



BROWN UNIVERSITY
Providence, Rhode Island 02912

November 18, 1994

Dr. Adele Simmons
President
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
140 South Dearborn Street
Suite 1100
Chicago, Illinois 60603-5285

Dear Adele:

As you probably know, the group working on the Annenberg Challenge in Chicago is putting the finishing touches on its proposal to the Annenberg Foundation. I received the final draft last Thursday. It appears to be a bold, focused plan that builds upon the ongoing school reform work in Chicago. I also get the firm sense that it represents the work of a broad cross section of the Chicago education, political and philanthropic communities. So I am excited about its chances for bringing about an educational renaissance in Chicago classrooms.

I write to you at this time to pose a couple of questions about the management and accountability structures for the project, since I assume that as a potential contributor to the effort, such concerns would interest you as much as the Annenberg Foundation. I hasten to add that I raise these questions not because I have any reason to doubt that the project will be managed well, but because I want to be sure that we have considered the issue of management carefully and thoroughly before a contract is signed between the Annenberg Foundation and whatever entity ends up being the formal grant recipient in Chicago. (I understand that the group submitting the proposal, the "Chicago School Reform Collaborative," is not--nor does it seek to be--a full-fledged 501(c)(3).)

The three management areas, as I see it, are: fiscal responsibility, coordination of project implementation, and evaluation and documentation of the overall effort. The "bottom line," from my perspective, is what concrete, identifiable entity will take ultimate responsibility for being accountable, bringing together people with different knowledges and

experiences for joint performance, keeping the project on track and insuring its success.

Anne Hallett and Bill Ayers, the two people who have coordinated the Annenberg planning work in Chicago, are currently exploring the possibility of the Donors Forum of Chicago being the fiscal agent for the project. As such, the Donors Forum would sign the contract with the Annenberg Foundation. What this means about oversight for program implementation and evaluation functions is yet unclear.

I also gather that Anne Hallett and her colleagues are in the process of sharing their finalized proposal with you--that, indeed, you, Pat Graham and Deborah Leff are meeting with Anne next week. I am glad to hear this, since your input with regard to these management and accountability concerns would be most helpful to them.


But it would also be helpful for me to hear your thoughts directly, since we must ponder comparable management and accountability questions in other Annenberg metropolitan sites. I am also curious to know what concerns you may have in this area that I and others may have overlooked. How does the MacArthur Foundation currently handle evaluation of education grants it makes in the Chicago area? Might Chicago funders who contribute to the Annenberg Challenge form a sort of executive committee around evaluation, adding a small percentage for evaluation onto their grants and pooling these funds in a joint evaluation effort which complements the cross-site evaluation the Annenberg Foundation will sponsor? (Each funder, of course, could reserve the right to pursue questions of particular interest to it as well.)

I apologize for burdening you, but I feel you are one of the best people to reflect upon these issues, particularly given your potential role as a significant stakeholder in the Annenberg initiative in Chicago. It is imperative that this large undertaking, aptly called by its authors "Smart Schools/Smart Kids: A Proposal to the Annenberg Foundation to Create the Chicago School Reform Collaborative," have smart management too.

Thank you so much for your help, thoughts, and steadfast support. I plan to transmit the Chicago proposal to Ambassador Annenberg as soon as

these remaining administrative details have been resolved. Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues. I am taking the liberty of sending copies to Pat Graham and Deborah Leff whose input is equally critical.

With warm regards,

Vartan Gregorian 

Vartan Gregorian

cc. Patricia Graham
Deborah Leff
Anne Hallett
Bill Ayers



BROWN UNIVERSITY Providence, Rhode Island 02912

Gregorian

The President

November 18, 1994

Anne C. Hallett, Executive Director
Cross City Campaign for Urban Reform
407 S. Dearborn Street
Suite 1725
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dr. William Ayers
University of Chicago
College of Education
1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7133

Dear Ms. Hallett and Dr. Ayers:

Yesterday I read the proposal you have submitted in response to the Annenberg Challenge and on behalf of the young people in Chicago schools. My preliminary review reveals an ambitious and exciting project. The four-fold thrust on professional development and teacher empowerment, on the creation of smaller, more intimate learning communities, on community-school partnerships, and on systemic change all seem wise and appropriate. Equally compelling is the focus on key structural changes in time and size. And it is quite apparent that all those involved in the planning have been careful to build upon the strengths and lessons learned from the ongoing school reform movement in Chicago, rather than reinventing new wheels.

My only concerns are the following:

1. *Fiscal Agent:* I understand that you are currently working to tie this down. A fiscal agent must be designated before the Annenberg Foundation reviews this proposal.
2. *Ethnic Representation:* This probably goes without saying, but I urge you, as you compose the governing Board and the Collaborative, to engage people who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of Chicago.
3. *Assessment:* I have raised this issue in a separate letter to Adele Simmons and assume that this will be one of the issues you will address together when you meet. I question, though, the notion of presenting the Consortium of

Chicago School Research as a "given" in relation to documentation and assessment. I would prefer to see the governing board decide which independent, third-party can best provide documentation and assessment than this being prescribed in the proposal. I also would encourage you to see this as an expense which local, not Annenberg, dollars support--as a mechanism for local funders to "monitor" their investment.

4. *Role of Various Reform "Movements"*: It was not entirely clear to me from the proposal how other reform movements, such as Comer or Accelerated Schools, will be woven into the project.

5. *Public Matching Dollars*: It is my understanding that Chicago proposes to match an Annenberg grant two-to-one, with approximately \$50 million from private donations and \$50 million from public. It would be helpful if you could provide a clear statement of what you view as "new" public dollars.

I do not think it is necessary for you to amend the proposal you have sent me. Rather, I would be most appreciative if you could respond to these concerns in a letter to me, which I can then send to the Annenberg Foundation along with the completed proposal. Since I am hoping to present this and several other proposals to Ambassador Annenberg in the first week of December, your prompt reply is needed.

Before closing, I also would like to take this opportunity to clarify a few points:

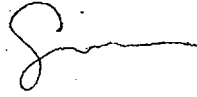
First and foremost, the Annenberg Foundation is the final arbiter with regard to awarding this and other grants through the "Challenge."

Second, the grant award will include a contract between the Annenberg Foundation and the locally-appointed grant recipient. I understand that Barbara Cervone recently sent you an abstract of the contract drawn up between the Foundation and the Fund for NYC Public Education for your review; I would anticipate that a contract with Chicago would include many of the same conditions, as well as some possibly unique to Chicago. It seems prudent, if an Annenberg grant is awarded Chicago, that the accompanying contract be shared with local funders so that there is a common understanding of expectations.

And third, beyond the funds made available to Annenberg sites through the Challenge, all grant recipients will have the opportunity to participate in a national network involving those doing "Challenge" work in other cities (New York et al.). The Annenberg Institute will lead this networking, bringing together people and ideas around professional development, lead schools, policy, technology, and communicating to the public about school reform.

Let me reiterate my deep appreciation for all you and your colleagues have done to forge a compelling vision for school reform in Chicago. Your dedication to the children of Chicago deserves hearty applause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vartan Gregorian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vartan Gregorian

140 South Dearborn Street
Suite 1100

Chicago, Illinois 60603-5285
Telephone: (312) 726-8000

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

DEC 2 1994

November 29, 1994

BY FACSIMILE (401) 863-7737

Vartan Gregorian
President
Brown University
Box 1860
Providence, RI 02912

Dear Vartan,

Thanks for your letter about the Annenberg matching grant to Chicago. The planning process in the city has been truly impressive drawing on the collaboration among many constituencies that are committed to public education in the city.

Bill Ayers, Debby Leff, Pat Graham, Anne Hallett, and I had breakfast on November 22, and reviewed the issues raised in your letter.

We expect to reach a formal agreement with the Donors' Forum shortly. Under the agreement, they will serve as fiscal agent for the project. If there are any last minute problems with the Donors' Forum, we will ask the University of Illinois to take on this role.

We are constituting a governing board that will be diverse and bi-partisan and will include civic leaders who have a long-standing interest in the public schools as well as the people who are actually working in the schools. We expect this group to include no more than eight people, and we should be able to send you a list of several of the names by early next week. It is this group that will be accountable for the implementation of the project, for raising the matching funds, and for overseeing the evaluation.

We talked in some detail about the evaluation situation. We agreed that it would be difficult to ask Tony Bryk's group to take on this job given his current relationship with the school board. We believe Paul Lingenfelter, who oversees all evaluation at MacArthur, is the best person to develop the plan for evaluation of the project. And we agree that this would be one way in which private donors could contribute to the project. Paul has a remarkable ability to tailor an evaluation to particular projects and uses experts from ethnographers to statisticians depending on who is appropriate. He is also a master at ensuring that the evaluation informs those working on the project and is seen as helpful rather than threatening. Obviously the design cannot be completed before the grant announcement is made, but responsibility for ensuring a quality evaluation can be assigned. He would also work with people from other Annenberg sites in this process.

Vartan Gregorian
November 29, 1994
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The board of directors will lead the effort to match Annenberg Foundation funds on a two-to-one basis, through a \$50 million commitment of public funds and a \$50 million commitment of private funds over the period of the grant. It is our conviction that the Annenberg principles, which will guide the activities supported with Annenberg funds, can also serve as a useful and valid way to define the appropriate sources for the match. The momentum of school reform in Chicago for the past five years has been consistent with, and will be accelerated by, the Annenberg principles. Existing public and private dollars supporting projects which directly address the Annenberg principles will provide some of the match. (In many or most cases, the private and public dollars committed may far exceed the dollars which we will commit from Annenberg funds). Additionally, the existing commitments consistent to the Annenberg principles will "snowball" the match by attracting new and/or currently otherwise allocated dollars to the Annenberg project. We see the Annenberg Challenge as an opportunity to foster collaboration among the three public funders and would like to insist that the state, the city, and the school board collaborate in defining the public challenge. Again, the details of this will take some time to work out, but I have taken on the responsibility of scheduling a meeting with the appropriate people from the state, the city, and the school board to discuss how they can jointly meet the public challenge.

Finally, I have been concerned that the Chicago teachers' union be a part of this entire process. I believe that those planning the project have included the union and that the union will remain involved in spite of the tragic death of John Kotsakis who was skillfully engaging the union in Chicago school reform.

Thanks for all your help with this, and please thank Ambassador Annenberg for his generosity.

Sincerely,



Adele Simmons
President

KMR/Gregori.gen

cc: Ted Sizer
Anne Hallett
Bill Ayers
Deborah Leff
Pat Graham

Curriculum and Instruction (M/C 147)
College of Education
1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7133
(312) 996-4508

DEC 2 1994

December 1, 1994

Dr. Vartan Gregorian
President
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island 02912

Dear Dr. Gregorian,

Thank you for your good letter of November 18, 1994. We are continuing to build a broad base of consensus and support for the main thrust of the proposal. The work in Chicago around the Annenberg Challenge has already had a positive and dynamic impact, and we expect this to continue and intensify as we proceed.

We have given careful thought to the issues you raise in your letter. We are working with Adele Simmons, Deborah Leff, and Pat Graham on issues of management and governance to ensure that Chicago's Annenberg Challenge initiative is successful. We offer the following responses:

1. The Donors Forum of Chicago, Inc., will be the fiscal agent for the Challenge. As the enclosed letter indicates, they are enthusiastic about assuming this role and see no obstacles that are not readily resolvable. There will be four interacting components to the project.
 - a. Board of Directors. A five-to-seven person Board of Directors of highly respected Chicagoans is being assembled. Pat Graham, president of the Spencer Foundation, has agreed to serve and is willing to work with the Board. The duties of the Board will be to approve grants, to help raise matching funds, and to hire the executive director.
 - b. Staff for the Chicago Annenberg Challenge. The Board will hire an executive director to staff both the grantmaking functions and to mount supportive programs. The executive director will hire additional staff members as needed. The executive director will work closely with the Board, the Collaborative, and the fiscal agent to ensure cooperative and collaborative working relationships.
 - c. Chicago School Reform Collaborative. This twelve-to-fifteen member group will be composed of representatives of all key participants, e.g., local school council members, teachers, principals, school reform groups, funders, the union, the Board of Education, state departments of education, the governor's office, and the mayor's office. Anne Hallett, Bill Ayers, and Warren Chapman will provide initial leadership to put together this group, in cooperation with the Challenge executive director. The Collaborative will be the operational policy and planning group.

