



2010-2011 Renaissance Schools Implementation Plan

The School District of Philadelphia



Renaissance Schools

Uniting Schools and Communities for Student Success

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Renaissance Schools initiative is designed to transform chronically underperforming District schools into highly effective schools that provide exceptional opportunities for student academic achievement and preparedness for success in college and the workforce. This Implementation Plan provides a detailed description on the Renaissance Schools initiative as well as a timeline and plan for opening the first set of Renaissance Schools in September 2010. This Executive Summary provides a broad overview of the Renaissance Schools Implementation Plan and highlights sections contained in the full document.

Process Overview

There are three major components of the Renaissance Schools initiative: 1) identifying chronically low-performing District schools that are not likely to achieve dramatic improvements without transformative change, 2) identifying individuals and organizations that are capable and prepared to turnaround around failing schools in Philadelphia, and 3) empowering school communities to play an active role in the turnaround and ongoing support of their school. The District believes that these components must be implemented with rigor and transparency in order to create an effective and lasting process for turning around failing schools in Philadelphia.

Overview of Implementation Plan Sections

Implementation Timeline (Section II)

The implementation timeline describes the key activities and dates for transforming a set of Renaissance Schools for school year 2010-11. The process begins in January 2010 with the public release of this Implementation Plan, the release of the RFQ/I to recruit turnaround teams, and the announcement of eligible schools to participate in the Renaissance Schools initiative. By May 2010, the District expects to finalize matches between schools and qualified turnaround teams with substantive input and support from school communities. This matching process will also determine if the new Renaissance School will be an externally operated school (Contract or Charter school), or a District-run school (Innovation or Promise Academy school).

Renaissance School Advisory Board (Section III)

The Renaissance Schools implementation plan is largely based on recommendations from the Renaissance School Advisory Board, which consisted of approximately 60 educators, business and community leaders, parents and District personnel from across Philadelphia. The implementation plan was further informed by community feedback the District collected through eight community information sessions conducted in November 2009.

Renaissance Schools Definition, Governance, and Autonomies (Section IV)

Renaissance Schools will serve students in a neighborhood catchment area, but will differ from traditional District schools by having greater degrees of autonomy in school management in exchange for a high degree of accountability for performance. Renaissance

Schools must use these autonomies to implement a school design that provides a high quality educational experience for students.

Within the Renaissance Schools initiative, four school models exist: Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract, and Charter. All of the options are alike in offering a change for the selected schools but differ in their structure, governance, and level of autonomy from the District. This section of the Implementation Plan describes how autonomies can be used in Renaissance Schools and how each Renaissance School model (Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract and Charter) will function as a turnaround school.

Renaissance Schools Accountability Plan (Section V)

Renaissance schools will be granted increased operating autonomies in exchange for increased accountability for producing dramatic gains in student achievement. Each form of school (Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract, and Charter) will be held to a Performance Agreement, contract, or charter that clearly states performance and growth targets for each school in several areas. The Accountability section of this Plan describes how the District will monitor performance targets and intervene if and when schools do not meet targets.

Student Admission and Retention (Section VI)

Renaissance Schools will continue to serve as neighborhood schools with a defined geographic boundary for assigning students. Student transfers in and out of the Renaissance School catchment area will be managed in a manner consistent with School District policies and procedures. Student retention will be a key performance indicator for the Renaissance Schools, and the District expects that successful Renaissance Schools will achieve higher rates of student retention as a result of engaging curriculum, high quality enrichment programs for students, and skilled and caring teachers and school staff.

Renaissance School Selection Process (Section VII)

The District will implement a multi-step process for selecting Renaissance Schools. In early January, the District will select a pool of up to 15 eligible Renaissance schools based on a comprehensive review of school performance data. In February, the District will conduct multi-day school evaluation of each eligible school. The school review will help assess the school's capacity to achieve dramatic improvements in student learning without the need for transformative Renaissance school intervention. The review will be led by an independent third-party organization with expertise in school quality reviews. The school review will also help assess the capacity and willingness of the community to support the transformation of the school.

The final list of Renaissance Schools for the 2010-11 school year will be announced on or around March 12, and will be based on findings from the school reviews, and by the number and types of Turnaround Team proposals that are qualified through Phase I of the RFQ process. .

Recruiting and Selecting Renaissance Turnaround Teams (Section VIII)

The District will utilize a public Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit responses from highly qualified individuals or teams who are capable of

turning around and managing schools in Philadelphia. The two-phased RFQ/P process will solicit responses from internal District candidates (i.e. SDP principals, teachers and administrators), as well as external individual and organizations. In Phase I, the District will evaluate applicants' qualifications to manage and/or start-up schools in urban settings, including their success in turning around low performing schools. Phase II will require successful applicants to submit more detailed plans for turning around specific schools and will include detailed elements of the school design. Based on a comprehensive review of the Phase II RFP responses, the District will identify Turnaround Team finalists that will participate in the school matching process.

Renaissance Schools that are formed as Promise Academies will not be developed through a RFQ/RFP process, but will be designed and implemented by the District Superintendent and administrative staff. These schools will otherwise function as Innovation Schools.

The District will also commence a Request for Information (RFI) process to identify Renaissance Support Applicants who have demonstrated the ability to address specific areas of the turnaround such as providing professional development, after-school programming, mental and behavioral support services, etc. Information collected through the RFI will be made available to Lead Applicants who respond to the RFQ. Lead Applicants are required to partner with at least one or more Support Applicants to participate in the Phase II RFP process.

Formation of School Advisory Councils (Section IX)

The District will facilitate the formation of School Advisory Councils for each Renaissance School in order to ensure active parent and community involvement. The Council members will serve as liaisons between the School District, communities, and potential turnaround teams to ensure that Renaissance Schools offer high quality educational options that match the community's needs and interests.

The Councils will review RFP proposals and solicit input from the broader community in order to submit recommendations to the Superintendent on which turnaround team proposals best meet the needs of the school community. The Councils will also play an active role in the transition, monitoring and ongoing support of Renaissance Schools. The District will provide technical assistance and training to ensure that each Council member is prepared to play this critical role in the Renaissance Schools process.

Matching Process for School Communities and Turnaround Teams (Section X)

Renaissance Turnaround Teams and Renaissance Schools will be matched based upon how the Turnaround Team's proposed school design meets the needs of the respective schools. The matching process will allow communities, Turnaround Teams, and the School District to identify optimal matches. School Advisory Councils will present recommendations to the Superintendent, who will incorporate their findings into her final recommendation to the School Reform Commission. In Promise Academies, the Advisory Council will provide support in designing and implementing the turnaround school design, but not in the selection of a Turnaround Team. A vote by the SRC (expected for May 2010) will finalize the match between Renaissance Schools and Turnaround Teams.

Renaissance School Transition (XI) and School Opening (XII)

After the SRC finalizes matches between Turnaround Teams and Renaissance Schools, the District will work with Turnaround Teams to quickly implement the new Renaissance School design. The School District will provide funds and resources to facilitate the planning and preparation for school transition, and Councils will play an important role by providing regular feedback to the Turnaround Team.

The District believes that the most critical factor in school success is the quality of a school's leadership, teachers and support staff. The District recognizes the importance of implementing a smooth process for transitioning staff in and out of Renaissance schools. The objectives of the transition process is to be respectful of the professionals that currently work in a Renaissance School, and to facilitate the formation of a high quality, cohesive faculty and staff that are committed to the new mission and design of the Renaissance School.

The School District looks forward to successful openings for each Renaissance School in September 2010, as neighborhood schools with new configurations of management, curriculum, and programs.

RENAISSANCE SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

I. Overview of Renaissance Schools Initiative

The Renaissance Schools initiative is articulated in the School District of Philadelphia's "**Imagine 2014**" strategic plan and is predicated on the belief that the School District has chronically underperforming schools that are not serving the educational needs of students and families, and that these schools need fundamental change that will facilitate a transformation of the learning environment, not simply school improvement. Because of the urgency to dramatically improve the learning environment in these underperforming schools, the School District is seeking innovative ways to embrace "bold new educational approaches with proven track records for success that include in-district restructuring (*Innovation and Promise Academy Schools*) and external partnerships (*Contract Schools* and *Charter Schools*)." Renaissance Schools will have greater degrees of autonomy in school management in exchange for a high degree of accountability for performance. Schools will be identified as Renaissance Schools based on an assessment of academic performance and growth, and will be matched with Renaissance Turnaround Teams who have demonstrated the capabilities and competencies to undertake the substantial challenges of a whole school turnaround process.

The School District's Superintendent, Arlene Ackerman, set forth the following guiding principles for the process:

1. Chronically failing schools should be transformed to provide all families and students with high quality education options.
2. Community engagement is integral to the process: Renaissance School communities will play an active and ongoing role in determining the schools and the solutions for transformation
3. Selection process for identifying Renaissance Schools will be fair, objective, transparent, and based on a rigorous analysis of school performance data
4. Process for identifying Renaissance School turnaround teams will be based on objective, rigorous and transparent criteria, and will be open to a wide range of internal and external partners that have a proven track record of success;
5. Timeline for implementation should result in the conversion of a first set of Renaissance Schools for the 2010-2011 school year.

The School District expects, at a minimum, that the Renaissance Schools will demonstrate an accelerated rate of improvement and growth, relative to comparable District schools. Success of a Renaissance School program will be measured by its ability to utilize the granted autonomies to generate improved student performance and

school climate. Greater detail concerning the accountability of Renaissance Schools and how they will be measured is offered in Section V of this Implementation Plan.

II. Implementation Timeline

In order to meet the goal of opening the first set of Renaissance Schools in September 2010, the following timeline has been adopted.

Renaissance Schools Implementation Timeline– Year 1	
<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
January 27, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Release SDP Renaissance Implementation Plan - Issue RFQ Phase I to solicit turnaround team qualifications as "Lead Applicants" - Issue RFI to solicit qualifications from "Support Applicants" - Release Results of School Performance Index (highlight lowest performing schools) - Announce initial pool of 10-15 Renaissance-eligible Schools - SRC Presentation and Vote on SDP Renaissance Schools Policy
February 1 - 9	Conduct school-based community meetings at Renaissance-eligible schools
February 8 - March 1	Conduct School Reviews in eligible Renaissance Schools
February 1 - March 12	Recruiting and Formation of School Advisory Councils
February 19	Lead Applicant RFQ responses due
February 26	Support Applicant RFI responses due (received on a rolling basis from January 26 to March 12, 2010)
March 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select/announce RFQ Phase I finalists Select/announce qualified RFI applicants (support services) Release RFP Phase II to solicit detailed turnaround proposals
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announce Final list of Renaissance Schools Announce Superintendent Promise Schools Final deadline for Support Applicants RFI responses
March 15 - April 9	Training and development of School Advisory Councils
March 26	RFP Phase II responses due
April 13	Select/announce RFP Phase II finalists
April 14 - April 30	School Advisory Councils evaluate turnaround team finalists and submit matching recommendations to the Superintendent
May 5	Superintendent Finalizes provider-school matches; makes recommendation to SRC
<i>May 19</i>	SRC vote on Renaissance School provider contracts, agreements or charters

III. Renaissance School Advisory Board

To help guide and shape the Renaissance Schools initiative, the Superintendent convened The Renaissance Schools Advisory Board (RSAB). The RSAB was composed of approximately 60 individuals representing a diversity of perspectives and communities from across Philadelphia. The RSAB included a wide array of educators, business and community leaders, parents and District personnel. The board members participated in three full-committee and ten sub-committees meetings between August 20 and October 8, 2009. The purpose of the RSAB was to develop recommendations on the District's plan for implementing the Renaissance Schools initiative.

In order to facilitate the work of the RSAB, the School District launched a website that held links to research on transformation efforts in other cities and on sub-committee progress; and used a series of e-mail and telephonic communications to keep all members fully informed of RSAB meetings, presentations, and sub-committee progress.

On October 16, 2009, co-chairs of the RSAB presented a summary of recommendations to the School Reform Commission (SRC) during a public meeting. Following the SRC meeting, the District collected feedback on the RSAB recommendations from parents, students and other members of the Philadelphia community as part of eight community feedback sessions conducted between November 2 and November 24, 2009.¹ The RSAB recommendations and community feedback are the primary sources that shaped this Renaissance School Implementation Plan.

IV. Renaissance Schools Definition, Governance, and Autonomies

Like traditional District schools, Renaissance Schools will serve a neighborhood catchment area, and will not establish any additional student admissions criteria. Renaissance Schools will differ from traditional District schools by having greater degrees of autonomy in school management in exchange for a high degree of accountability for performance. Renaissance Schools must use these autonomies to implement a school design that includes the following elements.

<i>Required Elements for Renaissance School Plans</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum aligned to PA state standards• Community involvement including a defined role for parents and community to ensure faithful implementation of education plan proposed in RFP• Programs to address ELL, Special Education, and mentally gifted students• After school enrichment, extracurricular activities, and athletics• Parent involvement including a parent association and at least quarterly parent/teacher meetings or conferences

¹ The full RSAB report and a summary of community feedback is available on the District website at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/r/renaissance-schools>.

- Access to at least one foreign language
- Longer school day and year
- Specific programming for college and work readiness
- Specialized services for children with social, emotional, and behavioral issues
- Specific programming to ensure school culture that promotes a safe and secure learning environment
- Ongoing assessments of student performance and creation of data driven instructional program
- Professional development for all staff
- Targeted academic supports and interventions for students performing below grade level
- Plan for incorporating technology to support a rigorous instructional program
- School uniforms for all students

Within the Renaissance Schools initiative, four school models exist: Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract, and Charter. All of the options are alike in offering a change for the selected schools but differ in their structure, governance, and level of autonomy from the District. Regardless of school type, each Renaissance School must educate the existing student population, i.e., the current school catchment area will remain intact for the school. In addition, all Renaissance Schools must adopt the District's [Code of Student Conduct](#), however individual schools may implement different approaches to establishing positive learning environment and enforcing the student code of conduct.

For all school models, the District will define "**What**" performance expectations it has for turnaround schools, and allow new management teams to define "**How**" results are achieved. The "What" and "How" is generally defined as:

"What" performance expectations[‡]	"How" results are achieved*
Increases in key performance indicators (PSSA, graduation, college enrollment)	Curriculum – Implement rigorous curriculum aligned to State standards
Remain as a neighborhood school responsible for education of ALL children	Staffing plan – Site-level control for establishing school positions and selecting staff
Improvements in the learning environment (school culture)	Budget – Flexibility over allocation of school funds
Improvements in student and parent satisfaction	School Day / School Year - Structure of school day/year can deviate from traditional District schools
Operate in compliance with applicable laws and contractual obligations	Student Interventions & Supports – autonomy to adopt unique student intervention and enrichment programs

[‡] In addition to the performance expectations listed in this table, all Renaissance schools will implement the 'Required Elements for Renaissance School Plans.'

*Degree of autonomy will depend on form of Renaissance School Model (i.e. Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract or Charter)

Renaissance Schools Models

Innovation Schools: Innovation Schools are District-managed schools with autonomy over aspects of school operations in exchange for greater accountability for school performance. Schools will use this autonomy to create a school culture and academic program that supports high expectations and achievement. School autonomies and accountability standards will be defined as part of a "Performance Agreement" that is established at the inception of a new Innovation School.

Innovation School staff are School District employees and will maintain membership in their respective unions. The selection/assignment of school employees and other aspects of employee working conditions must be within the bounds of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Turnaround Teams who apply for the Innovation Model will describe in their proposal how they will incorporate autonomies into their new school design. Specifically, applicants will propose how their staffing model, curriculum, student support and enrichment programs, school budget, school day schedule, and calendar year may differ from traditional District schools. The District's ability to grant certain school-level autonomies will be contingent upon the District's collective bargaining agreements with its respective unions.

Innovation Schools will be funded on a per pupil basis at a rate at least comparable to traditional District schools that are in Corrective Action II. The per pupil amount will cover all school operating expenses, excluding funding for any school services that are provided by the District's central administration. (For example, transportation services for students will remain centrally-managed services, so Innovation Schools will not receive per pupil funding for this service).

Promise Academy Schools: Promise Academy Schools are District-managed schools that have identical characteristics to the Innovation School Model. However, Promise Academies will not be developed through an open application process, but will be designed and implemented by the District Superintendent and administrative staff. These schools will otherwise function as an Innovation School.

Contract Schools: A Contract School is a school that is managed and staffed by an external organization. These independent organizations (including for-profit and non-profit entities) are responsible for managing all aspects of the school, including the employment of school staff under a reconstituted design and program. The School District will establish a contract with the organization that specifies the responsibilities of both parties, and establishes accountability for Contract School performance. Contract Schools will be neighborhood schools drawing their attending populations from their current catchment areas. The School District will determine per-pupil funding, but school leadership will have autonomy to use the funding to hire staff and build its own curriculum and program. Facilities will remain District properties, and governance for

Contract Schools will be the responsibility of the School District and School Reform Commission.

Contract Schools are created pursuant to the School Reform Commission's power under the Pennsylvania School Code (Section 24 PS 6-696) to "appoint managers, administrators of for-profit or non-profit organizations to oversee the operations of school or group of schools within the school district."

Similar to Innovation schools, Contract Schools will be funded on a per pupil basis at a rate at least comparable to traditional District schools that are in Corrective Action II. The per pupil amount will cover all school operating expenses, excluding funding for any school services that are provided by the District. The contract between the District and management organization will specify funding formulas and clarify what school services (if any) remain the responsibility of the District. The school management organization will be required to make school budget information available to the public, and will submit annual financial reports to the District and school community. The school management organization will not receive a separate per pupil management fee for operating the school.

Charter Schools: A Charter School is an independent Local Education Agency with a charter school board of directors that governs all elements of school operations. The relationship between charter school and School District is primarily defined by Pennsylvania Charter School Law, and further refined in the charter agreement between the School District and the charter school board of directors. In order to maintain high levels of accountability, Renaissance Charter Contracts will include provisions guiding student enrollment, student achievement, data reporting, and grade configuration. These provisions will include stringent academic requirements for turnaround school success that may exceed performance targets for traditional charter schools.

Charter school organizations are responsible for managing all aspects of the school, including the employment of school staff. Unlike student enrollment at traditional charter schools, the student lottery system at a Renaissance School will allow for students within the defined enrollment catchment area to be guaranteed admission to the school, thus preserving the schools' mission to serve as a neighborhood school.

Per Pennsylvania Charter School Law, Renaissance charter schools will be funded at a per pupil basis as determined by the charter school funding formula established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Appendix A provides a summary of the four Renaissance School models in a table format.

V. Renaissance Schools Accountability Plan

The Renaissance Schools initiative seeks to achieve dramatic improvements in schools by offering increased autonomies in exchange for increased accountability. As a result of the autonomies granted to the Renaissance Schools, the District expects to see dramatic gains in student achievement. Each form of school (Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract, and Charter) will be held to a Performance Agreement, Contract or Charter that clearly states performance and growth targets for each school in several areas.

Renaissance Schools will be evaluated based on criteria including:

- PSSA scores, including measures of overall achievement, as well as student level growth measures
- School climate measures including rates of serious incidents, student attendance, and student and perceptions of safety and acceptance
- Student retention
- Promotion rates
- College readiness as measured by rates of college enrollment, PSAT and SAT scores and participation rates
- Graduation rates (high schools)
- Parent and student satisfaction
- Success in implementing the proposed turnaround model

Each Renaissance School Turnaround Team will enter into a Performance Agreement, Contract or Charter with the School District of Philadelphia for a period of up to five (5) years. Throughout this term, the School District will conduct annual assessments to monitor the progress and performance at the schools. Schools that are struggling to meet annual performance targets may receive guidance and interventions from the District, and if necessary, the District may elect to restructure the school and implement a new turnaround strategy. Throughout the term, each school will maintain a School Advisory Council (see Section IX) consisting of parents, students, community members, and school staff that will be responsible for monitoring annual and periodic progress of Renaissance schools according to established performance targets.

During the last year of the contract term, a comprehensive review will be conducted to assess whether the terms of the accountability agreement have been achieved. If the review determines that the Renaissance School has fulfilled the terms of its performance agreement and has demonstrated that it has successfully adhered to its initial proposal, the school will drop its Renaissance designation. The school will maintain its autonomies and design but will no longer be subject to the additional monitoring but will instead be measured by the District wide accountability system. The schools will also be required to demonstrate parental support of the school design and program to maintain operating the schools in its current form.

If the findings of the review suggest that the school has not met its performance targets and/or is not faithfully implementing its proposed school design and plan a course of

remediation may be followed. Depending on the findings, additional supports, guidance, and intervention may be offered or the contract may be terminated. The decision to terminate a contract is the sole discretion of the SRC. In the case of a Charter School the School District will exercise the right to revoke the Charter if the terms of the Charter Agreement are not satisfactorily upheld. In the event that a Contract is terminated or a Charter revoked, the District will assume responsibility for implementing an alternative school design (including traditional school-District management). The District will consider strategies to minimize disruption during school transition. (For instance, if a Charter school reverts back to District management, the District would consider options for offering District employment to former charter school staff in order to provide continuity for students in schools.)

VI. Student Admission and Retention

The primary goal of the Renaissance School Initiative is to provide dramatically improved educational opportunities for the same students who currently attend a failing school. The student catchment area (which defines the geographic boundaries where students are assigned to schools) will remain intact as part of the Renaissance School process. All students currently attending a Renaissance School will be eligible to attend the new school. Student transfers in and out of the Renaissance School catchment area will be managed in a manner consistent with School District policies and procedures.

Renaissance School Turnaround Teams are expected to educate all students and all grades of the existing school. The School District recognizes that some Renaissance School providers may contemplate a "phase-in" approach to school transformation, whereby entering grades participate in unique academic and behavioral programs that are distinct from programs for the existing class of students, or a "small-schools" strategy, whereby large schools are split into small learning communities with distinct academic programs. Although Renaissance School turnaround teams are permitted to propose such strategies to facilitate a comprehensive transformation of the school, the Renaissance School turnaround team is accountable for the success of all students in the existing school.

Student retention will be a key performance indicator for the Renaissance Schools accountability metrics. High student mobility is pervasive challenge for Philadelphia's public schools, and is correlated to low performance and high drop-out rates for students. The District expects that successful Renaissance schools will achieve higher rates of student retention as a result of engaging curriculum, high quality enrichment programs for students, and skilled and caring teachers and school staff.

VII. Renaissance School Selection Process

In January 2010, the District will publicly announce the results of the School Performance Index (see below), and related school performance data, that compares the relative performance of all District schools. The District will highlight a subset of approximately 10-15 schools that are eligible for Renaissance conversion for the 2010-11 school year. The District's announcement of eligible schools will be accompanied with a full description of why each school was selected into the pool. The initial pool of schools will be selected based on the following criteria

- Designation as a **Corrective Action II** school, as defined by NCLB.
- Score on the District's **School Performance Index (SPI)**. The SPI includes outcome measures of academic progress, achievement, as well as parent and student satisfaction. The SPI score is a composite of key indicators that show how the school is performing relative to the District overall, and relative to similar schools. (See Appendix B for an overview of the School Performance Index.)
- Opportunities to identify **clusters of low-performing schools**, that would include a low-performing high school and a low-performing feeder elementary/middle school, (where 'low-performance' is defined by the School Performance Index)
- **Plans for school closing**. The District is not likely to select schools that are scheduled to be permanently or temporarily closed.
- **Diverse representation of students**. The District will ensure that the pool of eligible schools includes significant representation of African American and Latino students, since these student populations are most at-risk as identified by the District's academic achievement gap.

From the initial pool of schools, a final, smaller group of schools will be selected in March 2010 as Renaissance Schools for the 2010-2011 school year. The final selection of schools will be informed by the results of a **School Review** to be conducted in February 2010.

The purpose of the School Review is to assess the school's capacity to achieve dramatic improvements in student learning without the need for transformative Renaissance school intervention. The School Review will be led by an independent third-party organization with expertise in school quality reviews. The audit will be conducted over a multi-day period and will consist of principal, teacher, staff, parent and student interviews, classroom observations, and comprehensive data review. The School Review will also assess the capacity and willingness of the community to support the transformation of the school. This portion of the school review process will include interviews with parents, community organizations, churches and other involved community members. (See Appendix C for summary of the School Review process and protocol.)

The final selection of schools will also be informed by the number and types of Turnaround Team proposals that are qualified through Phase I of the RFQ process (See

Section VIII below for a complete description of the Turnaround Team selection process). The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that the number and mix (i.e. high schools vs. middle/elementary schools) of Renaissance schools is compatible with the list of potential turnaround teams. The District's goal is to ensure that each Renaissance school community is presented with more than one option for school turnaround teams.

Schools that were included in the pool of eligible Renaissance Schools, but were not included in the final pool of schools will have opportunities to receive additional supports and resources from the District for the 2010-11 school year, and will again be eligible to be selected as a Renaissance School for the 2011-2012 school year. The specific resources will depend on results from the school review.

Communication to School Staff, Parents, Students and Community Members

The District recognizes the importance of providing timely information to the staff, students, parents and community members that are affected by Renaissance School selection. The District intends to communicate with these constituents through the following mechanisms:

Date*	Communication Plan
January	<p>Community meetings with schools from Pool of Eligible Renaissance Schools Purpose of meeting is to inform parents and community members about the Renaissance School opportunity and next steps in the Renaissance Schools process. Meetings will take place at the school in the evening. Meeting will include brief presentation, distribution of information materials, and Q&A with the parents and community members. The community meetings will also kick-off the formal process for identifying parents and community members to participate on School Advisory Councils.</p>
January	<p>Staff meetings with schools from Pool of Eligible Renaissance Schools Purpose of meeting is to inform school staff about the Renaissance School initiative, why their school was selected in the pool, and how final selection as a Renaissance School could impact their job at the school.</p>
March	<p>Staff and Community meetings for final list of Renaissance Schools District expects to announce the final list of Renaissance Schools on March 12, 2010. The District will conduct separate meetings with school communities and school staff for each selected school.</p>

*The dates listed in the communication plan are based on the overall implementation timeline (Section II), and are subject to change.

VIII. Recruiting and Selecting Renaissance Turnaround Teams

The School District is committed to attracting a strong and diverse group of applicants who want to participate in the Renaissance Schools initiative. In order to achieve that goal, the District is releasing a public Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit responses from highly qualified individuals or teams who are capable of turning around and managing schools in Philadelphia.

The School District seeks to work with teams whose plans are the most feasible and applicable for the needs of schools. By fostering an open response process, the School District hopes to get the broadest possible participation and the most innovative proposals for school turnarounds. The RFQ will solicit responses from internal District candidates (i.e. SDP principals, teachers and administrators), as well as external individual and organizations.

During the RFQ/P process, applicants may collaborate with other individuals and organizations in order to form a comprehensive approach for a school turnaround (e.g., a joint response by a local community group and a non-profit educational organization), or submit individual responses that provide a complete turnaround solution.

The District expects to solicit responses from the following types of individuals and organizations that can serve as either Lead or Support applicants:²

- Individual educators (e.g. successful teachers and principals)
- Community-based organizations
- Colleges or Universities
- Professional services organizations
- School management organizations (for-profit or non-profit)
- Charter management organizations, (or individuals and organizations with experience in the start-up or management of successful charter schools)
- Leadership teams from the existing Renaissance school³

The District's RFQ and RFP will present a two-tiered process consisting of "Lead" and "Support" Applicants. Lead Applicants will have the capacity to design and implement a turnaround strategy that addresses the needs of the entire school community. A Support Applicant, on the other hand, would demonstrate the ability to address specific areas of

² Pennsylvania charter school law, 24 P.S. § 17-1717-A(a), restricts what individuals and organizations are eligible to establish a charter school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Only eligible organizations and individuals can be a Lead Applicant for a Renaissance charter school application. The Renaissance RFQ/P process has no restrictions on what types of organizations and individuals may apply as a Support Applicant for a Renaissance charter school.

³ Leadership teams from the existing Renaissance School may submit an application to turnaround their own school. These applications will be evaluated against the same criteria as all applicants, and must include a school design and leadership team that has demonstrated success in turning around failing schools.

the turnaround such as providing professional development, after-school programming, mental and behavioral support services, etc.⁴

The recruitment and selection of Renaissance Turnaround Teams will be conducted in two phases. In Phase I, Lead Applicants will be invited to complete a Phase I RFQ, and Support Applicants will be invited to complete a separate Request for Information (RFI) application. This phase will seek responses that demonstrate the proposer's qualifications to support, manage and/or start-up schools in urban settings, including their success in turning around low performing schools. The Phase I RFQ responses for Lead Applicants will be evaluated by a review committee and qualified applicants will be invited to continue to the Phase II RFP process.

The RFI for Support Applicants will collect information and qualifications from individuals and organizations whose services or programs could support the overall turnaround of a school. Information collected through the RFI will be made available to Lead Applicants who respond to the RFQ. Lead Applicants are required to partner with at least one Support Applicant in order to participate in the Phase II RFP process. The District will evaluate the quality of responses to the RFI, but the RFI will not result in an award of a contract, charter or performance agreement with the School District.

In the Phase II RFP, Lead Applicants will be required to submit more detailed plans for turning around a school. The plans will focus on a specific school or schools and address detailed elements of the school design such as curriculum, staffing plans, enrichment programs, school environment, services for special needs students, school budgets and other operational considerations. In order to meet the Renaissance School requirements and ensure that a full complement of services is offered to students at the selected schools, Lead Applicants are required to partner with at least one Support Applicant that applied through the RFI process. The Support Applicants should help address any deficiencies in the capacity of the Lead Applicant, as well as strengthen the overall proposal.

Support Applicants will only continue to the RFP if they partner with a Lead Organization. Following the release of the RFP, a bidder's conference will be sponsored by the School District. The bidder's conference will be designed to answer questions about the RFP as well as provide an opportunity for Lead and Support applicants to meet and partner.

Prior to the release of the Phase I RFQ and RFI, the District will host RFQ information sessions. At these meetings potential respondents will have the opportunity to ask questions about the details of submitting a proposal, learn more about the Renaissance initiative, and learn what constitutes a strong proposal. After the proposal is released, the District may provide additional technical support.

⁴ The Renaissance RFQ will provide more specific guidance on the types of support applicant services that are appropriate for the RFQ process.

An evaluation committee, comprised of representatives from various departments within the School District of Philadelphia as well as external evaluators will be assembled to review and evaluate the responses for each phase. Phase I RFQ respondents (Lead Applicants only) will be evaluated based on their responses to questions contained in the RFQ. Phase II RFP applicants (Lead Applicants only) will be evaluated based on the responses to Phase II RFP questions as well as possible oral presentations, interviews, and site visits. Based on a comprehensive review of this information, the evaluation committee will identify Turnaround Team finalists from Phase II of the RFP process. These Turnaround Teams will then participate in the school-turnaround team matching process described in Section X of this document.

Turnaround Team finalists from the Phase II RFP that apply for a charter school model will be required to complete a separate charter school application in order to meet requirements of Pennsylvania Charter School Law and the SRC's Charter School Policy. The charter school application process will solicit responses only from those individuals and organizations that were finalists from the Renaissance RFP process. The charter school application will be designed so that content from the Renaissance School RFP will satisfy most requirements of the Charter school application. In addition, charter school applicants will be required to submit additional information that is required for approval of a new charter school. Charter school applications will only be approved if the applicant is matched with a Renaissance School (see Section X).

Renaissance Schools that are formed as Promise Academies will not be developed through a RFQ/RFP process, but will be designed and implemented by the District Superintendent and administrative staff. These schools will otherwise function as an Innovation School.

IX. Formation of School Advisory Councils in Renaissance Schools

Function of School Advisory Councils

Community input and engagement is an essential part of the process of turning around failing schools. In order to facilitate change within a school community, it is vital to engage the entire community and its stakeholders to work together to identify the appropriate strategy to support transformational change. The Renaissance Program is an **opportunity** for school communities to engage in and support the transformation of their neighborhood school.

To facilitate community involvement throughout the entire Renaissance Schools process, school community members will have the opportunity to apply to be part of a School Advisory Council ("Council"). Councils will be formed for each Renaissance School. The Council members will serve as liaisons between the School District, communities, and potential turnaround teams to ensure that Renaissance Schools offer high quality educational options that match the community's needs and interests.

Councils will review proposals from the RFP and will have the opportunity to meet with Turnaround Team finalists. The Councils will also be responsible for engaging the broader community both to solicit feedback and encourage support for the Renaissance Schools initiative. After reviewing the proposals, meeting with the prospective Turnaround Teams and holding community meetings, the Councils will develop match recommendations to the Superintendent. The Councils will also play a role in the transition, monitoring and ongoing support of Renaissance Schools.

Specifically, Councils will have the following responsibilities in the Renaissance School process:

- Meet regularly to discuss and determine the community's educational needs
- Review turnaround team proposals to identify potential matches to identify potential turnaround team finalists the larger community would like to meet and interview
- Host community meetings, public forums and community outreach activities to collect community input on potential turnaround teams
- Provide recommendations to the Superintendent on matches between their school and potential turnaround teams
- Assist in incubation and transition of Renaissance Schools
- Participate in periodic monitoring of Renaissance School progress, including an annual report on school progress against performance targets

Council Member Selection and Composition

Councils will be representative of the larger school community and will be comprised of a variety of community members, including parents, high school students (if applicable), area residents, school alumni, local businesses, representatives from faith-based/community-based organizations, members of the local university community, and representatives from offices of locally elected officials. An emphasis will be placed on including a significant number of parents who currently have students in the potential Renaissance School. Teachers and other members of the school staff will not be included on the Council during the initial school-turnaround team matching process. However, once schools have been matched to turnaround teams, and the Renaissance school leadership team and faculty have been reestablished, teachers and school staff will have an opportunity to join the School Advisory Council.

The following criteria will be used to define the membership requirements for School Advisory Councils:

- Membership for Elementary, Middle and K-8 schools
 - Minimum of 5 and maximum of 21 members
 - Majority of members will be parents of school-aged children that attend the specific Renaissance Schools.

- Membership for High and K-12 schools
 - Minimum of 7 and maximum of 21 members
 - Majority of members will be parents of school-aged children that attend the specific Renaissance Schools.
 - Student Seats- two seats will be reserved for high school students; one filled by member of student government, and one filled by a student from the general student body of the identified school.

The process for establishing and training School Advisory Councils will formally begin with the identification of pool of eligible Renaissance Schools in January 2010, and should be completed by early to mid March (see implementation timeline in Section II). The School District will work with the eligible Renaissance School Communities to identify potential members for each Council. The District will recruit Council members through an open application process, and will also utilize information obtained from the school audits (see Section VII) to recruit specific individuals and representatives from organizations. The criteria for Council selection will include demonstrated involvement and activity in the community, strong relationships in the community, involvement with the current school, and willingness and ability to meet the time commitment required of Council members. To ensure continued community engagement and support each Council member will be asked to sign a Letter of Commitment, which will require up to 10 hours of volunteer time per month for the first year of the Renaissance School.

The District will form a School Advisory membership selection team to review the pool of applicants and identify individuals to serve on each of the Councils for the identified Renaissance Schools. The selection team will notify the individuals under consideration and make the final appointment to the Council. The membership selection team will include members that are internal and external to the District, including representatives of the Renaissance Schools Advisory Board.

Technical Assistance for School Advisory Councils

The School District will provide technical assistance to each School Advisory Council in order to facilitate their engagement in this process. Technical assistance will include, but is not limited to:

- Sharing the results of the School Audit, and providing technical assistance in interpreting findings from the report
- Providing technical assistance in reviewing proposals submitted by turnaround teams
- Recommending protocols for Council activities and recommendations
- Providing logistical support in organizing Council meetings and meetings with the larger school community
- Provide access to materials, technology, information and other resources that support Council activities

The District will hire the position of Renaissance Representative to provide and coordinate technical assistance for school communities. The Representative will work in collaboration with other school, regional, and central-based staff to establish Councils that have the legitimacy and capacity to play an active role in the transformation of their neighborhood schools throughout the matching, incubation, and transition periods.

X. Matching Process for School Communities and Turnaround Teams

Renaissance Turnaround Teams and Renaissance Schools will be matched based upon how the Turnaround Team's proposed school design meets the needs of the respective schools. The matching process will allow communities, turnaround teams, and the School District to identify optimal matches. An optimal match will include a high quality proposal and capable provider that fits the needs of the school and is embraced by the community.

Once School Advisory Councils have been established in each Renaissance School and Turnaround Teams have been selected from Phase II of the RFQ process, the Councils will be responsible for evaluating and recommending matches between Turnaround Teams and Renaissance Schools. (See the Implementation Timeline in Section II for specific dates for these activities.) The School District will establish a protocol for this matching process with timelines and activities for the Councils interaction with Turnaround Team finalists, including public presentations, community forums, interviews, site visits, and other activities.

The Councils will present recommendations to the Superintendent, who will incorporate their findings into her final recommendation to the School Reform Commission. In Promise Academies, the School Advisory Council will provide support in designing and implementing the turnaround school design, but not in the selection of a Turnaround Team. A vote by the SRC will finalize the match between Renaissance Schools and turnaround teams.

The District recognizes that some Turnaround Teams that are identified as finalists from Phase II of the RFQ process, may *not* be matched with a Renaissance School. Although these turnaround team proposals may be considered for future rounds of the Renaissance School process, the District will have no obligation to match these turnaround teams with a Renaissance School.

XI. Renaissance School Transition

The transition phase for Renaissance Schools begins immediately after school matches are made. The transition process may include key activities such as organizing and confirming school leadership; transition and hiring of school staff; finalizing school curricula and programs; identification of instructional and administrative resources; purchasing curriculum, technology, and furniture (if necessary); contracting with

auxiliary service providers (e.g., janitorial, food, etc.), and making improvements to the school facility.

The School District will provide funds and resources to facilitate the planning and preparation for school transition. The funding amount and available resources will be clarified in the RFP application. During this phase of implementation, the School District will finalize contracts, as needed, with providers and other organizations.

School Advisory Councils will continue to play an important role in the transition phase by providing regular feedback to the Turnaround Team.

Staff Transition Plan in Renaissance Schools

The District believes that the most critical factor in school success is the quality of a school's leadership, teachers and support staff. The District recognizes the importance of implementing a smooth process for transitioning staff in and out of Renaissance schools. The objectives of the transition process are to be respectful of the professionals that currently work in a Renaissance School, and to facilitate the formation of a high quality, cohesive faculty and staff that are committed to the new mission and design of the Renaissance School.

The District plans to identify the final list of Renaissance Schools on March 12, 2010. If a Renaissance eligible school is not selected as a finalist, there will be no impact to school staff outside of the normal staffing transitions that happen in a typical school year. If a school is selected as a Renaissance School, the impact to staff will depend on two factors: 1) the position of the employee at the school (i.e. Principal, teacher, secretary, building engineer, etc.), and 2) the Renaissance School model (Innovation, Promise Academy, Contract, or Charter).

- Transition Plan for Principals and Assistant Principals

Principals and assistant principals from the Renaissance School will be reassigned to a new school for the 2010-11 school year unless they are selected by the new management team of the school. The reassignment would proceed according to the collective bargaining agreement and District protocols for recruiting and assigning administrators to vacant school positions.

If the principal or assistant principal applies and is selected for a Renaissance Charter or Contract school, the individual would no longer be an employee of the School District of Philadelphia and would need to resign and accept the new position with the charter or contract organization.

- Transition Plan for Teachers and PFT Instructional Positions

Regardless of the Renaissance School model, all teachers and school-based instructional positions in the building will be considered a "forced transfer" for the 2010-11 school year. In this case, teachers will not be assigned to the school for the 2010-11 school year unless they apply and are selected by the school's new leadership team.

Per the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, teachers will be eligible to participate in the District's Site Selection process and may apply to any vacancy in their certification area within the District, including posted positions at the new Renaissance School if it is a District-managed Innovation or Promise Academy school. The Site Selection process will begin in April. If teachers are not selected through the site selection process, teachers will be eligible to choose a school assignment in system seniority order starting in June 2010.

If the Renaissance School becomes a Charter or Contract school, teachers from the school will also have the option to submit resumes directly to the Charter School operator or Contract organization and participate in school's hiring process. Designation as a Charter or Contract school will not be known until the completion of the Turnaround Team-school matching process in late April. If selected as a teacher for a Renaissance charter school, the employees will have the option to either request a leave of absence from the School District of Philadelphia for up to five years, or resign from the District and then accept the new position at the Charter School. If selected as a teacher for a Renaissance contract school, the employees will no longer be an employee of the School District of Philadelphia and will need to resign and accept the new position with the contract organization.

- Transition Plan for Non-Instructional Positions (excluding employee represented by 32BJ and Local 634)

The transition plan for these employees will depend on whether the Renaissance School remains a District-managed school (Innovation or Promise Academy), or becomes an externally managed school (Contract or Charter).

For **Innovation** and **Promise Academy** schools, all non-instructional school-based staff will maintain their assignment at the Renaissance School for the 2010-11 school year. Any staff transfers in and out of the school will proceed in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

For **Charter** and **Contract** schools, school staff will be employees of the charter or contract organization. All non-instructional staff, with the exception of employees represented by Union 32BJ and Local 634, will be transferred out of the school, and will be eligible to choose a school assignment in system seniority order in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Current staff will also have the option to submit resumes directly to the management group and participate in the school's hiring process. If selected, the individual will no longer be an employee of the School District of Philadelphia and will need to resign and accept the new charter or contract position.

- Transition Plan for Facility Staff (32BJ) and Food Service Employees (Local 634)
Regardless of the Renaissance School model (external or internal management), the District will maintain current staff assignments in school year 2010-11 for school-based facility maintenance employees represented by Union 32BJ, and food service employees represented by Local 634. If the Renaissance School is a Charter or Contract school, the new management team will be required to contract with the School District for services provided by these employees. Any staff transfers in and out of the school will proceed in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

XII. School Opening

New school management teams will begin operating in school buildings at the end of the current school year. July and August will allow the District and the Turnaround Teams to ready the buildings for school opening in September. At this time, facilities issues will be addressed and the Turnaround Teams will have the opportunity to make modifications to classrooms and the building that will help support their turnaround and mission.

The summer months will also provide Turnaround Teams an opportunity to conduct intensive professional development and new teacher orientation to prepare for the challenges of the first year of the turnaround. Additionally, the Turnaround Teams will be able to use this time to engage and communicate with students and families. In September 2010, the first set of Renaissance Schools will open fully ready to educate their students.

The School District looks forward to successful openings for each Renaissance School in September 2010, as neighborhood schools with new configurations of management, curriculum, and programs. School leadership teams will be required to submit quarterly reviews to the School District that will describe the outcomes of key indicators including a school's academic, managerial, operational, and financial performance. Additionally, each Renaissance School will maintain a School Advisory Council that will play an active role in providing continuous feedback and holding school leaders accountable for implementing the mission, vision and program articulated in the Renaissance School plan. Once the school is open, the membership structure of the School Advisory will change to accommodate teachers and other school staff members.

APPENDIX A: Overview of Renaissance School Models

	Innovation and Promise Academy Schools	Contract Schools	Charter Schools
Contract Form	Performance Agreement	Management Contract	Charter Agreement
Governance	School Reform Commission	School Reform Commission	Independent board under Charter School Law
Curriculum	Must align to Pennsylvania State content standards; may opt to participate in School District initiatives	Must align to Pennsylvania State content standards; may opt to participate in School District initiatives	Must align to Pennsylvania State content standards
Staffing	School District employees; subject to School District labor agreements with potential for waiver agreements for school working conditions	Non-School District employees*; employed by management organization	Non-School District employees*; employed by charter school board
Employee Compensation	In accordance with School District salary schedules	Determined by management organization	Determined by charter school board
School Calendar & Schedule	Must meet minimum PA Public School Code, and be in compliance with collective bargaining agreements	Must meet minimum PA Public School Code	Must meet minimum PA Public School Code
Student Enrollment	Neighborhood catchment area	Neighborhood catchment area	Neighborhood catchment area
Parent and Community Involvement	School Advisory Council	School Advisory Council	School Advisory Council and Participation on charter school board and other committees defined in charter agreement
Funding Model	School District developed per pupil funding formula	School District developed per pupil funding formula	Per pupil funding defined by Charter School Law

* The School District **may** require certain staff (i.e. maintenance, custodial) for charter and contract schools that operate in School District facilities. These employees will remain School District employees, and members of their respective collective bargaining units.

APPENDIX B: Overview of the School Performance Index (SPI)

Evaluating schools' performance requires examining many outcomes of academic progress and achievement as well as parent, student, and teacher satisfaction. Since at least 1996, the School District of Philadelphia has periodically implemented methods of combining school performance data into a single index. The index used as a school accountability measure from 1996 through 1999, and slightly modified in 2000, was phased out of use with the advent of the NCLB accountability framework. A revised index was used for research purposes only in 2005-2006. Building on those precedents and informed by work at other large urban school districts, the 2009 School Performance Index (SPI) is a newly-defined composite of key indicators of school success. The 2009 SPI will help school leaders and communities evaluate the performance of each school relative to the District overall as well as compared to similar schools.

There are two versions of the 2009 SPI, a High School version and an Elementary-Middle version. Both versions include measures of individual student progress, school-wide student academic achievement, and the satisfaction of students, parents and teachers. The High School version additionally includes a section on post-secondary readiness. The indicators and their relative weights are given in the following table:

SPI Components	High School	Elementary-Middle
Student Progress (Growth on PSSA)	40%	50%
Student Achievement (PSSA)	30%	40%
Percent Proficient or Advanced	18%	20%
Percent Below Basic	6%	10%
Achievement Gap	6%	10%
Post-Secondary Readiness	20%	N/A
On-Time Graduation Rate	10%	
Ninth-Grade On-Track	4%	
SAT Participation	4%	
College Enrollment	2%	
Satisfaction & Engagement	10%	10%
Student Attendance Rate	4%	4%
Student Satisfaction	2%	2%
Parent Satisfaction	2%	2%
Parent Survey Response Rate	1%	1%
Teacher Satisfaction	1%	1%

After the indicators are weighted and combined, schools are ranked by the resulting index and divided into ten groups. The top ten percent of schools are rated "1" in the overall rating, the next ten percent are rated "2", and so on down to the lowest-performing ten percent, which receive a "10".

Although the overall rating is useful for comparing schools district-wide, SPD schools face distinct challenges related to their diverse demographics. When evaluating school performance, it is often desirable to compare schools with similar student populations. Therefore, every school is also assigned a *similar schools rank*, which is based on comparing its SPI to the nine schools most similar to it demographically. Strawberry Mansion High School, for example, received an overall rating of "2", meaning its SPI ranks in the top twenty percent of high schools, but not in the top ten percent. However, Strawberry Mansion's similar schools rank is "1", which means it had the highest SPI among demographically similar schools.

The components and relative weights used to determine demographic similarity are given in the following table:

Demographic-Similarity Components	High School	Elementary-Middle
Percent African American/Latino	30%	32.5%
Percent Poverty	30%	32.5%
Percent Special Ed	15%	17.5%
Percent English Language Learners	15%	17.5%
Selectivity (8 th grade Reading PSSA)	10%	N/A

APPENDIX C: Overview of the Renaissance School Review Protocol



**Office of Charter, Partnership
and New Schools**

The School District of Philadelphia

**Overview of the Renaissance
School Review Protocol**

Winter 2010



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Renaissance Review

What is the purpose of the Renaissance Review? ---

The purpose of the Renaissance Review (RR) is to provide a diagnostic view of current school strengths and areas for improvement, with a focus on school leadership's capacity to affect dramatic improvements in student achievement. In conjunction with the analysis of student achievement data, the RR will be used by the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to select Renaissance Schools that will be matched with internal and external organizations that have a track record of improving schools with chronically low performance. While the RR report is one source of information that will be used by the District, the RR report does not make a direct recommendation regarding the selection of Renaissance Schools.

How was the Renaissance Review protocol developed? ---

The RR protocol was developed by SchoolWorks in collaboration with the School District. It is based on transparent criteria that are used to promote understanding and dialogue between the school and the review team. Two guiding resources informed the development of the RR protocol:

1. The SchoolWorks Quality Criteria (SQC) – a set of research-based criteria and indicators that are grounded in best educational practices. The SQC are used as the basis for numerous school reviews conducted across the country.
2. The Readiness Model,⁵ – a set of characteristics and related strategies designed to both inform and propel school turnaround. The Readiness Model places focus on students' readiness to learn, staff readiness to teach, and school and community readiness to act. These characteristics and strategies are important to consider in both the team's review of the school's current capacity, as well as to assist SDP in identifying partnerships for Renaissance Schools.

How are schools selected for Renaissance Review? ---

Selection of schools for review is based on a comprehensive review of school performance data, as measured, in part, by the District's School Performance Index (SPI). The SPI is a composite of key indicators that show how the school is performing: 1) relative to the district overall, and 2) relative to similar schools. The SPI includes outcome measures of academic progress, achievement, as well as parent, teacher and student satisfaction, attendance and post-secondary readiness for high schools.

Schools with the lowest overall performance levels and the lowest rankings (when compared to similar schools) will be placed in the pool of candidates for potential selections as Renaissance Schools. SDP may also consider other factors to identify potential schools for RR. These include (but are not limited to):

- Designation as a school in Corrective Action II, based on the State accountability system,
- The performance of schools within the same feeder pattern, and
- The capacity of SDP and its turnaround partners to support a school, following the RR.

⁵ Adapted from: *The Turnaround Challenge: Why America's best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst-performing schools*. The Mass Insight Education and Research Institute. Boston, MA, (2007).

What areas of capacity are measured by the Renaissance Review? _____

The RR will measure capacity of school leadership, the climate and professional culture of the school, and the quality of current instruction and assessment. These are at the center of the review and will be the focus of three team members. Partnerships also play an important role in supporting school and student success. The RR will document current school partnerships to understand the school's current level of community support and to assist SDP in determining future supports that will be most beneficial to potential Renaissance Schools. One team member will have a particular focus on school partnerships and parental support. Overall, areas to be reviewed include:

1. **Mission and vision for high expectations:** Does the school exhibit high expectations for student achievement and well-being?
2. **Organizational leadership and school management:** Is the school well-organized and managed to execute critical changes?
3. **Instructional leadership:** Does leadership provide instructional oversight and implement strategies to improve teaching and learning?
4. **Instruction and Assessment:** Do classroom instructional practices and the use of assessment data meet the needs of students?
5. **Professional learning culture:** Does the school build strong relationships and sharing of practices?
6. **Supports for students:** Do services, programs and partnerships support student success and well-being?
7. **Safety and classroom management:** Does the school provide a safe and orderly climate in support of learning?
8. **Community and parent engagement:** Does the school engage parents and community resources in support of student success?

How does the Renaissance Review work? _____

The RR places a team of experienced educators in a school for two days to collect and analyze data about its programs, practices and operations. The RR process is based on a transparent set of standards that assess readiness for change.

The RR utilizes multiple sources of evidence (documents, interviews, classroom visits) to understand a school's programs, practices and operations in relation to the protocol's key questions and guiding criteria. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence about daily life in the school. Evidence collection begins with the review of key documents that provide the team with initial information about the school's programs and the students it serves. While on site, evidence collection continues through additional document reviews, classroom visits and interviews. The review team uses evidence collected through these events to develop findings about the key questions in the RR protocol.

The RR places a high value on engaging the school in understanding its own performance. The process may be described as an open and frank professional dialog between the school and the review team. The professionalism of the school and review team is essential in the process. Both the school and the review

Renaissance Schools Implementation Plan

team have clear roles and responsibilities that are designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. All review team members are governed by a code of conduct. Honesty, integrity, objectivity and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the review.

What does the process look like when the review team is on site? _____

Time on site progresses from a fixed structure, designed to ensure good coverage of the school, to a more flexible schedule that allows the review team to follow up on emerging claims and findings. Since it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the evidence collected, the review team requires the flexibility to move about the school and observe any aspect of its practice without notice. However, as a matter of courtesy and in the spirit of developing and maintaining a good working relationship, the review team leader works with the school to define as much of the schedule as possible without restricting the review team's ability to pursue important evidence.

What are the general steps in the Renaissance Review process? _____

Pre-visit planning and analysis: The school and SDP prepare necessary documents. The team leader works with the school to organize the schedule for the site visit. Review team members review documents and, according to the protocol standards, record their initial questions.

Evidence gathering on site: On site, the review team continues document reviews and conducts classroom visits and interviews with school administration, faculty and students.

Development of findings: The review team's primary objective is to develop findings about key strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the criteria in the protocol. In order to come to consensus on a set of findings – including strengths and areas for improvement – the review team works together to collate and discuss available evidence.

Written report: After the site visit, the school will receive a draft report from SchoolWorks that formalizes the findings discussed on site. The school will have an opportunity to review the report for factual corrections.