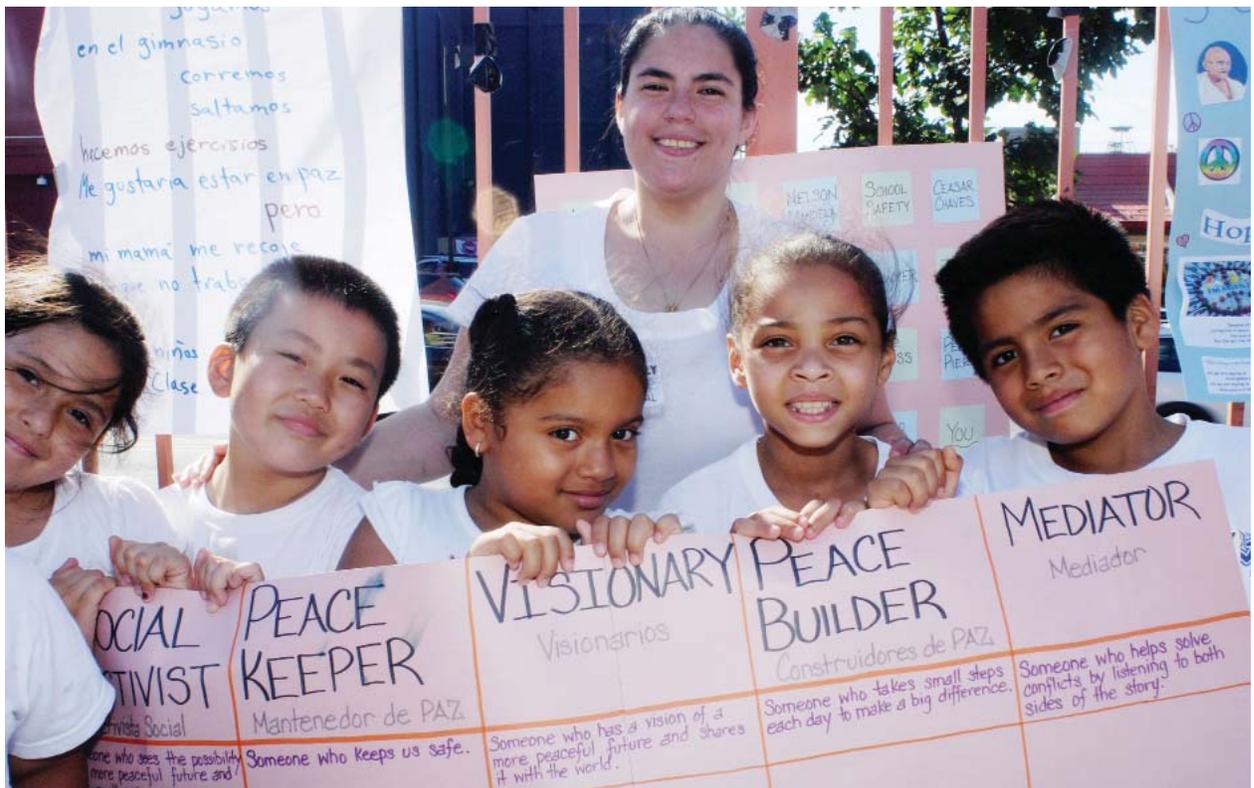
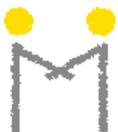


ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



PAZ After-school Program @ PS 24, Sunset Park, Brooklyn.



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Making our schools places of joy



A *New Yorker* cartoon shows a school bus. One of the kids says to the child sitting next to him, “I turned five. That’s why I’m here. What are you in for?”

The obsession with testing during the past two decades has made school a grim and anxious affair for children and adults

alike. We know of a charter school in New York City where students aren’t allowed to talk during their 20-minute lunch period. I’m sure those kids wonder what *they’re* in for!

Morningside Center works in schools every day to expand the opportunities for laughter, joy, meaning, and human connection during the school day. Under the banner of “social and emotional learning,” we’re part of a national movement to restore balance – and sanity – to American schools.

Two articles in this year’s annual report show the power of our approach. One describes the impact of our 4Rs program on a preK teacher and her students in Atlanta. The other shows the transformative effect of our Smart School Leaders Project on a principal and her school

in Brooklyn.

Through The 4Rs, teachers facilitate weekly interactive workshops to develop students’ social and emotional skills and build a caring, productive classroom community. An introductory course followed by classroom coaching helps teachers develop their mastery of The 4Rs curriculum and improves their own social and emotional skills.

The Smart School Leaders Project supports principals in three ways: one-on-one coaching in leading with emotional intelligence; coaching in orchestrating collaborative planning for sustainable, school-wide SEL; and participation in a learning community of like-minded principals.

The combination of a principal leading with emotional intelligence, students and teachers developing their social and emotional skills, and collaborative planning has a powerful impact on students. It also sets the stage for transforming the school overall, as the experience of PS 130 demonstrates. We have long argued that high-quality, research-based SEL must become integral to every child’s education. It turns out that SEL is also necessary for turning schools around.

In their book, *Organizing Schools for Improvement*, researcher Tony Bryk and his colleagues report on

their study of Chicago’s seven-year experiment with school reform during the 1990s. They wanted to find out why some schools improved substantially while others, often with equally hard-working, well-intentioned leadership, stagnated. Not surprisingly, Bryk found that the principal was the key driver for change: The successful principal focused on providing supports for top-quality teaching and learning in classrooms – specifically, providing instructional guidance, increasing professional capacity, improving the school learning climate, and strengthening parent-school-community ties.

Continued next page



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Our 2012 Courageous Schools conference: the movement is growing.



But equally important, the successful principal focused on fostering what Bryk calls “relational trust” throughout the school community. Using a cooking analogy, Bryk sees the supports for top-quality teaching as the ingredients. But relational trust is the oven’s heat that turns the mixture of ingredients into a delicious cake.

This stands to reason. Transforming a school is hard work. Research shows that when school staff are fully enlisted in the process of school change – developing a shared vision, setting goals, and learning to pull in the same direction – they can summon the energy for the hard work of adopting, carrying out, and sustaining educational reforms and improving student achievement. In a positive school culture, people work together, look forward to coming to work, feel their voices are heard, think beyond their self-interest, and enjoy contributing to a shared vision. Relational trust is what makes true collaboration, and ultimately school change, possible.

Our vision for schools

For three decades, Morningside Center has been partnering with schools to carry out school-friendly, time-tested strategies for building relational trust. Our vision includes

- the principal leading with emotional intelligence;
- the school staff becoming a professional learning community based on collaboration and mutual respect;
- weekly SEL instruction for students provided by their teachers;
- professional development services to support teachers in developing their own social and emotional skills and in teaching the curriculum effectively;
- school discipline policies and practices that support students’ social and emotional development;
- student leadership;
- parent engagement;



Fun at school: The 4Rs at PS 307K.

- celebrating diversity and eliminating discrimination

Transforming this vision into reality is a multi-year process for a school. Our manual, *Collaboration for Success: A Strategy for School Transformation based on SEL*, describes the vision in detail and provides a Roadmap and Toolkit to guide schools in realizing the vision step by step.

We have a two-pronged strategy for getting schools started on this journey

- Supporting teachers in providing weekly 4Rs lessons for their students;
- Coaching the school’s leadership in leading with emotional intelligence and orchestrating collaborative planning for moving the school toward the vision of school change

During the coming year, we will be using this model as the centerpiece of our plan to scale up our work in NYC and beyond. This annual report will give you a picture of how the model plays out in classrooms and schools.

We know how to say goodbye to grim and anxious schools. Instead of taking kids to prison, that school bus will be taking them to a joyful and welcoming place, an open door to the wide and wonderful world.

– Tom Roderick



In Atlanta, kids and teachers take to The 4Rs



© Norman Klotz

Atlanta students take to The 4Rs, with the help of Ms. Solomon (left) and our staff developer Marieke van Woerkom (right).

Morningside Center is lucky to be a partner in a fascinating project with the Dunbar Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, supported by the Atlantic Civic Site of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The foundation has initiated what it calls “a place-based effort to improve conditions for children and families” in the school – and the entire surrounding community, a low-income, African-American section of Atlanta. The project includes an early learning center, a neighborhood preservation initiative, a job development center, and a drive to improve academic achievement at the school.

Our contribution: helping kids develop the social and emotional skills they need to thrive. We are training and coaching every teacher in the school to teach The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution), our literacy-based curriculum. Our staff developer, Marieke van Woerkom, is also working with parents at the school, facilitating workshops to help parents communicate better with their kids. A peer mediation/peace helpers program is next.

“What’s so awesome about this project is that the work we’re doing – social and emotional learning – is just one piece of a much larger endeavor,” says Marieke, who has been traveling from New York to Atlanta every month to

support the Dunbar teachers in teaching The 4Rs.

“It’s a recognition that you can’t change things for kids just inside the school – you need the whole community,” says Marieke. As a result of this comprehensive approach, parents are getting invaluable support and feel strongly connected to the school, teachers have a common language and goals, and children get extra academic support and a more consistent message of caring and respect.

For Ms. Solomon, a preK teacher at the Dunbar school, The 4Rs has made a huge difference. In fact, she says, “it has completely transformed my classroom.” Marieke and Ms. Solomon both say some of her students first came to school with some challenging behavioral problems. “They would



kick, hit, spit. I really didn't know how to deal with it," says Ms. Solomon.

At first, Ms. Solomon was not sure The 4Rs would connect with the kids. The 4Rs is built around reading and discussing children's books, then practicing social and emotional skills that relate to what happened in the book. But were these books the right starting place for her students?

Ms. Solomon worried that her students wouldn't understand the offbeat humor in the book *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. But, she says, "They loved it. And it taught them to be able to say no without hitting or fighting." The children also understood the message in Dr. Seuss's *The Foot Book*, which, Ms. Solomon notes, "is a way of teaching that we are all the same, and yet different." Overall, she says, her students are "captivated" by The 4Rs. "It's something new and different. They like the active lessons, the stories, the Hugg-a-Planet..."

'How come your kids are so different?'

Fairly quickly, Ms. Solomon observed that the program was having a positive effect on the children's behavior. So she started teaching 4Rs lessons as often as possible – two or three times a week – even though our model is based on just one lesson a week. The result: "My students have learned a lot of skills and they've developed a better sense of empathy and kindness."

She's not the only one who has noticed. "I've had people stop by my classroom and ask me, 'How come your kids are so different?'"

Our work in Atlanta is part of Morningside Center's plan to scale up, to share The 4Rs program and our approach to school-wide change through social and emotional learning with school systems beyond New York City.



Kids from NYC to Atlanta relate to great children's books (here, as read by Ms. Cotton).

It's been interesting to see how The 4Rs Program, developed in NYC public schools, plays with kids in Atlanta (as well as two districts in Ohio). One story we use in The 4Rs is *The Subway Sparrow*. This concept was very intriguing to some Atlanta students. (A subway? We thought that was a sandwich. And there's a bird in it!!)

One of the activities that resonates most with kids in New York is a lesson about put-downs that we call the Heart Story. In the story, a little girl named Jane has a day full of put-downs, from the moment she gets up in the morning. With each put-down, the teacher rips off a little piece of a paper heart – Jane's heart. Then the teacher tells the story again, this time with the class coming up with "put-ups" for Jane, coloring in a blank heart with every put-up.

Sometime after Ms. Solomon's class took part in the Heart Story activity, one of her students was having trouble cutting something. A classmate saw the problem, and said, "Here, give me the scissors, I can help with that." And another student said excitedly, "You just colored in Jane's heart!" And then, says Ms. Solomon, everybody started trying to say something nice so they too could color in Jane's heart. Kids in Atlanta and New York have a lot in common.

– Laura McClure



Program highlights:

'I see growth everywhere': PS 130's whole school approach to SEL

Friday mornings don't look the way they used to at Brooklyn's PS 130. That's the time when every teacher in the school is teaching The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution). Throughout the school, on every grade, every child is reading a book or discussing it, or doing an activity that helps build essential social skills (such as understanding and handling feelings, problem-solving, and dealing well with diversity).

"I see growth everywhere," says Ms. Mack-Burnstein, a third-grade teacher. "This is the first time in my teaching that students have had an emotional and heartfelt connection to books and poems. Because they learn about feelings, they are able to connect to issues like poverty, war, and illiteracy. When students start to make more personal connections, they begin to connect their life to the wider world."

With every teacher teaching the 4Rs every week at the same time, teachers themselves are taking The 4Rs to heart – and supporting each other in teaching it. They discuss their progress at every grade meeting, and consciously work to use SEL language in their daily interactions with students – and each other.

The school climate is changing. Principal Maria Nunziata says, "I'm hearing a lot more language in the school that reflects social and emotional learning. The kids are using the language too."

Principal Nunziata and her staff have long worked to foster a positive school climate and build students' social and emotional skills. But last year, she says, was "transformative." She credits Morningside Center's Smart School Leaders Program, which supported her in creating a new SEL Planning Team at the school. The program also enabled Maria to receive one-on-one coaching from a retired principal, and to participate in a learning community of principals who are committed to fostering social and emotional learning.

It was the SEL Planning Team that came up with the idea for a school-wide 4Rs class on Friday mornings, inspired by



Principal Maria Nunziata created a collaborative team that has brought measurable changes to her school.

a similar approach at PS 307 (Brooklyn) and PS 62 (Bronx), whose principals are also part of the principals' learning community. But the team did more than hatch an idea – they organized support for it, and for other changes in the school.

The 10-member SEL team includes the principal, guidance counselor, and teachers (including special ed teachers) from grades K-5. "The makeup of the group is diverse," says PS 130 guidance counselor Erin Langstaff. "We were careful about including people with a range of personalities and teaching styles."

Maria provided coverage so that all members of the committee could participate in three full days of planning and discussion over the course of several months. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school's efforts to foster SEL, the committee used the rubric in Morningside Center's manual *Collaboration for Success: A Strategy for School Transformation based on SEL*.

"This process allowed our team to air their concerns

Continued on next page

honestly and come to a common vision and understanding,” says Maria. “We talked about what social and emotional learning really means.” For example, with support from Morningside Center, the group worked through the difference between a traditional view of discipline as “punishment” versus an approach that, in Maria’s words, “lets children have a chance to reflect on their behavior, to encourage children to have more autonomy so they can learn to make good decisions on their own.”

Having arrived at a common vision and an approach they could all get behind, the group began developing a plan for carrying it out. A top priority was getting every teacher in the school to teach the 4Rs curriculum every week – and teach it well.

The members of the SEL Planning Team, some of whom had been skeptical about SEL before, now pushed the new plan at grade meetings and helped persuade their colleagues of the potential of social and emotional learning. They reached out to engage paraprofessionals and school aides as well.

Morningside Center provided training and coaching to get additional teachers ready to teach The 4Rs. Teachers began including an “SEL shout-out” at every faculty meeting to cheer on and learn from each others’ efforts. On a city-wide professional development day in June, teachers



PS 130 students in class meeting.

on the SEL Planning Team facilitated three SEL workshops for their colleagues at the school. The team’s organizing, and Maria’s strong support, allowed PS 130 to reach a tipping point. “People are responsive to numbers,” says Erin Langstaff. “When people see a peer doing SEL and it’s working – that’s what gets two more people to do it. It’s now a movement, spreading throughout the whole building.”

Morningside Center’s work at PS 130 was made possible in part by the sustained and focused support of the Charles Lawrence Keith and Clara Miller Foundation.

– Laura McClure



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LET THE CHILDREN BE THINKERS

Leslie Ramos helps students at Brooklyn’s PS 24 solve their own problems through our 4Rs Program and class meetings.

“Before I started doing class meetings, I’d have a whole line of children coming to me with problems, especially after lunchtime. It was hard to get all of them to solve their problems, right at that moment. And that’s when I came to Emma [Morningside Center staff developer Emma Gonzalez] and we came up with the idea of trying class meetings.

Class meeting is a time of the week when we sit in a circle and work on problems we have. We started by coming up with certain guidelines for having a productive meeting. And because we had done 4Rs lessons, the students already knew about active listening and paraphrasing. In the meetings, they practice all those skills.

The meetings have become a safe environment where no one feels like they’re being blamed or judged, where people can just get help solving their problems.

What I’ve learned is that we shouldn’t underestimate children. Because they are thinkers, they can be problem-solvers, and they learn from each other. They even teach us. So let them be thinkers. Give them that freedom.”



OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

© Norman Klotz



It all begins in the classroom. We provide professional development services to support teachers in consistently teaching our social & emotional learning (SEL) curricula and in strengthening their effectiveness in the classroom.

- **The 4Rs** (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution) (preK-8) develops the academic, social & emotional skills of students by integrating SEL into language arts. We are now incorporating an intensive coaching model, *My Teaching Partner*, into our 4Rs work.
- **Be the Change!/Circles** is a new curriculum we're developing for grades 9-12. It combines social and emotional skills instruction with Circles (also called "talking circles" or restorative practices). Circles are democratic processes for engaging young people in communicating with others, strengthening community, and taking responsibility for their actions. In collaboration with the NYC Department of Education, we are providing support and facilitation for Circles in schools across NYC, often through advisory programs.
- **Resolving Conflict Creatively** (grades K-12) develops students' social & emotional skills.
- **Advisories** (grades 6-12) are non-academic periods

aimed at helping young people feel more connected to school and at fostering their social and emotional learning. We help schools develop advisory programs and advisory curricula tailored to their needs.

SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAMS



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It takes a whole school! We work flexibly with school leaders to develop strategies to integrate SEL throughout the school, creating a respectful school climate.

- **Smart School Leaders** (preK-12). Through this project, we are currently coaching ten principals in leading with emotional intelligence and in guiding their schools in planning for school-wide, sustained SEL. A new cohort of principals will join the project in the summer of 2013.
- **Whole School SEL** (preK-12). We support school transformation through: weekly SEL classroom instruction; discipline policies that support students' social and emotional development; student leadership opportunities; a school culture based on respect for all; and parent engagement.
- **Pathways to Respect** (grades K-8) helps schools eliminate bullying by working at the school, classroom, and individual level.
- **Holistic Discipline** (grades preK-12). We work with school leaders to help them align their schools' approach to discipline with social and emotional



learning, creating a school environment that is safe and productive. This includes collaborative planning to help schools develop and implement effective discipline plans, and workshops and classroom coaching for teachers.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

© Christopher Smith



Kids need lots of opportunities to lead and shine – and to help build a better school. We provide school-based training and support for students (preK-12) in learning specific skills to help them become effective leaders.

- **Peer Mediation.** Selected young people, grades 3-12, (25-30 students per school) learn basic SEL skills and master a step-by-step mediation process. They then serve their schools by mediating disputes among their peers and providing other leadership.
- **Peace Helpers.** Students from grades K-2 work with their teachers to establish classroom Peace Corners and help their classmates address problems and conflicts.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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Our PAZ after-school programs engage young people in fun, enriching activities, and help them further develop their social and emotional skills.

- **PAZ (Peace from A to Z) After-School Program @ PS 24** serves 175 children in Sunset Park, Brooklyn with a program of SEL, cooperative sports, arts, community service, and homework help.
- **PAZ @ PS 214 M** serves 132 Bronx middle school students with a program of SEL, health and nutrition workshops, and an outdoor environmental education program.
- **PAZ @ PS 214 E** serves 160 elementary school students with a program that includes social & emotional learning, academic skills-building, and enrichment.

OTHER PROGRAMS



© Christopher Smith

- **TeachableMoment.Org.** Our website of teacher resources, TeachableMoment.org, provides teachers with hundreds of inquiry-oriented approaches for encouraging students' social responsibility, including critical thinking on current issues. We also share news about our work, SEL, and education issues through our organizational website, our newsletters, and our growing networks on Twitter and Facebook.
- **Stand-alone Workshops.** Each year our staff developers provide engaging, interactive stand-alone SEL workshops for hundreds of school staff. Through Respect for All, our collaboration with the NYC Department of Education to address bullying, we provide two-day awareness and skill-building workshops for teachers and guidance counselors from schools throughout NYC.
- **Courageous Schools Conference.** Each year hundreds of educators come together for a day of inspiration, sharing and SEL skills-building. Our 2013 theme: Fulfilling the Promise of Public Education. Our keynote speaker: education advocate *Diane Ravitch*.



WHO DID WE REACH IN THE 2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR?

Schools: 48

48 schools had sustained classroom programs: 38 in NYC, 10 in Ohio and Georgia. We reached an additional 185 schools through 2-day Respect for All workshops and other workshops.

School staff: 1,172

1,172 teachers and other school staff were trained or coached in our programs.

Students: 12,485

12,485 students received regular classroom instruction through The 4Rs and other sustained programs: 9,795 students in NYC and 2,750 in Ohio and Georgia.

Mediators: 1,171

1,171 students were trained and/or supported as peer mediators, peace helpers, and peer leaders.

After-School Students: 467

467 students are enrolled in our three PAZ after-school programs at PS 24 in Brooklyn and PS 214 in the Bronx.



All-day retreat for leaders of our ten model SEL schools.

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Thanks to the foundations currently supporting our work!

- Ashoka Changemakers
- David & Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation
- Keith & Miller Foundation
- New York Community Trust
- NoVo Foundation
- Ohrstrom Foundation
- SHS Foundation
- Philip & Lynn Straus Foundation
- Tiger Foundation

Operating budget for FY2012

REVENUE & SUPPORT

Contract services	2,159,664
Foundation grants & contributions	621,416
Other revenues	15,665
Total Support & Revenue	2,796,745

EXPENSES

Program	2,151,677
Management and general	898,566
Fundraising	58,511
Total Expenses	2,967,770



New report finds:
Our SEL programs among top in nation

A comprehensive report on school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs named Morningside Center’s 4Rs Program and our Resolving Conflict Creatively Program as two of the 23 most effective SEL programs in the country. The report, developed by

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CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social & Emotional Learning), was announced on Capitol Hill in September by Reps. Tim Ryan and Judy Bigger, leading national advocates for SEL. The 4Rs and the RCCP received outstanding ratings in the report, entitled *CASEL Guide: Effective Social & Emotional Learning Programs*.

Washington Post:
‘This is the future of education’

At PS 307 in Brooklyn, “Faculty members say lunchrooms and hallways are calmer, teachers and students interact better, and suspensions have dropped...” In his story “Believing self-control predicts success, schools teach coping,” *Washington Post* reporter Andrew Reiner describes some of the great work underway at the school through its close collaboration with Morningside Center. He quotes CASEL President Roger Weissberg on the movement to make SEL universal: “This is the future of education.”

Welcome, PAZ at PS 214 Elementary!

We are very excited to announced the opening of our third PAZ After-School Program, this one for elementary students at our wonderful partner school, PS 214 in the Bronx. Led by director Adam Torres, the program serves 165 kids, grades K-5, with a fun and enriching program that fosters social & emotional learning.



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Left, executive director Tom Roderick; top, deputy executive director Tala Manassah; above, rally for PAZ at PS 24.

Thanks to our Board of Directors!

Carol Beebe, Co-founder & Board Member, New York Open Center

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Emma Gonzalez, Educational Consultant & Trainer

Laura Shmishkiss, Associate Director, Instruction & Youth Development, FHI 360

Shellie Winkler, Director, Health & Corporate Practices, MSLGroup



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Kids from our PAZ @ PS 24 program rally for after-school funding.



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