



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Boston Renaissance to Expand Chinese Language and Culture Program
for K-6 Students With \$1.3 Million Federal Grant**

BOSTON, Aug 18, 2010 – Boston Renaissance Charter Public School (BRCPS) was recently awarded a \$1.3 million Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant by the U.S Department of Education to assist with the development and expansion of the school’s Chinese language and culture program over the next five years.

“The entire Renaissance community thanks the U.S Department of Education for recognizing the strength and importance of our Chinese language and culture program,” Dr. Roger F. Harris, the school’s Superintendent and CEO, said. “Boston Renaissance introduced Chinese language and culture into its Kindergarten curriculum in 2009 as part of the school’s mission to prepare its students for successful 21st century global citizenship and to advance our country’s national security and economic development.”

Eighty-eight Kindergarten students began learning Chinese as a second language in 2009. Through the grant, the school will expand the program to include more students, staff, and parents. As part of the program, the school is developing a sequential Kindergarten through college critical foreign language (Chinese) program through partnerships with secondary/high schools and institutions of higher education in Boston, including UMass-Boston’s China Institute.

FLAP requires the partnership of the Local Educational Agency (in this case the Boston Renaissance) with an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) as part of the competitive grant process, and provides federal funding to schools for creating innovative second language program models that establish, improve, or expand foreign language study for elementary and secondary school students. Only 22 school districts nationwide received IHE-FLAP awards in 2010. Boston Renaissance is one of only two schools to receive this award in Massachusetts.

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The goals of the BRCPS Chinese Language and Culture Program are:

1. Improve and expand Chinese language and culture instruction from the current partial instruction in grades K-1 to include every student.
2. Develop thematic curriculum materials in Chinese and English.
3. Establish a technology infrastructure capable of distance learning.
4. Develop Chinese language arts standards and performance assessment tools.
5. Train teachers in the latest and most effective research-based practices of teaching Chinese.
6. Develop a sequential K-College program with local and international partnerships.
7. Provide outreach to parents and communities to sustain and support the program.

“Even though we’re an elementary school, we believe the early exposure to Chinese language and culture is vital for our students who will be entering an extremely competitive job market in the future,” Dr. Harris said. “Our school will also integrate all federal funds and limited general and state funds with the FLAP grant to expand our existing program by providing new technology equipment and additional educational services. The purpose is to expand educational opportunities for children by exposing them to other cultures and languages for peace and prosperity in the world.”

The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School (BRCPS) was opened in 1995, one of the first charter schools in Massachusetts. It is not only the largest charter public school in Boston, but also the largest public or private elementary school in the Boston area. BRCPS serves 1,200 students from all over Boston in Grades Pre-K through 6. The school’s student population is 98 percent African-American and Latino. More than three-quarters of its students come from economically disadvantaged families, and more than 20 percent come from families whose first language is not English.

As a charter school, BRCPS has taken the challenge of providing alternative methods of motivating economically disadvantaged students and enabling them to become positive agents of change for the society. The school is scheduled to move from its downtown location to its new campus in Hyde Park in September 2010.

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