

Chicago Annenberg Challenge

The Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) provided support for networks of three or more Chicago Public Schools who worked together with External Partners. The External Partners provided resources to assist schools with their programs to improve academic achievement. CAC provided grants to more than 200 Chicago public schools who worked together with their external partners in 50 networks throughout Chicago.

Some examples of external partners and the projects they supported in Chicago's public schools include the following.

National-Louis University was the external partner for the "Best Practices Network" in which six public schools engaged skilled, veteran teachers as instructional leaders to train less experienced teachers to employ new methodologies to integrate reading and writing in their schools' curriculum. In another network of schools National-Louis University developed training programs for teachers to implement curriculum to integrate technology and the arts in their classrooms. In addition they provided after-school programs to train students and their parents in computer technology.

The University of Chicago's Center for School Improvement provided training and technical assistance in a network of public schools for providing literacy curriculum as a lever for comprehensive school change in elementary schools.

Chicago Teachers Center of Northeastern Illinois University developed professional development programs for teachers and staff that were shared across three middle schools in Chicago's neighborhoods.

A collaborative of three city-wide school reform organizations -- Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, Chicago ACORN, and the Small Schools Workshop -- joined together to develop parent leaders who worked with Chicago Public Schools to recruit qualified teachers to their communities' understaffed schools. Joint parent leadership training by the three organizations led to a program in which parents and community members of low-income communities return to school to obtain teacher certificates in order to teach in their local schools.

The Erickson Institute, the country's premier early-childhood training institute for early childhood education, trained teachers and staff to develop comprehensive curriculum for early childhood education in a network of Chicago public schools.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra developed arts integration workshops and curriculum training for teachers and students across a set of schools. Their program included student and teacher attendance at the Symphony's learning center in downtown Chicago.

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association, a 30-year old community organization, recruited and developed parents to work in classrooms in its neighborhood schools. The

program led to the creation of “Grow Your Own,” a statewide program in Illinois to recruit and train neighborhood-based parents to become certified teachers in their local schools. In addition, parents trained by this external partner worked with Chicago Public Schools administration to keep their neighborhood schools open into the late evening several days a week, to serve as community learning centers for students and their families.

University of Illinois, Department of Bilingual Education provided professional development programs for teachers to implement dual-language learning curriculum and programs for four schools where students learn all subjects in two languages.

Garfield Park Conservatory worked with schools in its community to restructure their curriculum and school day, and to provide professional development for teachers in the schools in their network.

DePaul University, School of Education reformed the curriculum in a high school and its three feeder schools to develop literacy – reading and writing skills – in all students. As part of the new curriculum and teaching approach, the University developed a computer laboratory where individualized tutoring was provided for students and their parents. They further provided teacher professional development programs to enable teachers use technology in their schools.