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BLACK STUDENT EMPOWERMENT AND CHICAGO School Reform Efforts in 1968

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Current school reform efforts in Chicago have gained national attention, but little is known about the struggle for educational reform that took place in the 1960s. Black students, surrounded by the organizing in their communities and the events shaping the civil rights and Black Power movements, moved to correct the injustices they experienced at their schools in 1968. After several protests at individual schools, students organized citywide boycotts demanding community control, Black administrators, more Black history courses, and various other school improvements. Their protests led to increased Black administrators and increased Black history courses. The most significant accomplishment was the organized efforts to improve their education.

With the advent of the Black Power movement in Chicago, like many other cities there was waning interest in the desegregation of public schools and increased attention to community control of the schools Black youth already attended. As the hard-fought battle for desegregation in the North led to few results, Joseph M. Cronin (1973) suggested “a new and younger group of activists . . . placed little trust in the white man’s willingness to correct injustices” (pp. 185-186). Black high school students in Chicago, witnessing or participating in the activism surrounding them (Carson, 1981; Chafe, 1980; Exum, 1985), followed in the footsteps of Black community organizations, teachers, and parents, and organized for community control and quality education first at their local high schools and then citywide. Their demands included more Black administrators, community and student participation in school

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decision making, additional Black history courses, inclusion of Black contributions in every subject, more homework, and Black business participation in school sales (rings, pictures, etc.).

Although it seemed like the entire nation was in the fervor of activism and organizing in the 1960s and 1970s, the reality was that the majority of people remained on the sidelines, inheriting the benefits of the movement by observing it, criticizing it, or working against it. A group of high school students took control of school reform efforts through the Black Power ideology and community control despite the threat of suspension, arrests, and expulsion. Their empowerment served as an awakening to school central administration, which viewed previous community school reform efforts as outside meddling in school affairs, that students were conscious about the miseducation they were receiving at their schools and serious about reforming the educational deficiencies. Black students, like teachers and parents, wanted an education that reflected their image, was controlled in their best interest, and was going to benefit their communities.

Much of what is written about the community control/decentralization efforts focuses on the New York City teacher strikes and the Ocean Hill–Brownsville school controversy (Berube & Gitwell, 1969; Levin, 1970; Podair, 1994). Joseph M. Cronin (1973) defined *community control* as a community group with a cross section of the community gaining control over the operating budget, hiring and firing, and planning for building and repairing schools. I would also add curriculum control. *Decentralization*, on the other hand, is the breakdown of centralized bureaucracies into smaller, more local administrative districts. Decentralization is typically a top-down reform, whereas community control is bottom-up. Efforts at community control may lead to decentralization, as seen in New York, but again, much of the focus has been on decentralization. The focus of this article is on the student activists' attempts to garner community control of the schools they attended. Unlike New York City, however, their combined efforts with teachers and community members did not lead to decentralization. Their reform efforts led to increased Black administrators and curriculum changes. More important, it highlighted inadequate education, the

lack of Black representation in administrative positions, the lack of community input on school issues, and the radical attempts to reform the system.

HISTORIOGRAPHY/METHODOLOGY

William H. Chafe (1980, pp. 80-81) discussed the four North Carolina A&T students' sit-in protest within the realms of the organizing environment of Greensboro, North Carolina. According to Chafe, parents, teachers, and ministers instilled pride in the students through their own actions, which eventually inspired the students to become active. Clayborne Carson (1981, p. 9) went further by saying that the students acted first out of "suppressed resentments" and from their action the "ideological rationale" was developed. In other instances, Carson noted that some students were already trained or had participated in previous demonstrations (p. 16). Moreover, the students' actions illustrated that they could create a resistance movement without the guidance of established leaders or organizations. Exum (1985, p. 5) argued that the student activism was within the context of protests within the larger Black society. The students were not operating in a vacuum. He also argued that there was continuity within the student struggle that identified with the student activism in the 1920s and 1930s where students struggled for a special approach to the education of Black youth.

McCormick (1990, p. 4) viewed the Black student movement on White campuses as more than an extension of the civil rights movement, for Blacks in the urban ghettos faced employment, housing, and educational issues that were beyond civil rights. McCormick explained that Black Nationalism appealed to those students and education served as an essential component to empowerment. McCormick also noted that the militancy was not limited to Black students.

Muñoz (1989, p. 3), in his search to find a space for dialogue about the Chicano movement, criticized New Left scholars such as Westby (1976) for minimizing or leaving out the activities of students of color. The basic argument of those scholars was that the

Black student movement was one that did not challenge the American society but was a fight, “despite the rhetoric” (Westby, 1976, p. 39), that sought to create a place within the existing society for Blacks. Westby called Black students’ goals “typically limited” and “reformists.” Muñoz stated, “The work of the New Left scholars in the 1980s continued to promote the false image that the history of the 1960s was a history centered on white radical middle-class youth” (p. 3). I would further argue that although White student protest is an outgrowth of the civil rights movement, just as the Black Power movement and Black student protest, these authors make it seem as if the White leftist student movement is somehow superior to that of the Black student movement. Their lack of acknowledgement of this important progression of the movement and the ideological growth based on demands made and acquired, actions attempted that failed or succeeded, is disrespectful to the White student movement’s origins. Protests center around the needs of a people. Free speech is not that important when a group’s educational needs are not being met or if they cannot find decent affordable housing. It is in attempting to garner equality and achieve a true democracy that different groups received the training, understanding, and growth to meet their own needs. One movement is not superior to another. But without the civil rights movement, the complexion of the 1960s and this nation would be vastly different.

Although these scholars provide important theoretical dialogue for the Chicago movement, their discussions were primarily focused on college students either on or off campus. Although Chicago high school students’ protests demanded many of the same things, such as a space for the recognition of their humanity, and their actions were consistent with the activities within their communities, they were minors, still under the control and watchful eye of their parents and school authorities; and like Chicano students in East Los Angeles and Houston, they primarily represented working-class communities (Board of Education, 1966; Muñoz, 1989; San Miguel, 2001).

The research in this article is a combination of archival research and oral history. Information primarily from the six Chicago news-

papers was collected to piece together the narrative. The Chicago Police intelligence division, known as the Red Squad, had papers that supplied important data on the surveillance and demands of the student groups. The Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, as well as various other Board of Education records, provided valuable responses made by the school administration, demographics of the schools, and school policies.

BACKGROUND TO STUDENT MOVEMENT

To fully understand the student movement's origin and ideological underpinning, a brief discussion of Chicago's Black history, including segregation, civil rights, and Black Power is needed. The Black community in Chicago has been historically segregated, beginning with the Great Migration of Blacks from the South at the turn of the 20th century. Escaping the terrorism of lynching, sexual abuse, disenfranchisement, and degradation, Blacks entered the city by the thousands to find a new life. World War I, decreased European immigration, increased employment opportunities in northern industries, and southern industrialization and agricultural failures were some of the push/pull factors that catapulted Black migrants to Chicago. In 1900, Chicago's Black population was 30,150; 1.9% of the overall population. Just 20 years later, Blacks made up 6.9% of the population with 233,903 residents (Spear, 1967, pp. 5, 11, 12). One of the significant factors of the population increases was the city's maintenance of a segregated Black ghetto on Chicago's South Side. Black Chicago residents mostly lived in an area known as the Black Belt, a narrow piece of land stretching 30 blocks. Despite the increased migrant population, the Black area expanded at an extremely slow pace due to realtor's red-lining and other racist housing practices. A second wave of Black migrants entered Chicago's city limits beginning in the 1940s and continuing well into the 1960s. Many migrants from this group, settled on Chicago's West Side, expanding it to a second Black ghetto (Hirsh, 1983). As the South Side's ghetto expanded and the population increased, a massive construction of public housing high-rises was utilized to contain the Black population. In 1964, Chicago's Black

population was 930,000, while the city's White population decreased by 399,000 residents with the expansion of suburbs and the transportation infrastructure (Anderson & Pickering, 1986).

The immense increases in the Black population during both migrations, coupled with the restrictive housing policies, meant that neighborhood schools were largely segregated and overcrowded. A 1957 Chicago National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) report noted that due to de facto segregation, more than 90% of Chicago's students attended segregated schools. Many students were on double-shift assignments, where half came to school early and left early and the other half attended later and stayed later in the afternoon. To combat overcrowding, Superintendent Benjamin Willis built or renovated 250 schools, which led to the elimination of double-shift assignments by January 1963 (Usdan & Anderson, 1965). Willis also utilized mobile classrooms, dubbed Willis Wagons, to assist in the elimination of overcrowding. Civil rights groups argued that the areas where new schools were built caused further segregation. Furthermore, they viewed the use of mobiles as unnecessary because White schools nearby were often underutilized. Continued segregation led to organized efforts for desegregation.

The civil rights movement in Chicago was at its core an educational reform movement as civil rights, religious, and civic organizations under the umbrella of the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO) organized a school campaign, with two massive school boycotts in October 1963 and February 1964. The boycotts protested the administration of Willis, segregation, and overcrowding. Despite the substantial organizing efforts, which led to the Chicago Board of Education's creation of a permissive transfer plan (without transportation provided), by 1966 the *Chicago Today* ("Board of Education Members," 1969) reported that only 1,500 students participated.¹ These low numbers indicated the lack of interest the school administration had in desegregation.

Activist Timuel Black (personal communication, June 16, 2000) suggested that the city benefited from the maintenance of segregation because businessmen warned Mayor Richard M. Daley that desegregation would promote increased White flight and would

decrease the middle-class buying power. Therefore, in an effort to maintain the city's economy, all students suffered from the school resources being focused on segregation. Daley's interest in maintaining segregation was also illustrated with the construction of public housing in Black areas primarily on Chicago's South and West Sides.

Because of the unwillingness of city officials and school administrators to desegregate and the recognition that the needs of Black Chicagoans went beyond civil rights, there was an ideological shift to Black Power, which occurred with the national shift in 1966. The shift was exemplified with the inability of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) to shape the activities of Chicago grassroots organizations, which marched on the all-White town of Cicero, despite King calling off the march after gaining concession from Mayor Daley. A Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaflet passed out at the speech where King called for the march cancellation stated that King's concessions were useless because Daley lied to the Black man in the ghetto; and even if the concessions were true, poor Black people could not buy houses in an "open city" (Anderson & Pickering, 1986, pp. 274, 276). The shift could also be seen with the lack of interest many Black leaders had with supporting busing Black children to White schools, even to relieve overcrowding at Black schools. One organizer noted, "Busing does not face the issue of the lack of quality education of the West Side" ("Westside Speaks," p. 4). The belief that Black youth in Chicago should remain in Black schools was the dominating movement ideology in the latter part of the 1960s. The actions of parents, teachers, and community organizations reflected this ideology.

By 1968, parents began to call for the ouster of principals at schools and organized a conference entitled, "Judgment Day for Racism in West Side Schools." The conference addressed issues such as substandard curriculum, dilapidated facilities, poorly prepared high school graduates, community control, miseducation of teachers, and the racist teaching of history ("End Racism," p. 1). The work of Black parents showed their continued interest in the education of their children and their general interest in community

control of Black schools. Teachers also organized, ousted principals, conducted or attended conferences, and protested the general miseducation that youth were receiving in Chicago schools. Some were even willing to forego pay raises, the result of a school negotiation, for the money to be used to benefit school improvement for youth. The general atmosphere in the Chicago school reform movement was one where Black Power was the ideological center, and parents, teachers, and community organizations organized on various levels to ensure the community control of Black schools. Students noted the atmosphere around them and some participated in activities. By 1968, they began organizing at their local schools and later collaborated on a citywide level for education reform.

STUDENT STRUGGLES

Two of the high school struggles that are highlighted for this study are Harrison and Austin High Schools. Harrison High School was a part of the North Lawndale community, the same area that had led a campaign to oust an elementary school principal and conducted conferences to discuss the problems in its schools. Students were well aware of these activities. Harrison, like some high schools on the West Side, had a changing racial dynamic as Black residents moving into certain neighborhoods led to White flight. The racial dynamics at Harrison included Black, White, and Puerto Rican. The school population according to the 1968 teacher headcount was 1,749 or 55.2% Black students, 1,168 or 36.8% White students, and 242 or 7.6% Puerto Rican students (Board of Education, 1968b). The Latino presence at Harrison added an interesting dynamic to activism at the school, as Black and Latino students were united in their efforts. The Black student organization, New Breed, was inclusive of Latino students, as they demanded the establishment of language laboratories as a part of their 14th demand for innovative educational improvements. Although Latino students came up with their own manifesto and had the support of their parents and community organizations as well, Black and Latino students were united in their understanding that changes needed to occur in the school to meet their needs.

Underlying the demands of the New Breed manifesto in 1968 was a call for increased community and student control over the school policies. The first two demands were for the Concerned People of Lawndale (CPL) to serve as the parent teacher organization and New Breed to serve as the student liaison. Furthermore, CPL and New Breed would approve the hiring of Black administrators, administrative assistants, and counselors. The second demand was for Black administrators, a request in many of the teacher and student manifestos across the city, largely because so few existed. The request for Black counselors came because many of the school counselors misadvised students and often led them to believe they could not go to college. Another demand, which was also common citywide, was for an extension of Black history courses to be taught by Black teachers, and the inclusion of Black contributions in every subject. Other demands in the Harrison Student Manifesto in 1968 included improvements be made to the present educational programs and community resources be utilized "to develop each Harrison student to their highest potential." This development could come through the elimination of tracking, evaluation of Harrison's educational instruction through graduate follow-up, reenrollment programs for dropouts, acquisition of new educational equipment, and utilization of instructional resources already available. So Harrison's student leadership was well aware of the problems that they faced at their school and also provided some of the solutions they deemed necessary to turn the miseducative process around.

In fall 1968, student protests began at Harrison on Tuesday, September 17, when Victor Adams and Sharron Matthews were suspended for calling an unauthorized assembly against White teachers, including the teacher of a Black history course. The *Chicago Daily News* ("Two Walkout Leaders," 1968, p. 11) reported that students believed a White teacher could not instill the sense of pride in Black students that Black history is supposed to offer. Victor Adams was New Breed's president and had been an active student for a number of years. Adams was surrounded by the organizing in his community. His English teacher at Hess Upper Grade Center was Al Raby, the CCCO convener and one of the organizers of the Freedom Day Boycotts in 1963 and 1964. As a participant in those

boycotts and an organizer of a boycott at Hess, Adams was already groomed for student leadership. After King's assassination on April 4, 1968, Adams led a nonviolent protest at Harrison. Black Power was an ideology Adams embraced; as he stated in an interview, "Black power is not an extermination of whites, but the pride of Blacks. It is a search for an image" ("Harrison High," 1968, p. 80). Sharron Matthews (personal communication, March 15, 2000) served as New Breed's vice president. Her experience in desegregation, sitting alone in the White school lunchroom, gave her an understanding of some of the detriments and sacrifice of desegregation. By her junior year in high school, she developed a sense of Black consciousness. Matthews's new awareness led her to observe the lack of Black administrators and community involvement in the school.

Austin High School was also on Chicago's West Side, and was a school in transition. The western suburbs of Chicago bordered the Austin community. In 1963, Austin had less than 1% Black student population. By 1968, Blacks represented more than 48% of the school's population. Despite the growth in Black student enrollment, there was only 1 Black teacher out of 134 and no Black administrators (Board of Education, 1968b). The teacher and administrator demographics failed to keep pace with the student demographics. Again, Austin was located in a community where White flight was constant. In just 5 years, almost half of the White students were gone. It is questionable whether the school's teacher demographics could have kept pace with the changing student population even if central school officials had wished for those changes to be made. But there was clearly a futile attempt to keep pace.

The issue of demanding the hire of Black teachers may appear unfair due to school and union officials' policies. It can also be misunderstood that students believed that only Black teachers could adequately teach Black students. However, the situation at Austin and Harrison indicates that the request for Black teachers came as a result of the individual as well as institutional racism students experienced at their schools. One of the Austin student leaders, Riccardo James (personal communication, June 2000), plainly stated that "the teachers were racist." James recalled writing a poem

that his teacher returned and asked him where he had copied it. According to James, the teacher could not believe a Black student had written the poem. In another incident, James told another teacher he had planned on applying to Harvard. James stated that the teacher “looked at me and said the day Harvard lets you through the doors, I’ll die or something to the effect that you being a Black person just couldn’t go there. I wasn’t even going to mention my brother was going there.” Teachers and counselors also encouraged Black students to attend trade schools and not college and get menial instead of professional jobs. James asserted, “Black students were pretty much fed up with white teachers’ attitudes.” Because of the treatment Austin students received, they believed that increased Black teachers and administrators would improve their educational opportunities.

The frustrations reached a boiling point on Monday, October 7, as students at Harrison and Austin conducted protests almost simultaneously and apparently without knowledge of each other’s plans. At Harrison, police broke up a 250 Black student sit-in. Afterwards, approximately 750 students left school and some met at St. Agatha’s Church, whereas others went downtown to the Board of Education building to call for the ouster of Principal Alexander Burke. Victor Adams, Sharron Matthews, Joseph Saenz, and other student leaders met with board officials. That same day, Harrison’s Concerned Black Teachers met with Principal Burke and walked out of the meeting protesting the arrest of 9 to 12 students who were arrested for sitting in after the postponement of an assembly. When students resisted Burke’s demands for them to end their sit-in, he called the police. The Concerned Parents of the West Side contacted board officials to demand the ouster of Burke. (“Black Harrison Teachers,” 1968; “Fifteen People,” 1968; “Nab 16,” 1968).

At Austin, 1,000 Black students walked out of their classes. Principal Dorothy L. Martin requested that students meet in the auditorium to discuss their grievances. Black student demands included a Black assistant principal, Black counselors, and a Black teacher for Afro-American history. White students walked out in opposition to the Black student demands. After the meeting in the auditorium, Black students walked out as well (“Black Harrison

Teachers," 1968; "Fifteen People," 1968). The White student walk-out highlighted a misunderstanding of Black student demands and the unwillingness of the remaining White students to give in to the demands for Black Power at their schools. As the racial demographics continued to change from White to Black at Austin, the transition often led to racial fights and incidents at the school (James, personal communication, June 2000).

Protests continued throughout the rest of the week at Harrison and Austin, and also at Fenger, Morgan Park, Waller, Wells, and suburban Argo High School. Austin's Black and White students continued walkouts and continued meeting to discuss their grievances. James (personal communication, June 2000) stated that the smaller group meetings were more successful because the larger ones were generally out of control. Recalling those meetings, James stated, "We spoke to the White students trying to explain to them what our movement was about. It wasn't necessarily against them. Some of those meetings went awry. Some White students would bring up past [racial] violence" which had occurred at the school.

At Harrison, Burke met with students and community members to discuss student grievances. The groups represented at the meeting were New Breed, Concerned Black Parents and Concerned Residents of Lawndale, Latin Action Committee, and representatives from the White community. Students listed other demands not included in their manifesto at the meeting. These demands included an Afro-American club and the ouster of Burke and other unsupportive school officials. The Latin Action Committee came with their set of demands for Spanish-speaking faculty and Latin American history and culture courses. The sole concession Burke made that students had control in implementing was to grant the students an Afro-American club, as long as a faculty member served as adviser ("Black Students Call," 1968; "Schools Threatened," 1968).

As the events took place the week of October 7, Burke went around the school and attended meetings with armed security, a telltale sign of the tension and threats of violence to administration. Someone had broken Burke's car windshield that week. Assistant

Principal William Wieser (personal communication, June 22, 2000) said that one of the student leaders threatened his life. Two armed police officers escorted him to the bathroom. Wieser asserted that "it was not a healthy teaching situation." With hundreds of students walking out all week long, it was doubtful any serious learning took place. But Wieser's comments also shed light on the obvious threat of violence that occurred whether student leaders wanted, planned, or encouraged violence. At some schools, violence went beyond threat in terms of property damage. The protests alone were probably enough to make school administration and teachers fearful.

On Sunday, October 13, after a week of demonstrations, 25 representatives from more than 13 Chicago high schools and some area colleges joined together and formed Black Students for Defense to organize collective demonstrations. Representatives were from Calumet, Chicago Vocational, Dunbar Vocational, DuSable, Englewood, Harlan, Harrison, Lindblom, Marshall, Parker, Phillips, Simeon Vocational, and South Shore. The students planned citywide boycotts for each Monday until their demands were met. Twelve demands were created that encompassed the demands from various student manifestos and the Black teacher manifesto at Farragut. Along with the demands for community intervention in schools, Black administrators, and Black history courses, they demanded holidays for Black heroes including Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. DuBois, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The rest of the demands were more homework, relevant military training, school building repairs, insurance for athletes, vocational courses, better cafeteria food, and the use of Black businesses for class rings and photos. Students were able to get the word out through passing out handbills that read, "No School Monday Solidarity Day for Liberation," and through the television and newspaper media, which covered the student press conference. The students claimed that unless Superintendent Redmond met their demands by October 16, 1968, there would be 4-day school weeks, with Mondays set aside for boycotting ("28,000 Stay Out," 1968; "Black Students Call," 1968; "Black Students Plan," 1968).

The first citywide boycott took place on Monday, October 14, and between 27,000 and 35,000 students stayed out of school.² A rally was held at the Afro-Arts Theater, where student leaders addressed the boycotters. One speaker, called Brother Akenti, of the Umoja Black Student Center, linked the students' fight to an international struggle against oppression. He was quoted ("Black Students Skip," 1968, p. 22) as saying, "We intend to have Black schools with Black teachers for Black students, and Black communities for Black people. . . . Black people are fighting for their lives." Akenti's speech illustrated that students knew that their school boycott was just one part of a much larger struggle. Student leaders also passed out questionnaires during the rally to determine the types of conditions that existed at various schools Black students attended. After the rally, James Harvey, director of the Afro-American Students Association, spoke to students in Washington Park about a new demand, lifting the suspensions of students who participated in the boycott ("28,000 Stay Out," 1968).

Another group of students, led by Victor Adams, went to the Board of Education and demanded to talk with Superintendent Redmond. Their request was denied, but they were given the opportunity to talk with Assistant Superintendent Manford Byrd. Byrd suggested, as his supervisor had done before, that the students needed to handle their problems at the local school level ("Black Students Skip," 1968, p. 22). The reality for those students was that they faced common problems at all the schools and had already demanded changes from their individual schools. Many of the issues, such as more Black administrators and teachers, and more Black history courses, needed to be handled at the central administration because students were not receiving or could not be given what they requested at the local school level. The power was at the central administration level, and students knew they were being given the runaround. Therefore, they continued their boycotts.

Predominately Black schools had large numbers of students absent on October 14 (see Table 1). On Tuesday, October 15, most students returned to school. However, at Cooley, Waller, Farragut, Harrison, and Wells, there were still more than 30% of students absent. Three hundred Latino students walked out of Harrison.

TABLE 1

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Absentees</i>	<i>% Absent</i>	<i>% Black in 1968</i>
Austin	2,950	400	14.0	48.6
Bowen	3,056	300	9.7	21.0
Calumet	2,430	1,494	51.3	99.3
Carver	1,040	150	12.6	100.0
Chicago Vocational	3,718	1,797	44.4	64.1
Cooley Vocational	673	488	66.6	98.0
Crane	3,203	850	25.4	98.6
Dunbar Vocational	2,457	1,025	41.7	99.8
DuSable	3,314	712	21.4	99.9
Englewood	2,960	1,687	57.0	99.8
Farragut	3,167	804	25.4	91.0
Fenger	2,927	624	21.4	17.0
Forrestville	1,400	370	24.4	100.0
Gage Park	1,711	253	14.8	11.2
Harlan	3,388	3,044	84.8	99.1
Harper	1,606	2,880	14.0	61.3
Harrison	2,675	1,386	44.3	55.2
Hirsh	2,006	297	14.8	99.9
Hyde Park	1,583	1,151	72.7	98.2
Kenwood	888	660	78.0	65.4
Lindblom	2,056	1,832	60.3	93.0
Luella	279	15	6.3	9.8
Marshall	4,453	797	17.9	99.8
Morgan Park	2,500	319	12.6	42.0
Parker	1,577	1,477	93.7	100.0
Phillips	3,040	1,832	60.3	99.7
Senn	3,379	690	20.4	10.5
South Shore	1,937	558	22.4	73.2
Thorpe	242	22	11.0	48.2
Tilden	2,035	490	19.4	42.4
Waller	2,392	1,600	66.9	54.3

SOURCE: Board of Education (1968b).

There were 49 false fire alarms pulled according to fire officials and 52 the day before. Senn and Simeon reported bomb scares, and a molotov cocktail was thrown in Calumet High School. Twenty-four people were arrested at schools throughout the city, including Adams for disorderly conduct. The student disturbances and demonstrations caused Superintendent Redmond to take action ("24 Held," 1968; "35,000 Black Students," 1968; "Nab 24," 1968).

SUPERINTENDENT REDMOND RESPONDS

Superintendent Redmond, given a deadline of October 16 to respond to the student demands, announced on that day that he would hold a press conference on October 17 and also give his response at the October 23 Board of Education meeting. Redmond responded in detail to the 12 student demands. The one tangible response was to the call for Black administrators. When Farragut teachers issued their manifesto at the opening of the 1968-1969 school year, they demanded a Black administrator by September 30. In an effort to meet their demand and the growing demands at other schools, 17 new assistant principal positions were opened up to "improve the integration of administrative staff at certain high schools" (Board of Education, 1968a, p. 700). So in essence, the demand had already been met. It was just a matter of finding qualified people to fill those positions. Redmond also stated that a 20-week Afro-American history course was already being offered in 114 classes in 36 high schools to 12th graders and there would be additional courses offered and the course would be extended to a 1-year course. In terms of community involvement, Redmond insisted that strengthening the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) would be useful and creating culture clubs would assist with student involvement. The demand for more Black and Latino teachers was answered with the fact that placing teachers by race was illegal. Although Redmond claimed it was illegal, the majority of Black teachers already taught at Black high schools. Redmond also stated that quality teachers, with a "real concern for people," were the type of teachers the school system was seeking (Board of Education, 1968a, pp. 700-701).

Redmond strategically responded to the student demands in the way negotiators respond when attempting to get their opposition to back down. Promises were made that if not carefully observed sounded great, but either would not be implemented or if they were they would still not be to level the students expected. The superintendent skillfully responded to the demands but then announced policy that would effectively punish students and teachers who participated in further demonstrations. Redmond advised,

We have heard your demands, we are concerned about many of the same problems which are contained in them. Your Board of Education, your teachers and your administrators are trying, within the money available to them, to improve all the schools. Accept our commitment to improve the schools and consider your mission of dramatizing our needs accomplished. Return to your studies and do your part in furthering your necessary education by remaining in the classroom. . . . The demands, which are made, are not reasons for staying away from school. (Board of Education, 1968a, pp. 701-702)

Furthermore, Redmond listed the repercussions for absent students, including being taken to juvenile court for truancy and parents being summoned to circuit court for being “indifferent parents” for having a truant child. The four steps Redmond advised principals to take with truancy were as follows: letter to parents, chronically truant students were to be suspended and would have to return with a parent, repeat offenders 16 and older would be dropped from school rolls, and problem reports would be filed to determine special placement for those 16 and younger. Teachers would be docked if they did not have a doctor’s note when they claimed to be sick or if they could not prove they had personal business that could not be handled outside of school hours.

Redmond ended the press conference with the following:

We believe that students, parents and communities must continue to be involved with us in our task that we are about. We will delay our joint efforts if we continue to have students out of schools and continue to have protest only for protest sake. We ask again for the students to return to school where problems can be worked out and we ask parents and community leaders to work with us in bringing them back to their classes. (Board of Education, 1968a, p. 704)

Again, Redmond strategically called on parents and community leaders while threatening parents, students, and teachers to ensure that the boycotting would end. However, the students were much more sophisticated than Redmond anticipated, and they refused to put an end to their demonstration solely based on concessions.

THE BOYCOTTS CONTINUED

On Monday, October 21, the second boycott occurred. Despite Redmond's threats, 500 to 700 teachers of Operation Breadbasket's Teachers' Division boycotted and held a rally at Fellowship Baptist Church on the South Side. More than 20,000 students boycotted, primarily from West Side schools. Dozens of Black college students picketed the Board of Education building, and Lewis Chaplin Elementary School was shut down because only two teachers showed up ("700 Teachers," 1968; "20,000 Boycott," 1968). So the student protest gained more support from teachers and college students, while thousands of high school students did not participate. Redmond's words undoubtedly had some effect on the lower numbers.

The following day, as most students returned to school, Latino and White students walked out of Lakeview High School demanding more Spanish counselors and special language classes. A total of 21 students were arrested at or around Waller for truancy or disorderly conduct and at Austin because of racial fight ("21 Youths," 1968; "Four Austin High Students," 1968).

The Board of Education decided at the October 23 meeting in a 6:5 vote that they would meet with student leaders. This would be the first meeting of its kind. At the same meeting, seven Black teachers were appointed as assistant principals at Austin, Carver, Marshall, and Waller High Schools, as well as Forrestville Upper Grade Center and Carver and Calhoun North Elementary Schools. Moreover, due to parental complaints, Principal Jacqueline Brown-Miller would be transferred from Dvorak Elementary and a search for a Black principal would be in place (Board of Education, 1968a; "School Board Votes," 1968). The Dvorak decision, along with the assistant principal positions, calls into question Redmond's statement about the illegality of placing Black teachers at Black schools. Apparently, it was not illegal to place Black principals and assistant principals because so few existed at Black schools or elsewhere for that matter. So their placement was seen as desegregation, but because of the already high concentration of Black teachers at Black schools, their placement was viewed as illegal. A possible reason Redmond and the school board did not place Black teachers

at Black schools could have been due to the United Federation of Teachers' response to the situation in New York's Ocean Hill–Brownsville District that led to strikes. The Chicago Teacher Union had already made it clear that they would not tolerate it. Another reason was the fact that Black teachers were organizing simultaneously as students in Chicago. Their concentration at Black schools may have been viewed as problematic. Finally, the assistant principal positions were added to the four positions that already existed, so there were no replacements. Principals who were replaced were those who had problems controlling their students or teachers or had parents, students, or teachers effectively organized against them.

As a result of what they were learning from their protest, students created three new demands, with the first two calling for community control. They wanted a replacement of the PTA with a Black PTA, and also wanted a student policy-making group to deal with student issues such as discipline. The last demand called for amnesty for participants in the boycotts (“Black Students Ask,” 1968).

The final boycott occurred on Monday, October 28, with only 8,000 to 9,000 students participating. The low numbers of student participants in the third boycott were a result of the prolonged protests taking a toll on students, the grades of many were slipping, some were suspended or arrested, parents pressured students to stay in school, and Redmond's truancy scare tactics were working. Other reasons students were no longer participating in the boycotts were that many felt Redmond had responded to their demands, some were not really genuinely committed to the struggle, and some questioned the need for a prolonged struggle. In a study of one Chicago high school, James Pitts (1971) found that the type of organization a student belonged to determined their understanding of the boycott issues. Students in militant organizations participated the most but were less aware of the issues than students in Afro-American History Clubs. Those in nonracial clubs participated less and understood less than the other two groups. Although the survey was limited to one school and only 159 people, it determined that participation was based on the level of consciousness

students had. It also highlighted that militancy cannot always be equated with awareness.

At the boycott demonstration, Victor Adams led a mock burial for the Board of Education at the Civic Plaza. During the 1963-1964 Freedom Day Boycott a similar burial had been done, further demonstrating the connection students had to the activities of the past as well as the activities of their parents, community organizations, and teachers. The students had also organized Freedom Schools, like civil rights activists had done, but only a few students attended ("Boycotters," 1968; "Citywide Defection," 1968).

On October 30, the Board of Education met with some of the 70 invited students and three teachers. Some students addressed the board to discuss their demands. The teachers addressing the board were Roy Stell of the Teachers' Division of Operation Bread Basket, Harold Charles (now known as Hannibal Afrik) of Farragut High School, and Bobby Wright of the Black Teachers' Caucus. Those teachers spoke of the miseducation students received and the need for community control. The meeting reportedly ended abruptly when 23-year-old student boycott organizer James Harvey insisted, "We didn't come here to play word games. We came here to emphasize our demands must be met. . . . It's our meeting, not yours baby" ("Student Boycott," 1968). The audience applauded his comments, the third such "disruption" of its kind, and Board President Frank M. Whiston ended the meeting. Redmond attended the meeting but had not commented (Herrick, 1971, pp. 366-367; "Student Boycott," 1968).

The next Monday, November 4, students decided to do sit-ins at each school and stay over from Monday night, all day Election Day Holiday Tuesday, until school reopened on Wednesday. Redmond warned that students would be subject to arrests. School officials, in an effort to avert the sit-ins, ended schools at 2:00 p.m. instead of 3:15, catching sit-in organizers off guard. Disturbances at Parker caused the school to close at 10:30 a.m. Police broke up protests at Dunbar, Harrison, Hyde Park, and Kenwood. Twenty-six youth were arrested in relations to school incidents. The botched sit-ins ended the citywide student movement as well as the local movement in many schools ("Black Pupil," 1968).

CONCLUSION

The gallant efforts of Chicago high school students shed light on their desire for improved educational opportunities. Although their actions were viewed as disruptive to school officials, they were school reformers calling for community control and school improvements. They understood that some White teachers were unsympathetic, that they were being tracked into lower level courses, and that their schools' leadership was predominately White, not Black. With the awareness of the organizing occurring internationally, nationally, and locally, these Black Chicago youth seized the moment to create change in their schools and communities.

Whenever protest occurs, it is often judged by the results. If the movement by Black Chicago youth was judged simply by results, their actions would appear to be a failure. The early 1960s reform movement under the civil rights banner had almost negligible results. But one important result was that students were paying attention or had participated in the civil rights movement and utilized tactics from the movement to garner administrative positions for Black administrators and teachers, yearlong Black history courses, and some structural school improvements. These Black Chicago youth also drew attention to the massive problems that existed in the city's public schools.

But as former Chicago school principal Norman Silber (personal communication, 2000) noted, the problems that existed in the 1960s still exist today. The new top-down Chicago school reform may be raising test scores, but it has not substantially changed the quality of education for Black and Latino students. According to the Illinois School Report Card (2001), the Chicago high school graduation rate in the 2000-2001 school year was 67.5% compared to the Illinois state average of 83.2%. The 67.5% was the highest in 14 years. The drop-out rate for Chicago was 16.3% compared to the state average of 5.7%. For the schools with students who participated in the 1968 boycotts, the drop-out average was 21.8%. Students at Englewood High School led the drop-out rate with 43.6%, DuSable was second with 36.8%, and Austin had the third highest rate with 32.5%.³ The only school with students boycotting in 1968

that had a single digit average drop-out rate and was below the state average was Morgan Park High School with a 4.6% drop-out rate.

The drop-out and graduation rates indicate that the desire Black and Latino parents and students had for a quality education has not been met despite Chicago's new school reforms. In 1968, the community demanded more Black teachers and administrators, community control, and increased Black history courses. An analysis of the current school situation shows that simply having Black faces in Black places has not guaranteed substantial change, particularly when the community does not have control over who will be placed in those positions or when those placed in the positions put career advancement above the needs of the students. New efforts at community participation and decentralization are in the form of Local School Councils (LSC), a result of Illinois's 1988 School Reform Law. They consist of the principal, two teachers, six parents, two community members, and one student at the high school level. The LSC's duties are the hiring and evaluation of principals, approval of the schools discretionary budget, and the school improvement plans (Gewertz, 2002). However, studies show that LSCs are at times ineffective because the principals are largely in control of them or their duties, no matter how effectively they carry them out, and are not tied to the "systemic restructuring activities necessary to create major reform" (Easton & Storey, 1994). Finally, the Black history courses these Chicago youth fought and risked their education opportunities for have been eliminated or minimized.

For contemporary theorists and practitioners, it is important to note that students, teachers, and community members must be involved with the demands and fight for school reform. More important, any reforms that are made through protest must be maintained over time—it must be a long-term commitment. School reform cannot be left up to the government because their agenda is oftentimes vastly different than people of color. Raising test scores has never meant quality education. The Black student protests of 1968 in Chicago are a testament to this suggestion.

NOTES

1. There were just fewer than 225,000 students and 124,000 that participated in the two boycotts.
2. There were discrepancies about the actual number of students out of school. The *Defender* had 35,000, the *Tribune* had 28,000, and the *Sun Times* had 20,000 because they subtracted what was said to be the usual number of absences from the 26,826 the school board reported absent. The *Defender*, in another article, stated a lower number of students absent. Because of prior discrepancies, the estimate of 28,000 to 35,000 was used.
3. Harrison, Forrestville, Cooley, Luella, Parker, Thorpe, and Waller are no longer high schools in Chicago Public Schools. They have either been closed down or have become schools for lower grades.

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