

# CHICAGO DISTRICT-CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT

Date Signed: November 2011

Number of All Public School Students: 397,641(2012-2013) NAPCS

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 12.4%

Charter Authorizer(s): Chicago Public Schools, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois State Charter School Commission

School District Governing Body: Mayoral control

Compact Grant Amount: \$2,757,840

## CURRENT STATUS OF COLLABORATION:



## OVERVIEW

Public education in Chicago has a tortured political history. Recently, the city has faced a teacher strike, a CEO resignation amid allegations of financial fraud, and heated public battles around the growing number of charter schools. 150 of 650 public schools in Chicago are now chartered. The Chicago Teacher's Union is powerful, well organized, and has taken a strong anti-charter stance. Yet Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who has the power to set the course for Chicago Public Schools (CPS), has been elected and re-elected (albeit narrowly) on an education platform that considers high-quality charter schools a critical tool to provide strong school options to as many parents as possible.

Emanuel announced the signing of the Compact in 2011. It was, and remains, the most detailed district-charter Compact agreement, with bold, tangible goals coupled with ways to hold signing parties accountable. Nearly four years and three superintendents later, with the active help and partnership with the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), Chicago has accomplished what few other Compact cities have: substantial wins for both sides. Funding for all schools increased after district and charter leaders jointly lobbied the state. Charter schools also saw a rise in facilities dollars from the district. A cross-sector committee slogged through the laborious work of designing the [School Quality Rating Policy](#) (SQRP) This common accountability tool provides parents with apples-to-apples comparisons of all

schools across multiple metrics including growth and school climate. The Compact's Leadership Collaborative continues to bring district and charter leaders together for professional development; feedback on the program is positive.

Often overshadowed by, and in spite of, intense politics, district-charter collaboration in Chicago continues to make progress. The 2012 teacher strike had a cooling effect on how the district and mayor talked about charter schools. Work to create a common school enrollment system ceased in the midst of the strike but there is interest from both district and charter schools in revisiting the idea. CPS withdrew its request for a district-charter collaboration grant from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, citing its need to focus on closing 50 under-enrolled schools. Yet district and charter leaders continued meeting and in 2014 a \$2.7 million grant was awarded. District and partners including LEAP, INCS, and New Schools for Chicago continue to work toward outcomes ranging from improving use of common core standards in literacy, transitioning schools to personalized learning, and increasing engagement of families and neighborhoods in vetting new charter school applications. The latest test for the Chicago compact is Emanuel's appointment of a new CEO. Forest Claypool was brought in to right the fiscal ship after his predecessor was accused of financial improprieties. Time will tell how high a priority the remaining Compact work is for Claypool.

COMMON AREAS OF COLLABORATION	COMPACT PROGRESS
<b>High-Performing Schools</b>	<p>Charter school and district leaders are drafting a “Commitment to Quality” policy to govern charter renewal decisions based on its school performance framework that will be adopted by the board. CPS receives roughly 20 charter applicants a year; between 2012 and 2015, 31 approved charter campuses opened. CPS did not approve charter school applicants during the heated election campaign in 2014. CPS is currently reviewing applications from 9 charter operators to open 24 campuses and has created four Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs) that will make recommendations to the school board for an October 2015 vote. NACs could potentially provide real community engagement and input on siting new quality school options in the city, but they could be distracted by a debate on charter schools and district policy. The board has indicated a preference for new campuses from established networks rather than start-up operators.</p>
<b>Special Education &amp; English Language Learners (ELL)</b>	<p>The Chicago Compact did not call for collaboration efforts for these populations, however, some charter schools utilize district special education services. CPS lobbied the state for authority to provide charter schools with increased flexibility over their use of special education funds.</p>
<b>Facilities &amp; Resources</b>	<p>CPS established student-based budgeting that provides equity for both district and charter schools, and helps to tie spending decisions closer to the classroom in both systems. Charter schools currently receive a per-pupil facilities allotment of \$750. The Compact called for eventual increase to \$1,000; this will likely never come to fruition. However, INCS is working to get CPS agreement to establish an additional \$15 million dollar grant pool that will be awarded based on need. With the exception of one pre-existing charter elementary school that moved in to a closed CPS school building, political pressure has prevented CPS from providing any of the 50 school buildings closed in 2013 to charter schools, even though these facilities cause a financial drain on CPS or cause increased blight in underserved neighborhoods.</p>
<b>School Performance Framework</b>	<p>CPS established the <a href="#">SQRP</a> beginning with the 2013-14 school year. District and charter leaders rightly point to the SQRP as a key compact achievement. Every district and charter school receives a rating based on overall student academic performance and growth, as well as school climate and other measures. SQRP data is available on CPS’ website, but INCS is exploring ways to present the data in a more user-friendly format. Significant attention has been paid to school discipline at charter schools. Although the district is working on technical capacity to collect and produce better data from charter schools that could better inform the public, the charter sector is concerned because it uses different practices that don’t translate to CPS’ data definitions.</p>
<b>Enrollment Systems</b>	<p>The lack of a common or universal enrollment system is one of Chicago’s greatest missed opportunities. Charter schools still run their own applications, timelines, and lotteries, increasing burdens on parents. Compact participants made significant progress in developing a system, but ultimately shelved it in the wake of the 2012 CEO turnover and the 2013 teacher strike and school closures. Many charter leaders also did not have faith in CPS’ ability to run the system. These challenges will be difficult to overcome if leaders hope to restart the effort.</p>
<b>Human Capital &amp; Professional Development</b>	<p>The Chicago Leadership Collaborative, partnering with ten leading universities, has helped develop a pipeline for effective principals. Separately, LEAP Innovations has helped shepherd two cohorts of district and charter school leaders as they implement personalized learning models. Participating district school leaders are learning to be more entrepreneurial as they engage with their charter counterparts.</p>
<b>Common Core</b>	<p>A Literacy Design Collaborative between Nash Elementary and KIPP Chicago, which are co-located, helped build a sense of community between the two schools. However, the work does not necessarily align with Common Core-aligned curriculum rolling out to district schools.</p>