

Summary of research studies on Renaissance 2010
Pauline Lipman, PhD. University of Illinois-Chicago
plipman@uic.edu

Research findings: A growing body of research indicates Chicago's Renaissance 2010 plan to close, phase out, consolidate, or turn around schools and turn them over to private charter school operators or selective enrollment schools does not benefit low-income students of color.

- Students have been transferred from one low-scoring school to another; overall the moves did not significantly affect student achievement.
- R2010 leads to exclusion of vulnerable students, increased school violence, disruption of teaching and learning, disruption and demoralization of receiving schools, destabilization of students and communities, and displacement of teachers.
- CPS charter high schools are not performing significantly better than CPS neighborhood high schools, while enrolling less special-need, ELL, and low-income students.
- Students and communities disproportionately affected are low-income African American and Latino.
- School closings are concentrated in gentrified and gentrifying areas.
- Case studies of schools proposed to close for under-enrollment indicate that CPS uses flawed enrollment data.
- There has been little genuine participation of parents, teachers, students, or communities in decisions affecting them.
- R2010 schools' governing bodies are not open to public scrutiny.
- Charter schools nationally tend to be more racially segregated than regular public schools.

Recommendation: Freeze Renaissance 2010 and implement a school/community-centered school transformation process.

Reports:

1. *Students as Collateral Damage? Preliminary Study of Renaissance 2010 School Closings in the Midsouth.*
P. Lipman, A. Person, Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, February 2007.

<http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/papers.html> As a result of school closings and student transfers, teachers, administrators, and parents in Midsouth receiving schools reported: a) lack of necessary resources, staff, and professional support; b) disruptive and demoralizing climate; c) negative effects on teaching and learning; d) problems with safety and discipline; e) schools were "set up for failure" due to a history of declining resources and lack of support from CPS.

2. *Public Accountability and Renaissance 2010. Parents United for Responsible Education, 2008.*

<http://pureparents.org/data/files/FOIAreport11-16-08.pdf> Two-thirds of R2010 schools failed to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests for basic information about their governing bodies in 2008. Information from the schools that did respond showed that only 5% of their governing body members were parents.

3. *Examining CPS' plan to close, consolidate, turn-around 18 schools. Data and Democracy Project: Research Paper #1: Feb. 2008. A. Greenlee, N. Hudspeth, P. Lipman, D. A. Smith, J. Smith.*

<http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/resources.html> Case studies of two schools slated for closure show that when actual utilization of space for educational programming is taken into account, both schools have currently acceptable and

educationally appropriate rates of utilization, while CPS AMPS schools have lower utilization rates. Schools to be closed or turned around are in areas with higher than average poverty rates, a majority residents African American or Latino, and are experiencing gentrification. The communities have not had opportunity for full participation in decisions affecting them.

4. *The Charter Difference: A Comparison of Chicago Charter and Neighborhood High Schools.* L. Brown & E. Gutstein, Feb. 2009. <http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/resources.html> Charter high schools in Chicago enroll fewer low-income, limited-English-proficient, and special needs students than neighborhood high schools, and there is no significant difference in student achievement scores. Charter schools have less-experienced and less-educated teachers who work longer hours for less pay. Charter high schools' significant under-enrollment of special needs students may be discriminatory and warrants further investigation.

5. *Examining CPS' plan to close, phase out, consolidate, turn-around 22 schools.* Data and Democracy Project, Research Paper #2, Feb. 2009. J. Fleming, A. Greenlee, E. Gutstein, P. Lipman, J. Smith. <http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/resources.html> Case studies suggest CPS is using flawed assessments of under-utilization. School closings seem to be correlated with gentrification and contribute to neighborhood destabilization. There is insufficient evidence of efficacy of the turnaround strategy, particularly when weighed against destabilizing effects of replacing all familiar adults. There is a lack of community involvement in local school decisions.

6. *High School Reform in Chicago: Renaissance 2010.* SRI International, June 2009. L. Cassidy, D. C. Humphrey, M. E. Weschler, V. M. Young. http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/other/Renaissance_2010.pdf R2010 high schools have higher attendance rates than most other CPS high schools but achievement data do not show gains to ensure large numbers of students will be ready to succeed in college. Despite some promising practices, most teaching is at the basic or unsatisfactory level in a majority of observed classrooms. Outcomes can be explained in part by constant focus on start-up processes.

7. *When Schools Close.* Consortium on Chicago School Research, Oct. 2009. J. Gwynne & M. de la Torre. http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=136. Eight in ten CPS students displaced by school closings transferred to schools ranking in the bottom half of system schools on standardized tests. Because most displaced students transferred from one low-performing school to another, the move did not, on average, significantly affect student achievement.

8. *Choice Without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards.* Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA, Feb. 2010. E. Frankenberg, G. Siegel-Hawley, J. Wang <http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/> Charter schools continue to stratify students by race, class, and possibly language, and are more racially isolated than traditional public schools in virtually every state and large metropolitan area in the country.