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The UIC Doctoral Program in Urban School Leadership
Best Practice Profile
The Student Information Logging Strategy at Chicago's National Teachers Academy (NTA)
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Introduction

In addressing the multiple obstacles to learning faced by urban students in poverty, schools typically lack the kind of detailed information about students and their behavior that would aide the design of effective interventions. It is not that this information does not exist. It is rather that critical information is scattered across individuals in schools and families who know the student in particular settings, but can not or do not share with one another. As a result it can be difficult for teachers and parents to agree on the "big picture" of a student's behavioral choices, and gather strategic support around children in the settings that most challenge their well-being and learning. As noted by Tourse and Mooney (1999, p. 57) in their extensive study of inter-professional collaboration in schools, "The pooling of expertise on behalf of vulnerable children and families has the potential to achieve deeper and more lasting resolution to complex problems."[1]

In this best practice profile we explore a powerful strategy for gathering and sharing detailed information about students in ways that have enabled sustained attention to the needs of struggling students. Since Fall 2004, the principal and staff of National Teachers Academy have designed and implemented an on-line student information logging system that allows all school staff to post and access information about individual students. A set of practices and applications have grown around this on-line system that have significantly impacted two critical obstacles to student learning, tardiness and disruptive behavior, while supporting the success of a range of other school initiatives. The case also illustrates how a combination of principal leadership and teacher initiative has evolved this logging capability from a problem-driven concept toward an asset-focused concept, documenting student successes as well as struggles and failures.

A note on data sources. The primary data source for this case is a series of three interviews with NTA's principal, Ms. Amy Rome, during autumn 2007 and winter 2008. These were supplemented during the same period by interviews with four UIC staffers who have coached and advised Ms. Rome. Where relevant we also draw upon NTA school improvement documents and aggregate school data made available by the Chicago Public School's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability. We thank Denis Roarty of the UIC College of Education for contributing cost estimates to the discussion of the replicability of NTA's on-line logging software.

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[1] Tourse, R. W. C. and J. F. Mooney, Eds. (1999). Collaborative practice: School and human service partnerships. Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers.

What are the origins of NTA's Student Information Logging Strategy (SILS)?

The National Teachers Academy (NTA) opened in September, 2003 serving grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. The school is located in the Chicago's south loop area at 55 West Cermak Rd. NTA serves students living in two nearby public housing complexes, including Hilliard Homes and Ickes Homes and, more recently, the Long Grove Apartments, a mixed-income residence that houses many who formerly lived in CHA housing. In 2007 the student population was 98.5% African-American, while 97.7% of students qualified for federal lunch subsidies. Despite its focus on an exceptionally challenged student population, NTA has seen significant gains in student achievement since 2005. The percentage of students meeting Illinois grade level achievement standards reached 48% in 2007, more than double the 2005 levels. Student mobility receded to 18%, while the school has gained control of what seemed an epidemic of student tardiness. By many measures, NTA is a school on the rise, after a very bumpy and politically complicated start.

These gains were nowhere in sight in autumn 2004, when two highly visible problems catalyzed the development of the Student Information Logging Strategy (or SILS) : chronic student tardiness and disruptive student behavior. CPS statistics indicate that 39% of NTA students were chronically tardy during the 2004-2005 school year, while 81 serious disciplinary incidents were reported to CPS authorities. These student problems were transpiring inside a school and community context that made amelioration of them even more difficult. Within NTA, high staff turnover, including principals, teachers, ancillary staff, and external partners had undermined both trust and collegiality within the faculty, and eroded basic standards of professionalism such as punctuality. NTA's status as an alternative school with the dual mission of recruiting and preparing quality teachers while also functioning as a neighborhood elementary school made the setting unique. The school's early efforts to combine these two roles yielded some helpful university and community partnerships, including with the University of Illinois at Chicago. The same efforts also produced instability in leadership and staffing that challenged the school's development in its first five years.[2]

Outside and around NTA, community residents were facing multiple challenges associated with displacement from public housing, and were wary of a hidden agenda at NTA, believing it not intended for their children but rather for the children of a future "gentrified" population.[3] In addition, the CHA Ickes and Hilliard Homes were undergoing significant restructuring associated with the agency's Plan for Transformation, changes that often stranded residents with least means to relocate to alternative housing. In addition, Ickes serves as a relocation site for displaced residents of other already rehabilitated housing projects adding to the instability of the neighborhood attendance area. Internal school dynamics and community circumstances converged, yielding unusually acute levels of behavioral disruption, even by the standards of Chicago's south side neighborhood schools.

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[2] For a sense of the complexities facing NTA in its opening years, see: Williams, D. (2002). Teachers academy to open amid unanswered questions. Catalyst Chicago. Chicago.

[3] See Weissman, D. (2002). New South Side: High-income housing, low-income schools. Catalyst Chicago. Chicago. For an overview of issues of displacement posed by the CHA Plan for Transformation, see: Venkatesh, S., I. Celimli, et al. (2004). Chicago public housing transformation: A research report. New York, Center for Urban Research and Policy, Columbia University: 46.

How did the Student Information Logging Strategy (SILS) evolve?

Beginning in Fall 2004, the school responded to these challenges by developing a capability to track the behavioral compliance of individual students and share information about the academic and personal development of students. The evolution of this strategy has progressed through three clear stages, and has tracked closely to the professional trajectory of current NTA principal Amy Rome.

Phase 1 – Fall 2004 through Spring 2005: Building and implementing the tardiness log system

As a University of Illinois (UIC) principal intern during 2004, Ms. Rome, was expected to identify an "actionable" issue and begin to develop potential solutions. The issue of chronic tardiness rose to the forefront as a significant obstacle to student learning. Tardiness had ramifications beyond simple compliance. Persistently late students were missing instructional time and interrupting the flow of instruction for their peers as well. The ongoing problem of tardiness was exacerbated by a cumbersome and inefficient means of handling late students with no follow-up or inquiry method attached. The traditional use of handwritten tardy slips for up to one-hundred students per day was unwieldy and produced no useful information. From Ms. Rome's perspective, it was one more example of a pattern that had become part of the implicit culture of the school: "Tardiness and its impacts on the school day are insurmountable."

After consultation with her UIC coach, Ms. Rome proposed a relatively simple information system that could impact the tardiness problem significantly. The system would speed the processing of tardy students relieving the morning front-office bottleneck while simultaneously preserving specific information about the tardy students that allowed for subsequent intervention strategies to be formulated. With no competing proposals on the table, Ms. Rome's initiative earned her credibility with the school's administrator and further latitude to develop the strategy. Ms. Rome and her UIC coach recruited a third partner with technology expertise to assist in the first iteration of the system, a Microsoft Access database program. The program contained an uploaded roster of all NTA student names, fields for indicating arrival time and reason for tardiness respectively for checked students, and the report capacity to print out tardy passes with that information. Ms. Rome administered the program personally.

Implementation of the strategy quickly impressed teachers as an innovative attempt to deal with a serious and intractable problem. Significant reductions in tardiness resulted. Summary reports to teachers had a "WOW" effect – teachers began to ask how they could directly engage the database to review student records. Success of this initial phase thus gained Ms. Rome credibility as a problem-solver in the eyes of the faculty.

Phase 2 – Summer 2005 – Spring 2006: Transitioning to an on-line student logging system

In Summer 2005, Ms. Rome was hired as one of three assistant principals at NTA with particular responsibility for middle school students, grades six through eight, where disruptive student behavior issues were particularly acute. Ms. Rome began exploring the potential applications of an enhanced student logging strategy to another serious obstacle to academic progress at NTA – disruptive student behavior. Drawing upon UIC's partnership with NTA, Ms. Rome engaged a UIC

colleague with web design expertise to design and implement an on-line, intranet version of the tardy database. From a restricted Access database focused on tardiness, the new intranet morphed into a multi-purpose "blog" allowing any staff member to record information about any student enrolled in the school at any time and from multiple locations. Several other features were added to organize the kinds of log entries made by staff, allow classroom staff to signal administrators for help with classroom management issues, and facilitate collaborative problem-solving around severe student behavior issues. The specific features that made the SILS functional for addressing student behavior are described under "What are the key features of NTA's Student Information Logging Strategy (SILS)?"

Success of the revised SILS was greatly dependent on the degree of adult engagement in the school. As Ms. Rome's status changed, so too did her sphere of influence and conferred authority. In Phase 1, her role was as originator and modeler of the strategy. In Phase 2, she was better placed to serve as a modeler, recruiter, and "cheerleader." In addition, she had a specific target group of students under her purview – the middle school students who comprised the locus of most of the disruptive behavior. As an assistant principal, her positional status in the school changed as well allowing her to persuade the other two colleague assistant principals to use and promote the SILS.

Phase 3 – Summer 2006 – Present: Socializing student logging practices

At the start of this third phase, Summer 2006, Ms. Rome was appointed principal of NTA. This added to the momentum of adoption of the SILS from an administrative perspective. The focus of Phase 3 was on broadening usage and enhancing sustainability. Adoption of the system and exploration of its potential was aided both by both "top-down" and "bottom-up" factors. On the one hand, the role of principal permitted Ms. Rome to selectively mandate SILS activity as well as model its use and encourage voluntary users. All classroom teachers were now required to make at least two entries per student per quarter. Ancillary and schoolwide staff were also encouraged to log. Staff were supported in the use of the SILS through schoolwide professional development, continuous exhibiting of powerful examples of SILS use, and one-to-one responses to teachers.

On the other hand, for many teachers already at ease in a technology zone, the SILS became a cathartic "blogging" tool. The SILS tool's capacity to conserve information, cluster it according to any number of descriptors, and generate reports with the targeted information was seen as immensely powerful simply on the face of it. Examples of the use of the reports to structure more productive parent conferences and a teacher's ability to "red flag" a student's name to garner administrative assistance for student behavior concerns in a predictable manner were two of the primary promoters of increased use. Several key specialized service staffers also became avid adopters as Ms. Rome encouraged the use of SILS to anchor School-Based Problem Solving and advocacy for special needs students. Avid staff bloggers were important in exploring the capabilities of SILS to document student successes and progress as well as behavior problems. Norms and expectations for excellent use of SILS began to coalesce through administrator coaching and peer modeling.

As of winter 2008, when we conducted our interviews, all NTA teachers were using the log system. By Ms. Rome's count, approximately 90% of the teachers are adequate users of the SILS, i.e., meet

the minimum requirements for logging. About 50% of the teachers are considered effective users, i.e., evidence enhanced student support through use of the SILS. Administration and staff are now exploring applications of the SILS beyond student behavior.

What are the key features of NTA's Student Information Logging Strategy (SILS)?

The original ACCESS logging tool was created to tackle what was previously deemed an intractable problem, chronic tardiness. The tool engaged the principal's vision that gathering fragmented student information into a single file with sorting capacity would allow for targeted intervention. As the logging system evolved to include student behaviors other than tardiness, intentional changes occurred related to technology, inputs, use, and outputs.

The current SILS at NTA is built on the foundation of an on-line intranet information system that allows multiple users from the school to access the recorded information about students. The software platform functions consistently with most "relational databases" like Access or Filemaker. That is, the software allows multiple sources of data on students and groups of students to be coordinated into reports on individual students or student groups. Principal Rome emphasized that it is the relationships among system users, rather than simply the tool, that transmit the benefits of this information system to the students and school community. A tacit expectation is that information from the SILS will be used in a supportive, not a punitive, manner. *Attachment B provides several screen shots of the SILS database as it currently appears to NTA staff, with student information masked.* Key features of the Student Information Logging System as it now operates in NTA include the following:

- ✓ Fields for capturing tardiness remain in place to sustain the school's strong progress in battling chronic tardiness
- ✓ Access to the intranet is password protected and encrypted, and currently restricted to school staff and administrators
- ✓ All staff are authorized and enabled to read and write log entries for any students at any time
- ✓ A profile report can be generated for every student at NTA
- ✓ Log entries can be coded for categories of behavioral issues, as well as "positive" entries, parent contacts, goal-setting interactions, and categories. Further categories can be added by system administrators
- ✓ Log entries can be flagged for urgency
- ✓ Loggers can restrict access to confidential logs to authorized staff
- ✓ Single entries can be posted to multiple students for efficiency of logging
- ✓ Homeroom teachers are alerted when other staff members log about their students
- ✓ Various data can be graphically displayed and reported
- ✓ Reports can be generated based on given data or a clustering of data
- ✓ Administrators can review logs by grade levels, classrooms, individual students or other groupings
- ✓ Information fields may be added as needed by authorized system administrators, resulting in a highly flexible set of potential uses for the database.

How do NTA staff and administrators commonly use SILS ?

NTA's student logging system and the strategy of collective reflection on student behavior and development has contributed to the school's development and transformation. Following are some examples of how that strategy has been applied to obtain high yield results.

Addressing Chronic Tardiness: Application of the student information gathering strategy to tardiness resulted in very useful data for targeting investigation of causes and attaching appropriate remedies which, in turn, resulted in improvement of on-time attendance. More specifically, the families of chronically late students were now identified and could be contacted to discuss the problem. Parents were shown, in printed form, how much instructional time was being lost to their child. When causes such as inability to wake up on time or fear of walking through given areas in route to school were proffered, the principal's response was to provide alarm clocks along with training on their use, escorts to students for the walk to school, and other assistance as appropriate. The demonstrable success of applying the student information gathering strategy to the tardiness issue prompted application to more complex issues of student behavior.

Addressing Chronic Disruptive Behavior: All CPS elementary schools are required to implement and document a process known as School-Based Problem Solving (or SBPS) prior to recommending that a student be formally evaluated for a behavioral or learning disability and an IEP (or Individualized Education Plan).[4] SBPS processes ideally assemble a child's teacher, school administrators, parents, and specialized service staff to examine data related to a child's disruptive behavior or resistance to classroom discipline, devise a plan to address these behaviors, and reconvene over a 10 week period to evaluate the child's progress. At NTA, SILS has become an integral source of data for SBPS, allowing the members of SPPS teams to devise interventions based on specific log information and track student progress through intensive, collaborative logging. Currently at NTA, SILS is used to address four broad tiers of disruptive student behavior at four levels of intervention:

1. **Classroom-based interventions**. Teachers log day-to-day, low impact student behaviors and infractions. The logs can be shared with colleagues, students, and parents for reflection and joint problem-solving.

2. **School-based interventions**. When classroom teacher interventions fail or when a teacher's repertoire of remedies is limited, the teacher can use SILS to "flag" given students. "Flagging" is the means by which a teacher requests administrative assistance for solving student behavior

[4] According to the website of the CPS Office of Specialized Services: "School-Based Problem Solving (SBPS) describes the intervention process that is a required component of the Corey H. Settlement Agreement (1997). This agreement requires that the Chicago Public Schools implement a school-based intervention process. The SBPS process is not a single event, but a process that is built into the educational program in the Chicago Public Schools. It is designed as a general education process, but information collected through SBPS may be used in conducting a full and individual evaluation." For detail see: http://www.oism.cps.k12.il.us/dept_oss_faq.shtml.

problems. Logs may be used to organize conferences with parents and joint problem-solving with colleagues.

3. **School-Based Problem Solving**. A small number of students exhibit chronic and severe disruptive behavior, triggering attention from NTA's School-Based Problem Solving Team, comprising administrators, counselors and social workers, teachers, and parents. Log entries are used to validate the extent of the problem behaviors, pinpoint contexts and likely causes for the behaviors, and develop a plan for action. *From Ms. Rome's perspective, use of the logging system to organize SBPS shifts this approach from several discrete meetings and decisions toward a more continuous and reflective process, an on-going discussion among colleagues and family members keyed to gaining appropriate services for challenged students.*

4. **Specialized Service Interventions**. If SBPS plans do not result in significant improvement in student behavior, attention shifts to providing more intensive services to students, either within or outside NTA. In-depth documentation must be compiled to secure these services. At NTA, the log record provides the foundation for petitions to secure more intensive services for students, a practice that meets with the approval of the CPS special education authorities.

A significant result of student logging within the NTA behavior intervention process has been recognition by school administrators and relevant staff that the needs of some of NTA's students would best be served by placement outside of NTA. This was a major philosophical shift, prompted by the log data, for the principal and other staff who had long believed that it was the school's obligation to meet the needs of all students in the attendance area and enrolled at the school. Now, they began to realize that the needs of both the majority of remaining students, as well as those referred for outplacement, could best and likely only be met in this way. According to Ms. Rome, finding alternate placements for a few of the middle school's most disruptive students yielded a major shift in the climate of safety and respect on NTA's third floor, and greatly improved the prospects for retaining other students whose behavior and demeanors began to improve.

Improving Parent Relations: Since its founding, NTA has struggled to establish a climate of welcome, respect, and collaboration with parents. As reviewed earlier, collective logging of student behavior has helped change the focus of parent-staff interactions around students with severe behavior and adjustment problems. The availability of rich information about a child from several school adults has helped change daily problem-solving with parents as well. At NTA, the first stop for Principal Rome or her leadership teammates when fielding a concern from a parent increasingly is a computer terminal where parent and educator can pull up a child's recent logs. Examining the logs with the parent can change the tone of interaction in at least three ways:

- ✓ It communicates to the parent that his/her child is truly cared for and the focus of concern for several staff members in the school

- ✓ It often provides corroboration of the child's adaptation issues from multiple perspectives and in multiple settings

- ✓ It can generate a problem-solving conversation between parent and educator, helping to focus the conversation on the facts of the behavior, including when, where, and why it occurred

Promoting Positive Student Behavior: Staff are encouraged to make entries regarding students' positive behaviors. As entries are required for every student, it is presumed that some, if not many, entries would be of a positive nature. On occasion, student and teacher or student and administrator view a given student's log together. The time that staff utilize to write about students' behavior is largely viewed by students as evidence of their teachers' interest in and caring about them. Students have begun to request that certain of their good behaviors be recorded in the SILS. The collection of positive student behavior data has led to increased acknowledgment of that behavior through incentive and award events. From the principal's vantage point, it has helped to create a more constructive school culture by shifting the emphasis from negative to positive student behavior.

Supporting the Uniform Policy: Students are expected to wear their school uniform regularly. Parents and staff see great value in the uniform policy in principle but, until recently, adherence to the policy has been lax and inconsistent. Compliance with the uniform policy thus provides a particularly visible indicator of the regard of students for school expectations. Logging on student behavior provides a mechanism for increasing compliance through direct contact with the home in a non-punitive manner. The school has assigned its security staff the duty of logging daily uniform violations upon arrival to school. That staff then calls parents (contact information having already been entered into the database and regularly updated) to inform them that their child is out of compliance. A script was developed to help security staff approach these calls professionally.

Has the strategy achieved its priority goals?

While our purpose of providing an overview of NTA's SILS did not permit an in-depth collection of outcome data, several data points support the view that SILS has contributed to improvements in target outcomes like tardiness and student learning.

- ✓ Tardiness was reduced from an average of 85 late students per day in the 2004-05 school year to an average of 30 late students per day by the end of the 2005-06 school year. CPS statistics indicate a sharp reduction in the chronic truancy rate over three years: 39% in 2005, 19.2% in 2006, and 1.6% in 2007.

- ✓ Declines in tardiness and an improved climate of student behavior correlate with significant improvements in student ISAT performance, as mentioned in our introduction. Among NTA's 2007 8th grade class, 71% met state standards in reading (up 18% from 2006) and 59% met standards in math (up 14% from 2006). 50% of NTA's 2006 graduates were "on-track" for high school graduation, almost 20% improved over "on-track" rates in 2003.[5]

- ✓ Ms. Rome reported that student behavior improved as evidenced by a reduction in incidence reports, observed sense of a calmer more orderly school atmosphere, reduced press of disruptive behavior on classroom instruction, and increased opportunity to showcase and reward positive

[5] Data cited in this section were derived from public access aggregate school data sets supported by the CPS Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability: http://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/iam_Researcher/.

student behavior. Serious behavior issues exhibited by those students at the "top of the SBPS pyramid," were either modified or the students were provided appropriate placement outside of NTA.

Our interviews with the principal and several UIC coach/observers also point to several ancillary as well as unanticipated benefits of SILS:

- ✓ Richer more reliable profiles of students as a result of documentation by a range of adults interacting with the student
- ✓ Improved tenor and structure of parent conferencing as a result of printed documentation regarding their child's behavior
- ✓ Student needs met in a more timely manner as a result of consistency of expectations and procedures for using SILS
- ✓ Enhanced climate of professional support among teachers now provided a prescribed means of seeking administrative assistance for student behavior concerns.
- ✓ Enhanced relational trust among staff and administration and a greater sense of transparency of information as a result of immediate access
- ✓ Changed professional discourse to allow more objective and productive discussions and increased reliance on electronic communication
- ✓ Increased student attention to their own behavior as they began to view the process as a way of "showcasing" their positive behavior and being rewarded for it through the school's various incentive programs.

We anticipate exploring these imputed benefits in a more in-depth follow-up study of SILS and its relationship to other maturing school transformation strategies at NTA.

What leadership strategies have promoted adoption of SILS by staff?

In conversation with her staff, leadership team, and UIC coaches, Principal Rome has authorized practices and developed policies that encourage "pathfinder" teachers to explore the potential of the SILS, while increasing the costs incurred by staff members who resist engagement. Several practices aim to encourage and support use of SILS, including the following:

Principal modeling. Ms. Rome communicates her commitment to the value of the SILS through her own frequent use of student logging and responsiveness to log entries by her staff. Ms. Rome monitors the system throughout the day as well as at home, taking advantage of the system's on-line, remote log-in capability. She regularly enters logs on students and posts responses to teachers and staff, especially in "red flagged" cases. As Ms. Rome readily admits, her engagement with the SILS plays to her "geeky" interest in technology applications. But it also enacts her commitment to the kind of student-focused conversation that she intends to make the center of professional activity at NTA.

Releasing the "blog" effect. While addressing negative student behaviors was an early aim of the SILS, the on-line database was structured intentionally to allow staff to enter any observations about students. Several early adopters quickly recognized this flexibility, and began to use the system as a

diary-like "blog," with in-depth entries on most students in their classrooms. The system further encourages blogging by restricting editing to the log author, thus protecting the integrity of log entries. Authorizing early adopters encouraged experimentation with features such as flagging serious disciplinary incidents or structuring parent conferences with reference to student log entries. For a second wave of adopters, curiosity about the content of logs provided motivation to sign in and begin reading what was being said about their students.

Minimum restrictions and access. When it comes to accessing on-line information about students, CPS teachers are accustomed to mediated patterns of access and use. Even the revamped IMPACT system restricts direct access to principals and administrators, from whom teachers must request student data reports, even on the students they are teaching. By contrast, teachers and staff can access SILS both at school and remotely with a log-on ID and password provided by NTA. They enjoy full access to logs for all students as well as family contact information, and are encouraged to make entries on any students about whom they have insights to share. Classroom teachers thus gain the benefit of hearing multiple perspectives on the students they teach, and knowing who else on the staff can provide insight into a student's needs or motives.

An emphasis on formative feedback. In addition to addressing issues posed by log entries, Ms. Rome focuses considerable attention on providing teacher/loggers with feedback aimed at improving their logging practice. Rather than elaborating a lengthy set of explicit rules for student logging, Ms. Rome and her leadership team incorporate feedback into their problem-solving exchanges with teachers, focusing on two central principles: first, useful logs emphasize objective information about the behavior of students rather than subjective information about the teacher's emotional response; and second, that the tone of log entries should be measured by whether parents and students could read them and engage them constructively. An emphasis on building professional relationships around student logging has helped minimize inappropriate or punitive uses of logging by staff, while deepening norms for student support and encouragement across the professional community.

Training and professional development. NTA seeks to link its professional development activities directly to the improvement of instruction, drawing as much as possible from expertise grown within the school staff. Training and orientation to the evolving SILS was instituted in fall 2005 with the initial implementation of the system, and has remained a regular feature of professional development at NTS. The first rounds of training focused specifically on the manipulation of the technical features of the on-line database, and oriented teachers to the core goals of the system – continued regulation of tardiness, reporting student behavior issues, and accessing integrated information about student academic performance. The early system also integrated the school's report card production capability, allowing teachers to generate their own report cards at Report Card Pick Up Days. Subsequent presentations to faculty have built on the process of informal feedback to consolidate norms around the tone, content, and purposes of log entries and discussions.

Responsiveness to user concerns and suggestions. Attention to user ideas and suggestions have led to several improvements in the on-line logging system while deepening buy-in to the strategic goals of the logging strategy. For example, many faculty greeted the introduction of the on-line system in 2005 with concerns that publishing negative information about students would only deepen negative impressions of students among faculty. This led to development of options for restricting access to

logs to limited viewers in cases *judged by the teacher* to be particularly sensitive. This system "tweak" has a triple value. It communicates respect for teacher judgment and its exercise. It helps safeguard student confidentiality around sensitive issues. And it reduces the likelihood of public fallout from release of sensitive information prior to full vetting of its validity and implications.

Care in distinguishing potential "add-ons." CPS teachers frequently complain of the addition of processes and paper work that yield no clear benefit for students or teachers. While enthusiastic about the potential applications of the SILS, Ms. Rome has been cautious not to mandate applications that do not address a clear teacher interest or yield compelling "value added" in relation to goals for which teachers are evaluated and held accountable. Thus asking teachers to log student behavior issues has elicited fairly high compliance, given its "high yield" in the areas of student discipline and school climate. Ms. Rome also sees value in the other applications, for example, involving students in logging on their own goals and achievements. But this would require facilitation and oversight by very busy teachers. Such applications are best explored by highly committed teachers, and assessed collaboratively for their value in relation to the school's instructional goals.

Several other practices and policies have helped to incentivize use of the system, while at the same time increasing the professional costs to practitioners who elect not to engage the strategy. As context, it is important to note that NTA was founded with a strong commitment to the use of information technologies, and that Ms. Rome is strongly committed to IT as a medium for professional collaboration. All staff communication is conducted via email, for example, in an effort to reduce paper transactions and improve collaboration. Teachers at NTA who resist email can risk falling out of the information loop. Similar dynamics reinforce engagement with SILS, including the following:

Accessing administrative help with classroom issues. A focal benefit of using SILS is the capacity to quickly signal school administrators when student behavior issues have escalated to an unmanageable level. Administrators have established the expectation that they can and will respond to such flags within the same day if not the same hour as posting. In turn, red flags on the SILS receive priority attention from administrators, leaving non-users of SILS less likely to receive timely help and accountable for failure to address a behavior problem effectively.

Leveraging School-based Problem Solving (SBPS) resources. At any time of the year, most classroom teachers at NTA are in the process of documenting one or two student candidates for specialized services. In turn, NTA has wed its implementation of School-Based Problem Solving tightly to the use of SILS, with approval from CPS officials overseeing special education services. Thus for NTA teachers to effectively argue their case with CPS Specialized Service staff, they must be able to produce log documentation that supports their analysis of student needs. Teachers who use SILS to engage the SBPS process at NLS benefit from the team's collective reflection on the student case based on the deep documentation provided by log entries. But in at least one case related by Ms. Rome, a teacher who had not used SILS found herself unable to convince CPS staff of the events and evidence surrounding the petition for specialized services. As one CPS Special Education staffer told the teacher, "If you didn't log it, it didn't happen."

Transparency with parents. In Ms. Rome's view, SILS has contributed to a significant shift in the tone of interactions with NTA parents around behavior management and student needs. While rancorous interactions with parents have not disappeared at NTA, they are less likely to happen when school administrators and teachers can bolster claims about student behavior with evidence, and begin to problem-solve with parents based on the sustained observations of NTA colleagues. Students have also come to understand that "good logs" bring them to the attention of Ms. Rome, and can even qualify them for school-wide rewards and recognition. Teachers who log their student's successes and challenges consistently can approach parent conferences with confidence at three levels: first, they can support their own claims; second, they can enlist the support of colleagues; and third; they can reinforce a positive alliance with parents of even the most difficult students. NTA teachers who do not use SILS find themselves without these three assets in their interactions with parents.

Finally, measures and policies that establish minimum expectations for adoption and use of SILS have been introduced in order to communicate the centrality of the student logging strategy to the overall agenda for school transformation at NTA, including the following:

Minimum use expectations. While Ms. Rome has encouraged adoption of SILS with personal coaching, persuasion, and professional development, she also established minimum logging requirement for all classroom staff. This minimum requirement was included among the "local criteria" for annual teacher evaluations at NTA - two entries per student per academic quarter. The leadership team integrates a review of teacher SILS use into classroom observation review conversations, further emphasizing the leadership team's close identification of SILS use with overall teaching excellence. If necessary, these reviews scrutinize the quality and effectiveness of log entries. The inclusion of SILS among teacher evaluation criteria is particularly powerful at present, since all teachers at NTA will be required to reapply for their positions as a condition of a new affiliation between the school and the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) to begin autumn 2008. However, specific sanctions for failing to meet minimum use requirements have not been elaborated.

On-going monitoring of use by administrators. In addition to reviews of minimum use requirements, Ms. Rome and her leadership team monitor the on-line SILS system for signs that teachers are not using the system. The system's "homeroom roster view" provides clear summary graphics of how many students in each homeroom have received no attention or entries, as well as how much follow up has occurred in the case of high priority logs. Administrators signal teachers that little record of progress is available for several students.

Public review of SILS implementation. The development and review of relevant data is a center-piece of NTA's transformation to a high performing professional learning community. This includes a commitment to shared accountability for school-wide goals and public review of data benchmarking those goals. In at least two other contexts, Ms. Rome has developed a data review procedure that marries accountability with shared reflection. When addressing the question of teacher attendance and tardiness, for example, she and her leadership team collected absence and lateness data for individual teachers over a designated period. These data then were plotted anonymously within grade level and reviewed as a shared problem at a faculty meeting. At the same time, confidential letters summarizing absences and lateness were sent to each teacher, followed by conferences with non-compliant teachers. According to Ms. Rome, the joint strategy significantly improved the

teacher attendance levels while minimizing personal embarrassment. A similar public review strategy has been applied to reflection on fidelity of implementation of the school's new math curriculum.

In late January 2008 Ms. Rome applied a similar approach to review the use of SILS over the fall 2007 academic quarter. Several benchmark indicators of SILS use were plotted anonymously at the classroom level, organized within grade level. That is, classrooms and teachers were not labeled, but they were grouped within the grade level. The net effect was to mobilize grade level teams to identify issues related to compliance with logging requirements, while eschewing isolation of non-compliant teachers. As Ms. Rome explains, "The purpose is not to humiliate. But we said we were going to do it, and we're looking to see if we are doing it. We're going to hold ourselves accountable."

What challenges and issues are posed by implementing the SILS?

In several respects the practice of student logging adds a new layer of activity to the daily work of teaching, and challenges how teachers have traditionally understood their roles. Not surprisingly, then, the implementation of student logging has posed several challenges that would likely arise in schools attempting to replicate the strategy, including the following:

Staff resistance and non-compliance. Our analysis suggests that by combining formative coaching and feedback with efforts to tailor SILS to meet teacher needs, Ms. Rome and her leadership team have realized significant buy-in from NTA teachers for the practice of student logging. After two years of implementation, though, teachers continue to vary in their investment and use, while a small number of teachers have resisted the practice completely. Variable compliance, in turn, generates two corollary challenges for SILS:

- ✓ First, low compliance from some teachers means that student documentation levels can vary considerably, even when other teachers and staff are contributing logs about students. In a school that uses SILS to anchor critical functions such as School-Based Problem Solving, this could hamper the ability of the staff to fully address the special needs of some high-risk students.

- ✓ Second, low compliance can hamper the on-going contribution of SILS to building trust and partnership with parent/guardians. As Ms. Rome reflected, it remains "maddening" to sit down with a perturbed parent to review log entries only to find a paucity of entries. This leaves a parent to wonder, "Why my child?"

Several factors influence low staff engagement with SILS, each requiring distinct responses. While NTA has a generally "tech-savvy" staff, a few teachers evidence a general resistance to the virtual office, be it email, the use of video to document class work, or SILS. According to Ms. Rome, staff members who get excited about SILS tend also to be enthusiastic about data in general, and are the same teachers who push school administrators for access to test scores and assessment results. Alternately, teachers who generally resist the push for greater transparency of teaching practice at NTA also resist documenting their relationships with students via SILS.

Meeting the expectations of adopters. The converse challenge arises as the number of SILS adopters has increased, driven especially by the expectation of quick response to "red flagged" student behavior issues. During her first year as principal, Ms. Rome made it a priority to respond to these flags as well as other logs on the same day as posted, using these exchanges to problem-solve and build trust with her teachers. As adopters have increased and Ms. Rome's agenda for school transformation has diversified, keeping up with "red flags" and other SILS correspondence has begun to exceed her grasp. This has led to disappointment on the part of lead adopters, and concern on Ms. Rome's part that early gains in building relational trust and SILS buy-in among her staff could be undermined.

Broader delegation of responsibility for monitoring SILS, particularly to her leadership team and grade level leaders, would seem a natural response to this challenge. But there are constraints. Ms. Rome's two assistant principals already monitor "red flags" through the day, in addition to fulfilling their other administrative and instructional oversight roles. Grade level leaders are deeply engaged in instructional and curriculum issues in addition to managing their own classroom assignments. In Ms. Rome's view, a full-time, "released" school counselor could be the role best suited to keeping expert pace with teacher log entries. But that would require a significant recrafting of the current CPS counseling role, which focuses largely on administrative rather than direct service activities, in addition to finding dollars to buy that role.

Concerns about data misuse and confidentiality. Concerns about potential misuses of information about individual students are a significant focus of distrust among parents, especially in minority communities. Liability considerations linked to these concerns have led to high levels of security within the data bases of school systems like CPS. Further, many teachers view the sharing and codification of information about student behavior with suspicion, preferring not to formulate negative impressions of students on the basis of the opinions of prior teachers whom they may not know, or alternately, whom they do know and do not respect. Thus, while the dictum "more information is better" may apply in most organizations seeking to improve, school staff often doubt the utility and efficacy of conserving information about student behavior and development, preferring to safeguard "a fresh start" for students at the outset of each school year. Behind this is an implicit assumption, often based on hard experience, that school teachers and leaders tend strongly toward punitive purposes when they take the trouble to build dossiers of student behavior.

Ms. Rome shared these concerns and explicitly opened them to discussion when she oriented her upper grade teachers to the online SILS as an assistant principal. These discussions led directly to one of the first "tweaks" of SILS, permitting teachers to limit log access to administrators or student support staff if, in their judgments, logs contained sensitive or confidential information. Ms. Rome also emphasized the role of student logging in the broader agenda of building a culture of student support, and pointed out the potential uses of logs to highlight student progress as well as problems. As this potential began to be realized, and Ms. Rome and her colleagues continued to shape norms for log entry at the coaching level, teacher concerns about the misuse of log content have receded.

Parents also voiced early concern about the misuse of student dossiers, on occasion strenuously. Three factors appear to have allayed these fears and built parent support for logging. First, Ms. Rome takes every occasion to underscore with parents the student support purposes of the logging strategy, both in personal conferences and in parent meetings. Second, administrator review of logs

helps identify entries that smack of personal criticism or shift from incident specifics to broad generalizations about a student's motives or character. Third, teachers are oriented not to share unedited log reports with parents unless they have vetted the content prior to a conference and feel confident that log entries conform to faculty norms for "objective" logging. Fourth, integration of log information into parent conference and SBPS processes has progressively built the reputation of the log system as an ally of parents in seeking specialized services for students.

While the specific view of parents must await further study, it is notable that no parents have attempted to challenge the use of the logging strategy through complaints to CPS central office. The results of the 2007 Parent Voice Survey also show that overall parent satisfaction with NTA exceeds the CPS city-wide average for elementary schools by over 7% (59% approval versus 51.9% among all CPS elementary schools).[6]

Developing staff norms for logging. Open access to SILS with minimum regulation of log content has helped drive SILS adoption among teachers at NTA. But it also introduces the likelihood that log quality will vary considerably in at least three ways: the affective tone of entries, the inclusion of appropriate and useful detail, and the quality of writing. Our discussions with Ms. Rome surfaced several examples of the need to coach and counsel teachers about log content that was either emotionally "hot," insufficiently detailed to be useful in a conference with a parent, or filled with spelling and writing errors that could cause embarrassment to the school and teacher if shared with parents or colleagues.

Norms about how to write students logs have developed through three processes. First, formal training began with the introduction of the logging system in fall 2005, and has continued through discussions of logging issues as part of in-house professional development sessions. One teacher leader took a particular interest in the tone and content of logs from the system's inception, and helped develop a consensus about what effective logging would look like. Second, on-going monitoring and on-to-one coaching by the principal and leadership teams reinforce this shared consensus and help identify new issues for formal PD. Third, and perhaps most powerfully, the on-line logging system is a source of peer modeling, as teachers read well drafted logs and are socialized to respond to their peers from the same stance of objective problem-solving and positive student and family support. So far, NTA has not produced a formalized protocol of "rules" for logging, preferring to allow faculty relationships to communicate the basic consensus around the tone, focus, and quality of effective logging practice.

Alignment with other district IT systems. NTA developed and implemented the SILS at a uniquely fluid moment of transition between old and new IT systems within CPS. This provided an opportunity to experiment with how SILS might align with an in-house database for tracking student attendance and academic performance. The first edition of SILS articulated closely to the popular POWERSCHOOL program, allowing the school to import revised student rosters quickly to SILS, and to connect log data to reports on absence, tardiness, behavior, grades, and test scores, maximizing the access of individual teachers to this information. While there were bugs to work out

[6] CPS data set location for 2007 Parent Voice Survey: http://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/Reports/allschools.html.

in the interface between SILS and POWERSCHOOL, the SILS software demonstrated its potential for integrating log information into a wide range of performance indicators for individual students.

NTA discontinued its use of POWERSCHOOL during the 2006-2007 academic year in favor of the newly implemented IMPACT student information system.[7] In addition, NTA began to implement the new FIRST CLASS email system, with its enhanced capacity to support in-school work groups and collaborative conferencing. SILS now co-exists with IMPACT and FIRST CLASS, and continues to track daily tardies with log entries, an essential ingredient in NTA's student support strategy. There is no direct, technical connection between SILS and the other systems. An assistant principal transfers tardy records from SILS to IMPACT daily. And a consultant was retained to update student enrollment and classroom assignment rosters to SILS. These transitions have phased in smoothly at NTA, where SILS has rooted significantly in the school culture. Other principals trying to implement SILS might well encounter the question: Can't we accomplish the same goals using capabilities within IMPACT and FIRSTCLASS?

At least for now, the answer appears to be "no." IMPACT certainly provides fields for documenting student behavior issues. But general access to IMPACT student records, including behavior notations, is restricted to school administrators, making IMPACT unsuitable for the sort of powerful "blogging" the SILS supports. FIRSTCLASS can significantly expand team communication within schools, but lacks the student-centered data necessary to track student progress over time. At least at NTA, *SILS occupies a unique and complementary niche between the capabilities of IMPACT and FIRSTCLASS*, generating data about student progress and problems that can be integrated into correspondence via FIRSTCLASS, and dovetailed to student data derived from IMPACT.

Could this strategy be replicated at another school?

Yes. But we first acknowledge that NTA and Ms. Rome possessed some unusual assets that help account for the *development* of SILS over three years and the rarity of such initiatives at other schools.[8] Three assets helped Ms. Rome and her colleagues to conceptualize and implement SILS:

- ✓ *Released time and a mandate to address a critical problem.* As an intern from UIC, Ms. Rome was freed to devise innovative solutions to critical problems facing the school. The tardy tracking system that preceded SILS addressed such a problem effectively while making no demands on staff and minimal demands on school resources. As a result the first stage of development of SILS was subject to minimum administrative scrutiny and review.

- ✓ *A computer-rich setting.* SILS does not require advanced technical resources but does benefit from easy computer accessibility. The easier it is to sit at a computer terminal at school, the more

[7] IMPACT represents an ambitious, district-wide effort to integrate sources of information on individual students that have previously been housed in separate data sources, thus hampering efforts to address the complex needs of students and families. For detailed information on the CSP IMPACT Student Information System, see:< http://www.sl26t.com/wbt/ES/Courses/Intro_SIM/Intro2sim.htm>.

[8] We know of no similar system currently in operation within Chicago Public Schools. For an account of a similar system currently implemented by Codman Academy Charter Public School in Dorchester, MA. See: http://luceatlux.com/gcb/.

likely it becomes that teachers will log. NTA is a new building with superior technical resources and computers in every classroom.

- ✓ *UIC coaching and technical resources*. NTA's partnership with UIC has given Ms. Rome access to two UIC staff members who assisted with the design and implementation of SILS. A UIC principal-coach collaborated directly on the design of the tardy database and consulted on subsequent developments. A UIC database consultant with CPS teaching experience was assigned to design software for the on-line SILS and remain engaged with implement adjustments through spring 2006.

If SILS were available as a software package, our analysis indicates that the system could be installed and implemented with resources in a cost range of $15,000 to $17,000. The NTA system uses commonly available software applications with publicly available data management functions, similar to those used by Microsoft Access. The primary resource considerations for a similar system would include the following:

- ✓ An in-school server with the capacity to support an intranet program. Cost depending on desired capacity: $10,000 to $15,000.

- ✓ Specialized consultation with mounting, maintaining, and adapting the SILS intranet program (assuming no CPS IT assistance can be acquired): $2000 to $5000.

- ✓ Specialized training for first-time users, integrated into professional development activities: $1000.

Each of these costs could be integrated fully or partially into existing CPS IT roles where they are available to schools. We note also that NTA administrative staff currently manage key functions of SILS maintenance, including periodic updating of student rosters between IMPACT and SILS, and the transfer of tardy data from SILS to IMPACT.

Three lessons for school leadership

As an aide to instruction and a starting point for research, UIC's doctoral program in Urban School Leadership has identified 10 factors in school leadership and design that contribute critical value to the task of transforming and elevating educational practice in urban schools. This "Ten Factor Model" gives equal attention to the catalytic role of principals in leading and sustaining school transformation, and the imperative to cultivate leadership capacity across the entire school community to root transformation deeply and propel it forward. Attachment A summarizes this Ten Factor model.

Within UIC's model, NTA's Student Information Logging Strategy presents a strong exemplar of Factor 6 – "establishing a transparent, accessible, school-wide data tracking system to be used to analyze implementation efforts." A potential lesson from this profile, as Figure 1 suggests, is that trusting, authorizing, and supporting faculty to populate a database such as SILS can inject considerable energy into the development of other transformational factors. For example:

- ✓ *To Factor 1*. Ms. Rome has built her leadership team around an interest in supporting the success of SILS, and assistant principals and teacher leaders all engage teachers daily in conversations based on log entries. In many respects, SILS is a rich case portfolio for nurturing and identifying promising teacher leaders within the faculty.

- ✓ *To Factor 2*. SILS represents one of several strategies to transform the expectations and aspirations of the entire NTA learning community about punctuality, mutual respect, self-control, and what a serious academic climate looks and feels like. But it has proven powerful in linking norms for order to the promotion of a school culture of child development rather than a punitive culture of conformity.

- ✓ *To Factor 5*. Gaining leverage on classroom behavior issues was a clear driver behind developing SILS as an on-line, school-wide system. Less anticipated but already promising is the potential of the system to support shared reflection among practitioners on the full range of instructional challenges faced daily in NTA classrooms.

- ✓ *To Factor 7*. Research demonstrates clearly that conditions pressing upon poor and underserved communities often undermine "social capital" – that network of relationships, expectations, and norms for behavior that support experiences of belonging, aspiration, and responsibility to community, and monitors compliance with community values.[9] Our evidence indicates that SILS has helped build social capital for the students of NTA, by building shared awareness of the progress of individual children, and sharing those insights with parents.

- ✓ *To Factor 8*. SILS includes the kind of on-line software application that becomes organically integrated into the daily life of a school, creating a previously unavailable virtual space for collaboration and shared reflection. It remains to be seen whether SILS will affect how the capabilities of both IMPACT and FIRSTCLASS are developed at NTA.

- ✓ *To Factor 9*. SILS is not as transparent or accessible to parents as it is to NTA faculty, at least at this point in its development. But the evidence suggests that even partial transparency and mediated accessibility have contributed to a significant positive shift in relational trust between parents and teachers. Parents appreciate the commitment of the faculty to monitor and support their children while at school, and increasingly expect to engage SILS with teachers in partnering on solutions to behavior and learning issues.

- ✓ *To Factor 10*. Ms. Rome has been selective in bringing the use of SILS to the attention of CPS officers whose roles impact her school. She briefed her Area Instructional Officer on the use of the system, and verified that it posed no conflict with the AIO's priorities. She introduced the logs entries to CPS special education staff as NTA's documentation system for special education cases, and gained the assent of these officials to use logs as the primary data for documentation.

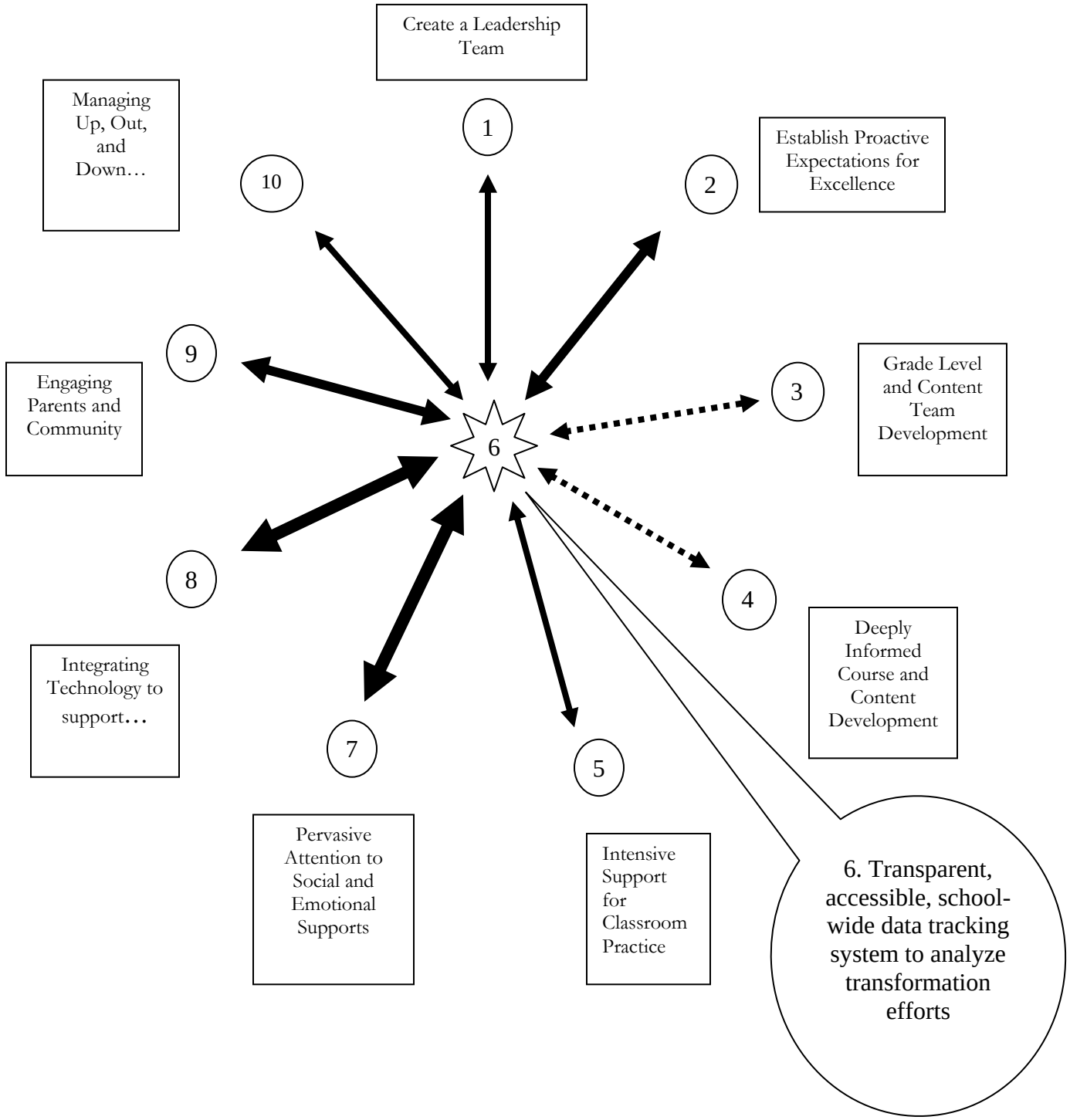
[9] For an extensive consideration of this concept and its cousin, "relational trust," see: Bryk, A. S. and B. Schneider (2002). Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement. New York, Russell Sage Foundation.

She has also used the log records in settings like juvenile court to advocate for specific students, impressing judges with the relevance of log records to judicial decisions.

Figure 1 also suggests a corollary lesson, namely that not every factor in the model has been equally impacted by SILS. In particular, grade level instructional processes and curriculum development (Factors 3 & 4) remain less directly implicated by the daily focus of SILS on student behavior and well-being. Especially in grades where most teachers use the log system consistently, student log records do enter grade level meetings when issues with individual students are shared. But SILS has not been adapted as a collaborative platform or listserve for discussions of the several curriculum development initiatives now underway at NTA. This constraint on SILS is largely intentional. For the present, Ms. Rome prefers to maintain the strong student focus of SILS as platform for social and emotional support, while allowing the grade level teams to design processes for advancing standards-based curricula. She has also been careful not to mandate responsibility for monitoring SILS to grade level team teachers, who must already juggle instructional leadership with their own classroom assignments.

A third lesson from NTA's experience with SILS involves the process of introducing such a strategy to an already busy and challenged school. In our discussions, Principal Rome was emphatic that while SILS may appear to be a technical initiative, the real power of the strategy resides not in the software but in the relationships it forges and the problem-solving it enables. Ms. Rome's process in introducing SILS at NTA, in turn, is analogous to that of a gardener, identifying the best locations in which to root the strategy, cultivating the relationships and the incentives necessary to sustain the strategy early, and weeding and pruning with urgency and patience to allow SILS to take strong root without overextending its capacity or overtaxing its users. Like staking young plants, minimum requirements for faculty participation have been introduced to encourage even growth. But these requirements are secondary to the voluntary supports and incentives that have freed motivated staff to demonstrate the potential of the strategy. Without stretching this analogy further, SILS provides one example of how a school leader can use information technology to cultivate faculty initiative and creativity, articulating the purposes of the strategy, but allowing teacher colleagues to shape how the purposes are realized in daily practice.

Figure 1. NTA's Student Information Logging System (SILS) Through the Lens of UIC's Ten Factor Model



Attachment A. UIC's Ten Factor Model for Urban School Transformation

To build a culture of shared responsibility for achieving high aspirations, the school must:	1. Attract, enlist and develop a leadership team of highly qualified teachers who see it in their self-interest to co-lead, with the principal, the building of a highly effective learning community capable of doing all of the following items.
	2. Establish among students, parents and teachers a detailed, pro-active set of expectations for the behavior, interpersonal conduct and academic performance of all parties that shape the school-wide and classroom culture of the school. This culture should make the correlation between academic success, effective habits and a productive and fulfilling life evident on a daily basis.
	3. Establish grade level and content specific teams that develop goals, strategies, classroom assessments and tracking tools that are used on a daily or weekly basis by the team to track progress and modify practice for the purpose of measurably increasing the learning of all of the children in each grade level.
To establish structures and systems to realize those aspirations, the school must:	4. Develop written course outlines, or curriculum maps, for each grade level and content area that are based on state standards, test score analysis and teacher knowledge of student work. Literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking curriculum and instructional strategy receive heavy emphasis in these course outlines, especially at the elementary level.
	5. Develop structures, tools and procedures to ensure that every teacher in the school is in the process of mastering a wide and deep range of instructional practices and classroom management strategies that ensure the high achievement of every child.
	6. Establish a highly transparent, school-wide data tracking system to which everyone has the access and ability to analyze the implementation and results of all goals and strategies.
To support school structures with the necessary technological and human supports, the school must:	7. Develop the social and emotional supports needed by everyone to engage in the above efforts and achieve at the level defined. The school leadership team recognizes that human relationships are at the heart of sustainable school change, and that social and emotional learning [for students, staff, and administration] are important to achieving transformative school goals.
	8. Integrate technology into the management and execution of instructional practice through strong learning communities.
	9. Develop very specific strategies for engaging parents in the daily support of their children's learning development and achievement.
	10. Be able to manage *up* and *out* as well as manage down. That is, not only must school leadership have the organizational and management skills to implement and sustain complex change at the building level, but it must also have the political and interpersonal skills to work productively with system level officers and community stakeholders to achieve school goals.

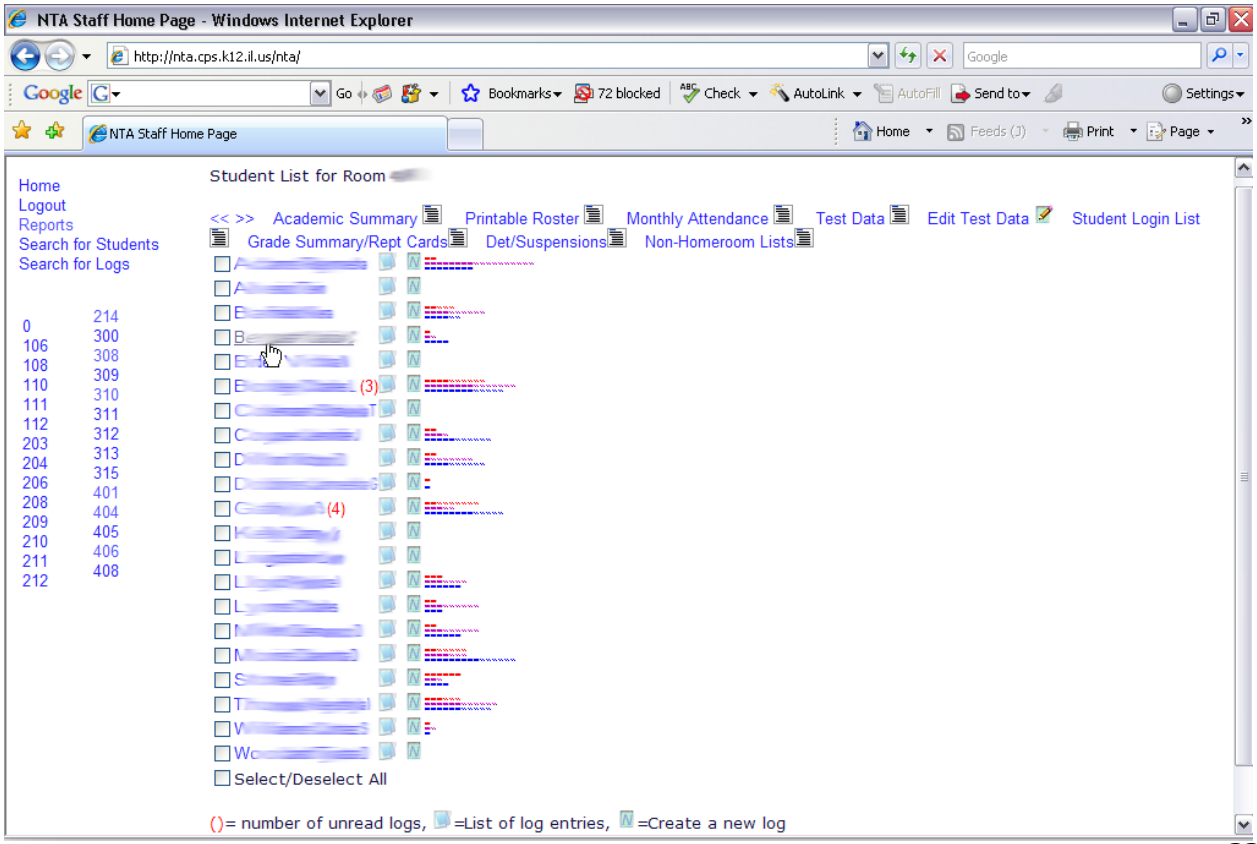
Attachment B - Technical Summary of the Student Information Logging Software (SILS)

NTA's Student Information Logging Software (SILS) allows teachers and administrators to keep track of student behaviors, school interventions, and parent communications in a secure but accessible web application. Teachers can log an incident or communication with a student much like they would an on-line help ticket or a blog entry. The first version of this software was integrated into the commercial student information system Power School (product of Pearson Education, Inc.). This provided a source of student and teacher information for the logging tool. More recently the SILS was separated from Power School so that it could function independently of other information systems.

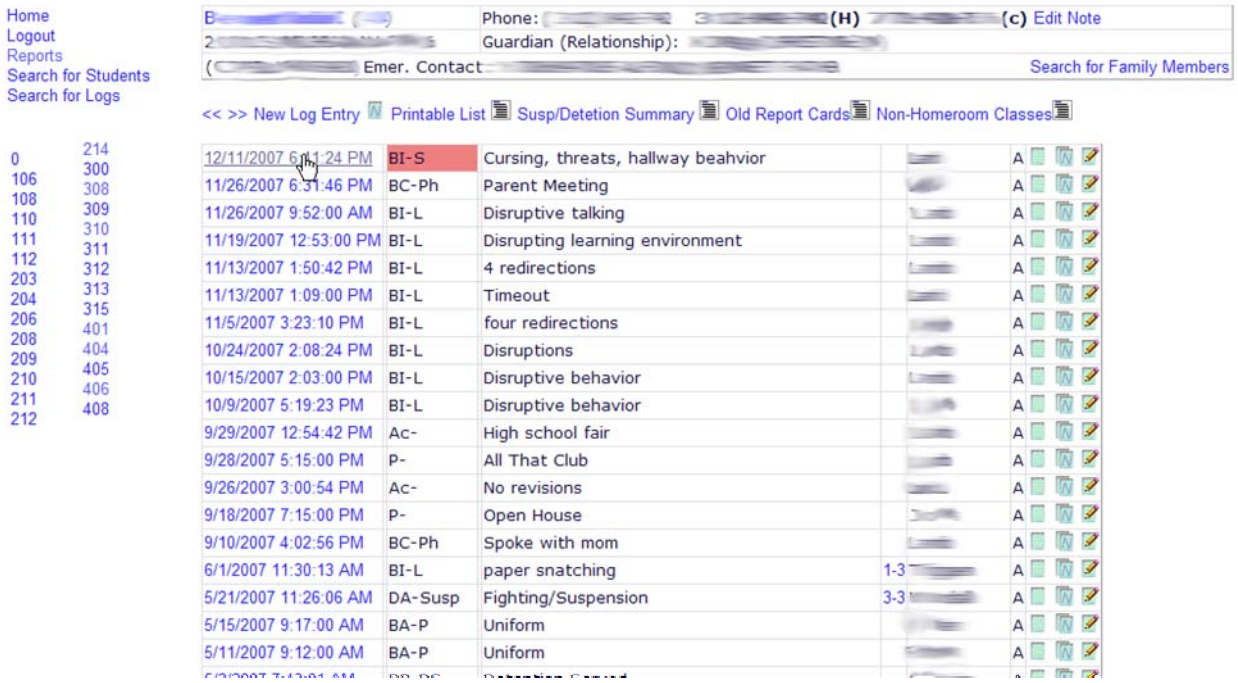
The SILS database is made up of 20 tables in Microsoft Access. After nearly three years of use, the total storage requirement for the data is still under 200Mb. The web based application was written in C# and runs with Microsoft's ASP.NET framework on the IIS web server. Authentication uses an Active Directory server. In the following examples, note that some information is blurred to protect student confidentiality.

Structure of the Software

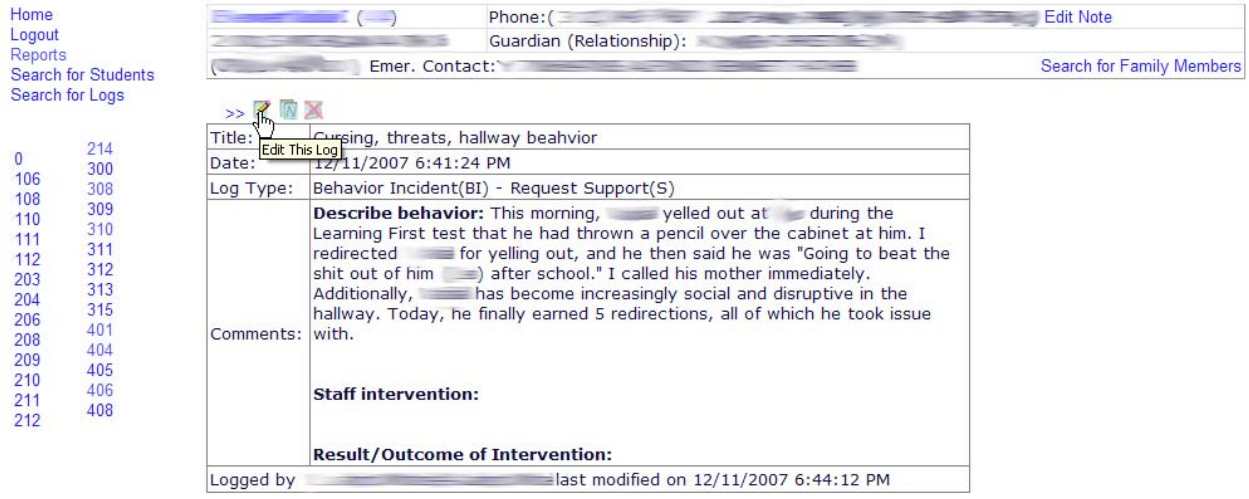
When teachers log into the SILS, they are presented with a list of their students (example shown below) and some graphic indicators that signal important information about the current status of each student. Users can access student information by double clicking on any student's name.



In the student view (example shown below) a list of the most recent log entries is displayed in chronological order. Family contact information is posted at the top. Links to various other views for this student are shown along the top. Log entries that are flagged in red indicate that the teacher is requesting assistance from the school administration. This log will also show up flagged in the administrator's view.



After clicking on a log link, the log details are displayed (below). Logs may be of a variety of types but if it is a behavior log then school intervention details are also shown.



New log postings are entered into a form with numerous options. These include the ability to categorize (and sub-categorize) the log, to attach multiple students to this log, and to choose from a variety of privacy settings.