

Chicago Public Schools—Renaissance 2010 Schools

Program Name:	Student-Based Budgeting
Implemented:	2005-2006 School Year
Program Type:	Pilot Program
Legal Authorization:	School Board Policy

School Empowerment Benchmarks		
1.	School budgets based on students not staffing	yes
2.	Charge schools actual versus average salaries	yes
3.	School choice and open enrollment policies	yes
4.	Principal autonomy over budgets	yes
5.	Principal autonomy over hiring	yes
6.	Principal training and school-level management support	yes
7.	Published transparent school-level budgets	no
8.	Published transparent school-level outcomes	yes
9.	Explicit accountability goals	yes
10.	Collective bargaining relief—flat contracts, etc.	yes
Chicago’s Renaissance schools met 9 out of 10 school empowerment benchmarks.		



I. Program Overview

Chicago's, "Renaissance 2010" (Ren10) was developed to transform Chicago public school education by launching 100 innovative new schools in the city's most underserved communities by 2010. Unveiled in June 2004 by Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan and Chicago business and philanthropic leaders, the goal of Ren10 is to provide all families—regardless of their socio-economic standing—with options for a high-quality public education. Under Ren10 new public schools have been started by universities, corporations, foundations, philanthropic citizens, private schools and teachers. The approach is the opposite of the traditional one-size-fits-all view of education. Ren10 schools are independent, giving operators the flexibility they need to respond to students' education needs. In exchange for this autonomy, they are held to a high degree of accountability. By 2010, Renaissance schools, including new schools and pre-existing charter schools, will total 107 schools serving 53,679 students at capacity, equating to 13 percent of the Chicago public school market.¹

These Renaissance schools' basic principle is "autonomy in exchange for accountability," as accomplished through three qualities:

- Every new school is held accountable to a 5-year performance plan or agreement.
- Every school's achievement is measured by a standard set of metrics, beyond test scores.
- Schools enjoy freedom over curriculum, length of school day and school year and budget.

Schools opened under this initiative use a new funding formula that also gives them more control over their money, setting the stage for more transparency and equity in how funds are allocated to schools throughout the district. Renaissance schools are piloting the approach, which allots a basic amount of money per child and then supplements those funds with additional money for each child with special circumstances, such as coming from a low-income family or needing special education or bilingual services.

II Student-Based Budgeting Formula

The Chicago Public School District provides each school with operational resources that are equal to the average operational funding provided to all Chicago public schools, on a per-pupil basis. The district differentiates funding according to grade levels served, unique student populations or educational programs. All charter schools, contract schools and performance schools receive their funding on a per-pupil basis.

In addition, each Renaissance school receives its proportional share of state and federal categorical funds, subject to applicable grant requirements and obligations. Each Renaissance school also receives capital support, either through the provision of a district-owned or leased facility or through supplemental payments or assistance. The school board also provides adequate start-up resources prior to each school opening and a small schools supplement of \$300 per pupil.

III. Autonomy

Renaissance schools have complete control over school budgets in exchange for higher accountability. They receive their funding in the same way that charter schools receive funding, as a pass-through from the district. They also have autonomy over a wide range of educational and operational issues from hiring decisions to the length of the school day, scheduling and school design. Some of the differences between Renaissance schools and traditional schools include:²

- Renaissance elementary school students receive an average of 43 percent more instruction time in core academic areas.
- A student attending Renaissance schools from K–12th grade will receive an average of 5.3 years more instruction in core subject areas.
- Renaissance teachers receive an average of 70 percent more professional development hours per month than the traditional school average.
- Student-to-teacher ratio is 23 percent lower in elementary schools and 9 percent lower in high schools.
- Renaissance high schools have an average attendance rate of 90 percent compared to the Chicago public school average for traditional high schools of 83 percent.
- Renaissance schools are in high demand and have received 1.4 applications for every available seat.

IV. School-Level Management Support

The school district provides a school support team that is responsible for supporting the educational and operational success of all new charter, contract, performance and professional development schools. The primary focus of school support is to ensure that new schools have access to the information and resources necessary to meet student achievement goals. The school support team is led by the director of school support, who oversees a team of six school support coordinators and acts as senior liaison to all Renaissance 2010 schools. Coordinators serve as liaisons between the school and the district by advocating on behalf of the school as well as the students and families served by the school. The school support team works in conjunction with the Office of New Schools departments—Accountability, Business Services, External Relations & Special Projects, Planning & Development and Recruitment—as well as district departments in supporting each school’s unique needs.

V. School Site Councils

Contract schools have an advisory body composed of parents, community members and staff. Performance schools are governed by an Appointed Local School Council (“ALSC”) composed of parents, community members and staff. Finally, charter schools have independent non-profit boards that set policy and approve budget decisions for the charter school.

VI. School Choice Component

Each Renaissance school defines a community area around the school and grants an enrollment preference to students who reside in that community. Renaissance schools are also allowed to enroll students residing outside that community if space exists and to be chosen by a random lottery if demand exceeds space.

VII. Accountability

Renaissance 2010 schools receive more freedom than traditional public schools in return for high levels of accountability. The Chicago Public Schools District outlines and manages the accountability system for new schools by developing performance plans/agreements, formally evaluating their performance and compliance against these plans and regularly reporting on schools' performance on a variety of indicators. The accountability plans share the following common metrics:

1. Test scores—composite and gains
2. Attendance
3. Graduation rates

Performance evaluation of the schools occurs through periodic evaluations that include informal reviews, an annual charter school performance report, mid-charter evaluations and renewal evaluations. In addition, the Office of New Schools ensures that all schools are appropriately authorized by the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. Renaissance 2010 schools will be given a five-year term of existence. If a school meets its goals, the school will be renewed. If the goals of the agreement are not met, the

school could be closed or ordered changed by the school board.

IX. Performance Outcomes

Charter schools, which make up the majority of Renaissance schools, continued to show higher student performance than traditional district schools.³ During the 2007-2008 school year, charter schools served 22,700 students district-wide and more minority students. Sixty-four percent of charter school students were African-American, 30 percent were Latino, 3 percent were Caucasian, 1 percent were Asian and 2 percent were of another race. In comparison, 46.5 percent of non-charter school students were African-American, 39 percent were Latino, 8 percent were Caucasian, 3 percent were Asian and 3 percent were multi-racial or of another race. In 2008, 91 percent of charter elementary schools had a higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2008 Illinois state composite test than their comparison neighborhood schools. Eighty-eight percent of charter high schools had a higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2008 high school composite than their comparison neighborhood schools.

In addition, the first cohort of Renaissance schools from 2005, including charter and non-charter Renaissance schools, showed larger annual gains on the state test than the average gains for all district schools. The Renaissance schools gained 6.5 percent in 2006-2007 compared with 2.3 percent gains for the Chicago Public School District as a whole.

X. Lessons Learned

1. Chicago demonstrates that charter schools can become part of a student-based budgeting system when they are invited to participate and given school support from the district. The key is that the charter school “lump-sum” financing must become the basis for funding all schools in the district. Therefore, the new district schools that are funded under a per-pupil basis have 100 percent control over their budgets like charter school principals.

2. Chicago demonstrates that pilot schools can be held accountable by signing five-year contracts that outline explicit accountability goals and that these schools can have their contracts renewed based on the actual performance of their students.

Resources

Creating a New Market of Public Education, The Renaissance Schools Fund 2008 Progress Report, http://www.rsfcchicago.org/rsf_2008_report/RSF_2008_Report_pgs.pdf.

Establish Renaissance Schools, Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual, June 27, 2007, <http://policy.cps.k12.il.us/documents/302.7.pdf>.

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Endnotes

1. *Creating a New Market of Public Education, The Renaissance Schools Fund 2008 Progress Report*, http://www.rsfcchicago.org/rsf_2008_report/RSF_2008_Report_pgs.pdf.
2. Ibid.
3. *Charter Schools Performance Report 2007-2008*, Chicago Public Schools, http://www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us/docs/ONS%20perf%20report%202-25_FINAL.pdf.