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March 14, 2016

Douglas County School District
Board of Education
620 Wilcox St.
Castle Rock, Colorado 80104

Directors of the Douglas County Board of Education;

It is my honor and privilege to submit this charter application on behalf of Renaissance Secondary School. It represents the culmination of a three-year planning process to bring a middle and high school project-based learning option to Douglas County students and families.

Renaissance Secondary School is requesting a twenty-five year charter from the Douglas County Board of Education to provide an innovative and unique educational program to 696 students each year at full build-out. The educational program will combine successful elements from expeditionary learning, project and problem-based learning, and design thinking, and will continue to offer the adventure education program found at Renaissance Elementary.

Indeed, Renaissance Secondary's program and culture will be an extension and expansion of the success of Renaissance Elementary. Many of the individuals who have helped to make Renaissance Elementary a success, including faculty and staff, have contributed to this plan to extend Renaissance to middle and high school.

The Douglas County School District has demonstrated leadership at reinventing public education. Its support of Renaissance Elementary and its expansion shows its commitment to deeper learning and providing real choice to parents and families. Renaissance Secondary's Board of Directors appreciates the District's guidance and support during this planning process and looks forward to partnering with the Douglas County School District for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Ryan Stuart

President, Renaissance Secondary School Board of Directors



CHARTER APPLICATION

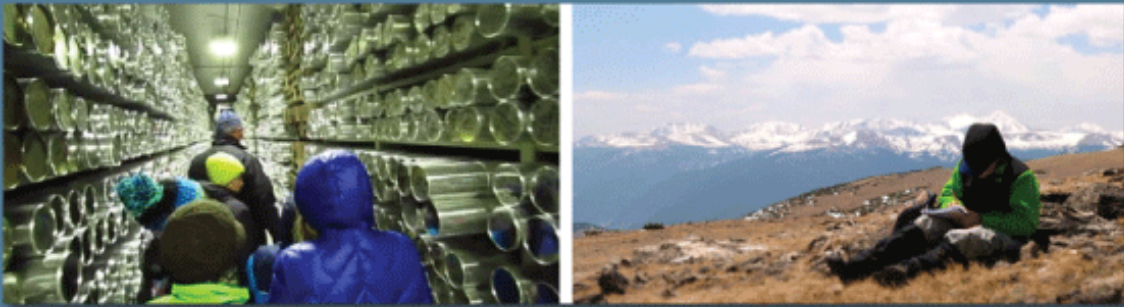




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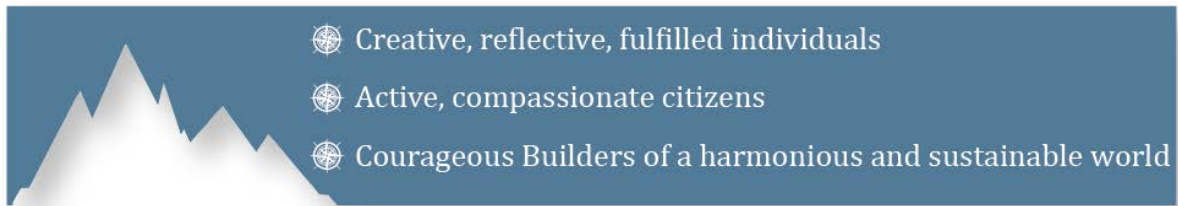


A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Renaissance Secondary School, a Colorado non-profit corporation, seeks a twenty-five year¹ charter from the Douglas County School District (DCSD) to operate a problem based/project-based learning school for grades 7-12.²

Vision

The vision of the Renaissance Secondary School is to empower students to explore, discover, and understand the world around them and the passions within them and to graduate students who are:



Mission

Through authentic, integrated learning experiences, Renaissance will empower students to become modern learners who are critical thinkers and problem solvers, communicators, collaborators, and creative innovators who contribute to the world around them.

A Fundamentally Different School

Douglas County School District (DCSD) is the ideal charter authorizer for Renaissance given its commitment to fundamentally redesign K-12 education for modern learners. Like DCSD, Renaissance recognizes that schools must focus on cultivating in students skills and dispositions like problem solving, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Traditionally, schools have viewed their role as imparting knowledge on students. Current

¹ Renaissance Secondary is seeking a twenty-five year charter in order to obtain more favorable financing terms. More information is provided in [Section N. Facilities](#).

² Renaissance Secondary is prepared to amend its charter application to serve grades PK-6 if the District would benefit from added capacity at those grade levels.

technologies, that give every person instantaneous access to nearly all of the knowledge known to man through a computer held in a palm of one's hand, have made the purpose of traditional school nearly obsolete. Universities and employers care far less about *what* a person knows than they do about *what a person can do* with what they know.³

Renaissance will be a fundamentally different school. Rather than offering discrete classes of specific subjects, students will learn through carefully designed projects that are integrated and authentic and aligned with state and district standards. Instead of being taught in 50 minute increments, students will spend multiple hours over the course of weeks on one project. This type of learning will engage students and will result in students retaining more of what they learn.

Key Academic and Programmatic Features

Renaissance Secondary School will offer an innovative academic program that includes elements of project based and problem based learning, learning, design thinking, service learning, and adventure education. Renaissance will meet all state content standards, but has chosen to adopt Douglas County's World Class Outcomes (WCO) as the guiding standards for the school because they reflect Renaissance's commitment to developing the skills required of students in the 21st century.

The six design principles of Renaissance Secondary School reflect the school's commitment to innovation and guide the faculty and school. The design principles are:

- 1. Strong School Culture**
- 2. Teachers and Students as Designers**
- 3. Integrated, Project/Problem based Approach**
- 4. Personalized Learning**
- 5. Real-world Connection**
- 6. Arts Integration**



Problem-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning are the guiding pedagogies of Renaissance Secondary, approaches that transform teaching from the “sage on the stage” model to a “guide on the side” in which students actively take part in their learning. According to researchers, project-based learning involves the following:

³ Tony Wagner. In 2010, IBM conducted a survey of more than 1,500 Chief Executive Officers from 60 countries and 33 industries. Those CEO's believe that -- more than rigor, discipline, and vision -- successfully navigating an increasingly complex world will require creativity. <https://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/31670.wss>

- students learning knowledge to tackle **realistic problems** as they would be solved in the real world
- increased **student control** over his or her learning
- teachers serving as **coaches and facilitators** of inquiry and reflection
- students often working in **pairs or groups**⁴

Students will work with teachers to develop engaging learning experiences involving complex, real-world projects through which they develop and apply skills and knowledge. The school's students will become active participants in their learning and will be required to publicly demonstrate their learning through presentations and portfolios, introducing an additional, and arguably more authentic, element of accountability for quality work.

Studies comparing learning outcomes for students taught via project-based learning (PBL) versus traditional instruction show that PBL increases long-term retention of content, improves problem-solving and collaboration skills, helps students perform as well as or better than traditional learners in high-stakes tests, and improves students' attitudes toward learning.⁵

Summary of Evidence of Community Need

The planning team has conducted a survey of parents from Douglas County schools. We received 142 survey responses representing 246 students. An overwhelming majority of parents voiced their desire for an expeditionary learning secondary school; and 87% preferred a charter or magnet school. The data indicates that there is a high demand for a project-based/experiential learning school in Douglas County serving middle school and high school students. Currently there are no such project-based learning/expeditionary learning middle or high schools in Douglas County. Renaissance Secondary School will fill that gap.

Moreover, Renaissance Secondary School has already received 753 intents to enroll, 327 of which are for students who would be entering the grades served in 2017. The intent to enroll forms received constitute over 70% of the first year student enrollment. Having just begun our outreach efforts, the planning team believes that its success thus far suggests a high demand in the community for Renaissance Secondary School.

⁴Barron, B., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008) [*Teaching for meaningful learning: A review of research on inquiry-based and cooperative learning \(PDF\)*](#). [Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching for Understanding](#); Thomas, J. W. (2000) [A review of research on project-based learning](#)

⁵ Strobel, J., & van Barneveld, A. (2009) [When is PBL more effective? A meta-synthesis of meta-analyses comparing PBL to conventional classrooms](#); Walker, A. & Leary, H. (2009) [A problem-based learning meta analysis: Differences across problem types, implementation types, disciplines, and assessment levels](#), *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, 3(1): 12-43. For a review of all of the research relied upon by Renaissance Secondary School, see the annotated bibliography in [Appendix A-1](#).

Overview of Student Body to be Served

Renaissance Secondary School, at full capacity, will serve 696 students in Douglas County in grades 7-12. The planning team anticipates that the majority of students will come from the Castle Rock planning area. Many of those students will likely matriculate from Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, a K-6 magnet school providing an academic program similar to Renaissance Secondary.

The school will open in Fall 2017 with 464 students in grades 7-10. Each year thereafter the school will expand one grade until it serves 696 students in grades 7-12.

GRADE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
7	116	116	116	116	116
8	116	116	116	116	116
9	116	116	116	116	116
10	116	116	116	116	116
11		116	116	116	116
12			116	116	116
Total # Students	464	580	696	696	696

Summary of the Governance and Management Structure

Renaissance Education is governed by a board of seven directors.

Upon approval of the charter application by DCSD, the Directors of Renaissance Education will transition into the charter board. The charter board will have between five and nine members in staggered three-year terms. For consistency, it is critical that the initial charter board be comprised of members of the planning team. However, to assure sustainability, the charter board will need to allow for new board members to participate and transition into governance.

Renaissance Secondary will be led by a principal who is selected based on his or her experience as a leader in a school with an academic program similar to Renaissance. The principal will serve as the chief executive and educational officer of the school and will report to the charter board. The principal will be tasked with carrying out the mission and vision of Renaissance Secondary.

A Unique School for Douglas County

Renaissance will be a fundamentally different school. Rather than offering discrete classes of specific subjects, students will learn through carefully designed projects that are integrated and authentic and aligned with state and district standards.

Renaissance will be the only middle and high school in Douglas County that offers a project-based learning program to all of its students.



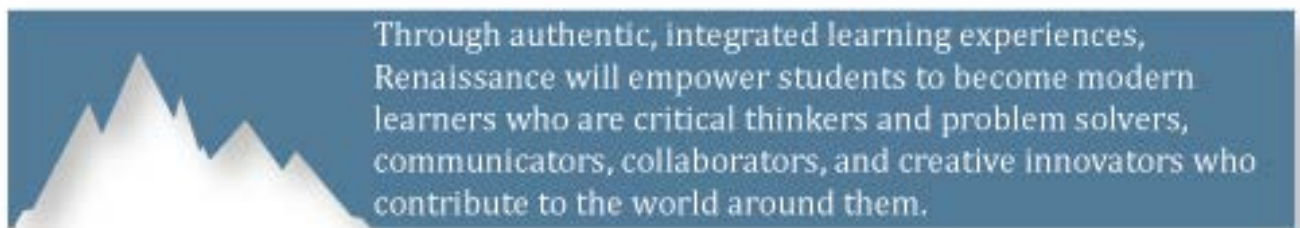
B. MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Vision

The vision of the Renaissance Secondary School is to empower students to explore, discover, and understand the world around them and the passions within them and to graduate students who are:

- creative, reflective, fulfilled individuals;
- active, compassionate citizens; and
- courageous builders of a harmonious and sustainable world.

Mission



Development of the Vision and Mission Statements

The school's vision statement was developed by the staff at Renaissance Elementary Magnet School. It was adopted by the board of Renaissance Education on September 28, 2015 as the purpose of Renaissance Secondary is to continue and expand the educational program that is currently offered at the elementary level.

The mission statement was crafted by the Board of Renaissance Education after a deliberative and collaborative process.

The statements are based upon scores of research that discuss the skills and dispositions that are necessary for success in the 21st century, including creativity, compassion, courage, collaboration, communication, and problem solving.⁶ The research is discussed in greater detail in [Section E: Educational Program](#).

⁶ National Education Association. [Preparing 21st Century Students for a Global Society](#).

Vision and Mission Guides the School

The vision and mission statements are the guiding philosophy of Renaissance Secondary. The Board of Directors is committed to achieving the ideals set forth in the statements, and will rely on these statements to guide their governance.

The school's goals and objectives, along with the educational program, are aligned with the vision and mission statements and designed to provide measurable outcomes of the school embodying its vision and mission statements.

Renaissance Secondary intends to display the vision and mission statements prominently throughout the school, including on printed material, on the website, and on handbooks for students, employees, and the board of directors.





C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PUPIL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Renaissance planning team understands the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) requirements for Accountability and Accreditation⁷ and will meet all accountability and accreditation requirements. The team also understands that recent legislation will change some of these requirements and Renaissance will adapt accordingly. According to recent CDE changes, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is no longer applicable and thus will not be addressed in this application.

Renaissance has formulated a number of “SMART” goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant to the school’s mission, and time-specific. Renaissance has set goals that are academic in nature as well as non-academic goals designed to measure whether the school is accomplishing its vision of graduating students who are creative, reflective, fulfilled, and compassionate individuals contributing to their communities. The goals are aligned with the school’s mission to empower students to become modern learners who are critical thinkers and problem solvers, communicators, collaborators, and creative innovators who contribute to the world around them.

Renaissance plans to achieve the following SMART goals:

Overall School Performance Goals

- Renaissance understands that the Renaissance may receive an Improvement plan rating in the first year of the school’s operation. The planning team hopes that the DCSD will elevate the school to a Performance plan rating in the first year of operation. Renaissance will maintain a Performance plan rating in all subsequent years on the CDE’s School Performance Framework.

Academic Goals

Academic Achievement Goals

- In year one, Renaissance will receive at minimum a “meets” rating for Academic Achievement on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency, or strong command, levels at or above 62.5% in reading, writing, and math, as measured by Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and

⁷ Colorado Department of Education. September 2015. District Accountability Handbook. https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district_accountability_handbook2015

Careers (PARCC) and in the areas of science, and social studies as measured by Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS). (Based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.⁸)

- By year three, Renaissance Secondary will receive an “exceeds” rating for Academic Achievement on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency, or strong command, levels at or above 87.5% in reading, writing, math, as measured by PARCC and in the areas of science, and social studies as measured by CMAS (based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.)

Academic Growth Goals

- In year one, Renaissance Secondary will receive at a minimum a “meets” rating for Academic Growth on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency, or strong command, levels at or above the 60th percentile in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.
- By year three, Renaissance Secondary will receive an “exceeds” rating for Academic Growth on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency or strong command levels at or above the 66th percentile in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.
- Students who are not proficient or have a strong command will have growth higher than the state average (above the 50th percentile); students who are proficient will meet their growth percentiles to “keep up” or “move up” as measured by the Colorado Growth Model.

Academic Growth Gaps

- In year one, Renaissance Secondary School will receive a “meets” rating or above for Academic Growth on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency, or strong command, levels for students in the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SPED), and ethnic subgroups at or above the 45th percentile in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.
- By year three, Renaissance Secondary School will receive an “exceeds” rating for Academic Growth on the CDE School Performance Framework by having student proficiency, or strong command, levels for students in the FRI, ELL, SPED and ethnic

⁸ http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/spfdpf_technicalwriteup_072814

subgroups at or above the 60th percentile in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science based on CDE cut-points for performance indicators.

Renaissance's Growth and Achievement Goals are in line with the performance of its target population as referenced below:

Growth and Achievement Ratings from Target Community

2014 Academic Achievement Ratings:

Castle Rock Middle School--Meets (75%)
Castle View High School --Meets (66.7%)
Cresthill Middle School--Meets (75%)
Mesa Middle School--Meets (75%)
Rock Canyon High School--Exceeds (100%)
DC Montessori Charter K-8 --Exceeds (91.7%)

2014 Academic Growth Ratings:

Castle Rock Middle School -- Approaching (60.7%)
Castle View High School--Approaching (42.9%)
Cresthill Middle School-- Meets (67.9%)
Mesa Middle School--Approaching (57.1%)
Rock Canyon High School--Meets (66.7%)
DC Montessori Charter K-8--Meets (70.8%)

Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness Goals

- Beginning in 2020, with the first graduating class, all Renaissance Secondary students will meet or exceed the minimum credit requirements for admission to Colorado institutions of higher education.
- Beginning in 2021, when Renaissance Secondary's first classes of freshman are eligible for graduation, 95% of students having entered Renaissance in ninth grade will graduate.
- Beginning in 2019, when the first class is required to take the SAT, the school's average SAT score will meet or exceed the average SAT score for Douglas County Schools.

- Within one year of graduation, 95% of Renaissance Secondary graduates will be either enrolled in a post secondary academic program or employed full time in the field of their choice.

Other Goals Aligned with Renaissance's Mission and Vision

The planning team recognizes that not all of the school's goals are academic in the traditional sense. The school's vision is to graduate students who are creative, reflective, fulfilled, active, compassionate, and courageous, which are qualities difficult to measure by traditional means. Therefore, Renaissance Secondary will form an alumni committee made up of parents and students charged with data collection and analysis via survey. See [Appendix C-1](#) for a sample draft survey.

- Within five years of graduation, 70% of Renaissance Secondary alumni will be creative, reflective, fulfilled individuals, as measured by ratings of 4s or 5s on the alumni survey.
- Within ten years of graduation, 90% of Renaissance Secondary alumni will be creative, reflective, fulfilled individuals, as measured by ratings of 4s or 5s on the alumni survey.
- Within five years of graduation, 70% of Renaissance Secondary alumni will be active, compassionate citizens, as measured by evidence of community service/donation or careers in service as indicated by the alumni survey. Alumni will be rated as active, compassionate citizens if they list/mark at least one activity in this category.
- Within ten years of graduation, 90% of Renaissance Secondary alumni will be active, compassionate citizens and/or builders of a harmonious and sustainable world by evidence of community service/donation or careers in service as indicated by the alumni survey. Alumni will be rated as active, compassionate citizens/builders of a harmonious and sustainable world if they list/mark at least one activity in this category.
- Beginning in 2020, upon the graduation of the first class, 95% of Renaissance Secondary graduates will demonstrate the 21st century skills of collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication as measured by Presentations of Learning (POLs), project rubrics, portfolios, public exhibitions of work, and the senior Capstone Project.

For a detailed discussion of how Renaissance will accomplish these goals, see [Section E: Education Program](#).

These goals provide alignment with Renaissance’s mission, vision, and design principles by emphasizing creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration, reflection, and fulfillment in meaningful, teacher and student-designed projects.

Non-Academic Goals

Attendance and Enrollment

- By the end of year one, Renaissance will have average daily attendance of 90% or greater.
- Starting in year two, Renaissance will re-enroll at least 85% of the student population year-to-year.

Student and Parent Satisfaction

- By the end of year three, 85% or more of students and parents will agree that Renaissance is providing an innovative academic program that prepares students to be modern learners who demonstrate the 4Cs of creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.
- By the end of year one, 80% of parents/guardians will attend student-led conferences.

Finance and Operation Goals

- Beginning in year one, Renaissance will implement sound fiscal policies and controls that lead to a balanced budget and will manage operations and finance in compliance with best practice and legal requirements.
- Beginning in year one, Renaissance will have an annual external audit within three months of the close of each fiscal year. The audit will be unqualified with no significant financial concerns.
- Beginning in year one, Renaissance will meet all authorizer-reporting deadlines.
- Beginning in year one, Renaissance will comply with all requirements of the Public School Finance Transparency Act (HB 10-1036) by posting accurate budgetary and financial documents on the school’s website in a timely manner.

- Beginning in year one, Renaissance will be TABOR compliant.
- Beginning in year one, Renaissance’s core functions will be fully supported by per pupil operating revenue (“PPR”) and any mil levy override funds provided by DCSD by the end of the second year of operation.

Teachers (retention and highly qualified designation)

- Beginning in year one, one hundred percent (100%) of Renaissance teachers will possess the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) “Highly Qualified” designation or will be eligible to become highly qualified within two years of employment.
- Beginning at the end of year one, 90% of teachers that have been invited to return shall be retained each year.

Performance Management Plan

The school’s Performance Management Plan is discussed at length in [Section F: Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance](#). The Performance Management Plan details how Renaissance will use progress on the above goals to drive adjustments to the program.

Pupil Performance Standards

Because PARCC and CMAS offer an incomplete measure of student achievement and growth, Renaissance will utilize other formal and informal assessments to help determine student achievement and growth in alignment with the school’s pupil performance standards.

Math Standards

- Renaissance students will have at least an average achievement in math based on informal and formal assessments.
- Renaissance students will have at least average growth in math as compared to District averages.

Students will increase on the math strand of the PARCC tests and will show a growth rate of 10% or higher based on the Colorado Growth Model starting year two (2017-2018 school year).

Literacy Standards

- Renaissance students will have at least average achievement in literacy based on informal and formal assessments.
- Renaissance students will have at least average growth in literacy as compared to District averages

Science Standards

- Through the implementation of an integrated project and problem based curriculum, students will maintain above-average achievement in science from the CMAS test as compared to other DCSD schools.

Social Studies Standards

- Through the implementation of an integrated project and problem based curriculum, students will maintain above-average achievement in social studies from the CMAS test as compared to other DCSD schools.

Writing Standards

- 90% of students will meet or exceed their personal point growth target on writing goals as defined through internal assessments from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

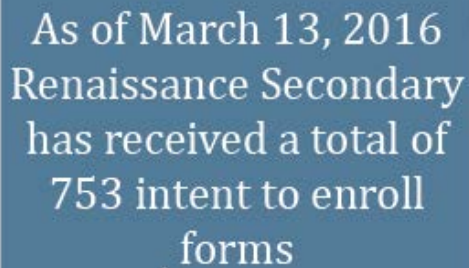
Unified Improvement Plan

The Education Accountability Act of 2009 requires each Colorado school to create an annual improvement plan. Renaissance will have a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) based on the template provided by the CDE.



D. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

Renaissance is fortunate to have received broad and deep community support. As of March 13, 2016, Renaissance has received a total of 753 intent to enroll forms, with 327 forms for students intending to enroll when the school opens in 2017. The school has also received 13 letters of support from community members, local businesses, and non-profit organizations. The letters are included in [Appendix D-1](#).



As of March 13, 2016
Renaissance Secondary
has received a total of
753 intent to enroll
forms

Support from Educational Organizations

The planning team has relied on resources from the following organizations in developing its application:

- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado League of Charter Schools
- DCS Montessori
- Renaissance Elementary Magnet School
- High Tech High
- Design 39
- Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning
- EDUCO
- Compass Montessori Charter School

Renaissance has utilized resources from the CDE Schools of Choice Unit. Board members have completed online training modules and other training webinars offered by CDE. The planning team has aligned its academic program to meet the Colorado Academic Standards and the team used the resources available from CDE to aid in that process. Upon charter approval, Renaissance will also apply for the Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) Start-Up Grant administered by CDE and will utilize the assistance offered by CDE's technical assistance program that is a part of the grant process.

The Colorado League of Charter Schools has also been instrumental in the development of the charter application. Renaissance has closely followed the League's Quality Standards for Developing Charter Schools.⁹ Board members have participated in various trainings offered by the League. Renaissance also has received five planning grants from the League of Charter Schools that have assisted in the development of the school. The \$12,500 in grants Renaissance has received from the League has allowed Renaissance to hire an attorney, a financial consultant, and academic consultants to review and provide constructive feedback for many components of the charter plan, including governance, budget, and the educational program. The grant money has also helped with community outreach. Finally, the League of Charter Schools conducted a rigorous two-stage review of the charter application prior to its submission to the DCSD for approval. All of the feedback has been incorporated into this final application.

Renaissance worked closely with leaders and teachers at Renaissance Elementary Magnet School in Douglas County to ensure consistency with and fidelity to the academic program at the elementary school. Teachers at Renaissance assisted in the development of some of the example Learning Expeditions contained in [Section E](#). Leaders at Renaissance Elementary also assisted with the development of the Renaissance Secondary's budget.

The school's budget was also developed with assistance from the leadership at DCS Montessori, a DCSD charter school that serves a similar population of students and has similar resource requirements.

The planning team conducted site visits at the Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning in Denver, Compass Montessori in Golden, the Watershed School in Boulder, High Tech High in San Diego, Vista Innovation and Design Academy (VIDA) in San Diego, and Design 39 in San Diego. Members of the planning team met with leaders and students at many of these schools and incorporated aspects of these schools into the school design of Renaissance. See [Section E: Educational Program](#) and [Section N: Facilities](#) for specific aspects of each of these schools incorporated into Renaissance.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Renaissance looks forward to working with the DCSD Choice Programming Office to explore partnerships that will add value to both Renaissance and the District.

Community Partnerships

In addition to educational organizations, other community groups have shown their support for Renaissance Secondary. These include:

⁹ http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/coloradoleague.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/files-nsd/quality_standards_for_develo.pdf

- EDUCO
- Camp Elim
- Storm Soccer
- Phillip S. Miller Library
- Keystone Science School
- Castle Rock Care Center
- Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department
- Castle Rock Smiles
- Douglas County Task Force
- Rocky Mountain Self Defense

Partnerships will assist the educational program in a number of ways. The school will rely on partnerships with adventure education organizations to develop its adventure education program. The X-Blocks, which allow students to explore different academic, artistic, and athletic endeavors, will rely on partnerships with outside organizations to teach or provide resources. Projects involving service learning with require strong partnerships with local non-profits, such as the relationship Renaissance Elementary has developed with Castle Rock Care Center. Finally, to develop Real-World Connections, one of the six Renaissance Design Principles, the school will need to develop relationships with experts in the field to assist with Learning Expeditions.



Renaissance has established a Community Partnerships committee to develop partnerships with local organizations. The committee has already received informal commitments from the following organizations to work with Renaissance or Renaissance students:

Adventure Education

- EDUCO
- Camp Elim
- Keystone Science School

X-Blocks

- Storm Soccer

Service Learning

- Douglas County Task Force

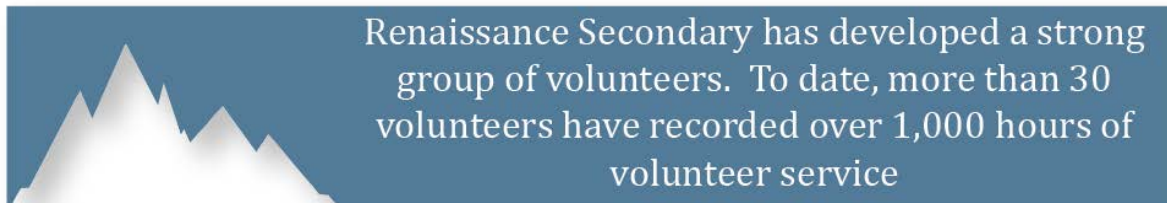
- Castle Rock Care Center

Experts in the Field

- Rocky Mountain Ice Core Lab
- Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department

Upon approval of the charter application, Renaissance will move to secure more formal partnerships with those and other community organizations.

Community Outreach



Renaissance has developed a strong group of volunteers that has begun community outreach activities throughout Douglas County. To date, more than 30 volunteers have recorded over 1000 hours of volunteer service to help develop Renaissance. Volunteers serve on various committees, including marketing, community partnerships, facility, and educational programming.

Renaissance has created a website, www.RenaissanceSecondary.org, which provides information to the community and prospective parents and students about the school, a form to express intent to enroll, and information about how to further support the school. Renaissance also has a Facebook page, a Twitter account, and has developed a strong social media campaign that has assisted the school in generating interest throughout Douglas County.

Renaissance hosted multiple community meetings, providing information about the school to prospective students and parents. Renaissance also sponsored a community screening of the film *Most Likely to Succeed* about the need for project-based learning in our schools.

Renaissance volunteers have provided information to the community at the Miller Activity Complex, the Castle Rock Starlighting, the Turkey ROCK Trot, the DCSD Choice Fair, and libraries and coffee shops throughout Douglas County.

Renaissance has also posted flyers in the community in Spanish to ensure outreach to communities normally not reached by Douglas County charter schools. [Appendix K-1](#).

Upon charter approval, Renaissance will continue to use a variety of outreach methods to increase awareness and provide information to prospective families.

Target Student Population

Renaissance is expected to serve students in the Castle Rock area, but also students throughout Douglas County, including Parker, Highlands Ranch, Franktown, Larkspur, Lone Tree, and Roxborough. The school has received intent to enroll forms for students also residing in Jefferson and Arapahoe Counties.

It is anticipated that students at Renaissance will match the demographics of the community it will serve. The broad outreach efforts that the planning team has conducted and plans to continue after charter approval will ensure that information about and access to enroll at Renaissance will reach all families in Douglas County, regardless of socioeconomic factors. The table below shows the socio-economic profile of Douglas County,¹⁰ and the expected profile of Renaissance Secondary.

Racial/Ethnic Composition	2.2% African American 3.9% Asian 77.1% Caucasian 12.7% Latino 4.1% Native American/Other
Socio-economic Status	10.6% qualifying for free or reduced price lunch
English Language Learners	2.9% qualifying for ELL services
Special Education Services	10.5% receiving special education services

Renaissance recognizes that the fees charged to students are higher than most neighborhood schools. While the fees are necessary to support the unique programming at Renaissance, the planning team does not want any student or family to be unable to attend the school due to their ability to pay. Therefore, Renaissance has budgeted to provide full and partial scholarships to students so that everyone may participate in all aspects of the Renaissance experience, including the Adventure Education program.

¹⁰ Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/labor-management-collaboration/conference/douglas-county-school-district>

Intent to Enroll Statistics

Renaissance received intent to enroll forms from 327 students in the grades that will be offered in Year 1. A copy of the online Intent to Enroll form can be found in [Appendix D-2](#). For individuals without access to the online form, physical forms are available at the community informational events. The following chart shows the intent to enroll forms received, by grade level.

Grade	Expected Enrollment	Forms received
7	116	128
8	116	82
9	116	82
10	116	36
Total	464	327

The students who are included in the school's intent to enroll numbers will matriculate mostly from Renaissance Elementary, however, Renaissance Secondary has received forms from students throughout the Castle Rock area and beyond, as shown below:

School	7	8	9	10	Total
Academy Charter	2	4	3		9
Accelerated Schools			1		1
American Academy	1	3		1	5
Arma Dei Academy	1				1
Aspen View Academy	7	8	4	3	22
Aurora Hills Middle			1		1
Castle Rock Elementary	2	1			3

Castle Rock Middle School			22	8	30
Castle View High School		1	1		2
Cherry Hills Christian		1			1
Cherry Valley		1			1
Cimarron Middle		1	1	2	4
Classical Academy			1		1
Clear Sky Elementary	3				3
Colorado Online Virtual		1	1		2
Coyote Creek Elementary	1	1			2
DCS Montessori	2	2	11	2	17
Denver Christian				1	1
eDCSD	2	1	1	1	5
Flagstone Elementary		5			5
Hamlin Middle School				1	1
Homeschool	4		4	1	9
Meadow View Elementary	6	2			8
Mesa Middle School		1	11	8	20
Pine Lane Elementary		2			2
Powell Middle School			1		1
Prairie Crossing	1				1
Preston			1		1
Ranch View Middle School			2		2
REMS	73	29			102
Rock Ridge	1				1

Rocky Heights Middle		3	2	1	6
Saddle Ranch		2			2
Sage Canyon Elementary	11	1			12
Sagewood Elementary School		2	3	1	6
Soaring Hawk	2	2			4
STEM High		2	2		4
Trinity Lutheran		2		1	3
Other	1	2	3	3	9
Unknown	1		4	2	7
Total	128	82	81	36	327

As is evident from the intent to enroll numbers, Renaissance has received significant interest in the school. Although the school has not received intent to enroll forms sufficient to fill the 464 available first year spots, the planning team is confident that once the charter is approved and a location is chosen, many more parents will submit intent to enroll forms for the school. The planning team has observed a similar trend for other charter schools approved by the District, including STEM and World Compass Academy.

The Planning Team

The planning team for Renaissance is comprised of a diverse group of parents, educators, and community members that each brings expertise and knowledge of the community to the development of the school.

The team comprised a steering committee that provided advice and assistance to the board of Renaissance Education. Members included:

Deborah Lemmer, Principal Renaissance Elementary Magnet School
Debbie Rabideau, Professional Learning Specialist Renaissance Elementary Magnet School
Karl Fisch, Director of Technology Arapahoe High School
Lisa Johnson, Sixth Grade Teacher Renaissance Elementary Magnet School
Kenny Harris, Sixth Grade Teacher Renaissance Elementary Magnet School
Jill Fisch, First Grade Teacher Renaissance Elementary Magnet School

Jennifer Sheets, Middle School Technology Teacher Mesa Middle School
Forrest Sheets, Middle School Teacher Castle Rock Middle School
Stacy Wagner
Allison Armour
Adam Armour
Michelle Cohen, realtor
Krista Zizzo, President of Renaissance Education Alliance
Diane Simmons, social media designer
Gretchen Muehlnickel, nutritionist



E. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

As I see it, the aims of education are to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens.

- Sir Ken Robinson from *Creative Schools*

Educational Philosophy

Renaissance's educational philosophy is best articulated through its design principles ([Appendix E-1](#)), which are the overarching principles that will guide instruction, assessment, and culture at the school. The design principles are derived from research-based models and best practices from expeditionary learning, project based learning, and design thinking. The Design Principles of Renaissance Secondary will guide and govern the leadership, faculty and board of the school in their efforts to carry out the mission and vision of the school.

There will be an emphasis on a strong school culture, aided by the small school size, culture of crew, and an adventure education program. The planning team understands that building positive relationships is an important construct of a school. Strong relationships at Renaissance Secondary will be built through embedded character education and expectations, service, and challenge.

Renaissance Secondary's curriculum will be standards-based and passion-driven. Teachers and students will work together to design learning experiences in alignment with state content standards and the DCSD WCO, while considering student interests and passions whenever possible. Learning experiences will be authentic, problem based, integrated across disciplines, and personalized such that students may drive their own learning through the pursuit of passions and interests. There will be a focus on the 21st century skills of innovation, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication with an emphasis on students being resilient and persistent. Thus, teaching and learning at Renaissance Secondary will be personalized, self-directed, and connected to the real world.

Arts (performing and visual) are also an important aspect of Renaissance's program and will be integrated in relevant ways throughout learning experiences. Arts will serve as a

vehicle that gives form to how students view themselves and the world around them, as well as help them build understanding of other cultures, viewpoints, and values.

Renaissance Secondary Design Principles

❖ Strong School Culture

- The school will have strong character education embedded into the culture of the school, including an emphasis on service learning appropriate to students' development and grade level, developing students as principled, caring young people who take action as a consequence of their learning. The school's motto, "We are crew, not passengers" embodies the ethos that each student is expected to actively participate in his/her learning and to help others in their pursuits.
- An adventure education program will be in place in which students are challenged physically and mentally, and are pushed outside of their comfort zones. This will assist with a culture of teamwork, perseverance, and cooperation.

❖ Teachers and Students as Designers

- Teachers and students are program and curriculum designers. Students work with teachers in interdisciplinary teams to design relevant learning experiences. Teachers and students participate in critical decisions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment. Teachers are involved in decisions regarding professional development, hiring, and other significant areas of the school.
- The schedule supports team teaching and teachers and students have ample planning time to devise relevant integrated projects and authentic assessments by which all students demonstrate their learning and progress.
- Teachers and students will be offered opportunities to develop in their role as designers.

❖ Integrated, Project/Problem based Approach

- **Authentic, Relevant and Integrated curriculum:** developing critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills to solve complex problems.
- **Innovation and Creativity.** Students use a creative process to develop ideas, products and projects. Innovative thinking allows students to combine multiple known concepts to create something new or solve a problem.
- **Critical thinking and problem solving:** Students think critically, analytically, and creatively. They know how to find, evaluate, and synthesize information. They can design their own solutions to complex, relevant problems.

- **Collaboration:** Students work productively in groups. They communicate and understand multiple points of view and they know how to cooperate to achieve a shared goal.
- **Effective Communication:** Students communicate effectively. They structure information in meaningful ways, listen, act on and give feedback, and construct messages for specific audiences.
- **Assessments:** Performance assessments and portfolios, exhibitions of student work. Authentic, real-world assessments.
- **Growth Mindset:** Students develop a growth mindset that enables them to have a strong belief in their abilities. They believe their success to be the result of hard work. They overcome obstacles with persistence and resiliency. They learn to see setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth. They also learn from and support each other. Their work is relevant to the real world.

❖ **Personalized Learning**

- **Self-directed Learning:** Students can direct their own learning. They set goals, monitor their own progress, and reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. Self-directed learning is facilitated through:
 - Small learning community
 - Student projects that pursue interests and passions
 - Advisory crews

❖ **Real-world Connection**

- Internships, fieldwork, and other community-based learning
- Empathy drives and inspires the defining of problems and designing of solutions in the workplace or community
- Students develop meaningful relationships with adults in different disciplines
- Exploration of interests, passions, gifts and talents are embedded in learning experiences
- Flexible schedule contributes to opportunities for real-world connection

❖ **Arts Integration**

- The arts give students form to how they view themselves and the world around them
- The arts give students a vehicle for understanding another culture

Student Population to be Served



Renaissance Secondary School, at full capacity, will serve 696 students in Douglas County in grades 7-12. The planning team anticipates that the majority of students will come from the Castle Rock planning area. The majority of those students will likely matriculate from Renaissance Magnet School, a K-6 magnet school providing an academic program similar to Renaissance Secondary. The Renaissance Secondary program is a good fit for the intended student-body because it provides authentic, problem based learning based on real-world problems. The current Renaissance Magnet School in Castle Rock has demonstrated success with a very similar learning model.

The planning team, by virtue of parent request, is committed to establishing a continuation of the academic, social, emotional, and character-building program offered at the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School. The planning team has the support of parents and students of the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, both current and former. For several years, parents of Renaissance Elementary Magnet School have expressed their desire for a program that continues beyond the current 6th grade. It is after exploring various avenues and continuing to receive requests and support that this planning team is moving forward with a charter school proposal.

The planning team is also confident that the program being offered will meet the needs of other students in the Castle Rock area. There is also confidence that the program will provide much needed space for middle and high school students in the Castle Rock area.

The school will open in Fall 2017 with 464 students in grades 7-10. Each year thereafter, the school will expand one grade until it serves grades 7-12 with a total student population of 696.

Renaissance Secondary School's academic program begins, first and foremost, with the school's vision and mission. The vision of the Renaissance Secondary School is to graduate students who are creative, reflective, fulfilled individuals; active, compassionate citizens; and courageous builders of a harmonious and sustainable world. The mission of Renaissance Secondary School is to empower students to explore, discover and understand the world around them and the passions within them.

Curriculum Meets Needs of Student Population

The curriculum at Renaissance Secondary School is a good fit for the intended student population because it provides authentic, problem based learning based on real-world problems. The current Renaissance Elementary Magnet School in Castle Rock has demonstrated success with a very similar learning model in the same target population. Other schools such as Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) in Denver and the Watershed School in Boulder have also demonstrated success in the older grades with similar student populations. Success at these schools is evidenced by graduation rates, college attendance, standardized tests, attendance, and anecdotal evidence.

For example, the most current CMAS scores from Renaissance Elementary Magnet School demonstrate a high level proficiency in the areas of Social Studies and Science.

Social Studies:

School: 650

District: 632

State: 606

Science:

School: 651

District: 631

State: 600

The expected demographics for the student population expected for Renaissance Secondary is the same as that of Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, as both are in Castle Rock, CO and serve similar areas and students. The demographics for Renaissance Elementary Magnet School are¹¹:

Low Income	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More
8%	0%	3%	0%	7%	86%	0%	4%

RMSEL and the Watershed School have similar demographics.

¹¹ <http://coloradoschoolgrades.com/SchoolReportCard.aspx?sid=7319E>

The demographics for RMSEL are:

Low Income	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More
unk	0%	3%	2%	11%	77%	0%	7%

The demographics for the Watershed school in Boulder are:

Low Income	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More
unk	3%	2%	1%	7%	87%	0%	unk

The Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) has been recognized by the Colorado Department of Education as a 2014 District Accredited with Distinction. RMSEL met 88.8% of School Performance Framework Targets, receiving the highest percentage of total points in meeting Academic Growth and Academic Growth Gaps. Also, RMSEL received 100% of Post Secondary Readiness points calculated based on student achievement, graduation, and ACT results. RMSEL outperforms the state average on the ACT with a composite score of 23.1. In a study from the University of Memphis, in comparison to a group of schools with similar demographics, teachers at RMSEL used significantly more coaching and project-based learning and significantly less direct instruction and independent seatwork.¹² The study found that RMSEL students consistently outscored the weighted average of students from its four feeder districts across all grade levels for each year of the five-year study period on the Colorado State

¹² **Sterbinsky (2002)** [Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning Evaluation Report](http://elschools.org/sites/default/files/RMSEL-crep.pdf).
<http://elschools.org/sites/default/files/RMSEL-crep.pdf>

Assessment Program. RMSEL students scored on average 11.9 percentage points higher in reading than those of the comparison group.¹³ In addition to success on standardized tests, Expeditionary Learning students demonstrate critical thinking, intellectual courage and emotional resilience; they possess the passion and the capacity to contribute to a better world.

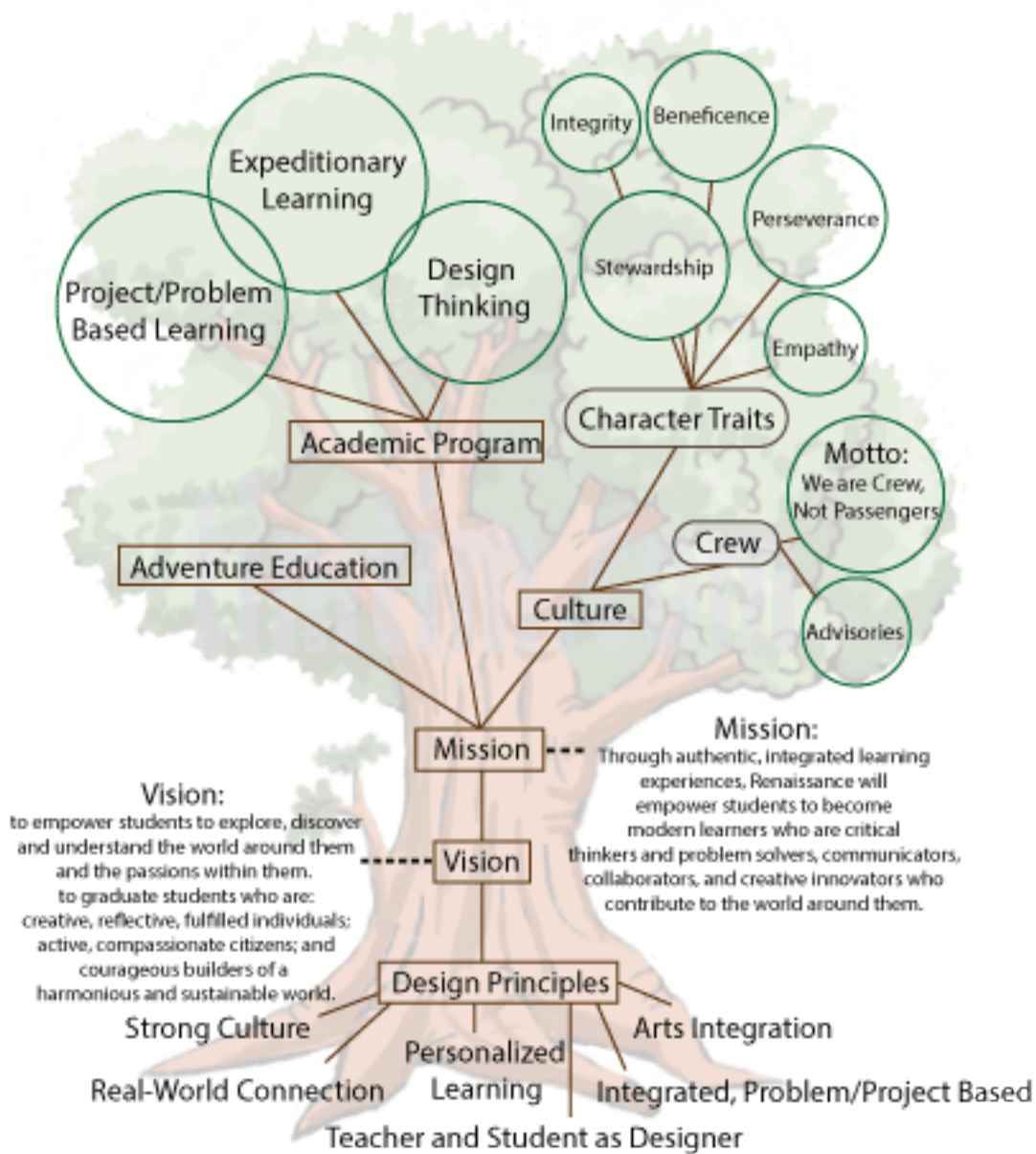
The Watershed School in Boulder, CO has also exhibited success in academic achievement and in preparing students for a rapidly changing world. Students learn to work in teams, pursue meaningful inquiry, take smart risks, and create original work. 100% of Watershed graduates have earned admission to college. More importantly, Watershed graduates are ready to take on life's great challenges beyond college. By creating original work across multiple disciplines, both as individuals and as part of a team - including small businesses, construction projects, and service programs - Watershed graduates leave ready to do meaningful work and make the world a better place.

The planning team has investigated the most current research and visited numerous successful schools that share Renaissance's educational philosophy. By analyzing the key points in other educational programs, a strong, research-based academic plan was developed. Renaissance Secondary intends to become a leading school for this mode of teaching and learning and serve as a model for the educational transformation that is required in the world today.

Curricular Framework and Unifying Themes

The following diagram illustrates the Renaissance Educational Program, its components, and their relationships.

¹³ **Sterbinsky (2002).**



Modern Learning

“...Modern learning is self-organized; the learner creates his or her own curriculum, finds his or her own teachers and classmates, and reflects on and assesses his or her work to achieve learning goals. It’s based on passion and the questions that are important to the learners. Modern learning is about doing authentic work in the world that can be amplified by technology. And

it's about forming networks and communities outside the physical space to support and nurture the work.”

-- Will Richardson, *From Master Teacher to Master Learner*

“The critical skill of this century is not what you hold in your head, but your ability to tap into and access what other people know. The best leaders and the fastest learners know how to harness collective intelligence.”

-- L. Wiseman, *Rookie Smarts: Why learning beats knowing in the new game of work*

Needs of Modern Learners

Renaissance recognizes that today's students will be modern learners and, as such, has been tasked with developing a school that serves every child equally and adequately in preparing him or her for the world that lies ahead. The continued long-standing challenges of school and the modern contexts of a highly networked, technology-filled, fast changing world make it essential that Renaissance Secondary prepares students for a future that looks less predictable by the minute.

What's happened with technology and specifically the Web over the last two decades or so has had an enormous impact on how we communicate, how we create, and, importantly, how we learn. Nowhere have those effects been felt more acutely than with our kids, most of whom now have never known a world without the Internet. In almost all areas of life, in almost every institution and society, the effects of the ubiquitously connected technologies we now carry with us in our backpacks and back pockets have been profound, creating amazing opportunities and complex challenges, both of which that have been hard to foresee. In no uncertain terms, the world has changed, and is changing quickly and drastically.

Will Richardson - *Introducing the Modern Learner Series*

Framework for Modern Learners

Modern learners benefit from the Framework for 21st Century Learning developed by P21.¹⁴ Although this framework appears to be a list of “skills” or possible “subjects,” Renaissance's approach to this framework relies on integration and authentic application. For example, there is no class that teaches persistence. Rather, persistence is encouraged, valued, identified, labeled, expected, and modeled in the daily affairs of the school. The framework consists of:

¹⁴ http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_framework_0515.pdf

- Global awareness
- Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
- Civic literacy
- Health literacy
- Environmental literacy
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT Literacy
- Life and Career Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
- Self Direction
- Evidence Based Thinking
- Persistence
- Calculated Risk Taking
- Tolerance for Ambiguity



Curricular Framework

At Renaissance Secondary, emphasis will be placed on student choice, doing work that matters, and learning how to learn. Conditions for learning will support powerful learning that includes:

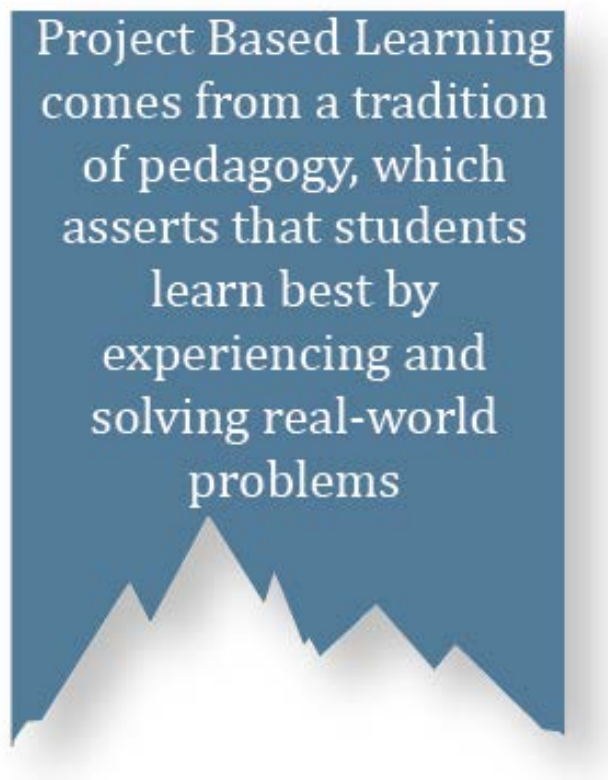
- Safe and Positive Learning Environment
- Personal Investment
- Real-World Application
- Fun
- Relevance to the Lives of Students
- Inquiry Composed of Interesting Questions
- Real Audience for Student Thinking
- Student and Teacher Passion
- Teachers and Mentors Working to Support Student Interests and Needs
- A Feedback Cycle that Allows Students to Revisit and Revise Thinking
- Student Autonomy and Agency
- Appropriate Challenges
- Integrated, Inquiry-Based Curriculum Incorporating Action Steps

The academic focus for Renaissance Secondary has been developed directly from the effective practices of several research-based models with “learning how to learn” central to their model. The Design Principles ([Appendix E-1](#)) were developed to reflect those

research-based models. The Renaissance Secondary planning team chose a multi-model approach for a several reasons. First, Renaissance Secondary is meant to be the next logical step for students completing sixth grade at the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School and, as such, has very similar philosophical underpinnings. Second, using a few similar research-based models allows the planning team to customize a curriculum that is best suited to the target population and school's Design Principles.

Renaissance Secondary will prepare students for the challenges they will face at the next educational level and/or the post secondary world by using elements of Project-Based Learning, Design Thinking, and practices from some Deeper Learning Network Schools, including Expeditionary Learning. Through the Renaissance Secondary Design Principles, the following effective practices from several research-based models will be implemented.

Project-Based Learning Model



Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching and learning method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Moreover, the engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge is an authentic, real world question, problem or challenge. Studies have proven that when implemented well, PBL can increase retention of content and improve students' attitudes towards learning, among other benefits.¹⁵

PBL comes from a tradition of pedagogy, which asserts that students learn best by experiencing and solving real-world problems. Project-based learning

involves the following:

- students learning knowledge to tackle **realistic problems** as they would be solved in the real-world

¹⁵ Strobel, J., & van Barneveld, A. (2009) [When is PBL more effective? A meta-synthesis of meta-analyses comparing PBL to conventional classrooms](#); Walker, A. & Leary, H. (2009) [A problem-based learning meta analysis: Differences across problem types, implementation types, disciplines, and assessment levels](#), *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, 3(1): 12-43.

- increased **student control** over his or her learning
- teachers serving as **coaches and facilitators** of inquiry and reflection
- students (usually, but not always) working in **pairs or groups**.¹⁶

Projects are an effective and enjoyable way to learn and develop deeper learning competencies required for success in college, career and civic life. The main characteristics of PBL are:

- Students are active, not passive; a project engages their hearts and minds, and provides real-world relevance for learning.
- After completing a project, students understand content more deeply, remember what they learn and retain it longer than is often the case with traditional instruction.
- In the 21st century workplace, in college, and in life, success requires more than basic knowledge and skills. In a project, students learn how to take initiative and responsibility, build their confidence, solve problems, work in teams, communicate ideas, and manage themselves more effectively.
- Present-day standards emphasize real-world application of knowledge and skills, and the development of success skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, communication in a variety of media, and speaking and presentation skills. Projects are an effective way to meet these goals.
- Projects allow teachers to work more closely with active, engaged students doing high-quality, meaningful work.
- Projects provide students with empowering opportunities to make a difference, by solving real problems and addressing real issues. Students learn how to interact with adults and organizations, are exposed to workplaces and adult jobs, and can develop career interests.

Researchers have identified several components that are critical to successful PBL:¹⁷

1. A realistic problem or project
 - aligns with students' skills and interests
 - requires learning clearly defined content and skills (e.g. using rubrics, or exemplars from local professionals and students)
2. Structured group work

¹⁶ Barron, B., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008) [Teaching for meaningful learning: A review of research on inquiry-based and cooperative learning \(PDF\)](#). [Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching for Understanding](#); Thomas, J. W. (2000) [A review of research on project-based learning](#).

¹⁷ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008); Ertmer, P. A., & Simons, K. D. (2005) [Scaffolding teachers' efforts to implement problem-based learning \(PDF\)](#). *International Journal of Learning*, 12(4), 319-328; Hung, W. (2008). [The 9-step problem design process for problem-based learning: Application of the 3C3R model](#). *Educational Research Review*, 4(2) 118-141.

- groups of three to four students, with diverse skill levels and interdependent roles
 - individual accountability, based on student growth
3. Multi-faceted assessment
- multiple opportunities for students to receive feedback and revise their work (e.g., benchmarks, reflective activities)
 - multiple learning outcomes (e.g., problem-solving, content, collaboration)
 - presentations that encourage participation and signal social value (e.g. exhibitions, portfolios, performances, reports)

Criteria for success on PBL tasks are clearly defined at the start of the project, and include multiple opportunities for feedback, reflection, and time for students to revise their work.¹⁸ Students who have clear criteria for success spend more time discussing and evaluating

content, and these conversations increase student learning.¹⁹



Inquiry-based learning is most productive when teachers provide students with frequent assessments and redirection through project benchmarks and reflection activities.²⁰ Providing students with feedback that they act upon produces significant learning gains.²¹ Frequent feedback enables teachers to adapt their

instruction to target students' learning needs, while providing students with information to develop their work. Students come to understand that learning is the result of cumulative effort. This, in turn, improves their resilience and academic achievement.²²

Barron and Darling-Hammond recommend providing students with several opportunities to review and revise their project work (as a way of delivering a polished performance) and providing comments rather than grades during these assessments to focus attention on the quality of work rather than the worker. For example, students might write a research

¹⁸ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008).

¹⁹ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008).

²⁰ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008).

²¹ Black, P., & William, D. (1998). [Assessment and classroom learning \(Abstract\)](#). *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1); Hattie, J. (2008). [Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement](#). New York, NY: Routledge.

²² Dweck, C. (2000). [Self-Theories: Their role in motivation, personality and development](#). *Essays in social psychology*. Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis Group.

plan, listing the questions they will need to address and sources they will read, before heading to the library or conducting an Internet search.²³

Researchers also recommend end goals that reflect professional practice, such as public exhibitions, portfolios, and presentations, which signal the social value and relevance of student work.²⁴ The final (summative) assessment should use many different criteria that reflect the various skills involved in the task, and these criteria should be communicated openly to students.²⁵ To ensure that students truly understand final assessment criteria, teachers can ask students to help define the criteria.²⁶

Aspects of PBL speak to Renaissance Secondary School principles of personalized learning, real-world connection, and integrated project/problem inquiry approach.

The Design Thinking Model

In addition to PBL, Renaissance Secondary will employ aspects of design thinking in its academic program. Design thinking is a method to promote creative thinking, teamwork, and student responsibility for learning, all integral aspects of Renaissance Secondary's Design Principles. Design thinking will be taught and utilized within specific projects to help students develop their creative thinking, empathy, collaboration and problem solving skills.

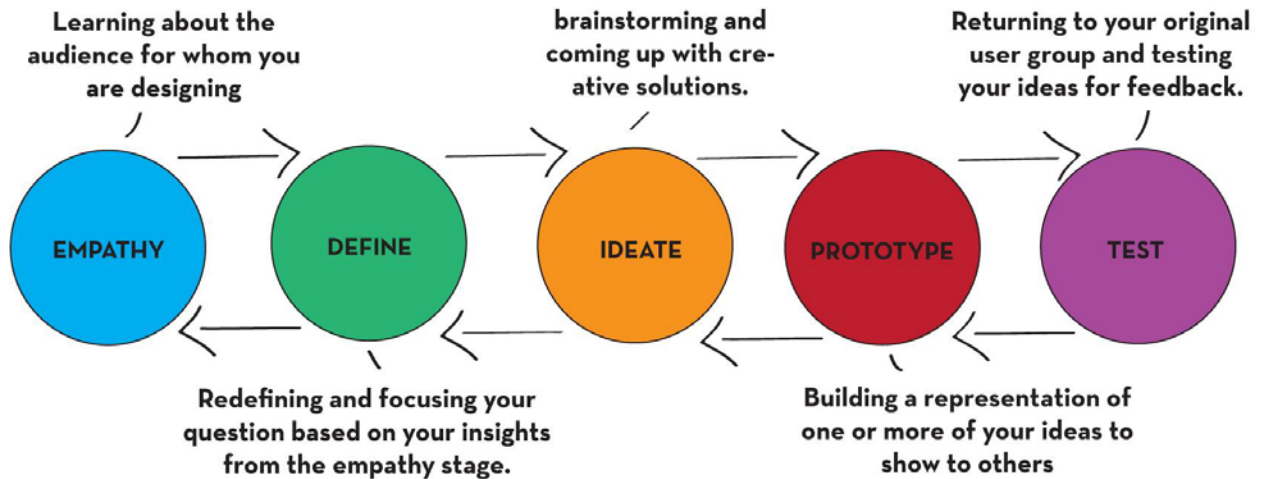
Design thinking is a five stage process: (1) empathize, (2) define, (3) ideate, (4) prototype, and (5) test. The process is illustrated below:

²³ Mergendoller, J. R., & Thomas, J. W. (2005). [Managing project-based learning: Principles from the field](#).

²⁴ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008).

²⁵ Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008); Mergendoller, J. R., & Thomas, J. W. (2005).

²⁶ Mergendoller, J. R., & Thomas, J. W. (2005).



Empathize

First, students learn to empathize. Empathy is the centerpiece of a human-centered design process. As a design thinker, the problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of a particular group of people; in order to design for them, you must gain empathy for who they are and what is important to them. Students empathize by observing, engaging with people, watching and listening.

Define

Second, students learn to define. The define mode of the design process is all about bringing clarity and focus to the design space. The goal of the define mode is to craft a meaningful and actionable problem statement. The define mode is also an endeavor to synthesize your scattered findings into powerful insights. Students define by: finding patterns, asking why, developing an understanding of the type of person for whom they are designing, synthesizing and selecting a limited set of NEEDS that they think are important to fulfill, and articulating a point-of-view by combining these three elements – user, need, and insight – in an actionable problem statement that will drive the rest of the design work.

Ideate

Third, students ideate. Ideate is the mode of the design process in which students concentrate on idea generation and defer judgment throughout. Students ideate by: combining the conscious and unconscious mind, and rational thoughts with imagination; building – that is, prototyping itself can be an ideation technique; bodystorming; mind mapping; and sketching.

Prototype

Fourth, students prototype. The prototype mode is the generation of artifacts intended to answer questions that get students closer to their final solution. A prototype can be anything that a user can interact with – be it a wall of post-it notes, a gadget students put together, a role-playing activity, or even a storyboard. Students create prototypes by: building, not spending too long on one prototype, identifying a variable, and building with the user in mind.

Test

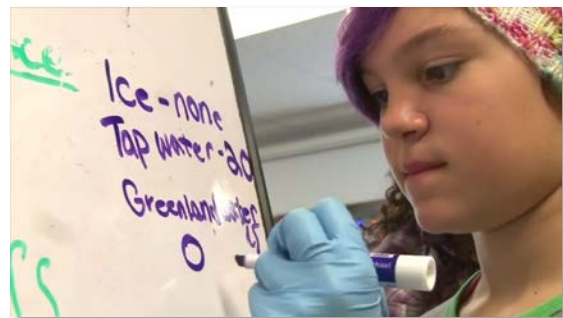
Finally, students test. The test mode solicits feedback about the prototypes created from the users. By testing, students have another opportunity to gain empathy for the people for whom they are designing.

Aspects of the Design Thinking model speak to Renaissance Secondary's principles of strong culture--relationship and service. Design Thinking also reflects our principles of integrated project/problem, inquiry approach, and real-world connection. In addition, Design Thinking provides a terrific opportunity for personalized learning.

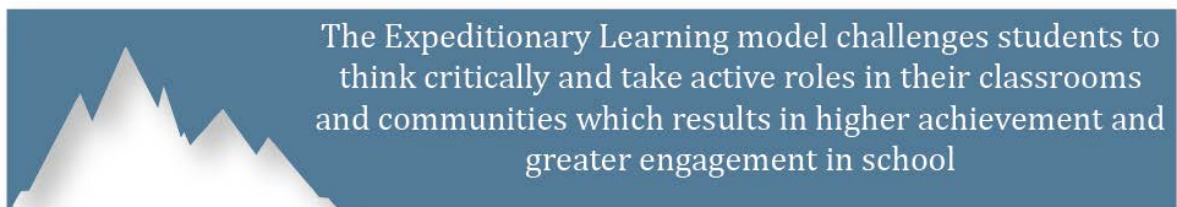
Expeditionary Learning Model

Renaissance Secondary School will also utilize elements of expeditionary learning in its academic program. Both expeditionary learning and Renaissance Secondary believe that given fundamental levels of health, safety and encouragement, all people can and want to learn. A person's natural passion to learn is a powerful motivator for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

Expeditionary learning is a model of comprehensive school reform based on the educational ideas of German educator Kurt Hahn, the founder of Outward Bound. Expeditionary learning schools exist in more than 150 schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia. They are exemplified by project-based learning expeditions, where students engage in interdisciplinary, in-depth study of compelling topics, in groups and in their community, with assessment coming through cumulative products, public presentations, and portfolios. The model emphasizes high levels of student engagement, achievement, and character development.



Since its founding, the Expeditionary Learning model has been honored with high praise and positive reviews from many third-party observers and researchers. *The New York Times* has written positively about Expeditionary Learning. The Rand Corporation, The American Institutes for Research, The National Staff Development Council, and The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) have all evaluated expeditionary learning models and practices, and cite such positive outcomes as higher student achievement and participation, and a more positive and productive school culture. The 2002 CRESPAR analysis of 29 comprehensive school reform models awarded Expeditionary Learning the highest rating given to any model created in the previous ten years. In February 2009, President Barack Obama visited Capital City Public Charter School, an expeditionary learning school in Washington, DC, and said the school "is an example of how all our schools should be."



The Expeditionary Learning model is based on ten design principles that guide the teaching and learning, much like Renaissance uses its design principles to guide teaching and learning. The preface to the design principles sums up Expeditionary Learning's approach to learning and informs Renaissance Secondary's approach to teaching and learning: "Learning is an expedition into the unknown. Expeditions draw together personal experience and intellectual growth to promote self-discovery and the construction of knowledge. We believe that adults should guide students along this journey with care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. Addressing individual differences profoundly increases the potential for learning and creativity of each student."

The expeditionary learning model challenges students to think critically and take active roles in their classrooms and communities which results in higher achievement and greater engagement in school. Schools designed in this way give students the academic and character-building skills they need to reach their potential as learners and leaders.

The expeditionary learning model is standards based. Learning comes alive for students by connecting learning to relevant issues, identified needs, and authentic audiences. Academic content is charged with rigor through the curricular structures of learning expeditions, case studies, projects, fieldwork, consultation with community experts, service learning, and exhibitions of student work.

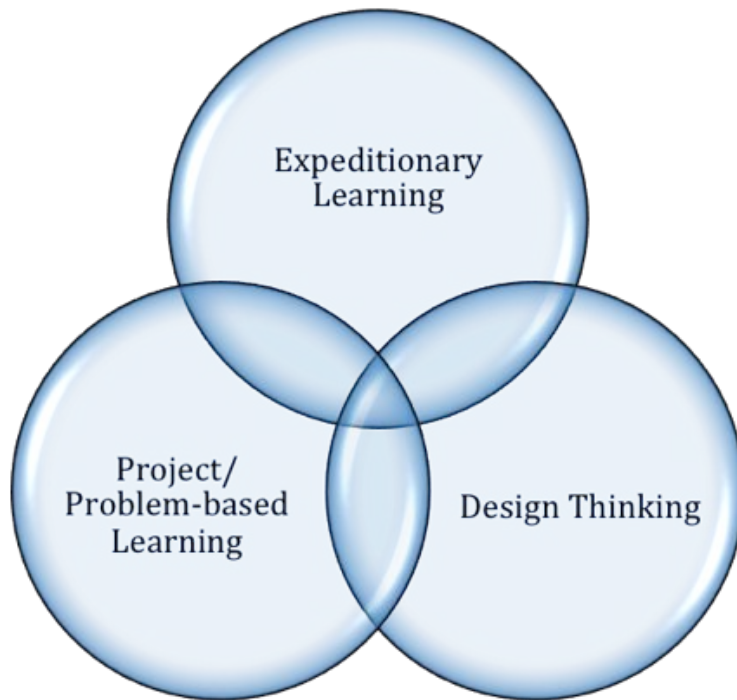
The expeditionary learning model challenges students to think critically and take active roles in their classrooms and communities. Students:

- Graduate with the academic knowledge, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving capacity needed to succeed in college and beyond
- Hold themselves and their peers to high expectations for quality work, commitment to learning, and character
- Take leadership roles in their schools and communities
- Engage their families and communities in their learning by leading family conferences and making formal presentations to expert panels
- Complete projects that challenge them to do the work of professionals—scientists, historians, mathematicians, writers, and artists
- Work with experts and conduct field research to produce high quality academic products that meet professional standards
- Contribute to their communities through meaningful service embedded in the curriculum
- Benefit from learning in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, marked by kindness, respect, and responsibility

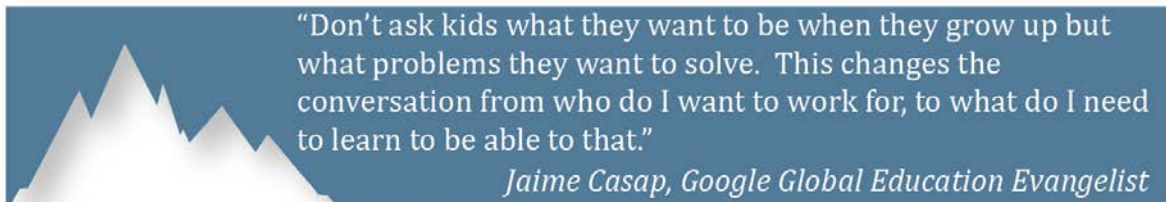
The expeditionary learning model exemplifies many of Renaissance’s design principles. Renaissance will use World Class Outcomes-based Learning Expeditions to organize curriculum, engage learners, and provide structures for differentiation. Learning Expeditions are authentic and based on real-world connections. PBL and Design Thinking are also well suited for this aspect of Renaissance Secondary. Expeditionary Learning, Design Thinking, and PBL fit together well at the Learning Expedition level.

Learning Expeditions are, by nature, integrated “units” of study. Renaissance Secondary will use its learning expeditions as a vehicle for integrating content, skills, and the arts. Both PBL and Design Thinking utilize the idea of integrated curriculum through PBL projects, and through Design Thinking steps.

Renaissance will also use strong cultural pieces from Expeditionary Learning, Design Thinking, and Adventure Education. Although Expeditionary Learning no longer aligns itself with Outward Bound, Renaissance will use an Outward Bound-like adventure education curriculum to support its strong school culture. The design thinking model is based on relationship and service, both strong components of Renaissance’s culture.



Core Content Curriculum



Students at Renaissance will benefit from the core disciplines of humanities, physical, earth and life sciences, and mathematics delivered through an inquiry based, problem-solving model. Curriculum in each of the content areas will be designed by teachers and students, such that it is integrated across content areas, aligned with state content standards and WCOs, meets students' needs, reflects students' interests, and has real-world significance. Samples of Learning Expeditions may be found in [Appendix E-2](#).

Humanities (Includes Language Arts and Social Studies)

Humanities at Renaissance will include, but not be limited to the applied language arts of reading, writing, listening, and speaking:

- for a variety of reasons
- for a variety of audiences
- in a variety of genres and modes

- driven by learning expedition content, purpose, desired service outcome

Students will meet the DCSD World Class Outcomes:

- Strategically create meaning through complex writing and speaking
- Formulate a position supported by the quantitative method
- Demonstrate the process of inquiry:
 - Create plausible solutions through the inquiry process
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Evaluate multiple perspectives to construct resolution

Renaissance will use Great Books materials and Socratic Seminars as a framework for critically thinking about literature (fiction and informational text) as well as a variety of group and individual structures designed to help readers make meaning from text and respond to text both orally and in writing:

- Close reading of text
- Annotation of text
- It says, I say, so what?
- Sentence, phrase, word
- Written preparations for Socratic seminar

Humanities also include Social Studies, History, Civics, and current issues:

- Embedded in learning expeditions, as in the sample learning expeditions This American Life, Shock and Awe, Ship Shape, Bombs Away, etc. ([Appendix E-2](#)).
- Relevant content
- Relevant audience
- Relevant desired outcome for expedition work (e.g. service)

Students will meet the DCSD WCO for Social Studies:

- Evaluate how perspective and bias generate and shape global citizenry
- Demonstrate the process of inquiry:
 - Identify a problem
 - Generate questions
 - Justify possible solutions to the problem
- Create plausible solutions through the inquiry process
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Evaluate patterns of past events to hypothesize future events
- Evaluate the factors which sustain and destroy systems

Sciences

Science instruction will include physical science, earth science, and life science. Technology and engineering will be emphasized as well.

- Embedded in learning expeditions, as in the sample learning expeditions Actually, It is Rocket Science, the Rube Goldberg Project, Shock and Awe, Lunar Landing, Catch the Fever, etc. ([Appendix E-2](#))
- Relevant content
- Relevant audience
- Relevant desired outcome for expedition work (i.e. Service)

Students will meet the DCSD WCO for Science:

- Evaluate the relationship of stability and change within and among systems
- Evaluate the relationship between multiple causes and effects to formulate and defend a prediction of multiple outcomes
- Evaluate the relationship between ethical decisions and their impact on a global society
- Solve problems using models
- Demonstrate the process of inquiry:
 - Create plausible solutions through the inquiry process
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others

Mathematics

Mathematics curriculum includes, but is not limited to, mathematical thinking and problem solving. Mathematical thinking will be taught outside of Learning Expeditions as well as applied within Learning Expeditions. Students will have access to a variety of print and web-based resources for math:

- Applied as appropriate in learning expedition
- Each student will be engaged in mathematical thinking, and problem solving sequenced by strand to meet student needs
- Renaissance will utilize numerous mathematical resources, including
 - Khan Academy
 - <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
 - Hands on Equations
 - <http://www.borenson.com/>
 - Connected Math
 - <https://connectedmath.msu.edu/>
 - Youcubed.org - A resource from Stanford University that promotes innovative math teaching and problem based learning

Hands on Equations, Connected Math, and youcubed.org have been chosen because of their emphasis on mathematical thinking. Mathematics at Renaissance Secondary will emphasize problem solving, the understanding and application of concepts, and the idea that there are many paths to an accurate answer. Research supports the idea that mathematical thinking is an important component of math instruction and, specifically, that students who learned mathematics through a project-based approach achieved at significantly higher levels in mathematics.²⁷

Students will meet the following DCSD World Class Outcomes for Math:

- Create a process to solve a problem
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning
- Demonstrate the process of inquiry:
 - Create plausible solutions through the inquiry process

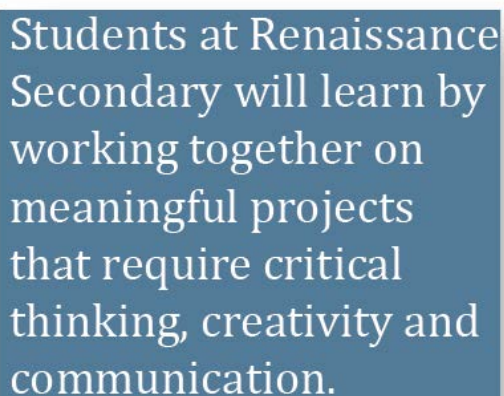
Curricular Materials

Students at Renaissance Secondary will learn by working together on meaningful projects that require critical thinking, creativity, and communication.

Appropriate curricular materials will emerge directly from the skills, processes, and information relevant to the area of study, including primary source materials for social studies and science. Materials will be chosen purposefully in order to facilitate students' ability to identify and address current, relevant issues and problems. Students will use a variety of content-rich resources such as text (paper and web based), video, audio, experts in the discipline, fieldwork, etc. They will ask questions, identify problems, gather data, propose solutions and get feedback in the same way experts do in their particular field.

²⁷ **Stacey, K.** University of Melbourne, Australia. [What is Mathematical Thinking and Why is it Important?](#); **Boaler, J. (1998).** [Open and closed mathematics: Student experiences and understandings](#). Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 29(1), 41– 62.

For example, working with the scientific method at a traditional school, students might learn through a lecture or textbook, or a simulated "experiment" in the classroom. At Renaissance Secondary, students will learn through actively using, in this case, the



Students at Renaissance Secondary will learn by working together on meaningful projects that require critical thinking, creativity and communication.

scientific process. Students will go out into the field, make observations, ask questions, research to learn more, design studies, gather and analyze data, draw conclusions, get feedback from peers and the professional community, and use that feedback to deepen learning and make the application of new ideas meaningful. Finally, Renaissance students will take action with their new learning by connecting with authentic audiences interested in their work. In other words, when it comes to studying science, Renaissance students will work, learn, and take action in the same way scientists do.

Students engaged in authentic, relevant, content-rich, integrated learning experiences, such as those inherent in our model gain the knowledge and skills they need to excel in the

world. Students engaged in an inquiry approach to learning look at topics, problems, and solutions flexibly. Renaissance Secondary students will be able to think through a problem, persevere through potential solutions, and work with others--- skills that apply in any job or life situation.

Curriculum will be integrated at Renaissance Secondary. This means that in a Learning Expedition, students will use the skills of literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and numeracy (mathematical thinking), the visual arts and performing arts, skills in history and geography, and science in their pursuit of understanding about a particular topic that represents a particular content standard and set of World Class Outcomes.

Example of Integration

This integrated approach illustrates the use of Learning Expedition design from Expeditionary Learning, the use of projects as a vehicle for real-world connection as well as performance assessment from PBL, and components of empathy and service from Design Thinking.

From Douglas County Schools District's **WCO**:

- There is a relationship between stability and change in systems. That relationship can be studied, defined and evaluated
- The inquiry process is a viable way to increase understanding and to create plausible solutions

For example, using the science example from above and, for **Colorado State Standards**:

- Living things have characteristics and structures and interact with each other and the environment

So one can define the “**Big Ideas**” (enduring or important concepts worth understanding for the long term and applicable in lots of different situations, and topics) as:

- Living things have characteristics and structures and interact with each other and the environment
- There is a relationship between stability and change in systems. That relationship can be studied, defined and evaluated
- The inquiry process is a viable way to increase understanding and to create plausible solutions

Let's say that a group of students wants to study these “Big Ideas” or concepts through the topic or content of the impact of non-native, invasive plant species on the Colorado Plateau. At this point, one can map out some opportunities for the integration of skills across the disciplines that students will use in an authentic way as they develop an understanding of the “Big Ideas” through this particular representative topic.

From literacy:

- Research
- Reading for meaning
- Annotating notes
- Synthesizing of information in written and oral form
- Organizing and presenting information

From numeracy:

- Data collection
- Graphing
- Data interpretation
- Statistical analysis
- Organizing and presenting information

From history, geography and other areas of the humanities:

- History of non-native species
- Geography of the Colorado Plateau
- Impact of non-native plant species on communities
- Conventions used by historians when doing research
- Organizing and presenting information

From the visual and performing arts:

- Scientific drawing/illustration
- Interpretive presentation skills (plays, poetry, song....)
- Organizing and presenting information

From science:

- Scientific method
- Conventions used by scientists in observing, testing, and communicating findings
- Organizing and presenting information

From Technology:

- Engineering
- Building
- Technology for input of information
- Technology for output of information
- Organizing and presenting information

Characteristics of Modern Learners:

- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Resilience/Perseverance
- Growth mindset
- Information literacy including organizing and presenting information

Service Learning

There will be a strong, significant service component embedded in the authentic learning opportunities at the Renaissance Secondary School. In fact, service and service learning will

be a distinctive component of the Renaissance Secondary School, setting the school apart from other secondary schools.

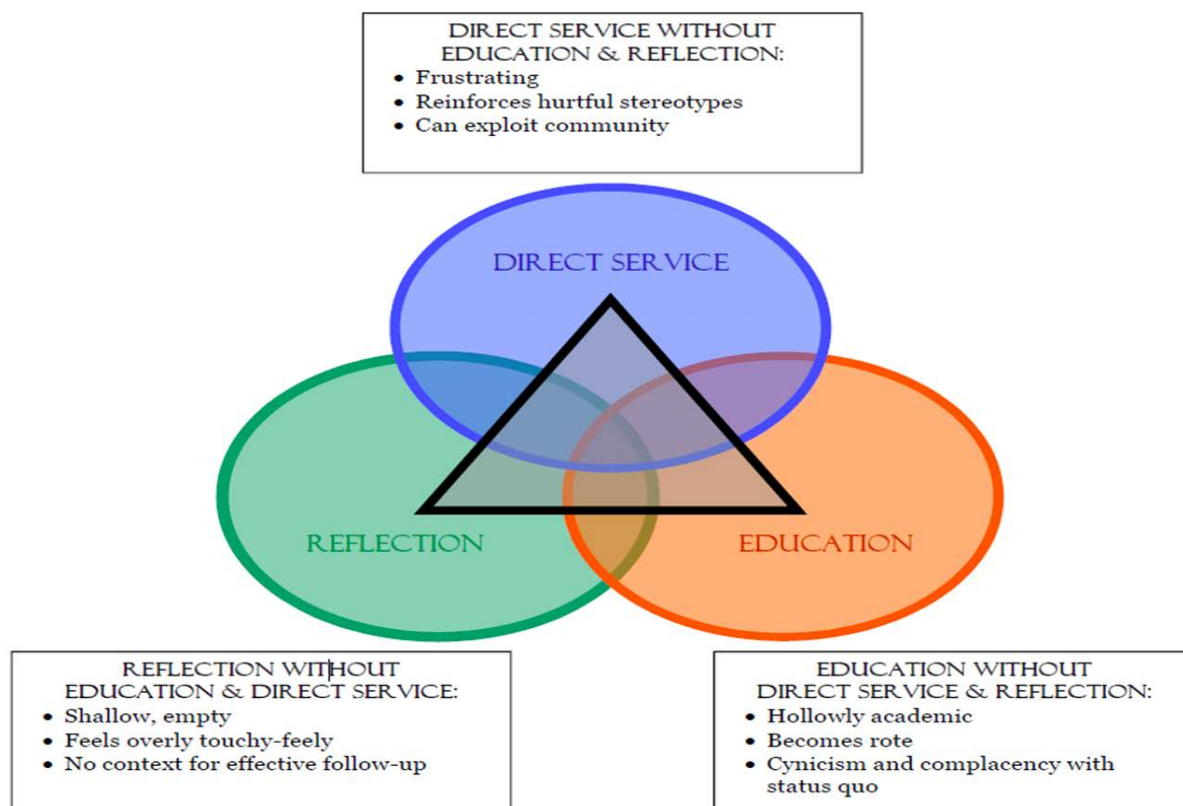
Service learning allows learners to apply classroom theories to authentic and practical situations by connecting service to the needs of the local and global community.

Service learning involves:

- Collaboration
- Addressing community needs
- Education
- Reflection
- Fostering the development of civic and social responsibility

Service learning puts a focus on learning before, during, and after a learning opportunity such as a learning expedition so service becomes more than just a one-week volunteer experience but rather an immersive experience that allows students to learn and grow while working with a community and their peers.

The relative importance of service, reflection, and education is reflected in the following visual representation:



THE TRIANGLE OF QUALITY COMMUNITY SERVICE

Why Service?

The University of Minnesota cites the following potential benefits of service learning to everyone involved: students, faculty, and the community.²⁸

Students in service learning classes can benefit academically, professionally, and personally. These are just a few of the ways:

- Increase understanding of the class topic
- Gain hands-on experience (possibly leading to an internship or job later)
- Explore or cement values and beliefs
- Have opportunities to act on values and beliefs
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Grow understanding of diverse cultures and communities

²⁸ **University of Minnesota (2011)** <http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/benefits.html>

- Learn more about social issues and their root causes
- Improve the ability to handle ambiguity and be open to change; become more flexible
- Develop or enhance skills, especially in the areas of communication, collaboration, and leadership
- Test out skills, interests, and values in a potential career path, or learn more about a field of interest
- Connect with professionals and community members and learn from them
- Grow a professional network of people one might connect with again later for jobs or internships
- Satisfy an urge toward public service or civic participation

Faculty can benefit personally and professionally from integrating service learning into courses. Teaching with service learning can:

- Encourage interactive teaching methods and reciprocal learning between students and faculty
- Add new insights and dimensions to class discussions
- Promote students' active learning
- Engage students with different learning styles
http://academic.umn.edu/provost/teaching/cesl_outcomes.html
- Provide networking opportunities with engaged faculty in other disciplines
- Foster relationships between faculty and community organizations, which can open other opportunities for collaborative work
- Provide firsthand knowledge of community issues
- Provide opportunities to be more involved in community issues

Community Partners participating in service learning can benefit in these ways:

- Gain additional human resources needed to achieve organizational goals
- Inject new energy, enthusiasm, and perspectives into the organization's work
- Grow the organization's volunteer pool: service learning students will share their experiences with friends and classmates
- Increase public awareness of key issues
- Reach out to youth—an important part of any organization's future support
- Educate students/youth about community issues; correct any misperceptions
- Help prepare today's students to be tomorrow's civic leaders
- Network with colleagues in other organizations and agencies
- Identify and access other resources
- Build relationships with faculty, students, and staff

Examples of Service Learning

While service learning will not be applicable for every project or learning experience, it can be used in most disciplines as evidenced by the examples below.²⁹ Research suggests that service learning is especially useful when included as part of the core content area, and where reflection is an important component of service.³⁰

- In an **engineering design** course, students design and build mechanical devices to assist people with physical, developmental or learning disabilities. Some students create bathroom stalls to be used by people who are visually impaired. Other students develop a specifically-designed stuffed animal to demonstrate cause and effect relationships to children. (Children can push various control panel buttons on the teddy bear's belly to evoke different responses from the bear, thus helping the children to relate structure to function, differentiate among the various button' functions and practice their motor skills.)
- **Landscape architecture** students design and plant a community garden at a women's shelter. Residents gain an enhanced living environment while students learn principles and methods of site analysis. Students also apply landscape construction principles to grading, drainage, and pedestrian circulation issues.
- **Computer science** students develop databases for non-profit agencies. Students learn about storage strategies, query facilities and integrity constraints while increasing the efficiency of donor tracking systems for agencies that depend on individual's voluntary contributions.
- Students tutor children and adults in English for a **linguistics** course on second-language learning. Students observe first-hand how language learners master verb conjugations and adapt to varying grammatical structures. At the same time, those they tutor learn pronunciation and syntax from native speakers.
- In a **biochemistry** course, students conduct seminars for teens on the effects of substance abuse on the body. By teaching others, students learn better about the molecular structure of organic compounds.

The benefits of Service and Service Learning to students, faculty, and community have driven the planning team's decision to make Service and Service Learning a strong, significant component to curriculum design at Renaissance Secondary.³¹

²⁹ **University of Maryland.** Defining Service Learning and its Importance.
http://thestamp.umd.edu/leadership_community_service-learning/academic_opportunities/faculty_service-learning/defining_service-learning_and_its_importance

³⁰ **Astin, A., et al.(2000).** [How Service Learning Affects Students](#). Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

³¹ **Prentice and Robinson (2010).** [Improving Student Learning Outcomes with Service Learning](#). American Association of Community Colleges.

Supplemental Curriculum, Electives, and Programs

Student choice and agency are at the core of Renaissance Secondary. In addition to the choice and agency opportunities provided in core content areas (through learning expeditions, humanities, sciences, and mathematics), choice and agency will be exemplified through Exploratory Blocks (X-Blocks), Foreign Language, and opportunities for participation in sports teams.

Exploratory Blocks (X-Blocks):

In order to offer students ample opportunity to explore varied elective areas, Renaissance Secondary will offer Exploratory Blocks. Modeled after High Tech High in San Diego, CA, Renaissance will offer exploratory blocks as an integral part of the curriculum. An X-Block is an elective course developed around student interest and passion and ranges from physical undertakings; sports, skateboarding, circus arts, archery, Pilates, yoga to the more academic; chess, model United Nations, yearbook, academic coaching, model rockets, to arts based; digital arts, performing arts, fine arts, fabric arts, building arts to name a few. Renaissance will offer two X-Block periods per day. These courses will meet five times per week for a trimester. Students will rank their preferences and will be placed in X-Blocks based on preferences and availability. Facilitators for X-Block electives will come from teaching staff, Renaissance Secondary support staff, qualified community members and parents. Teachers will be assigned as advisory to X-Blocks taught by members outside of the faculty, such that credit may be appropriately awarded for these electives.

Foreign Language

In order to accommodate varied student interests as well as the variety of paces at which students may learn a language, Renaissance will utilize Rosetta Stone for language learning. Rosetta Stone is computer based language software that allows students to progress at an individual pace through a world language. Rosetta Stone software offers a variety of languages and students at Renaissance Secondary will be able to select the language that best suits them.

Sports

In addition to sports offered as X-Block choices, students at Renaissance Secondary will be able to participate in more traditional team sports (e.g., soccer, tennis, cross country, etc.), either via other middle and high school programs or as their own team playing within the charter school network.

Other Vital Aspects of the Education Program Design

Integrated Arts

The Kennedy Center defines arts integration in this way: *Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.*³²

Students at Renaissance will have significant opportunities in both visual and performing arts. Students will explore the arts through X-Blocks, receive direct instruction focused on specific arts skills, and utilize art as a vehicle for learning and demonstrating understanding via arts integration in the core content areas. For example, a learning expedition will often integrate arts as a means of demonstrating understanding in a core content area. This may involve a performance, written and directed by students that showcases their understanding of the content and is facilitated by the performing arts teacher. Alternatively, students may use a visual arts product to demonstrate understanding.

Students will also use the arts as a method for learning core content. For example, in a humanities based learning expedition, the arts aspect of a culture often plays an important role in understanding an issue, event, or people. The artistic practices, artists, and artifacts of a culture provide key information in defining and representing that culture and context. Both visual and performing arts teachers will facilitate understanding of the context surrounding an issue, event, or people, and students will demonstrate understanding through both visual and performing arts forms.

Facilitators for Integrated Arts will be the Integrated Arts staff (in year one, there will be three arts teachers), who will teach skills and support other teaching staff, support staff, and qualified community and parents who work in Arts Integration and/or an X-Block elective. Arts teachers will schedule their time according to the integration of the arts in content areas, and according to the needs for skills instruction for a particular crew.

Research supports the use of integrated arts as a means of keeping students interested and involved and supporting and encouraging creativity, imagination, and innovation.³³

Adventure Education

Adventure Education is another significant and unique component that differentiates Renaissance Secondary from other schools. Renaissance's intention is to prepare each

³² <https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/arts-integration/what-is-arts-integration>

³³ **Sloan, W. (2009)** [Making Content Connections through Art Integration](#). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, ASCD Education Update.

student for the challenges of life outside the walls of the school. Adventure Education helps facilitate this goal through knowledge of self and a strong, positive school culture. Research supports Adventure Education as significant in aiding students in developing their capacity for empathy through challenging, shared experiences, as well as contributing to physiological and psychological well-being.³⁴

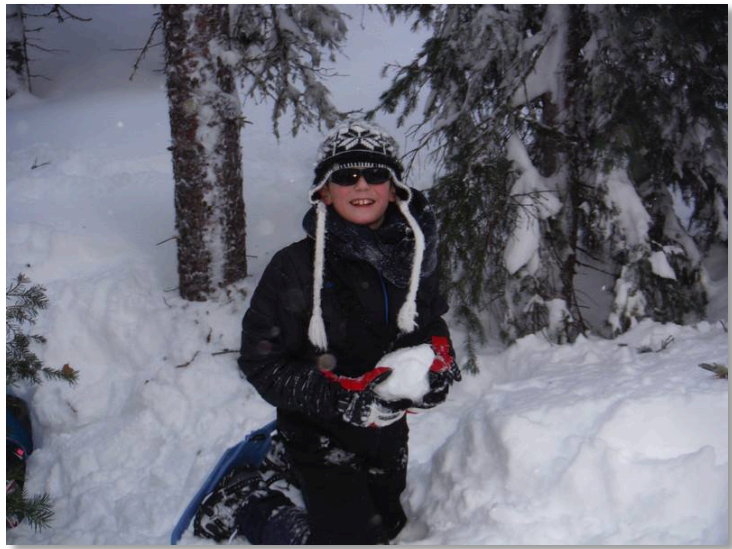
Adventure Education encourages all of its participants, regardless of need, to reach and stretch beyond their abilities. It involves teamwork, communication, problem-solving, trust-building, and goal-setting. These concepts are introduced and developed through the concepts of a "Full Value Contract"³⁵ and "Challenge by Choice"

Full Value Contract

The "Full Value Contract" implies that everyone must contribute to their best effort in order for each participant, and the entire group, to achieve the maximum benefit. The contract may be written or oral, and is designed by the participants and facilitators.

Challenge by Choice

The "Challenge by Choice" concept is an important one. It means that participants choose their own level of challenge and involvement in each activity - guided by their commitment to the "Full Value Contract." Zones of comfort or challenge level include: the comfort zone, learning zone, and panic zone. Any individual can benefit from developing these skills through the process of physical activity and through Adventure Education curriculum.



Adventure Education at Renaissance Secondary will be inclusive of all students, rather than an optional program. Students will participate in one to two outdoor education trips per school year, facilitated by Renaissance Secondary staff. Voyages will vary in number and length, according to student readiness and goals of the trip.

³⁴ **Brassard, E.** *Adventure and Experiential Education: Principles, Adaptations and a Case Study* **Williams, Randall (2011).** <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-comment/2011/02/the-benefits-of-outdoor-adventure/>

Watters, Ron. *Idaho State University (1999, 2013).* <http://www.isu.edu/outdoor/CADefine.htm>
http://www.englishoutdoorcouncil.org/Values_and_benefits.htm

³⁵ <http://wilderdom.com/ABC/ChallengeByChoice.html>

Core Values (adopted from Outward Bound)

The Core Values of Renaissance's Adventure Education program are adopted from Outward Bound. They are:

- Adventure and Challenge
- Learning through experience
- Compassion and service
- Social and environmental responsibility
- Character development
- Inclusion and diversity

The above Core Values have been tested and practiced for many years by Outward Bound. Renaissance Secondary School has adopted these Core Values for its Adventure Education program.

The goals and objectives of Renaissance's Adventure Education program are:

1. Students will demonstrate perseverance in a growing willingness to step beyond his or her comfort zone
2. Students will demonstrate empathy, beneficence, and integrity in a growing respect for self and others.
3. Students will demonstrate an increased sense of stewardship in his or her role in the community, in society at large, and in the environment.

The goals and objectives and Core Values are accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Through multi-day trips (voyages) --often camping and backpacking-- which may or may not include some type of fieldwork (data collection opportunity) related to a Learning Expedition
- Through daily culture building rituals: drumming, community meetings, advisory group "morning meeting" circles
- Through team building opportunities
- Through physical challenges: ropes courses, high ropes elements, rock climbing, and other physical challenges encountered during voyages

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a vital aspect of a Learning Expedition and illustrative of Renaissance Secondary's commitment to authentic learning with real-world significance. At Renaissance Secondary, Fieldwork means the opportunity to gather data in the course of a Learning Expedition with the goal of furthering understanding of content and concept, and the opportunity to work like an expert in the field. The same Fieldwork might occur over the

course of a Learning Expedition as students gather data over time for the purpose of analysis. For example, in a science based Learning Expedition on climate change students might visit the Ice Core Lab in Denver in order to:

- Learn what scientists do by doing what scientist do
- Gather data about climate change as measured by ice layers
- Add to data from previous Fieldwork

Fieldwork is not just another name for a field trip. Indeed, Fieldwork has aspects of a field trip, but what sets Fieldwork apart from a field trip is:

- Opportunity to gather data *in the course of a Learning Expedition*
- Opportunity to *revisit fieldwork*--collect new data from the same location--*during the course of a Learning Expedition*
- Opportunity to work like experts in the field

Culture of Crew

Advisories

Renaissance students will participate in Advisory Crews five days per week for thirty minutes at the beginning of each day. Advisory Crews will be comprised of approximately 15-20 students from all grade levels and one crew leader. All teachers as well as some administrators (Professional Learning Specialist (PLS), Adventure Ed Coordinator, etc.) will lead an advisory crew.

The goal of advisory crews is to create a “family” within the school that fosters a supportive environment and strengthens the culture of crew. The adult crew leader will serve as a mentor for the students in his/her advisory. Advisory crews will remain with the same crew leader throughout their time at Renaissance Secondary. The content of advisory crew time will vary, but examples of how the time may be used include:

- Team building activities
- Academic support (time management, planning of independent study projects, etc.)
- Social Support (discussion and skills, tailored to student needs)
- College Counseling

Character Traits

In accordance with the Core Values of the school, the five character traits of **Empathy, Beneficence, Stewardship, Perseverance, and Integrity** will be interwoven into Renaissance Secondary’s educational program ([Appendix E-3](#)). For example, **empathy** is

the first step in the Design Thinking process, as well as being applicable in service learning projects, along with **beneficence**, and thus will be integrated into the curriculum.

Stewardship will play a role in the daily care and keeping of Renaissance Secondary, as well as may be an emphasis in certain learning expeditions surrounding the effects humans have on the environment, etc. Students will have ample opportunity to demonstrate **perseverance** in both academic (e.g. design thinking process) and physical pursuits (e.g. Adventure Education, rock climbing) at Renaissance. The use of **integrity** will be expected and encouraged throughout the school.

Students will be held to a high standard for **empathy, beneficence, and integrity** when it comes to interactions between students and/or students and staff. Advisory crews may also choose to emphasize these character traits in some of their team building exercises.

Circle of Courage

The core cultural values of Renaissance Secondary are represented by a circle, the medicine wheel, that is divided into quadrants. The circle suggests the interconnectedness of life. Each quadrant of the circle of courage stands for a central value - **belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity**.³⁶ The Circle of Courage comes from a Native American model of youth development. The circle in the center symbolizes a medicine wheel in Native American culture. The circle also symbolizes that we all are connected, interconnected and dependent on one another. If the circle stays intact, we have the courage we need to care for others and make good decisions for ourselves. But if something happens that causes the circle to break, we become discouraged which affects how we treat others and how we make decisions.

Rituals

All-school gatherings, advisories, and drumming are rituals that support the school's core values. All school gatherings will be held weekly on Friday afternoons and will be approximately thirty minutes in duration.

All school gatherings at Renaissance Secondary will take the form of community meetings with the goal of sharing learning, building community, sharing leadership responsibilities, having and having positive, shared experiences. Community gatherings will be designed and run by students, with the assistance of a performing arts teacher and will be a large part in developing and maintaining the culture of crew. Examples of what content for community meetings may look like are:

- Presentations of learning (skits, formal presentations, book talks, etc.)

³⁶ <http://www.wearecrew.org/#!/circle-of-courage/cm8>

- Performances: school play/musical, dance, voice, or musical exhibitions
- All school drum circles (end-of-year culmination)

Curriculum Alignment with State Model Content Standards

The standards that Renaissance Secondary will meet are:

- The DCSD WCO³⁷
- Colorado State content standards
- 21st century skills, including the 4Cs (*collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking*) and civic responsibility, financial literacy, global awareness, health and wellness, problem solving, resiliency, and systems thinking

The DCSD WCO were derived from the Colorado State Standards. The WCO provide the long view of the importance of discipline focused, integrated studies grounded in Big Ideas and/or concepts considered essential by the district and the state.

For example: The WCO for science in 7th grade are:

- There is a relationship between stability and change in systems. That relationship can be studied, defined and evaluated.
- There is a relationship between multiple causes and effects and it is important to analyze and defend predictions of multiple outcomes.
- Ethical decisions have an impact on global society and that impact can be evaluated.
- Problems can be solved using models.
- The inquiry process is a viable way to increase understanding and to create plausible solutions.

CDE content standards for 7th grade science state the long view in this way:

- Things in the physical world have common properties, common forms and can change.
- Living things have characteristics and structures and interact with each other and the environment
- The Earth and other objects in space have processes and interactions

A "Big Idea" approach naturally leads to integration and application of skills and processes and crosses disciplines. For example, from a science WCO; *There is a relationship between stability and change in systems. That relationship can be studied, defined and evaluated.* This idea is as important to civics as it is to earth science, as important to world history as it is to life science. If a student understands the idea of systems (systems are made of parts, parts

³⁷ Douglas County World Class Outcomes can be found at: <https://www.dcsdk12.org/world-class-education>.

interact. If parts change, the system is impacted) then a student can understand and apply the idea of systems to the Earth's systems and the structure and dynamics of Earth and other objects in space. A clear understanding of systems allows a student to apply that understanding to systems that are present in social science, for example: government systems and societal systems. Systems is a Big Idea that is invaluable. Students learn about the Big Idea and how to use the Big Idea to understand content and concept across disciplines.

This approach to curriculum design; integrated in discipline, and connected through "Big Ideas" provides the grounding for teachers and students to design learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant.

In this way, students understand and experience the fact that what they are learning is applicable, connected, and relevant to them. Renaissance Secondary School will ask teachers and students to use state content standards and district WCO to design learning experiences that represent Big Ideas--systems for example--and choose compelling, relevant and current representative content. Students will learn predominantly through an inquiry approach; direct instruction will also play a role. Students will be immersed in skill, content, application, and action working in the same way as experts in the field.

Research supports this way of teaching and learning. The Understanding By Design Framework, (UbD) one of the first models of this sort, uses big ideas and compelling topics to design curriculum. UbD is guided by the confluence of evidence from two streams—theoretical research in cognitive psychology, and results of student achievement studies. A summary of the key research that undergirds UbD framework can be found at <http://www.ascd.org> under Research A Topic.

Expeditionary learning schools have quite of bit of current research that supports its approach to teaching and learning. Expeditionary learning organizes curriculum into integrated, cross discipline studies using Big Ideas, compelling, relevant topics, and inquiry. Hands-on and minds-on learning drive what students do. Studies have shown that students at expeditionary learning schools perform better on math and reading assessments than students at traditional schools.³⁸ Expeditionary learning schools also close achievement gaps in English language arts for African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students and English language learners.³⁹

Project-based learning is widely supported by evidence. Multiple studies have concluded that project-based and inquiry-based models of learning result in students performing

³⁸ Nichols-Barrer, I. & Haimson, J. (2013) [Impacts of Five Expeditionary Learning Middle Schools on Academic Achievement](#); Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts (2011) [Impact of the Expeditionary Learning Model on Student Academic Performance in Rochester, New York](#)

³⁹ Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts (2011) [Expeditionary Learning: Analysis of Impact on Achievement Gaps](#)

better on standardized tests,⁴⁰ able to generate more problem solving strategies,⁴¹ and showed deeper understandings of content⁴² than students in traditional educational programs. Students in project-based learning programs also show better planning capabilities,⁴³ attitudes toward math,⁴⁴ historical thinking skills,⁴⁵ collaboration skills,⁴⁶ metacognitive skills,⁴⁷ critical thinking,⁴⁸ science skills,⁴⁹ and show a greater motivation to learn.⁵⁰

Design thinking, as a newer approach in K-12 learning, has fewer studies evaluating its effectiveness. However, preliminary research suggests that students show positive affect, are more engaged, and collaborate more during this learning.⁵¹

The planning team chose a multi- model approach for a couple of reasons. First, Renaissance Secondary School is meant to be the next logical step for students completing sixth grade at the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School and, as such, has very similar

⁴⁰ Chang, C. (2001) [Comparing the impacts of problem-based computer-assisted instruction and the direct-interactive teaching method on student science achievement](#); Finkelstein, N., Hanson, T., Huang, C. W., Hirschman, B., & Huang, M. (2010) [Effects of problem-based economics on high school economics instruction](#); Gallagher, S. A., & Stepien, W. J. (1996) [Content acquisition in problem-based learning: Depth versus breadth in American studies](#); Geier, R., Blumenfeld, P. C., Marx, R. W., Krajcik, J. S., Fishman, B., Soloway, E., & Clay-Chambers, J. (2008) [Standardized test outcomes for students engaged in inquiry-based science curricula in the context of urban reform](#). *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 45(8), 922-939; Gordon, P.R., Rogers, A.M., Comfort, M., Gavula, N., & McGee, B.P. (2001) [A taste of problem-based learning increase achievement of urban minority middle-school students](#). *Educational Horizons*, 79(4), 171-175; Mergendoller, J. R., Maxwell, N. L., & Bellisimo, Y. (2006) [The effectiveness of problem-based instruction: A comparative study of instructional methods and student characteristics](#). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, 1(2); Parker, W., Mosberg, S., Bransford, J., Vye, N., Wilderson, J., & Abbott, R. (2011) [Rethinking advanced high school coursework: Tackling the depth/breadth tension in the AP U.S. Government and Politics course](#). *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(4), 533-559.

⁴¹ Drake, K. N. & Long, D. (2009) [Rebecca's in the dark: A comparative study of problem-based learning and direct instruction/experiential learning in two fourth-grade classrooms \(Abstract\)](#). *Journal of Elementary Science Education*, 21(1), p 1-16; Finkelstein, Hanson, Huang, Hirschman & Huang (2010).

⁴² Gallagher & Stepien (1996).

⁴³ Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt (1992) [The Jasper series as an example of anchored instruction: Theory, program description and assessment data](#). *Educational Psychologist*, 27(3): 291-315.

⁴⁴ Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt (1992).

⁴⁵ Hernandez-Ramos, P., & De La Paz, S. (2009) [Learning history in middle school by designing multimedia in a project-based learning experience](#). *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 42(2), 151-173.

⁴⁶ Kolodner, J. L., Camp, P. J., Crismond, D., Fasse, B., Gray, J., Holbrook, J., Puntambekar, S., & Ryan, M. (2003) [Problem-based learning meets case-based reasoning in the middle-school science classroom: Putting Learning by Design into practice](#). *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 12(4), 495- 547.

⁴⁷ Kolodner, et al. (2003).

⁴⁸ Beckett and Miller .

⁴⁹ Kolodner, et al. (2003).

⁵⁰ Thomas, J. W. (2000). [A review of research on project-based learning](#); Walker, A. & Leary, H. (2009) [A problem-based learning meta analysis: Differences across problem types, implementation types, disciplines, and assessment levels](#). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, 3(1): 12-43.

⁵¹ Carroll, M., Goldman, S., Britos, L., Koh, J., Royalty, A., & Hornstien, M., [Destination, Imagination, and Fires Within: Design Thinking in a Middle School Classroom](#).

philosophical underpinnings. Second, using a few similar research based models allows us to choose the pieces that best fit our target population and our Design Principles.

Instructional Methods and Structure

Renaissance Secondary is committed to personalized learning for students, as outlined in the school's design principles. As such, Renaissance Secondary will use a variety of instructional methods to meet student needs and achieve its goals. Teachers will choose instructional practices based on student needs and the alignment of a given instructional practice with the content or skill involved. Small group and one-on-one instruction will be valued highly as a means for teachers to serve as facilitators in student learning.

Humanities/STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Instruction

The two Humanities/STEM blocks provide a large chunk of time in which students will engage in Learning Expeditions. Science, Social Studies, Technology, and Engineering content are included here, in addition to Language Arts and Math content. In addition to time to work on a project, students will also receive instruction in specific skills needed to complete a project or demonstrate learning.

Humanities/STEM instruction will also be facilitated through:

- Socratic Seminars
- Literature Seminar (Book Clubs)
- Math Instruction
- Arts Integration

In grades 7 and 8, teachers and students will be placed in teams of two teachers (one Humanities and one STEM) and 58 students (two classes of 29 students each.) The teaching team will construct this STEM/Humanities block according to curricular needs. For example, the team may choose to do a Socratic literature seminar every day for two weeks, or once a week for a 6-week block, based on what works best with that given content and group of students. Perhaps the learning expedition for that trimester requires a lot of dedicated project time, or students are particularly engaged and involved in a project, such that teachers (with student input) may choose to postpone the literature seminar to next week. This flexibility in scheduling allows for teachers to maximize learning time, rather than be bound to rigid schedules that may not meet the students' needs for a given unit of study.

In grades 9-12, students will have similar blocks of time but will have greater choice in the selection of what he or she will study. High School expeditions (integrated projects) will be divided, generally, into 4 nine week blocks, and students would be able to select their expeditions in much the same way students at a traditional high school would select

classes. Students, in collaboration with parents and advisory crew leader, would need to ensure that the expeditions chosen meet the graduation requirements. ([see F. Plan for Evaluating Student Performance](#) for discussion on high school credits and graduation requirements)

“Flex” Time - Foreign Language or Art Skills Instruction/Integration

Flex time intended to be Foreign Language (Rosetta Stone) three days per week and dedicated Arts instruction time (two days per week.) Art teachers will have dedicated time set aside during these Flex times for each team. For example, if a specific arts skill (e.g. sculpting) is required for a project, students will have dedicated time with the arts teachers during this flex time. This time is flexible in that if students are working on an arts-intensive project, they may use a full week of art instruction/project time one week and have a Foreign Language block for an entire week the following week.

Flex time may be used for additional STEM/HUMANITIES time, if the teachers and students deem appropriate. This is intended for time for specific skills instruction (Foreign Language/Art) and serves as a scheduling tool so that arts teachers have dedicated availability for each team. This could be the art teacher coming to the classroom or the students going to a dedicated art space, depending on the project, skill, or student needs.

Teachers will still be held accountable to the framework provided (i.e. they must meet state content standards and DCSD WCOs.) That said, teachers, as professionals in their field, will be allowed to determine (collaboratively with students) how to arrange their schedule to best meet these outcomes.

Passion Projects

Modeled after Google’s 20 time⁵², passion project time allows students dedicated time once per week to work on a project of their choosing, most likely unrelated to projects they are doing within a learning expedition. Teachers will serve as facilitators and resources for students, allowing them time to pursue their passions or explore new areas of interest.

Differentiation

A variety of instructional methods will be employed by Renaissance faculty to differentiate instruction according to student needs and interests. The curricula utilized for Renaissance (PBL, Expeditionary Learning (EL), Design Thinking) is highly differentiated in nature. Thus, differentiation will be an integral part of all learning at Renaissance Secondary.

⁵² **Brookhouser, Kevin. (2015)** The 20 Time Project: How educators can launch Google's formula for future-ready innovation www.20time.org

Teachers will facilitate differentiated learning according to student interests, learning styles, and academic needs.

❖ *Example of Differentiation in Learning Expeditions*

As an example, students may participate in an eighth grade learning expedition that relates to the Colorado state content standard in Science: *Human activities can deliberately or inadvertently alter ecosystems and their resiliency.*

❖ *Differentiation based on Student Interests*

Student choice in content will allow for ample differentiation in this case. Students who are interested in a particular ecosystem (e.g. the rainforest), may choose to study the Big Ideas related to this outcome through the lens of human activity as it relates to rainforest destruction and its consequences. Other students may choose to gain understanding toward this outcome as it relates to pollution and ozone, while developing strategies for decreasing the influence and effects of human activities on the environment. Still other students who may have an interest in mountain ecosystems may study the effects of tourism on mountain ecosystems.

❖ *Differentiation based on Academic Needs, Strengths, and Learning Styles*

Within the example regarding the effects of human activities on ecosystems, teachers will also differentiate instruction based on student needs. For example, students may all have a written product associated with this learning expedition. Perhaps one student would benefit from writing letters to key players involved in the activities, while another student who is a strong writer and needs to be challenged beyond a few letters, would be encouraged to write an editorial piece for a local newspaper regarding their chosen topic. Yet another student's needs may be best met by writing a research paper related to their topic and, of course, the Big Ideas.

Differentiation will also be utilized when a product is determined for the student's presentation of learning. Students gifted and/or interested in the arts may choose to utilize a play or a visual arts piece as part of their presentation, while others may employ a more mathematical approach involving charts, graphs, and other numerical understandings of the effects of human activities on an ecosystem.

❖ *Differentiation in Skills Instruction*

Data on the academic needs of students will drive teacher instructional choices. For example, math instruction will be integrated and highly differentiated. Thus, students who need additional instruction in mathematical problem solving involving multiple operations will receive instruction in that area through small group instruction, one-on-one conferencing, and online resources, such as Khan Academy.

One-on-One Conferencing and Small Group Instruction

Teachers will rely on one-on-one conferencing with students as both an evaluative and instructional tool. Individual instruction with students may be applicable in many scenarios. For example, teachers will meet with students to check-in and assist on independent projects and/or provide help with a particular skill. One-on-one conferencing allows for differentiation of instruction based on student needs.

Small group instruction will be used frequently for conferencing with students involved in projects and as a means for teaching specific skills. For example, teachers and students will identify specific math skills needed for a particular project and thus the teacher may facilitate small group instruction in that area. Small groups also will serve as a time to consult with a teacher on projects/expeditions and teachers will facilitate progress and identify needs. Teachers will also assist students in obtaining access to resources such as online content, fieldwork, and experts.

Implementation and Curriculum Monitoring

Renaissance Secondary's curriculum is inquiry based, problem/project-based, and authentic with respect to relevant issues and events. Because of the nature of the curriculum--teacher and student designed--and the intended depth and flexibility of the WCO, monitoring the implementation of our curriculum for purposeful support is critical. "Purposeful support" means that the intent for monitoring curriculum is to provide teachers and students with the level of support they need to design the very best inquiry based, problem/project-based, and authentic curriculum possible. Monitoring curriculum will be shared by all, and the primary responsibility rests with school leadership (Principal, PLS, other members of the leadership team) Renaissance will use the following support structures (including but not limited to) to monitor the curriculum:

- Curriculum Mapping
- Monthly School/Faculty Meetings
- At Least Monthly Observation and Conversation
- Weekly Professional Learning Communities Meetings
- Meetings, as needed, Outside of the Professional Learning Communities

Curriculum mapping:

During paid summer planning time, the curriculum map will outline the year's learning fully anticipating, of course, last minute changes. The reality of authentic curriculum is that what is relevant changes with time, opportunity and student/teacher interests. Renaissance Secondary's curriculum mapping efforts must be flexible in content and true to the WCO.

Monthly School/Faculty meetings:

Curriculum progress will be shared and updated. The curriculum map will be evaluated and adjusted.

At Least Monthly Observation and Conversation:

Dialogue between crew leaders, students, the Principal and the PLS will take place at least monthly. The purpose of this informal conversation/observation is to surface successes and concerns about curriculum implementation early so that successes can be repeated and concerns remediated.

Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Meetings:

Weekly meetings of the PLCs provide a more formal structure than the conversation/observation that will be organized, monitored and facilitated by the PLS. This is an opportunity to analyze student work for alignment with curriculum learning targets and outcomes both in and out of a learning expedition, and an opportunity evaluate and adjust the curriculum map.

Meetings as Needed Outside of the PLC:

These meetings provide another chance look at student evidence of learning to analyze student evidence of understanding for alignment with curriculum learning targets and outcomes both in and out of a learning expedition. These opportunities can be within a teaching team, with the PLS, or across disciplines. The configuration of the team is driven by the purpose of the analysis.

Assessment

All CDE Regulatory requirements apply to the school. Renaissance will meet those requirements through rigorous instruction and assessment aimed at supporting students for success in meeting the required outcomes. **Renaissance will monitor progress toward meeting these requirements through the results of formative, interim, and summative assessments and evaluations** including standardized tests, classroom exams, teacher observation, student self-report, portfolio or project-based assessments as well as CDE methods and processes for measuring and monitoring growth.

Renaissance will employ a wide assortment of ongoing authentic assessments. The range of assessments reflects the school's belief that student success requires producing real work products, solving real problems, and making effective oral and written presentations to a variety of audiences. The purpose of the school's assessment program is to provide information for:

1. Curriculum planning, determining and planning instructional practices.
2. Special needs and interests of students.

3. Feedback to students regarding their individual progress.
4. Program evaluation and accountability.
5. Students to be self-assessors of their own work.
6. Communication with parents and the larger community.

The assessment practices are firmly grounded in academic research.

Research informs us that for project-based learning to be successful, there must be multiple opportunities for feedback, reflection, and time for students to revise their work.⁵³ Inquiry-based learning is most productive when teachers provide students with frequent assessments and redirection through project benchmarks and reflection activities.⁵⁴ Providing students with feedback that they act upon produces significant learning gains.⁵⁵ Frequent feedback enables teachers to adapt their instruction to target students' learning needs, while providing students with information to develop their work. Students come to understand that learning is the result of cumulative effort. This, in turn, improves their resilience and academic achievement.⁵⁶

Barron and Darling-Hammond recommend providing students with several opportunities to review and revise their project work (as a way of delivering a polished performance) and providing comments rather than grades during these assessments to focus attention on the quality of work rather than the worker. For example, students might write a research plan, listing the questions they will need to address and sources they will read, before heading to the library or conducting an Internet search.⁵⁷

Schools are also advised to utilize end goals that reflect professional practice to assess student learning. These include public exhibitions, portfolios, and presentations, which signal the social value and relevance of student work.⁵⁸

Assessment data guides all instructional decision making, therefore, Renaissance Secondary School teachers will use summative, formative, and interim assessments to determine areas of strengths and next steps for all learners.

To accomplish the goals of the assessment program, Renaissance will utilize a range of assessments, including the state mandated formal assessments, as well as assessments designed to determine how well students are meeting the higher level WCO.

⁵³ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

⁵⁴ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

⁵⁵ Black & William (1998); Hattie (2008).

⁵⁶ Dweck (2002).

⁵⁷ Mergendoller & Thomas (2005).

⁵⁸ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

It is important to note that Renaissance is committed monitoring data collection and analyzing and using analyzed data to impact instruction and programming. Specifically, monitoring the success of our approach will include but not be limited to the following:

- Required state tests: part of the Renaissance Secondary School summative assessment package.
- Summative assessments in mathematics, literacy, and learning expeditions: also part of the Renaissance Secondary School summative assessment package, used to document individual learning and to impact programming.
- Portfolio process including Presentations of Learning (POLs), Digital Portfolios, Project Rubrics, and Public Exhibitions of Work: primarily as a reflection tool for students to assess growth and establish next steps, and a way to publically acknowledge accomplishments and serve as evidence for critical thinking and follow through.
- Senior project: The senior project will take the place of a portfolio senior year. It is a comprehensive project with service outcomes, designed and implemented by the student as a way to publically acknowledge skills and application and serve as evidence for critical thinking and follow through.
- Interim data collection including formalized reading and mathematics assessments: this data is collected at least three times a year and used to impact programming and individual student next steps.
- Formative data collection will include daily checks for understanding given by teachers. Data used by students and teachers to identify strengths and impact next steps in learning.

State Assessments

Renaissance Secondary plans to use the PARCC standardized test, administered twice a year, and the CMAS given once a year. These tests provide summative data on student academic achievement in the areas of literacy, math, science, and social studies.

Formative Assessments

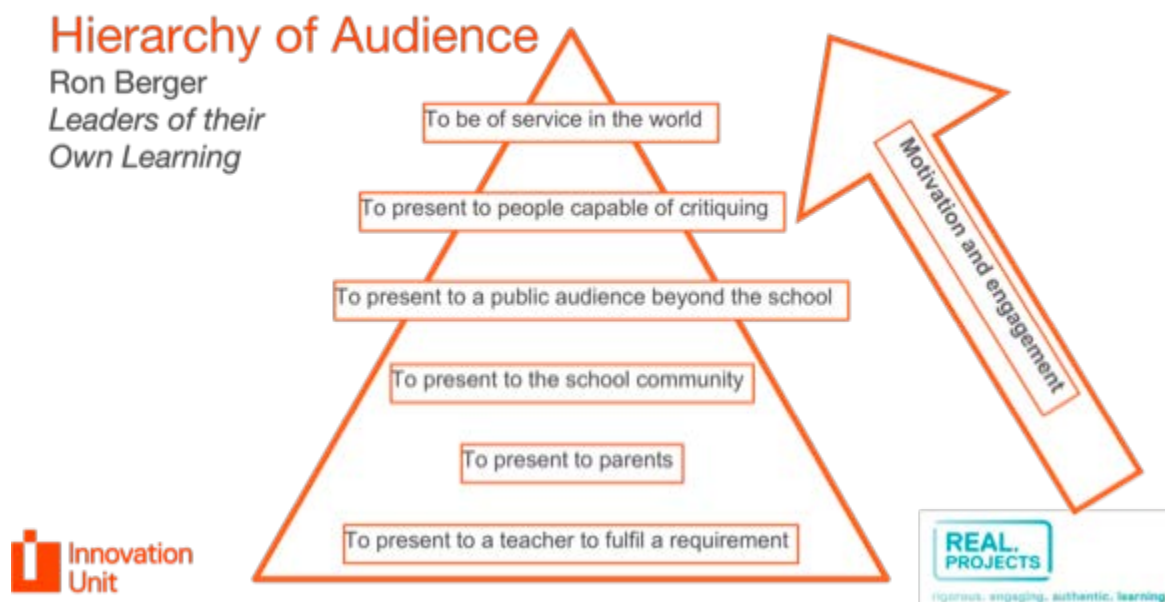
Renaissance Secondary will use iReady for Math and Reading assessments given three times per year. iReady is a research-based, state-approved assessment and provides interim information on student progress to teachers to inform instruction and identify student strengths and areas of need such that teachers can support individual learners as indicated. The diagnostic component of this program also contributes to its usefulness.

Teacher-made performance assessments will be used to evaluate the Douglas County WCO through integrated studies. These authentic performance assessments are evaluated via rubrics and are used internally to inform classroom instruction and provide teachers, students and parents with a picture of student progress. In addition, the four C's

(creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) and the 21st century skills will also be assessed using district approved rubrics. These rubrics, created collaboratively with the students, will connect the authentic, rigorous academic program to the high quality, critical thinking tasks in which Renaissance Secondary students will be engaged.

Authentic Assessments That Support Students' Success

In addition to assessments found at traditional schools, Renaissance will utilize more authentic assessments matched to the specific problem based academic program. These assessments include: Presentations of Learning, Digital Portfolios, Project Rubrics, and Public Exhibitions of Work. Research supports the idea that engagement and motivation are directly proportional to the authenticity of the audience for student projects.⁵⁹



Presentations of Learning (POLs)

A Presentation of Learning is a formal presentation given by a student to a panel of peers, community members, administration, teachers, and parents on a timeline determined by the teaching team:

- Public Exhibition of Work – Students in all grades have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, and answer community questions

⁵⁹ **Berger, Ron. (2014).** Leaders of their Own Learning: Transforming Schools through Student-Engaged Assessment.

- Reflective Portfolio POL – Presentation that shows growth, work samples, reflects on strengths and areas of improvement
- Project-Specific POL – Occurring at the conclusion of specific projects and can take many possible forms such as an award ceremony, a documentary video presentation, a student debate, the performance of a play, a visual art exhibition, etc.
- Personal Growth POL – A transitional POL; reflective presentation given at end of year; required for promotion to next grade level

Before a POL, students practice their presentations in their advisory groups. Advisory groups focus on presentation skills and give feedback to each student on how they can revise and improve their POL before the final presentation. Each type of POL must incorporate a reflective piece regarding the learning goals.

Digital Portfolios

Every Renaissance Secondary student will be required to create a personal digital portfolio. Although students may take creative license in the design of their portfolio, each portfolio must contain the following: articulation of future/educational objectives, samples of work, Colorado State Standard areas and Douglas County WCO met, and reflections on their learning.

Public Exhibitions of Work

The most authentic of the assessment tools used at Renaissance will be through publicly exhibiting the work of students.

Project Rubrics

Projects will be evaluated utilizing rubrics created by teachers and students. Renaissance Secondary faculty will utilize standards for creating rigorous rubrics in accordance with best practices, such as those provided by Jonathan Mueller⁶⁰ and the George Lucas Foundation's review of how students and teachers understand the standards against which work will be measured.⁶¹ Teachers will use appropriate resources such as those provided

⁶⁰ **Mueller, Jonathan (2014).** North Central College. Naperville, IL. [Assessing Critical Thinking Skills](#). Summary.

⁶¹ The George Lucas Education Foundation. How Students and Teachers Understand the Standards Against Which Work will be Measured: How Do Rubrics Help? <http://www.edutopia.org/teaching-module-assessment-rubrics>

by the Buck Institute for Education⁶² and Rubistar's free digitally interactive rubric creator for project-based learning activities.⁶³

Teachers will also utilize specialty rubric design templates such as those available for assessing collaboration, presentations, or research papers, critical thinking, and higher-order thinking.

- A Collaboration Rubric is for assessing how well an individual student works as a member of a team during a project.⁶⁴
- A Presentation Rubric is for assessing oral, content, organization, presence and digital portfolio presentation skills.⁶⁵
- A Research Paper Rubric is for assessing content, mechanics, organization of sources, and illustration.⁶⁶
- A Critical Thinking Rubric is for assessing communication techniques, material application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis⁶⁷

Proposed Authentic Assessment Map for Grades 7-12

Seventh grade students at the Renaissance Secondary will be required to do the following either during or at the end of their seventh grade year:

- Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays, deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

AND

- Build a reflective Portfolio POL or “working” portfolio – a portfolio that shows growth, work samples, self-reflection on strengths and areas of improvement. Required for promotion to next grade level.

⁶² The Buck Institute for Education. Project Design Rubric.

http://bie.org/object/document/project_design_rubric

⁶³ Rubistar. Rubrics for Project Based Learning Activities. <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

⁶⁴ <http://www.multiage-education.com/multiagelessons/authors/collabrubric.html>

⁶⁵ **McCullen, C.** North Carolina State University. <http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html>

and Utah Education Network. http://www.uen.org/Rubric/rubric.cgi?rubric_id=9393

⁶⁶ http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf

http://www.winona.edu/AIR/resourcelinks/Science_Rubrics.pdf

<http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/resrub.html>

⁶⁷ **Peirce, W.** Designing Rubrics for Assessing Higher Order Thinking (2006)

<http://academic.pgcc.edu/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/Designingrubricsassessingthinking.html>

Eighth grade students at the Renaissance Secondary will be required to do the following either during or at the end of their eighth grade year:

- Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

AND

- Formal portfolio presentation to an outside audience. Students will be required to self assess learning from 7th grade and 8th grade and build a portfolio that represents learning strengths and next steps. Students will formally present their portfolios to an outside panel. Required for promotion to next grade level.

Ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students at the Renaissance Secondary will be required to do the following either during or at the end of their ninth-eleventh grade years:

- Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

AND

- Build a reflective Portfolio POL or “working” portfolio – a portfolio that shows growth, work samples, self-reflection on strengths and areas of improvement. Required for promotion to next grade level.

Capstone Project

Beginning in tenth and/or eleventh grade, students will begin planning and drafting a Capstone Project that is to be completed by the end of twelfth grade. A Capstone Project is a multifaceted body of work that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. *An example of a Capstone Project could be:*

- A portfolio of the student’s best work — curriculum or research-based that features a set of experiments, learning experiences, development of process/product organized around a central problem or issue including a component of service or service learning

Capstone projects will include:

- Problem based evidence of service or service learning
- Presentation to an outside panel

Data Driven Professional Development and Ongoing Curriculum Development

For a discussion on initial training and development of teachers at Renaissance Secondary, see [Section I: Employees](#), which provides a detailed discussion and timeline for teacher training.

The content of Professional Development at Renaissance will be driven by data gathered in a variety of ways and analyzed through the lens of student social, emotional and academic growth. Student understanding is most often a reflection of teacher understanding, so by analyzing student data, school leaders are also gathering information about teacher understanding, and teacher needs will drive professional development content.

Data will drive the content of workshops, the focus of PLC meetings and other professional development offerings. The Principal and/or PLS shall serve as the lead contact for professional development. However, there will be avenues for all the faculty and staff to impact the content of professional development.

Professional development at Renaissance Secondary will take place weekly, including but not limited to:

- PLC
- Faculty meetings
- Teaching team meetings
- On-campus workshops including content delivered by certain Renaissance Secondary faculty and other expert speakers
- Off-campus workshops/conferences

Data used to drive professional development and the continuous improvement of the educational program will include the analysis of student work and the ongoing analysis of the implementation of curriculum. The school will utilize a framework/schedule for data analysis, which includes curriculum mapping, monthly school meetings and observations, weekly meetings of PLC, and other meetings as needed.

The faculty at Renaissance Secondary will also analyze the data from student formative and interim assessments to help determine faculty needs and inform professional development plans. For example, the level of student successes, indicated through daily and monthly student data, will help the faculty identify and guide next steps for students, as well as help

identify both strengths and “holes” present in faculty understanding and practice. Using data and data analysis in this way allows faculty to utilize professional development to move forward in the most targeted way possible.

Information that allows for the adjustment of student programming - sequence of learning opportunities, pacing of curriculum - will come from summative assessments, both performance assessments and standardized, state assessments.

Self-reflection generated by Renaissance Secondary faculty will also be used to inform professional development.

Significant professional development will take place in the spring and summer of 2017 in anticipation of the school opening. Teaching teams and faculty will meet and be immersed in the kinds of educational experiences they will be expected to provide for students. Faculty will be engaged in doing groundwork for learning expeditions, Socratic seminars, and math workshops. This means the leadership of the Renaissance Secondary School will provide learning experiences for teachers that mirror the learning experiences teachers will be planning for students. Teachers will have lived examples of the curriculum as students. Subsequently, teachers will design learning experiences for students.

Performance Management Plan for Staff Development, Mentorship, Retention and Evaluation

Research says that at the school level, classroom instruction and school leadership are crucial to student achievement.⁶⁸

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

--Leadership Matters--National Association of Elementary School Principals

Staff Development

Plans for ongoing Staff Development are discussed in a previous part of [Section E: Educational Program](#) and in detail in [Section I: Employees](#).

⁶⁸ National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals (2013). [Educational Leadership. A Framework for Shared Leadership](#). Darling-Hammond (2000). [Teacher Quality and Student Achievement](#). *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8, 1.

Regular Evaluation

Teacher evaluation is the responsibility of the Principal. Principal evaluation is the responsibility of the Board. Rubrics for evaluation are located in [Section I: Employees](#). The Principal is the lead contact for regular evaluation.

Leadership Team

“Instead of looking to the principal alone for instructional leadership, we need to develop leadership capacity among all members of the school community.”⁶⁹

A Framework for Shared Leadership

--Educational Leadership

A commitment to students at Renaissance Secondary drives the plan to mentor and retain high quality teachers. The Principal will be provided the tools he/she needs to lead Renaissance Secondary, including a leadership team. The leadership team will consist of faculty and service will be voluntary and change on a rotating basis. All teachers will have the opportunity to serve on the leadership team. There will be two permanent positions on the leadership team--that of the Principal and the PLS. This team will be responsible for gathering data and making recommendations with respect to the overall school professional development plan.

Mentorship

Research indicates that mentorship is essential for the retention of high quality teaching staff.⁷⁰ Mentoring in the form of Building Resource Teachers and Professional Learning Specialists has long been a successful part of teacher mentoring in Douglas County.⁷¹

“.... investment in teacher support, on an ongoing basis, is one of the most useful gifts a teacher can receive over the span of their career. For over 20 years, New Teacher Center has proven that teacher support results in retention, leadership development and an improvement in student success.”

--Ten Reasons to Have a High-Quality Teacher Induction Program

New Teacher Center

⁶⁹NAESP, NASSP (2013).

⁷⁰ **Barlin, D. (2010).** [Better Mentoring, Better Teachers](#). Education Week.

New Teacher Center (2014). [Ten Reasons to have a high-quality teacher Induction Program](#).

⁷¹ http://www1.dcsdk12.org/ResourceLibrary/StaffDev_BRTinfo.pdf

“When mentors are well-selected, well-trained, and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers become great.”

--Better Mentoring, Better Teachers

Education Week

Mentoring at Renaissance Secondary will be designed according to the needs of the individual teacher. Mentoring topics will be related to and support:

- Mission Statement
- Design Principles
- Educational program
- Principles of good instruction
- General philosophy
- Growth
- Connection to student outcomes
- Personal or professional goals

Professional Learning Specialist

A Professional Learning Specialist (PLS) is a dedicated position at Renaissance. The qualifications of a PLS include, but are not limited to:

- Successful teaching experience in Middle or High School
- Interest and passion for adult learners, and instructional leadership as demonstrated by: extensive reading, professional development, successful experience as a mentor.

Renaissance Secondary will have an in-school mentoring program. The PLS will serve as the lead for the program. The PLS will have the primary role of:

- Mentoring and/or choosing mentors for individual teachers
- With the Principal and school Leadership Team, analyzing school wide data, designing, and in some instances, delivering professional development.
- Tracking mentoring opportunities for each staff member, arranging for mentors as appropriate, differentiating mentoring for individual staff through various levels of support and instructional coaching
- The lead contact for Renaissance Secondary Mentorship Program

Timeline

The timeline for the mentorship program in year one will be:

Summer of 2017

- Leadership team meets--develops possible school goals

- PLS initiates contact with mentees, sets up meeting schedule, explores possible content and delivery

August 2017

- PLS establishes mentoring schedule, arranges for mentors as appropriate
- Leadership meets as appropriate throughout the school year

October 2017

- PLS evaluates mentorship program and makes necessary adjustments

January 2018

- PLS evaluates mentorship program and makes necessary adjustments

April 2018

- PLS evaluates mentorship program and makes necessary adjustments

May 2018

- PLS evaluates mentorship program, topics, organization, and makes plans for the coming summer and school year 2018-19

Staff Professional Standards

All staff at Renaissance Secondary will, of course, be held to high professional standards. The planning team has adopted a description of professional standards, a process to give clarity to what is meant by professional standards, and a way to assess professional development and grow in professionalism. The description of professional standards comes from the DCSD Teacher Evaluation document. DCSD defines professionalism as a teacher demonstrating professional growth and development, leadership, and professionalism, with demonstration being the keyword. In addition, Renaissance will define professionalism as:

- Teachers working collaboratively for the benefit of students
- Teachers creating a professional growth plan that is aligned to
 - Mission Statement
 - Design Principles
 - Educational program
 - Principles of good instruction
 - General philosophy
 - Growth
 - Connection to student outcomes
- Teachers demonstrating application of professional learning to practice
- Teachers differentiating communication with families based on the individual needs of the student
- Teachers demonstrating professional and ethical conduct including following all laws, district policies and school procedures.

Clarity will come from staff embedded in-services where faculty come to a common understanding about how they define professional standards and what that “looks like” and “sounds like.” Clarity and assessment will come from discussion and self-reflection. Assessment and growth flow from teachers setting rigorous and attainable goals.

The Principal, PLS, and the school leadership team will be responsible for establishing, modeling, and supporting professional standards.

The State of Colorado teacher evaluation rubric will be used in determining the effectiveness of teachers. The rubric may be found in [Appendix E-4](#).

Calendar and Daily Schedule

Proposed 2017-2018 Calendar

In order to facilitate collaboration with other local middle and high schools, Renaissance Secondary will follow the DCSD Conventional Calendar.⁷² This will also allow for families with students at multiple schools to have children on the same school calendar.

Students will be enrolled for a total of 173 contact days, which exceeds the state mandated 160 contact days. After accounting for passing periods and lunch/break times, Renaissance middle and high school students will have a total of 6.5 contact hours per day for a total of 1,124.50 contact hours per year. The state of Colorado mandates 1,056 contact hours, thus students will exceed the required hours. The additional 13 days and 68.5 hours will provide an adequate buffer to make up for any lost time due to snow days, emergency closures, etc.

Schedule

Daily Schedule

Renaissance’s school day will begin later than most traditional middle and high schools. The school hours will be 9am-5pm. Research strongly supports a later start for middle and high school students, citing early start times as a hindrance to student performance.⁷³ The natural sleep patterns of middle and high school students are not aligned with traditional early start times and thus have been implicated in a host of problems for students.⁷⁴

⁷² DCSD 2017-2018 Conventional Calendar

<https://www.dcsdk12.org/sites/default/files/calendar/FutureYearsCalendars/2017-2018%20Conventional%20Calendar%20FINAL.pdf>

⁷³ **Schaffhauser, D. (2015).** [Early School Start Times Hurt Students, Hinder Performance](#). THE Journal.

⁷⁴ **American Academy of Pediatrics (2014).** [Let Them Sleep: AAP Recommends Delaying Start Times of Middle and High Schools to Combat Teen Sleep Deprivation](#).

A late arrival to school also means a late dismissal. The planning team recognizes that this may present a challenge for students who are involved in after school activities that start before 5pm. For this reason, the proposed schedule places elective activities at the end of the school day, which include physical education and arts electives, among others. Students who are involved in after school sports or arts activities (e.g. music, dance) will be allowed to apply for an exemption from the last X-Block of the day. Written proof of the extent of their involvement in said activity will be required for an exemption to be granted.

Renaissance Secondary will use flexible scheduling to accommodate the needs of students involved in a project-based learning environment.

Renaissance Secondary will not have discrete 50-minute classes as one would encounter in a traditional secondary school setting. Instead, students will learn through integrated, authentic learning expeditions. Diving deep into a project requires more flexibility than 50 minute increments provide. Renaissance Secondary's schedule allows for teachers and students (within a structural framework) to collaboratively choose how to use time in a meaningful way, such that the needs of the learning community are met and the schedule is appropriate for the content, skills, and tasks in which students are engaged. In much the same way that professionals work on projects in increments appropriate to the task at hand, Renaissance Secondary students will not have to limit themselves to hour-long blocks of time before moving on to the next "subject."

See [Appendix E-5](#) for Sample Schedules broken down by grade level and team.

A "Day in the Life" of a Renaissance Secondary Student

The individualized nature of Renaissance Secondary's education plan means that schedules and experiences will vary greatly amongst students based on their grade level, educational needs, and interests. A few examples of potential schedules are provided below in order to illustrate how this might look at the level of an individual student on a given day. The last column indicates the WCO (mapped by the DCSD to the Colorado State Standards) met through the particular class or series of learning experiences.

Georgia O., 7th Grade

9:00	Advisory Crew	<p>Georgia is still getting used to her new school. As a seventh grader, this is her first year at Renaissance Secondary. She likes Advisory Crew because there are fewer kids and she feels more comfortable speaking up. Today the students are discussing what X-Blocks they will choose for the next session. Riley, a ninth grader Georgia has come to know pretty well, encourages her to run cross-country.</p> <p>Georgia also has 1:1 time with her advisory crew leader. This gives Georgia the support she needs to make some individual decisions, set some goals, and get needed feedback on learning so far.</p>	
9:40	Learning Expedition-- Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Humanities	<p>Georgia and her team, through a series of learning experiences (text, video, discussion, Skype) about the Syrian refugee crisis, have identified an issue --- the need for low-cost, sustainable, portable boats for transporting people to safer ground.</p> <p>Georgia works on her design for her boat in the expedition, "Ship Shape." (See Appendix E-2) She and three other students are using an engineering design process to develop a hull design fulfilling a complicated set of design constraints. They are working with a free education license of Autodesk Inventor to create a 3D model which they will print a prototype of on a 3D printer.</p> <p>Next week, her team will build the ship model and sail it. Their prototype and trial results will be shared with the international relief agency the students have partnered with.</p>	<p><i>Mapped to DCSD WCO</i></p> <p><i>Language Arts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strategically create meaning through complex writing and speaking. -Formulate a position supported by the quantitative method -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Evaluate multiple perspectives to construct resolution <p><i>Mathematics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a process to solve a problem -Look for and make use of structure -Use appropriate tools strategically <p><i>Science</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate the relationship between ethical decisions and their impact on a global society -Solve problems using models -Evaluate the relationship between multiple causes and effects to formulate and defend a prediction of multiple outcomes

			<p><i>Social Studies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate how perspectives and bias generate and shape global citizenry -Demonstrate the process of inquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Identify a problem --Generate questions --Justify possible solutions to the problem <p><i>Middle School Technology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create/explain original ideas for an intended audience -Assess viable solutions to obtain maximum results -Combine risk-taking as a valid component to the design process -Evaluate available resources to formulate a plan -Synthesize solutions to problems -Develop perseverance throughout the design process while revising, analyzing, evaluating and reflecting -Develop respect, cooperation and flexibility to accomplish a goal -Collaborate as a productive member of a team -Supports ethical use of information and technology
11:45	Lunch	Georgia enjoys getting served lunch by her brother and his best friend Tanner. It's nice to see them taking on some responsibility and serving others. Georgia looks forward to her service in the kitchen.	
12:20	Break	Georgia plays soccer with the 7-9th grades intramural team and kicks the ball around with some friends from the team during this break.	
12:40	Flex Time (Arts/Foreign Language)	Today, Georgia's crew meets with the Visual Arts teacher to hone their skills in technical drawing and Autodesk Inventor as part of their "Ship Shape" expedition.	<i>See Middle School Technology</i>
1:30	Learning Expedition--	Georgia and seven other students are reading <u>Life of Pi</u> , as part of the	<i>See MS Language Arts</i>

	Integrated Humanities, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math	same “Ship Shape” expedition. Today is Georgia’s turn to lead the literature seminar. She's especially excited because they will be live streaming and live blogging with a 9th grade class in a neighboring school district who is also reading <u>Life of Pi</u> right now."	
3:10	X-Block 1	Sculpture: Georgia has the chance to work with a professional sculptor as part of the school’s partnership with the Greater Castle Rock Arts Guild.	
4:05	X-Block 2	Yoga: Taught through a grant from Inner Connections Yoga of Castle Rock and the Recreation Center, this is one of several classes designed to introduce healthy lifestyle options to kids.	PE -Create plans to achieve personal well-being -Evaluate the combination of skills to modify body movements/spatial awareness in dynamic situations
5:00	Dismissal		

Tanner D., 9th grade

9:00	Advisory Crew	Along with community building and 1:1 support, Tanner’s advisory crew takes part in a young entrepreneur/ innovator guest speaker’s series. His advisory group is exposed to a variety of design processes ideas, and projects. The idea is to open students’ eyes to how others identify a need and create a viable design, and to show students a wide variety of possible interest areas.	
9:40	Learning Expedition-- Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Humanities	Tanner’s class is spending the semester in the Agriculture Expedition. This Learning Expedition is grounded in community and service. Tanner and 3 other students go to the kitchen to help the chef prepare the community meal, since it is the second Friday of the month. He is learning how to bake bread after learning last week the chemical process that causes yeast to make bread rise.	Mapped to DSCD WCO Science -Evaluate system functions and consequences to propose improvements or solutions -Evaluate the relationship between multiple causes and effects to formulate and defend a prediction of multiple outcomes -Create solutions and measure their impact on

			<p>the global society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Solve complex problem using multiple models -Demonstrate the process of inquiry
11:45	Lunch	Tanner helps serve lunch to students, faculty, and staff and then joins a table for community lunch.	
12:20	Break	Tanner and his friends play football outside.	
12:40	Learning Expedition-- Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Humanities	Tanner meets his class in the outdoor classroom near the farm. They are studying flow rates and determining the amount of water needed for each crop. After their discussion, Tanner is given time to read. He and his fellow students are reading Grapes of Wrath, and have also read historical, economical, and scientific accounts of the dust bowl and Great Depression. Tomorrow's Socratic Seminar discussion during literature seminar will be about the effect of drought on the economy during the Great Depression.	<p>See HS Science</p> <p>English Language Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strategically create meaning through complex writing and speaking -Formulate a position supported by the qualitative method -Demonstrate the process of inquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve ambiguity synthesizing alternatives through the inquiry process -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Synthesize multiple perspectives to drive solutions <p>Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate the ethics of citizenship -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Evaluate the past events and generate understanding of current events to propose solution to achieve future objectives
2:15	Flex Time (Arts/Foreign Language)	Since today is Friday, Tanner's flex time is dedicated to working on a personal project in the makerspace. Tanner has volunteered to work on set construction for a musical theater piece that is being produced in an X-Block.	

3:10	X-Block 1	Chess: this X-Block is open to students with a wide range of experience. Students have the opportunity to tutor one another, play against students with comparable ability and work with adult chess mentors identified through the Castle Rock Recreation Program.	
4:05	X-Block 2	Rocketry	
5:00	Dismissal	While the school day is officially over, Tanner is so excited about his rocket design that he takes it home to work on more this evening with his mom.	

Johnny C. 10th grade

8:20	Alarm clock rings	Johnny wakes up. He was up late last night practicing with his band. He plays the guitar. His bandmates go to a nearby school and they have already been in class for half an hour. He feels rested and ready to learn.	
9:00	Advisory Crew		
9:40	Expedition	Johnny's current expedition is studying various forms of renewable energy and which might be most economically feasible on the front range of Colorado. Today his crew is doing fieldwork with Solar City, learning about how they evaluate a residential home for placement of solar panels and the potential for electricity generation. His Integrated Math teacher told him to pay particular attention to the geometry involved in determining where - and whether - to place solar panels on each part of the roof.	<p>Mapped to DCSD WCO</p> <p><i>Science</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate system functions and consequences to propose improvements or solutions -Evaluate the relationship between multiple causes and effects to formulate and defend a prediction of multiple outcomes -Evaluate and modify solutions and measure the impact on the global society -Solve complex problems using multiple models -Demonstrate the process of inquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve ambiguity synthesizing alternatives through the inquiry process -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others <p><i>Mathematics</i></p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a process to solve a problem -Reason abstractly and quantitatively -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Model with mathematics -Use appropriate tools strategically -Attend to precision -Look for and make use of structure -Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning -Demonstrate the process of inquiry
12:30	Lunch		
1:05	Break		
1:25	Math Lab (M-Th) Passion Projects (F)	Usually, Johnny takes part in a 10th grade integrated <i>Math Lab</i> , but since today is Friday, he is working in service of his <i>Passion Project</i> which is the creation and maintenance of the school's recycling program. Today, he is putting the finishing touches on a school-wide survey for students to find out how the program is working for them and asking for feedback on what changes they'd like to see. Johnny checks his email and sees an email from his contact at Pro Disposal confirming his visit to their recycling facility next week and the opportunity to interview the Director of Operations.	
2:20	Literature Seminar (Tu/Th) Foreign Language (M/W/F)	<p>Johnny works at his own level and pace using <i>Rosetta Stone Spanish</i>. He loves foreign language and is almost fluent. He is considering taking a more advanced class at a nearby community college next semester, as he is close to completing all five levels of Rosetta Stone.</p> <p>Johnny also participates in his 15-minute, once a week Skype chat with his video-pal Isabella in Senora Cruz's class in Costa Rica.</p>	<p>World Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strategically construct meaning through conversation -Interpret written and spoken language -Critique structure to determine the relationship between the practices, products, and perspectives of culture -Develop and refine personal viewpoints as related to heritage and target language -Compare and contrast between viewpoints that are unique to target language and culture

			-Combine other disciplines through target language
3:10	X-Block 1	<p><i>Costa Rica Community Service Trip Planning:</i> He and 8 other students studying Spanish developed a plan to go to Costa Rica to do some community service over Spring Break. They will be tutoring English language for some Costa Rican school-age kids, offering seminars in language skills such as writing for older students and adults. Students will also be painting and otherwise upgrading the structure that serves as the local school building. Probably most importantly, students will participate in the exchange of language and culture.</p> <p>A teacher has agreed to help create a four week X-Block as a time to plan the details of the trip and create a plan for financing through fundraising. They recently sent letters and have made oral and visual presentations to various churches and service organizations, and have received nearly half of the money needed to fund their trip. Today, they are brainstorming other fundraising ideas that will help them get to their goal.</p>	
4:05	X-Block 2	Makerspace	
5:00	Dismissal		

Janice J., 11th grade

9:00	Advisory Crew		
9:40	Learning Expedition-- Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Humanities	<p>Janice is finishing her performance assessment of the last Learning Expedition she was involved in. Janice chose to demonstrate her understanding through visual arts. Part of her assessment involves curating a painting representing the struggle for civil rights. She hangs it on the wall in the hallway, making sure the lighting is just right. She takes a picture for her digital portfolio. She will present her portfolio during her Presentation of Learning at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Mapped to DCSD WCO</p> <p>Art -Create intentional perspective within a body of work</p> <p>Social Studies -Justify and defend your role as a contributor to the global society -Demonstrate the process of inquiry: -Create expert</p>

			<p>analysis through the inquiry process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Construct and defend personal and global theories based on research -Defend a solution of a global initiative in a quantitative and a qualitative method -Create and defend a sustainable solution that accounts for cooperation and competition <p>English Language Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strategically create meaning through complex writing and speaking -Defend metacognitive process in a quantitative and qualitative method -Demonstrate the process of inquiry: -Create expert analysis through the inquiry process -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Justify and defend solutions to socially responsible problems from multiple perspectives
12:30	Lunch	<p>Janice chooses to attend today's R-Talk while she eats lunch. R-Talks are modeled on TED Talks and occur bi-monthly. Today's talk is from a college admissions counselor discussing the relative merits of taking a gap-year and some of the opportunities available to students if they decide to take one. Janice makes a note to herself to learn more about City Year as it sounds like something she might love.</p>	

1:05	Break	On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Janice takes advantage of the flexible schedule and heads to Arapahoe Community College for a Calculus class as part of the concurrent enrollment program.	Mathematics -Create a process to solve a problem -Reason abstractly and quantitatively -Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -Model with mathematics -Use appropriate tools strategically -Attend to precision -Look for and make use of structure -Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning -Demonstrate the process of inquiry
1:25	Math Lab (M-Th) Passion Projects (F)	Calculus at ACC (Tuesdays and Thursdays)	See Mathematics
2:20	Literature Seminar (Tu/Th) Foreign Language (M/W/F)	This semester, Janice won't participate in Literature Seminar, in order to accommodate her concurrent enrollment at ACC.	
3:10	X-Block 1	SAT/College Prep: Janice and other juniors are preparing to take the SAT. Today she is taking a practice test of one of the sections. Two weeks from now, the students in this X-Block will be meeting with college counselors.	
4:05	X-Block 2	Musical Theater: Janice is taking the opportunity to explore her passion for music and theater through participation in the school's winter musical.	
5:00	Dismissal		

Yearly Schedule

At Renaissance Secondary, the school year will be divided into semesters (for learning expeditions) and 4-5 week blocks for X-Blocks. The schedule will allow for deep explorations, projects, products, etc. with flexibility to tailor the schedule to the needs of teachers and students. See [Attachment E-6](#) for a sample yearly schedule showing how expeditions, fieldwork, presentations of learning, and adventure education will be accommodated throughout the year.

Sample Course Descriptions

Integrated Math

Integrated Math I is a problem based math course for topics in secondary mathematics education. Topics introduced in Integrated Math provide the foundation students require for future success in high school mathematics, critical thinking, and problem solving. Integrated Math I is designed to combine some of the basic principles of Algebra, Geometry, and Statistics. Students will deepen and extend their understanding of linear relationships and be introduced to exponential functions, modeled through data. Students will use properties and theorems involving congruent figures to expand and broaden understanding of geometric knowledge. Students will experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that draws on their ability to make sense of problem situations, and will develop the ability to explore and solve mathematical problems, think critically, work cooperatively with other students and communicate mathematical ideas clearly.

Integrated Math II is designed to combine some of the intermediate principles of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Probability. Topics include Quadratic Functions, Similarity and Congruence, Circles, Basic Trigonometric Functions and Probability. The Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practices will be addressed throughout the course.

Integrated Math III completes the three-course sequence of Integrated Mathematics and is designed to further explore the principles introduced in Math 1 and Math 2 in preparation for enrolling in advanced mathematics courses. This course brings together knowledge acquired in the previous two courses and uses it as a bridge to expand into more complex territory. Students will expand their knowledge of linear, exponential, and quadratic functions to polynomials, rationals, and trigonometric functions. Students will also extend their previous work with circles to other conic sections, their understanding of trigonometry to all triangles, and experiences with data as they solve sophisticated problems. Students will experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that draws their ability to make sense of problem situations, and will develop the ability to explore and solve mathematical problems, think critically, and work cooperatively with other students and communicate mathematical ideas clearly.

Pre-Calculus: The major purpose of Pre-Calculus is to prepare the student for modern courses in college mathematics. It unifies the student's previous learning in Algebra and Geometry and gives the student knowledge of how and why various mathematical concepts are developed. The course content is comprised of coordinate Geometry, theory of equations, quadratic equations and inequalities, functions and exponents and logarithms.

Major emphasis is placed on introductory calculus. It is intended for students who have successfully completed three years of Integrated Math.

Statistics: The course is intended for students with a reasonable background in mathematics. It supports student access to technology activities using computers (MINITAB) or calculators (TI-82). It is to provide an overview and summary of concepts from real-world problems using real data sets which include data collection, quality control, average and variation, elementary probability, Poisson and geometric distributions, normal distributions, sampling distribution, confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, requisition and correlation, chi-square and f distributions.

Project/Learning Expedition Samples

Renaissance Secondary will not offer traditional courses, other than in mathematics, to its students. Rather, learning will be accomplished through integrated projects or expeditions. These learning expeditions will be designed by experienced teachers based, in part, on the interest of students. Therefore, the planning team is not able to include all of the expeditions and projects students may experience in this application. However, [appendix E-2](#) includes sample projects.

High School Vertical Alignment

Learning Expeditions are intentionally integrated across disciplines. Therefore, one Learning Expedition will include content standards from a variety of academic areas. High School Academic Standards for the State of Colorado and Douglas County School District are not delineated by grade level.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/gradelevelbooks>

Grade	Colorado Academic Standards	Learning Expedition (s) Examples
9	Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking 1. Oral Expression and Listening 2. Reading for All Purposes 3. Writing and Composition 4. Research and Reasoning Science 1. Physical Science Students know and understand common properties, forms, and	Learning Expedition #1 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic, students explore the physics topic: matter and energy. Students also consider the impact of historical events on the topic. For example; The current and compelling topic of; Hydraulic Fracturing in Colorado would offer opportunities for exploration in matter and energy, the related historical content/context and geography surrounding Hydraulic Fracturing and other energy sources. Data

	<p>changes in matter and energy.</p> <p>Social Studies Students solve problems, make decisions and analyze issues from multiple perspectives as a responsible member of society</p> <p>History 1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history 2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures</p> <p>Geography 1. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world 2. Examine places and regions and the connections among them</p> <p>Economics 2. ** Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL)</p>	<p>collection and interpretation in this Expedition requires students to work like scientists in the field. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>Learning Expedition #2 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic students explore the physics topic: Newton's laws of motion and gravitation. Students also consider the impact of historical events on the topic. For example; the current and compelling topic of deep space exploration, and long term survival in deep space would offer opportunities to explore the laws of motion, and gravitation, and the related historical content and context surrounding deep space exploration and survival. Data collection and interpretation in this expedition requires students to work like scientists in the field. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This Learning Expedition provides a vehicle for creativity and innovation, that shared, becomes the basis for service learning.</p> <p>**Economics has a second part; Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL). Exploration of this topic would be taken up in Advisory, or X block.</p>
10	<p>Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking 1. Oral Expression and Listening 2. Reading for All Purposes 3. Writing and Composition 4. Research and Reasoning</p> <p>Science 2. Life Science Students know and understand the characteristics and structure of living things, the processes of</p>	<p>Learning Expedition #1 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic, students explore the Life Science topics; characteristics and structure, life processes, and interaction with the environment. For example; The current and compelling topic of; Genetic Engineering would offer opportunities for exploration in the characteristics and structure, life processes, and interaction with the environment. Data collection and interpretation in this expedition requires students to understand the science and use research, and evidence to eventually support a personal</p>

	<p>life, and how living things interact with each other and their environment</p> <p>Social Studies Solve problems, make decisions and analyze issues from multiple perspectives as a responsible member of society</p> <p>History 1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history 2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures</p> <p>Geography 2. Examine places and regions and the connections among them</p> <p>Economics 2. ** Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL)</p>	<p>argument. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>Learning Expedition #2 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic students explore the Social Studies topics of; interpreting history and analyzing patterns of change over time, and the geographical topic of connections between places and regions. For example; The compelling topic of nation building provides opportunities for students to analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time, both locally, nationally and internationally. Data collection and interpretation in this expedition require students to work like historians and social scientists. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>**Economics has a second part; Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL). Exploration of this topic would be taken up in Advisory, or X block.</p>
11	<p>Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking 1. Oral Expression and Listening 2. Reading for All Purposes 3. Writing and Composition 4. Research and Reasoning</p> <p>Earth Systems Science Students know and understand the processes and interactions of Earth's systems and the structure and dynamics of Earth</p>	<p>Learning Expedition #1 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic, students explore the Earth Systems Science topics; processes and interaction of earth's systems, structure and dynamics of Earth and other objects in space. Students also consider the impact of historical events on the topic. For example; The current and compelling topic of; searched for more planets around stars beyond our own Sun, discovering patterns and features that indicate what types of planets are likely to form around different kinds of stars in order to make planet hunting more efficient and help us</p>

	<p>and other objects in space</p> <p>Social Studies Students solve problems, make decisions and analyze issues from multiple perspectives as a responsible member of society</p> <p>Economics 1. Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy 2. ** Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL)</p>	<p>better understand our own solar system's formation, would offer opportunities for exploration in process and interaction of Earth's systems, and structure and dynamics of Earth and other objects in space. The related historical content/context and geography surrounding Earth Systems Science would give students opportunities to make connections between history and science. Data collection and interpretation in this expedition require students to work like scientists in the field. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>Learning Expedition #2 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic students explore the economics topic of; resource allocation; For example; the current and compelling topic of: hunger and food allocation gives students the opportunity to explore scarcity, allocation, individual choice, market interaction, and public policy. Data collection and interpretation in this expedition require students to work like economists in the field. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This Learning Expedition provides a vehicle for creativity and innovation, that shared, becomes the basis for service learning.</p> <p>**Economics has a second part; Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL). Exploration of this topic would be taken up in Advisory, or X block.</p>
12	<p>Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking 1. Oral Expression and Listening 2. Reading for All Purposes 3. Writing and Composition 4. Research and Reasoning</p> <p>Social Studies Solve problems, make decisions</p>	<p>Learning Expedition #1 Through the lens of a current, compelling topic students explore the civics topics of; rights, roles and responsibilities of citizens, and origins, structure and functions of governments. For example the compelling topic of; regime change gives students the opportunity to study rights, roles and responsibilities of citizens, and origins, structure and functions of governments.</p>

	<p>and analyze issues from multiple perspectives as a responsible member of society</p> <p>Civics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens 2. Analyze the origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens <p>Economics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. ** Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL) 	<p>Data collection and evaluation in this expedition require students to work like historians and political scientists in the field. Research, presentation, and service learning require reading, writing, listening, and speaking.</p> <p>**Economics has a second part; Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions (PFL). Exploration of this topic would be taken up in Advisory, or X block.</p> <p>*** 12th grade students will also work on their Capstone Project---a Learning Expedition of their own design.</p>
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High School Credits

Renaissance faculty will assign high school credits by mapping curriculum to a more traditional transcript. The planning team expects that many, if not most, students matriculating from Renaissance Secondary will be applying to colleges. Therefore, high school students at Renaissance Secondary will have the ability to earn all credits necessary for entry to Colorado colleges and universities. See Section **F: Plan for Evaluating Student Performance** for further discussion on high school credits and higher education requirements.



F. PLAN FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A core belief of the Renaissance Secondary School is that providing a rigorous, differentiated education for each student requires multiple methods for determining individual abilities. The Renaissance Secondary School will measure academic success through the performance of each student using a well-rounded approach to assessment and individual attention. The goals identified here are based on full implementation CMAS and the PARCC.

All CDE Regulatory requirements apply to the school. Renaissance will meet those requirements through rigorous instruction and assessment aimed at supporting students for success in meeting the required outcomes. Renaissance will monitor progress toward meeting these requirements through the results of formative, interim, and summative assessments and evaluations including standardized tests, classroom exams, teacher observation, student self-reporting, portfolio or project-based assessments as well as CDE methods and processes for measuring and monitoring growth.

The Renaissance Secondary School will participate in all state-mandated assessments, including CMAS and PARCC to assess student and program performance. The assessment approach may be augmented by the administration to include additional tests with curriculum, instruction, standards and Renaissance Secondary School mission in mind.

Colorado Measures of Academic Success - CMAS

The CMAS exams, required by the state, will be given to students in grade 7 in social studies and grades 8 and 11 in science. These assessments are computer based unless alternative methods must be provided in compliance with an IEP. Renaissance will monitor state and district assessment requirements and standards as the CMAS is rolled out to schools to ensure Renaissance is aligned to current state and district assessment goals and standards.

CMAS is used to “measure students’ mastery of the standards and the complex thinking and other critical skills students need to be successful in school and in life” which fulfills the mission of the Renaissance Secondary School.

Renaissance Secondary will also administer the PARCC performance-based assessments (PBA) for grades 7 through 8, in math, and English language arts.

Renaissance Secondary will use the iReady test. iReady interim results will be used by individual classroom teachers, grade-level teams, and the school as a whole to gauge student progress in math and language arts to determine if the student is on-track with learning at their grade level.

ACCESS (WIDA)

For any Renaissance Secondary School students identified as English Language Learners (ELL), Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited-English Proficient (LEP) in grades 7 through 12, ACCESS for ELLs will be administered. The purpose of the assessment is to monitor individual student progress in English Language Proficiency (ELP) on an annual basis. The assessment also serves as one criterion in determining when ELLs have attained language proficiency comparable to that of their English-proficient peers. This assessment will also be critical in determining if the Renaissance Secondary School attains the targeted goals as defined in [Section C: Academic Growth Gaps](#).

Renaissance will employ a wide assortment of ongoing authentic assessments. The range of assessments reflects the school's belief that student success requires producing real work products, solving real problems, and making effective oral and written presentations to a variety of audiences. The purpose of the school's assessment program is to provide information for:

1. Curriculum planning.
2. Determining and planning instructional practices.
3. Special needs and interests of students.
4. Feedback to students regarding their individual progress.
5. Program evaluation and accountability.
6. Students so that they can be self-assessors of their own work.
7. Communication with parents and the larger community.

Academic Research Supporting Authentic Assessments

The assessment practices at the Renaissance Secondary School are firmly grounded in academic research.

Research informs us that for project-based learning to be successful, there must be multiple opportunities for feedback, reflection, and time for students to revise their work.⁷⁵ Inquiry-based learning is most productive when teachers provide students with frequent assessments and redirection through project benchmarks and reflection activities.⁷⁶ Providing students with feedback that they act upon produces significant learning gains.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

⁷⁶ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

⁷⁷ Black & William (1998); Hattie (2008).

Frequent feedback enables teachers to adapt their instruction to target students' learning needs, while providing students with information to develop their work. Students come to understand that learning is the result of cumulative effort. This, in turn, improves their resilience and academic achievement.⁷⁸

Barron and Darling-Hammond recommend providing students with several opportunities to review and revise their project work (as a way of delivering a polished performance) and providing comments rather than grades during these assessments to focus attention on the quality of work rather than the worker. For example, students might write a research plan, listing the questions they will need to address and sources they will read, before heading to the library or conducting an Internet search.⁷⁹

Schools are also advised to utilize end goals that reflect professional practice to assess student learning. These include public exhibitions, portfolios, and presentations, which signal the social value and relevance of student work.⁸⁰

Assessment data guides all instructional decision making, therefore, Renaissance Secondary School teachers will use summative, formative, and interim assessments to determine areas of strengths and next steps for all learners.

To accomplish the goals of the assessment program, Renaissance will utilize a range of assessments, including the state mandated formal assessments, as well as assessments designed to determine how well students are meeting the higher level WCO.

It is important to note that Renaissance is committed monitoring data collection and analyzing and using analyzed data to impact instruction and programming. Specifically, monitoring the success of our approach will include but not be limited to the following:

- Required state tests: part of the Renaissance Secondary School summative assessment package.
- Summative assessments in mathematics, literacy, and learning expeditions: also part of the Renaissance Secondary School summative assessment package, used to document individual learning and to impact programming.
- Portfolio process including POLs, Digital Portfolios, Project Rubrics, and Public Exhibitions of Work: primarily as a reflection tool for students to assess growth and establish next steps, and a way to publically acknowledge accomplishments and serve as evidence for critical thinking and follow through.
- Capstone Project: The Capstone Project will take the place of a portfolio senior year. It is a comprehensive project with service outcomes, designed and implemented by

⁷⁸ Dweck (2002).

⁷⁹ Mergendoller & Thomas (2005).

⁸⁰ Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008).

the student as a way to publically acknowledge skills and application and serve as evidence for critical thinking and follow through.

- Interim data collection including formalized reading and mathematics assessments: this data is collected at least three times a year and used to impact programming and individual student next steps.
- Formative data collection - daily checks for understanding given by crew leaders. Data is used by students and crew leaders to identify strengths and impact next steps in learning.

State Assessments

Renaissance Secondary plans to use the PARCC standardized test, administered once a year, and the CMAS given once a year. These tests provide summative data on student academic achievement in the areas of literacy, math, science, and social studies.

Formative Assessments

Renaissance Secondary will use iReady for Math and Reading assessments given three times per year. iReady is a research-based, state-approved assessment and provides interim information on student progress to teachers to inform instruction and identify student strengths and areas of need such that teachers can support individual learners as indicated. The diagnostic component of this program also contributes to its usefulness.

Teacher-made performance assessments will be used to evaluate the DCSD WCO through integrated studies. These authentic performance assessments are evaluated via rubrics and are used internally to inform classroom instruction and provide teachers, students and parents with a picture of student progress. In addition, the four C's (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) and the 21st century skills will also be assessed using district-approved rubrics. These rubrics, created collaboratively with the students, will connect the authentic, rigorous academic program to the high quality, critical thinking tasks in which Renaissance Secondary School students will be engaged.

Authentic Assessments That Support Students' Success

In addition to assessments found at traditional schools, Renaissance will utilize more authentic assessments matched to the specific problem based academic program at Renaissance. These assessments include: POLs, Digital Portfolios, Project Rubrics, and Public Exhibitions of Work.

Presentations of Learning (POLs)

A Presentation of Learning is a formal presentation given by a student to a panel of peers, community members, administration, teachers, and parents timeline determined by the teaching team:

1. Public Exhibition of Work – Students in all grades have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, and answer community questions;
2. Reflective Portfolio POL – Presentation that shows growth, work samples, reflects on strengths and areas of improvement;
3. Project-Specific POL – Occurring at the conclusion of specific projects, and can take many possible forms such as an award ceremony, a documentary video presentation, a student debate, the performance of a play, a visual art exhibition, etc.; and
4. Personal Growth POL – A transitional POL; reflective presentation given at end of year; required for promotion to next grade level.

Before a POL, students practice their presentations in their advisory group. Advisory groups focus on presentation skills and give feedback to each student on how they can revise and improve their POL before the final presentation. Each type of POL must incorporate a reflective piece regarding the learning goals.

Digital Portfolios

Every Renaissance student will be required to create a personal digital portfolio. Although students may take creative license in the design of their portfolio, each portfolio must contain the following: articulation of future/educational objectives, samples of work, Colorado State Standard areas and DCSD WCO met, and reflections on their learning.

Public Exhibitions of Work

The most authentic of the assessment tools used at Renaissance will be through publicly exhibiting the work of students.

Project Rubrics

Standards for creating rigorous rubrics can be found:

A summary of Jon Mueller's book, *Assessing Critical Thinking Skills*⁸¹

Rubistar software (free), allowing for digitally interactive rubric⁸²

⁸¹ <http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/rubrics.htm#top>

The George Lucas Education Foundation's review of how students and teachers understand the standards against which work will be measured⁸³

The Buck Institute for Education⁸⁴

Specialty rubrics design templates are also available:

A Collaboration Rubric is for assessing how well an individual student works as a member of a team during a project⁸⁵

A Presentation Rubric is for assessing oral, content, organization, presence and digital portfolio presentation skills⁸⁶

A Research Paper Rubric is for assessing content, mechanics, organization of sources, and illustration⁸⁷

A Critical Thinking Rubric is for assessing communication techniques, material application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis⁸⁸

Possible Authentic Assessment Map--Grades 7-12

A 7th grade student at the Renaissance Secondary School will be required to do the following either during or at the end of his/her 7th grade year:

1. Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show

⁸² <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

⁸³ <http://www.edutopia.org/teaching-module-assessment-rubrics>

⁸⁴ http://www.bie.org/tools/useful_stuff/rubric_for_project_design/

⁸⁵ http://www.bie.org/tools/useful_stuff/pbl_starter_kit_21st_century_skills_rubrics/
<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/tidepoolunit/Rubrics/collrubric.html>
<http://www.multiage-education.com/multiagelessons/authors/collabrubic.html>

⁸⁶ http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf
<http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html>
http://www.uen.org/Rubric/rubric.cgi?rubric_id=9393

⁸⁷ http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf
http://www.winona.edu/AIR/resourcelinks/Science_Rubrics.pdf
<http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/resrub.html>

⁸⁸ http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf
<http://academic.pgcc.edu/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/Designingrubricsassessingthinking.html>
https://my.wsu.edu/portal/page?_pageid=177,276578&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

2. Build a reflective Portfolio POL or “working” portfolio – a portfolio that shows growth, work samples, self-reflection on strengths and areas of improvement. Required for promotion to next grade level.

An 8th grade student at the Renaissance Secondary School will be required to do the following either during or at the end of his/her 8th grade year:

1. Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

2. Formal portfolio presentation to an outside audience. Students will be required to self assess learning from 7th grade and 8th grade and build a portfolio that represents learning strengths and next steps. Students will formally present their portfolios to an outside panel. Required for promotion to next grade level.

A 9th-11th grade student at the Renaissance Secondary School will be required to do the following either during or at the end of his/her 9th-11th grade year:

1. Public Exhibition of Work – Students have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, answer community questions, and show evidence of service or service learning. Usually occurs in relation to a Learning Expedition or other integrated project.

2. Build a reflective Portfolio POL or “working” portfolio – a portfolio that shows growth, work samples, self-reflection on strengths and areas of improvement. Required for promotion to next grade level.

Capstone Project:

Beginning in the middle of 11th grade, students begin planning and drafting a Capstone Project that is to be completed by the end of 12th grade. A Capstone Project is a multifaceted body of work that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. *An example of a Capstone project could be;*

- A portfolio of the student’s best work — curriculum or research-based; that
- Features a set of experiments, learning experiences, development of process/product organized around a central problem; or issue including a component of service or service learning

Capstone projects will include

- Problem based evidence of service or service learning
- Presentation to an outside panel

Using data to facilitate professional development and continuous improvement in education program

The content of Professional Development is driven by data gathered in a variety of ways and analyzed through the lens of student social, emotional and academic growth. Student understanding is most often a reflection of teacher understanding, so by analyzing student data one also gathers information about teacher understanding, and teacher needs drive professional development content.

Data will drive the content of workshops, the focus of PLC meetings and other professional development offerings. The Principal and/or Professional Learning Specialist shall serve as the lead contact for professional development. However, there will be avenues for all the faculty and staff to impact the content of professional development.

Professional development at the Renaissance Secondary School will take place weekly, including but not limited to:

- PLC (Professional Learning Communities)
- faculty meetings
- teaching team meetings
- on campus workshops including content delivered by certain Renaissance Secondary School faculty and other expert speakers
- off-campus workshops/conferences

Data used to drive professional development and the continuous improvement of the educational program will include the analysis of student work and the analysis of the implementation of curriculum. Analysis of student work and the analysis of the implementation of the curriculum are ongoing. Following is a framework/schedule for data analysis:

Curriculum mapping – done during paid summer planning, the curriculum map will outline the year’s learning fully anticipating, of course, last minute changes. The reality of authentic curriculum is that what is relevant changes with time, opportunity and student/teacher interests. Our curriculum mapping efforts must be flexible in content and true to the WCO.

Monthly school/faculty meetings – in which curriculum progress is shared, updated, and the curriculum map evaluated and adjusted.

At least monthly observation and conversation – between crew leaders, students, the Principal and the PLS. The purpose of this informal conversation/observation is to surface successes and concerns about curriculum implementation early so that successes can be repeated and concerns remediated.

Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) – a more formal structure than the conversation/observation that will be organized, monitored and facilitated by the PLS. This is an opportunity to analyze student work for alignment with curriculum learning targets and outcomes both in and out of a learning expedition, and an opportunity evaluate and adjust the curriculum map.

Meetings as needed outside of the PLC – another chance to look at student evidence of learning to analyze student evidence of understanding for alignment with curriculum learning targets and outcomes both in and out of a learning expedition. These opportunities can be within a teaching team, with the PLS, cross discipline--the configuration of the team is driven by the purpose of the analysis.

The Faculty of the Renaissance Secondary School will also analyze the data from student formative and interim assessments to help determine faculty needs and inform the adjustment of professional development plans. For example the level of student successes, indicated through daily and monthly student data, will help the faculty identify and guide not only next steps for students, but will help identify both strengths and “holes” present in faculty understanding and practice. Using data and data analysis in this way allows the school to utilize professional development to move the faculty forward in the most targeted way possible.

Information that allows teachers to adjust their student programming – sequence of learning opportunities, pacing of curriculum – will come from summative assessments, both performance assessments and standardized, state assessments.

Renaissance will also use self-reflection generated by faculty to inform professional development.

Significant professional development will take place in the spring and summer of 2017 in anticipation of the school opening. Teaching teams and faculty will meet and be immersed in the kinds of educational experiences the school expects teachers to provide for students. Faculty will be engaged in doing groundwork for learning expeditions, Socratic seminars, and math workshops. This means the leadership of the Renaissance Secondary School will

provide learning experiences for teachers that mirror the learning experiences teachers will be planning for students. Once teachers have lived examples of the curriculum as students, teachers will begin to design learning experiences for students.

Assessment Timeline

The school administration and faculty will develop a comprehensive schedule for the annual and on-going assessments that assures adequate testing and preparation time that also accommodates and is not disruptive to regular class instruction. The assessment plan reflects a comprehensive list of assessments. The assessment plan includes a full schedule of assessments with respect to interim and summative assessments. Formative assessments are given daily.

The plan includes provisions for literacy testing, interventions, formative assessments, and summative assessments. The plan also addresses how information will be used to improve instructional practice and content.

The identified formal assessments will ensure the Renaissance Secondary School's compliance with the Colorado accreditation requirements as articulated by the Colorado School Performance Framework. The Renaissance Secondary School will follow the accreditation procedure for DCSD.⁸⁹

Data Management & Data Support for Teachers

The Renaissance Secondary School recognizes the need to have a comprehensive data dashboard system that can be used to compile, sort, aggregate and assist with the analysis of a variety of kinds of academic and financial data. The Renaissance Secondary School will purchase a data management system, to manage student information, state data, assessments, and student plans such as IEP, ILP, and MTSS/RtI. The Renaissance Secondary School will purchase data management services from DCSD, including Infinite Campus.

Academic Data Tracking

Any data tracking system chosen would be designed to accomplish the following tasks:

- Allow teachers to compile data from multiple sources in a user-friendly format.
- Allow data to be sorted in a variety of ways to benefit teacher and student
- Allow data comparisons.
- Create dashboards for classrooms to highlight areas and students in need.

⁸⁹ <https://eboardsecure.dcsdk12.org/attachments/7a7ead83-e183-4d13-9112-6ef3190356f3.pdf> (pages 18-21)

- Create reports for teachers, parents, board members, authorizer, and other stakeholders.
- Provide appropriate data needed to guide professional development decisions

Student Information Systems, Interim Assessments, & Data Management System

The Renaissance Secondary School will implement Infinite Campus as its student information system. Several successful charter schools, in addition to most DCSD schools, use the Infinite Campus solution. This will allow all students and parents who are currently using the Infinite Campus system to continue using the same system and to have the entire student data easily transferred to the Renaissance Secondary School.

Through the required purchased services included in the budget, DCSD will provide all aspects of Infinite Campus to Renaissance Secondary School. Infinite Campus will meet all data management needs of the school.

Sample Testing Schedule

Assessment	Month Administered	Type of Assessment	Purpose
WAPT	Within first 30 days of school or 2 weeks of enrolling	Mandated ELL assessment for students new to school	Initial ELL ability diagnostic
ACCESS	Beginning of school year and in January	Mandates ELL assessment for all ELL students	Monitor year over year progress of ELLs.
PARCC	March/April	State mandated assessment for school accountability	School accountability tool, assessing by grade level an alignment of curriculum to Common Core State Standards.

			Measures school's longitudinal growth year over year as well as school's according to the Colorado Growth Model.
CMAS	April	State mandated assessment of student performance in science and social studies.	School accountability tool, assessing by grade level students' performance in science and social studies curriculum as aligned to CAS.
iReady	Three times a year	Research-based assessment in Math and Language arts with diagnostic component	Tool for collecting interim data in Math and Reading
PSAT	Spring	replaces PARCC for 10th graders	
SAT	Spring	replaces PARCC for 11th graders	

Longitudinal Data Analysis

The Principal, PLS, and teachers will collect longitudinal student data as it becomes available and will analyze it no less frequently than 3 times per year. Longitudinal student academic data will be shared frequently with the governing board (3 times per year) and with the teaching staff (3+ times per year). The Renaissance Secondary School will send home an annual School Report once each year to inform parents and community members of how students are doing as a group and what the improvement goals will be for the

upcoming year. The School Report will be posted to the website and also shared with community members, the governing Board, DCSD and other stakeholders. Additionally, data from all assessments, standardized and in-house, formative and summative, will be regularly shared with and analyzed by teachers in order to drive professional development and future instruction.

Data Management Responsibilities

As the success of the Renaissance Secondary School students depends upon every adult within the school, and every student in the school, responsibility for tracking and managing data is spread among the school stakeholders: Principal, PLS, teachers, and, most importantly, students. The Principal, PLS, teachers, and Board of Directors have obvious roles in data management:

Teachers

- Administer standardized tests, analyze results and make correlating adjustments to instruction
- Maintain daily, weekly, and monthly formative assessments and progress monitoring tools
- Use professional development time to compare horizontal and vertical achievement results
- Create and implement MTSS/RtI plans in accordance to data analysis results.
- Regularly report student achievement data to Principal and PLS
- Work in collaboration with Principal, leadership team members, and faculty to create calendars and curriculum maps

PLS

- Support teachers in analyzing results and making adjustments to instruction
- Support teachers in developing systems for progress monitoring
- Support teachers in using professional development time to analyze data
- Work in collaboration with Principal, leadership team members, and faculty to create calendars and curriculum maps

Principal

- Work in collaboration with PLS, leadership team members, and faculty to create calendars and curriculum maps
- Monitors and ensures assessment occurs
- Reports assessment data to the Board of Directors and the public

The Board of Directors

- Monitor school performance as indicated by assessment data and outcomes
- Ensure compliance with the school's Accountability Plan and Unified Improvement Plan
- Make policy adjustments as needed

Students

Students have a very important and often understated or just missed-all-together role in data management, analysis, and making adjustments to learning steps. To fully leverage the power of data analysis and its use, it is critical that students be intimately involved.

"The practice is most effective as an ongoing part of a classroom culture in which students are always collecting and analyzing information in order to improve."

--Ron Berger Leaders of Their Own Learning

The ways students use data include but is not limited to:

- Students use their classwork as a source for data, analyzing strengths, weaknesses, and patterns to improve their work.
- Students regularly analyze evidence of their own progress, track their progress on assessments and assignments, analyze their errors for patterns, and describe what they see in the data about their current level of performance.
- Students use data to set goals and reflect on their progress over time and incorporate data analysis into student-led conferences.

At the Renaissance Secondary School, students will be an important and equal partner in collecting, analyzing and using data to plan for learning. Students will track their data, analyze data for trends and patterns, reflect on data to gain insight into themselves as learners, and use all the information gained to plan steps to move forward.⁹⁰

Graduation Requirements and Post Secondary Readiness

Post-Secondary Readiness Goals

⁹⁰ <http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/09/08/how-students-can-be-partners-in-data-driven-approaches-to-learning/>
<https://insidetheclassroomoutsidethebox.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/students-using-data-to-drive-their-own-learning/>
<http://www.theleaderinmeblog.org/how-to-use-student-data-as-a-tool-in-self-directed-learning/>

Capstone Project:

Beginning in the middle of 11th grade, students begin planning and drafting a Capstone Project that is to be completed by the end of 12th grade. A Capstone Project is a multifaceted body of work that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. *An example of a Capstone Project could be:*

- A portfolio of the student's best work — curriculum or research-based
- Featuring a set of experiments, learning experiences, development of process/product organized around a central problem; or issue including a component of service or service learning

Capstone Projects will include

- Problem based evidence of service or service learning
- Presentation to an outside panel

Students will also have the option of concurrent enrollment. Concurrent enrollment provides students the opportunity to enroll in postsecondary courses, simultaneously earning high school and college credit.

OR

The option to earn an industry certificate. An industry certificate is a credential recognized by business and industry. Industry certificates measure a student's competency in an occupation, and they validate a knowledge base and skills that show mastery in a particular industry.

Additional Graduation Requirements

All seniors must demonstrate through a portfolio/project process that they have met the WCO as measured by rubric, reflection, and presentation. The project, presented March of senior year, allows for students to revise and represent in April, if portfolio or project needs extensive revision.

High School Graduation Credit Requirements

Though CCHE, CDE, and School Districts are developing standards for alternative demonstration of proficiency to be accepted in lieu of course completion, CCHE currently requires the following courses for college admission. Renaissance recognizes the need to graduate students who meet the CCHE's admission requirements and is committed to maintaining high school graduation requirements in line with the CCHE, CDE, and school district changes moving forward. The Renaissance leadership team and board will keep abreast of changes in alternative means of proficiency demonstration and modifications to

college admissions requirements such that Renaissance students will meet the applicable requirements.

CCHE Admission Requirements⁹¹

Academic Area*

English**	4 years
Mathematics (Must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or equivalents)***	4 years
Natural/Physical Sciences (two units must be lab- based)***	3 years
Social Sciences (at least one unit of U.S. or world history)	3 years
World/Foreign Language****	1 year
Academic Electives*****	2 years

* CCHE, CDE, and School Districts are developing standards for alternative demonstration of proficiency to be accepted in lieu of course completion. For course guidelines see paragraph 4.01 of the [Admissions Standards Policy](#).

**Two units of ESL English may count for Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR) requirements when combined with two units of successfully completed college preparatory English.

⁹¹ <http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/academics/admissions/coursecompletion.html>

***College-preparatory ESL mathematics/science courses that include content and academic rigor/level comparable to other acceptable courses may satisfy HEAR requirements.

****[American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#) courses can count toward the Word/Foreign Language requirement.

*****Acceptable Academic Electives include additional courses in English, mathematics, natural/physical sciences and social sciences, foreign languages, art, music, journalism, drama, computer science, honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate courses, and appropriate Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

DCSD Graduation Requirements

<http://www1.dcsdk12.org/secondary/dchs/docs/879803.pdf>

Awarding Credits

Renaissance will award credits in alignment with DCSD's policy (per Graduation Requirements Document)⁹² for doing so. Thus to earn credit for a given content area course, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Content Standards for that content area. Documentation that these standards have been achieved will be through teacher judgment based on District assessments, end-of-course tests or other measurements.

Students who do not achieve these standards will be enrolled in courses or programs as prescribed by the school principal and faculty.

Each learning expedition will include credits based upon the content and subjects covered in that expedition. Credits will be awarded by qualified faculty, and based on the Colorado State Content Standards and Douglas County World Class Outcomes. For example, the expedition Ship Shape, shown in [Appendix E-2](#), may be a 5 week-long expedition. Students may receive .2 credits for Language Arts, .1 credit for Social Studies, .3 Science credits, .1 Mathematics credit, and .1 Art credit.

In addition, students would receive Mathematics credit for the math labs as well as PE and elective credits for voyages and X-Blocks.

Grading System

Quarterly Grades

Renaissance will assign traditional grades on a four-point scale for all academic courses (A, B, C, D and F). The use of grades is an important indicator of student mastery of a particular subject and will transfer easily onto a traditional high school transcript. Report cards will be delivered at the end of each quarter.

⁹² <http://www1.dcsdk12.org/secondary/dchs/docs/879803.pdf>

Renaissance will require each student to earn a grade of C- or higher in all academic courses. Students who do not achieve this minimum grade requirement may be required to attend summer school or to repeat the grade. The Principal or his or her designee is responsible for determining whether a student is required to repeat a grade.



G. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A copy of the Renaissance Secondary five-year budget is provided in [Appendix G-1](#). A digital copy also accompanies this application.

Budget Assumptions

Enrollment

The chart below details Renaissance Secondary's enrollment projections and the amount of Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) and other funding that results in Years 1 - 5.

GRADE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
7	116	116	116	116	116
8	116	116	116	116	116
9	116	116	116	116	116
10	116	116	116	116	116
11		116	116	116	116
12			116	116	116
Total # Students	464	580	696	696	696
Fees	\$528,960	\$661,200	\$793,440	\$793,440	\$793,440
State and Local Revenue	\$3,697,152	\$4,689,393	\$5,711,736	\$5,799,117	\$5,889,412
Total Revenue	\$4,226,112	\$5,350,593	\$6,505,176	\$6,552,557	\$6,682,852

Staffing Plan

STAFF	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Administration	3	4	4	4	4
STEM/Humanities Teachers	16	20	24	24	24
Arts Teachers	3	4	5	6	6
Clerical/Facilities	3.5	4	5	5	5
Support	.5	2	3	3	3
Total	26	34	41	42	42

Revenue

Revenue shall be provided from the following sources:

- Colorado State Per Pupil Funding (\$7,183 per full-time equivalent, per year). It is assumed that Per Pupil Funding shall increase 2% per year.
- Capital Construction (\$255 per full-time equivalent, per year).
- Douglas County Mil Levy funds (\$530 per full-time equivalent, decreasing each year by 5%).
- Student fees (\$1200 per student, per year, assuming a 90% collection rate, which includes waivers for low income students, see below for discussion of student fees).

The optional student fees are consistent with fees charged by DCS Montessori for similar programming. The optional student fees charged are itemized as follows:

- \$500 adventure education fee (to fund adventure education program)
- \$200 supply fee to fund the supplies required for projects
- \$125 fieldwork fee
- \$100 technology fee
- \$75 book fee
- \$75 activity fee to fund the X-Blocks (however, competitive sports will be charged based on participation and will be revenue neutral to the budget)
- \$125 art fee

The fees are designed to be all-inclusive and pay for all expenses throughout the year, rather than asking parents to pay for fieldwork or adventure education experiences as they arise.

Even though the fees are consistent with some other charter schools, Renaissance recognizes that the fees charged to students are higher than most neighborhood schools. While the fees are necessary to support the unique programming at Renaissance, the planning team does not want any student or family to be unable to attend the school due to their ability to pay. Therefore, Renaissance has budgeted to provide full and partial scholarships to students so that everyone may participate in all aspects of the Renaissance experience, including its Adventure Education program. Renaissance has budgeted to provide scholarships to 10% of the student population to fund the fees.⁹³

⁹³ The figure of 10% relies on the demographics of Castle Rock schools, which have 10% of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. The figure is likely to be lower. DCS Montessori has only 5% of students that are not able or choose not to pay the fees. Renaissance Elementary, where many students are likely to matriculate from, has less than 2% of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Although Renaissance will attempt to recruit at-risk populations, the lack of transportation provided may result in fewer students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch attending Renaissance.

Renaissance Secondary will apply for a Colorado Public Charter Schools Startup and Implementation Grant. This grant is not provided in the budget and is not required to balance the budget. However, if received, Renaissance would spend the additional revenue on professional development and other start-up expenses in years 0-2.

Renaissance recognizes that the capital construction funds are subject to annual appropriation from the Legislature. Therefore, if funded the revenue will be placed in a capital construction fund for future capital needs and allocated only after they have been received. They are not relied upon to provide the educational program.

Salary Expenses

Renaissance anticipates spending on average 48% of its operating budget on employee's salaries and benefits.⁹⁴ This figure is consistent with other charter schools in Douglas County. The teaching staff will grow as the school grows. At full implementation Renaissance will include 33 teachers and classroom assistants and 9 administrators and support staff. For a narrative breakdown of staffing plans please see [Section I: Employees](#).

The principal's salary is based on comparable salaries at other Douglas County charter schools such as DCS Montessori.

Teacher salaries at Renaissance, however, are higher than other Douglas County charter schools. The higher pay is necessary to recruit and retain teachers that have the skills required to teach the unique program at Renaissance. Teachers will be required to design projects that align to district and state standards. In prioritizing teacher salaries in the budget, Renaissance relies on research that shows the quality of a school's teachers is the variable that has the greatest impact on student performance.⁹⁵

In order to have budgeting flexibility and plan for unexpected revenue shortfalls or additional expenses, to reach the average salary of \$52,000, Renaissance base average salary will be \$49,000 with bonuses available to teachers that will increase the average pay to \$52,000. For more information regarding the teacher bonus program, see [Section I: Employees](#).

Facility Expenses

⁹⁴ Student fees and capital construction funds are excluded. In addition, the figure does not include staff provided by DCSD through Tier III SPED purchased services.

⁹⁵ **Darling-Hammond (2000).** [Teacher Quality and Student Achievement](#). *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8, 1.

Renaissance plans to keep its facility costs to less than 20% of its total budget in order to spend more of its resources on staffing and instruction.

Renaissance has multiple facility options. Ideally, Renaissance would be able to build and own its facility. Renaissance is currently discussing land lease options with developers as well as considering land purchase options. More detail is provided in Section N: Facilities.

Based on the current land available, information provided by architects and contractors, and financing options provided by PFM, the school's financial consultant, the Board of Directors is confident that it will be able to build the planned facility and be able to meet its bond payment obligations plus other facility costs, with less than 20% of its revenue. To plan conservatively, Renaissance has budgeted 22% of its revenue for facility expenses. If, as expected, the facility costs end up lower than budgeted, it is the Board's priority to increase teacher pay in subsequent years.

Professional Development Expenses

Unlike other charter schools in Douglas County that use a core knowledge curriculum, the Renaissance educational model relies on teachers to develop the curriculum. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are given the training and support to create high quality projects aligned to state and district standards. Teacher development and training is essential to maintaining a highly qualified teaching staff. Not only will professional development opportunities provide teachers with skills that will impact student learning, Renaissance views its strong support for teacher development as an important tool to recruit and retain high quality teaching staff. For more information about the school's professional development program, see [Section E. Educational Program](#).

The professional learning specialist funded in the school's budget will lead the professional development of faculty. We anticipate that the Professional Learning Specialist can perform much of the professional development, but Renaissance has also budgeted \$50,000 each year to fund various seminars, conferences, and speakers. In addition, the school will provide \$700 per employee to travel and attend professional learning opportunities. The professional development budget is higher than most other charter schools. This is due to the school's reliance on teachers to develop projects that align to District and State standards rather than a purchased curriculum used by many charter schools in Douglas County.

Curriculum Expenses

Renaissance anticipates spending substantially less on curriculum than traditional schools. As discussed above, Renaissance's educational model relies on teachers to create learning

experiences and projects aligned to standards. At Renaissance, teachers are curriculum designers. While teachers will be able to create their own learning projects, they will also have access to many free resources and databases of projects. Therefore, Renaissance has budgeted only \$20,000 in year one for books. While Renaissance does not believe any students will be using textbooks, teachers may want to purchase resources to assist them in developing projects and books will be purchased for students to read as part of literature seminars.

Renaissance has budgeted \$50 per student for software expenses. Renaissance intends to mostly use free software such as Google docs and Google drive. However, the digital arts program will use programs like Adobe Illustrator and InDesign, and the Board wants to ensure teachers have access to software, if needed, for any projects that require it. In addition, foreign language instruction in the first years will be provided using Rosetta Stone.

Technology Expenses

Renaissance plans to purchase high-speed fiber internet from DCSD at a cost of \$10,800 per year. Telephone service is assumed at two phones lines for the school and a basic cell phone for every teacher and administrator.

Technology infrastructure such as routers, Wi-Fi routers, wiring, etc. will be provided with the facility.

Renaissance will require students to bring their own devices, such as an iPad or Chromebook. This will limit the cost to the school of providing computers. However, Renaissance will purchase a computer for each teacher and administrator and will also purchase a number of devices for students to use who either can not afford to bring a device or who forget their device. The \$45,000 budgeted for technology in year one will fund these additional computers.

Renaissance intends to purchase a number of other technological devices, such as 3D printers, fabrication equipment, laser cutter, etc. as tools students can use in specific projects. The cost of these additional devices are not included in the Renaissance budget at this time as the school will seek to include many of these items as furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) in its bond proceeds. Other items will be paid for from grants and donations for these items.

Special Education Expenses

Renaissance will purchase Tier III special education services in year one from DCSD for \$612.49/student. These funds will pay for any special education staff needed. In

subsequent years, Renaissance will determine if it is cost effective to continue to purchase Tier III services or to purchase Tier I or II services and provide special education services itself. In this application, Renaissance has chosen to budget for the highest cost option to ensure the budget is sustainable.

Other District Expenses

Renaissance will purchase all required services from the District. These services include District support staff, emergency services, student information system, state mandated assessments, and treasurer fees. Additionally, Renaissance will purchase school nurse consulting services, RevTrak, and software services.

Startup Expenses

During the first years, Renaissance must invest in fixtures and furniture. Renaissance intends to include the cost of these items in its facility expenses as it will be included in bond proceeds.

Cash Flow Projections

A cash flow projection is provided in [Appendix G-2](#). A digital copy will be provided.

Contingencies

Renaissance has planned for various budget shortfalls.

First, while Renaissance has been pleased with its community outreach efforts and expects intent to enroll numbers to increase significantly once the charter is approved, the Renaissance board has a contingency plan for less than expected enrollment. “Scenario B” budgets for a 25% decrease in expected enrollment.⁹⁶ The budget spreadsheet for this scenario is included in [Appendix G-3](#). Renaissance will make the following changes to its budget should enrollment drop by 25%:

- reduce the number of teachers and increase class sizes to 30
- if shortfall is known prior to construction, a smaller facility will be built
- reduce expenditures in adventure education consistent with reduction in students
- Delay hiring some administrative staff, including Dean of Students and Athletic/X-Block Coordinator

⁹⁶ Current data on intent to enroll submissions indicate that the shortfall in enrollment will be most likely to occur in grade 10, if a shortfall materializes. Based on the expectation that most students will matriculate from Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, it may take two years to reach full enrollment in grade 10.

- Decrease professional development expenses consistent with reduction in teaching faculty

Second, the Renaissance Board of Directors is concerned about the stability of the PPR revenue. Without legislative action, the negative factor used by the state to meet Amendment 23 requirements will substantially limit the ability to continually increase PPR.⁹⁷ Therefore, Renaissance has planned for actions it will take should PPR remain flat. This is referred to as “Scenario C” and the budget for such a scenario is included as [Appendix G-5](#). By freezing staff salaries, Renaissance could maintain a balanced budget absent increases to PPR.

Finally, Renaissance will plan for both flat PPR and reduced expected enrollment. “Scenario D,” included as [Appendix G-6](#), results in Renaissance modifying expenditures as shown in Scenario C and:

- Freezing staff salaries
- Increase student fees by \$100
- Pay no teacher bonuses
- Cut teacher’s personal professional development budget (\$700 per teacher).

By conducting stress tests on the budget, Renaissance is confident that the budget it has developed is conservative, sustainable, and funds the priorities necessary to deliver its educational program.

Statutory Requirements

Separation of Funds

All funds in the general fund shall be kept separate from any title funds or grant funds.

Public Employees’ Retirement Association (PERA) Contributions

Renaissance will provide PERA as mandated by Colorado law. In year 1, PERA is anticipated to be 19.94% of salaries and shall increase at the state mandated rate.

Tabor Reserve

Renaissance will maintain a TABOR reserve in compliance with state law. This reserve shall be maintained at 3% of revenue each year as reflected in the budget.

⁹⁷ See discussion from Moody’s Investor Service, October 2, 2015 in [Appendix G-4](#).

School Reserves

Renaissance has a goal of reserving 2% of annual income for emergency purposes.

Soft funds

In order to prove financial feasibility without grant funding or other donations, the budget does not include any “soft funds,” such as grant money or donations.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Financial Planning and Budgeting

Financial Planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the Board’s established goals and priorities, risk financial jeopardy, or fail to be derived from a multi-year plan. The financial planning and budgeting used at Renaissance shall avoid the following:

- Budgeting that contains too little information to enable credible projection of revenue and expenses, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.
- Budgeting that plans for more expenditures in any fiscal year than are conservatively projected to be received in that period or saved from the previous years and approved for expenditure by the Renaissance Board.
- Budgeting that is in violation of TABOR or the school’s contract with the authorizer, DCSD.
- Budgeting that is in violation of financing agreements and any other relevant contracts.
- Budgeting that is not based on reasonable assumptions.

Financial Conditions and Procedures

With respect to the on-going financial activities and conditions of Renaissance, the Business Manager or Board designee, or the Principal shall not operate outside the school’s budget or cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from Board priorities established in goal setting. Accordingly the Business Manager or Board designee, or the Principal shall not:

- Allow purchases that are not consistent with Renaissance goals, tenets, mission statement and core virtues.
- Fail to inform and seek the approval of the Board on curricular purchases.
- Expend more funds than are available and within budget.

- Indebt the organization in an amount greater than can be repaid by certain, otherwise unencumbered revenues within ninety days.
- Borrow any money without Board approval.
- Use any long-term reserves without Board approval.
- Expend money outside an approved budget line item without prior Board approval.
- Fail to settle payroll and debts in a timely manner and according to applicable law.
- Allow tax payments or other government ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.
- Acquire, encumber, or dispose of real property.
- Fail to pursue receivables after a reasonable grace period.
- Fail to properly accrue income and expenses in the proper fiscal year.
- Fail to develop procedures, which are not compatible with a successful audit.

Asset Protection

The Business Manager or Board designee, the Principal and Board shall not allow the assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained or unnecessarily risked. Therefore the Business Manager or Board designee, the Principal and Board may not:

- Fail to adequately insure against theft and casualty losses.
- Allow un-bonded personnel access to material amounts of funds.
- Subject the building to improper wear or insufficient maintenance.
- Unnecessarily expose the organization, its Board, or Staff to claims of liability.
- Fail to give the Board up-to-date list of persons who have check-writing authorization.
- Fail to monitor purchases for budget consistency.
- Invest or hold operating capital in insecure instruments, including uninsured checking accounts and bonds of less than AAA rating, or in non-interest-bearing accounts except where necessary to facilitate ease in operational transactions or as otherwise required by applicable contracts.

Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB)

Renaissance shall comply with any required GASB provisions.

Board Responsibility

The financial health of the school is the fiscal responsibility of the Renaissance Board. Therefore, there shall be no budget approved which spends money that cannot reasonably be expected to be real income by the school. The Board Officers will be responsible for approving all contracts which obligate the school to spend money for more than a single fiscal year and/or which obligates the school to spend more than \$5,000; an exception does

exist for recurring items. The initial budget for any fiscal year will be created with the input of the Board Treasurer and the Principal and Business Manager or Board designee and the first draft will be presented to the Board on the Board meeting closest to February 28th of the previous fiscal year. The final proposed budget will be approved no later than May 31st of the previous fiscal year. All TABOR requirements will be met.

The Board will apply for 501(c)(3) status immediately upon charter approval.

It is the responsibility of the Board to establish budget priorities that reflect the needs of the school in advance of the budgetary process.

CDE Chart of Accounts & Financial Reporting Requirements

Renaissance will use the CDE Uniform Chart of Accounts and follow all reporting requirements as detailed in the CDE Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.

Financial Transparency

Renaissance intends to comply with all requirements of the Colorado Financial Transparency Act (C.R.S. § 22- 44-301 et seq.) by posting all required documents on the school's website in a timely manner. This includes:

- The school's annual budget.
- The school's annual audited financial statements.
- The school's quarterly financial statements.
- The school's salary schedule or salary policies.
- The school's accounts payable check register and credit, debit, and purchase card statements in a downloadable format (such as a searchable PDF).
- An "investment performance report" for any school investments.

Financial Audits

Renaissance agrees to maintain appropriate financial records in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, and will make such records available to the authorizer as requested from time to time. Renaissance will maintain a comparison of actual expenditures to budgeted expenses. Revenue and expenditures will be consistent with the CDE's Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook and Chart of Accounts.

Renaissance will maintain appropriate internal controls to ensure protection of the school's financial resources. This includes separation of duties as much as possible, careful review of all credit card transactions, second signature requirements on large checks (over \$2,000), and tight processes for accounts payable and receivable.

Renaissance agrees to engage and participate in independent, outside audit by a certified public accountant of its financial and administrative operations on an annual basis. The auditor will be selected by the Board based on input from the Board's finance committee. The results of the audit will be provided to the authorizer in written form within the statutory time limits or as defined by the authorizer in the charter contract. Renaissance will also post the audited financial statements on the school's website as required by law.

Outside Providers

The school does not intend to work with outside providers for any educational services. Outside providers shall, however, be utilized for such things as maintenance, janitorial services, auditing, legal services, trash, insurance, etc.



H. GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

Board Formation

Renaissance Education, the non-profit organization that developed the charter application, was formed in May of 2015. The Board of Renaissance Education consists of seven diverse directors. Upon approval of the charter application by the DCSD Board of Education, the seven directors of Renaissance Education will become members of the Board of Directors of Renaissance Secondary. However, the two married couples will each share one seat and one vote.

It is anticipated that the Board will continue to operate in the future with no less than five members and no more than nine members. Prior to the opening of the school, the Board may appoint additional members by a majority vote of the Board. Efforts will be made to ensure that any additional Board members are committed to the vision and mission of Renaissance and have demonstrated that commitment by volunteering their time during the charter planning process.

Potential Board members will be evaluated on their dedication to the mission and vision of the school, experience, skills, work ethic, personality, and ability to work within a group.

Renaissance believes parent and community involvement is critical to the success of the school. Therefore, a minimum of two Board seats are reserved for parents of students at Renaissance Secondary.

The purpose of the parent Board seats is to represent the parent community of Renaissance Secondary and uphold the mission and vision of the school from their point of view. Feedback from the parent community is critical, and it is recommended that these members engage in regular school activities (e.g., parent coffee chats) with their constituents to seek their input.

Board of Director Biographies

Ryan Stuart served as a Director of the Douglas County School District Board of Education from 2007-2010 and as its Vice President in 2010. While on the school board, Ryan supported innovative academic programs and reviewed numerous charter applications and

renewals, including for STEM High and Sky View Academy. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Stanford University, a Master's Degree in Education Policy from Harvard University, and a law degree from Georgetown University. In addition to the Board of Education, Ryan was elected to the Highlands Ranch Metropolitan District Board of Directors in 2004 and served for six years. Ryan has also been an adjunct faculty member at Red Rocks Community College, a Deputy District Attorney, a District Court Magistrate, and was appointed in 2012 by Governor Hickenlooper to serve as a County Court Judge in Jefferson County.

Amy Stuart is a former teacher and current business owner. She holds a Master's Degree in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Colorado. She taught in both Baltimore City and Denver Public Schools and worked as a school site coordinator for Teach for America. Amy currently serves as the President of the School Accountability Committee and Vice President of the parent teacher organization at Renaissance Elementary Magnet School. She has also volunteered her service on a number of local boards, including the Highlands Ranch Metropolitan District and a local homeowners association.

Michael Sparks has worked in the IT industry for over 20 years in various capacities. He has worked in multiple industries including Semiconductor Trading, Consulting, Small Business Services, Oil & Gas and Financial Services. For the past 11 years, he has been at a large financial services company based in Denver starting as a technical lead and is now a Director, managing multiple teams across the world. He has recently taken charge of key integration items with a large merger and is responsible for managing multi-million dollar budgets. He has also been part of several startups starting with a business he started in college servicing fish tanks and computers called "Fysh 'n' Chyps". He then worked with a group of investors to establish several services-based IT companies before moving to Denver to start his career in Financial Services. He is a father of three with two of his kids currently attending Renaissance Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School. Michael is an active volunteer at his children's school. He also is a leader within his church's children's programs and volunteers his time several times a month. He has most recently taken up an interest in international service projects and is passionate about returning to Haiti every year to participate in construction projects. He also has volunteered as a youth mentor at the Juvenile detention facility in Denver.

Diane Sparks has an extensive background working with children and families. She has a Bachelor of Science, Social Sciences degree with a concentration in psychology and social work from the University of Houston-Downtown. She has worked with women and families at the Star of Hope Organization in Houston, Texas. As a Senior Case Manager, she assisted clients with essential support services, supervised caseworkers, taught life skills classes, and worked closely with schools in the Houston Independent School District to meet the

education needs of elementary, middle and high school transient students. Diane is currently a stay at home mom, has three students in the Douglas County School District, and is actively involved in her children's education. She currently chairs the school-wide art show committee, coaches battle of the books, and volunteers with various committees at the Renaissance Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School. Diane is also very active in the community, volunteering at a local food bank as well as teaching elementary age children at her church.

Brian Trettel has worked in the banking and data industry for over 20 years at an executive level. His current position is Vice President of Business Development for a data company, CourthouseDirect.com, that is based out of Houston. He also serves on the company's Board of Directors. His work responsibility includes creating business contacts throughout the country, reviewing business proposal contracts with large national clients, and reviewing and revising processes to ensure that overall projects fall within the approved budget and timeframe outlined to the client. Brian and his wife, Sara, also have a son, Nicholas, who is 11 years old and currently attends school within the Douglas County School system. Brian believes in the educational philosophy that is taught through Renaissance Secondary and has a strong vested interest in helping to ensure that the school comes to fruition in the Castle Rock area. Their family have also hosted a number of exchange students from all over Europe, and when they are not traveling, the family enjoys being out in the Colorado wilderness, camping, hiking, and fishing.

Noreene Thibault-Chen began teaching and working in public schools in 1974. Noreene has taught all elementary grades in multiage/grade settings. During her career, Noreene served as the Interim Superintendent of Schools and the Principal of a school, as well as spending a year teaching English as a second language in the People's Republic of China. During her career, Noreene has designed integrated curriculum both independently and as a team member. Most recently, Noreene has served as a Professional Learning Specialist for the Renaissance Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School. In this role, she supported the teaching staff in classroom instruction and assessment as well as in curriculum design. Noreene earned BAs in Elementary Education and Psychology from Western State College, and an MA in Integrated Natural Sciences, Emphasis: Constructivist Teaching and Learning from The Colorado College. Noreene has been recognized for her teaching through the Governor's Excellence in Education Award (1988), as an Outstanding Foreign Instructor by the Shandong China Provincial Government (1992), and through C.A.S.T. as the Elementary Science Teacher of the Year (1998).

Shawn Stephens has worked in the education industry since 2006, with a specific focus in online education. Shawn is a Subject Matter Expert at Pearson eCollege, where he acts as an internal consultant to development, product, and infrastructure teams to provide analysis, training, design, and integration support and guidance for the company's eLearning

products. Prior to Pearson eCollege, Shawn was a consultant to and for companies such as Fujitsu and Microsoft, where he worked as an accountant, technical writer, developer, and business analyst. Shawn has two children in the Douglas County School system, and he has a vested interest in seeing them and other children continue their learning in an innovative and collaborative environment. Shawn has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a concentration in Finance, from Colorado State University.

Board of Director Terms

The board of directors shall hold the following seats labeled 1 through 5 with the following lengths and terms:

Seat 1 shall be occupied by Ryan Stuart and Amy Stuart until the regular meeting in May 2018.

Seat 2 shall be occupied by Michael Sparks and Diane Sparks until the regular meeting in May 2019.

Seat 3 shall be occupied by Brian Trettel until the regular meeting in May 2019.

Seat 4 shall be occupied by Shawn Stephens until the regular meeting in May 2020.

Seat 5 shall be occupied by Noreene Thibault-Chen until the regular meeting in May 2020.

When seats become available after Renaissance has been opened, directors holding Seat 1, Seat 3, and Seat 5 will be directors appointed by Renaissance Education. Directors holding Seat 2, and Seat 4 will be parent elected directors and will be appointed by the Parent Voting Group established in the bylaws. If the Board adds additional seats, odd numbered seats will be appointed by Renaissance Education. Even number seats will be parent elected directors and will be appointed by the Parent Voting Group established in the Bylaws. This method will ensure that a majority of the Board of Directors are appointed by Renaissance Education so that there is consistency in accomplishing the vision of Renaissance Education while maintaining a group of democratically elected directors.

Married Board Members

Renaissance recognizes that married board members is untraditional and may lead to concerns about families controlling the board of directors. However, the planning team also recognizes the unique contributions of the current board members who happen to be married. Therefore, Renaissance has implemented policies to address those concerns.

First, married board members will only be permitted on the founding board. Second, if two board members are married to one another, they will share one vote. If the two directors disagree on a vote, the couple will be required to abstain from the vote.

Number of Board Members, Manner of Selection, Vacancies and Attendance

As mentioned above, at least two seats of Board of Directors shall be elected by a Parent Voting Group, as established in the Bylaws. Each parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled at Renaissance shall be included in the Parent Voting Group. Election procedures shall be established by policy adopted by the Board of Directors.

Terms

Directors shall serve a term of three (3) years from the date of their appointments or until their successors are seated. A full three-year term shall be considered to have been served upon the passage of three (3) annual elections. After election, the term of a director may not be reduced, except for cause as specified in these bylaws. Directors shall take their seat beginning in the regular meeting held in May of each year. There will be no term limits.

Resignations

Any director or officer of the school's Board of Directors may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board's President or Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Deemed Resignation

A director having three (3) or more unexcused absences from the regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be deemed to have resigned as a director. Directors shall be removed in the manner provided by the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Removal by Board of Directors

Directors elected by the Parent Voting Group may be removed as provided in the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act. Directors appointed by Renaissance Education may be removed at anytime by Renaissance Education.

Vacancies

Upon vacancy of a directorship elected by the Parent Voting Group, the remaining directors shall appoint a replacement within ninety (90) days. Upon vacancy of a directorship appointed by Renaissance Education, the replacement will be appointed by Renaissance Education within 90 days. If a replacement is not appointed within 90 days, the President of the Board will appoint a replacement. The director appointed or elected shall hold office until the end of the term of the director whose vacancy s/he is filling.

Officers

The officers of the Board of Directors shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Powers and Duties

The officers of the Board of Directors shall have such powers and duties as usually pertain to their office, except as modified by the Board of Directors, and shall also have such powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by the Board of Directors. The general powers and duties of the primary officers are as follows:

President

The President shall preside at all the meetings of the Board. The President shall sign all written contracts to which Renaissance may be a party when such contracts have been authorized by the Board; shall sign all official reports, provided that the president may delegate the duty to sign reports; and in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of president and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors.

The President also shall schedule Board meetings, prepare and set the agenda for all Board meetings and distribute the appropriate materials to Board members before the meeting. The President shall be the main point person between the Board and administration.

Vice President

The Vice President shall have all the powers and perform all the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.

Secretary

The Secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings in the Minute Book of the Board; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the

provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the Board records; and in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time-to-time may be assigned by the Board of Directors. The Secretary may attest any written contract to which the Board/school may be party to when such contract has been authorized by the Board.

In the absence or disability of the Secretary, an Assistant Secretary or Secretary pro tempore appointed at any meeting by the President of the Board may perform said duties. The Secretary also shall oversee the school's lottery process and coordinate new Board member elections. In addition, the Secretary shall maintain and update Board member binders as needed.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep complete and accurate financial records and books of account for the school in accordance with DCSD policies unless otherwise waived. The Treasurer shall prepare and timely file all financial reports required by federal and state governments, DCSD, and the Board. In addition, the treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board. In the absence or disability of the treasurer, duties of the Treasurer may be assigned by the Board to any Director.

Board of Directors Meetings

Place of Meetings

The Board of Directors may hold its meetings at any place or places within the state of Colorado, as the Board may determine. All notices of Board meetings shall be given, and all such meetings conducted and their minutes kept in conformity with the Colorado Open Meetings Act.

Regular Meetings

The Board of Directors will meet at least once a month when school is in session. The Board of Directors may provide, by resolution, the time and place for the holding of additional regular meetings without other notice than such resolution, and as required by Colorado's Open Meetings laws. All regular meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, except for executive sessions thereof. The Board of Directors shall set a schedule of meetings for the upcoming year at the beginning of each school year. Such a schedule will be publicly posted on Renaissance's premises or electronically posted on Renaissance's website. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as the parliamentary authority by the Directors.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or a majority of Directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board of Directors may authorize any location as the place for holding a special meeting called by the Board of Directors.

Notice

Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least twenty four (24) hours before the meeting.

A director waives notice of a regular or special meeting by attending or participating in the meeting unless, at the beginning of the meeting, s/he objects to the holding of the meeting or the transaction of business at the meeting. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of directors for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors. If less than such majority is present at a meeting, a majority of the directors present may adjourn the meeting from time-to-time without further notice, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days at any one adjournment.

Voting

No action of the Board shall be considered legal or binding unless approved by an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Board. Said action to be binding shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Board.

Telephonic Meetings

One or more members of the Board of Directors, or any committee designated by the Board, may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors (or a committee thereof) by means of conference phone or similar communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another at the same time. Such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. Any such meeting shall comply with the Colorado Open Meetings Act.

Waiver of Notice

Any director may waive personal notice of special meetings. A waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. The attendance of a director at any meeting also shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

Proxies

Voting of directors by proxies shall not be permitted.

Alternates

An absentee director may not designate an alternate to represent him/her at a Board meeting.

Compliance with Open Records Laws

The Board will abide by open records laws. Generally speaking, the school will develop procedures to make the records available to a requesting party within three working days of a request unless the request violates privacy federal or state laws, and/or including but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Board Training and Development

Renaissance's professional development plan includes not only administrators and faculty, but also the Board of Directors. This ongoing and mandatory training includes all required areas to effectively lead the school. Directors are required to attend all Board meetings, strategy sessions, retreats and conferences as determined by the Board of Directors. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Regular Board Meetings - Board meetings are held once per month, as well as work sessions held once per month (as deemed necessary), throughout the calendar year.
- Board Visit Days - Board Visit Days will be scheduled once each semester at the school. Board members will visit the school, sit in on classes, have lunch with students, interact with students and teachers, and experience life at Renaissance first hand. All Board members will be required to participate in at least one Board Visit Day each school year.

- The Colorado League of Charter Schools' Annual Colorado Charter Schools Conference - This conference provides training in board policy and effective governance, and will play an important role in the annual training of the Renaissance Board of Directors.
- Customized Governance Training by the Colorado League of Charter Schools - The Colorado League of Charter Schools offers customized governance trainings designed to meet a school's unique needs for board development. Upon charter approval, Renaissance plans to apply for the Stage 6 Planning Grant from the League, which will provide funding for a half-day or full-day customized governance training workshop aligned with the unique needs of the Renaissance Board. This customized training may be in conjunction with the first annual Board retreat (see below).
- Annual Board Retreat - A Board retreat shall be held each summer starting in 2016, pending charter application approval. This retreat enables the directors to develop the school's strategic plan for the upcoming school year. During this Board retreat board members will receive training for a minimum of 4 hours.
- CDE Charter School Board Training Online Modules - The Board, and any future Board members, will be required to take the online Charter School Board Training Modules, provided by the Colorado Department of Education. The Founding Board of Renaissance will be required to complete and pass all online training modules by the time the charter is approved. All future members of the Board will be required to complete and pass all online training modules by the end of their first 90 days as a member of the Board.

All Board members, including future Board candidates, will be required to attend training sessions that are held by the CDE in conjunction with the Colorado League of Charter Schools. Two different types of trainings are held for current and future board members. The Board Fundamentals training happens twice per year, and current and future board members will be required to attend a minimum of one training each year.

Also, Board Continuing Development is held four times a year via workshops and webinars; current and future board members will be required to attend a minimum of two trainings each year.

The planning team has written a draft Board of Directors handbook. The handbook will be made available on the school's website and provided to each new board member. The draft can be found in [Appendix H-4](#).

Renaissance has allocated \$4,000 of the budget for professional development and will be used for Board training in the first year, with \$2,000 used for training each year thereafter. This will be used for the Board retreat and for other Board trainings deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

Internal and External Evaluations

The Board of Directors will annually evaluate its effectiveness. The evaluations will include self-assessments and external assessments. These evaluations will measure:

- Board Operations
- Adherence to Vision and Mission of the School
- Effectiveness of Strategic Plan
- Policy Development
- Effective Meetings
- Legal Issues
- Accountability & Accreditation
- Effective Meetings
- Financial Oversight

Based on the above evaluations, a training plan will be forged for Board members over the following year with the goal of improving Board function. External evaluations will be conducted annually and will include 360-degree feedback from parents, staff, administration, and students regarding the board's function. Through the Charter School Support Initiative (CSSI) process, an evaluation will be conducted in the first three years of operation pursuant to the terms of the CDE start-up grant, if received. Self-assessments by individual Board members will be conducted quarterly and will be used for training and goal setting.

Daily Financial Operations

Renaissance shall establish procedures and controls to facilitate the preparation of accurate financial statements and minimize the ability for unauthorized use of Renaissance funds. Included among these procedures and controls are segregation of responsibilities between individuals who prepare and process disbursement requests and those who are authorized to approve a disbursement by signing checks for approved services and acquisition of supplies. In addition, the annual budgeting process provides a means to measure the accuracy of both interim and year-end information that is prepared by Renaissance staff. The Treasurer of the Board of Directors will be tasked with actively monitoring the finances of the school. Finally, an annual audit is conducted by an

independent accounting firm, the objective of which is to express an opinion that the annual financial statements of Renaissance are not materially misstated.

Board and Administrator/Staff Relationship

The Board of Directors will have an effective working relationship with the school administrator and will refrain from being involved in the daily operations of the school. They will work together to develop the strategic plan, long-term growth plans, financial plans, and policy development.

The Principal, who will oversee the daily operations of the school, is in charge of implementing the policy and goals of the board and will be involved in the strategic planning process. The Principal will be given the authority to hire, organize, and supervise the staff, and allocate resources within the budgetary guidelines developed by the board. The Principal will be evaluated annually by the Board as discussed in [Section I: Employees](#).

The Board will support the Principal by ensuring that he or she has the necessary resources to accomplish goals and by conveying confidence in day-to-day decision making. The Board will also invite the Principal to evaluate the Board's effectiveness.

The Board will build positive relationships with the staff by communicating with them regularly and attending school functions. While building an open and honest relationship with the staff, it will again be the board's policy to maintain an appropriate distance from the daily decision making. The staff of Renaissance will have a voice as well during the development of the strategic plan.

Articles of Incorporation

Renaissance Secondary School is incorporated as a non-profit organization. The Board of Directors of Renaissance Secondary School holds the charter. The articles of incorporation are provided in [Appendix H-1](#).

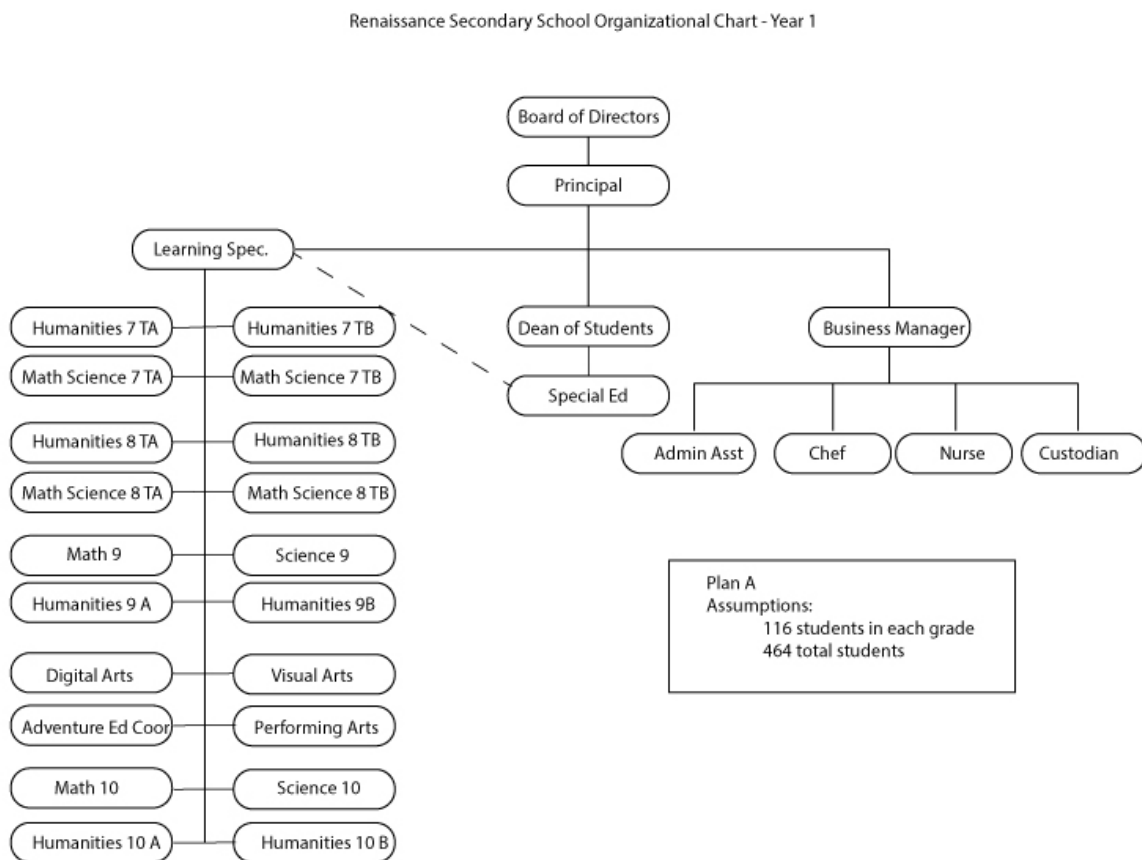
Organizational Structure

The Board of Directors will operate as a policy-setting board in accordance with the Founding Board's bylaws, a copy of which is found in [Appendix H-2](#). The Principal will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. The Board of Directors shall:

- Establish and maintain the mission and vision of the school.
- Review and monitor the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).
- Implement policies that are consistent with the mission, vision and goals of the school.

- Hire and evaluate the principal.
- Provide financial and legal oversight to ensure that the school's integrity is maintained.
- Be responsible for final accountability for the school's academic success, organizational viability and faithfulness to the terms of the contract with DCSD.
- Recruit and orient new Board members and assess Board performance.

Renaissance will be organized in accordance with the following organizational chart.



The Principal reports to the Board and is responsible for the following: hiring and evaluating the Business Manager, teachers, and other staff; directing grant and fundraising efforts; assisting the Board with its long-term strategic plan; and overseeing the development of the annual school budget.

The Principal shall prepare a monthly dashboard tool to monitor key performance indicators of the school. This dashboard will be used by the Principal as part of his or her monthly reporting to the governing board. The specific details of the data provided in the dashboard will be further developed as the school begins operations. Dashboard data will

be consistent with Colorado League of Charter School and CDE recommendations, and may be similar to the samples provided on the CDE website.⁹⁸ Dashboard data shall change over time depending on school performance and the current challenges facing Renaissance.

The Business Manager reports to the Principal and is responsible for providing financial, property, risk, and human resource management support. Office and facilities staff report to the Business Manager.

The Professional Learning Specialist and Dean of Students will also report to the Principal and will supervise the employees listed in the organization chart above. See also Section I: Employees.

Administrator Hiring Process/Qualifications

The Board of Directors, upon approval of the charter application, will begin a comprehensive local and national search for a qualified Principal to lead Renaissance. A copy of the job description for the Principal can be found in [Appendix H-3](#).

The Principal will have minimum qualifications of:

- Master's Degree in Education, Education Administration or MBA
- Administrator/Principal license or the ability to obtain a Colorado Principal license within two years by completing the CDE Administration Mentoring Cohort program
- Administrative or leadership experience in an educational environment
- Effective communication, organizational, and delegation skills.
- Colorado First Aid and CPR training certification
- Demonstrated knowledge of State Content Standards
- Successful experience with staff supervision and budget management
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.

The preferred qualifications for the Principal are:

- Experience with expeditionary learning or project-based learning.
- Experience in creating an organization and maintaining sustainability
- Experience in adventure education
- A passion for accomplishing the school's mission and vision

⁹⁸ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index>.

The Board will post the open position for the Principal on various websites such as Renaissance, Douglas County School District, Colorado League of Charter Schools, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, TeachinCO.org, and numerous other local and national websites.

Following the passage of Senate Bill 10-19154, Renaissance and its Board of Directors will utilize the comprehensive educator evaluation process, and the model system developed by the CDE when evaluating the principal and staff. The Board of Directors will be responsible for evaluating the performance of the Principal on an annual basis. A copy of the Principal evaluation rubric can be found in Appendix H-5.

The principal will be evaluated on, but not limited to, the following:

- Student achievement outcomes
- Achievement of goals
- Teacher effectiveness
- Leadership actions
- Adherence to vision and mission
- Finances and operations
- School safety

The Principal evaluations will be used to improve job performance. The evaluations measure Principal effectiveness and are intended to inform the Principal of successes as well as opportunities for growth, improvement, and professional development.

Advisory Committees

The Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of the full Board of Directors, may appoint advisory committees to the Board of Directors as deemed necessary. Committees may be composed of parents, staff, community members or others or a combination thereof with final approval by the president. At least one member of the Board of Directors shall serve on each advisory committee, with the exception of the School Accountability Committee (SAC) on which no Board member shall serve. The School Accountability Committee (SAC) will be comprised of the school Principal, a teacher, parents, and community members. Renaissance will meet all statutory requirements for SAC as outlined in the DCSD bylaws. The Board will appoint a chairperson for each committee. All committees shall be created by the Board, which shall set forth the charge of the committees. The Board possesses certain legal power and prerogatives, which cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Committees shall report as directed by the Board and terminate their operations on completion of their charges, as determined by the Board. All committees shall post notices of meetings, hold meetings open to the public, and keep

and disclose minutes as required for the Board by the Colorado Open Meetings Law. Minutes of such meetings shall be promptly forwarded to the Board.



I. EMPLOYEES

School Leadership

Renaissance Secondary School will seek a school leader to fulfill the role of school Principal who is passionate about project-based learning and adventure education and who is experienced with implementing an academic program based on 21st Century learning and skills. The Principal will work with the Board of Directors to ensure that the day-to-day operations of the school are directly aligned with the vision and mission of Renaissance.

The Principal of Renaissance Secondary will oversee the school with responsibilities to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Professional development
- Assessments
- Data analysis for improved instruction
- Hiring and evaluating staff
- Development of the school's budget

Renaissance will begin a rigorous process to locate, interview and hire a Principal at least six-months to one-year prior to the school opening. Renaissance values the importance of hiring a highly qualified school Principal who will be committed to the unique vision and mission of Renaissance. Renaissance has a strong preference to hire a leader who understands and has experience leading teachers at the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, as Renaissance Secondary aims to expand that program and culture. Renaissance will recruit locally for a school leader using various advertising sources such as the Colorado League of Charter Schools job board, the Douglas County School District job board, area job fairs and additional recruitment activities as defined by the Renaissance Board of Directors. A full job description of the Principal is listed in [Appendix H-3](#).

In addition to the school Principal, Renaissance will also have a leadership team to include a Professional Learning Specialist, a Business Manager, Dean of Students, and Adventure Education Coordinator. These school leaders will report directly to the Principal and will oversee areas to include, but not limited to, the following:

Professional Learning Specialist

- Professional Development of Teachers
- Assist teachers with teaching strategies and development of projects

Dean of Students

- Assessment testing
- Data analysis
- Coordination of Special Education services and English Language Learner students
- Student discipline

Business Manager

- Supervise and manage all back-office functions
- Oversee employee payroll
- Manage employee benefits administration
- Facilitate fundraising and grant award tracking and reporting
- Hiring and evaluation of administration and facility staff
- Manage the facility and resources of the school

Adventure Education Coordinator

- Develop the Adventure Education curriculum and schedule
- Negotiate and contract with adventure education providers
- Assure all contracted adventure education providers meet the contracted terms

Once a Principal is hired, one of his or her first tasks will be to locate, interview and hire the Professional Learning Specialist, Business Manager, Adventure Education Coordinator, and Dean of Students. As with the school Principal position, Renaissance will recruit locally for the additional school leaders by continuing to use various advertising sources such as the Colorado League of Charter Schools job board, the Douglas County School District job board, area job fairs and additional recruitment activities as identified by the Renaissance Principal. Full job descriptions of the Professional Learning Specialist, Dean of Students, Business Manager, and Adventure Education Coordinator are listed in [Appendices I-1 through I-4](#).

Staff Hiring

Renaissance will select its personnel directly, without prior authorization from DCSD, subject to compliance with all federal and state rules and regulations. This includes, without limitation, requirements concerning the recruitment of applicants and use of

background and criminal checks, unless a specific waiver is obtained from the State Board of Education or other proper authority. All teachers will meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Renaissance's Board of Directors may terminate the employment of any personnel so long as such employees are not terminated for unlawful reasons. This authority may be delegated to the Principal. All people who perform services for Renaissance will be considered "at-will" employees. This means that in the absence of a contract to the contrary, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give notice or advance notice of termination or resignation. Additionally, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give a reason for the separation from employment. This will be explained to all candidates during the interview and hiring process.

Renaissance will hire administrative staff and teachers who can form a strong team capable of implementing the goals and mission of the school. The Board will ensure that the Principal has the necessary tools to be successful and that a professional, facilitative atmosphere is present at the school. To be successful at Renaissance, all staff employed by the school must:

- Be committed to the goals, objectives and mission as set forth in this charter application.
- Be committed to the educational philosophy of Renaissance.
- Have a passion about student centered learning through authentic, project-based experiences that serve the community.
- Have a background, or strong interest, in the arts or engineering or other related field that will assist students in creating high quality projects worthy of exhibition.
- Demonstrate a passion for adventure education and a willingness to challenge his or her-self in the same manner students are challenged in the adventure education program
- Demonstrate a passion for learning as much as for teaching.
- Conduct his/her duties in a professional manner.
- Be willing to adhere to the school motto, "We are crew, not passengers" and be willing to take on any additional roles to make the school a success.

A teacher job description is listed in [Appendix I-5](#).

Staff Qualification

Renaissance recognizes that the strongest indicator of student success is the quality of teachers.⁹⁹ Additionally, Renaissance's unique educational design model, in which teachers

⁹⁹ **Darling-Hammond, L. (2000).** Teacher Quality and Student Achievement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8, 1.

design learning projects aligned to state and district standards, demands highly qualified, dedicated teaching staff.

Therefore, Renaissance is committed to recruiting and retaining the highest quality teachers. Renaissance will only hire teachers that meet the ESEA definition of Highly Qualified for secondary schools and who demonstrate subject matter competency. A true passion for creating authentic learning experiences and student centered learning is also essential. Renaissance plans to recruit locally and, to a limited extent, nationally for teachers. To compete in the marketplace for qualified teaching staff, positions will be advertised as early as possible, ideally by the December prior to the opening of the school. These positions will be advertised in various locations designed to reach the best-qualified teachers with strong backgrounds in teaching. These locations will include, but not be limited to:

- The Colorado League of Charter Schools job board
- Douglas County School District job board
- Area teacher job fairs

Ideally we will fill each position in the spring but will continue to recruit and interview potential candidates throughout the summer until we have hired for all open positions. Additionally, Renaissance will establish a competitive, market-based salary schedule that takes into account the Douglas County Teacher Compensation Plan, other DCSD charter school salary schedules, salary levels at area private schools and the uniqueness and benefits of the program that Renaissance will offer. Renaissance has committed, through the development of its budget, to pay a salary competitive to that of DCSD teachers in order to be able to attract and retain highly qualified staff.

All faculty and staff at Renaissance will be subject to a criminal background check in accordance with district policy and state statute. Once hired, teachers will receive substantial and ongoing professional development in state standards and designing and teaching authentic learning experiences for students. The teacher evaluation rubric, a sample of which is found in [Appendix E-4](#), will hold teachers accountable for implementing the standards and Renaissance programs with fidelity. Teachers at Renaissance are required to attend a complete in-service on child abuse reporting provided by DCSD, which satisfies the Child Protection Act training requirements. Some staff also may be required to attend this training.

Interview Process

For the first year of operation, the Principal will complete teacher hiring with the assistance of any other individuals on the leadership team chosen by the Principal.

Prospective Renaissance teachers will undergo a highly rigorous hiring process, which will include the following steps:

- Receipt and review of completed application, resume, cover letter and references.
- Initial phone screen.
- Orientation information to learn more about the school mission/vision, philosophy, schedule, student population, and teacher expectations.
- Classroom observation and debrief (this activity has two goals: test the candidate's observational skills and expose the candidate to our educational model).
- Formal interview with Principal and interview committee.
- Reference check
- Candidates for employment will be evaluated according to a hiring rubric; a sample draft of the interview rubric is located in [Appendix I-6](#).

Management and Evaluation

Renaissance will track individual students as they progress through the Renaissance educational program. In order to make direct, year-to-year comparisons of student progress, students will take state-mandated assessments, such as CMAS and PARCC, and other nationally norm-referenced tests. Renaissance teachers and administration will analyze the results of the assessments to determine each student's baseline at the beginning of the new school year or upon enrollment at the end of the summer. This analysis will enable Renaissance to obtain information regarding student learning and identify any achievement gaps; this data will be used to adjust or change curriculum and instruction as needed and will inform professional development focus areas for Renaissance as a school and for individual teachers.

Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)

The CMAS is Colorado's large-scale assessment designed to measure student performance in the Colorado Academic Standards in Science and Social Studies. As per Colorado state requirements, Renaissance will administer the Social Studies CMAS annually to all students in grade 7 and the Science CMAS annually to all students in grades 8 and 11.

Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

Renaissance will administer the PARCC test annually to all students in grades 7-9 in accordance with the Colorado state and Douglas County District policies. PARCC data will be used by teachers to design learning outcomes for students and embed them in appropriate units of study. PARCC data will be used for evaluating school-wide performance by the Governing Board and evaluation compliance with the school accountability plan.

Ongoing Internal Assessments

In addition to formal external assessments, Renaissance teachers will conduct ongoing internal assessment and evaluation as part of the regular instructional program in order to more precisely determine students' progress toward meeting class objectives and benchmarks. These assessments may include, but are not limited to: performance-based assessments, written objective examinations, essay examinations, essays, oral examinations, research projects, and contributions to small group projects and presentations. Renaissance may also incorporate additional national-norm referenced tests identified by the Principal. Such tests must correlate directly with the mission and vision of the school.

The Renaissance curricula have assessment provisions embedded as part of their programs. These formative assessments can inform instruction so teachers are able to discern whether their teaching is successful and determine if students are learning the material being presented. These ongoing assessments also may be used in the implementation of or revisions to a student's individual academic plan. Teacher-made assessments will also provide more frequent information on student performance and add to the body of data regarding students.

Data from both the external and internal assessments will be analyzed to ensure that Renaissance remains aligned with its mission and vision. Teachers will use professional development days to regularly assess internal and interim assessments. The Principal and administration will annually analyze results of state and national tests in order to assess Renaissance's progress as a school. In addition, the Principal and administration will continually evaluate whether other assessments and nationally-recognized tests would provide additional data useful in evaluating both individual student progress and the effectiveness of the curriculum and programming at Renaissance in achieving the school mission.

Evaluation Plan and Professional Development

Renaissance's ability to achieve its ambitious mission is fully dependent upon the school's ability to create a high-quality professional culture. Our staff is our greatest resource and so investing adequately in this resource will ensure ongoing success for Renaissance and its students. Renaissance places great value on the continual learning and growth of its employees. We also believe in cultivating leadership at all levels of our organization. This includes building leadership capacity among teachers by honoring their input in professional development planning and delivery. This section details the school's professional development plans and staff evaluation.

A review of professional development literature reveals several common qualities of meaningful and productive professional development; it is results-driven, school-based, focused on collaboration, ongoing, incremental, and part of an integrated change strategy. Most importantly, impactful professional development measures its success by the success of the school's students and by whether or not the professional development alters instructional practice in a manner that boosts student achievement.

Because we place such value on professional learning and growth, we allocate substantial time and resources towards supporting professional development. This includes 5 days of professional development in the Summer Pre-service Program prior to the start of each school year, 5 professional development days during the year, and differentiated professional support based on individual teacher needs. In the first year, the planning team will pursue grant money to fund additional summer professional development for teachers. More information on the Renaissance Professional Development program can be found in [Section E: Educational Program](#).

Summer Pre-Service Program

Each year Renaissance will hold a Summer Pre-service Program immediately prior to students returning to the school. All staff members are required to attend various portions of the Summer Program as it is a critical time for team building and preparing for the year ahead. The Summer Pre-service Program will serve as an orientation to the systems, routines, procedures and expectations at Renaissance. The days will norm or re-norm all staff on the mission and vision of Renaissance, the nuts and bolts of the Renaissance community, curriculum design at Renaissance, the evaluation model used at Renaissance, and instructional norms and non-negotiable teaching practices at Renaissance. The focus of the Summer Pre-service Program is always professional development and planning, and topics covered may include but are not limited to:

- New teacher orientation
- Student and teacher culture
- School goals
- Response to Intervention
- Analyzing data to drive instruction
- Training on technology and digital curriculum
- Arts integration
- Serving students with special needs
- Adventure Education
- Assessment training
- Student scheduling

- Team meetings
- Relationship building

The Summer Pre-Service days will also allow time for the initial development of the school's Unified Improvement Plan, based on available data from the prior school year, and for curricular development and alignment with a focus on the school year's instructional/academic focus and expectations. During this time, teachers will also begin the development of a Professional Growth Plan in conjunction with school administrators.

Ongoing Professional Development

The annual calendar provides for 5 professional development days. These days are intended to provide teachers with the additional training they need in order to continually improve their instructional practice and topics covered on professional development days will include but not be limited to: Renaissance-specific initiatives, school-wide instructional initiatives, data and data tracking trainings, RtI work, vertical and horizontal planning opportunities, and outside professional development.

Moreover, all teachers will have a planning period built into their daily schedule to allow teachers time for work on their Professional Growth Plan and for class preparation.

Professional Growth Plans and Differentiated Professional Support

Each teacher's individual Professional Growth Plan (PGP) must be completed within one month of school opening. The PGP is based on a conversation with the Principal about how the teacher hopes to advance his or her practice, and/or growth areas identified by the administration for the individual teacher, and includes personal professional growth goals and a plan for meeting those goals; teachers will show how their individual goals will support the larger school goals as outlined in the UIP. In order to support each teacher's unique professional development needs, all teachers will have access to apply to use a professional development fund (funds budgeted in addition to the school-wide professional development budget) to participate in visits to other high-quality schools, classes, or conferences that support the employee in meeting his or her articulated PGP goals. Faculty members also receive two days of release time for individualized professional development. Professional development days and funds must be spent on school visits, classes, conferences, materials, travel, or other activities that the teacher and the Principal jointly agree support the school's goals and the individual's goals and must be approved in advance by the Principal.

Employees' Professional Growth Plans will be reviewed at least twice a year during evaluation meetings with their supervisors. Employees provide evidence of growth connected to student and classroom outcomes during these reviews. It is worth noting that

all school employees will have a PGP, including the administration and staff.

Staff Evaluation

Just as each student's progress is monitored from the moment they enter Renaissance, the progress of all staff will be tracked throughout the year as well. Teachers will be formally observed twice each year by the Principal or the Principal's designee. Following these formal observations, the Principal or the Principal's designee will provide individual coaching and guidance to help each teacher improve. Staff at Renaissance will receive an end-of-year performance review. The annual formal performance reviews of each teacher will be given by the school's Principal. The Principal will evaluate the Professional Learning Specialist, Dean of Students, Business Manager and Adventure Education Coordinator on an annual basis as well. The Board of Directors will evaluate the Principal annually. More information on the organizational chart can be found below.

Formal staff evaluations will include such items as salary and performance reviews, area of strength, areas for improvement, additional training is needed and goals for the following year. A crucial element of the annual evaluation for all teachers will be an assessment of the test scores achieved by students in each teacher's classroom, consideration of the Family Satisfaction Survey and success toward achieving the school's goals.

The formal evaluation process for all staff will begin with a goal meeting and review of PGP goals at the beginning of each academic year. Staff will meet with their supervisors to discuss their PGP goals and create an action plan to achieve those goals.

Fall Formal Observation

The Principal or his or her designee will formally observe all teachers and staff.

The fall observation cycle will consist of a pre-observation meeting in which the administrator meets with the staff member to discuss the goals and plan for the observation and any targeted areas of focus for the observation based on the staff member's goals/needs and school goals.

The post-observation conference will allow the staff member to reflect upon what went well and areas for improvement, and the Principal will share his/her observations, celebrations, and recommendations with the teacher.

They will plan together to identify future action steps.

Spring Formal Observation

This will follow the same pattern as outlined in the fall.

End-of-Year Performance Review

At the end of the school year, the Principal will develop a written performance evaluation to be shared with the employee based on the evaluation rubric shared with staff during the pre-service professional development days.

Formal and informal observation data will inform, in part, this review.

Teachers will be encouraged to use this review to shape their PGP goals for the following year, targeting any areas on their evaluation rubric in need of improvement.

The Principal will use the data gathered in the formal evaluations to inform next steps for the subsequent school year in order to improve the educational program and organizational structure to support academic progress and school goals.

In addition to the twice-annual formal observations and performance reviews, Renaissance will implement a plan of more frequent, informal evaluations, particularly in the case of staff new to the school. These informal evaluations will be conducted in a less formal manner and will consist of monthly drop-in walk-throughs by the Principal. The Principal will specifically look for the implementation of school non-negotiable practices, the staff member's growth in his/her targeted PGP areas, as well as areas of strength and challenge for each staff member. Staff members will receive written feedback in the form of a walk-through checklist with individualized comments and reflective questions to consider. Staff will be encouraged to use this feedback as they plan subsequent lessons and to reflect, in their formal evaluation meetings, upon how they used this input to improve their practice and student achievement. Teachers will provide input on what is working and what is not, and their input will be valued.

Renaissance intends to use the CDE State Model Evaluation System, which includes detailed rubrics designed to assess teacher and administration effectiveness. Teachers will be rated on six Quality Standards that measure professional practice and student learning over time. The Quality Standards are: content knowledge, establish classroom environment, facilitate learning, reflect on practice, demonstrate leadership, and student growth. This system will ensure compliance with SB 191 such that at least 50% of the evaluation is based on student academic performance.

Renaissance's teacher evaluation rubrics and evaluation procedures will be reevaluated regularly to ensure their authenticity, effectiveness, and adherence to future changes in

educational laws and regulations. A sample of the CDE evaluation rubrics for teachers and the Principal can be found in [Appendix E-4](#) and [H-5](#) respectively.

Hiring Accountability and Effectiveness

In order to judge whether the Renaissance teacher hiring and evaluation process is truly effective, the entire process and the results it produces must be analyzed regularly. For this reason, the Principal will evaluate the teacher evaluations in an annual report to the Board of Directors. This report will take place at the beginning of the school year assessing the previous school year's teacher evaluation data. This allows for inclusion of data on teacher hiring completed during the summer as well as standardized test results. These annual reports will include:

- Data on teacher retention.
- Data on teacher evaluation scores.
- Data on class and school student achievement rates.
- Identification of educational program and/or professional development initiatives from teacher evaluation information gathered.
- Identification of proposed revisions to the hiring process.

School Structure, Policies & Procedures

Equal Opportunity Employer

Renaissance shall not discriminate against any employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ancestry, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation or disability in its recruitment, selection, training, utilization, termination or other employment-related activities.

Employee Welfare and Safety

Renaissance shall comply with all DCSD policies and applicable federal and state laws concerning employee welfare, safety and health issues, including, without limitation, the requirements of federal law for a drug-free workplace.

Employee Records

Renaissance shall comply with all DCSD policies and regulations and applicable federal and state laws concerning the maintenance and disclosure of employee records.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

The terms and conditions of employment will be reviewed with each employee at two different points in the hiring process. It is important that a potential employee understand the expectations and values of Renaissance before accepting a position with the school. Likewise, it is important that Renaissance have assurances that a potential employee believes in and supports Renaissance's mission, goals, objectives and employee policies before continuing the interview process. This will be reviewed and discussed during the interview process.

Renaissance will compile the terms and conditions of employment into an Employee Agreement that will be signed by the employee, Principal and a Board member before the employee's first day as an employee.

Licenses

Renaissance will seek a waiver from the Teacher Employment Act, which requires a certificate license to pay teachers. Renaissance understands that the waiver request process has changed as of January 1, 2015 and that this will be included in the list of automatic waivers granted to charter schools upon entering a charter contract with their authorizer, in this case DCSD.

Grievances

The Board will adhere to the Dispute Resolution Process outlined in [Section R: Dispute Resolution Process](#) for any grievances raised by employees.

Employee Handbook

Prior to hiring its first employee, Renaissance will create an Employee Handbook which will provide critical information on the operation of the school and the expectation Renaissance will set for its employees. All employees will receive a copy of the handbook and will sign an acknowledgment form of their understanding of the information provided. A copy of the Renaissance Employee Handbook outline draft is provided in [Appendix I-7](#).

Upon charter approval, and prior to hiring its first employee, the Renaissance Board will work with the school's attorney, William Bethke, to draft and finalize the Employee Handbook.

Staff Roster

In addition to the school leaders (Principal, Professional Learning Specialist, Dean of

Students, Business Manager, and Adventure Education Coordinator) and faculty, Renaissance will also hire office staff and facilities staff, reporting to the Business Manager, to include a chef and a custodian.

Year 1 Employees

Position	FTE
Principal	1
Professional Learning Specialist	1
Dean of Students	1
Business Manager	1
Adventure Education Coordinator	.5
Chef	.5
Custodian	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Science, Math, Engineering Teachers	8
Humanities Teachers	8
Arts Teachers	3
Total	26



J. INSURANCE COVERAGE

Renaissance Secondary School will carry any authorizer- or state- mandated insurance coverage at the limits recommended by the Colorado League of Charter Schools. An insurance quote is provided in [Appendix J-1](#).

Prior to contracting with the insurance provider, Renaissance will ensure that the policy will include adequate coverage for all technology and other property, taking into account devices and equipment that will be taken home by students. Renaissance will also ensure that the insurance policy includes adequate coverage for any activity that may occur during classes or after school activities. Because Renaissance Secondary is an expeditionary school, adequate insurance will be taken on any off campus activities in which the students are involved.

Outside organizations or community groups that rent out the school facilities will be required to sign a waiver of liability and provide a certificate of insurance prior to signing a rental agreement with Renaissance.

All liability policies held by Renaissance will at a minimum, include coverage of \$2,000,000.00 per occurrence/ wrongful act that will cover the following:

- Bodily Injury
- Property Damage
- Abuse and Molestation
- Theft of Property
- Educators' Legal or Teachers Professional (Errors and Omissions)
- Employee Benefits
- Employment Practices
- Directors and Officers
- Automobile
- Off site student travel

Renaissance will secure an Excess or Umbrella Policy, at a minimum of \$1,000,000.00 that covers most, if not all of the following after determining Renaissance's individual exposure:

- Property (including business income and extra expense as well as all technology)
- Crime and Fiduciary Liability

- Student Accident
- Off Campus activities including fieldwork, sporting events (if applicable) and activities and events specific to the expeditionary learning program, such as concerts, performances, competitions, etc.
- Cyber Liability (including media exposures)
- Workers' Compensation

Emergency Management Plan

Renaissance will create and maintain an emergency management plan to work in conjunction with any Federal, State, emergency service providers (police, sheriff, fire and medical) or DCSC Emergency Management Plan designated to maximize all available resources in the event of an emergency. The Principal will create and oversee the school's Safety Committee (SC). The SC will be made of up of three to six members of the faculty at the school at the Principal's sole discretion, depending upon the number of students, size of the facilities, etc. The SC will be primarily responsible for creating and maintaining an emergency management plan. This emergency management plan will provide the procedures in the event of any emergency (i.e. fire, earthquake, tornado, civil unrest, terrorist attack, etc.) The Principal shall act as the designated crisis response spokesperson, unless otherwise set forth in the emergency management plan. The emergency management plan shall include a claims management process, including any and all necessary follow-up with the claimants.

Student Safety

Renaissance will make diligent efforts to ensure the safety of its students, teachers, and staff. A building security system will be installed and school visitors will be required to check in (presenting ID) with the front office before being allowed into the school. Additionally, parent volunteers will contribute to school safety by serving as crossing guards and carpool attendants before and after school.

Additionally, it will be vital to ensure that all technology is being responsibly used and that students stay safe online. Renaissance will employ all available technologies to ensure students can enjoy a safe and respectful digital community. This includes utilizing a digital media oversight system, such as Airwatch, to block inappropriate digital content on student devices and school computers.

To ensure all students are well equipped to act responsibly and interact positively in the digital world, faculty will teach safe digital usage. Like other aspects of the school's educational program, digital safety will be integrated into the learning projects.



K. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Renaissance Secondary will provide opportunities that encourage support from parents and the community. School leaders will ensure that parents feel welcome while providing unique opportunities for hands-on involvement in the structure and operation of their student's school. Parent and community support will be integral to educational programming at the school, providing "real world" connections to the world of work and life beyond high school.

Parent and Community Involvement in the Development of the School

Renaissance Secondary has a Volunteer Coordinator who has recruited parent volunteers, matched parent interest to volunteer projects, and has tracked volunteer hours for Founding Family status. Founding Families are families that contribute at least eighty (80) volunteer hours prior to the school opening. To date, over 30 volunteers have contributed over 1000 volunteer hours in support of the school.

The Founding Board has already established the following committees to ensure parent and community involvement as the groundwork for the school is being developed:

- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Responsible for contacting potential volunteers, gathering information regarding their interests, skills and backgrounds, and matching them with appropriate committees and/or volunteer opportunities.
- **Community Partnerships Committee:** Responsible for establishing sustainable relationships with individuals, organizations and businesses within the community that are interested in supporting the educational mission of the school. The committee will build reciprocal relationships with local companies and organizations that support the mission of the school. The committee will also seek out partners who can support after school programs and extracurricular activities for our students.
- **Curriculum Committee:** Responsible for establishing a learning environment that blends the design principles of expeditionary learning with project-based learning and technology. Committee members have researched and compared curriculum choices of other successful schools and made recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- **Enrollment and Lottery Committee:** Responsible for developing and running the Renaissance Secondary lottery. Committee members will research successful lottery and enrollment systems used by other schools and then develop a highly organized

lottery and enrollment protocol for Renaissance Secondary based on this data, including how parents will be notified of enrollment status, how enrollment statistics will be tracked and how a wait-list will successfully function.

- Fundraising / Grant Writing Committee: Responsible for developing and submitting a grant request to the CDE for a CCSP charter school start-up grant. The committee is also responsible for researching and applying for national and private grants that relate to curriculum, adventure education, technology in the classroom, and charter school start-up and implementation. Committee members will be seeking other funding opportunities from foundations, businesses and corporations that support the school's mission.
- Finance Committee: Responsible for advising the Board about financial transactions, interviewing and recommending auditors, and making recommendations based upon the annual audit.
- Marketing Committee: Responsible for educating the public about Renaissance Secondary, managing social media, creating positive community outreach activities, preparing communications materials which reflect the mission and vision of Renaissance Secondary and representing the school at community events. This committee is working to increase enrollment numbers by creating and distributing marketing materials and information to parents in the community.
- Nutrition Committee: Responsible for researching school lunch options beyond those provided by DCSD.

Community Interest and Support of the Development of the School

Renaissance Exploratory Group was formed in 2013 to evaluate the need for an Expeditionary Learning middle and high school in Douglas County. A community survey was conducted and there were 142 survey responses representing 246 students. An overwhelming majority of parents voiced their preference of wanting to send their children to an Expeditionary Learning middle school; the preference for a charter or magnet school was 87 percent. Recent additional data show a strong demand for a middle and high school continuum.

The planning team has relied on resources from the following organizations in developing its application:

- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado League of Charter Schools
- DCS Montessori
- Compass Montessori
- Renaissance Elementary Magnet School

- High Tech High
- Design 39
- Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning
- EDUCO

Renaissance has utilized resources from the CDE Schools of Choice Unit. Board members have completed online training modules and other training webinars offered by CDE. The planning team has aligned its academic program to meet the Colorado Academic Standards and the team used the resources available from CDE to aid in that process. Upon charter approval, Renaissance will also apply for the CCSP Start-Up Grant administered by CDE and will utilize the assistance offered by CDE's technical assistance program that is a part of the grant process.

The Colorado League of Charter Schools has also been instrumental in the development of the charter application. Renaissance has closely followed the League's Quality Standards for Developing Charter Schools.¹⁰⁰ Board members have participated in various trainings offered by the League. Renaissance also has received five planning grants from the League of Charter Schools that have assisted in the development of the school. The \$12,500 in grants Renaissance has received from the League has allowed Renaissance to hire an attorney, a financial consultant, and academic consultants to review and provide constructive feedback for many components of the charter plan, including governance, budget, and the educational program. The grant money has also helped with community outreach. Finally, the League of Charter Schools conducted a rigorous two-stage review of the charter application prior to its submission to the DCSD for approval. All of the feedback has been incorporated into this final application.

Renaissance worked closely with leaders and teachers at Renaissance Elementary Magnet School in Douglas County to ensure consistency with and fidelity to the academic program at the elementary school. Teachers at Renaissance assisted in the development of many of the example Learning Expeditions contained in [Section E](#) and attached as [appendix E-2](#). Leaders at Renaissance Elementary also assisted with the development of the Renaissance Secondary's budget.

The school's budget was also developed with assistance from the leadership at DCS Montessori, a DCSD charter school that serves a similar population of students and has similar resource requirements.

¹⁰⁰ http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/coloradoleague.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/files-nsd/quality_standards_for_develo.pdf

The planning team conducted site visits at the Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning in Denver, the Watershed School in Boulder, High Tech High in San Diego, VIDA in San Diego, and Design 39 in San Diego. Members of the planning team met with leaders and students at many of these schools and incorporated aspects of these schools into the school design of Renaissance. See [Section E: Educational Program](#) and [Section N: Facilities](#) for specific aspects of each of these schools incorporated into Renaissance.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Renaissance looks forward to working with the DCSD Choice Programming Office to explore partnerships that will add value to both Renaissance and the District.

Community Partnerships

In addition to educational organizations, other community groups have shown their support for Renaissance. These include

- EDUCO
- Camp Elim
- Storm Soccer
- Phillip S. Miller Library
- Keystone Science School
- Castle Rock Care Center
- Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department
- Castle Rock Smiles
- Douglas County Task Force
- Rocky Mountain Self Defense

Partnerships will assist the educational program in a number of ways. The school will rely on partnerships with adventure education organizations to develop its adventure education program. The X-Blocks, which allow students to explore different academic, artistic, and athletic endeavors, will rely on partnerships with outside organizations to teach or provide resources. Projects involving service learning will require strong partnerships with local non-profits, such as the relationship Renaissance Elementary has developed with the Castle Rock Care Center. Finally, to develop Real World Connections, one of the six Renaissance Design Principles, the school will need to develop relationships with experts in the field to assist with Learning Expeditions.

Renaissance has established a Community Partnerships committee to develop partnerships with local organizations. The committee has already received informal commitments from the following organizations to work with Renaissance or Renaissance students:

Adventure Education

- EDUCO
- Camp Elim
- Keystone Science School

X-Blocks

- Storm Soccer
- Rocky Mountain Self Defense

Service Learning

- Castle Rock Care Center
- Douglas County Task Force

Experts in the Field

- Rocky Mountain Ice Core Lab

Upon approval of the charter application, Renaissance will move to secure more formal partnerships with those and other community organizations.

Renaissance has received 13 letters of support from community leaders, organizations, and businesses. The letters can be found in [Appendix D-1](#).

Volunteer Opportunities in School Governance and Leadership Organizations

Once opened, the opportunities for parent and community involvement will be augmented by the following leadership structure. Renaissance Secondary will have four components to our parent support organizations:

Renaissance Secondary Board of Directors

This will be the governing body overseeing the operations of Renaissance Secondary (aka Charter Governing Board). This board will oversee the hiring and management of the Principal and approve the school's annual budget.

Renaissance Educational Foundation (REF)

This is the organization that will serve as the fundraising entity supporting the school. REF will have a board of officers elected from the parent and local community. The purpose of REF will be to raise funds in support of the school. Mechanisms that will be used include: seeking grants, corporate sponsorships, and an annual fund to solicit contributions. The REF board will meet at least quarterly and disburse funds to the school in the form of program grants and scholarships to support graduating seniors, current students in need of fee assistance and professional development scholarships to staff.

Renaissance Secondary Educational Alliance (RSEA)

This will be the parent and community support organization that operates similar to a PTO or school booster club. In addition to traditional officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer), RSEA officers will include the following leadership:

- *Volunteer Coordinator* - recruits, trains and shows appreciation for parent and community volunteers.
- *Portfolios Coordinator* - works with school staff to secure parent and community member participation in the annual student Portfolio Showcase.
- *Community Support Liaison* - this committee will provide outreach support to the school staff in recruiting support from the community organizations and individuals.

School Accountability Committee (SAC)

Renaissance Secondary will institute a School Accountability Committee (SAC), comprised of the school Principal, a teacher, at least one parent, and community members and operate as outlined in the DCSD bylaws. Among other activities, this committee will administer the annual survey to students and parents.

Academic Volunteer Opportunities

Renaissance Secondary values the input of parents and members of the community and plans to honor these relationships by creating partnerships to foster the vision and mission of the school and to build a sense of community. These partnerships will focus on two curriculum areas: academic achievement and personal growth.

Academic Achievement

Renaissance Secondary plans to emphasize the importance of families being invested and taking ownership of their student's education. To do this, school leaders will create several opportunities for parent and community involvement in the academics of the school. Areas for involvement include:

- Student Portfolios: One of the hallmarks of the expeditionary learning is the Portfolio Showcase, which gives students the opportunity to reflect on and share their learning with an audience outside of their peers and teachers—much like a thesis or professional presentation. The Showcase is an authentic opportunity for students to use presentation, communication and critical thinking skills. Students

gain a sense of pride and accomplishment through this experience and, through this process, develop a deeper understanding of an expeditionary learning design principle—responsibility for learning. Parents and members of the community will be invited to participate as panelists in this annual event for students.

- Student Led Conferences: Part of the outreach to our community will be accomplished by student-led conferences. Meant to augment the school's written performance records, the student-led conference will involve students in reflection on their work and academic achievement. More than a traditional "parent/teacher conference," the student led conferences may occur at the end of an academic unit or upon the completion of a major project. Parents and community members will be invited to share in the knowledge created by our students.
- X-Blocks: Opportunities built in to each school day for students to explore different areas of interest. Examples of X-Blocks include yoga, photography, rock climbing, competitive sports, instrumental music, and fencing. Renaissance will rely not only on teachers to lead these X-Blocks but also on community members and parents, although all X-Blocks will be supervised by teachers so that students receive credit for these experiences.

Personal Growth

Renaissance Secondary plans to also emphasize the character development of students and the importance of families taking ownership of achievement in this area. To do this, Renaissance Secondary leaders will create several opportunities for parent involvement in the area of personal growth, to include:

- Parent Information Seminars: Renaissance Secondary will conduct parent seminars to include topics such as: orientation to school culture, character building, parenting skills, transition from middle to high school, safe use of the internet and social media, post-secondary opportunities, college and career planning.
- Service Learning: Through ties to their curriculum and projects, as well as after school enrichment, students at Renaissance will be exposed to the five stages of service learning: *Inventory and Investigation, Preparation and Planning, Action, Reflection and Demonstration*. Renaissance will reach out to our community to engage non-profit and service organizations in creating a robust and meaningful program for our students. Service opportunities that involve and engage the family will be encouraged, especially in the "reflection" and "demonstration" stages of student-led service projects.

Volunteer Opportunities in School Culture and Operations

Upon charter approval, Renaissance Secondary will recruit a Volunteer Coordinator who will, on a volunteer basis, be responsible for the recruitment, placement, training and scheduling of all volunteers at the school. The Volunteer Coordinator will work closely with the school's Business Manager to ensure that the volunteer needs of the school are being met.

Parents will be asked to sign a volunteer commitment letter that outlines the school's expectations for parent involvement. In addition to supporting their student's academic achievement, parents will also be expected to commit to the school's adventure education program and volunteer in areas that are of interest to them. Requesting parents to participate in this manner underscores the vital role a family plays in their student's education and will involve families in the understanding and experiences of the school's culture. Renaissance will request all families commit 40 hours of their time to the school each academic year. For single-parent households, this expectation will be reduced in half.

Volunteer opportunities will fulfill a variety of needs at the school, to include the following:

- Assisting with the planning of various events and activities including portfolio showcases, student-led conferences, maker's fairs, etc.
- Supporting the school's art program - art shows, concerts, recitals, theatrical productions through activities such as building sets, making costumes, box office duties, etc.
- Planning or assisting with crew events or celebrations.
- Helping with classroom projects throughout the year.
- Assisting with facility maintenance projects, such as annual landscape and building improvements.
- Supporting after school programs.
- Planning or participating in school fund-raising events.

As previously stated in [Section E: Education Program](#), Renaissance Secondary will facilitate a positive school culture in several key ways. The school will have strong character education embedded into the culture of the school, including an emphasis on service learning appropriate to students' development and grade level, developing students as principled, caring young people who take action as a consequence of their learning. The school's motto, "We are crew, not passengers", embodies the ethos that each student is expected to actively participate in his/her learning and to help others in their pursuit.

To fully implement the desired school culture, school leaders will embody the culture of support and collaboration with parents and use meetings and training to reinforce the

culture. Students will witness the culture on a daily basis and will be held to high expectations in all interactions. In short, Renaissance Secondary will be a strong community with a culture of crew, where we celebrate the academic endeavors and successes of each member of our community.

COMMUNICATION

Communication about School Implementation and Progress

Renaissance Secondary will strive to foster strong relationships with members of the community. To facilitate a comprehensive community outreach program, Renaissance Secondary has created a website (<https://renaissancesecondary.org>), which provides updated information about the school, access to volunteer opportunities and an area to express an intent to enroll. In addition to the website, Renaissance Secondary has created a Facebook page (<https://facebook.com/RenaissanceCharterSchool>), YouTube channel (<http://video.rensec.org>) and a Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/rcschool2017>). These outlets allow for real-time information to be presented to the community about our efforts.

The Founding Board has already provided an opportunity for community members to learn more about positive educational reform efforts by screening the film, *“Most Likely to Succeed.”* This film explores the successes and challenges of project-based learning and helps to explain the need for the American educational system to update the pedagogy that has been used for the past century.

Additional outreach opportunities that have engaged the public include:

Participation in the Town of Castle Rock’s “Starlighting” event on November 21, 2015, which drew an audience of 50,000 members of the community. Renaissance Secondary had an informational booth, passed out a project-based learning kit to students (with instructions listed on our website) and gave out information to parents in attendance.

Members of the marketing committee have supported an information booth at the Castle Rock “Miller Athletic Complex” several weekends in the Fall 2015. The purpose is to reach out to parents and community members who value outdoor activities and education, which is a core value of the school.

Communication and Outreach to At-Risk Populations

Renaissance is committed to ensuring that all students in Douglas County, regardless of socio-economic, academic, or language status, have the opportunity to attend the school. Although the lottery process itself provides an equal opportunity to anyone interested in

attending Renaissance, the planning team recognizes that the process is only successful if at-risk populations learn about the school and the enrollment process.

Therefore, the Renaissance marketing team has intentionally targeted communications to at-risk populations. Renaissance has appointed “school coordinators” at Castle Rock elementary schools with higher proportions of students receiving free and reduced price lunch and schools with larger numbers of ELL students. Additionally, Renaissance has posted Spanish language flyers at locations in Castle Rock and provided the flyers to schools with higher percentages of ELL students ([Appendix K-1](#)).

Communication about School Operations

Parental feedback is important to the leadership of Renaissance Secondary in order to create and sustain a school of excellence. All teachers and staff will engage in communication with parents and community members through the use of crew blogs, a school website and regular communications sent home electronically. In addition, Renaissance Secondary will employ the following communications and feedback devices:

Infinite Campus

Renaissance Secondary will implement Infinite Campus as its student information system. Parents will have access to the information in Infinite Campus through a parent portal. Infinite Campus will be utilized in conjunction with school assessments to evaluate individual students, prepare interventions and chart academic progress through the grade levels. Infinite Campus will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program and track the achievement of goals. Parents will have access to Infinite Campus using their own username and password.

Annual Satisfaction Survey

All parents and students will get an annual satisfaction survey, administered by the School Accountability Committee. The Renaissance Secondary Board of Directors will use the feedback obtained to guide the school leadership for program development improvements. The student survey will ask students about the level of rigor and innovation in the core classes, the degree to which students feel they are advancing academically, and how meaningful their academic engagement has been. Students will be invited to make suggestions and recommendations as to how Renaissance Secondary can improve upon these critical elements of the school’s mission.

The parent survey will ask parents to evaluate the school on the same components from their perspective. The survey will ask parents if Renaissance Secondary is preparing

students for future success through rigorous and innovative academic instruction and meaningful engagement and will solicit feedback and suggestions for improvement.



L. ENROLLMENT POLICY

Renaissance plans to launch in fall 2017 by filling 464 seats in grades 7-10 through a standard lottery process. The first year budget is based on this 464 student enrollment, with additional students being added in grades 11 and 12 in subsequent years. At full build out, Renaissance will serve 116 students per grade level, for a total enrollment of 696 students.

A draft of Renaissance's enrollment policy is included in [Appendix L-1](#).

Method of Enrollment

Parents or legal guardians request enrollment for the child(ren) they intend to enroll in the school by submitting an Intent to Enroll form prior to or during the school's open enrollment period, and prior to the lottery held in December of each year. This open enrollment form is currently available on the Renaissance Secondary website (www.RenaissanceSecondary.org) and will be available in hard copy at public meetings or mailed via USPS to a family when requested prior to school opening. After school opening, this form will be available at the school for future prospective families. Submitting an Intent to Enroll form in no way guarantees an invitation for enrollment in Renaissance Secondary, nor does it obligate the family to enroll their child(ren) should they receive an invitation. This policy is clearly disclosed on the form.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Renaissance will not discriminate against the enrollment of any student as per the CDE Non-Discrimination Policy for charter schools.¹⁰¹ The Directors of the Board and school Principal are responsible for ensuring that the policy is upheld. As such, school enrollment will not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, socioeconomic status, language, or need for special education services. Renaissance also prohibits discrimination in enrollment based on the academic ability of any student. After students are officially enrolled in the school, Renaissance reserves the right to test to determine a student's academic knowledge using diagnostic or placement exams per The Colorado Charter Schools Act [C.R.S. 22-30.5-104 (3)].

¹⁰¹ [http://www.boarddocs.com/co/cde/Board.nsf/files/8LAU7Z71FDEC/\\$file/1412-Report-Final%28080111%29.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/co/cde/Board.nsf/files/8LAU7Z71FDEC/$file/1412-Report-Final%28080111%29.pdf)

Wait lists

When the school's student enrollment is at capacity, the school will maintain a waitlist. When a position opens, students will be offered admission to the school based on a lottery subject to the priority enrollment policy listed below.

Open Enrollment Period

The open enrollment period and lottery for each school year will be posted on the Renaissance Secondary website no later than November 1 and will end no later than 11:59:59pm (MST) January 5 annually unless either day is not a school day, in which case the next regular school day will be the commencement or closing day, respectively. All Intent to Enroll forms received prior to that time will be considered for enrollment for the upcoming school year. Prospective families not chosen must submit a new intent to enroll each year.

Priority Enrollment

Priority enrollment is granted to the following groups of students prior to the lottery:

- 1) Currently Enrolled Students
- 2) Children in the household of or under the legal guardianship of Founding Families
- 3) Children of Administrators, Teachers, and Staff employed a minimum of 20 hours a week at Renaissance Secondary

Enrollment for Children of Administrators, Teachers, and Staff will be prioritized based on:

- a) Hire Date
- b) Number of Paid Hours Weekly (with full time employees receiving highest priority and 20 hour a week employees receiving lowest priority)

(The sum of #2 and #3 will comprise no more than 20% of total student enrollment with children of Families having priority over children of Administrators, Teachers, and Staff)

- 4) Siblings of Currently Enrolled Students

Founding families are defined as families who provide 80 or more hours of approved volunteer services toward the development, formation, and completion of Renaissance prior to the opening of the school. Families that wish to enroll a child or children in the first

year lottery must complete their Founding Family status by November 1, 2016 in order to get priority enrollment before the initial lottery in December.

The child(ren) of founding families do not need to currently be of age to attend Renaissance, and when applicable, will be accounted for in future years of incoming seventh grade classes prior to that future year's lottery. Founding families and staff child(ren) will not exceed 20% of the total enrollments in the lottery. The Board of Directors will track the number of families completing founding family status so as to not exceed 20% as determined by the actual number of enrollments to be filled.

Lottery

The community shall receive notice about the formation of the new Renaissance Secondary charter school and of the enrollment lottery upon approval of the school charter application. All applicable dates and deadlines for the enrollment lottery of the initial year will be clearly communicated. Public meetings, website information, social media, posted notices, appropriate press releases, and other methods approved by the Directors of the Board, school Principal, and DCSD will provide adequate time and opportunity for all interested parties to submit Intent to Enroll prior to the lottery.

The lottery process shall commence within one week after the end of the open enrollment period and in December of the initial academic year. All students for whom an Intent to Enroll was received prior to the end of the open enrollment period and are eligible for enrollment will be assigned a unique identification number and placed on a list (by number). The list will be sorted using computer-generated, randomized numbers. Each entry is assigned a Lottery ID from 1 to N depending on where they landed in the sort. The Lottery ID will be utilized one time for the upcoming academic year only. Enrollment vacancies will be filled by grade, beginning with the highest grade for which there is one or more vacancies, and will continue in descending order until all vacancies are filled for all grades. Following priority enrollment as noted above, enrollment invitations will be extended to students in order of their assigned Lottery ID (lowest to highest). To ensure authenticity and integrity of the lottery process, no less than two Directors of the Board and the Principal or designee will oversee the randomization of computer-generated Lottery ID assignments; the final sort will be printed and signed by all witnesses.

Parents will be notified by email, if an email address was provided, or by telephone if a parent does not have access to email. For the first year, the lottery will be conducted by members of the enrollment committee, and they will perform all notifications. In subsequent years, administrative staff will perform the enrollment process.

DCSD Open Enrollment Policy

By providing written Enrollment Acceptance to the school, the child(ren) will forfeit enrollment in their neighborhood school, as defined by DCSD open enrollment policies. Please see the DCSD website for details regarding their open enrollment policies.¹⁰²

Enrollment Acceptance

Upon receiving an Invitation to Enroll via telephone or email, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) shall provide enrollment acceptance through the online Lottery Response form no later than forty-eight hours after the enrollment invitation was extended. Clear instructions on how to complete enrollment and accurate return contact information will be provided to each parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren). Introduction to the school, reference to its policies and procedures, academic calendars, and other high level pertinent information that will assist a family in making an informed decision on accepting enrollment at Renaissance will be provided at this time. Enrollment Acceptance and Open Enrollment forms shall be downloaded by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) from the school's website or hard copies picked up in person at the school and will be signed and submitted to the school within one week (7 days) of providing online acceptance. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) will also need to provide the child(ren)'s certificate of birth, immunization records, proof of residence (Warranty Deed, Deed of Trust, Tax Notice, Lease Agreement, Assessor Page, Notarized Letter from the person they are living with if they are living with someone and their name doesn't appear on the proof of residency. A copy of the second party's Proof of Residency must also be given at enrollment). A student who accepts enrollment and provides acceptable enrollment documentation will be deemed a currently enrolled student at Renaissance Secondary.

A student's immunization record must comply with Colorado law which requires that children going to school be vaccinated to prevent vaccine-preventable disease. In accordance with DCSD policy, (website: <https://www.dcsdk12.org/health-services/immunizations>) parents who have religious or personal objections to immunizations, or students who have a medical reason for exemption, may complete and sign a form at Renaissance Secondary. Students who have exemptions will be excluded from school at Renaissance if an outbreak of a specified common disease occurs. Renaissance will actively strive to ensure compliance with current immunization laws.

Once enrolled, that student will also be allowed continual enrollment for the duration of their 7-12 education in accordance and compliance with the school's policies and

¹⁰² <https://www.dcsdk12.org/enrollment>

procedures. The academic records of enrolled students will be transferred into Renaissance Secondary from the student's former school in accordance with Renaissance and DCSD Student Data & Information Services policies and procedures.

Following enrollment acceptance to Renaissance Secondary, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) will receive an official welcome packet to the school, and current up to date orientation information for the grade level of their enrolled student. Renaissance school administration will continue to execute an ongoing communication plan of critical information to families preparing to attend Renaissance that will continue all the way to the commencement of the school year.

If no online acceptance is received by the school within forty-eight hours from the time any child was extended an Invitation to Enroll, or an Enrollment Acceptance form was not submitted to the school within the time allowed, the school will assume the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) have declined to enroll the child(ren) in the school, and the school may then extend an Invitation to Enroll to another child using the established lottery process.

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) who completed an Intent to Enroll and who are not selected and enrolled into Renaissance during the lottery process will receive notice via telephone or email, will receive information about wait lists and wait list policies as described above, and will continue to be eligible if a student leaves the school, until the end of that school year.

Vacancies, Withdrawals, and Transfers

When a vacancy in enrollment is created prior to, during, or after the school year, the vacancy may or may not be filled at the discretion of the Principal, in the event it is considered to be fiscally, logistically, or otherwise in conflict with the school's ability to meet its mission and goals. If Renaissance is in possession of the student's academic records when the vacancy is created, the school will be responsible to properly transfer the records out of Renaissance and to the student's destination school in accordance with the school's and District's policies and procedures.

If the school chooses to fill the vacancy, priority will be given as specified in the Priority Enrollment section of this document and according to Board of Education Policy JCA/JFB-R. An Invitation to Enroll will be extended to a child in the same manner as described for Enrollment Acceptance above. A student who accepts enrollment and provides acceptable enrollment documentation will be deemed a currently enrolled student at Renaissance Secondary. Siblings of enrolled students who are not yet in seventh grade will be accounted for and extended priority enrollment in the Renaissance lottery process of future years.

Once enrolled, that student will also be allowed continual enrollment for the duration of their 7-12 education in accordance and compliance with the school's policies and procedures. The academic records of enrolled students will either be created with or transferred into Renaissance from the student's former school in accordance with Renaissance and DCSD Student Data & Information Services policies and procedures.

In the case of withdrawals or transfers of students causing a vacancy, Renaissance will partner with DCSD Student Data & Information Services to adhere to all current and correct policies and procedures surrounding the accurate maintenance and movement of student records from Renaissance to the destination school in Douglas County or abroad.



M. TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SERVICE

Transportation

Transportation to and from school will be the responsibility of parents/guardians. Renaissance will help provide transportation options through an electronic carpool service like www.waytogo.com. This service will be accessible to all families through the Renaissance Secondary home page and through the front desk of the school. Renaissance will encourage carpooling and assist parents in organizing carpools.

A transportation plan and parking plan will be developed in conjunction with the design of the facility. This transportation plan will be presented to and approved by Douglas County, as appropriate. Renaissance will permit students who are licensed drivers to park at the school with the appropriate pass. As such, the parking plan will need to accommodate all potentially licensed drivers, including students, faculty, and staff.

Students requiring transportation as part of an IEP will be provided those services by DCSD through the school's purchase of Tier 3 SPED services.

Food Services

In year one, Renaissance shall provide food services in conjunction with DCSD's food service program. These services will include the National School Lunch Program and may include the Special Milk Program and After School Care Snack Program. Moreover, DCSD's food service will meet the needs of low-income and/or low achieving students based on district requirements. In conjunction with this program, low-income students shall have access to the Free and Reduced Lunch. The principal shall designate a School Food Authority (SFA) that shall distribute, collect and record Free and Reduced Lunch qualification forms, will work with DCSD on the lunch program, and shall be the onsite manager of the program.

Renaissance will provide a lunch option to all students, using food services provided by DCSD. Students will have the opportunity to order lunch at the beginning of each school day. This service is similar to the option provided in DCSD neighborhood schools but will be customized to meet the needs of Renaissance through a service contract with DCSD. The service contract will include all staffing for the food service program as provided within the

service contract with DCSD. The Renaissance facility will have a food prep area/kitchen for DCSD food services to use for lunch preparation and will be in accordance to all applicable state and federal laws.

The food services program will be a break-even program for the school, with fees covering all expenses, with the exception of one staff person paid for out of the school's general fund. Because the food service program will be through DCSD, there is no line item in the school's budget. Lunches will be provided to students who forget their lunch and billed to the student's lunch account.



N. FACILITIES

Renaissance Secondary School plans to be just as intentional about the design and construction of the facility as it is with the academic program the facility will house. Every decision made regarding the facility will be made with the school's mission, vision, and design principles in mind.

Design Elements

First and foremost, the building design must support the project-based learning at the core of the school's academic program. Spaces must be open and flexible to allow for different projects to take place. They must also allow for collaboration and creative activities. Technology must be able to be used by students and teachers seamlessly, wherever students may be in the building.

The Renaissance academic program also includes teachers teaching in teams. In grades 7 and 8, each grade will have two teams taught by two teachers, one STEM and one Humanities. Therefore, folding walls between each pair of classrooms will be an essential design element.

The school building should also be designed such that students and teachers have frequent access to nature. Research supports incorporating green space into school design. One study, from the University of Georgia, found that student achievement increased when students had natural light, used outdoor paths and had access to outdoor spaces.¹⁰³ In fact, just having a view of green spaces out of classrooms had a positive effect on student achievement.

Based on research and alignment with the school's academic program, the building should have the following design elements:

- Open, flexible spaces
- Folding walls
- Interior windows
- Space for display of student work (exhibitions in halls and gathering spaces)
- Spaces for student collaboration
- Outside walkways

¹⁰³ **Tanner, C.**, [Effects of School Design on Student Outcomes](#). University of Georgia.

- Outdoor spaces
- Spaces that foster of sense of community, such as a learning commons, auditorium, and dining hall
- Many windows, with views of green spaces
- Classrooms that connect to outdoor learning spaces

Building Requirements

The Renaissance building will be approximately 95 square feet per student, including all spaces except the gym. This size is consistent with other schools visited by the planning team. In year 1, the required building size would be roughly 44,000 square feet. At full build-out in year 3, Renaissance would require about 66,000 square feet. The following table outlines the required spaces:

	Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Number of students		464	580	696
Approx. sq. ft. per student		95	95	95
Total sq. ft.		44,080	55,100	66,120
Classrooms (paired with access to outdoor space)	High	16	20	24
Exploratories are suited to specific disciplines. These vary from engineering to environmental science rooms and have large doors to allow for outdoors work space.	Med	4	5	6
Learning Commons (open space for study and collaboration)	High	1	1 or 2	2 (middle and high) or one large
Studios (5-20 students) for literature seminars, crew, quiet study)	High	As many as can be accommodated		
Administration	High	1	1	1
Health Room	High	1	1	1
Conference Room	High	1	1	1
Teacher Work Space	High	1	1	1
Prep Kitchen	High	1	1	1
Full Kitchen (to also accommodate culinary arts program)	Med		1	1

Gym (basketball/volleyball plus studios for yoga, dance, etc., indoor rock wall, Locker rooms)	Med	1	1	1
Innovation Lab (3D printers, fabricators, laser cutters, etc.)	Low	1	1	1
Auditorium	High	1	1	1
Storage	High	1	1	1
Outdoor Seating and Table area	High	1	1	1
Outdoor Rock Wall	Low	1	1	1
Multi-use field	Med	1	1	1
Track	Low	1	1	1

Project Management

Renaissance is working with Kurt Connolly from Inline Management to manage the purchase of land, selection of general contractor, and to assist with obtaining financing, in addition to the management of the construction process.

Land

Michelle Cohen, a licensed commercial real estate agent, is assisting Renaissance Secondary with identifying land in the Castle Rock area suitable for the school's needs. Renaissance has identified four options:

- The first lot identified is in the Crystal Valley area of Castle Rock. The lot is approximately 14 acres and the list price is \$4-5 per square foot.
- The second lot is west of Crystal Valley Parkway and I-25. The lot size and price is negotiable as it is being offered by a developer.
- The third lot being considered is owned by a non-profit organization in the Castle Rock area seeking to partner with a school that has a mission similar to its own. The Board is currently in negotiations to obtain a land lease in exchange for joint use of the facilities. The organization seeks space to conduct its educational programs in the summer when Renaissance Secondary is not in session.
- The fourth lot is south of Castle Rock and is 52 acres. It is being offered for about \$1.8 million but is able to be sold in divisible parcels.

As an alternative to the land options listed above, Renaissance would like to consider the lease or purchase of property owned by DCSD. This option could lead to significant savings for Renaissance. Renaissance will discuss these options with DCSD when the charter application is in the final stages of approval.

Financing

The Renaissance board is working with two financial advisors to investigate financing options for land purchase and construction. PFM has conducted a review and may assist Renaissance in obtaining financing for land purchase (if required) and construction costs. In addition, Grey Mountain Charter Financing has presented financing options to the Board of Directors. The Board will select the financing option that provides the best terms.

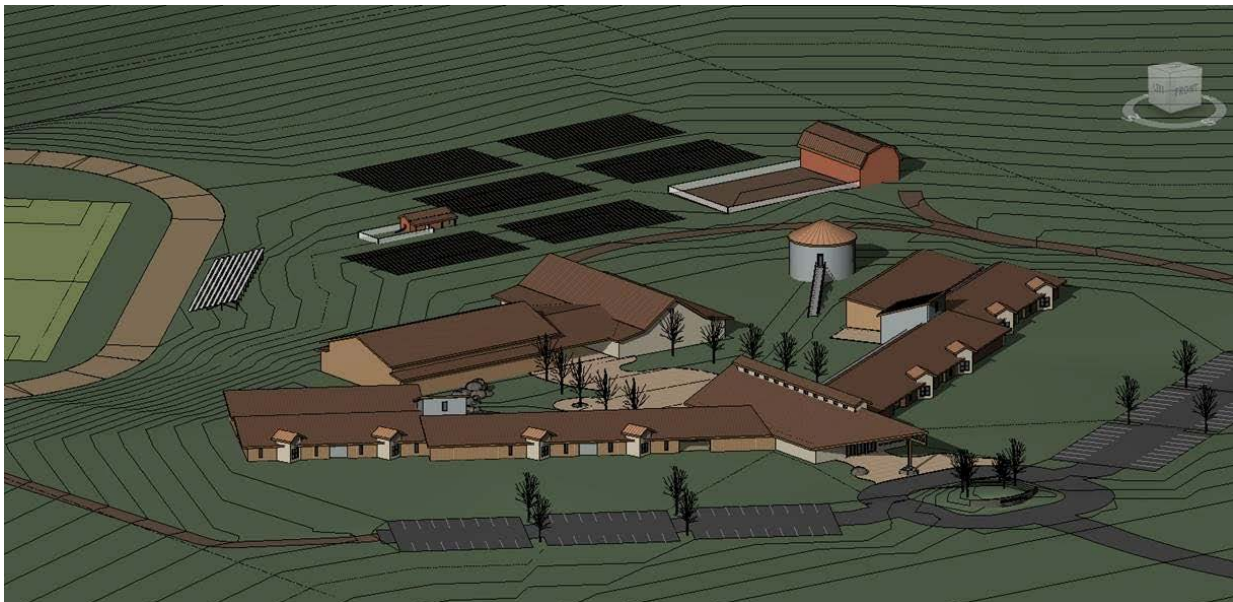
PFM has advised the Board that it will be able to obtain more favorable terms on its financing if the Board of Education authorizes a twenty-five year charter. The Board believes that the Board of Education will be able to maintain the ability to monitor the performance of Renaissance through the terms of its charter contract in the same manner it would through a formal renewal process. Renaissance intends to negotiate the terms of a twenty-five year charter contract such that the Board of Education retains all of the remedies available under a shorter term while Renaissance is able to finance its facility at a lower cost, freeing up funds to be used for the educational program.

Additionally, PFM has advised that Renaissance can achieve more favorable financing if DCSD would serve as a guarantor on any loans. Renaissance looks forward to discussing all available options with DCSD.

Indeed, Renaissance Secondary is prepared to amend its charter application to serve grades PK-6 if the District would benefit from added capacity at those grade levels.

Architect and Design

The Board issued an RFQ to four architecture firms in Colorado. The RFQ is attached in [Appendix N-1](#). After an open and transparent process, the Board selected Ewers Architecture to provide architectural services. The firm has begun the design process prior to charter approval and has agreed to provide those services without fee if the charter is not approved. The architecture firm has experience with school design in construction in Colorado and will ensure all local and state requirements are met, including building codes, fire safety inspections, and occupancy requirements.



Contractor

Renaissance intends to engage in a similar RFQ process for contractors as its RFQ process for architects. Because the timeline between charter approval, financing, and construction will be tight, Renaissance has chosen not to request bids based on the architect's plans. Rather, Renaissance will select a contractor based on qualifications to collaborate with the architect during the design process to help keep within the school's budget. Such a selection process is less common, although a generally accepted practice, for public construction projects.

Ewers architecture and a general contractor contacted who has built schools in Colorado both indicated that the cost for construction would be approximately \$200 per square foot.

Cost

A 66,000 building at \$200 per square foot will require approximately \$13 million in constructions costs, \$900,000 in design and site fees, and the cost of land. PFM has indicated that financing can be obtained to fund those costs and serviced within Renaissance Secondary's budget so long as DCSD provides a 25 year charter and/or a moral obligation to back the financing.

Phased Construction

Renaissance may need to divide construction in two phases, one prior to opening and one prior to year 3. The two-phase process will meet the school's growth needs and allow the school to conserve money in years 1 and 2.

Facility Schedule

The facility selection, development, and construction shall proceed along the following schedule:

- ☐ July 2016– Finalize financing
- ☐ July/August 2016 – Finalize location
- ☐ August 2016 – Complete financial approvals for facility
- ☐ September 2016 – Complete traffic study
- ☐ September 2016 – Finalize architectural drawings
- ☐ October 2016 – Approval from Douglas County Planning Commission
- ☐ November/December 2016 – Site work and foundation complete
- ☐ July 2017 – Complete structure

Leasing Options

Should new construction not become feasible, Renaissance Secondary is also exploring options to lease buildings. Michelle Cohen, licensed commercial real estate agent, is also assisting the Board in identifying buildings Renaissance can lease in the start-up years.



O. Waivers

Flexibility is required to deliver the educational experience at Renaissance in a cost efficient manner. Therefore, Renaissance will request waivers from DCSD from some state statutes.

The automatic waivers are listed below:

State Statute	Description
22-32-109(1)(b), C.R.S.	Local board duties concerning competitive bidding
22-32-109(1)(f), C.R.S.	Local board duties concerning selection of staff and pay
22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A), C.R.S.	Determine teacher-pupil contact hours
22-32-109(1)(t), C.R.S.	Determine educational program and prescribe textbooks
22-32-110(1)(h), C.R.S.	Local board powers-Terminate employment of personnel
22-32-110(1)(i), C.R.S.	Local board duties-Reimburse employees for expenses
22-32-110(1)(j) , C.R.S.	Local board powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
22-32-110(1)(k) , C.R.S.	Local board powers-Policies relating the in-service training and official conduct
22-32-110(1)(y), C.R.S.	Local board powers-Accepting gifts, donations, and grants
22-32-110(1)(ee) , C.R.S.	Local board powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non-certificated personnel

22-32-126 , C.R.S.	Employment and authority of principals
22-33-104(4), C.R.S.	Compulsory school attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences
22-63-301 , C.R.S.	Teacher Employment Act- Grounds for dismissal
22-63-302 , C.R.S.	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
22-63-401, C.R.S.	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
22-63-402 , C.R.S.	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
22-63-403, C.R.S.	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
22-1-112, C.R.S.	School Year-National Holidays - See more at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/waivers#sthash.RVEG0vtl.dpuf

Employment, Evaluation and Termination of Teachers and Non-Certificated Staff

In addition to the automatic waivers, Renaissance will seek additional waivers from DCSD regarding personnel matters.

State Statute/DCSD Policy	Description
22-9-106 – Certified Personnel Evaluations/ District Policy: AFC-1, GCN-1, Evaluation of Professional Staff: Teachers	Requires school districts to have a written system and related procedures to evaluate the performance of school district certificated personnel.
22-2-112 (1)(q)(l)	Reporting requirement of performance evaluation system
22-32-109(1)(f) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Selection	Requires local boards of education to employ all personnel required to maintain the operations

and Pay of Personnel	and carry out the educational program of the district and to fix and order paid their compensation.
22-63-201 – Employment – Certificate Required/ District Policy: GCC/GCD – Professional Staff Recruiting/Hiring	Prohibits a board from entering into an employment contract with a person who does not hold a teacher’s certificate or letter of authorization.
22-63-202 – Employment Contracts/ District Policy: GCPB, Resignation of Professional Staff Members; GCPC, Retirement of Professional Staff Members; GPCPA, Early Retirement; GDA, Support Staff Positions GDC/GDD, Support Staff Recruiting/Hiring; GDB/GDBA, Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans/Salary Schedules	Requires written employment contract with teachers, including a damages provision. Provides for temporary suspension of employment and cancellation of contract. DCSD policies relate to employment provisions including salary, benefits, leave and termination.
22-63-203 – Probationary Teachers	Provides for contract with probationary teachers and allows for non-renewal and renewal of employment contracts.
22-63-206 – Transfer – Compensation/ District Policy: GCE, Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers	Permits transfer of teachers between schools upon recommendation of district’s chief administrative officer.
District Policy: GBL, Personnel Records	Requires school personnel records to be maintained.
District Policy: GMB, Staff Complaints and Grievances	Sets forth procedures for staff to file complaints and/or grievances.
District Policies: GCA, Professional Staff Positions; GCDA, Professional Staff Recertification;	

GCG, Professional Staff Probation and Tenure; GCJ/GCK, Professional Staff Time Schedule/Work Load; GCKB, Professional Staff Meetings; GCL, GCL-A, Professional Staff Develop Visitations and Conferences; GCPA, Reduction in Professional Staff Workforce	
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Rationale for Waivers

Renaissance will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, providing its own training and establishing its own system for staff to file complaints and grievances. Renaissance will only hire teachers that meet the ESEA definition of Highly Qualified for secondary schools, and who demonstrate subject matter competency and a passion for and ability to teach within the project-based learning model.

Renaissance will be an Equal Opportunity Employer and shall not discriminate against any employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ancestry, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation or disability in its recruitment, selection, training, utilization, termination or other employment-related activities. Additionally, Renaissance will maintain personnel records for each employee, certificated, classified and administrative. These records will be maintained at the school. Renaissance will comply with all public records and privacy act requirements.

Additionally, all employees at Renaissance will be considered “at-will.” This means that in the absence of a contract to the contrary, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give notice or advance notice of termination or resignation. Additionally, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give a reason for the separation from employment.

Renaissance, therefore, requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Board of Education to the school’s Board.

Expected Impact of Waivers on Student Achievement

The Renaissance model relies heavily on highly qualified faculty to develop Learning Expeditions aligned with District and State standards and staff to support the learning. The waivers will allow Renaissance flexibility in hiring, training, and retaining faculty and staff

who are specifically qualified for this type of teaching and learning. By recruiting, hiring, training, and managing its own personnel, Renaissance will be able to operate its program in a more efficient manner and tailor the personnel to fit the educational model Renaissance Secondary provides. As the single variable that has been shown to have the greatest positive impact on student achievement is the teacher in the classroom, Renaissance expects the waivers to allow the school to employ the highest quality teachers which will increase student achievement.

Financial Impact of Waivers

Renaissance does not anticipate that the requested waivers will have any financial impact on the school or DCSD.

Replacement Plan

Renaissance will only hire teachers that meet the ESEA definition of Highly Qualified for secondary schools, and who demonstrate subject matter competency and a passion for and ability to teach within the project-based learning model.

Renaissance will be an Equal Opportunity Employer and shall not discriminate against any employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ancestry, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation or disability in its recruitment, selection, training, utilization, termination or other employment-related activities. Additionally, Renaissance will maintain personnel records for each employee, certificated, classified and administrative. These records will be maintained at the school. Renaissance will comply with all public records and privacy act requirements.

Additionally, all employees at Renaissance will be considered “at-will.” This means that in the absence of a contract to the contrary, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give notice or advance notice of termination or resignation. Additionally, neither an employer nor an employee is required to give a reason for the separation from employment.

A draft of Renaissance’s replacement personnel policy is included in [Appendix O-1](#).

The Board of Directors will review the personnel policy on an annual basis. The Principal will report to the Board annually and shall notify the Board of all violations of the personnel policy.

Waivers to Board of Education - Specific Duties

Renaissance requests waivers from any board policies that do not explicitly refer to charter schools. The following chart outlines requested waivers relating to specific duties of the Board of Education:

State Statute / DCSD Policy	Description
22-32-109(1)(n)(I) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/School Calendar/ District Policy: JC, School Attendance Areas	Requires local boards of education to determine the length of time which the schools of the district will be in session.
District Policy: JICA, Student Dress	
22-32-110 (1)(r)	Exclude inappropriate or pernicious materials from the library

Renaissance requests the ability to reserve the right to continue reviewing the Colorado Revised Statutes and/or DCSD policies to determine if there are additional waivers the school would like to pursue and to request waivers of those statutes, as specified in C.R.S. 22-2-117 (1) and (2).



P. DISCIPLINE

A strong, positive school culture reduces the need for student discipline, expulsion, or suspension. Renaissance Secondary School will develop a strong, positive school culture in several key ways; school leaders, students, teachers, parents and involved community will use school rituals, approaches to discipline, and modeled desired behavior to support and grow our positive school culture.

School Environment

Renaissance Secondary School believes in creating a positive school environment through school rituals designed to build community and establish and grow supportive relationships student to student, student to teacher, teacher to families, and school to community. Renaissance Secondary School rituals will, in part, continue to honor and use rituals established at the elementary school;

- Drumming, and The Circle of Courage: The **Circle of Courage®** is a model of positive youth development based on the universal principle that to be emotionally healthy all youth need a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.¹⁰⁴ Drumming is a vehicle for building community through shared experience, and a vehicle for developing a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.¹⁰⁵
- Character traits: Developed by the community as cornerstones of behavior that becomes the measure and descriptor of acceptable and appropriate behavior both on and off campus.
- Community meetings: As developed and defined by *Responsive Classroom*, a research-based approach to education that is associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. Responsive Classroom has been recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as one of the most well-designed, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_of_Courage

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.rhythmvision.org/>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.rhythmvision.org/>

- Morning meeting format, and closing circle: Also developed and defined by Responsive Classroom.¹⁰⁷

Renaissance Secondary School believes in creating a positive school environment through logical and restorative approaches to discipline.

- Restorative Justice In Schools: Restorative justice is an approach based on respect, responsibility, relationship-building and relationship-repairing. It focuses on mediation and agreement rather than punishment. In other words, students can expect the opportunity to repair relationships damaged by poor choices, as relationships are the most important part of a strong, positive school culture.¹⁰⁸ Renaissance will utilize many different resources.¹⁰⁹
- Discipline with Love and Logic: Positive techniques for maintaining calm and effective classrooms, practical tools and techniques that help adults achieve respectful, healthy relationships with their children. All of Love and Logic approach is based on a psychologically sound parenting and teaching philosophy called Love and Logic.¹¹⁰

Renaissance Secondary School believes in creating a positive school environment through modeling desired behavior.

Based on past experience from the Renaissance Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School, the planning team knows that when significant adults in the life of a child or adolescent model the desired behavior, attitude, and values the chances are greatly improved that the child or adolescent will take on the desired behavior, attitude and values. So at the Renaissance Secondary School, our core values of building and maintaining positive relationships, and character traits will be deeply held and modeled by everyone in the building.

Professional development to promote a strong, positive school culture will include but not be limited to:

- Drumming and Circle of Courage training from Rhythm Vision
- Responsive Classroom elements

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about-responsive-classroom>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.weareteachers.com/blogs/post/2015/04/03/restorative-justice-a-different-approach-to-discipline>

¹⁰⁹ http://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=socialflow&utm_campaign=RSS;
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/12/17/347383068/an-alternative-to-suspension-and-expulsion-circle-up>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.loveandlogic.com/>

- Restorative Justice in Schools
- Discipline with Love and Logic

Student Discipline

Beginning with our foundational statement: A strong, positive school culture directly impacts the degree of need for student discipline, expulsion, or suspension, it is important to note that our strongest building block for impacting the degree of need for student discipline, expulsion, or suspension is a strong, positive school culture. That said, all policies and procedures shall be in accordance with state laws and, where applicable, all federal laws as well. Renaissance Secondary School will adhere to the Douglas County Public Schools Conduct Code and Related Policies.¹¹¹

Discipline with Love and Logic provides the documents and training that support teachers in allowing children to grow through their mistakes. Love and Logic allows children to live with the consequences of their choices. Love and Logic is a way of working with children that puts parents and teachers back in control, teaches children to be responsible, and prepares young people to live in the real world, with its many choices and consequences. Renaissance Secondary School will use Love and Logic's Guidelines for Student Behavior.¹¹²

All students will be able to articulate their understanding of the Guidelines for Student Behavior and will sign the Guidelines at the beginning of each school year.

All adults that interact with students at the Renaissance Secondary School will be able to articulate their understanding of The Core Beliefs About School Discipline, and all adults will sign the agreement.¹¹³ A teaching contract will be, in part, dependent on a teacher's willingness to agree to the teacher's part of Love and Logic's guidelines for behavior.

It is worth emphasizing that the third guideline for student behavior is: unkind words or actions will not be tolerated. All efforts will be made to address inappropriate behaviors through Restorative Justice. Teachers and students will be trained in the purpose and use of Restorative Justice.¹¹⁴

Suspension or Expulsion

In addition to the school's strong, positive culture, character traits, and Discipline with Love and Logic training and implementation, Renaissance Secondary School will create and implement a Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy pursuant to C.R.S. 22-33-106. A

¹¹¹

http://www.dcsdk12.org/sites/default/files/studentdata/requestrecords/Student_Rights_%26_Responsibilities.pdf

¹¹² https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TjmFj6ovyhSNiKEygmlQvTgf0_H9-0leZHw0nlMOH7g/edit

¹¹³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FMKZK0aY5CoNaQGfNe1bUY8bJOXQzjXhupZI99Sm9xo/edit>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/toolkit-restoring-justice>

draft of the Renaissance Secondary Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy can be found in [Appendix P-1](#).

Once a school principal is hired by the Renaissance Secondary School Board of Directors and before the school opens, he/she will create a plan to provide due process, including appeals, for students who are being recommended for suspension or expulsion. This plan will meet the requirements for a Manifestation Hearing for students with disabilities (both IDEA and 504). Furthermore, the school Principal will propose a plan for preventing the disproportionate suspension or expulsion of students of color and/or students with academic and/or emotional disabilities.

The Renaissance Secondary School Board of Directors may expel a student for any of the violations that constitute grounds for expulsion as identified in the Code of Conduct Policy. Pursuant to C.R.S.22-33-106, serious violations in a school building, or on school property, shall result in mandatory expulsion. Renaissance students being recommended for expulsion by the principal, for any reason, shall be referred first to the designated school administrator and the Board, then to the DCSD superintendent or his/her designee and ultimately to the Board of Education. A student may also be denied admission to Renaissance Secondary School if they were expelled from any school district during the preceding 12 months. Additionally, a student from any other district may be denied admission to Renaissance Secondary School if the student's behavior was deemed detrimental to the safety and welfare of the students and/or staff of their previous school.

Renaissance Secondary School students will be required to follow the overall school discipline procedures and policies, as well as those established by their teachers. Other staff members and visitors will be required to support the overall school discipline procedures. All students, staff, and visitors will participate in creating and establishing a positive school culture. All Renaissance Secondary School discipline philosophy, policies and procedures will be available online and in print for parents and interested others.



Q. SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Renaissance Secondary School believes in meeting all students where they are, including students with special needs. Renaissance will contract with DCSD to provide all special education services and staff under DCSD's Purchased Services Agreement (See [Appendix Q-1](#)) including English Language Learners (ELL) and Gifted and Talented (GAT) students and has budgeted for that contract through the first five years, although Renaissance may choose to provide special education services itself after the 2017-18 school year.

Renaissance Secondary School will comply with all federal and state disability laws and regulations. Under the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) guidelines, Renaissance Secondary School will provide a free public education to each student with a disability in its program and in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. Renaissance Secondary School will adhere to the due process rights and informed consent of students with disabilities and their parents that IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantee. Confidentiality of student information and access to student files will meet the standards of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Renaissance Secondary School is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities or suspected disabilities, along with struggling learners, ELL, GAT students, twice-exceptional (2E) students, and at-risk students are identified, evaluated, and provided appropriate educational services or accommodations within the definitions of IDEA, ADA, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Renaissance Secondary School will implement these policies through the use of a Response to Intervention (RtI) model for the early identification of these particular student populations followed by immediate targeted interventions for the goal of preventing these students from later requiring more intense special education services. Students that do have a significant skill deficit relative to peers and meeting the Colorado State Eligibility Criteria will be provided special education services under Individual Education/Transition Plans (IEPs/ITPs).

Renaissance Secondary School will follow the special education mandates by placing students in the least restrictive environment as deemed appropriate by their IEP team. In accordance with the "Continuum of Alternative Placements," each student's IEP team will consider all possible placements from least restrictive to most restrictive, and will determine the most appropriate placement for each student. Individualized supplementary aids, accommodations, modifications, and interventions will be provided to ensure the most successful learning environment possible for the student. The continuum order from least restrictive to most restrictive is as follows:

- Special education services/interventions within the general education classroom
- Specialized services provided outside of the general education classroom
- A self-contained special education class

Even when the IEP team determines that a more restrictive placement is advisable for a particular student, they will be highly encouraged to participate with their peers to the maximum extent that is appropriate. Inclusion and mainstreaming strategies will be used to incorporate the student with disabilities with their peers for as much of the academic day as possible and may include times of the day such as, meals, recess, team building activities, X-Block classes, and adventure education trips.

Renaissance Secondary School will contract with DCSD for Tier III Special Education services for the first academic year and may choose to opt-out of this contract in subsequent years and offer in-house special education programming, instead. This decision will be based, in-part, on the number of enrolled students in the inaugural year that qualify for special education services and the subsequent demand or need for special education programming that may or may not exist. Douglas County charter schools are only required to offer mild to moderate special education services to its students. However, because research shows that the hands-on activities can play a crucial role in the support and development of special needs students, Renaissance Secondary School wants to be inclusive of students who may have wide-ranging severity of special education needs, as long as Renaissance Secondary School is feasibly able to meet FAPE guidelines for each of these students. Thus, if significant, on-going, and intensive interventions are required to support a specific student, Renaissance Secondary School, through the student's IEP team, and the District will determine whether a District operated school would better meet the student's needs.

While DCSD will administer Tier III SPED services, Renaissance Secondary School's Principal will work closely with the Douglas County specialists working at Renaissance Secondary School to learn more about SPED Program Administration at all tier levels. SPED Tier Levels I and II will be administered by the Renaissance Secondary School Principal or his or her designee and DCSD will provide consultants/specialists, as needed, for the ELL and GAT programs. For Tier II and III level ELL, GAT, and 504 Plan services, the Principal or designee will be charged with the implementation of individualized student interventions, communicating with the referring teachers, parents, student, and special needs teams, ensuring student progress is assessed regularly, and for the evaluation of overall program effectiveness. If Renaissance employs special education teachers after year 1, all special education teachers will be certified and licensed by the state of Colorado with an appropriate endorsement for special education. Related service providers, such as, but not

limited to, speech, occupational, and physical therapists, school psychologists, and visual therapists shall all hold current licenses in their appropriate field from the State of Colorado.

Multi-Tier System of Supports/Response to Intervention-Three-Tier Model

The Renaissance Secondary School will implement the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This is a systemic, continuous- improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. The framework of MTSS is a “way of doing business” which utilizes high quality evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports helps schools and districts to organize resources through alignment of academic standards and behavioral expectations, implemented with fidelity and sustained over time, in order to accelerate the performance of every student to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.¹¹⁵

One component of MTSS includes the RtI model that will be implemented at Renaissance Secondary School. RtI will be a three-tier model consisting of Universal (Tier I), Targeted (Tier II), and Intensive (Tier III) levels of support. The delineations between the three tiers will be fluid as the MTSS/RtI Committee will provide continuous problem-solving and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented strategies for individual students, and will update interventions and goals based on these assessments.

Universal Level (Tier I)

The Tier I level is academic instruction and behavior management for all students. This level meets the needs of approximately 80-90% of the student population according to the CDE. At this level, faculty will design and implement learning expeditions and assessments following the principles of Backward Planning and Understanding by Design. These two principles require that teachers design instructional units by first identifying desired student outcomes by the end of the instructional unit. These outcomes include which concepts and big ideas the students need to understand, learn, and master, as well as, what key knowledge and skills the students should acquire at the completion of the instructional unit. Once the student outcomes have been identified, teachers will then design the instruction unit and methods of assessment utilizing this information.

Teachers will utilize a variety of methods to evaluate student performance and mastery of the instructional unit. These methods include Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM), teacher observation, performance tasks, in addition to, state and district assessments. The

¹¹⁵ <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/whatismtss>

collective data from these assessments will be analyzed to monitor curriculum and student progress, drive instruction, provide guidance for teachers to differentiate instruction, and identify students who are academically or behaviorally in need of curriculum adjustments. Students identified as needing more behavioral/academic support or enrichment (GAT) will be referred to the MTSS/RtI Committee for individualized interventions and goals at the Targeted Level (Tier II).

Targeted Level (Tier II)

The Targeted Level (Tier II) is anticipated to encompass 5-15% of the student body as defined by the CDE. At the Targeted Level, the MTSS/RtI Committee meets to discuss more specific individualized supports for struggling students, ELL students, students who under-achieve according to their measured ability, in addition to, students functioning above the general curriculum expectations (GAT). The MTSS/RtI committee, referring teacher and parents/guardians of the child begin the problem-solving process by analyzing the data collected from the Universal Assessments, screenings, and progress monitoring tools from Tier I. Individualized intervention/enrichment plans will be based on this data and then implemented in the regular classroom setting. These interventions will involve explicit, direct instruction that aligns with the Universal Level curriculum. Such research-based interventions may include Direct Instruction (reading and math), Cognitive-Behavioral Modification, Behavioral Modification, and reading comprehension instruction.

Once the Tier II intervention plan has been developed, the MTSS/RtI committee will set a timeline for implementation, choose assessment tools based on the student's needs, and set an appropriate assessment schedule to judge the effectiveness of the interventions. The assessments will directly measure a student's progress with the specific interventions and may include diagnostic assessments, as well as, alternative formal and informal assessments, as decided by the MTSS/RtI Committee. A member of the RtI committee will be selected to do informal progress monitoring updates with the referring teacher(s) on a weekly basis and formal assessments every 6 weeks. For formal updates, the MTSS/RtI Committee will initially utilize the progress monitoring/fidelity of implementation rubric forms found on the Colorado Department of Education's website. However, the MTSS/RtI committee may choose to eventually alter the forms to better suit the individual needs of Renaissance Secondary School.

Intensive Level (Tier III)

After examining the data collected from the diagnostic assessments at the Tier II level of intervention, the MTSS/RtI committee may decide that the student is not making adequate progress and move the student to the Intensive Level of intervention (Tier III). At the Tier III level, the student exhibits a severe academic or behavioral gap between their measured

progress and their expected level of achievement. It is expected that 1-5% of the student body will fall into Tier III according to the CDE. The academic/behavioral achievement gap may be so vast that modifications to the curriculum may be required to address the student's individual needs.

Diagnostic assessments will be given to comprehensively identify the student's strengths and deficits and how to best meet those needs. Evidence-based interventions at the Tier III level continue to address the individual needs of the students, while working with the students' strengths. Such research-based interventions may include Direct Instruction (reading and math), Cognitive-Behavioral Modification, or Behavioral Modification. It is difficult to limit the options to just this list of interventions in this category as it is student specific. These interventions are so intense that they may need to be delivered in a small group, or through one-on-one instruction. The intensity level and frequency of the assessments at this level will increase. A member of the MTSS/RtI committee will be selected to do informal progress monitoring updates with the referring teacher(s) on a weekly basis and perform formal assessments every 6 weeks. For formal updates, the MTSS/RtI Committee will initially utilize the progress monitoring/fidelity of implementation rubric forms found on the Colorado Department of Education's website.

The Intensive Level not only addresses academic and behavioral challenges, but it also addresses the needs of GAT students, whose knowledge and experience may significantly exceed the instruction and curriculum content provided by Renaissance Secondary School. Students identified by the MTSS/RtI team as GAT will be further evaluated according to DCSD guidelines and an Advanced Individual Learning Plan (ALP) will be developed for the student, if found to be appropriate. On the other hand, the MTSS/RtI Committee may also find that the needs of a student require a referral for special education services and, subsequently, may refer the student to the IEP team for determination of eligibility for services under IDEA.

Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

IEP Team

The Principal or designee will be responsible for assembling a multi-disciplinary IEP team which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Parents or guardians of the child
- Special Education Director or designee
- At least 1 Special Education teacher
- At least 1 General Education teacher
- The student with special needs

- Individuals that have additional expertise interpreting the evaluation results and potential disability needs of the child as appropriate, such as; school psychologist, school social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech-language pathologist, and other related services professionals contracted through DCSD.

Timeline for Special Education Services

- Initial referral for Special Education and procedural safeguards given to parents.
- Consent for eligibility assessment given by parents.
- School personnel will have 60 calendar days to administer formal assessments to assist in determining if students meet eligibility requirements for Special Education. All assessments and reports must be completed by this time.
- School personnel will have another 30 days to set up an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. Parents will receive a Notice of IEP Meeting to confirm date/time to meet and review/discuss information obtained.
- IEP meeting convenes within 30 calendar days of completion of assessments. If student qualifies for Special Education services, parents must sign a consent form to begin services.
- Special Education services begin. Another IEP meeting will reconvene in a year from the date of the first meeting to review services. Evaluation for continued IEP eligibility will occur on a triennial basis.

Referral to Special Education Services/Consent

A parent or guardian may request an evaluation at any time if they suspect their student may qualify for special education services. MTSS/RtI Committee members, homeroom teachers, school personnel with knowledge of the student, and the student themselves can all request an evaluation. These referrals are given to the Eligibility Committee. This committee must be multi-disciplinary and is comprised of an administrator (or administrative designee), school or district psychologist or diagnostician, special education teacher, regular education teacher, related service providers and the referring party. Medical doctors may also be included depending on the disability of the student as medical records can also be used in the determination of eligibility for special education services. Parents will be provided a written copy of the Parent and Child Rights in Special Education Procedural Safeguards Notice. In addition, written parental consent must be obtained before the pre-placement evaluation is conducted. Renaissance Secondary School will utilize the informed consent from the CDE.

Eligibility Committee/Pre-Placement Evaluation

The purpose of the Eligibility Committee is to review records and other performance evidence of students being referred (including assessment data and reports from the MTSS/RtI committee) to make recommendations to meet the students' educational and behavioral needs and/or determine whether an evaluation for special education is warranted and what diagnostic assessments will be used. Evaluations must be conducted by qualified district professionals and may include, as appropriate, formal and informal measures of the student's ability, academic achievement, personal adjustment, information from the parent, and/or conferencing with the student. The Pre-Placement Evaluation will include what is being proposed, reasons for proposal, evaluation procedures, and an explanation of parental and student rights and procedural safeguards.

Special Education Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Eligibility Committee to obtain informed written parental consent for the evaluation, oversee the completion of the evaluations, and report the results to the members of the Eligibility Committee to determine eligibility. IDEA requires that students referred for special education services receive a non-discriminatory multi-factored evaluation.

This committee will complete all assessments within 60 days. Upon completion of all assessments, the Eligibility Committee will notify the parent/guardian of an IEP meeting, confirm the date and time, and convene within 30 days of the assessments to discuss the results of these assessments.

IEP Meeting/Accommodations

At the initial IEP team meeting, the members will examine all data collected by the MTSS/RtI and Eligibility Committees to determine eligibility and identification for special education services based on federal and Colorado House Bill 11-1277 criteria for eligibility. Once the IEP team determines that the student qualifies for services, they will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student. The IEP will include a current level of performance, annual goals with short term objectives, a statement of interagency responsibilities, classroom accommodations and curriculum modifications, a statement of participation in state and district wide assessments and the testing accommodations that may be provided for those assessments, as well as a list of special education related services that will be provided to the student, regardless of the severity of disability.

Classroom accommodations and curriculum modifications will be determined based upon individual student needs. Related services such as occupational and physical therapy, orientation and mobility, speech therapy, etc. may be provided by a third party to

accomplish functional and/or academic student goals. The IEP must contain a statement about how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. Specialized instruction is then designed to address concepts and discrete skill areas that most impact the student's ability to access the general curriculum and achieve the grade-level or alternate standard, if they meet the cognitive delay qualifications. Other unique needs of the student that may require accommodations may include, but is not limited to:

- Communication (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing including assisted augmentative alternative, alternate pencil; sign language)
- Functional skills (e.g., personal care, accessing the environment, activities of daily living)
- Behavioral needs (e.g., social skills, collaboration, transitioning, self-advocacy)
- Executive function (e.g., focus, persistence, effort, working memory and self-regulation skills)
- Community access (e.g., orientation and mobility skills, navigating the environment)
- Technology literacy (e.g., ability to self-initiate assistive devices)

Students, age fourteen and older, will have a 15+ Transition IEP to focus on post-secondary education and career options and to meet Indicator 13 requirements. The IEP team will determine the extent to which a student with special needs will participate in the regular education classroom and curriculum or if services outside the school are required for a particular student. An inclusive model of service delivery will be implemented to address the needs of students with disabilities. A system will be established that allows support services to be brought to the student's school facility, as much as possible. Special education services will include specialized, research-based interventions that may be delivered in the regular education classroom, small group, or one-on-one environment. Renaissance Secondary School's learning environment creates an ideal situation for inclusion to be effective for most students. Additional support will be offered to the students within the context of their regular classroom as often as possible. Renaissance Secondary School will operate in accordance with IDEA and offer the continuum of services and placements. The student will receive special education services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) that will meet the student's needs.

In accordance with IDEA, students with special needs will have the IEP team determine services with a focus on a student's course of study. The student's IEP will document these services and will identify the school's personnel responsible for guidance and will coordinate experiences and opportunities that will prepare students for post-school activities. These experiences and opportunities will occur during the regular school day, extended day, and intercessions. All students will work toward achievement in the state standards with the level at which these standards are appropriate to the special needs of

the students. The IEP Team may conclude, based upon a body of evidence and evaluation data, that the student meets participation requirements as a student with a significant cognitive disability. The student's progress then would be measured against alternate academic achievement standards. Measurable annual goals and objectives would then be based upon the Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs), which are linked to the grade-level standards, but are less in complexity, depth of content, and rigor. Grade-level content is modified according to the needs of the student. A student receiving instruction on alternate standards is required to have measurable annual goals and benchmarks/short term objectives.

Renaissance Secondary School will also individualize transition services and assistive technology as needed. The need for assistive technology services or devices (e.g. an item, piece of equipment, or product used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of students with disabilities) will be determined during IEP meetings and listed on the IEP. Renaissance Secondary School special services staff will coordinate with the appropriate resources to coordinate the obtainment of the assisted technology services or devices, if necessary, which will be provided through outside contracted services that comply with all CDE and DCSD requirements for certification and reporting processes.

Renaissance Secondary School will focus on high expectations for all students, where students are expected to grow academically and emotionally. Our school's commitment to unique digital instruction and supportive in-school staff will aid in providing the individual attention needed to meet a student's IEP. Every student at Renaissance Secondary School will be valued and respected and included in all aspects of the school day.

Dispute Resolution

Renaissance Secondary School understands the parent and the school are partners in ensuring that the student is provided a free and appropriate education. It is in everyone's best interest, especially the student's that the IEP Team members communicate respectfully and honestly with the parents of the special needs student. These collaborations will be used to assess whether the student's parents feel that the student is being properly assessed and educated. If the parent and the school staff disagree about a special education matter (such as an evaluation or IEP), IDEA establishes specific and formal ways to resolve the conflict. These are: voluntary mediation, filing a state level (investigative) complaint, and/or filing a due process hearing complaint. Parents are encouraged to contact the Renaissance Secondary School Dean of Students with any concerns over their student's special education services. The Dean of Students then confers with the MTSS/RtI and IEP Teams to attempt to resolve the issue internally. If the matter is not resolvable, parents have the rights to try mediation with an impartial mediator to resolve the conflict. If that fails to resolve the conflict, then the parents can file an

investigation complaint with the state. As a final resort, the parent can file a due process hearing complaint with the state and the matter is taken up by the CDE.

English Language Learners (ELL students)

Renaissance Secondary School will serve its English Language Learner (ELL) students in accordance with all applicable Federal Laws and Regulations and in compliance with the English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA) Section 22-24-105 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The federal law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), mandates Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) to be implemented, as an accountability measure for program effectiveness. Renaissance Secondary School will adhere to the DCSD English Language Development Plan and the CDEs Guidebook on Designing, Delivering, and Evaluating Services for English Learners for identifying ELLs, notifying parents of ELLs, creating an English Language Learner Plan (ELLP) for all ELLs, and serving the ELLs population.

In the first year of operation, Renaissance Secondary School will contract through DCSD for ELL teacher services and the development of a research based English Language Learner program whose administration will be overseen by the Renaissance Secondary School Dean of Students. The individualized ELLPs will be implemented and monitored by the Dean of Students who will collaborate with the classroom teacher, parents, and the students, thus making up the ELL team along with the contracted DCSD ELL teacher. All ELL team members will have annual professional development specific to English Language Learning students. For subsequent years of operation, Renaissance Secondary School reserves the right to review its contract with DCSD for ELL services and can either renew or replace with an in-house ELL program. In addition, the Renaissance Secondary School Dean of Students will be responsible for evaluating the performance of the ELL program on an annual basis.

Renaissance Secondary School will administer a “home language survey” to all parents upon student enrollment to Renaissance Secondary School to identify which language is primarily spoken in a student’s household. All students whose dominant language is not English, as identified either through this survey, through teacher observation, through RtI screenings, or through information from another school district will receive regular assessments of reading, written, and spoken English proficiency. Renaissance Secondary School will utilize the W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) for all potential ELL students. This test is an English language proficiency “screener” given to incoming and referred students who may be designated as English Language Learners. It will be administered by qualified members of the ELL team. It assists educators with programmatic placement decisions of Non-English Proficient (NEP), Limited English Proficient (LEP), or Fluent English Proficient (FLP) to determine eligibility for an English

Language Learners Program. Testing in this area will take place within the first 30 days of school or within 2 weeks of enrolling. WIDA: ACCESS will be given to all ELL students (both returning and new) in January to measure student progress to support educational planning and ELL programming success and graduation from ELL services.

Renaissance Secondary School will follow the CDE guide to informed parental consent as described in the CCDE Guidebook on Designing, Delivering, and Evaluating Services for English Learners. Parents of students identified as ELL will be given written notification by mail or email and given the opportunity to meet with the Dean of Students and ELL teacher at an ELL team meeting. This communication will occur in the parents' native language, whenever possible, and interpreters will be made available for face-to-face meetings, if needed. The ELL team meeting will develop the student's individual ELLP by describing the student's English proficiency, finalizing program placement levels, identifying individualized strategies available to the student, and providing needed differentiated curriculum options for the current and future academic success of the student.

All Educational Programs instituted for an ELL student will include goals and expectations to measure growth and success of the student and determine the program's effectiveness. As the student succeeds in the expectations and goals established, the student will be reevaluated via ACCESS and PARCC to establish new goals until the student is shown to be proficient in English in the areas of reading, writing and speech. To exit from ELL services, students must meet state designated scores on the ACCESS and PARCC, per CDE ELL guidelines, in addition to having a qualifying body of evidence and a Fluent English Proficient designation for at least two years, during which time the student is monitored for continuing academic success without language or differentiated curricular supports by the advisory teacher and MTSS/RtI Committee.

Dually Identified ELLs

As it is difficult to determine when low performance of ELLs in English settings is due to the process of acquiring English or from a special education need, special consideration will be given to all students who may be identified as ELLs by the RtI Committee for concurrent needs across the MTSS/RtI three tier levels of support, special education programming, and/or possible qualification for G&T services. The list below from IDEA will be carefully followed. In making a determination of eligibility, a child shall not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for such determination is one of the following:

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including in the essential components of reading instruction
- Lack of instruction in math; or

- Limited English proficiency

When the following questions can be answered affirmatively and when the student's needs cannot be met in the regular education classroom with MTSS/RtI Tier Level I, II, or III supports or with ELL programming, the student will be referred to the Special Education Eligibility Committee for possible special education services.

- Has the student been given an English language proficiency test?
- Is the student receiving or has this student received ELL services in accordance with the district's LIEP?
- Have targeted supports been implemented in addition to ELL services?
- Has progress been monitored and compared with the progress of a comparable group of ELLs?
- Has progress been markedly lower than that of ELL peers?
- Have ELL and other services been provided for a sufficient length of time so that growth can be measured?

If the Special Education Eligibility Committee determines that the ELL student does meet eligibility criteria for a pre-placement evaluation, written parental consent for the evaluation in the family's native language will be obtained prior to the evaluation. The special education evaluation process and IEP development will then continue per IEP timelines/process as previously outlined in this section. Consistent and ongoing collaboration between the ELL Team and the IEP Team will occur for the ELL student who subsequently receives an IEP.

Students with an IEP or 504 Plan who meet the criteria to take the W-APT screening assessment, should be provided non-linguistic assessment accommodations as documented on their educational plan. ELL students with identified significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible for the Colorado Alternate assessment (CoAlt) with expanded accommodations per Colorado State guidelines. The Colorado Alternate assessment (CoAlt) is intended to be accessible to students with significant cognitive disabilities who require an alternate measurement of their learning and who have been identified through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process as qualifying for this assessment using the criteria worksheet found in the Colorado Accommodations Manual. This assessment measures student progress towards Colorado's Expanded Benchmarks in reading, writing and mathematics (grades 3–10). Students taking CoAlt may use Expanded Accommodations in addition to all standard and linguistic accommodations allowed on PARCC. Renaissance Secondary School will utilize the web-based tool for selecting accommodations for the ACCESS for ELLs on the CDE website.

Gifted and Talented

The CDE defines Gifted and Talented (GAT) as "persons between the ages of five and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs." Gifted and talented students may come from all socio-economic and ethnic populations, as well as, students with disabilities (twice-exceptional). These GAT students are capable of high performance, outstanding production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness per the CDE:

- General or specific intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

During Renaissance Secondary School' first year of operation, DCSD will be contracted to provide a GAT coordinator who will be available to assist in the design of an advanced learning program based on research based instruction that is administered by the Renaissance Secondary School Principal. The individualized ALPs will be implemented and monitored by the Principal who will collaborate with the classroom teacher, parents, and the students, thus making up the GAT team along with the contracted DCSD GAT teacher. Informal assessments of a student's progress towards goals, proficiency levels in comparison to state standards, and any unaddressed needs, will be conducted quarterly with a comprehensive review of the ALP and any needed updated placement testing to be administered annually. A parent may request a review of their student's ALP, at any time. The GAT team members will have 30 days to complete such a requested review. All GAT team members will have annual professional development specific to GAT students. For subsequent years of operation, Renaissance Secondary School reserves the right to review its contract with DCSD for GAT services and can either renew or replace with an in-house GAT program. In addition, the Renaissance Secondary School Principal will be responsible for evaluating the performance of the GAT program on an annual basis.

Once the MTSS/RtI Committee has identified possible GAT students, they will be screened for Gifted and Talented abilities according to the DCSD screening schedule utilizing the CogAT and NNAT tests after a signed DCSD informed consent and permission to test form is received. Renaissance Secondary will follow CDE procedures and create an individualized Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) for all students identified in this area based on their strengths and areas of need. The ALP is a legal document [22-20-R-12.00, C.R.S.] outlining programming for identified gifted and talented students and is used as a guide for educational planning and decision making. It is also an accountability method for assessing

gifted student growth through progress monitoring of quantitative and qualitative goals in gifted student programming and social emotional development.

ALPs will become part of the student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) and will be reviewed and updated annually in conjunction with the student's ICAP academic and career goal setting.

Twice Exceptional

The MTSS/RtI Committee may be the first to identify twice-exceptional students from the RtI multi-tiered system of support, with subsequent referral to the Eligibility Committee. Once students are identified as possibly being twice-exceptional, assessment testing to identify the areas of struggle, along with areas of giftedness for the student will be conducted according to the IEP timelines/process as previously outlined in this section. This testing may include, but is not limited to the CogAT test for GAT placement, in combination with warranted individualized special education testing, as determined by the Eligibility Committee. Renaissance Secondary School will provide for the FAPE of students who are identified as twice exceptional with close coordination of the ALP and concurrent IEP. The GAT Team and IEP Team will collaborate weekly for the twice-exceptional student.

At-Risk Students

Students with 504 Plans

Renaissance Secondary School will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, which requires school districts to ensure that their programs and activities (including non-academic and extracurricular programs and activities) are accessible to all individuals regardless of disabilities under the guidelines of FAPA and the DCSD 504 Guide for Students with Disabilities. Since Section 504 applies to all students with disabilities, it is important to note that the same child may or may not also qualify for services under IDEA. This section addresses the process of identifying, evaluating, and serving the "Section 504-Only Student." Students may qualify for a 504 Plan if he/she (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a "record of" such an impairment; or (3) is "regarded as" having such an impairment. A substantial limitation means that the student is unable to perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform or is substantially limited in the condition, manner, or duration under which the student can perform the major life activity at issue.

During Renaissance Secondary School' first year of operation, DCSD will be contracted to provide access to their district-level Section 504 coordinator who will be available to assist in the Section 504 process, which will be administered by the Renaissance Secondary School Principal, implemented and monitored by the Principal who will collaborate with

the classroom teacher, the IEP team, parents, and the students, thus making up the 504 team along with the contracted district-level Section 504 coordinator. Informal assessments of a student's progress towards goals, proficiency levels in comparison to state standards, and any unaddressed needs, will be conducted quarterly with a comprehensive review of the 504 Plan to be administered annually. Students with a 504 Plan will undergo triennial formal comprehensive testing to determine ongoing eligibility for the program, the same as IEP plans. A parent may request a review of their student's 504 Plan, at any time. The 504 team members will have 30 days to complete such a requested review. All 504 team members will have annual professional development specific to students with disabilities. For subsequent years of operation, Renaissance Secondary School reserves the right to review its contract with DCSD for Section 504 services and can either renew or replace with an in-house program. In addition, the Renaissance Secondary School Principal will be responsible for evaluating the performance of the Section 504 program on an annual basis.

The MTSS/RtI Committee will be responsible for identifying and referring students who may qualify for a 504 Plan who do not enter Renaissance Secondary School with an existing 504 Plan, in place. At the initial 504 team meeting, members will examine all data collected by the MTSS/RtI Committee and complete any assessments deemed appropriate to determine eligibility based DCSD criteria for Section 504 eligibility. Once the 504 team determines that the student qualifies for services, they will develop a personal, individualized 504 Plan for the student. The plan will include individualized classroom accommodations and curriculum modifications to provide the student with a disability equal opportunity to benefit from Renaissance Secondary School's education and adventure education programs.

Classroom accommodations and curriculum modifications will be determined based upon individual student needs and will take into account both the functional capabilities of the individual and the alternative methods of performing tasks or activities. DCSD 504 Guide for Students with Disabilities outlines several examples of common Section 504 accommodations including shortened assignments, preferred seating for noise avoidance or to decrease visual strain, peer tutor, and use of a keyboard for written work. The individualized 504 Plans at Renaissance Secondary School will be best determined based on their unique disability needs by physical and occupational therapists serving on the 504 team.

Economically Disadvantaged and Homeless Students

This at-risk group will be primarily determined by whether students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program and can also refer to the "neglected or delinquent students" as defined by the federal program. Possible accommodations for this group will consider both

the physical and academics needs of the students. Assistance for physical needs may include free or reduced food programs, waiving student fees, and possible transportation by DCSD, which is approved on a case-by-case basis. Students in this at-risk category will be carefully evaluated through the employment of the MTSS/RtI model with appropriate tier placement as needed.

Low Performing Students

The MTSS/RtI program being utilized by Renaissance Secondary School was designed to provide early identification for under or low-achieving students. Once these students are identified, they will follow the above MTSS/RtI protocols for tier level designations, rapid targeted interventions, and referral to the more specialized special education teams, as needed and deemed appropriate.

Drop-out Students

Research shows that students at risk of dropping out of school give warning signals years in advance. Most future school dropouts may be identified as early as sixth grade and many can be identified even earlier. Research suggests that school level factors such as grades, retention, attendance, and classroom behavior and engagement are better predictors of dropout than fixed status indicators such as gender, race, and poverty. It is essential that students at risk of failing be identified early so interventions can more accurately be oriented around individual student needs, and work in conjunction with school wide interventions.

In its beginning year, Renaissance Secondary School will work to design an early warning system that tracks school level data aimed at keeping students on track to graduate. Renaissance Secondary School will utilize the MTSS/RtI Committee and IEP Teams to develop individualized interventions to keep these students engaged in their education.

Students with Physical Disabilities

Renaissance Secondary School will ensure its school facility is designed and constructed to be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. We acknowledge that compliance with ADA guidelines is required for any new (or remodeled) school facility and will work closely with the architect and contractor to make appropriate design decisions that comply with the American with Disabilities Act. Renaissance Secondary School classrooms and buildings will be fully equipped to address the needs of students with physical disabilities, such as, but not limited to, visual impairment, auditory impairment, and/or mobility problems. Regarding IDEA 613(e)(1)(B), Renaissance Secondary School will be a public school within DCSD, which has already established eligibility for federal assistance under IDEA. Thus, Renaissance Secondary School will work in tandem with the DCSD IDEA plan.

Positive Accommodations for Adventure Education and Fieldwork

Renaissance Secondary School students with special education needs and disabilities will have the opportunity to participate in fieldwork and adventure education trips. This may be accomplished through the employment of a number of individual modifications and accommodations selected to best meet each student's unique needs. Some possible accommodations for the Renaissance Secondary School student with various functional disabilities may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

Vision Impairments:

- Use of a peer partner for guidance to move safely around the classroom or outdoor environment
- Tactile cue from peer or teacher to indicate a turn or movement during team building
- Auditory cues for team building
- Alternative print formats such as raised lettering
- Consistent placement of art supplies in student's workplace
- Use of art mediums workable by touch alone
- Preferential seating in all classes

Mobility Impairments:

- Use of adaptive and durable medical equipment (DME) such as a wheelchair
- Accessible desk and supplies from wheelchair
- Preferential seating in all classes

Hearing Impairments:

- Visual cues
- Tactile cues
- Peer partner for team building activities
- Assisted listening devices for music
- Use of technology as a visual aid
- Preferential seating in all classes

Non-Verbal Student:

- Visual cues
- Tactile cues
- iPad or other technological devices

Emotional/Behavioral Impairments:

- Reduce sensory over-stimulation by participating in a small group versus large class
- Allow for student to move around within a defined, acceptable area in all classes
- Provide increased structure to sustain attention in the distracted student in all classes
- Use of a weighted-vest to "ground" the sensory-seeking student
- Use of ear plugs/noise cancelling headphones to decrease sensory over-stimulation
- Use of a sit-disc in class to provide stimulation for the sensory-seeking student while keeping them in their desk

It is important to note that the above accommodation list is a very limited list of possible methods for inclusion of the special needs student at the Renaissance Secondary School.

The selection of possible special needs accommodations will be highly individualized dependent on the student's disability impairments and the requirements of the class. An accommodation that works well in one class may not work in another for the same student, so a student may require multiple accommodations to be employed differently in each class. Renaissance Secondary School recognizes that all accommodations for the student will be identified and selected by qualified professionals from the student's IEP Team, such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, or school psychologists, in collaboration with the student's special education teacher. This will be an on-going process dependent on the success or failure of selected accommodations in the varying classes and will be assessed on a monthly basis by the IEP Team.

Differentiation in a Learning Expedition

Renaissance Secondary, with its model of learning that does not rely on advanced placement classes or remedial classes, meets the individual needs of students through differentiation and accommodation. For example, learning experiences (lessons in a Learning Expedition) might be set up for differentiation and accommodation in the following ways:

Student A	Outcome	Differentiation Plan
A struggling learner with needs in written communication. This student is very capable of critical	We want to support this student through accommodations so that he is able to demonstrate his thinking, innovation, and creativity, and, most	What tools, techniques, or unique support will allow this student to communicate his thinking effectively and be successful?

thinking.	importantly, experience success and the joy of communicating clearly and effectively.	His team (advisory teacher, classroom teachers, learning specialist, instructional technology expert, parent) decides that assistive technology is the most appropriate tool, and setting up a mentor/mentee relationship with either a student or adult to create a learning team that focuses on this student's strengths and addresses needs. The team decides on <i>Co-Writer</i> and <i>Dragon Speech</i> to both assist in word prediction and enable this student to speak his thoughts directly on to a word document. The team decides that a student in the upper grades who has expressed interest in mentoring will be part of this student's learning team. Together they will work on written communication. This student will also use a dedicated YouTube channel to express reflection and demonstrate learning.
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Student B	Outcome	Differentiation Plan
A gifted student is very capable of critical thinking and very capable of taking a topic and extending it	We want this student to have the time and opportunity to use her well developed skills in thinking, innovation, and creativity to the full extent	What tools, techniques, unique supports does this student need to extend thinking and work independently? Her team (advisory teacher,

independently	possible. We want this student to have the freedom and the constraints necessary to extend her learning independently	classroom teachers, learning specialist, instructional technology expert, and parent) knows that this student will benefit from collaboration with others and that adding more work is not a differentiation strategy. The team decides on a menu of options including but not limited to: shadowing an expert in the field as an X-block choice, taking a significant role in designing learning experiences to benefit others in the school community or community at large, working with the maker space facilitator to conceive, design and produce a prototype of a creative/innovative concept, conduct a Socratic seminar using text and video related to the Learning Expedition, create a YouTube channel dedicated to reflection and information dissemination, be a part of a learning team to help support other students.
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Finally, it is important to remember that equal support in learning does not mean that everyone gets the same support in learning. It does mean that everyone gets the support he or she needs to promote understanding, demonstrate understanding, and use understanding in service to others.



R. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

In the event any dispute arises between DCSD and Renaissance relating to the interpretation or application of the contract, or any waiver, policy, or procedure, either party may request dispute resolution pursuant to this article and/or C.R.S. § 22-30.5-107.5 by providing reasonable written notice to the other party. Such notice shall include, at a minimum, a brief description of the matter in dispute and the scope of the disagreement between the parties. Within thirty days after receipt of the written notice, the Superintendent of the district, or his/her designee, and the Renaissance Board, or their designees, shall meet and attempt in good faith to negotiate a resolution to the dispute using any form of alternative dispute resolution, including but not limited to any of the forms described in the “Dispute Resolution Act”, part 3 of article 22 of title 13, C.R.S., so long as the form chosen results in final written findings by a neutral third party within one hundred twenty days after receipt of the written notice of dispute. The parties may agree to be bound by the written findings of the neutral third party. In such case, such findings shall be final and not subject to appeal. If the parties do not agree to be bound by such written findings of the neutral third party, the parties may appeal such findings to the state board. Any decision by the state board shall be final and not subject to appeal.

Renaissance Conflict Resolution Policy

The purpose of this dispute resolution policy is to provide procedures for the resolution of questions, concerns, issues or disputes. Each student, parent, teacher, administrator and staff member will be held to a high standard of behavior at all times and especially during the conflict resolution process.

This conflict resolution policy is specifically not applicable to situations in which a policy exception is sought. Only the Board of Renaissance can create policies or grant any exception to the same. Exceptions to policies can only be granted or denied in a public meeting. A request for a policy exception must be made in writing to the Board President at least four (4) calendar days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting and will be listed in the meeting agenda posted on Renaissance’s website.

Dispute Resolution

The Board provides the appropriate direction and guidelines to ensure that Renaissance’s faculty and staff are comprised of competent, ethical and responsible professionals and to

ensure that Renaissance employees are free from unnecessary, spiteful or destructive criticism and complaint. Renaissance believes concerns, complaints or disagreements should be addressed constructively and in a timely manner. While Renaissance welcomes constructive criticism, such criticism should be focused on improving the quality of the educational program or to equip the administration, faculty or staff to do their tasks more effectively in order to benefit the students.

This policy provides general guidance regarding Renaissance's conflict resolution philosophy as well as the required procedures for instituting a formal complaint. In general, individuals must attempt to resolve the issue with the person with whom they have a concern before instituting a formal complaint. Renaissance believes that most concerns, complaints and/or disagreements can be resolved through open and honest communication. If the issue cannot be resolved despite best efforts, a formal complaint may be instituted pursuant to the procedures outlined in this policy.

All complaints must be in writing and a Complaint Form must be used to formally initiate Renaissance's conflict resolution process at any level. Also, thorough documentation is required as parties proceed collaboratively toward the resolution of the concern, complaint and/or disagreement. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole, or to an individual Director of the Board, the complaint will, in all circumstances, be referred back through the proper channels, as outlined in this policy. Similarly, the Principal shall not address a parent's concern, complaint and/or disagreement with a teacher/staff member until the parent has, through the procedures set forth in this policy, formally attempted to resolve the conflict with the teacher/staff member. The Board shall not address a parent's concern, complaint and/or disagreement with the Principal until the parent has, through the procedures set forth in this policy, formally attempted to resolve the conflict with the Principal.

If at any time an individual believes that any action taken by a teacher, staff member, the Principal or a Director of the Board is illegal, that person should immediately take his/her concern to the Board President. If at any time an individual believes that any action taken by the Board President is illegal, that person should immediately take his/her concern to the Principal.

Complaint Involving a Teacher or Staff Member

Thorough documentation is required as parties proceed collaboratively toward the resolution of the complaint and/or concern. The complaining party must document any complaint in writing using the Complaint Form to formally initiate Renaissance's conflict resolution process at any level.

The Teacher/Staff Member

After informally attempting to resolve the dispute in person with the teacher/staff member, the complaining party must present his/her specific concern or issue in writing using the Complaint Form to the teacher/staff member and request an appointment to discuss the specific concern or issue with the teacher/staff member. The complaining party and the teacher/staff member should schedule this meeting in a timely fashion.

At this meeting, the complaining party and teacher/staff member should decide on a course of action and commit this plan to writing with an intent to collaboratively remedy the situation and provide a set of actions and a timeline for accomplishing the agreed upon action(s). The complaining party is responsible for putting the plan of action in writing, including the specific action item(s) and timeline. The teacher/staff member must review the written plan. If appropriate, the plan may be reviewed periodically, and if needed, the complaining party and teacher/staff member may revise the plan accordingly.

If an agreement on an appropriate course of action cannot be reached, the complaining party must consult with the Principal to assist the parent and teacher/staff member in resolving the dispute and developing a plan of action.

The Principal

If, after the plan of action has been completed, the complaining party still feels the situation has not improved satisfactorily, then the complaining party may elevate the issue to the Principal. The complaining party must document compliance with the previous procedure, including submitting the Complaint Form previously submitted to the teacher/staff member and the written plan of action, by submitting a Supplemental Complaint Form explaining the current or unresolved status of the original complaint to the Principal, along with any other documentation the complaining party feels is appropriate. The complaining party then shall schedule an appointment to discuss the issue with the Principal. The Board recommends that the teacher/staff member be included in this meeting. The Principal, at his/her sole discretion, will determine if the teacher/staff member's presence is required.

After reviewing the original Complaint Form, the written plan of action, the Supplemental Complaint Form and any additional documentation provided by the complaining party, meeting with the complaining party, and taking any other necessary and reasonable steps the Principal may view as helpful, the Principal may either concur with the plan of action as developed in the previous procedure or develop a new plan of action. If the Principal concurs with the plan of action developed in the previous procedure, he/she must inform the complaining party and teacher/staff member. If the Principal develops a new plan, he/she must document the plan, including specific action item(s) and a timeline for

accomplishing the action item(s). The Principal shall monitor compliance with the plan and schedule a meeting with the complaining party once the Principal believes the plan has been fully implemented and the issue resolved.

The Board

If the complaining party continues to be dissatisfied with the resolution of the issue after escalation to the Principal, then, and only then, the party may bring the concern or issue to the attention of the Board President. The complaining party must document compliance with the previous procedures, including submitting the Complaint Form previously submitted to the teacher/staff member, the written plan of action, and the Supplemental Complaint Form, by submitting a Second Supplemental Complaint Form explaining the current or unresolved status of the complaint to the Board President. The Board President then will timely assign a Board member to serve as a liaison and stay in contact with the Principal, the complaining party and the teacher/staff member as everyone continues to work collaboratively toward a resolution of the conflict.

If the issue continues to be unresolved ten (10) school days after the Second Supplemental Complaint Form is presented to the Board President, a three-party Panel consisting of two Board members and the Principal will meet with all parties. The Panel will render a written recommendation to the full Board within seven (7) school days of the Panel meeting. The Board then will issue a final written decision no later than twenty (20) school days after it receives the Panel's written recommendation. The Board will consider the matter closed after issuing its final written decision.

The District

In the event the Board issues a final written decision and the complaining party is dissatisfied, the complaining party may bring his/her written complaint to the attention of the District or Board of Education. The DCSD Board of Education will not accept a complaint unless written documentation is provided demonstrating that the previous administrative processes have been exhausted.

Complaint Involving the Principal

Thorough documentation is required as parties proceed collaboratively toward the resolution of the complaint and/or concern. The complaining party must document any complaint in writing using the Complaint Form to formally initiate Renaissance's conflict resolution process at any level.

The Principal

After informally attempting to resolve the issue in person with the Principal, the complaining party must present his/her specific concern or issue in writing using the Complaint Form to the Principal and request an appointment to discuss the specific concern or issue with the Principal. The complaining party and the Principal should schedule this meeting in a timely fashion.

At this meeting, the complaining party and the Principal should decide on a course of action and commit this plan to writing with an intent to collaboratively remedy the situation and provide a set of actions and a timeline for accomplishing the agreed upon action(s). The complaining party is responsible for putting the plan of action in writing, including the specific action item(s) and timeline. The Principal must review the written plan. If appropriate, the plan may be reviewed periodically, and if needed, the complaining party and Principal may revise the plan accordingly.

The Board

If, after the plan of action has been completed, the complaining party continues to be dissatisfied with the resolution of the issue, then, and only then, the party may bring the concern or issue to the attention of the Board President.

The complaining party must document compliance with the previous procedures, including submitting the Complaint Form previously submitted to the Principal and the written plan of action, by submitting a Supplemental Complaint Form explaining the current or unresolved status of the original complaint to the Board President. The Board President then will timely assign a Board member to serve as a liaison and stay in contact with the Principal and the complaining party as everyone continues to work collaboratively toward a resolution of the conflict.

If the issue continues to be unresolved ten (10) school days after the Supplemental Complaint Form is presented to the Board President, a three-party Panel consisting of two Board members and the Chair of the School Accountability Committee will meet with all parties. The Panel will render a written recommendation to the full Board within seven (7) school days of the Panel meeting.

The Board then will issue a final written decision no later than twenty (20) school days after it receives the Panel's written recommendation. The Board will consider the matter closed after issuing its final written decision.

The District

In the event the Board issues a final written decision and the complaining party is dissatisfied, the complaining party may bring his/her written complaint to the attention of the District or Board of Education. The Douglas County Board of Education will not accept a complaint unless written documentation is provided demonstrating that the previous administrative processes have been exhausted.



S. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

Renaissance Secondary does not intend to enter into any school management contracts.



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