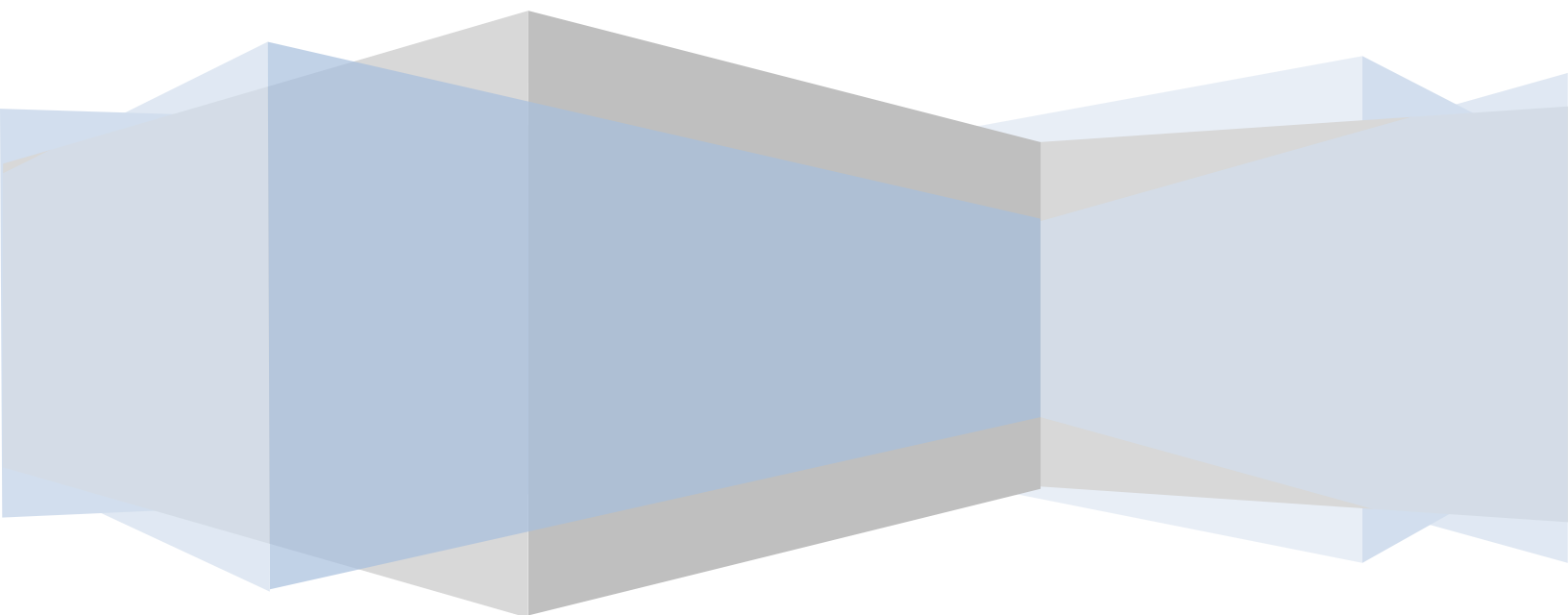


The School District of Philadelphia

# Renaissance Schools Initiative Progress Report

2010-2011 through 2012-2013

December 2013



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## Renaissance Schools Initiative Progress Report

Prepared by:

***The Office of Research and Evaluation***

Tonya Wolford, Ph.D.  
Deputy

Kati Stratos, M.S.S.P.  
Senior Research Associate

Adrienne Reitano, M.S.S.P.  
Research Assistant

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## Introduction

The following report focuses on the School District of Philadelphia’s (District) Renaissance Initiative, the District’s school turnaround model.<sup>1</sup> The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) analyzed changes in school-level outcomes in the first three years of the District’s Renaissance Initiative, from 2010-2011 through 2012-2013, by Renaissance Initiative type, school, and provider. Utilizing outcomes, including changes in enrollment, retention, school climate, and reading and math proficiency, we measured changes evident after the first turnaround year and subsequent years. In addition, changes at Promise Academies were compared to those at charter schools and across charter providers over the same years. This report is accompanied by several Research Briefs relevant to these areas.

While the first year of the Renaissance Initiative was examined by Research for Action (RFA) in 2011, referenced below, this report does not extend the evaluation of the Renaissance Initiative “model,” which is what RFA sought to do. Rather, this evaluation shifts to an examination of the impact of the initiative on participating schools. As such, the present report builds on previous findings, but shifts focus from the benefits of the model to how well the participating schools are doing.

### Renaissance Initiative: Previous Research

Research for Action’s report found that after one year, both Promise Academies and Renaissance Charters produced better outcomes for students than comparison schools (also low-performing). Specifically, students at Renaissance schools showed significantly greater improvements in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) math and reading proficiency than students at comparison schools; these same students showed significantly greater gains in attendance; there were no statistically significant differences between students at the Promise Academies and the Renaissance Charters; and there were no statistically significant differences among charter providers. There was no evidence of increased outcomes at the Promise Academy high schools. After its release, the report was reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences *What Works Clearinghouse* and it was determined that the study did not meet their evidence standards because the comparison schools and Renaissance schools “did not have similar achievement levels in the year before the initiative began.” Nonetheless, both types of schools showed improved student outcomes, and the Renaissance schools showed greater gains than the District’s other lowest performing schools. An internally-produced 2012 report found a similar pattern evident in the second year of implementation for Promise Academies. These schools as a group continued to be distinct from other low-performing District schools (a different set of matched comparison schools was identified) by either showing greater gains or by showing more moderate declines in achievement and attendance. There were additional flags about the effectiveness of the model at high schools, which did not show better outcomes than the newly identified comparison schools.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed explanation of school turnaround and for examples from other cities see Appendix A.

## The Renaissance Initiative

Under the Renaissance Initiative, the District has been converting schools to Promise Academies, a district-run turnaround model, and Renaissance Charters, operated by charter providers, since the 2010-2011 school year. As detailed in Table 1, Cohort 1 was the largest, with thirteen schools converted in the first year. Since then, ten middle and elementary schools and three high schools have been converted to Renaissance Charters; four elementary and middle schools and five high schools have become Promise Academies. Three of the Promise Academy high schools have been closed.

Table 1: Renaissance Initiative School Conversions by Cohort and Type

Cohort 1: 2010-2011	Cohort 2: 2011-2012	Cohort 3: 2012-2013	Cohort 4: 2013-2014
<b>Renaissance Charter Elementary and Middle Schools</b>			
Bluford (Universal)	Vare (Universal)	Cleveland (Mastery)	<i>Alcorn</i>
Daroff (Universal)	Clymer (Mastery)	Performing Arts @ Edmunds (String Theory)	<i>Kenderton</i>
Douglass (Young Scholars)	Birney (Mosaica)	Memphis St. @ Jones (American Paradigm)	<i>Pastorius</i>
Harrity (Mastery)		Creighton (Universal)	
Mann (Mastery)			
Smedley (Mastery)			
Stetson (ASPIRA)			
<b>Renaissance Charter High Schools</b>			
	Audenried (Universal)		
	Gratz (Mastery)		
	Olney (ASPIRA)		
<b>Promise Academy Elementary and Middle Schools</b>			
Ethel Allen			<i>Barry</i>
Dunbar			<i>Bryant</i>
Clemente			<i>McMichael</i>
Potter-Thomas			<i>Cayuga</i>
<b>Promise Academy High Schools</b>			
University City*	West Philadelphia		<i>Strawberry Mansion</i>
Vaux*	Martin Luther King		<i>Edison</i>
	Germantown*		

\*Closed School

The Renaissance Initiative was developed based on two of the United States Department of Education's school improvement models: turnaround and restart. The lowest performing schools in the District, based on their prior year's performance, were selected for turnaround, while school and community readiness also factored into school selection. The Promise Academy initiative served as the turnaround pathway. As such, new principals were assigned to these buildings; at least half of the staff was reassigned to other schools and replaced with new site-selected staff. Relating to operational and school-policy changes, the district-created Promise Academy model included:

- longer day for students (3 days a week);
- longer school year (summer academy);
- uniforms for students and staff;
- world language studies;

- collaborations with local college and universities, as well as city, community, and business organizations; and
- parent compacts.

Under the restart model at the Renaissance Charters, all staff were replaced and new policies, procedures and academics were instituted depending on the goals and missions of the charter provider selected for the school. Details on the components included in the first year can be found in the Research for Action study *Philadelphia's Renaissance Schools Initiative: 18 Month Interim Report*.

It should be acknowledged that the Promise Academies have little in common with the Renaissance Charters, which are distinct from each other due to the fact that they are run and managed by seven charter providers. Among the Promise Academies, there is an additional complicating layer of changes in the model over time. The Promise Academy schools were unified most closely in the first year by undergoing the dramatic transformations called for in a turnaround effort; as such, they all experienced extensive changes in leadership and staffing. The Promise Academies initially followed the "Promise Academy way," which specified certain conditions within the schools related to climate improvement measures, community involvement, extended learning opportunities, and the use of additionally allocated resources. In SY 2011-2012, an unprecedented budget shortfall led to Promise Academies receiving less funding and support than in SY 2010-2011 (although still more than other low-performing schools). Reforms such as Saturday School, summer academy, and summer orientation for teachers were eliminated. Additionally, there was unexpected staff turnover due to lay-offs and requirements in the teacher's contract tied to seniority. This produced teacher retention rates in the second year around 50% for some Cohort 1 schools.

At the end of the second year of implementation, the internal administrator responsible for Promise Academies (a Deputy Chief) left the District and was not replaced. Going into 2012-2013, and in the absence of direct oversight of the initiative, there was a general lack of clarity about what distinguished Promise Academies from other schools. In that environment, no new Promise Academies were created, however those schools that already converted were maintained. The model proposed by the Chief Academic Office for the 2012-2013 school year is shown in Tables 2 and 3. Qualitative data will be collected at the schools to determine the extent to which these elements were actually implemented. In addition, an important question that will be pursued in the future is what models are being implemented at the Renaissance Charter schools.

Table 2. K-8 Promise Academy Components in 2012-2013

Staff Employment and Retention	Staff will be employed by the School District
Staff Working Hours	Teachers will work one additional hour 4 days per week
Staff Work Year	Staff will work a longer school year to include a weeklong summer academy
Staff compensation	Teacher recruitment incentive Teacher retention incentive
Staff dress code	Staff will be required to adhere to a dress code.
Additional staff support	SEL (to schedule, implement and monitor interventions in addition to regular SEL duties) SISL (to work on attendance issues in addition to regular SISL duties) School Based Teacher Leader for reading and mathematics (design and implement professional development, implement common core standards across content areas and implement and support a school wide instructional model) One counselor
School governance	School advisory council
School day for students	One extra hour for academic intervention required (Monday-Wednesday)
Student Dress Code	Uniforms for students
School Climate and Culture	Promise Academy climate and culture procedures: town hall, pledge, code of conduct and peer mediation
University Centric Culture	College and career exploration and collaborations with a local college or university
Curriculum and Studies	Schools will follow the core curriculum World language studies
Parent Education	Parent University organized and implemented by SISL (on site)

Table 3. High School Promise Academy Components in 2012-2013

Staff Employment and Retention	Staff will be employed by the School District
Staff Working Hours	Teachers will work an additional hour per day – 4 days per week Monday –Thursday
Staff Work Year	Staff will work a longer school year to include a weeklong summer academy
Staff compensation	Teacher recruitment incentive Teacher retention incentive
Staff dress code	Staff will be required to adhere to a dress code.
Additional staff support	SEL (to schedule, implement and monitor interventions in addition to regular SEL duties) SISL (to work on attendance issues in addition to regular SISL duties) School Based Teacher Leader for reading and mathematics (design and implement professional development, implement common core standards across content areas and implement and support a school wide instructional model)
School governance	Promise Academy Advisory Council to service all four Promise Academies. Each school will have a minimum of two representatives on the council.
School day for students	One extra hour for academic intervention required (Monday-Wednesday)
Student Dress Code	Uniforms for students
School Climate and Culture	Promise Academy climate and culture procedures: town hall, pledge, code of conduct and peer mediation
University Centric Culture	College and career exploration and collaborations with a local college or university One college counselor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work one on one with seniors in Promise Academies to plan and implement a post-secondary plan</li> <li>• Manage students’ individual application process ensuring: applications, essays, letters of recommendation, required entrance exams and FAFSA are completed</li> <li>• Provide early college awareness</li> </ul>
Parent Education	Parent University organized and implemented by SISL (on site)

## Enrollment and Retention

Student retention and student mobility are important issues for all schools. Research has demonstrated that mobility “compromises effective student learning” and high rates of mobility are associated with a range of negative academic and social outcomes (Finch, Lapsley, and Baker-Boudissa, 2009). Despite its importance, there is limited research on student mobility and its effects, and in particular, the impact of school turnaround initiatives on student mobility. In a survey of 58 comparative studies of charter schools, Hassell and Terrell (2009) lamented the lack of research on outcomes other than student achievement, such as mobility, persistence, and attendance rates. They noted that student mobility is not studied directly but is treated instead as a control variable in analyses that focus solely on achievement (Finch, Lapsley, and Baker-Boudissa, 2009).

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*In 2012-2013, within year retention District-wide for grades 3, 7 and 9 was 91%, 91% and 84%, respectively.*

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### ***Within Year Retention***

The within-year retention rate looks at the students who were enrolled in the school on September 30 of the school year and still enrolled at the same school on May 31.<sup>2</sup> The analysis looks at a sample of students that includes 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

Overall, there was a significant increase in the within-year retention rates at both Promise Academies and Renaissance Charter schools. In a sample including all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students from all Renaissance Initiative cohorts, there was a significant increase in within-year student retention during the first year of turnaround. The increase was greater for Renaissance Charters than for Promise Academies (Table 4).

There was a significant increase in within-year retention one year after turnaround in each examined grade at Renaissance Charter Schools. At Promise Academies, there was no significant change in within-year retention one year after turnaround for grades 3 or 7, but there was a significant increase in within-year retention in grade 9 (see Table 5). School-level data is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Retention Rate from Year Preceding Turnaround to One Year into Turnaround: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

School Type	Within-year Retention Rate in Year Preceding Turnaround	Within-year Retention Rate One Year into Turnaround	Difference
Renaissance Charters	83.00% (n=2,633)	89.10% (n=2,953)	6.10%*
Promise Academy	76.30% (n=978)	81.60% (n=916)	5.30%*

\*Indicates that difference is significant at  $p < 0.05$

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<sup>2</sup> Students are excluded from the calculation for reasons of death, incapacitation, and enrollment in a foster or group home outside of Philadelphia.



Table 5. Retention Rate by Grade from Year Prior to Turnaround to One Year into Turnaround

School Type	Within-year Retention Rate in Year Preceding Turnaround		Within-year Retention Rate One Year into Turnaround		Difference
Renaissance Charters	83.00%	(n=2,633)	89.1%	(n=2,953)	6.1%*
Grade 3	84.50%	(n=850)	92.20%	(n=897)	7.70%*
Grade 7	84.70%	(n=998)	91.60%	(n=1,021)	6.90%*
Grade 9	79.20%	(n=785)	84.00%	(n=1,035)	4.80%*
Promise Academy	76.30%	(n=978)	81.60%	(n=916)	5.30%*
Grade 3	86.10%	(n=137)	88.80%	(n=116)	2.70%
Grade 7	87.20%	(n=274)	86.30%	(n=256)	-0.90%
Grade 9	68.60%	(n=567)	77.80%	(n=544)	9.20%*

\*Indicates that difference is significant at  $p < 0.05$

### Annual Retention

There did not appear to be major differences in the demographics of students who returned to the school from the pre-turnaround year to the first year of turnaround. The students who returned the following year were representative of the student population prior to turnaround (see Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. Student Retention from Year Prior to Turnaround

School Type	Enrolled in pre-turnaround year who returned for turnaround year	Enrolled in pre-turnaround year who did not return for turnaround year
Renaissance Charters	79.30% (n=7,369)	20.73% (n=1,927)
Promise Academies	80.95% (n=1,793)	19.05% (n=422)

Table 7. Student Retention from Year Prior to Turnaround by Student Group

Subgroup	Renaissance Charters		Promise Academies	
	Pre-turnaround population	Returning population	Pre-turnaround population	Returning population
English Language Learner	8.16%	8.24%	11.92%	12.33%
Special Education	16.89%	16.54%	23.48%	23.26%
Black/African American	73.64%	74.24%	67.90%	68.43%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.13%	0.11%	0.14%	0.06%
Hispanic/Latino	18.93%	18.62%	29.93%	29.50%
Multi Racial/Other	2.28%	2.28%	0.81%	0.84%
Asian	2.83%	2.70%	0.32%	0.33%
White	2.15%	2.05%	0.90%	0.84%

Overall, there has been a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students enrolled at Renaissance Charter schools from the year before turnaround (when the school was District-run) to the 2012-2013 school year (Table 7). The percentage of ELL students at schools that have gone on to become Renaissance Charters has decreased since 2009-2010, while enrollment in these schools has increased (Table 8).

There has been a statistically significant increase in the percentage of students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) enrolled at Renaissance Charter Schools from the year before turnaround (when the school was District-run) to the 2012-2013 school year (Table 9). The percentage of students with an IEP at schools that have gone on to become Renaissance Charters has increased since 2009-2010.

Table 8. Changes in ELL Enrollment from Year Prior to Turnaround to 2012-2013 in Renaissance Charters

	PRE-TURNAROUND YEAR			2012-2013			Difference in % ELL from Pre-turnaround year to 2012-2013
	All students	ELL	% ELL	All students	ELL	% ELL	
COHORT 1	4158	249	6.0%	4991	230	4.6%	-1.38%*
COHORT 2	4801	329	6.9%	5653	396	7.0%	0.15%
COHORT 3	3357	476	14.2%	3412	386	11.3%	-2.87%*
All Cohorts	12316	1054	8.6%	14056	1012	7.2%	-1.4%*

\*Indicates that difference is significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 9. Changes in IEP Enrollment from Year Prior to Turnaround to 2012-2013 in Renaissance Charters

	PRE-TURNAROUND YEAR			2012-2013			Difference in % IEP from Pre-turnaround year to 2012-2013
	All students	IEP	% IEP	All students	IEP	% IEP	
COHORT 1	4158	543	13.1%	4991	902	18.1%	5.01%*
COHORT 2	4801	998	20.8%	5653	1301	23.0%	2.23%*
COHORT 3	3357	529	15.8%	3412	594	17.4%	1.65%*
All Cohorts	12316	2070	16.8%	14056	2797	19.9%	3.09%*

\*Indicates that difference is significant at  $p < 0.05$

## Climate

School climate can be simply defined as the value and temperament of school life for a student. It can include daily activities and academics for pupils, but also refers to the safety of a school for its students, making things such as violent incidents and truancy rates relevant. Research suggests that the climate of a school is often correlated to academic achievement in students. "School climate may be one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program. Without a climate that creates a harmonious and well functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain (Hoyle, English, and Steffy as quoted in Kelley, Thornton, and Daugherty, 2005)."<sup>3</sup> Haynes, Emmons, and Ben-Avie (1997)<sup>4</sup> indicate that "Positive student behavior resulting in safer schools was evidenced in buildings where... the rules of the school were clear, fair, and consistently enforced; students were proud of their school... and there was a strong academic thrust where students were expected to excel." Research has also shown that, especially for African American/Black children, positive school climate is directly related to positive academic achievement as well as higher attendance rates (Haynes, Emmons, and Ben-Avie, 1997).

Data were obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) School Safety Reports to examine changes in serious incidents and offenders. Serious incidents are defined by PDE and each school reports then through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). PDE defines an incident and offender as follows: "A specific act or offense involving one or more victims and one or more offenders. A reportable incident includes one or more acts of misconduct, involving one or more offenders violating criteria defined under Pennsylvania's Act 26 of 1995."<sup>5</sup> Changes in serious incidents by school are shown in Table 10. The shaded areas indicate years under the turnaround initiative.

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*District-wide the number of serious incidents per 100 students has declined since 2009-2010 from 5.4 per 100 to 4.8 per 100 in 2012-2013. The percentage of student offenders has declined from 6.1% to 5.3% over the same period.*

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<sup>3</sup> Kelley, R. C., Thornton, B., & Daugherty, R. (2005). Relationships between measures of leadership and school climate. *Education-Indianapolis then Chula Vista-*, 126(1), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Haynes, N. M., Emmons, C., & Ben-Avie, M. (1997). School climate as a factor in student adjustment and achievement. *Journal of educational and psychological consultation*, 8(3), 321-329.

<sup>5</sup> From PIMS Appendix Z: <http://www.ksys-inc.com/PDE/PIMS Appendix Z.pdf>

Table 10: Serious Incidents per 100 Students by School and Provider<sup>#</sup>

Provider	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Change During Turnaround
<b>ASPIRA</b>						
Stetson <sup>1</sup>	26.63	17.86	1.55	2.01	7.21	-10.65
Olney <sup>2</sup> (East)	20.52	22.22	21.37	22.47	17.36	-4.01
Olney <sup>2</sup> (West)	16.65	18.06	18.07			-0.71
<b>American Paradigm</b>						
Memphis <sup>3</sup>	12.81	13.62	19.43	14.63	19.13	4.50
<b>Mastery</b>						
Harrity <sup>1</sup>	6.39	4.23	0.12	0.24	0.23	-4.00
Mann <sup>1</sup>	1.71	2.65	0.00	0.00	0.57	-2.08
Smedley <sup>1</sup>	8.27	12.00	0.17	0.28	0.00	-12.00
Gratz <sup>2</sup>	14.56	15.46	13.15	2.04	6.25	-6.90
Clymer <sup>2</sup>	9.64	4.74	1.84	0.68	0.19	-1.65
Cleveland <sup>3</sup>	7.54	9.19	2.86	9.96	0.72	-9.24
<b>Mosaica</b>						
Birney <sup>2</sup>	7.0	5.8	6.3	NA <sup>^</sup>	30.1	23.13
<b>String Theory</b>						
Edmunds <sup>3</sup>	8.99	5.07	4.02	7.40	0.00	-7.40
<b>Universal</b>						
Bluford <sup>1</sup>	4.84	6.20	0.00	0.19	2.96	-3.24
Daroff <sup>1</sup>	5.80	10.16	0.00	1.17	0.96	-9.20
Audenried <sup>2</sup>	27.98	17.37	14.02	5.95	1.15	-12.87
Vare <sup>2</sup>	31.66	13.62	14.21	8.23	1.52	-12.69
Creighton <sup>3</sup>	7.60	9.60	8.49	8.31	1.61	-6.70
<b>Young Scholars</b>						
Douglass <sup>1</sup>	23.86	10.23	0.61	0.94	1.18	-9.05
<b>School District of Philadelphia</b>						
Ethel Allen <sup>1</sup>	6.19	6.27	7.51	3.38	6.69	0.42
Clemente <sup>1</sup>	8.01	14.44	8.73	8.46	14.63	0.19
Dunbar <sup>1</sup>	7.88	16.89	6.07	7.44	4.23	-12.66
Potter-Thomas <sup>1</sup>	4.23	1.63	3.56	2.48	2.32	0.69
University City <sup>1</sup> (Closed)	14.47	8.03	6.70	7.15	7.11	-0.92
Vaux <sup>1</sup> (Closed)	16.98	14.32	4.93	8.59	7.50	-6.82
West Phila. <sup>2</sup>	14.03	6.63	8.46	11.83	12.88	4.42
King <sup>2</sup>	9.41	5.41	6.53	9.39	9.47	2.94
Germantown <sup>2</sup> (Closed)	16.83	11.00	10.38	11.25	8.79	-1.59

<sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education Safe Schools Reports; <sup>1</sup>Cohort 1 – converted 2010-2011; <sup>2</sup>Cohort 2 – converted 2011-2012; <sup>3</sup>Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

Table 11: Offenders by School and Provider<sup>#</sup>

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Change During Turnaround
<b>ASPIRA</b>						
Stetson <sup>1</sup>	26.6%	17.2%	2.5%	2.3%	7.1%	-10.12
Olney <sup>2</sup> (East)	23.4%	21.4%	23.3%	16.5%	16.6%	-6.64
Olney <sup>2</sup> (West)	21.3%	22.6%	18.5%			-1.90
<b>American Paradigm</b>						
Memphis <sup>3</sup>	16.0%	15.9%	19.2%	15.1%	20.2%	5.03
<b>Mastery</b>						
Harrity <sup>1</sup>	6.9%	5.6%	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%	-5.36
Mann <sup>1</sup>	1.7%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	-1.30
Smedley <sup>1</sup>	10.2%	12.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	-12.57
Gratz <sup>2</sup>	17.2%	19.4%	16.6%	3.8%	9.5%	-7.11
Clymer <sup>2</sup>	13.0%	5.6%	1.8%	1.1%	0.4%	-1.46
Cleveland <sup>3</sup>	8.1%	8.4%	4.5%	11.8%	1.2%	-10.68
<b>Mosaica</b>						
Birney <sup>2</sup>	6.8%	6.3%	7.0%	NA <sup>^</sup>	21.6%	14.80
<b>String Theory</b>						
Edmunds <sup>3</sup>	9.4%	5.3%	4.2%	7.4%	0.0%	-7.40
<b>Universal</b>						
Bluford <sup>1</sup>	5.9%	6.4%	0.0%	0.2%	2.8%	-3.64
Daroff <sup>1</sup>	6.3%	13.9%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	-12.78
Audenried <sup>2</sup>	35.1%	22.8%	19.2%	5.8%	4.1%	-15.07
Vare <sup>2</sup>	26.4%	15.9%	16.1%	3.7%	1.8%	-14.35
Creighton <sup>3</sup>	9.5%	10.1%	8.1%	8.7%	2.5%	-6.24
<b>Young Scholars</b>						
Douglass <sup>1</sup>	23.9%	12.5%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	-11.37
<b>School District of Philadelphia</b>						
Ethel Allen <sup>1</sup>	6.2%	7.8%	6.8%	3.6%	6.1%	-1.75
Clemente <sup>1</sup>	11.7%	18.2%	8.0%	9.6%	14.4%	-3.79
Dunbar <sup>1</sup>	11.2%	13.2%	6.5%	5.1%	4.2%	-9.01
Potter-Thomas <sup>1</sup>	5.8%	3.5%	4.2%	4.1%	2.3%	-1.15
University City <sup>1</sup> (Closed)	19.7%	10.6%	8.7%	9.4%	10.5%	-0.15
Vaux <sup>1</sup> (Closed)	20.0%	15.9%	6.1%	9.8%	10.7%	-5.17
West Phila. <sup>2</sup>	18.6%	8.0%	11.3%	15.9%	15.7%	4.38
King <sup>2</sup>	12.8%	6.5%	8.6%	11.8%	16.4%	7.89
Germantown <sup>2</sup> (Closed)	20.7%	14.6%	13.8%	13.8%	13.0%	-0.76

<sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education Safe Schools Reports; <sup>1</sup>Cohort 1 – converted 2010-2011; <sup>2</sup>Cohort 2 – converted 2011-2012; <sup>3</sup>Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

## Students Academic Performance

Based on the standards of successful turnaround initiatives, the expectation is that student achievement should increase dramatically in a short period of time, which has been determined by relevant literature to be within three to five years (Strunk et al. 2012; Meyers, 2013; Herman et al. 2008; Mass Insight, 2010; Brownstein, 2013). Measures of improvement vary across the field, as do definitions of “dramatic gains.” Some studies of school turnaround have relied on statistical tests to determine the significance of academic improvements within the first couple years of the initiative; however, in each of these cases, researchers acknowledge that several factors threaten the validity of such statistically-founded conclusions (Strunk et al. 2012; Meyers, 2013; Herman et al. 2008; Brownstein, 2013; O’Brien & Dervarics, 2013).

### District-wide Changes in PSSA Proficiency from 20011-2012 to 2012-2013

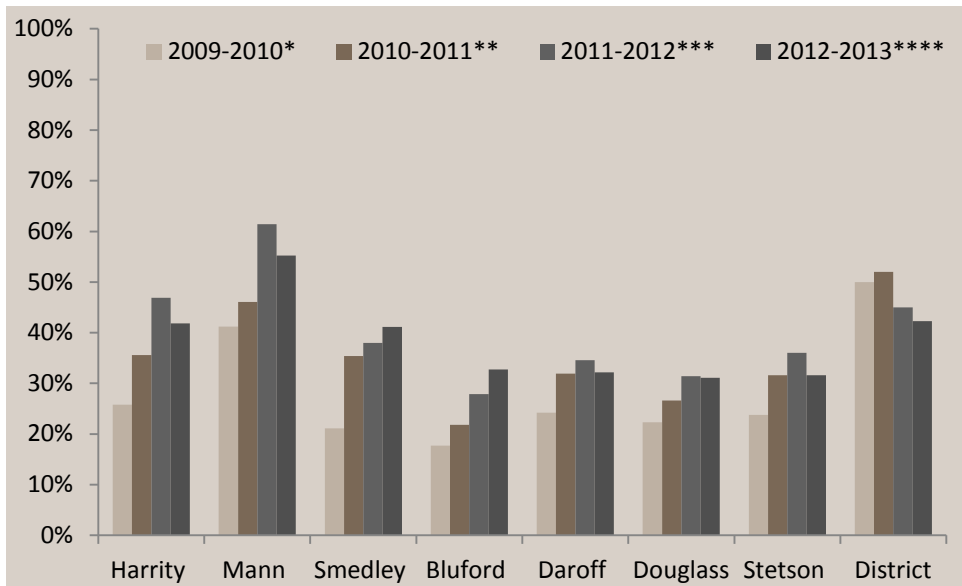
	Math		Reading	
Number and percentage changed				
Increase	25	13.4%	46	24.7%
Decrease	161	86.8%	140	75.3%
Change in proficiency rates				
Average	-5.4		-3.6	
Minimum	-21.2		-17.6	
Maximum	8.0		11.0	

### *Renaissance Charter Reading and Math Proficiency*

As seen in Figure 1, each of the Cohort 1 Renaissance Charter schools showed gains in the percentage of students scoring advanced or proficient in reading since the year before turnaround. Six of the seven schools showed at least a 10 percentage point increase by 2011-2012, with the exception of Young Scholars at Frederick Douglass (which came close at 9.1). In 2012-2013, Smedley and Bluford continue to show positive growth. Mann, Daroff and Stetson all saw declines in Year 3, but the percentage of students achieving proficiency remained higher than pre-turnaround. The trends at the Renaissance Charters were in contrast to an overall decline in reading proficiency District-wide (excluding other charters). Figure 2 shows a similar trend for math proficiency, with every school showing an overall increase in the percentage of students scoring advanced or proficient. Six schools had an increase of at least 10 percentage points over the three year period since turnaround. As was the case with reading, these positive changes went against the District trend, which showed an overall decrease over the past three years.

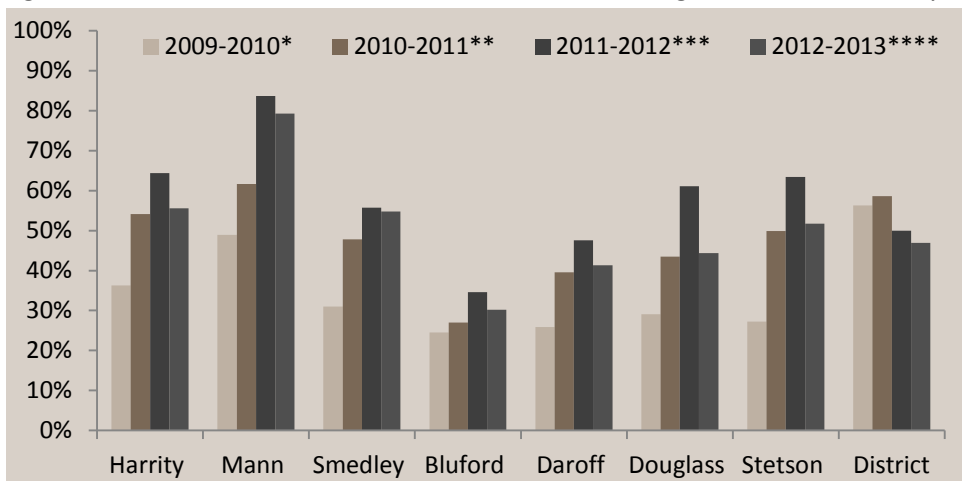
As seen in Figure 3, all Cohort 2 Renaissance Charter schools showed increases in reading proficiency in the first year after turnaround. However, with the exception of Mastery Clymer, these increases are smaller overall than those seen in Cohort 1. In Year 2, Birney was the only school to see the positive trend continue, as the percentages of students achieving proficiency at Vare and Clymer remained the same as Year 1. Math trends at Clymer and Birney are similar to those in Cohort 1, where all schools showed steady increases in the first two years after turnaround. The exception is Vare, which showed a 6.1 percentage point decrease in proficiency in math the year after turnaround (2011-2012).

Figure 1: Cohort 1 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



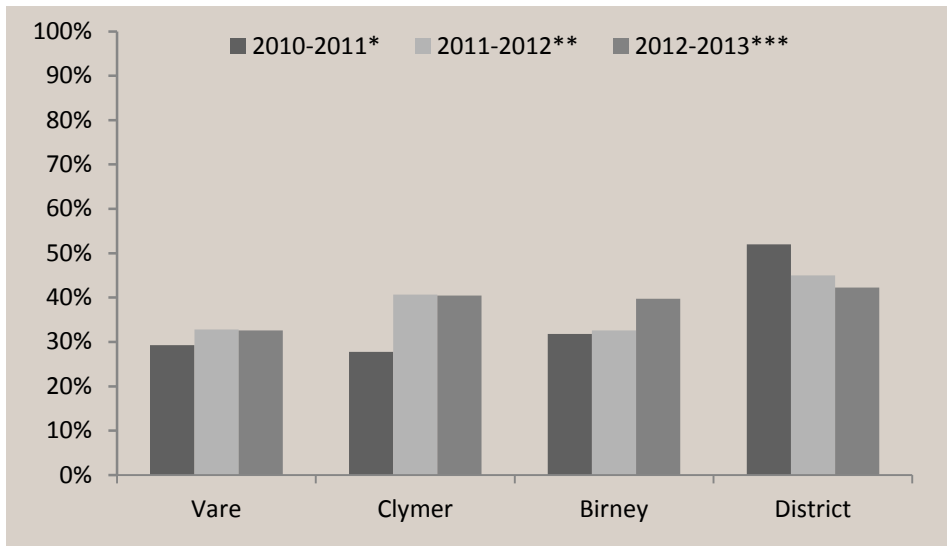
\* Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); \*\*\*\*Third turnaround year (Year 3); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Figure 2: Cohort 1 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



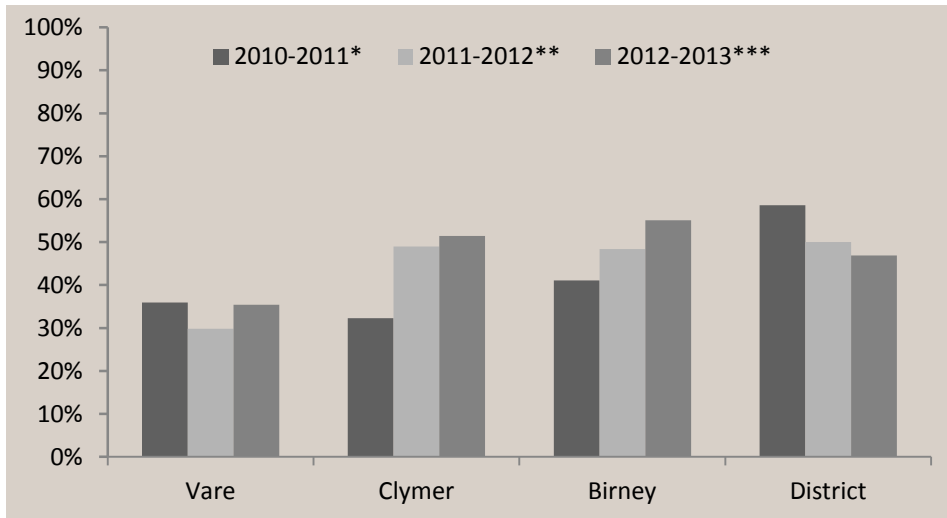
\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); \*\*\*\*Third turnaround year (Year 3); <sup>#</sup> Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Figure 3: Cohort 2 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year 2); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Figure 4: Cohort 2 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#</sup>

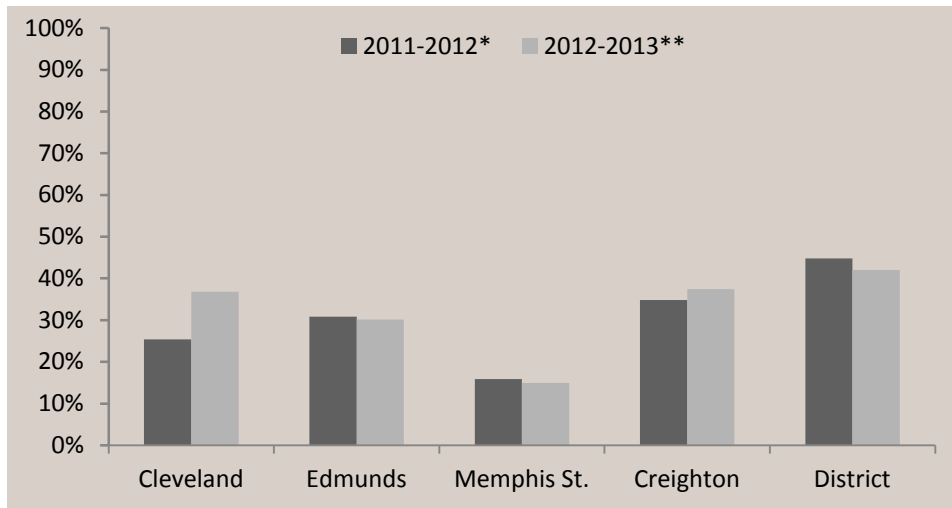


\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year 2); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Two of the four Cohort 3 K-8 Renaissance Charter schools (Creighton and Cleveland) showed an increase in proficiency in reading in the first turnaround year.

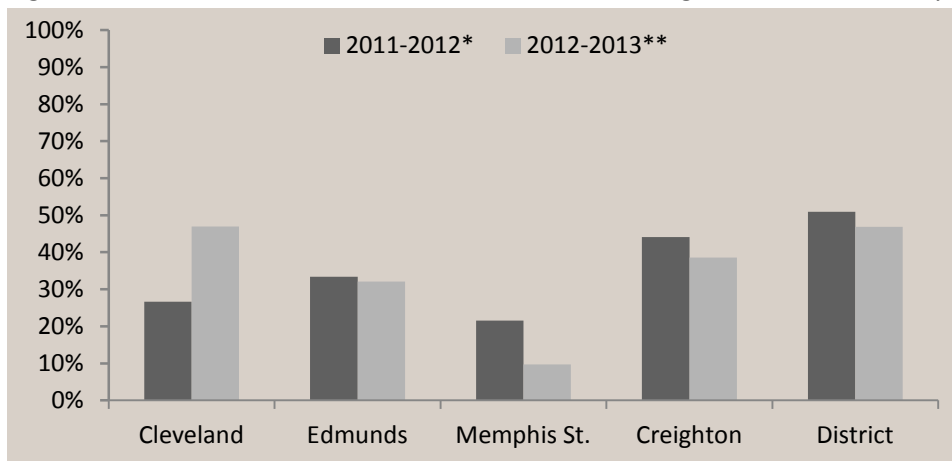


Figure 5: Cohort 3 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Figure 6: Cohort 3 K-8 Renaissance Charter Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#</sup>

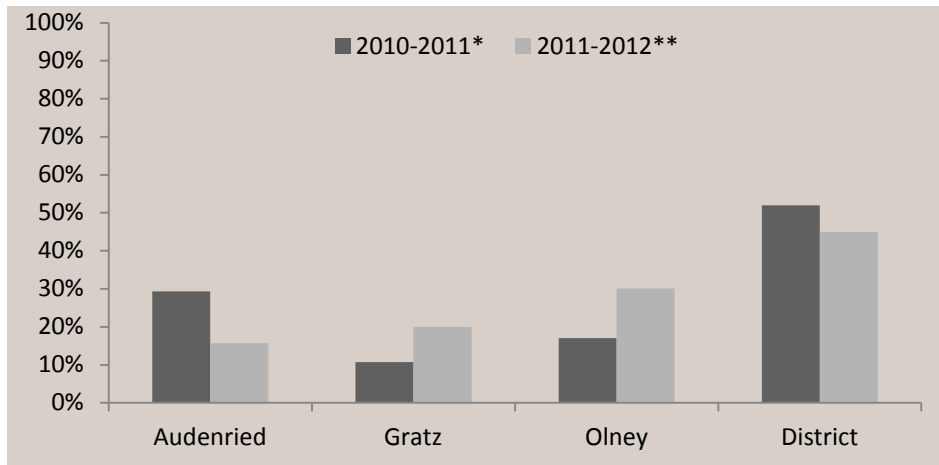


\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education.

Only Cleveland showed an increase in math proficiency in the first turnaround year. Similar to its reading trend, Edmunds shows little change in Year 1. In contrast, Creighton's math percent proficient decreased in Year 1.

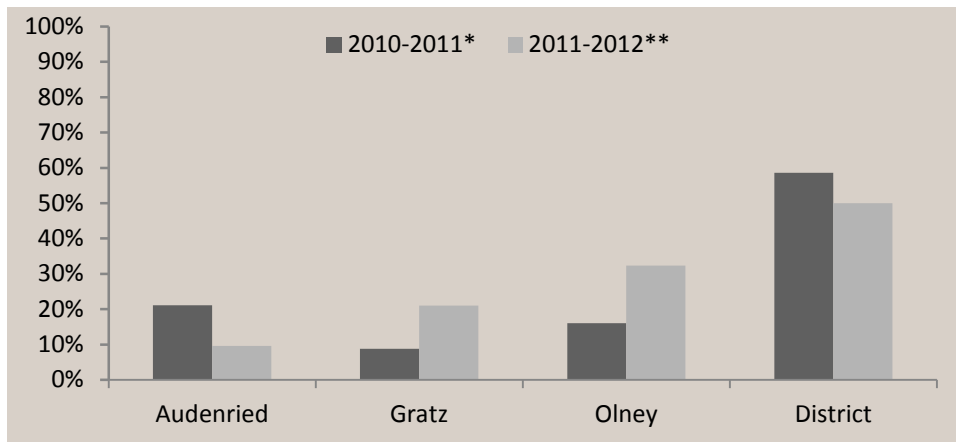
Figure 7 shows mixed results in reading proficiency after Year 1 for Cohort 2 Renaissance Charter High Schools. While Gratz and Olney High Schools saw 9.3 percentage and 13.1 percentage point increase, respectively, Audenried showed a 13.6 percentage point decrease in the first year after turnaround. This decrease is consistent with the overall District trend, where there was a 7.1 percentage point decrease in students scoring advanced and proficient in reading from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012.

Figure 7: Cohort 2 Renaissance Charter High Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); #Data from the PA Dept. of Education; &In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students, however, based on 2012-2013 Keystone Exams: 34.88% of Audenried students and 38.01% of Olney students were advanced or proficient in Reading/Literature.

Figure 8: Cohort 2 Renaissance Charter High Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>



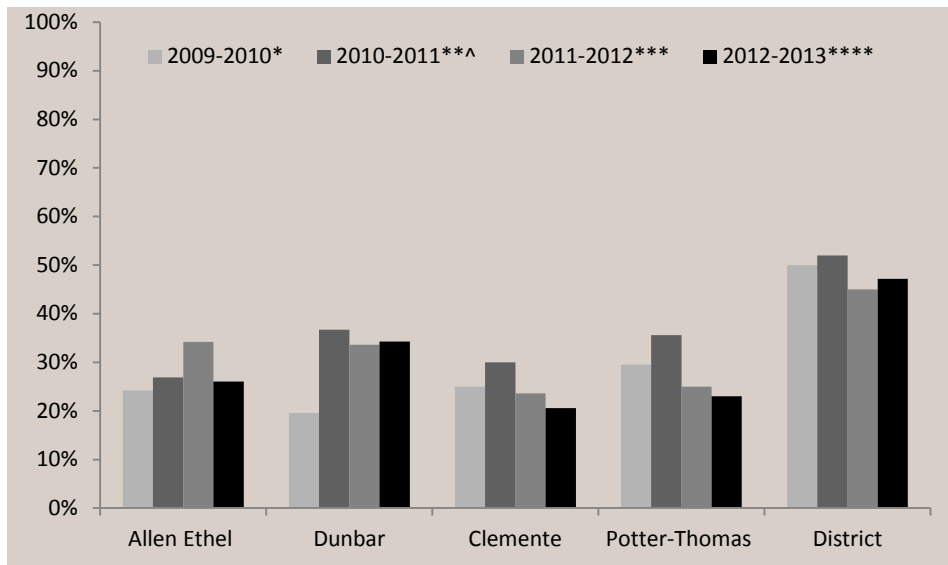
\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); #Data from the PA Dept. of Education; &In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students, however, based on 2012-2013 Keystone Exams: 8.04% of Audenried students and 30.63% of Olney students were advanced or proficient in Math/Algebra 1.

As seen above, the trends in math mimic those in reading for all Cohort 2 Renaissance Charter High Schools; both Gratz and Olney saw increases in the percentage of students scoring advanced and proficient (12.2 and 16.3 percentage points respectively), while Audenried saw an 11.5 percentage point decrease. The District decreased, but still remained above all Cohort 2 Renaissance Charters.

***Promise Academy Reading and Math Proficiency***

As seen in Figure 9, the trends in the percent of Promise Academy students scoring advanced and proficient in reading PSSAs differ considerably from those seen for Renaissance Charters. While there is an overall increase in 2010-2011, the first year after turnaround, this progress is reversed in all but one school (Allen Ethel) in the second year after turnaround. However, this Year 2 increase at Allen Ethel was reversed in Year 3, with an 8 percentage point decrease. In two Promise Academies, Clemente and Potter-Thomas, the most recent percentages of students scoring advanced and proficient fell below those of the year before turnaround. Only Dunbar shows a substantial overall gain in reading proficiency since turnaround. *All Promise Academies are currently below the District average.*

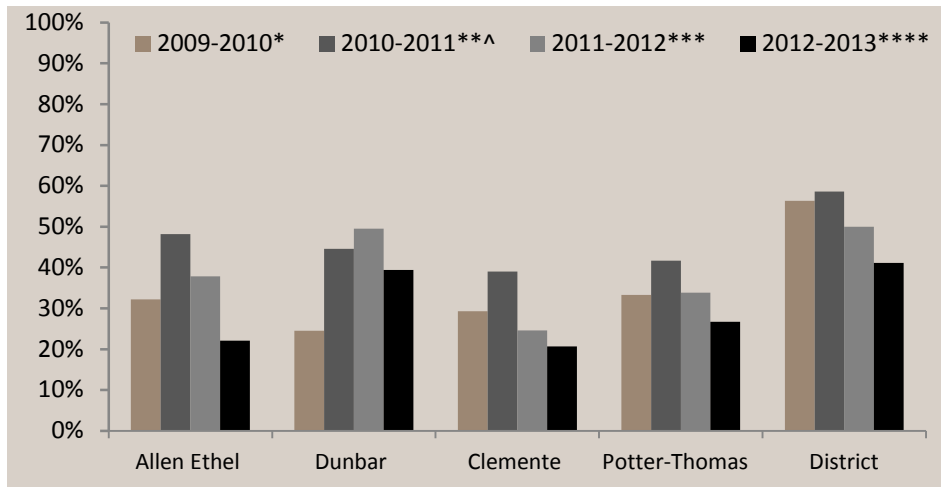
Figure 9: Cohort 1 K-8 Promise Academy Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); \*\*\*\*Third turnaround year (Year 3); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; ^Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations.

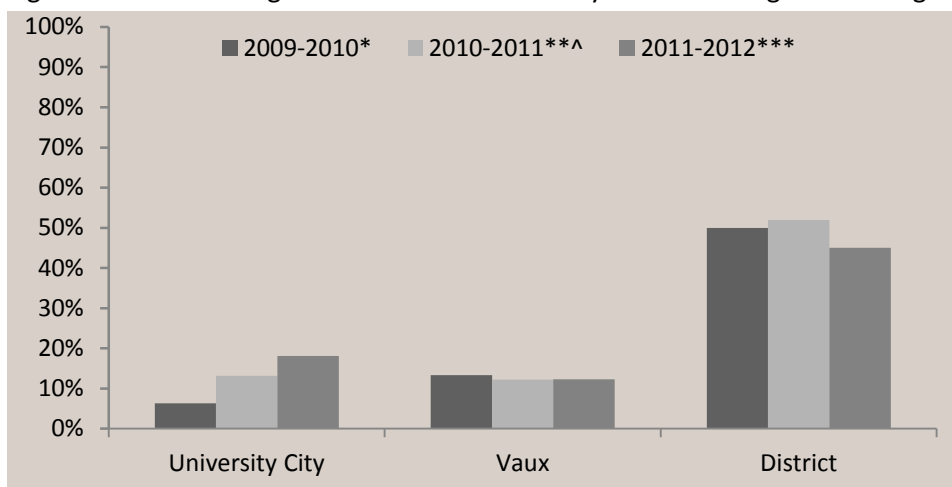
As shown in Figure 10, all Promise Academies show a first year increase in the percentage of students scoring advanced and proficient in math, which is in line with the findings published in RFA’s 2012 report. However, just as with reading scores, these increases are reversed in year two at all but one school, Dunbar; showing a 15 percentage point increase over the past three years. Clemente, Potter-Thomas, and Allen Ethel’s Year 3 percentages declined below the pre-turnaround levels. As with reading, all Promise Academies are currently below the District average.

Figure 10: Cohort 1 K-8 Promise Academy Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); \*\*\*\*Third turnaround year (Year 3); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; ^ Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations.

Figure 11: Cohort 1 High School Promise Academy Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; ^Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations; <sup>&</sup> In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students.

As seen above in Figure 11, University City High School showed steady improvement in the percent of students scoring advanced and proficient in reading since Promise Academy conversion. University City defied the District trend by almost tripling its percentage from 2009-2010 (6.3 percent) to 2011-2012 (18.1 percent). Conversely, Vaux High saw little to no change in its reading percentages. It is important to note that both of the Cohort 1 Promise Academies were closed in 2012-2013, which was their third turnaround year.

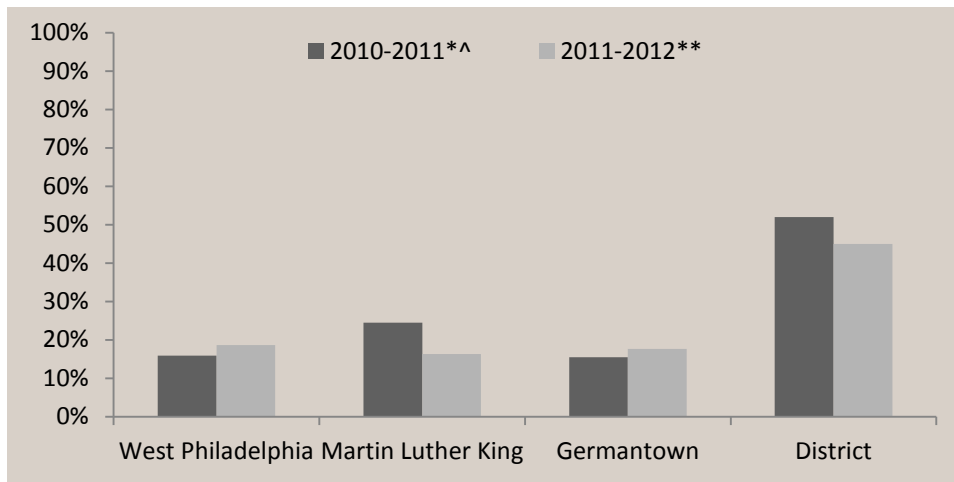
Figure 12: Cohort 1 Promise Academy High Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>



\* Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; <sup>^</sup>Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations; <sup>&</sup>In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students.

Figure 12 shows that while University City High School showed moderate increases (6 percentage points) in math proficiency after the first turnaround year, almost no gains were made in Year 2. The trends seen above for Vaux are similar to those found for reading, as there is little to no change across the three years. As noted, both University City and Vaux were closed in 2012-2013.

Figure 13: Cohort 2 Promise Academy High Schools Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>

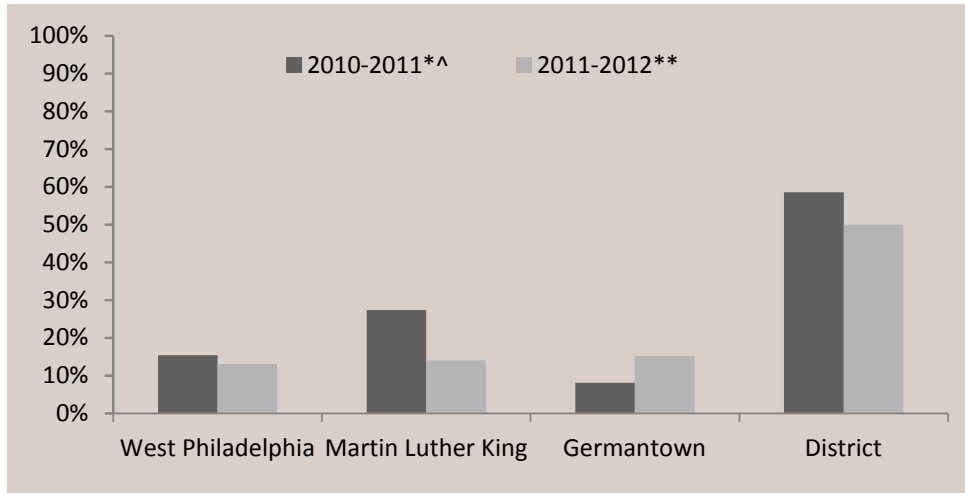


\* Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); \*\*\*Second turnaround year (Year2); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; <sup>^</sup>Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations; <sup>&</sup>In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students.

Figure 13 shows that two of the three Cohort 2 high schools, West Philadelphia and Germantown, showed small gains in the percentage of students testing advanced and proficient in reading in Year 1. Martin Luther King High however, showed an 8.2 percentage point decrease after turnaround. All

Cohort 2 high schools remained well below the District average in both years. In 2012-2013, Germantown was closed.

Figure 14: Cohort 2 Promise Academy High Schools Change in Math Proficiency<sup>#&</sup>



\*Year prior to turnaround; \*\*First turnaround year (Year 1); <sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education; <sup>^</sup>Year associated with PSSA cheating allegations; <sup>&</sup>In 2012-2013 PSSAs were no longer administered to high school students.

The trends for the percentage of students scoring advanced and proficient in math are similar to reading trends for Martin Luther King and Germantown, where there was a decrease and increase in percentages, respectively. For West Philadelphia, there was a slight decrease (-2.4 percentage points) in the percent of students scoring advanced and proficient in math.

Tables 12 and 13 show the yearly change since the first turnaround year of students at each Renaissance school scoring advanced and proficient in reading and math.

Table 12: Change in Students Scoring Advanced and Proficient in Reading by Provider<sup>#</sup>

	Change 09-10 to 10-11	Change 10-11 to 11-12	Change 11-12 to 12-13	Total Change Since Turnaround
<b>ASPIRA</b>				
Stetson <sup>1</sup>	+7.80	+4.40	-4.41	+7.79
Olney High <sup>2</sup>	---	+13.10	NA*	+13.10
<b>American Paradigm</b>				
Memphis St. <sup>3</sup>	---	---	-0.97	-0.97
<b>Mastery</b>				
Harrity <sup>1</sup>	+9.80	+11.30	-5.03	+16.07
Mann <sup>1</sup>	+4.90	+15.30	-6.19	+14.01
Smedley <sup>1</sup>	+14.30	+2.60	+3.14	+20.04
Gratz High <sup>2</sup>	---	+9.30	NA*	+9.30
Clymer <sup>2</sup>	---	+12.90	-0.27	+12.63
Cleveland <sup>3</sup>	---	---	+11.45	+11.45
<b>Mosaica</b>				
Birney <sup>2</sup>	---	+0.80	+7.17	+7.87
<b>String Theory</b>				
Performing Arts Charter at Edmunds <sup>3</sup>	---	---	-0.62	-0.62
<b>Universal</b>				
Bluford <sup>1</sup>	+4.10	+6.10	+4.85	+15.05
Daroff <sup>1</sup>	+7.70	+2.70	-2.43	+7.97
Audenried High <sup>2</sup>	---	-13.60	NA*	-13.60
Vare <sup>2</sup>	---	+3.50	-0.22	+3.28
Creighton <sup>3</sup>	---	---	+2.63	+2.63
<b>Young Scholars</b>				
Frederick Douglass <sup>1</sup>	+4.30	+4.80	-0.27	+8.83
<b>School District of Philadelphia</b>				
Allen Ethel <sup>1</sup>	+2.70	+7.30	-8.13	+1.87
Clemente <sup>1</sup>	+5.00	-6.40	-3.00	-4.40
Dunbar <sup>1</sup>	+17.10	-3.10	+0.7	+14.70
Potter-Thomas <sup>1</sup>	+6.10	-10.60	-1.96	-6.46
University City High <sup>1</sup>	+6.90	+4.90	CLOSED	+12.10
Vaux High <sup>1</sup>	-1.10	+0.10	CLOSED	-1.00
West Philadelphia High <sup>2</sup>	---	+2.80	NA*	+2.80
Martin Luther King High <sup>2</sup>	---	-8.20	NA*	-8.20
Germantown High <sup>2</sup>	---	+2.20	CLOSED	+2.20

<sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education

<sup>1</sup>Cohort 1 – converted 2010-2011

<sup>2</sup>Cohort 2 – converted 2011-2012

<sup>3</sup>Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

\*The PSSA was no longer administered to high school students in 2012-2013

Table 13: Change in Students Scoring Advanced and Proficient in Math by Provider<sup>#</sup>

	Change 09-10 to 10-11	Change 10-11 to 11-12	Change 11-12 to 12-13	Total Change Since Turnaround
<b>ASPIRA</b>				
Stetson <sup>1</sup>	+22.70	+13.50	-11.65	+24.55
Olney High <sup>2</sup>	---	+16.30	NA*	+16.30
<b>American Paradigm</b>				
Memphis St. <sup>3</sup>	---	---	-11.82	-11.82
<b>Mastery</b>				
Harrity <sup>1</sup>	+17.80	+10.30	-8.82	+19.28
Mann <sup>1</sup>	+12.80	+22.00	-4.46	+30.34
Smedley <sup>1</sup>	+16.80	+7.90	-0.93	+23.77
Gratz High <sup>2</sup>	---	+12.20	NA*	+12.20
Clymer <sup>2</sup>	---	+16.70	+2.45	+19.15
Cleveland <sup>3</sup>	---	---	+20.34	+20.34
<b>Mosaica</b>				
Birney <sup>2</sup>	---	+7.30	+6.71	+14.01
<b>String Theory</b>				
Performing Arts Charter at Edmunds <sup>3</sup>	---	---	-1.29	-1.29
<b>Universal</b>				
Bluford <sup>1</sup>	+2.50	+7.60	-4.42	+5.68
Daroff <sup>1</sup>	+13.70	+8.00	-6.31	+15.27
Audenried High <sup>2</sup>	---	-11.50	NA*	-11.50
Vare <sup>2</sup>	---	-6.10	+5.61	-0.49
Creighton <sup>3</sup>	---	---	-5.53	-5.53
<b>Young Scholars</b>				
Frederick Douglass <sup>1</sup>	+14.40	+17.60	-16.73	+15.27
<b>School District of Philadelphia</b>				
Allen Ethel <sup>1</sup>	+16.00	-10.40	-15.71	-10.11
Clemente <sup>1</sup>	+9.70	-14.40	-4.30	-9.00
Dunbar <sup>1</sup>	+20.10	+4.90	-10.08	+14.92
Potter-Thomas <sup>1</sup>	+8.40	-7.90	-7.07	-6.57
University City High <sup>1</sup>	+6.0	+0.50	CLOSED	+6.50
Vaux High <sup>1</sup>	-1.20	+1.30	CLOSED	+0.10
West Philadelphia High <sup>2</sup>	---	-2.40	NA*	-2.40
Martin Luther King High <sup>2</sup>	---	-13.30	NA*	-13.30
Germantown High <sup>2</sup>	---	+7.10	CLOSED	+7.10

<sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education

<sup>1</sup>Cohort 1 – converted 2010-2011

<sup>2</sup>Cohort 2 – converted 2011-2012

<sup>3</sup>Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

\*The PSSA was no longer administered to high school students in 2012-2013



## Findings

### ***Have the Renaissance Initiative schools shown changes in student outcomes appropriate to turnaround schools? If maintained, are the gains sufficient to “turn the schools around” in five years?***

While there were no specific targets set for climate and academic outcomes for the overall Renaissance Initiative, it is generally held that turnaround schools should achieve substantial and rapid increases in both within the first few years. Based on relevant literature, a reasonable range for increasing reading and math proficiency is 4-8 percentage points each year. Improvements in this range then need to be considered in relation to where the schools started to determine if they will improve the school *enough*; lower performing schools would need to make greater gains in order to close the achievement gap than those starting at a more moderate level of achievement. A positive learning environment is expected to precede the changes in academics.

As reported in the 2011 RFA report and the 2012 internal District analysis, Renaissance Initiative K-8 schools were making statistically significant gains (or mitigating declines) over comparison schools in both reading and math during the first two years of the initiative. High schools struggled in the first few years and did not show improvements that were different from other low performing District schools. In the present report, we look beyond these early gains to determine if schools are on track for dramatic improvements within a 5-6 year window. Many Cohort 1 schools have made considerable gains over the life of the turnaround initiative. Some Cohort 2 schools are also on track, but some are floundering, as is the case with Cohort 3 schools (although data for these schools is limited). Figures 15 through 18 depict projections in reading and math proficiency for the schools based on their average increases so far during the life of the turnaround.

As seen in Figures 15a and 15b, all Mastery Charter schools are on an upward trajectory. ASPIRA Stetson is also on track, and Olney high has limited, but positive evidence of change (seen in Figures 16a and b). Changes at The Universal Charter Schools (Figures 17a and b) and Fredrick Douglass (Figure 16a and 16b) were positive in the first two years, but those increases have not been sustained. As such, these schools may fall short of what is needed to achieve dramatic results within 5-6 years. At the same time, reasonable gains have been made in the climate indicators, which suggest a strong, but not yet realized foundation for change.

The Cohort 1 Promise Academies (Figures 18a and b) are not on track to achieve increases in reading and math proficiency that would be sufficient to turn these schools around in a 5-6 year window. They mostly had substantial gains in the first year, and mitigated losses in the second year compared to other low performing District schools. The declines in 2012-13 were more dramatic and resulted in a reversal of their positive trajectories. Strong, positive changes in the climate indicators are not evident at most Promise Academies; these should come ahead of the academic improvements.

Figure 15a: Mastery – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>&</sup>

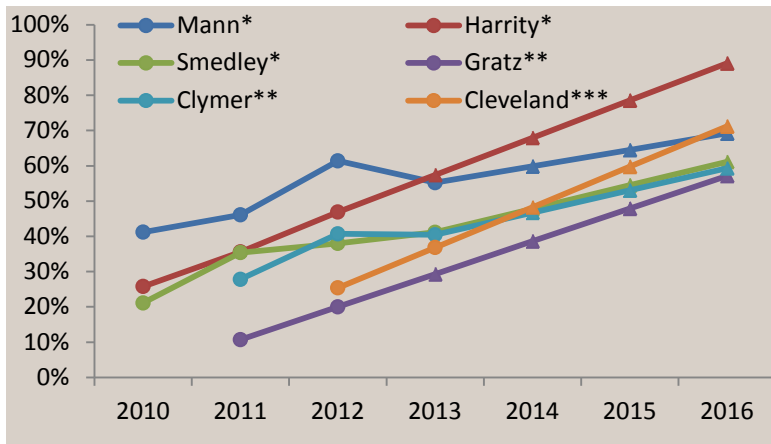
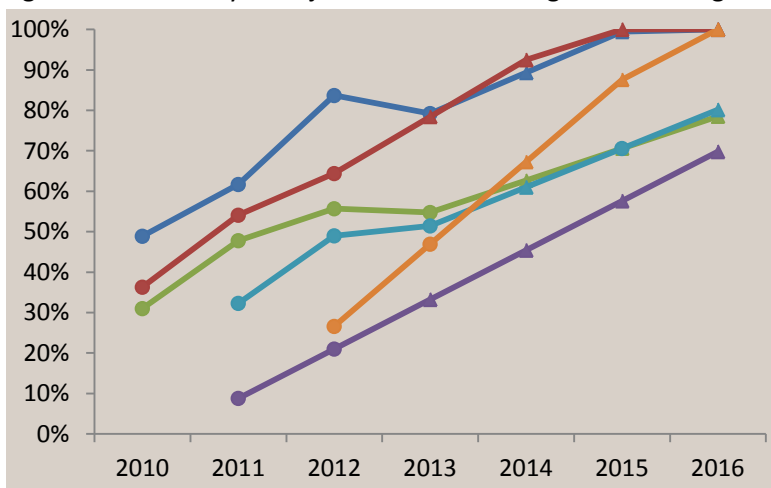


Figure 15b: Mastery – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Math Proficiency<sup>&</sup>



<sup>&</sup>Circles indicate actual percentages; triangles indicate projections; \*Cohort 1– converted 2010-2011; \*\*Cohort 2– converted 2011-2012; \*\*\*Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

Figure 16a: ASPIRA, Young Scholars, Mosaica and String Theory – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>&</sup>

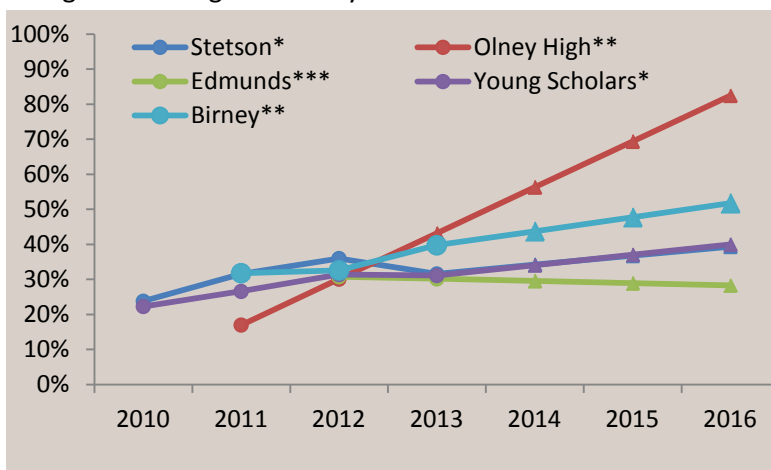
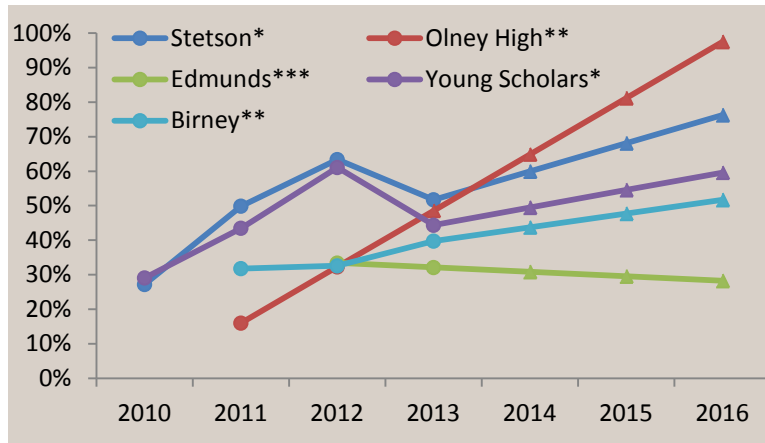


Figure 16b: ASPIRA, Young Scholars, Mosaica and String Theory – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Math Proficiency<sup>&</sup>



<sup>&</sup>Circles indicate actual percentages; triangles indicate projections; \*Cohort 1– converted 2010-2011; \*\*Cohort 2– converted 2011-2012; \*\*\*Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

Figure 17a: Universal – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>&</sup>

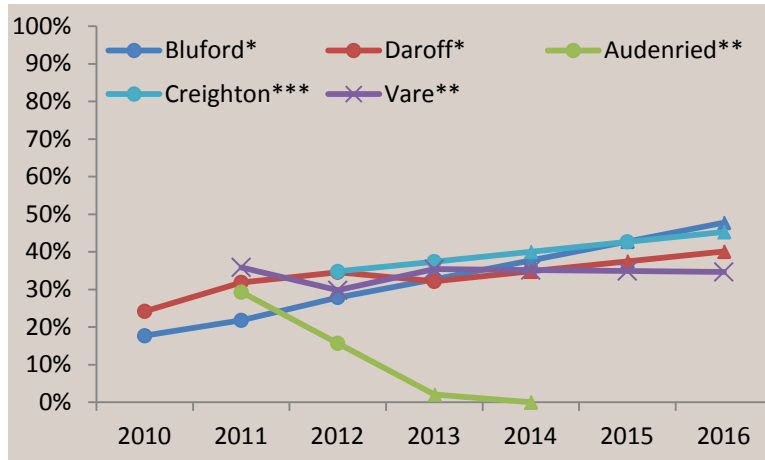
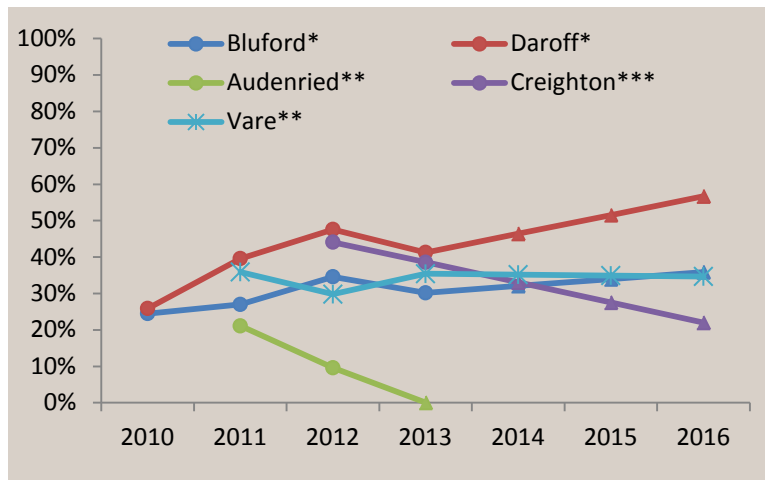
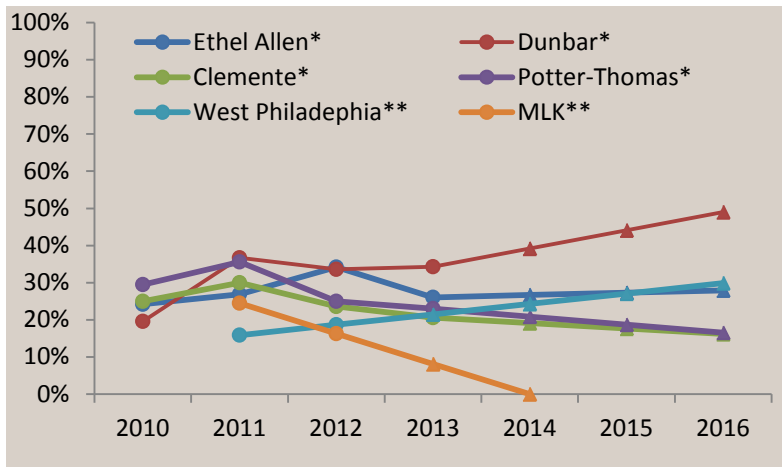


Figure 17b: Universal – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Math Proficiency<sup>&</sup>



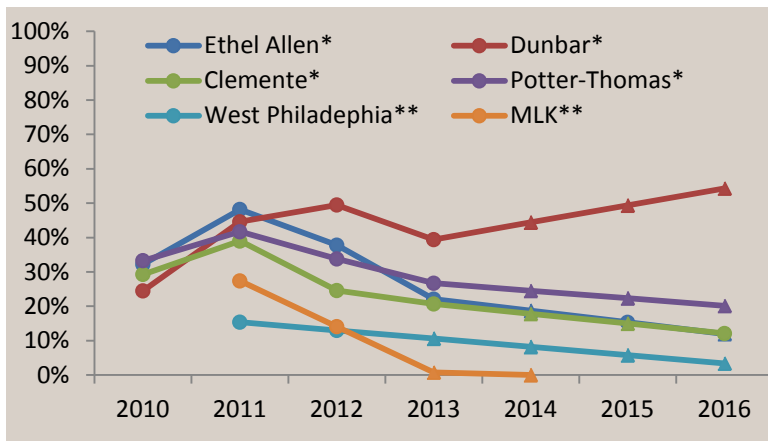
<sup>&</sup>Circles indicate actual percentages; triangles indicate projections; \*Cohort 1– converted 2010-2011; \*\*Cohort 2– converted 2011-2012; \*\*\*Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

Figure 18a: Promise Academies – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Reading Proficiency<sup>&</sup>



<sup>&</sup>Circles indicate actual percentages; triangles indicate projections; \*Cohort 1– converted 2010-2011; \*\*Cohort 2– converted 2011-2012.

Figure 18b: Promise Academies – Projections of Percentage Point Change in Math Proficiency<sup>&</sup>



<sup>&</sup>Circles indicate actual percentages; triangles indicate projections; \*Cohort 1– converted 2010-2011; \*\*Cohort 2– converted 2011-2012.

## Conclusion

The Renaissance Initiative is relatively new. At the same time, the schools were tasked with achieving dramatic improvements in student outcomes in a short period of time. Many of the schools were converted during a time of major financial instability in the District, which was followed by leadership, staffing, and programmatic upheaval. Despite these realities, there is evidence of positive improvements at some Renaissance Initiative schools. The Mastery and ASPIRA schools seem to be on track for achieving substantial improvements in reading and math proficiency. Programmatic and other qualitative data should be collected at these schools from administrators, teachers, students and parents in order to capitalize on the strengths of these programs. Outcomes for the other providers should be scrutinized closely once data is available for the 2013-14 year. In the meantime, the Renaissance Charters not on track should address the causes of the declines in proficiency seen in 2012-13 and re-assess whether or not they will be able to achieve sustained and sufficient increases to turn their schools around within the 5-6 year period. For schools that are headed in the right direction but not on pace to turnaround within this time period, possible modifications to programming may be warranted.

Based on changes at the District in the management of the program and allocation of resources, it is possible that the Promise Academies are suffering more from poor fidelity of implementation than outright failure of the turnaround effort. The Promise Academy model has been altered each year since inception; there should be renewed precision around structure, academics and other programming at these schools. As such, major changes at these schools this year will be imperative in order to re-direct the effort and capitalize on the early gains. It is likely that the charters have benefitted from a clarity-of-purpose that has been lacking at the Promise Academy schools.

Table 16 summarizes the strengths and weaknesses at each school for the portfolio of Renaissance Initiative schools. Those schools and categories shaded in green should be investigated further for best practices and understanding of how turnaround should work in Philadelphia. The pale pink and dark red shading signal areas of concern. It may be too early to assess some components at some schools (hence the light pink), however the dark red indicates areas of major concern that should be addressed explicitly either in the models, if applicable, or in the practices at the specific schools; this should include leadership, staffing, academics, climate and culture, and other programming.

Table 16. Areas of Achievement and Decline by Provider and School<sup>#</sup>

	SERIOUS INCIDENTS ≥5 per 100 Reduction or Overall Under 5 per 100	OFFENDERS (%) Reduction ≥5 percentage pts. or Overall Below 5%	READING Change Profile of Rapid Improvement <sup>&amp;</sup>	READING to Exceed 60% Proficiency by 2015-2016	MATH Change Profile of Rapid Improvement <sup>&amp;</sup>	MATH to Exceed 60% Proficiency by 2015-2016
<b>ASPIRA</b>						
Stetson <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Olney <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>American Paradigm</b>						
Memphis <sup>3</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Mastery</b>						
Harrity <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mann <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smedley <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gratz <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Clymer <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cleveland <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Mosaica</b>						
Birney <sup>2</sup>	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
<b>String Theory</b>						
Edmunds <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
<b>Universal</b>						
Bluford <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Daroff <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Audenried <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Vare <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Creighton <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
<b>Young Scholars</b>						
Douglass <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
<b>School District of Philadelphia</b>						
Ethel Allen <sup>1</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No
Clemente <sup>1</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dunbar <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Potter-Thomas <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
University City <sup>1</sup>	No	No	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>
Vaux <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>
West Phila. <sup>2</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No
King <sup>2</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No
Germantown <sup>2</sup>	No	No	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>	<i>closed</i>

<sup>#</sup>Data from the PA Dept. of Education

<sup>1</sup>Cohort 1 – converted 2010-2011

<sup>2</sup>Cohort 2 – converted 2011-2012

<sup>3</sup>Cohort 3 – converted 2012-2013

<sup>&</sup>Based on prior findings on successful turnarounds, the expectation is that there will be a 4 to 8 percentage point increase in standardized test scores each year following turnaround. Therefore, Cohort 1 schools with a minimum of +12 percentage points, Cohort 2 schools with a minimum of +8 percentage points and Cohort 3 schools with a minimum of +4 percentage points meet the expectation for acceptable progress.

## Appendix A – School Turnaround

### What is School Turnaround?

Borrowed from the business world, the term “turnaround” is based on the concept of changing chronically poor-performing schools into high achieving ones in a very short period of time. Most recently, federal endorsement of this approach has taken the form of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program and the Race to the Top (RTT) initiative. While these federal programs provide some guidance for states and districts, they only issue parameters for definitions, leaving it to state and local agencies to develop their own targets.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is important to look to emerging policies and practices in the field. The following themes have consistently emerged in the national literature on school turnaround efforts:

1. Turnaround reforms are generally defined by at least two qualities: (1) significant improvements in student achievement at chronically low performing schools and (2) academic gains are made over a short period of time (three to five years).<sup>7,8,9,10,11,12,13</sup>
2. There is a lack of strong evidence from studies and/or research that supports a causal link between turnaround strategies and rapid student achievement, which is in part a result of there being no consistent methodology for identifying schools in need of turnaround or schools that have been successfully “turned-around.”<sup>14,15,16,17,18</sup>
3. Therefore, measures of improvement vary across the field, as do definitions of “dramatic gains.” Aladjem et al.’s report for the U.S. Department of Education operationalize dramatic increase in achievement as a 4 to 8 percentage point increase per year in students scoring advanced and proficient on standardized tests. When possible, some studies have used statistical tests to

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<sup>6</sup> U.S Dept of Ed. (2010) Guidance on School Improvement Grants

<sup>7</sup> Aladjem, D., Birman, B., Orland, M., Harr-Robins, J., Heredia, A., Parrish, T. & Ruffini. (2010). *Achieving dramatic school improvement: An exploratory study*. U.S. Dept. of Ed. Washington D.C.

<sup>8</sup> Strunk, K., Marsh, J., Hashim, A., Bush, S. & Weinstein, T. (2012). *The efficacy of the Los Angeles School District Initiative for Student Achievement outcomes: Early evidence from the first year*. University of Southern California.

<sup>9</sup> Meyers, C. (2013). ). School turnaround as national policy in the United States: Considerations from three studies in the Midwest. *Journal of International and Comparative Education* 2(2), 98-111.

<sup>10</sup> Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Greene, J., Maynard, R., & Redding, S. (2008). *Turning around chronically low-performing school: A practice guide* (NCEE #2008-4020). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, US Dept of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides>.

<sup>11</sup> Brownstein, A. (2013). EWA research brief: What studies say about school turnarounds. The National Education Writers Association. Retrieved from <http://www.ewa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=publications>.

<sup>12</sup> Mass Insight Education (2012). *Being bold: An assessment of turnaround initiatives in select school districts and states*. Mass insight Education, the School Turnaround Group. Boston, MA.

<sup>13</sup> However, federal guidelines for the School Improvement Grant define a “turnaround model” as one of four models that can be used for rapidly transforming the lowest performing schools and delineate nine particular elements required of this model (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Strunk et al. (2012).

<sup>15</sup> Meyers (2010).

<sup>16</sup> Herman et al. (2008).

<sup>17</sup> Brownstein (2013).

<sup>18</sup> O’Brian, E. & Dervarics, C. (2013). *Which way up? What research says about school turnaround strategies*. Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association.



determine the significance of academic improvements within the first couple years of the initiative; however, in each of these cases, researchers acknowledge that several factors threaten the validity of such statistically founded conclusions.<sup>19,20,21,22,23</sup>

4. There is no single, replicable school turnaround model that has proven successful; turnaround initiatives must be specific to the schools' and districts' situation and needs.<sup>24,25,26,27,28</sup>
5. Preliminary research shows that turnaround initiatives have better outcomes for elementary schools than secondary or high schools.<sup>29,30,31,32</sup>

Lessons learned from turnaround initiatives in cities adopting a portfolio management model are particularly valuable for several reasons: they represent large urban districts, with similar demographics and challenges to Philadelphia; they share the school choice vision and strive to create schools that cater to different student needs and interests and; they are simultaneously attempting more than one turnaround model. Such efforts produce outcomes from different turnaround approaches within a single city, which lends itself to multiple proof points that can be easily compared for best practices.

### **Case Studies: Turnaround Initiatives in Portfolio Model Large Urban School Districts**

#### ***Chicago***

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) were some of the first to adopt a district-led turnaround initiative utilizing multiple models of reform. Starting in 1997, CPS sought to transform its lowest performing elementary and high schools using one of five approaches: Reconstitution model, School Turnaround Specialist Program (STSP) model, School Closure and Restart model, Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) model, and CPS Office of School Improvement (OSI) model.<sup>33</sup> The defining characteristics of each model are as follows:

1. Reconstruction: All teachers and principals are required to reapply; all staff is replaced; revised academic standards; "probation manager" appointed

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<sup>19</sup> Strunk et al. (2012).

<sup>20</sup> Meyers (2010).

<sup>21</sup> Herman et al. (2008).

<sup>22</sup> Brownstein (2013).

<sup>23</sup> O'Brian, E. & Dervarics, C. (2013).

<sup>24</sup> Strunk et al. (2012).

<sup>25</sup> Meyers (2010).

<sup>26</sup> Herman et al. (2008).

<sup>27</sup> Mass Insight Education (2012).

<sup>28</sup> Brownstein (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Strunk et al. (2012)

<sup>30</sup> O'Brian, E. & Dervarics, C. (2013).

<sup>31</sup> Meyers (2010).

<sup>32</sup> Mass Insight Education (2012).

<sup>33</sup> De la Torre, M., Allensworth, E., Jagesic, S., Sebastian, J. & Salmonowicz. (2013). *Turning around low-performing schools in Chicago*. The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research

2. School Closure and Restart: Schools close for at least one school year; all teachers are laid off or reassigned; schools reopen as charter, contract or performance schools; city wide lottery admission process enacted
3. School Turnaround Specialist Program (STSP): Most principals replaced; principals given intense PD focused on meeting four turnaround goals; additional \$100 per student funding; principal given incentive pay for meeting goals; consulting visits from specialists
4. Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL): All staff and principals are replaced (most trained at AUSL residency program); schools adopt PASSAGE<sup>34</sup> model; additional funds from external grants are provided; building renovations
5. CPS Office of School Improvement: All teachers are replaced; some principals are replaced; phased implementation of new model;<sup>35</sup> additional financial support over five years provided; schools are subject to closure or other turnaround models if they fail to meet expectations<sup>36</sup>

Three of the models CPS, AUSL and School Closure and Restart, were applied to both elementary and high schools. The Reconstruction model was only used with high schools, and the STSP model only with elementary schools. In 2013, the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research published a comprehensive report on CPS' school turnaround initiative, which identifies the successes and failures of the turnaround schools by type and model. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researchers compared students at the various turnaround schools before and after turnaround interventions as well as to students at comparison schools to determine if there were differences in achievement and behavior that could be associated with attending a school undergoing turnaround. The following outlines the major findings from this report, as well as from other smaller analyses of the Chicago turnaround initiative.<sup>37,38</sup>

#### Academic Achievement

- During the first year after turnaround, all Closure and Restart elementary schools saw an increase in reading test scores, and all but one of each STSP, AUSL and OSI schools saw increases in reading. In math, all but one STSP saw increases.
- During the first three years after conversion, elementary students' at turnaround schools reading test scores improved by 0.05 standard deviations more than those of students at comparison schools and math scores improved by 0.06 standard deviations more.
- Despite reducing the achievement gap between students at turnaround schools and the overall district average by about half in reading and two-thirds in math, turnaround schools still remained below the district average after four years.

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<sup>34</sup> A turnaround model comprised of the following: positive school culture, action against adversity, setting goals and getting it done, shared responsibility for achievement, guaranteed and viable curriculum, and engaging and personalized instruction.

<sup>35</sup> Six elements of the model include: school stabilization, school culture and climate, human capital, family and community involvement, community resource development and teaching and learning.

<sup>36</sup> De la Torre et al. (2013).

<sup>37</sup> De la Torre et al. (2013).

<sup>38</sup> Mass Insight Education (2012).

## Enrollment

- Many schools, especially Reconstruction schools, were smaller after turnaround; 27 of the 36 turnaround schools had lower enrollment numbers in the first year after conversion.
- With the Reconstruction, STSP and AUSL models, most schools saw an increase in year-to-year enrollment beginning in the second turnaround year. In contrast, schools utilizing the Closure and Restart model saw lower enrollment (0 – 46.5%). This could be attributed to the fact that they were closed for at least one year, and that upon reopening, a lottery admission process was enacted.
- At two OSI high schools, the dropout rate decreased by an average of 7.6 percent after the first turnaround year.

## Climate

- Attendance at two OSI high schools increased by 16% after the first turnaround year.

## *Los Angeles*

In contrast to Chicago, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) began its turnaround program just a few years ago in 2009. Strunk et al. (2012) highlight that from inception, LAUSD sought to incorporate its commitment to the portfolio model with its commitment to turning around the lowest performing schools.<sup>39</sup> Their reform plan, LAUSD's Public School Choice Initiative (PSCI), included boosting achievement at "focus" schools, while opening newly constructed "relief" schools, which were designed to ease overcrowding. In both cases, the district built in two layers of variation for school design, the provider and the government model. Potential providers included internal and external groups, including teacher, parent and/or school administration groups, non-profits and CMOs. After a comprehensive application process, the LASUD board selected five CMOs and three non-profits as the providers for the first cohort of focus and relief schools. Provider applications were required to specify which of the six existing government models they would enact as part of their school turnaround design: independent charter schools, pilot schools, Expanded Site Based Management Model (ESBMM) schools, affiliated charter schools, network partner schools, and traditional model schools.

## Academic Achievement

- Strunk et al. (2012) found that students in focus students performed worse than comparison students on ELA standardized tests, while students in relief schools scored about 17-18% of a standard deviation higher than their counterparts. This trend holds true for math and science tests as well.
- In 2012 UCLA's National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Students Testing (CRESST) published a study showing that students at Locke High School, a former large under-achieving school, had significant improvement in standardized test scores since turnaround.

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<sup>39</sup> Strunk, et al (2012).

Moreover, the average Locke student scored higher than other LAUSD high school students on the state exam.<sup>40</sup>

- In the 2010-2011 school year, the weighted API score of Locke students was 591, up 80 points since 2006-2007.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2011, two schools transformed under the Green Dot provider showed significant increases in their overall API score, increasing as much as 74 points one year after turnaround.<sup>42</sup>

#### Enrollment

- Green Dot Schools, one of the non-profit providers selected for turnaround, has achieved a 95% retention rate at all of its turnaround schools.<sup>43</sup>

#### Climate

- Strunk et al. include possible reasons for the discrepancy between academic successes of “relief” versus “focus” schools, including the “baggage and history” that comes with old school buildings, which is not present in the new “relief” schools. Additionally, the report notes how new school facilities, like “new labs and state-of-the-art classrooms, and even simply functional and working structures can help to increase student achievement.”<sup>44</sup>
- In year four after turnaround, Cohort 1 students at Green Dot Locke High School had a statistically significant higher attendance rate than comparison students.<sup>45</sup>

#### **Denver**

Unlike the previously discussed turnaround initiatives, Denver took a regional approach. All Denver turnaround schools are broken into two regional “turnaround networks,” the West Denver Network (supported with federal funds) and Denver Summit Schools Network (supported and subsidized by Blueprint Schools Network).<sup>46</sup> Keeping true to the portfolio model, there are various school providers within each network, and the uniting factor lies in five key elements of school turnaround: strong leaders; effective teaching teams; individual attention and time; health, social and emotional support and; safe and welcoming community.<sup>47</sup> The schools within both networks include district run schools, innovation schools (district run with more flexibility/autonomy for staffing and curriculum) and charters.

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<sup>40</sup> Herman, J., Wang, J., Rickles, J., Hsu, V., Leon, S. & Straubhaar, R. (2012). *Evaluation of Green Dot's Locke transformation project: Findings for cohort 1 and 2 students*. UCLA, CRESST, Los Angeles, CA.

<sup>41</sup> Herman et al. (2012).

<sup>42</sup> (<http://www.greendot.org/page.cfm?p=1646>)

<sup>43</sup> (<http://www.greendot.org/page.cfm?p=1646>)

<sup>44</sup> Strunk et al. (2012), p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Herman et al. (2012).

<sup>46</sup> Tomassini, J. (2012, August 27). Denver Tutoring Program Show Gains, Heads to Referendum. *Education Week*. Retrieved from:

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/marketplacek12/2012/08/innovative\\_denver\\_tutoring\\_program\\_shows\\_gains\\_heads\\_to\\_voting\\_booth.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/marketplacek12/2012/08/innovative_denver_tutoring_program_shows_gains_heads_to_voting_booth.html)

<sup>47</sup> Education Resource Strategies (2012). *School turnaround in Denver: Denver public schools case study*. Retrieved from: <http://static.dpsk12.org/gems/turnaround/DenverCase26jun2012.pdf>

### Academic Achievement

- A 2012 Education Week article notes that since 2011, math scores of students in the Denver Summit School Network were up by 8 percentage points amongst 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 14 percentage points amongst 6<sup>th</sup> graders and 14 percentage points amongst 9<sup>th</sup> graders.<sup>48</sup>
- A 2013 article in the Denver Post shows that Denver Public Schools showed scores above 50 (score of 50 indicates a normal year's academic growth) in median growth percentile (MGP) in writing, math and reading standardized tests in 2012. The article goes on to highlight the potential role that turnaround schools may have had in this positive trend.<sup>49</sup>

### Enrollment

- One year after turnaround, all six federally funded turnaround schools showed an increase in enrollment, ranging from two to 32 percentage points.<sup>50</sup>

### Climate

- Many turnaround schools have or are planning to implement longer school days and school years.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Tomassini, J. (2012)

<sup>49</sup> Simpson, K. (2012, August 8) Colorado's first TCAP scores show small gains, writing dip, growth. *The Denver Post*. Retrieved from: [http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci\\_21264364/colorados-first-tcap-scores-show-small-gains-writing?source=googlenews](http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_21264364/colorados-first-tcap-scores-show-small-gains-writing?source=googlenews)

<sup>50</sup> Denver Public Schools (2011). School turnaround in Denver presentation. Retrieved from: <http://static.dpsk12.org/gems/turnaround/USDEpreso12511final.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Education Resource Strategies (2012).