

Erikson Institute New Schools Project

Data brief for 2010–11

New Schools Project: A PreK–3rd initiative

The New Schools Project partners with Chicago Public Schools to promote high-quality early education, PreK–3rd grade.

The project targets five key elements of PreK–3rd:

- Caring, inclusive classroom learning communities
- High-quality teaching that is intellectually challenging
- Responsive practices and comprehensive curricula that support the development of the whole child, including the social-emotional skills necessary for high levels of learning
- Continuous assessment to guide teaching and learning
- Family and cultural connections

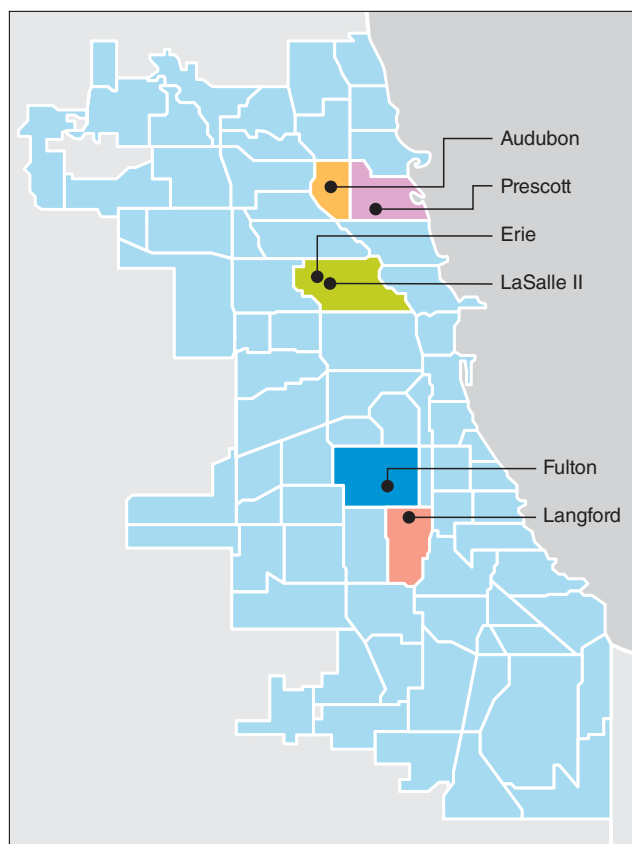
The New Schools Project partnered with six schools during the 2010 academic year and facilitated an Academy of Urban School Leadership (AUSL) Early Childhood Task Force. The task force developed recommendations for integrating elements of PreK–3rd across all 14 AUSL turn-around schools.

The New Schools Project professional development approach

The New Schools Project provides coordinated professional development supports that increase early educators' knowledge and teaching skills and build strong PreK–3rd communities of practice. A facilitator serves onsite at each partner school to provide the following:

- Formal professional development
- Classroom observations
- Co-teaching to model new practices
- Teacher coaching
- Co-facilitation of grade-level and cross-grade-level teams to build PreK–3rd communities of practice
- Consultation for administrators

Participating schools and locations



John Audubon Elementary School

3500 North Hoyne Avenue

Erie Elementary Charter School

1405 North Washtenaw Avenue

Robert Fulton Elementary School

5300 South Hermitage Avenue

Anna R. Langford Community Academy

6010 South Throop Street

LaSalle II World Language Academy

1148 North Honore Avenue

William Prescott Elementary School

1632 West Wrightwood

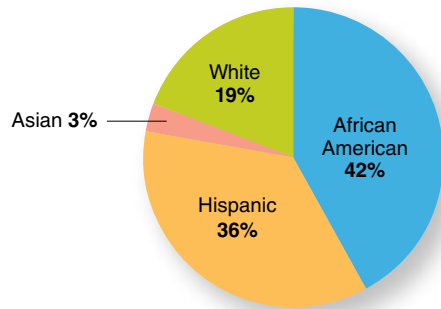
“We are making academic gains due to the New Schools Project.”

—Teacher, New Schools Project partner school

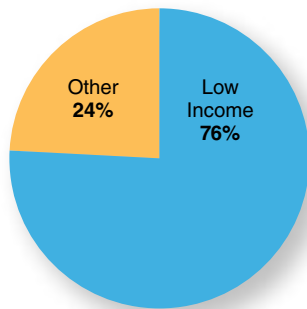
Who are New Schools Project's students?

In 2010–11, the New Schools Project served more than 1,500 PreK–3rd grade students enrolled in racially and linguistically diverse partner schools in Chicago. A large majority of these students were from low-income communities.

Students by race



Students by income



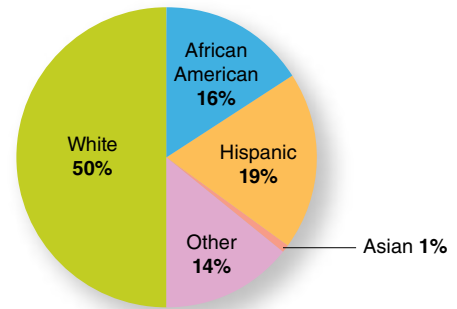
“Our PreK–3rd team has really come together as a unit to bring high-quality early childhood education to our school. The New Schools Project has been instrumental in guiding that process of self-evaluation and transformation.”

—Teacher, New Schools Project partner school

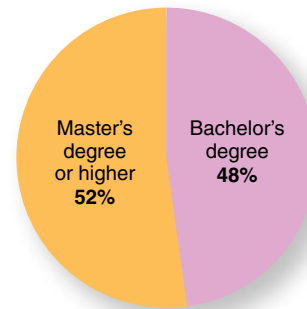
Who are New Schools Project's teachers?

More than 130 teachers, teacher assistants, and content specialists received intensive professional development. Teachers had an average of 9.5 years of experience. Slightly over one half had advanced degrees.

Teachers by race



Teacher education



“We are constantly improving and understanding more about early childhood, and I'm excited about the direction we are heading.”

“I feel that I am constantly growing as an educator due to the high-level conversations about PreK–3rd teaching and learning and the one-on-one professional support I receive.”

—Teachers, New Schools Project partner schools

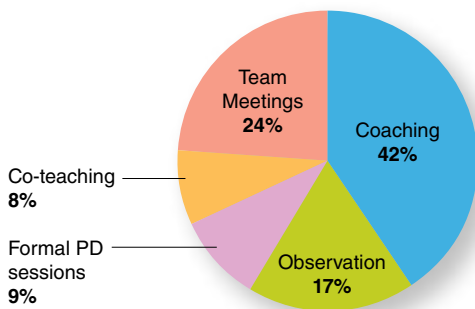
What professional development did the New Schools Project provide?

School-based support to teachers

New Schools Project facilitators provided more than 2,400 hours of professional development support to teachers.

The majority of this support was provided through one-on-one interaction between the facilitator and teacher, including coaching, classroom observations, and co-teaching.

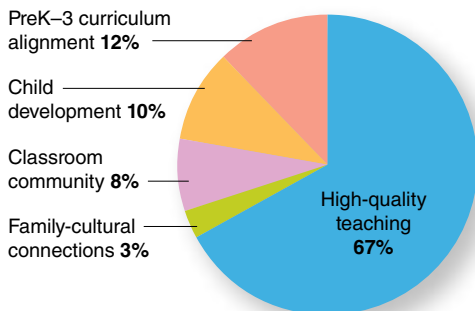
Facilitators also helped lead team meetings, promoting the alignment of learning expectations, curriculum, instruction, and assessments across PreK–3rd.



Content of school-based teacher support

The majority of professional development support to teachers focused on high-quality teaching.

Formal professional development sessions also addressed other elements of high quality PreK–3rd, including curricular alignment and assessment.



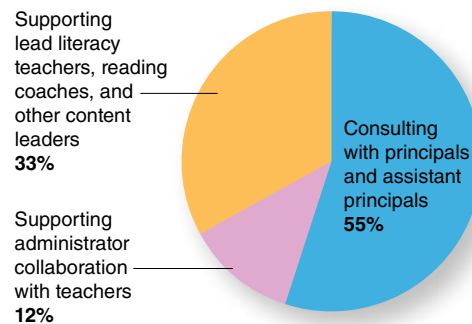
How did the New Schools Project support school administrators?

New Schools Project facilitators spent 19 percent of their time on-site at partner schools giving support to administrators and other school leaders.

Facilitators provided consultation regarding PreK–3rd curriculum, teaching practices, assessment, and cross-grade alignment.

Support to administrators

The majority of support to administrators focused on consultation with principals about PreK–3rd policies and practices.



“Our work with the New Schools Project has helped us make significant instructional reforms. Previously, there was little vertical alignment in our curriculum. Now we can build on children’s learning grade after grade, PreK–3rd grade.”

—Principal, New Schools Project partner school

What network-wide activities did the New Schools Project support?

The New Schools Project supplemented school-based support with network-wide PreK–3rd professional development activities.

Summer workshops

Sixty teachers participated in summer professional development workshops. Topics included assessment,



team communication, creating inclusive classroom communities, reading comprehension, and intellectual rigor in PreK–3rd teaching and learning.

Leadership meetings

Administrators in partner schools participated in quarterly leadership meetings to explore topics such as benchmarks of progress in PreK–3rd and tools for early childhood classroom observations.

Year-end conference

Thirty-four teachers participated in “A Celebration of PreK–3rd Learning,” a culminating conference that featured instructional presentations by teachers in the New Schools Project network.

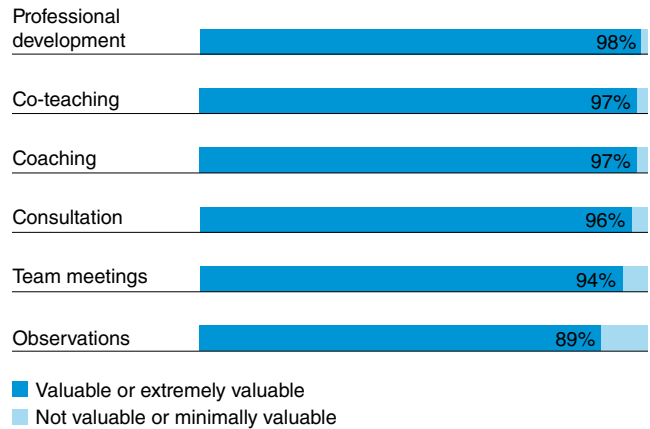


Did the New Schools Project benefit teachers’ development?

Perceived value of supports by teachers

Teachers rated how valuable each type of support was for their development as a teacher during 2010–11.

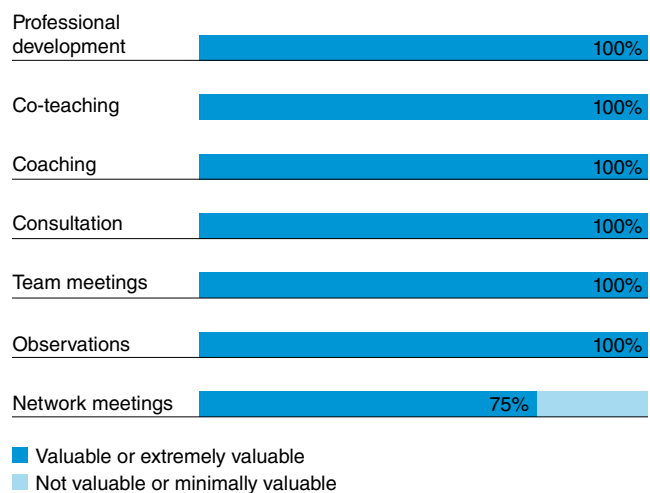
A large majority of teachers rated all types of support as valuable or extremely valuable.



Perceived value of supports by principals

Principals from partner schools rated how valuable they perceived each type of support to be for their teachers’ development.

Principals were unanimous in reporting “high value” for all school-based supports.

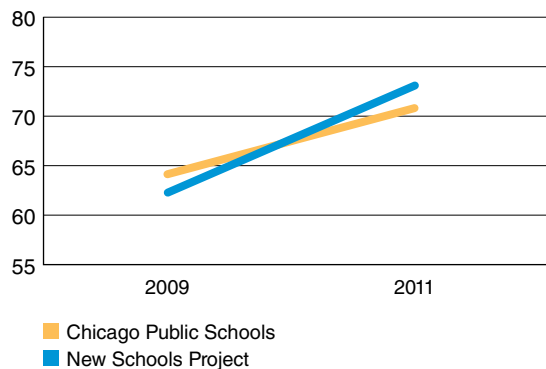


Did students make academic gains?

Schools in the New Schools Network showed slightly accelerated gains on the ISAT. On average, third graders gained more than 9.6 percentage points in their composite reading and math scores from 2009 to 2011 as compared to the Chicago Public School district average of 6.4 percentage points.

Mean ISAT composite scores

Percent meets or exceeds



How did the project contribute to the broader dialogue about PreK–3rd reforms?

Policy Forum

In March 2011, New Schools hosted *Preschool through 3rd Grade: A Dialogue on Educational Reform* in collaboration with Erikson’s Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. At the forum, a diverse group of stakeholders explored the new educational possibilities suggested by the PreK–3rd approach. Speakers presented the national view on PreK–3rd as educational reform, analyzed research upon which it is grounded, and highlighted key dimensions of policy that impact PreK–3rd.

More than 100 individuals participated in the forum, including public school administrators, policy advocates,

community-based early childhood program administrators, policy researchers, and higher education faculty. Fifty additional individuals participated via webcast. The perspectives voiced by these participants are shaping a second forum on the PreK–3rd approach to be held in early 2012.

National Conferences

Partner school principals, teachers, and facilitators advanced new ideas and shared lessons learned about PreK–3rd through an array of conference presentations.

Highlights include two presentations at the 2010 international conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children:

- PreK–3rd and Educational Equity: Constructing Intellectually-Challenging Curricula for Young Children to Help Close Learning Gaps
- High Quality PreK–3rd as Educational Reform: What Do School Administrators Really Need to Know and Do?

For further information, please contact

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