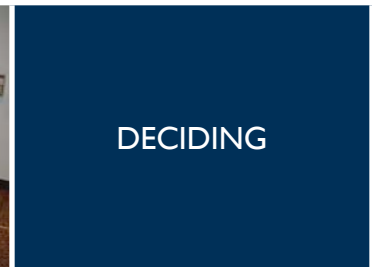


# ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Assisting families, schools and communities with children's academic and personal development



WHERE WE HAVE BEEN  
WHERE WE ARE GOING

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## WHERE WE HAVE BEEN WHERE WE ARE GOING

Academic Development Institute



### IN THE BEGINNING

ADI began in 1984 with a summer camp to teach study skills to junior high kids and courses for parents to help them support their children's success in school. Foundations and corporations supported ADI's work in Chicago, and then in rural areas of Illinois and Indiana.

*ADI's initial approach was to work with students at the pivotal age of middle school, and with their parents, to help the students develop the skills, habits, and attitudes that would contribute to their success in school and in life. Particularly, ADI promoted self-directed learning, a love for reading, and personal characteristics of respect and responsibility.*

*ADI's Solid Foundation represents the finest work in school family partnerships being carried out around the country.*

Dr. Roger Weissberg  
University of Illinois at Chicago

*I am very happy our school is in the Solid Foundation program because it has given me more opportunities to work with my daughters on reading at home. I am encouraging more parents to participate in the home visits and parent courses.*

Felipa Mena  
Parent

Academic Development Institute



### EARLY LESSONS

ADI soon learned that the number of students and families it could directly reach was limited, and that its efforts could be magnified by building the “community of the school,” helping schools connect students, parents, and teachers around common goals for students, such as self-directed learning, reading, and respectful, responsible behavior. Alliance for Achievement, a model for building a strong, value-based school community, was born in 1989. By 1991, ADI had created a network of Alliance for Achievement schools and was publishing the *School Community Journal*, gathering and disseminating the best scholarship on schools that functioned as communities.

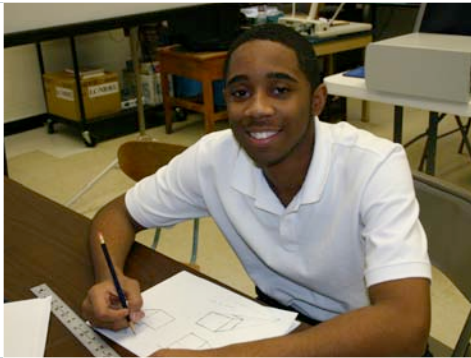
*Applying research on the “community of the school,” ADI developed practical ways to embed within a school’s operation the connections among students, teachers, parents and school staff that focused on core competencies and encouraged each student’s success. ADI’s research council, consisting of James S. Coleman, Benjamin Bloom, Herbert J. Walberg, and Ralph Tyler (all then or previously affiliated with the University of Chicago) provided foundational guidance for Alliance for Achievement.*

*ADI’s Solid Foundation program is helping to rebuild hope and a sense of belonging among families. This has been without question the most effective “parent involvement” effort we have seen.*

Dr. Andrea Brown  
Regional Superintendent of Education

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### RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

In 1995 ADI began its association with the Laboratory for Student Success, a federal education laboratory based at Temple University in Philadelphia. Alliance for Achievement took root in the mid-Atlantic states, and ADI continued to refine and improve the model.

ADI's field-research project with the Laboratory for Student Success now focuses on developing data analysis systems, instruments, and decision-making procedures to enable schools to internalize improvement processes. Comprehensive school reform has been effective in getting schools to see how research-based practices must fit together in a coherent sense and with a critical mass of implementation to get results. But much remains to be learned about how schools internalize these processes and continue to monitor their progress, scrutinize their practices, and strive for better outcomes for their students.

*This, to me, is the essence of ADI's program—targeting instruction to each student. It is a workable, systematic way to reach each child. The students assume a new level of responsibility for their own learning, and it is very effective.*

Laurie Small  
Principal

*ADI's program has enabled me to plan instruction for the individual student. The Work Time activities allow me to address the various learning needs of my students. Through on-going formal and informal assessment, I am able to modify my instruction as needed. The rewards are well worth the efforts!*

Denise Castro  
Teacher

### PARENTS AND LEARNING

In 1997 ADI won a grant from the U. S. Department of Education to become the first Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) in Illinois. With this support, ADI assumed the role of state leader for Parents as Teachers, providing technical assistance to the PAT programs in the state. ADI expanded its parent education programs to include courses for parents of children with disabilities. Community Leadership Institutes, held regionally throughout the state, and state conferences enabled ADI to reach families, schools, and agencies throughout Illinois.

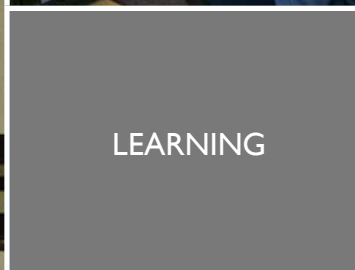
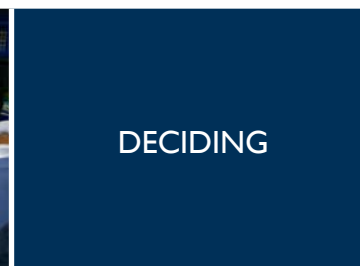
In 1999, ADI began working with 32 elementary schools in the high-poverty area of East St. Louis. A year later, ADI was awarded a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education to extend its program, Solid Foundation, to 200 high-poverty schools throughout the state. In 2004, ADI published a study that showed that schools implementing Solid Foundation over a two-year period improved their scores on the state assessments by nearly twice the gain of a control group of schools with identical beginning scores.

*An evaluation of ADI's Solid Foundation program in 129 high-poverty schools showed that a comprehensive program to engage parents in children's learning could significantly impact student learning outcomes. The study was presented at the annual convention of the American Educational Research Association and was published by the Harvard Family Research Project.*

*Our School Community Council gets right down to business. The SCC Planning Guide keeps us on a productive track. As a result, we aren't spinning our wheels with parents anymore. Parents are better informed and more supportive of the school because of it. The payoff is for our students, who now see their parents and their teachers working together for them. We are a much stronger community now.*

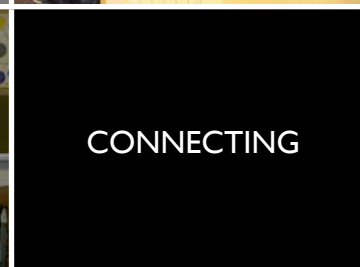
Andrea Loeffler  
Teacher

## WHERE WE HAVE BEEN WHERE WE ARE GOING



*For me, the thrill of teaching is seeing the lights go on in a child's eyes. That's what targeted learning is really all about. The teacher matches the mode of instruction with the individual student's learning requirements. A lot of lights go on. I love it when that happens, and I love helping teachers create that magic in the classroom.*

Brenda May  
ADI Education Specialist



## IMPROVING SCHOOLS

During the 1990s, design teams around the nation created “models” for school reform to address concerns about the effectiveness of many public schools. In 1997, Congress made funds available for low-performing schools to adopt research-based models. The Center for Research in Human Development and Education at Temple University had a model, and that model included Alliance for Achievement as its component for engaging parents. The model’s classroom management component, based on the research of Dr. Margaret C. Wang, was strong in areas that appealed to ADI’s individualized instruction, student accountability for learning, and student-directed learning. By 2000, ADI was training school staff in the model, and by 2001 ADI was overseeing the implementation of the model in 42 schools in 8 states while studying the effectiveness of the model in 82 schools.



### A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

Having worked with comprehensive school reform for the past five years, ADI put forth its own model in 2003. It kept the name Alliance for Achievement for the model that combined the community-building and parent engagement aspects of the predecessor AFA with classroom management techniques that were the central strength of the Temple model.

Alliance for Achievement added to these two research-based and field tested components a strong system of curriculum alignment and instructional planning. By 2005, 16 schools in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin had adopted Alliance for Achievement as their model for comprehensive school improvement.

Studying various models of comprehensive school reform, and implementing Temple's model, ADI learned that three important aspects of sustained school improvement were missing or were weak in most models:

- 1) structures and processes for shared decision-making and use of student learning data;
- 2) alignment of standards-based, curricular objectives with the instructional plan for each student; and
- 3) practical methods for engaging parents in their children's learning.

ADI's revamped Alliance for Achievement included these components.

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### CONVENING THINKERS

In 2003, ADI sponsored a state conference, *Working Together for Student Success*, with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, former lieutenant governor of Maryland, as the keynoter. Thirty-two state organizations and agencies participated in the conference. That same year, ADI featured Dr. Karen Mapp, then at Northeastern University in Boston, as the featured speaker at ADI's first Guest Researcher dinner, held in Chicago. In 2004, the featured speaker at the Guest Researcher dinner was Dr. Heather Weiss, director of the Harvard Family Research Project. The 2005 guest researcher was Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center, and Dr. Patricia Edwards of Michigan State University spoke at ADI's annual conference for Alliance for Achievement schools. The guest researcher for the 2006 researcher dinner was Dr. Joyce Epstein, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University.

*We do a lot of work with schools. But parents can be reached in other places as well. ADI works through faith-based and community-based organizations to reach parents with the information and assistance they need to support their children's learning and make the best decisions about their children's schooling.*

Bernadette Anderson  
ADI Director of Community Education



### NATIONAL CENTER ON INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

In 2005, ADI was awarded a competitive contract from the U. S. Department of Education to form and operate a national Center on Innovation and Improvement, one of only five national content centers. The Center provides technical assistance to regional comprehensive centers and state departments of education on school improvement and education options.

### LEARNING ENGINEERS, COMMUNITY BUILDERS

With more than 20 years of service to families, schools, and communities, ADI continues to evolve, to retool, to find better ways to fulfill its purpose. ADI has always served as a conduit between research and sound practice: ADI makes things work. ADI will fulfill this engineering role to reach families, schools, and community organizations more effectively and more efficiently. True to its roots, ADI will maintain its deep respect for the human dimension in children's development. Research-based methods are only successful when they are embraced by teachers, parents, and administrators—the people who care most about the children in their midst. ADI will connect people with each other and with sound practice so they can make the best decisions about children's learning. Deciding. Learning. Connecting.

*I have looked at the connection between parents and schools from every angle—parent educator, teacher, volunteer, program director, and mom. When we get it right, every child benefits.*

Reatha Owen  
ADI Director of Solid Foundation

### OUR NEXT STEPS

Deciding. Learning. Connecting. ADI will help people make things work for the children in their midst. A new ADI Training Center will build the capacity of leadership teams from schools and community organizations to make the best decisions about children's learning. Web-based learning will supplement the training. ADI will refine and expand the use of its computer programs for building instructional units, preparing individual student learning plans, analyzing classroom practices, tracking student learning, and assessing the connections among teachers, parents, and students. ADI will differentiate its models for preschool, special education, elementary school, middle school, high school, and charter schools.

ADI's goals are to:

1. **Make Alliance for Achievement's "targeted learning" instructional practices more widely available** to schools through a training center for school teams, data systems, and web-based learning.
2. **Make Solid Foundation's parent engagement strategies more widely available to schools** through Solid Foundation Academies that train school teams in the field-tested components of the program, including a documentation system that monitors their progress.
3. **Seek partnerships with districts** in order to serve more schools more efficiently.
4. **Adapt Alliance for Achievement's instructional methods (targeted learning) to preschool and for special education.**
5. **Provide standards-based technical assistance for Parents as Teachers programs** in collaboration with state and community agencies.
6. **Accelerate the development and expansion of Champions Together** and related programming for special education.
7. **Link research to practice, and researchers with practitioners**, through the *School Community Journal*, *Families & Schools Newsletter*, *PAT News*, ADI website, Illinois Parents website, Guest Researcher Dinner, and a new website devoted to resources for social and emotional learning.

# **Academic Development Institute**

**Founded in 1984**

***Assisting families, schools and communities with children's academic and personal development.***

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. *Those* children become *our* children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



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