As a private nonprofit corporation, New American Schools (NAS) began in 1991 to fund the development of designs aimed at transforming entire schools at the elementary and secondary levels. Having completed competition and development phases, NAS currently is scaling-up its designs across the nation. During the phase when NAS was committed to implementing its designs across schools within partnering jurisdictions, RAND’s research assessed the impact of NAS designs on classroom practice and student achievement in a sample of schools in a high-poverty district during the 1997–1998 and 1998–1999 school years.

The current study is aimed at those who want to better understand the expanding area of whole-school, or comprehensive, school reform and its effects on teaching and learning within high-stakes accountability environments.

RAND’s assessment of NAS schools has spanned several years. To date, RAND studies about New American Schools include:


“Reforming Whole Schools: Challenges and Complexities,” by Mark Berends, Susan Bodilly, and Sheila Nataraj Kirby. Forth-


Funding Comprehensive School Reform, by Brent R. Keltner, 1998 (IP-175-EDU).


Funding for this research was provided under a contract with NAS and supported by the Ford Foundation and another donor. This report was written under the aegis of RAND Education.