

Renaissance Blitzkrieg continues

By George N. Schmidt

During the more than 50 years that Lindblom high school (variously "Lindblom Technical High School" and recently "Lindblom College Prep High School") served as one of the Chicago's top schools, no one in the city would have believed it if someone had suggested that the head of the city's school system would close down the school, replace its entire faculty, override its local school council, and ignore its alumni and community. Lindblom — and Chicago's South Side — would not stand for such disrespect.

On March 23, 2005, the Chicago Board of Education, without discussion, voted to rename Lindblom "Lindblom Math and Science Academy." The renaming includes replacing the current staff and appointing a principal handpicked by CEO Arne Duncan against the LSC's wishes.

More than a decade of destabilization campaigns and threats had worked. Chicago's political leaders were able to reorganize Lindblom without taking into account the school's proud staff, its community, or its traditions. For the other side of town it was as if Arne Duncan, Michael Scott, and Richard Daley had shut down Lane Technical High School, dispersed its students to an elementary school in Uptown, lied to everyone there, and then use the "facts" that were spawned by their lies to destroy the school's remains.

Under "Renaissance 2010" even Chicago's best schools are under attack by privatization and the ideologues of corporate "school reform". Lindblom is not alone.

On March 23, the Board of Education voted to approve "Board Report 05-0323-EX11 (Approve the Establishment of the Robert Lindblom Math & Science Academy)". The vote, combined with the announcement by Duncan that he had appointed Alan Mather, assistant principal of North Side College Prep, as Lindblom's new principal, amounts to a union busting purge of the school's remaining staff.

Lindblom

High School teacher Sheila Frazier(left) questioned the Chicago Board of Education's decision to once again close Lindblom during the March 23 board meeting. Despite Lindblom's proud history, the board ran a negative media blitz, then voted to close the school.

The March 23 vote was preceded, as has happened before, by a media

blitz. The blitz included an article in the Chicago Sun-Times praising the newly appointed principal and a longer piece in the Chicago Tribune lamenting the fact that Lindblom had fallen on hard times. But as everyone who knew the facts said, Lindblom hadn't fallen on hard times, it had been pushed.

Lindblom had been subject to a number of destabilizing events, all of them from the Daley administration and corporate Chicago. Chicago ignored the gang problems on Lindblom's front steps even as the community turned toxic. It was not safe for students to walk near their school. Then Duncan moved the school out of its building for two years — supposedly for "renovations" — instead of doing the work while school continued. Finally, Duncan claimed nobody wanted to go to Lindblom and closed the school.