

AUSL FACTS

From “School reform organization gets average grades” published in the Chicago Tribune
February 06, 2012|By Joel Hood and Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, Chicago Tribune reporters

(This is an article from 2012- some of this information may need updating.)

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-02-06/news/ct-met-cps-turnaround-20120206_1_turnaround-schools-urban-school-leadership-ausl

(F)or all the public attention, AUSL's results have been mixed; many students have made considerable progress, but as a group they still lag well behind district averages.

- Test scores increased remarkably in AUSL's 12 "turnaround" schools in the first year or two under the group's management but then **leveled out, with many ending up on par or even below comparable neighborhood schools.**
- **All of AUSL's turnarounds remain on academic probation**, including the two original turnaround projects, Sherman Elementary in 2006 and Harvard Elementary in 2007. However, two of the turnarounds have earned elite Level 1 rankings from CPS, a sign they could come off probation next year. Six others were designated Level 3, **placing them among the worst in the city.**
- While CPS has recommended closing many neighborhood schools in recent years because of poor performance or underutilization, **two-thirds of AUSL's schools remain open at less than 70 percent capacity.**
- Most of AUSL turnarounds score **below CPS averages** on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state benchmarks on standardized testing.
- Those schools that beat district averages have been accused of **pushing out their lowest-performing students or those with discipline problems to artificially inflate their test scores.**
- CPS has paid AUSL millions....In addition to the money the district portions out to each neighborhood school, turnaround high schools receive **\$500,000** for specialized teacher training and recruitment and **an additional \$500 per pupil** to pay for instructional coaches, student mentors and tutors. Elementary schools receive **\$300,000** and **\$420 per student.**
- The district also pays to hire **one additional assistant principal** at each turnaround school for one year.
- **(CPS) pump(s) millions into these schools** to repair crumbling walls, fix or modernize equipment, or simply give the school a fresh coat of paint. CPS has pledged \$25.7 million to upgrade schools marked for turnaround (in 2012).