in Chicago, Reynolds and Gill (1994) found that parents generally had positive attitudes toward their children's schooling, had high expectations for their children, and were moderately involved in the educational process (measured by satisfaction with their child's school, attitudes toward visiting school, the importance of school, and whether they liked to help their child with homework). Parents also expected their children to do well: 97 percent stated that they believed that their child would graduate from high school and 68 percent reported that their child would go beyond high school. Parental expectations and satisfaction with school quality were significantly associated with school achievement. Further, the expectations of these low-income parents may be a greater influence on their children than the expectations of middle- or upper-income parents because these lower-income parents have less resources and opportunities upon which to draw outside of the home, making the experiences and attitudes of the home more important.

On the other hand, several studies (see Reynolds and Gill 1994; Seginer 1983) report that while lower-income parents do have high expectations for their children (similar to those of middle-income parents), their behaviors may not be as consistent with these expectations. Monetary constraints and associated stress may make behaviors conducive

to educational achievement less likely. The effects of child-parent interactions (see above) appear to decline over time and to be less in low-income families, perhaps due to differences in resources, stress, or researcher techniques (see Reynolds and Gill 1994). In their study, Reynolds and Gill (1994) reported that nearly all parents provided positive encouragement for their children's school progress. Parental involvement in school, however, was considerably varied, with only 14 percent of the parents participating in school activities more than once per week but with nearly 50 percent participating up to three times per month. These parents also varied in their involvement in other academically related activities, such as taking children to a museum or zoo. Therefore, while such studies do demonstrate that low-income parents have high expectations and thus create social capital, the restraints of financial capital and related stress may prevent them from acting upon their beliefs to the extent that other families do.

Another study of inner-city African-American students further contradicts stereotypes as well as provides a closer look at the structure and characteristics of the families of high-achieving students. In an effort to determine what factors allowed such students to succeed, Clark (1983) researched the lives of some high-achieving students and found that their family lives were characterized by frequent parent-child dialogue, encouragement of academics, well-established norms, and monitoring of child behavior (including setting limits). The parents believed that they should accept responsibility for their children's educations, which translated into parental efforts to help by instilling good study habits and maintaining discipline. In addition, the personal traits of parents and students played off of each other to facilitate academic achievement and create social capital, allowing the family members to act as a support group for each other. The

parents of academically successful students had goal direction, management skills, self-reliance, and independence while the high-achieving students had high self-regard, a reliable support network, independence, autonomy, and a willingness to take on responsibility. Thus, Clark asserted that it was the family's overall quality of life, rather than its composition or status, that would determine whether the children were prepared to succeed academically. In addition, he found that children were most effective in school when their home and school environments were compatible and reinforcing.

Like the high-achieving students of Clark's study, parental support and encouragement are a large part of the lives of Chicago Scholars. In general, the parents of Chicago Scholars, according to the students, have high expectations for their children, including getting good grades (the most commonly reported in March and April of 1998--39 %), doing their best, attending college, doing the things that the parents were unable to do, and getting good jobs. Again, the families of these students provided a home life ripe for social capital development by holding high expectations and engaging in verbal praise and dialogue. All of the students interviewed in March and April of 1998 reported that their parents praised or rewarded them for accomplishments at least some of the time, with many students reporting that they were praised very often. Of 18 students, only one (6 %) reported that his/her parents did not encourage independence and self-reliance; of these 18 students, 10 (56 %) reported that they were encouraged to be independent and self reliant "a great deal." According to the students, nearly all of their parents (16 of 18 or 89 %) discussed education with their children, and 15 of the 18 students (83 %) said education was a fairly frequent topic of conversation in the household. The most common subjects of this conversation were college and high school, although some

students also discussed specific schoolwork, college major, or job choices with their families.

However, interviews with the students did reveal some discrepancies between this population and the findings of previous research. While research has shown that parents of high-achieving students are involved with the students' schools, most of the Chicago Scholars (12 of 18 or 67 %) reported that their parents were not involved with their schools. However, four (22 %) reported that their parents were very involved and two (11 %) reported some parental involvement. The only differences among the students appear to be that those with very high grades (GPAs above 4.0) are more likely to have parent-school involvement (43 % versus 20 % for those with GPAs between 3.0 and 3.9).[8] Unlike the findings of the Grant Foundation (1988) which were that nearly 90 percent of high school seniors agreed with their parents on the value of education, Chicago Scholars did not necessarily agree with their parents on this issue. They were less likely to value education as much as their parents. In interviews, six of 18 (33 %) said that they valued education the same as their parents, three (17 %) said that they valued it more, and nine (50 %) said that they valued education less than their parents. Those students with very high grades (GPAs above 4.0) seem slightly more inclined to value education more or the same as their parents than the other students. Of those students who said that they valued education less than their parents, many students said that they were pushed too hard by their parents or that forcing education had made it less

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[8] The Chicago Public School system operates on a 4.0 scale, but honors and advanced placement classes operate on a 5.0 scale. Since many Chicago Scholars are in these accelerated classes, some have GPAs above 4.0.

appealing. Others said that their parents did not feel that they (the students) tried hard enough in school. In some of these instances, it seems that the strong encouragement of parents backfired.

While studies and interviews with Chicago Scholars have demonstrated that low-income students of color do have access to social capital, its forms may be different from the social capital forms of those from more economically privileged backgrounds. Moreover, the forms of social capital possessed by low-income students may not be the types of skills and resources for which schools look. The language skills that these students may develop are not the speech patterns schools desire or consider standard (typified by the "Ebonics" debate). Students may be adept at maneuvering and relating in an extended family, but most schools are structured to deal with and relate to a nuclear family and do not have the capacity to deal with both the strengths and difficulties of other living situations. Therefore, these students may be at a disadvantage when attending school because the strengths and maturities that they have gained in their families and communities are devalued or ignored by the school staff (Hess 1995). The staff may try to force students to imitate their more "successful" counterparts from higher income families or try to force the students to abandon their own views and adopt middle-class (and/or white) values and traditions. Ogbu (1978) explains this as cultural conflict, in which one culture differs from the mainstream in values, attitudes, and learning styles.

The cultures of families may also impact their sources and amount of social capital. Although in their nationally representative study Boisjoly, Duncan, and Hofferth (1995) found that nine out of ten families had access to social capital, the amount--as measured by perceived access to time and money help from friends and family--differs among

various subgroups. Families with a less-educated or older household head had less social capital, while families in very poor neighborhoods had more, primarily through friendship networks. This finding contrasts strongly with previous research, which has stated that physical and social isolation characterize inner-cities (see Strickland and Ascher 1992). Again, this study breaks stereotypical notions of low-income families.

Immigrant Families: Posing Still More Questions

Another family formation that merits examination is that of immigrants. In the past century, Chicago was the gateway to the second largest immigration wave in the United States (Vander Weele 1994). Vander Weele (1994) reports that in the early 1990s between 12 and 14 percent of the Chicago Public School students had limited English proficiency, and Hess (1991) reports that 80 different languages were spoken by the students. The Chicago Scholars population reflects this diversity (see Table 3). Of the 29 Chicago Scholars, 15 (52 %) are from immigrant families. Eight of these students (53 %) are second-generation; seven (47 %) are first-generation (although they all came to the United States before adolescence and some before school-age). Of these 15 students, eight (53 %) are bilingual in the home, one (7 %) is trilingual, two (13 %) speak no English in the home, two more (13 %) speak only English, and two (13 %) are unknown. Thirteen of these families are from various parts of Asia, and speak languages ranging from Cantonese to Vietnamese to Korean. Two more families are from Mexico.

Table 3. Chicago Scholars from Immigrant Families.

	Number (n = 29)	Percent	Valid Percent
First generation	8	28	28
Second generation	7	24	24
Total	15	52	52

Table 3, Continued. Chicago Scholars from Immigrant Families.

	Number (n = 29)	Percent	Valid Percent
Language of the home (of the 15 immigrants)			
Bilingual	8	53	62
Trilingual	1	7	8
Only non-English	2	13	15
English only	2	13	15
Missing	2	13	---

Immigrant families such as these pose different questions to the issue of academic success, as some children of such families do remarkably well in school, while others flounder. Most recent immigrants reside within central cities (a factor which Portes and MacLeod (1996) posit may actually contribute to their academic success), and some, such as several Chicago Scholars' families, do not speak English. It would seem that these factors (urban life and limited English proficiency) would hinder youngsters in their educational attempts. Yet a study of Indochinese refugee children who had been in the United States for an average of less than four years and who resided in inner cities reflected remarkable achievements, as the students attained an average GPA of 3.05 ("B" range). Of these children, 27 percent had GPAs in the "A" range (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1992).

What may account for this success, despite handicaps of language and cultural adjustments? A sense of shared values--a "we-ness"--is found in most immigrant communities. The structure of these communities and the shared values are an important form of social capital, as they serve to facilitate the actions and values of individual members. The most successful families have often retained the traditions and values of

their homeland (including religious views) and use them to deal with the vastly different issues they face in a new country (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1992; Zhou and Bankston 1994). Often, immigrant families may stress values--such as obedience and helping others--that differ from mainstream U.S. values--such as individualism (Zhou and Bankston 1994). Within this value tradition is often a strong ethnic identification, which can foster academic achievement. In one study, over 80 percent of second-generation Vietnamese who reported a strong ethnic involvement received at least a "B" average in school, as compared to less than 40 percent of those who reported a weak ethnic involvement. Also among these values is a "love of learning," which both parents and children most often rated as the dominant factor in academic achievement (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1992). Learning is emphasized as extremely important and regarded as fun and worthwhile (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1992; Kao and Tienda 1995). The families of Chicago Scholars, as reported by the students, place this emphasis, value, and importance on school, often even more so than the students themselves (see above).

In addition to different values and emphases (including education) among immigrants, the family itself plays a pivotal role, especially in demonstrating how academic success can be achieved. In the Indochinese refugee families of the Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore study (1992), all family members demonstrated mutual obligations to each other and attempted to achieve respect and cooperation within the family. Family was extremely influential because of its emphasis on spending time on homework (rather than on other responsibilities); this emphasis correlated with academic achievement (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1992; Kao and Tienda 1995). Older Indochinese children were actively involved in helping the younger children, learning from teaching (Caplan, Choy, and

Whitmore 1992). In another study, the success of Vietnamese (second generation) children was due to the large amounts of time that they spent on homework, which was dictated by the influence of their families and communities (Portes and MacLeod 1996). Immigrant parents, however, may be less likely to speak directly to their children about school, although the value of education assumes normative priority (Kao and Tienda 1995). Immigrant parents, while less likely to participate in school activities, were more likely to attend parent-teacher meetings (Kao and Tienda 1995). In these families, it may not be parental English skills or direct involvement in education that makes a difference, but the high level of ties between the family, the shared cultural experiences, and the values placed on school--in other words, social capital. The experiences of Chicago Scholars, whose parents are not involved in school (according to student interviews in March and April 1998) but who value education highly support this idea.

Along with family, a strong tie to and involvement with the ethnic (immigrant) community is correlated with high achievement (Zhou and Bankston 1994). Holding the same values as the community and then acting consistently with these values demonstrates a high level of social integration; social integration provides a form of social capital in both the family and the community which enables children to succeed academically. Strong ties within the community serve as social capital to help children overcome other barriers which exist in their lives (Zhou and Bankston 1994). Even shared ethnicity itself may serve as a form of social capital, consisting of obligations, expectations, information, and norms (Coleman 1988 in Zhou and Bankston 1994); in inner cities, in which resources are lacking, clinging to ethnicity may be the strongest (or only) resource available. According to Zhou and Bankston (1994:825), the "system of

supports and constraints" set up by immigrant communities (in this case, the Vietnamese community of inner New Orleans) turns immigrant status and ethnicity into an advantage for youth. While the overwhelming majority of these families are poor, they have, for the most part, intact and strong family structures and community social contexts. Families are highly integrated and extended; thus, the community consists of a dense web of social and kin relations, focused on the church. The interlocking relations reinforce community goals and standards. Since the network is so tight, actions by one person reflect on the family and community as a whole, meaning that academic achievement honors more than just the student. The importance of this social capital is so significant that Zhou and Bankston (1994:838) "perceive the academic achievement of Vietnamese students as a direct result of the social capital provided by the ethnic community." Adherence to traditional values, a strong work ethic, and ethnic involvement thus all contribute to academic success.

Several studies have posited that second generation youth (native-born children of foreign-born parents) are best positioned for academic success (Kao and Tienda 1995). While first-generation persons may be at risk due to their limited English skills, they also promote academic achievement to a greater extent than native-born parents (Kao and Tienda 1995). The first-generation immigrants may not yet be disillusioned with the prospects of upward mobility and so may aspire to high academic success (Kao and Tienda 1995). The academic achievement of second-generation youth may mirror their parents' hopes and aspirations (Portes and MacLeod 1996). This influence is not uniform among immigrants of different ethnicities, however, as Asians tend to outperform their white, black, and Latino/a counterparts (Kao and Tienda 1995). Interestingly, Chicago

Scholars' data refute this hypothesis as six of the nine students interviewed in March and April of 1998 who stated that they valued education less than their parents were children from immigrant families. Three of these students are second-generation and the other three had moved to the United States at a young age (which some studies also call second-generation). Thus, second-generation persons do not always mirror their parents' aspirations. Perhaps these students do not have the strong community support (such as the students from New Orleans do) and are therefore less influenced by their ethnic ties and more by their other social contexts. Perhaps, though, it may be, as stated above, that these students are rebelling against their parents' strong pushing.

Influences of Race and Racial/Ethnic Identity and Reference Groups

It has long been known that whites outscore students of all other racial and ethnic backgrounds in terms of academic achievement, and the question of why this occurs has been researched a great deal. For instance, while blacks begin school with only a slight academic disadvantage, each year their average reading scores decline, leaving black children over three times more likely to be placed in classes for the mentally retarded and three times less likely to be placed in academically advanced classes than white students (Strickland and Ascher 1992; see also Lomotey 1990). One once-popular theory to explain such occurrences was the cultural deficit model, which posited that the reason certain ethnic groups, such as African-Americans, did not perform as well in school was that they were culturally not prepared to do so because their cultures did not emphasize academic success, placed less value on education, and were less stimulating. This theory, however, is no longer accepted. Using data from a national longitudinal study, Solorzano (1991) found that after controlling for social class, black and Latino/a students had much

higher educational aspirations than whites, although the gap between aspirations and attainment was much larger for these minority groups. Reynolds and Gill (1994:see above) found that the families of students of color valued education as much as other families. But although they value education, thus refuting the cultural deprivation hypothesis, the students' scores are still lower, leaving the question of why this occurs open. Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) have proposed that while African-American and Latino/a students are just as likely to value education as their white peers, they are likely to devote less time to homework and are less likely to believe that success comes from working hard. They may not be as likely as white students to fear the negative consequences of not doing well. Because these studies have generally not examined the academic lives of students of color within inner cities, it is uncertain how issues such as poverty play into the academic achievement questions.

Another area of study in relation to black academic success has focused on the various identities that students adopt. Some African-American students may develop a "raceless" identity which endorses mainstream values, denies institutional racism, and is not closely associated with African-Americans (see Clark 1991). Studies have shown that this type of identification may help to facilitate academic success for some students. In fact, Steinberg and colleagues (1992) assert that peer support for high-achieving African-Americans may be so low that these students choose to affiliate primarily with students of other ethnicities. This situation presents a bind for these high-achieving students, as they are losing their racial/ethnic identities and heritage. Another possible identity status for a student is a bicultural one, in which a person identifies both with African-American group behavior and norms and those of the mainstream society, being socialized into both

cultures (Clark 1991). Research on this identity, however, does not address inner-city students, who live in areas of high minority concentration and where the norms may be different. A third possibility for black students is to disavow academic success so as not to alienate themselves from their peers and so as not to appear to smart (a "white" characteristic) (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Farkas 1996 and Portes 1995 also suggest that Mexican-American patterns may parallel these black patterns; see also DeSantis, Ketterlinus, and Youniss 1990). These students may "disidentify" with school as a place that can be of use to them (see Newberg and Sims 1996). It is interesting to note, however, that high-achieving African-American students are found in the same environments as their counterparts who do not do as well, meaning that there are likely several of these identity processes taking place within one environment. In a study of high-achieving African-American students, Lee, Winfield, and Wilson (1991:82) write that these students "are not those (few) who attend mostly White suburban schools, or even urban schools that are integrated. . . .their schools look remarkably like those attended by the large majority of African-American students--located in cities, with many disadvantaged and racial/ethnic students. . . ." Research has yet to address how or why African-American students may adopt these different identities.

Considerably less research exists on Latino/a students and the potential identities or strategies they may use to succeed. One important study on high-achieving, low SES Hispanic youth was conducted by Alvin So (1987). So also points to different reference group hypotheses to explain why certain students succeed: those students with a middle-class reference group (that is, those who aspire to the goals and lifestyle of the middle class) do well academically, as (although to a lesser extent) do those students with a

Hispanic reference group (that is, who take pride in their ethnic identity). So proposed that a Hispanic middle-class reference group framework (aspiring to the middle class while identifying with a Hispanic background) produces the most academic benefits. Thus, for these students, racial and ethnic identity also plays a large role in academic achievement.

In their study of second generation Vietnamese, Zhou and Bankston (1994) also used theories of identity or reference groups, suggesting that the main goal of this community was to assimilate into the middle class, and that education was the means to do so. These students were successful because they took on an identity in which success was highly valued and integral. Although Asian students are often viewed as being highly academically successful, Kao and Tienda (1995) found that this was related to their immigrant status; that is, Asians of the third generation or higher did not perform any better than their white counterparts. Perhaps the middle-class ideal loses significance as a family has been in the United States for many generations. Farkas (1996) posits that Asian-American success is due to the fact that they work much harder, show more organization, effort, and class participation; it is possible that these traits also have to do with identity and reference groups.

Cohesion, Family Size, and Mothers' Employment: Debated Issues

The issue of family cohesion has been a major point of debate in studies and theories of academic success, especially the question of whether single-parent families are detrimental for children (see Astone and McLanahan (1991); Downey 1994; see Heiss 1996 for a literature review on these effects, especially in relation to people of color). Some researchers suggest that single-parent families have less resources, financial,

human, and social; others suggest that the effects of single-parent families are negligible. In a national study, for instance, Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that adolescents living with single parents or stepparents received less encouragement and help with schoolwork and had lower grades and school attendance. Natriello, McDill, and Pallas (1990) state that children in single-parent families have both lower standardized test scores and grades. But while Heiss (1996) found that coming from single-mother families had a very slight negative effect on educational aspirations, expectations, and grades for African-American high school students, family structure was not the most important influence upon education: parental involvement was much more influential, and family structure had only a small effect upon parental involvement. In a study using data from a national survey, Watts and Watts (1991) found that family configurations had negligible effects on academic achievement.

Since many of the studies that have been conducted on family cohesion have dealt primarily with white families and because the structure of many families of color is quite different, several researchers have questioned whether this large body of literature (such as some of the above studies) is applicable to people of color (especially blacks). Additionally, one of the major mechanisms used to explain why children from single-parent homes fare more poorly academically is that they have less economic resources. This factor, coming from national research, may not necessarily be applicable to low-income, inner-city people of color who face resource shortages regardless of family structure. Finally, the research does not focus specifically on urban minority populations. Therefore, it is unclear how or even if family cohesion is an issue in examining the social capital of this population. In the Chicago Scholars' population, 19 of 24 students (79 %)

live with both of their parents. In this instance, there is a significant relationship between GPA in the fall of 1996 and parental status (married or not/no longer married), at the 10 percent level of significance ($\chi^2 = 5.92$). Those whose parents are not married (or living together) are more likely to have lower GPAs (60 % versus 11 % of those whose parents are married).[9]

The number of siblings within a family has also been a topic of debate, although again the research has not specifically addressed the context of inner cities. Most research has found that there is a consistent inverse relationship between the number of siblings a student has and educational performance (for instance, Kunz and Peterson 1977; see Stevenson and Baker 1987 for the opposite effect; see Greenberg and Davidson 1972 for no effects). In general, the dilution hypothesis states that the greater the number of children within a family, the less time parents have to spend with each child (see Coleman 1988; see Downey 1995 for further exploration and a discussion of a family's "threshold"). As resources (both interpersonal and economic) will be spread more thinly, each child will have less access to resources. Consequently, the outcome for all children will be poorer. This means that the number of siblings, according to Coleman (1988), is an (inverse) indicator of social capital. Hanushek (1992), in a study of low-income black families, also found that family size affected achievement, with children early in the birth order having a achievement advantage, because they had a higher probability of being in

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[9] Because I was only able to interview one student whose GPA was below 3.0, this was the only category of information gathered from interviews for which I was able to do statistical analysis. Thus, although I asked the students many questions, I was not able to analyze statistically the relationship between factors about which I asked and GPAs. For the other categories, I report tendencies, not statistical data. In other instances, if enough data were available for statistical analysis, chi square values are reported, if not, tendencies are mentioned.

a smaller family. On the other hand, in large families, being born last conferred an advantage. The annual achievement of each child fell as the family size increased. Regardless of position, having bright siblings was correlated with higher achievement (Hanushek 1992), again demonstrating that the relations implicit in social capital are important.

The Chicago Scholars have an average family size of nearly five members. In the fall of 1996, the family size of these students did not affect GPAs ($\chi^2 = 1.45$); that is, those with smaller families performed at the same level as those with larger families. In the spring of 1997, family size did have an effect (at the 10 % level of significance [$\chi^2 = 4.72$]), but less than half of the students reported data. Because of the small population size, the results are difficult to interpret. For those students with GPAs between 3.0 and 4.0, smaller families seemed to be more beneficial. This relationship did not hold true for those students with GPAs above 4.0. A categorical analysis comparing grammar school and high school GPAs (for changes between them, either none, increase, or decrease) also revealed no differences among family sizes ($\chi^2 = 0.16$).

Chicago Scholars have a higher average number of siblings, at 2.36, (meaning that there are an average of 3.36 children per family) than the U.S. population as a whole. Four out of 25 students (16 %) have four or five siblings while seven (28 %) have no or only one sibling. Although not enough information was available for bivariate analysis, the number of siblings did not appear to affect GPA (fall 1996). Again, categorical analysis revealed no association between number of siblings and changes in GPA from grammar school to high school. Therefore, the data from the Chicago Scholars do not support the dilution hypothesis. Of 23 Chicago Scholars, nine (39 %) are the oldest,

seven (30 %) a middle child, six (26 %) the youngest, and one (4 %) an only child.

Again, for this group, sibling placement seemed to have no effect on fall 1996 GPA

($\chi^2 = 2.66$ in bivariate analysis or $\chi^2 = 3.37$ in categorical analysis) or spring 1997 GPA.

(As a side note, it is interesting that half of the students who turned in grade report cards

in the spring were oldest children.) Several Chicago Scholars say that they often

collaborate with siblings on homework, suggesting a possible parallel with Hanushek's

(1992) finding that bright students have bright siblings.

Regardless of whether children live with one parent or two or the size of their

families, the increase in women's employment is often cited as a reason why children

may not do well in school; the argument is that the absence of this parental figure is

detrimental, that the mother's preoccupation with work may take time away from family

life, and that the mother may be socially isolated. A study of low-income single-mother

families by Alessandri (1992), however, found exactly the opposite in families in which

the mother was employed full-time. Children whose mothers were employed perceived

more family cohesion and organization and had greater self-esteem, factors which were

especially beneficial to girls (in the form of greater independence and greater academic

achievement). Perhaps this is because these mothers provide a model of behavior for

their children, demonstrating achievement, status, and independence, and may be more

likely to instill such attitudes and behaviors in their own children. These beneficial

correlations were not found in families in which the mothers were either not employed

(although not desiring employment) or employed part-time. Similarly, Lee, Winfield, and

Wilson (1991) found that high-achieving African-American students were more likely to

have mothers in the work force outside of the home.

Of the Chicago Scholars interviewed in March and April 1998, 10 of 18 (56 %) had

mothers who were employed full-time outside of the home, in many different occupations

ranging from factory worker to teacher to supervisor. Another two students (11 %) had

mothers either working part-time or who were in school. Thus, only one-third had

mothers who were not engaged in work activities outside of the home. For this group, the

work status of the mothers did not appear to affect (either negatively or positively) the

GPAs of the students. Categorical analysis also revealed no association ($\chi^2 = 1.37$)

between changes in GPA between grammar school and high school and mother's

employment. In other studies, neither a father's absence nor a mother's employment had

negative effects on academic achievement (Greenberg and Davidson 1972; Hanushek

1992; Stevenson and Baker 1987; Watts and Watts 1991).

BEYOND THE FAMILY: COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

In addition to the family, students can draw upon the social capital of their

communities, which is greatest when the communities are bound by strong ties, common

values, and strong norms. Dense social interactions serve to create norms and

expectations for behavior; deeply intertwined social networks produce the most social

capital. When different community networks overlap, the results are particularly

favorable (Coleman's 1988 concept of closure). People in such systems, including

parents, can rely upon each other. In fact, parenting can thus become shared by the

community, which will increase children's chances of success (Furstenberg and Hughes

1995). Children's connections to other competent adults (outside of the home) are

important in influencing educational success. It is therefore logical that the presence of

strong social networks and access to close parental friends are measures related to favorable outcomes for children (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995). Effective communities provide social organizations with the resources to meet the needs of the community, consistently express social norms (which act as a standard for behavior), and provide opportunities for youth to participate within the community (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994). When communities appreciate young people for the ideas and resources they can provide, young people feel cared about, thus helping to create the bonds of which social capital is composed (William T. Grant Foundation 1988). As an example, an evaluation of a tuition-guarantee program for low-income, African-American students in Philadelphia found that students could only take advantage of the opportunities available to them when they were involved in "transforming relationships and widening the sense of possibility" (Newberg and Sims 1996).

Schools in Chicago

A major aspect of the community, certainly for students, are the schools. How has the school system in Chicago been set up to create social capital? Often, it would seem it has not--in analysis of the Chicago Public Schools, many of the above factors seem to be lacking and much attention has been focused in Chicago, in Illinois, and nationwide on the failure of the Chicago Public Schools. This attention has focused on facts such as the following. In Chicago, 40 percent of high school students flunk at least two major classes per year, with the rate as high as 65 percent in some high schools, such as Crane. The average Chicago high school graduate reads only as well as the average U.S. eighth grader.

Looking at recent history of the Chicago school system is informative in order to see how such problems have been addressed and how and why they continue to occur. In 1980, to try to address the racial inequalities within the system, a desegregation agreement was implemented. Unfortunately, instead of solving the problem, it merely eliminated the few remaining predominantly white schools in the district but left the vast majority of nonwhite students attending the vast majority of schools that were 100 percent students of color. Hess's assessment (1995) is that the agreement resulted in only 4 percent more minority students attending school in desegregated settings: instead of really addressing the issue of desegregation, the number of magnet schools in the city was doubled. Magnet schools, according to Blank (1986) are found mainly in large urban school districts and are defined by four basic elements: 1.) a theme-based curriculum or teaching approach 2.) a role in desegregation of the school district 3.) voluntary enrollment and 4.) a student clientele that extends beyond regular school boundaries. These schools are disproportionately funded and thus provide disproportionate benefits to white, middle-class students.

In creating such a system, Chicago set up a type of "educational triage" in which half of Chicago's low-income students, 45 percent of its black students, and 49 percent of its Latino/a students attend neglected schools with huge dropout rates. On the other hand, Chicago's selective (magnet) schools have dropout rates below the national average--rates which are less than half of those of the other Chicago schools. Over 20,000 of the city's best students are channeled into selective high schools (and an additional 11,000 into a middle tier of selective vocational schools), created as a result of the 1980 desegregation lawsuit. Magnet schools have the most involved parents and the best staff, in other

words, they have the most opportunities for social capital. At Whitney Young, for instance, over 50 percent of the students' parents are college graduates (*Chicago Tribune* 1988). The creation of this system has set up schools with vastly unequal amounts of social capital. As the *Chicago Tribune* (1988:133) writes, "in a system whose students are overwhelmingly black and Hispanic, the separation of the best from the rest has spawned a different kind of segregation that discriminates on the basis of achievement as well as race." (For other school reforms, see Hess 1991; Hess 1995; Kyle and Katowicz 1992).

Overall, Chicago has 64 high schools, most of which are classified as "general," although there are 10 (16 %) vocational schools. There are also several schools which are selective (magnet) in nature, meaning that at least some--if not all--of the student body was required to take a test in order to qualify to attend the school. Of these 64 schools, 11 currently have Chicago Scholars enrolled, including all six of the selective high schools (Kenwood, Lane Technical, Lincoln Park, Lindblom, Morgan Park, and Whitney Young--listed in Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance 1993). Overall, this means that 54 percent of the schools attended by Chicago Scholars (which enroll 83 % of the scholars) are selective high schools (11 Scholars, for example, attend Lane Technical).

Table 4. Specified Characteristics of Schools Chicago Scholars Attend as Compared to the Chicago Schools Overall.

	Mean for all (64) Chicago public high schools	Mean of 11 schools Chicago Scholars attend	St. dev., 11 schools	t-value, 11 schools	Mean of 6 magnet schools	St. dev., magnet schools	t-value, 6 magnet schools
grad. rates	61.2	72.8	10.1	3.81[4]	79.1	8.1	5.14[4]
low income students	71.0	55.7	15.7	-3.23[4]	49.3	7.6	-4.35[4]
students of color	88.5	84.0	13.7	-1.09[ns]	83.4	11.6	-1.08[ns]
limited English-proficiency students	9.1	1.5	2.7	-9.34[4]	0.98	1.2	-16.57[4]
attend. rates	78.9	84.2	8.1	2.17[2]	87.7	3.7	5.83[4]
mobility rates	27.3	13.7	8.4	-5.37[4]	10.0	6.1	-6.95[4]
ACT score, all students	16.8	18.1	2.7	1.60[1]	19.8	1.8	4.08[4]
ACT score, core students	18.5[5]	19.3	2.7	0.98[ns]	20.7	1.9	2.84[2]

Table 4:
ns not significant
[1] significant at alpha equals 10 percent
[2] significant at alpha equals 5 percent
[3] significant at alpha equals 1 percent
[4] significant at alpha equals .5 percent
[5] core students are defined as those who will graduate within four years, having taken
four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, and three years of social
studies
(information from Chicago Panel on School Policy 1996)

Although the percentage of students of color in the schools Chicago Scholars attend is

not significantly different from the average Chicago high school, nearly all of the other

demographic characteristics of the schools demonstrate that these schools--especially the

magnet schools which enroll 83 percent of the Scholars--are not typical. While the public

schools overall graduate only 61 percent of the students who enrolled, these 11 schools

graduate a significantly higher 73 percent (79 percent in the magnet schools). In fact, one

of the schools has a graduation rate of 92 percent, well above national averages. While

on the average over 70 percent of students in Chicago Public schools come from low-

income families, in these 11 schools, only 56 percent of the students do (and less than

50 % in the magnet schools). In fact, one of the schools has only 36 percent low-income

students. This means that the overall SES of these schools is higher, thus more likely to

foster success (see below). These 11 schools also have fewer limited English proficiency

students (1.5 % versus 9.1 %) which could have several effects: first, less resources must

be devoted to developing basic English proficiency, possibly freeing up resources for

other programs. The students in the 11 schools, who all speak English well, potentially

have more bonds with each other, creating more social capital. Again, it is also likely

that the overall SES in these schools is higher. The attendance rates in these selected schools are significantly higher (79 percent for all Chicago schools, 84 percent for the 11 selected schools, 88 percent for the magnet schools). Finally, they have significantly lower mobility rates (less students transferring in and out). In the magnet schools, this figure is just over one-third of the average public high school.

These factors all suggest that Chicago Scholars attend high schools that are likely to foster academic success, are able to give students the support and resources that they need, and create social capital within the system. When examining the schools' ACT scores (one major method of determining whether students will be accepted into college), it is again evident that the schools Chicago Scholars attend, especially the magnet schools, are top quality (see Tables 5 and 6). While the scores of these 11 schools are significantly lower than state and national averages (in 1994-95, 21.1 and 20.8, respectively), they are higher than the average Chicago student's score, both when examining core students (not significant) and the general student body (significant). Interestingly, the scores of the magnet schools are not significantly different from the state and national averages in most cases (see tables 5 and 6). They are significantly higher than the average Chicago school, however, for both core and all students. Thus, the schools the Chicago Scholars attend are those which are preparing students to attend college.

**Table 5. Comparison of Mean ACT scores for 1994-95,
11 Schools Chicago Scholars Attend.**

	Mean score, 11 schools	Standard deviation, 11 schools	National mean score[4]	t-value for national mean	State mean score[4]	t-value for state mean
ACT score, core students	19.3	2.7	20.8	-1.84^1	21.1	-2.21^2
ACT score, all students	18.1	2.7	20.8	-3.32^3	21.1	-3.69^3

**Table 6. Comparison of Mean ACT scores for 1994-95,
6 Magnet Schools Chicago Scholars Attend.**

	Mean score, 6 schools	Standard deviation, 6 schools	National mean score[4]	t-value for national mean	State mean score[4]	t-value for state mean
ACT score, core students	20.7	1.9	20.8	-0.13^{ns}	21.1	-0.52^{ns}
ACT score, all students	19.8	1.8	20.8	-1.36^{ns}	21.1	-1.76^1

^{ns} not significant
^{1} significant at alpha equals 10 percent
^{2} significant at alpha equals 5 percent
^{3} significant at alpha equals 0.5 percent
^{4} national and state figures do not differentiate between core and all students

While these numbers are interesting, an example of one of these schools is more

clarifying. Kenwood Academy, which enrolls three Chicago Scholars, is an example of a

high-achieving (magnet) school. Kenwood offers many accelerated class options, such as classes at the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago, and students may take any of six different languages. Half of the students at the school meet or exceed national norms in math, science, and other testing screens, and only 53 percent of Kenwood's students are from low-income families. According to Rebecca Janowitz, April 6, 1998, 85 percent of the graduating students of Kenwood go on to a four-year college; the other 15 percent enter either a two-year college or the armed forces. Because the school is structured to prepare students for higher education, it creates an environment in which social capital can flourish. The relations between people and through the system of the school mean that parents, teachers, and students work together and have similar goals (e.g., college admission). Kenwood students are encouraged in large and small ways--such as college billboards--to focus on higher education, and resources, such as college admission counselor visits, are available for students. For instance, one Southern university offers over a dozen scholarships to Kenwood students. Without this cooperation or with added distractions and concerns, such as discipline problems or extreme poverty, the students most likely would not do as well.

When asked how they felt their personal academic abilities compared with the rest of the students at their respective schools, four of eighteen (22 %) Chicago Scholars said their abilities were much better, six (33 %) said their abilities were somewhat better, seven (39 %) said their abilities were about the same, and only one (6 %) said his abilities were a little worse. Those students with very high GPAs (at or above 4.0) appeared more likely to think that their abilities were the same as the rest of the students in the school; those with "B" GPAs were likely to think that their abilities were somewhat better.

Interestingly, the one student interviewed with a GPA below 3.0 believed her abilities were much better than the average student at her school. Most students thus seem to think that they fit fairly well into the demanding academic environment of their high schools and seem to be living up to the expectations of these schools.

Schools and High Achievers

In general, schools which produce high achievers hold high expectations for their students, including consistent evaluation and progress assessment (Strickland and Cooper 1987). More rigorous standards may produce higher effort and thus achievement (see Natriello and McDill 1986). These schools also have a more positive environment and higher student commitment (Lee, Winfield, and Wilson 1991). In one study, schools with fewer students, motivated teachers, and high rates of order and discipline had high achievers (see Teachman 1996). These factors all suggest that high levels of social capital--that is, relations, interactions, and influences among members--are crucial for academic achievement.

Another important factor in fostering achievement, discussed by Natriello, McDill, and Pallas (1990), is that the (academic program of a) school and a student's skills and interests match appropriately. This involves making schooling relevant to the lives of students and ensuring that they understand school's importance to their present and future lives; if schoolwork is not tied to any explicit and valued goals, the work is not extrinsically motivating (Wehlage et al. 1989). This may be particularly important for students from low-income families, as the articulation hypothesis states that working and lower class students (especially academically capable blacks) have a perception that academic achievement is not clearly linked to future status in society (such as job

attainment). But when students see links between school and their futures, thus overcoming this perception, they are more willing to sacrifice to meet the demands of school (Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1990). Of 11 Chicago Scholars who answered a question of whether school was relevant to their lives, only one (9 %) said that it was not; five (45 %) said that it was nearly all relevant in some manner and another five (45 %) said that it was somewhat relevant. From students' statements, it seems that their teachers and schools, for the most part, are making attempts to connect school learning to the students' current and future lives. On the other hand, one Chicago Scholar stated that school did not do this; rather, she saw high school as a fashion show.

While evidence of achievement by low-income students illustrates that individual SES may not play as large a role in academic achievement as has been previously believed, it appears that a school's overall SES does influence a student's achievement. Schools with higher (average) SES among their families produce students with greater academic achievement (Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996; Lee, Winfield, and Wilson 1991; Portes and MacLeod 1996). Additionally, since the overall level of parental involvement in the school (not just whether an individual's parent participates) has been suggested to be associated with academic achievement, it is significant that parents with children in high SES schools tended to participate more, regardless of their personal SES (Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996). This may be attributable to a number of factors, including peers, teachers' expectations, the school climate, parental involvement, and the number of resources (see Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996), all factors which make up social capital.

The type of school a student attends may also affect social capital and academic achievement. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) extensively researched different types of

school (specifically public and various types of private) to determine how students benefitted academically from different school configurations. Their research found that social capital was greatly heightened within the private religious schools, because the members of the school (students, parents, and teachers) formed a type of (intergenerational) functional community, which held common values, goals, and norms. An active social structure existed among the parents and the institution, and parental involvement was higher. In religious institutions (primarily Catholic), students were connected with the adults around them, not only with those from their families but also with those in the school setting. (See Coleman and Hoffer 1987:231-233 for discussion of when this embeddedness may be harmful rather than helpful.)

The social capital extant in the private and Catholic schools manifested itself in greater achievement. Coleman and Hoffer found that private school students showed higher performance on standardized tests (even when compared with students of the same background): sophomore students in Catholic or private schools outperformed public school seniors at almost all levels (i.e., in most verbal skills and math.) They hypothesized that this occurred because even though these religious schools had less economic resources, the functional community base overcame this deficit. Additionally, the achievement benefits of the Catholic schools were considerably greater for blacks and Latinos/as. For instance, students from disadvantaged backgrounds showed great learning deficits in public schools and even more in private schools that were not present for similar students in Catholic schools. Likewise, Wehlage et al. (1989) found that Catholic schools are more effective with at-risk students (especially black and Latino/a students) than public schools, although it may be that families who choose to send their

children to these schools have a greater commitment to education, which may account for these results. While these results may not be applicable to the Chicago Scholars as the students all attend public schools, it does demonstrate the importance of social capital and shows ways in which it may be manifested.

Tracking Within a School

Within a school, regardless of its type, students are placed in different types of classes, entitled tracks. Tracking (found in 90 percent of schools according to Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade 1987) usually formally begins in junior high (middle school), and where a student is placed then has a great impact on high school track placement. This system exists to set up distinctive programs of study tailored to students' interests, abilities, and future needs and aspirations. (For a review of tracking, its effects, and research see Oakes, Gamoran, and Page 1992. For a description and analysis of ability-grouping, which occurs at the elementary school level, see Eder 1981; Gamoran 1986; Hallinan 1992; Hallinan and Sørensen 1985; Mackler 1969; Rist 1970; Rosenthal and Jacobsen 1968; Rowan and Miracle 1983.) Schools often break tracks into categories such as advanced, honors, regular, or basic, arguing that this allows students to be taught at appropriate levels, each according to individual potential. This then facilitates instruction and increases learning, through the teacher's tailoring of lessons to the needs and abilities of the students. Through this system, students with demonstrated high achievement are provided access to an academically-oriented (college preparatory) learning environment while other students are channeled into general or vocational tracks. Where a student is placed within the tracking system can have large impacts on her or his access to social capital.

How tracks are assigned.

It seems reasonable that earlier course work would impact track placement, in that earlier work nurtures academic interests and orientations and prepares a student for future course work. One potential problem, however, is that students, in entering either junior or senior high school, are funneled in from multiple schools of the lower level, each of which has its own methods of determining grades and placement. Even so, academic competency does appear to be a very important (perhaps the most important) predictive factor of enrollment in an academic track (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978; Alexander and Cook 1982; Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996; Gamoran and Mare 1989; Hallinan 1992; Rehberg and Rosenthal 1978; Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade 1987). Alexander and Cook (1982) found that academic criteria, such as relevant prior course work and grades, are quite influential in determining high school track placements. In fact, these factors (ability, junior high work, and curriculum expectations) may account for 40 percent of the variance in high school placement (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978). Thus, it appears that high school track placements may simply perpetuate differences in achievement that were set in motion in the elementary and junior high years (Alexander and Cook 1982; Rehberg and Rosenthal 1978). However, Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle (1996) found elementary academic history to have little impact on junior high placements.

As demonstrated above, race or ethnicity plays a role in school identity, and some researchers argue it also plays a role in track placement. While Hallinan (1992) found that neither race nor ethnicity affected track placement, Gamoran and Mare (1989) found that blacks, in comparison to their equal-ability white classmates, were more likely to be

placed in higher tracks. Oakes (Hallinan and Oakes 1994) found something similar when examining this question, but maintains that it is important to look at differences in schools. She argues that minority students attending schools in minority communities (such as the students in the Chicago Scholars Program) are placed in high academic tracks to fill positions, even though their demonstrated ability levels would not qualify them for the same positions in other schools. She attributes the slight advantage that is seen for students of color in some aggregated studies to this phenomenon, which masks considerable discrimination. When studying racially mixed schools, she found that whites and Asians were significantly more likely to be placed in higher tracks as compared to similar-achieving blacks and Latinos/as. Kershaw (1992) concludes that students of color (and those of lower income) are often perceived as having less academic ability and thus placed in noncollege tracks. As blacks as a group show a much more prominent shift towards the lower tracks, Jones, Erickson, and Crowell (1972) conclude that tracking may function to widen the gap between whites and blacks. Due to their data, however, they were not able to distinguish between the effects of race and SES. Nonetheless, Persell (1977:88) writes that "few can disagree that race and class are associated with track placement. . . [but] many would deny that race or class is a basis for allocation to track." Race differences may be smaller in college tracks than in noncollege tracks (Gamoran and Mare 1989). Finally, interplay between race and SES may also have an impact, as blacks and Latinos/as are likely to have a lower SES, which reduces the probability of college-track assignment.

In addition to and interplaying with race, SES exerts substantial influence on track placement, placing minority and lower SES students at the bottom of the tracking

hierarchy (Alexander and McDill 1976; Gamoran and Mare 1989; Jones, Erickson, and Crowell 1972; Oakes 1985; Persell 1977; Rehberg and Rosenthal 1978; Rosenbaum 1976; Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade 1987). As track placement tends to remain stable over time, social background may have a great impact at the beginning of the formal tracking process in junior high, which masks the impact of SES later in students' careers (by originally fostering higher academic achievement for those of higher SES) (Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996; Hallinan 1992). Additionally, Gamoran and Mare (1989) argue that track assignments reinforce existing inequalities in achievement for students of different SES, increasing the gap in SES by nearly 9 percent and thus widening the gap in achievement and probability of graduation.

This relationship manifests itself in several ways. A study of inner-city students found that social-background effects are greatest for those in academic tracks (Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996). In a study of a Midwestern school district, Hallinan (1992) found that students who qualified for a free lunch were more likely to be assigned to lower tracks, regardless of previous achievement, although the same effect was not seen for those students qualifying for reduced-price lunches. She thus argues that a student must be quite poor before SES affects track placement. In another study, students at least one standard deviation above the SES mean were placed in the college track at a 17 percent higher rate than those students at least one standard deviation below the mean. Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade (1987) located a 16 percent difference in the top ability quartile between the lowest and highest SES quartiles who report that they are in an academic track, a difference which increased to 28 percent by senior year. (More concretely, 52 percent of the lowest quartile SES but 80 percent of the highest quartile

ended up in an academic track.) Additionally, the chance that a top quartile SES student would be in an academic track was 53 percent but only 19 percent for the bottom SES quartile. They argue that regardless of the reasons, there are substantial differences for ultimate track destination of different social classes.

Student background and SES may affect track placement because of differences in family socialization processes, motivation, and academic competencies (Alexander and Cook 1982), factors which are all part of social capital. Families of higher SES may be able to provide resources that further students' education, such as access to computers and books. In addition, many researchers argue that high status parents are able to finagle their children into higher tracks, as these parents are more likely to intervene in their children's educations, even to the point of suggesting certain track placements. They may also reward their children's performance and encourage them. Parents who do not expect their children to go to college, on the other hand, may not feel these actions necessary or useful. Students in higher tracks, therefore, either receive or perceive greater parental encouragement (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978). Through the provision of financial and interpersonal resources, students are afforded differing access to social capital, which may consequently affect their track placement.

A student's aspirations may also very highly influence both track placement and educational attainment. Alexander and Cook (1982) found that students' aspirations for postsecondary education (i.e., both intending to prepare for college and wanting to enroll) had a greater effect on college attendance than prior course work. Rosenbaum (1980) found a high correlation (r = .70) between plans and college attendance. Track placement may affect these goals: enrollment in a college track increases the probability of planning

to attend college by 30 percent (in comparison to equally capable, motivated youths in lower tracks), and placement in a college track may have a greater effect on plans to attend college than taking steps to do so or even being accepted (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978). Perhaps this is because students live up to the expectations placed upon them, and being in an academic track often confers the expectation of college attendance. Students with long-standing college expectations may additionally be more likely to take steps to fulfill their expectations (Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996). The Chicago Scholars all have high expectations for further education; many of them intend to complete some education beyond a bachelor's degree, be it medical school, law school, or graduate school. These aspirations, nurtured by school and home, likely have a great impact on what the students will achieve in high school and beyond.

Unfortunately, the relationship between perceived academic track and college hopes has potentially harmful effects. Rosenbaum (1980) found that students often misperceive their tracks (the correlation of track perception with actual track placement was .60). Because it is track placement more than future plans that affects whether a student will go to college, these misperceptions may nourish unrealistic plans. For instance, he found that 46 percent of noncollege track students who perceived that they were in the college track attend college, while 86 percent of correctly perceived college track students do so, although the majority of these students had college aspirations.

Criticisms of tracking and their refutations.

The tracking system as described has been subject to harsh criticisms, as a system which maintains and perpetuates social inequalities. Critics maintain that tracking produces unintended consequences which negate its usefulness. Rosenbaum (1976)

asserts that tracking is an effective communication of intellectual inferiority. Persell (1977) writes that tracking in large urban schools affects the ethnic and social class composition of classrooms (limiting contacts among different student subpopulations) and influences academic achievement and self-concept, thereby reducing social capital. Because limited resources and other environmental factors may dictate the number of spots in each track, assignment to track may not actually be based on students' projected competencies but on structural and organizational needs (Hallinan 1992). Tracking sizes are often fixed, discouraging mobility: in order for one student to change tracks, there must be another student with whom to change. (Other nonacademic criteria may also come into play in assigning tracks, such as course conflicts, teacher resources, and extracurricular demands.) For reasons such as these, Oakes (Hallinan and Oakes 1994:86) maintains, "[m]ost educators cannot imagine tracking as a technical, neutral organizational practice that is unrelated to personal, societal, or vocational purposes." Tracking, in her opinion, does not equalize educational opportunities, increase efficiency, meet individual needs, or increase achievement, as it limits the access and opportunities of certain students (1985).

On the other hand, some research states that track assignments are not as permanent as many believe (Hallinan and Oakes 1994) or that tracking has less effects than previous studies would suggest, especially as regards SES (Alexander and Cook 1982). In one study, while SES did have an effect on track placement, it was accounted for by test performance, future plans, and peer involvement, thus leading the authors to the conclusion that there was little evidence of bias in track assignment (Alexander and Cook 1982). Another study concluded that once previous academic records were controlled,

social background had few effects on tracking (Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996).

Studies have also determined that SES characteristics influence track placement through

their effects on achievements, goals, and encouragement in junior high, making the

effects of SES not direct but indirect (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978). While a

greater proportion of lower SES students are in lower tracks, some of this variation may

be accounted for by academic achievement, although this does not account for all

variances (Hallinan and Oakes 1994). Thus, ability "dwarfs the effects of socioeconomic

factors" (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978; also Rehberg and Rosenthal 1978).

Finally, in their empirical study (of predominantly white and middle class students),

Rehberg and Rosenthal (1978) found that curriculum location did not have significant

effects on achievement (because it could be explained by other factors--the factors that

resulted in the upper track placement originally). Rather, they argue, differences in

achievement are due to scholastic ability, educational ambitions, and educational

encouragement from counselors.

While Oakes (1985:59) states that "despite differences in track *systems*, tracking

effects on students seem to be remarkably similar," other researchers argue that individual

school differences in tracking selection and implementation have a great effect on

outcomes. Hallinan (1994) asserts that the different social and political climates of

schools are what account for each school's success or lack thereof; a lack of support

makes tracking unsuccessful, not the actual practice itself. This hypothesis may mean

that studies on the effects of tracking cannot be generalized, since many studies combine

different schools, in different locations, with different social backgrounds. Rosenbaum

(1976) asserts that research needs to be specific to each school's tracking structure and

social composition. For this reason, it may be difficult to determine the effects of tracking in general. In inner cities, higher ability students (usually white, higher SES) may be pulled out of the city school system, in a phenomenon known as "bright flight." This has an impact on track placement, although the relationships between tracks and urban public schools are not well empirically documented, leaving the effects of tracking on and for students in the Chicago Public Schools uncertain.

A new view of tracking: benefitting academically advanced students.

Despite valid and heavy criticisms, tracking does appear to benefit academically advantaged students (such as the Chicago Scholars), although the gains may be due more to related aspects of tracking (e.g., more resources, teacher interaction, etc.--see below) than to tracking itself. For youths placed in a high academic track, tracking may function to develop social capital and to foster achievement. The ACI Chicago Scholars Program also implicitly recognizes the benefits of a system in which students are placed on an academic track and nurtured through the process (see Appendix A). In interviews (March and April 1998), 10 of 18 Chicago Scholars (56 %) self-identified as being in the advanced or honors track, four (22 %) as being in a combination of honors and basic tracks, three (17 %) as being in a basic track, and one (6 %) as being in a vocational track (this student is at a vocational high school). Therefore, only four of the Chicago Scholars believe they are not in any type of advanced track.

Being placed in an advanced track seems to lend numerous advantages, even beyond the higher academic competencies of those enrolled in one. Students in academic tracks are more likely to have higher self-perceptions, to be satisfied with school, to obtain high grades and test scores, to graduate from high school, to plan to attend college, to take

steps to do so, and to enroll in college. In high school, curriculum differences may be so

large that they gain as much or more importance than standardized test scores, ambitions,

and SES standings. Higher tracks expose students to more advanced material, allowing

them to progress at a faster rate. This then means that students have greater high school

achievement. For example, Kulik and Kulik's (1982) meta-analysis revealed that students

gained more (academically and attitudinally) from grouping.[10] Gamoran and Mare (1989)

found that students in the college track achieved more in mathematics and were more

likely to complete high school. According to Alexander, Cook, and McDill (1978),

placement in a college track increased eleventh-grade achievement, even when ability and

previous achievement were controlled. The advantage conferred to these students is

additionally very important for the pursuit of higher education. In fact, one study (see

Persell 1977) found that high school track, rather than ability, was the most important

variable in whether students went to college and what type of college they attended.

"Tracking confers advantages upon the college bound over and above those which follow

from the particulars of their program of study, from their scholastic performance, and

from whatever interpersonal resources they might be able to draw upon." (Alexander and

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[10] The present study focuses on high achieving students, but it would not be fair to mention that critics of tracking state that it is extremely detrimental to lower-track students, who are given less resources. This system introduces inequalities where none existed. Further, it perpetuates these and also preexisting inequalities as students in lower tracks fall behind because they have less opportunities. Low-level course tracking may be one factor linked to later dropout (Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle 1996). This may be important to the current study as those in lower tracks tend to be minorities and those of low SES. See Alexander, Cook, and McDill (1978), Hallinan (1992), and Page (1991) for more details. Kershaw (1992) and Rosenbaum (1976) also discuss the impact of negative subcultures and delinquent roles. Further, these types of criticisms are important to examine when looking at a program like the Chicago Scholars Program or a system of magnet schools which, though selecting high-achieving students, may also actually perpetuate such problems.

Cook 1982:638) Hence, Gamoran and Mare (1989) hypothesize that all students would gain more and have higher graduation rates if enrolled in a college-preparatory track. These effects may last beyond the high school years, as tracking "appears to influence not only learning and other characteristics of student life but also adult outcomes" (Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade 1987:112).

Another way that higher track placement may benefit students is in allowing them greater access to teacher and counseling resources, heightening the students' social capital. Both the quality and the quantity of instruction increase, as teachers are better, information more engaging, and on-task time (rather than disciplinary time) greater. Teachers spend more time with these students (and preparing for class), for whom they hold higher expectations (Persell 1977). When teachers (and peers) set these higher standards, students tend to live up to them by expending greater effort (Natriello and McDill 1986). Guidance counselors also apparently treat students of different tracks in dissimilar manners, giving them different kinds and amounts of information, leading noncollege track students to misunderstand their tracks and track implications (Borman and Spring 1984; Rosenbaum 1980). Persell (1977) also reports studies in which those in higher tracks were afforded more access to counselors as well as more encouragement. Rehberg and Rosenthal (1978) write that curriculum placement has more to do with whether a counselor encourages college for a student than do the student's social class or scholastic ability; boys in a college track were 2.5 times and girls 6.5 times more likely to be encouraged by guidance counselors to go to college than their noncollege track peers. Guidance counselors, then, nurture different patterns of career and educational expectations for different students. For students of high ability in the tracking system,

this means that they are given extra opportunities for knowledge, interaction, expectations, and relationships.

For the Chicago Scholars, however, this does not appear to be the case. These students (even those not in the academic tracks) are high achieving, high potential students, which means, according to previous research, that they should have more access to guidance counselors. According to students' reports in March and April 1998, however, this does not occur. Only one student (6 %) reported talking to a guidance counselor on a regular basis; three students (17 %) reported sometimes talking to a counselor; 14 others (78 %) reported speaking with a counselor never or almost never. To most of these students, not having the opportunity to speak with a counselor does not matter, but a few would like to have more contact. Since these students are sophomores, however, these relationships may change as college approaches. For instance, some students have not even thought about talking to a counselor, as it has not seemed relevant at this point in their educational careers. On the other hand, some students mentioned that counselors were too busy; one student said that she had given up trying to contact her counselor. From speaking with the students, it is unclear why they have such limited access to counselors, although it highly likely has to do with the Chicago Public School structure.

Other Means of Developing Social Capital in Schools

Research on tracking and education in general has shown that schools' expectations are particularly important in fostering achievement. One method by which schools can do this is to develop a sense of support and belonging among students (Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1990; Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994; Wehlage et al. 1989). A sense of

belonging should enhance motivation and connections and make students want to come to school, thereby increasing regular attendance which should lead to higher achievement. For instance, Lee, Winfield, and Wilson (1991) found that high achieving African-American students attended schools with a more positive attitude and higher student commitment than their peers who did not achieve at such high levels. Student engagement with and participation in school helps promote self-esteem, autonomy, positive social interactions, and commitment and attachment to school (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994; Wehlage et al. 1989). Through positive attachments and bonding, students imitate, identify with, and internalize the values, attitudes, and goals of the school and its personnel (Swanson and Spencer 1991). Bonds can lead to many positive outcomes: one program in Los Angeles which was created to provide such social bonds among students resulted in a 5 percent dropout rate for those students enrolled, compared to 35 percent school wide (William T. Grant Foundation 1988).

Because the large size of many high schools often renders them impersonal, it is necessary for schools actively to recruit students into a certain environment. Often, though, the teachers and other adults have too many students to provide much support for individuals (Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1990). Thus, more concretely, creating and maintaining these strong bonds means encouraging links between the students and both adults and peers (within the school). Occasions for shared activities can bind students together: school rituals, for example, initiate students into the community of the school and bind them together symbolically, inviting them to share the values of the school (Bryk, Lee, and Smith 1990). Additionally, the importance of fostering peer networks through extracurricular activities and other activities becomes even more important.

Nearly all of the Chicago Scholars are involved in some kind of extracurricular activity, demonstrating that they have ties to their schools outside of course work.

Fostering such bonds is especially crucial as students are about to enter a new school. Dauber, Alexander, and Entwisle (1996) argue that social background variables may play a more important role in these transition periods, especially into junior high, causing the potential negative effects of these transitions to be particularly prominent among minority and low-income students (Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994). For all students, these transitions may heighten academic and personal vulnerability as students face a move to a more heterogeneous social structure, a loss of social status, a larger school, different teachers and peers, and new bureaucratic structures (Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994). For example, the Chicago Scholars reported that they had to make a lot of adjustments when they entered high school, although more students said that it was easy to adjust than said it was hard to adjust. These changes included having to make new friends, having fewer close ties with students and faculty, having a different ethnic composition in school, and having more people and bigger school facilities. Because most schools lack formal mechanisms for integrating new students who face these changes into the system, it is important that transition programs, which socialize new students to the school and increase social capital in various ways, be undertaken. If students feel that they have the skills and knowledge to contend with their new environment, they are more likely to succeed. These programs can include providing students with information about their new schools (rules, academics, coping skills, etc.) and setting them up with older peer mentors. The use of mentors reduces alienation and forges social bonds, as well as allows the mentors to feel needed and responsible. (See Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994

for an evaluation of a transition program in Chicago.) Further, the social bonds created

through such programs may be particularly important because by the time students reach

the end of their first year of high school, they feel that support from their families and

schools has decreased significantly (Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994).

Because one major risk factor for students is a disconnection between schooling and

family life (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994), in addition to developing ties within the

school, creating bonds between home and school enhances achievement as it furthers a

sense that both school personnel and family are working together for the betterment of the

student (see Strickland and Cooper 1987 for specific relation to the education of black

children). In order to succeed, schools need to decrease the alienation between schools,

families, and social networks (Swanson and Spencer 1991). Thus, it is logical that of

schools serving low SES and minority students, those with the highest achieving students

had greater community support, more adult volunteers, and were more open to parent and

community involvement, and that high levels of parental involvement in school foster

academic achievement (Ascher and Flaxman 1987; Stevenson and Baker 1987). Parents

must be knowledgeable concerning their children's school and agree with the school's

goals because the parental goals of high achievers seem to match the demands of their

children's schools (Greenberg and Davidson 1972). In Chicago, this home-school

relationship is exemplified by schools such as Lane Technical (one of the two Chicago

high schools to have above-average ACT scores and the school of 11 Chicago Scholars)

in which the school and its officials "select their students and fill classroom seats with

children motivated to learn and whose parents support them." (Vander Weele 1994:245)

The schools which most of the Chicago Scholars attend are generally successful in

involving parents as well as communities. Such magnet schools tend both to exist in areas of community involvement with education and to produce high levels of parent and community involvement (possibly because of the voluntary enrollment factor) (Blank 1986). Magnet schools have been found to have more involvement with private, public, and nonprofit organizations, including business, industry, higher education, and cultural institutions (Blank 1986). Thus, students in these schools can access a large number and variety of sources of social capital.

Social capital is also developed when a student stays in the same school, because this allows students and their families to build and promote ties and goals and to understand their role within the schools. Families that move often have less social capital, for their moves disrupt relationships and social ties (Boisjoly, Duncan, and Hofferth 1995; Coleman 1988; Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996). In fact, Teachman, Paasch, and Carver (1996) found that each additional school change increased a student's chance of dropping out before graduation by 34 percent. Parents and children, if they have moved, have less understanding about the new schools, the teachers, and available resources; the teachers may be less willing to commit time and resources to these students (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996). The schools that the Chicago Scholars attend have significantly lower mobility rates (students transferring in and out of the school), inferring that the peer groups are more likely to stay the same, creating stronger social capital (see table 4.)

The Role of Teachers

Within schools, teachers serve an important role in the interplay of social capital, and support and help on the part of teachers and staff may enhance students' academic

performance (see Clark 1991). Schools which help students and foster success have teacher-student interactions governed by reciprocity and relationships of moderate intensity, in which teachers support students' academic and social endeavors (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994). Such teachers accept personal responsibility for the success of the students, meaning that the teaching role is extended (Wehlage et al. 1989). Because school systems fail to provide needed support for many students, having a supportive school-based adult figure is extremely important for many students (see Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994). In a study of low SES, inner-city adolescents, the importance of formal sources of support, such as teachers, became increasingly important with age and was especially helpful for black males (Cauce, Felner, and Primavera 1982). Similarly, one Chicago Scholar stated that he has a teacher with whom he speaks when he needs advice or is having trouble and that this relationship within the school has been very important.

Background characteristics of both students and teachers can get in the way of these potential relationships. Many studies have found that teachers discriminate against minority or low-income students, either because of perceptual biases or because of self-fulfilling prophecies (Persell 1977; Rist 1973; see also Clark 1991; Farkas et al. 1990; Natriello and McDill 1986). School personnel may favor students of higher SES and perceive students of color or those with lower family incomes as having less academic ability (Kershaw 1992). While a study by Ehrenberg, Goldhaber, and Brewer (1995) found that the race, gender, and ethnicity of a teacher did not impact how much students learn, it did impact the teachers' subjective evaluations of the students, making, for instance, a black female teacher's opinion of black female students higher than a black

male teacher's opinion of the same students. Additionally, Persell (1977) reported that low-income and minority students were more influenced by teacher expectations.

Social Capital and Peers

Peers can also act either to enhance or to inhibit academic success, depending on relationships and on whether peer groups value academics or not. Peers, especially friends, have a significant impact on how students perceive their academic competencies as well as upon their attitudes toward school. Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994) write that this attitude may be a strong predictor of grades, test scores, and confidence. Peer support and attachment have also been shown to help children succeed and perform better in school, even despite great odds (Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1990; see Reyes, Gillock, and Kobus 1994). Stating that "shared goals of academic success reinforce their [students'] dreams and goals of going to college," the ACI Chicago Scholars Program (1997) acknowledges that peer support is "essential for adolescents to remain on the academic track." Thus, the program is intended to develop close bonds between the students. On the other hand, peers can act to inhibit academic success. While higher self-concept was related to higher social support from peers, GPA and absenteeism did not benefit from higher levels of peer support (Cauce, Felner, and Primavera 1982). The authors attributed this to the effects of value conformity within this system (inner-city), in which low academic achievement is commonplace. While these students may feel better about themselves, they may also feel more pressure to conform to the low-achieving that they see all around them.

The special case of friends.

While peers can act to enhance or inhibit success in schools, friends play an even larger role. Tracking also enters into this equation, as placement in higher tracks may give students a chance to interact with peers of similar mind-sets, who then act both as resources and encouragement, creating social capital. The environments in which a student travels influence peer interaction as well as friendship selection. Assignment to the same social group increases interaction and promotes similarities, thus promoting friendships. Consequently, the majority of a student's friends come from the same track in which the student is enrolled (Karweit and Hansell 1983) and friendships are enhanced and deepened through the similar opportunities afforded to students of the same track (Hallinan and Sørensen 1985; Hallinan and Williams 1990).

Friends are particularly important because friendship is an arena which shapes a student's self-concept and because friendships provide special space for social interactions (and social capital). Friends create reference groups which set norms, beliefs, values, and standards of behavior; additionally, they influence aspirations, achievements, values, attitudes, skills, and social roles. Studies have found that students who do well academically and value education have friends who do so as well (Cauce 1986; Epstein 1983; see also Clark 1991). In fact, Epstein (1983) found that friends influence academic achievement more than a student's family SES. Bryk, Lee, and Smith (1990) report that students with high-achieving friends have higher scores, regardless of ability. In a national study, Hallinan and Williams (1990) determined that friends had great influences on each others' college plans and attendance, especially when those friends were in the same track and of the same gender. These relations are evidenced by

one Chicago Scholar who reported that her friends were important to her because they expected her to succeed and to attend college. Additionally, unlike with parents, school authorities, or teachers, students find their friends easily accessible and generally trustworthy (Hallinan and Williams 1990). In turn, perceiving friends as emotionally supportive leads to increased school competence (Cauce 1986). Supportive friends also help a student to deal with adverse peer pressure from other students: one Chicago Scholar who felt pressured to join a gang reported that he changed his peer group and having new friends eliminated his problem. Therefore, the special relations social capital creates between friends serve to facilitate the actions and values of the students involved. For academically successful students, friends are an important source of affirmation and support.

A Student's Personal Traits

Within the family and community, but especially within the school, students' personal traits play a great role in the social capital exchange. In many studies, student personality and academic success are strongly correlated. Research has found a clear and persistent relationship between high self-concept and academic achievement (Allen 1980; Clark 1983; Purkey 1970; Wang and Gordon 1994). The causal model has been suggested to work both ways: academic success fosters high self-image or high self-image fosters academic success. Either way, children who achieve academically thus have high loci of control, self-esteem, self-efficacy, expectations, aspirations, goals, and autonomy; they believe that life has meaning and have goal directions and problem-solving skills (Garner and Cole 1986; Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1994). Clark's (1983) study of academically successful students coming from poor black families gives case study

reports of the qualities of these students: they are proud, independent, self-directed, mature, self-confident, self-assured, determined, responsible, goal-oriented, and have coping strategies and stay away from negative peer influences. The profiles of the Chicago Scholars, as gleaned from interviews in March and April 1998, seem to fit this portrait quite well, for the most part. Many of the students are very articulate, assertive, mature, self-confident, and self-motivated. They seem well aware of psychological processes that will allow them to succeed. Having set themselves on a college course, they are determined and willing to follow it. One way in which these traits may influence academic achievement is that teachers have been found to grade as much (or perhaps even more) on student work habits as upon actual course work mastery, meaning that those students who exhibit great effort and turn in neat work will be rewarded with good grades (Farkas et al. 1990; Farkas 1996). Additionally, students who believe that they have (internal) control over their education also achieve success (Bandura et al. 1996; Garner and Cole 1986). The Chicago Scholars, in general, feel they have a great deal of control over their education; when surveyed, no students felt that they had little or no control over their education.

WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT THE CHICAGO SCHOLARS PROGRAM?

Very little research and evaluation has been done of educational programs such as the ACI Chicago Scholars Program, but on reading of some of those that have been done, it is evident where this program falls short. For instance, the Say Yes to Education program in Philadelphia had coordinators that provided services such as tutoring (with recruits from area colleges), counseling, classroom consultations, home visits, advocacy,

mentoring, college visits, internships, and summer school (Newberg and Sims 1996). The program staff and the students developed close relationships through which students came to understand pressure and expectations and had a consistent source of support and social capital. Thus, a holistic and continuous approach was used, combining social services, academic monitoring, and parental involvement. Parents were involved through monthly meetings and discussions of topics of interest, such as discipline, teenage sexuality, and goal-setting. This program was successful in graduating more students than a comparison group (at a 5 percent level of significance).

The ACI Chicago Scholars Program, while purporting (in theory) to do similar things, has not (in practice), for various reasons which include subcontracting problems. From the program's inception, an organizational structure was not in place which was equipped to deal with all of the various problems and situations that would arise. For instance, a program director was supposed to serve as a liaison between ACI and the Chicago Public Schools, especially to ensure that the students selected for participation met the nomination criteria. However, much of the work was subcontracted out of ACI, making this and subsequent processes difficult, especially when coupled with the intricacies of maneuvering through the Chicago Public School system. After the students were selected, additional problems arose. People hired to oversee tutoring programs, for example, did not always attend scheduled tutoring sessions. Additionally, because there were many contact people for the program, students were often uncertain who to contact with questions or concerns. Recently, ACI has addressed such issues with new staff assignments, hopefully eliminating (or at least reducing) such problems.

While the program does give the students opportunities to interact with each other, which many students have stated has been a benefit, it has mainly been left to the students to create their own social capital with regards to the program. The apparent level of interest in the ACI Chicago Scholars Program among the selected students seems to be quite varied. Some students have not communicated with the program coordinators at all in the past two years--for instance, not turning in any report cards. On the other hand, some students are in frequent contact through e-mail and postal mail or have turned to the program when they wanted help with activities such as finding a job. One student, for instance, contacted the program coordinator for help when he was having difficulty in chemistry, did not receive help from his teacher, and could not find a tutor. This same student notified the coordinator when he had a personal tragedy, letting her know how he felt and why he may be having trouble at school. This student worked on developing his own social capital, using the program as a source, when he was unable to find it in other arenas. Thus, some of the students have done well at developing social capital through various activities. These students seem very well-prepared to enter college and have had many life experiences which have allowed them to build great and marketable skills, such as typing.

One of the programs which set out both to help students academically and to increase their relationships with their peers was tutoring. When surveyed in August 1997, eight of 14 respondents (57 %) felt that tutoring was fun, nine (64 %) felt that it was worthwhile, and 12 (86 %) reported that they learned something. While the students may have gained something from tutoring, they were not necessarily convinced it helped them academically. Only five (36 %) felt that tutoring helped them to maintain their grades,

and five also felt that it improved their grades. However, students did appear to take advantage of tutoring opportunities when they needed them (see Table 7). For instance, fall 1996 GPA seemed to affect spring 1997 attendance at tutoring. That is, only two out of 18 (11 %) of those students with GPAs above 4.0 in the fall of 1996 and seven of 18 (39 %) of those with GPAs above 3.0 attended tutoring, while six of seven (86 %) of those students with GPAs below 3.0 attended tutoring (all six at least half of the sessions). Overall, 52 percent of the students participated in this tutoring. Spring 1997 GPA also appeared to affect the summer 1997 tutoring attendance. All of those with GPAs below 3.0 attended tutoring, although all but one attended less than half of the time; only four of those with GPAs above 3.0 attended. Overall attendance was 41 percent.

Nevertheless, tutoring as set up does not fulfill all of the students' needs. A tutor with the program, Masha Shtyenberg, stated that more tutoring would be necessary for some of the students to really achieve (ACI Chicago Scholars Program 1997). For instance, attending spring tutoring did not appear to influence spring grades, although this could be due to missing data (15 of 29 missing). While these data do appear to show that those with lower GPAs were more inclined to attend, does this mean that these students were not helped by tutoring or that these students needed more help to begin with (and had lower GPAs in the fall, since GPAs are cumulative)? Other students have difficulty with tutoring times or location. From self-reports, though, most of the students believe that they already have good study skills. This is reflected in the amount of time they spend studying per day: four (22 %) spend one hour, three (17 %) spend between one and two hours, four (22 %) spend two hours, five (28 %) spend between two and three hours, and

two (11 %) spend between three and five hours. The number of hours a student spends on homework outside of school per day does not appear to affect GPA.

Table 7. Tutoring Attendance.

	Number (n = 29)	Percent
Spring 1997		
0 percent	12	41
1-49 percent	3	10
50-100 percent	14	48
Those with GPAs		
below 3.0, fall 1996*	6	86
Summer 1997		
0 percent	17	59
1-49 percent	9	31
50-100 percent	3	10
Those with GPAs		
below 3.0,		
spring 1997*	5	100

* For whom information is available, n = 7 and n = 5, respectively

FULFILLMENT OF CONTRACTS

Table 8. Fulfillment of Chicago Scholars' Contracts.

	N	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Fall 1996 semester end				
Without classes below B-	27	6	21	22
GPA above 3.0	28	21	72	75
95 % (or more) attendance	27	24	83	89
Spring 1997 semester end				
Without classes below B-	15	7	24	47
GPA above 3.0	17	12	41	71
95 % (or more) attendance	15	10	34	67
Overall				
GPA above 3.0	17	12	41	71
95 % (or more) attendance	15	13	45	87

In their first semester of high school, 28 students turned in grades, although some data is missing because not all turned in report cards. Of these 28, 21 (75 %) had GPAs above 3.0. Of the students who had GPAs below 3.0, only one had a GPA below 2.0. The mean GPA was 3.40. In addition to maintaining a 3.0 GPA, students are required to achieve at least "B"s in all core courses. However, only six students out of 27 (22%) had all As or Bs while nine students (33%) had three or more classes with grades below B-. In comparison to the other students at their schools, the Chicago Scholars are doing well, as they stated in interviews. The mean class rank percentile of these (27) students was 18.93. Four students (15 %) were in the top one percent of their class, 13 (48 %) in the top 10 percent, and 20 (74 %) in the top 25 percent. Only two students (7 %) were below fiftieth percentile. Most students are fulfilling attendance requirements. Of 27 students, 24 students (89 %) had 95 percent or higher attendance; 14 students (52%) had perfect attendance. No one had less than 89 percent attendance. Overall, seven students of 28 (25 %) were not meeting the requirements (four students for grades and three students for both grade and attendance requirements). Attendance and grade point average seem to be associated. Of the 27 students, all three of those with attendance below 95 percent also had GPAs below 3.0. For those with perfect attendance, six of 14 (43 %) had GPAs above 4.0; 13 of 14 (93 %) had GPAs above 3.0.

One of the potential reasons that students perhaps did not do as well as they would have liked this first semester was related to making the transition to high school (see above). While the average high school that they attend enrolls 2000 students, the schools from which they came tended to be small. In these grammar schools, students had more personalized attention. Additionally, students generally stated that they did not have to

work or study hard at all in grammar school (i.e., do homework outside of school) in order to attain good grades. Thus, when they entered what are for the most part quite competitive high schools, some of the students did not realize how much work they would have to do to continue to receive high grades. Shtyenberg wrote that many students did not realize that they would have to do more to study in high school than simply reading over the material in the textbooks (ACI Chicago Scholars Program 1997). She further commented (in the summer following the students' first year of high school), "This group of students left with me an impression of intelligent, independently-minded, interested and dynamic students. They seem to be at different stages of adapting to the new independence and demands of high school, where the critical stage is to realise that intelligence doesn't substitute for work." In speaking with the students three-fourths of the way through their sophomore year, it is apparent that some students now have a different attitude toward school, one which presses them to work harder.

For the most part, however, there is a positive relationship between grammar school reading and math scores and overall high school GPA (although again there is not enough information to be certain). One-half (three of six) of those students who had below a 3.0 in reading in grammar school also had an overall GPA below 3.0 in their first semester of high school; of those above a 3.0 in grammar school reading, 92 percent (18 out of 22) had above a 3.0 in this semester. (This relationship is not significant according to contingency analysis [$\chi^2 = 2.74$].) Grammar school math GPA also seemed to affect fall 1996 GPA (although again not significant according to contingency analysis [$\chi^2 = 4.93$]). All three of those with GPAs below 3.0 in grammar school math had below a 3.0 in their overall GPA in high school while only four of 25 (16 %) of those with a grade school

math GPA below 3.0 did. But, many students experienced changes in their GPAs.

Overall, when comparing grammar school GPA (calculated using three years of math and reading grades) with first semester high school GPA, of the 29 Chicago Scholars, 17 percent (five students) had less than a 0.1 change, 35 percent (10 students) improved their GPAs, and 48 percent (14 students) received a lower GPA.[11] Interestingly, sex played a role in these changes, significant at 5 percent ($\chi^2 = 6.34$): girls' GPAs were more likely to decrease and boys' GPAs were more likely to increase.

After the first semester, the number of students turning in grade reports fell dramatically. In the spring of 1997, 17 students reported grade point averages. Of these, 12 (71 %) had GPAs of 3.0 or above; no students had GPAs below 2.0. The mean GPA was 3.42. Seven of 15 students (47 %) had all As or Bs, while four (27 %) had three or more classes with grades below B-. Again, Chicago Scholars did well compared to the other students in their schools: the mean class rank percentile for the 15 students was, 16.47. Two students (13 %) were in the top one percent, nine (60 %) in the top 10 percent, and 11 (73 %) in the top 25 percent. Only one student was below the fiftieth percentile. Attendance was not quite as good this semester: 10 out of 15 (67 %) had 95 percent or better attendance; no one had below 89 percent attendance. As compared to first semester, only 27 % (versus 52 %) had missed no days of school. Again, attendance

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[11] As one student's first semester high school GPA was unavailable, I substituted her second semester GPA. Additionally, regression analysis showed that none of the following variables had a significant effect on changes in GPA from grammar school to high school: number of people in family, number of siblings, sibling place, family income, mother's employment, parental involvement with school, how much a student values education as compared to the student's parents, students' self-perceived academic ability, magnet versus nonmagnet schools, number of hours spent on homework, or school attendance rates.

did appear to be associated with GPA. Three of five (60 %) of those with attendance

below 95 percent also had GPAs below 3.0, and all of those with 100 percent attendance

had GPAs above 3.0. Thus, in the spring, seven students did not meet the requirements

(two for grades, two for attendance, three for both.)

When these first two semesters are combined, 12 of 17 students (71 %) are achieving

a GPA above a 3.0 and 13 of 15 (87 %) have an attendance record of at least 95 percent

(see Table 8). Thus, five students are not meeting the requirements, and many others'

statuses are unknown. Nearly no students have turned in report cards from the present

school year, so it is difficult to say what the patterns look like for sophomore year. It is

also important to remember that both attendance and grade requirements are cumulative

(95 % attendance and 3.0 GPA overall in order to receive the scholarships).

Other Factors in Students' Lives and Access to Social Capital

While information is difficult to gather, the ACI Chicago Scholars program is

apparently helping students access social capital to an extent, although not as much as it

professes to be. For instance, while all students felt that the program was preparing them

for college, many reported that they would like additional support, such as psychological

training, a peer program, or academic/major counseling (all factors involved in other

successful programs). Students also would like to see programs such as sports and

volunteer activities and help with finding jobs (ACI did do a survey in January 1998 to

help students find jobs). Additionally, these students do not feel that the program

provides them with special college access. While some students expressed that being

nominated as an ACI Chicago Scholar makes them more motivated to achieve, all stated

that they would have attended college without this scholarship promise. Indeed, these

students appear to be those who would have excelled even without the lure of a college

scholarship and the Chicago Scholars Program. They have a wide variety of aspirations

and also a wide variety of possible majors, ranging from the fine and performing arts to

the social sciences to business to humanities to math, natural sciences, and computers.

The students, for the most part, aspire to professional occupations, such as engineering,

law, social work, financial advising, and medicine.

Many people would expect that these students would name stereotypical urban

problems--such as gangs, drugs, and violence--as barriers to high achievement in school

and to their life goals. However, in August 1997, only two students expressed pressures

from peers, gangs, or drugs (including alcohol). These students stated that they had

learned to walk away from these pressures. Others declared that they had decided before

the Chicago Scholars Program not to get involved with those activities and to surround

themselves with supportive people. This is not to say that the students are unaware of the

problems within their city--one of the goals of one student is to open a homeless shelter if

she makes enough money. Rather than stereotypical city problems, the students

expressed more common adolescent concerns, such as time management, self-discipline,

lack of study skills, fear of failure, fear of public speaking, and shyness or loneliness.

These trends were confirmed by student interviews in March and April 1998: only

four of 18 students (22 %) said that they experienced some peer pressure, mostly

involving cutting classes or cheating in school, not the stereotypical peer pressures listed

above. Other students again stated that they stay out of trouble or bad situations; one

student said she has learned not to be a victim and is thus involved in the Peer

Intervention Program (PIP) at her school. Another student expressed the view that peer

pressure is something that you put upon yourself. In addition, only three students (17 %) expressed any concerns that might keep them from getting good grades: a parental divorce, the fear of bad influences (on the part of friends and family), and an unspecified source. All other students (83 %) stated that they had no worries about not succeeding in high school.

CONCLUSION

A report by the ACI Chicago Scholars Program (1997) stated the following: "Academic success does not come solely from intellectual talents. Rather, it comes from these abilities being nurtured and supported by a good education, family, peers, and the community." (See Appendix A for the full document.) The program, by including the support systems of family, peers, and community, recognizes that social capital is crucial in fostering academic success. Indeed, the Chicago Scholars Program, as conceived, is an example of social capital at work, striving to create bonds between its students, their peers, families, communities, and schools. However, because of organizational difficulties from the very start, the program has fallen short of its potential, as students have been unable to access its coordinator or attend tutoring, for instance. From the information available, though, the Chicago Scholars are for the most part faring well in high school and are likely to continue this path of academic excellence and to attend college.

In general, then, students who do well in school academically are those students who have access to social capital in their families, schools, communities, and through peers. Often, these groups are connected to and involved with each other. These students are

also those to whom attention is given through such channels as academic tracks or magnet schools and of whom much is expected by families and schools. Through relationships, these students come to understand what is expected of them, how they can achieve their potentials and goals, and are given pathways to do so.

In recognizing the potential of low-income students of color in the Chicago Public School System, the ACI Chicago Scholars Program attempts to break through some of the gloom and despair caused by a focus on the failures of the public schools. Students from backgrounds that many would consider disadvantaged can excel, especially when they live in families and communities and attend schools which develop relationships and social networks. Highlighting the achievement of these students and looking at their assets and the backgrounds from which they come, such as membership in an immigrant community, is an opportune way to recognize, sustain, and further cultivate the potential of these students. As ACI becomes more experienced with operating this type of program, it could be an effective member of the social capital team, helping these students to achieve.

Appendix A

Reprint of the "Executive Summary" of the ACI Chicago Scholars Program Progress Report, October 1997

The ACI Chicago Scholars Program helps low-income and minority students access the nurturing environment provided by member colleges and universities of the Associated Colleges of Illinois. The focus of the program is to put promising minority students on a higher education track and motivate them to stay on it. Through tutoring, mentoring, and events at ACI colleges, the ACI Chicago Scholars Program provides a support system to help them become highly competitive college applicants. Scholars who successfully complete this program will be awarded scholarships to ACI colleges.

The ACI Scholars were nominated by their public school teachers and counselors and chosen for their success in grade school. They represent a diversity of cultures including African-American, Chinese-American, Vietnamese-American, Native American, and Mexican-American.

Academic success does not come solely from intellectual talents. Rather, it comes from these abilities being nurtured and supported by a good education, family, peers, and the community. The ACI Chicago Scholars Program contributes educational support by providing year-round tutoring to help students maintain good grades and learn effective study skills.

Family support is important to the Scholars. It is their parents, siblings, and relations who encourage them to continue to achieve. The ACI Chicago Scholars Program helps the families to continue to support their children on the academic track by providing workshops related to higher education. Ultimately, financial support will be provided when the Scholar enters an ACI college. The program not only puts the child on the academic track, but the whole family, as well.

Peer support is essential for adolescents to remain on the academic track. During the academic camps and events, the Scholars have developed a close bond with one another. Their shared goals of academic success reinforce their dreams and goals of going to college and having a successful career.

Community support is provided on two levels. One, the Scholars are initiated in the academic community on campus. They attend activities on various ACI campuses. Each Scholar has a college mentor who serves as a role model and provides encouragement and support.

Finally, the Scholars are supported by the larger business community through generous financial donations to the program. The Scholars are very appreciative of being in this program and of the individuals and businesses that support it. Included in this report is a profile of each Scholar. Many have included messages of thanks to the donors and feelings about what the program means to them.

Appendix B.

Table 9. N's, Means, and Standard Deviations for Data.

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grammar math GPA	29	3.34	0.81
Grammar reading GPA	29	3.41	0.63
Attendance: sixth grade	27	96.82	4.04
Attendance: seventh grade	28	96.54	5.27
Attendance: eighth grade	28	96.18	2.86
ITBS math percentile	29	87.62	6.34
ITBS reading percentile	29	70.48	15.70
Family income	28	23,707	18,863
Spring tutoring attendance (percent)	26	34.46	34.82
Summer tutoring attendance (percent)	29	17.00	23.21
Family size	25	4.88	1.20
Number of siblings	25	2.36	1.29
Fall 1996 semester end: Number of classes below B-	27	1.89	1.74
Fall 1996 semester end: GPA	28	3.40	0.76
Fall 1996 semester end: Class rank percentile	27	18.93	20.40
Fall 1996 semester end: Attendance rate	27	97.90	3.13
Spring 1997 semester end: Number of classes below B-	15	1.33	1.80
Spring 1997 semester end: GPA	17	3.42	0.80
Spring 1997 semester end: Class rank percentile	15	16.47	16.51
Spring 1997 semester end: Attendance rate	15	96.55	3.74

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