



▲ Nine time Grammy Award winner Alicia Keys at the Betty Shabazz International Charter School (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)

Schools

From the Tick-Tock Nursery School to the University of Chicago, over 2,000 schools - public, private and parochial - are busy educating Chicagoland's future. The inner-city schools have unfortunately long been challenged by low test scores and high dropout rates but there have been concentrated efforts to change. Local School Councils (one per school) made up of parents, teachers, and community representatives were formed in 1988, and given governing powers including the hiring and firing of principals and budgeting of specific funds. By the mid 1990s, in an effort to improve public education conditions further, Mayor Daley and the school chief directly took reign of these schools from a central office. The city offers magnet school programs for gifted and talented students from elementary through college preparatory. Other initiatives to keep Chicago schools competitive have included implementing "small schools".



▲ Noble Prize winner Dr. James Franck (AP Photo)

Home schooling is an option that many residents take advantage of with the only legal requirements being that the child is taught the same curriculum as in public schools and that they are taught in English. Over a dozen local organizations are available as resources to home-schoolers. Scores of institutions for continuing education, college level and beyond are available in the region.



▲ Rabbi Aharon Yonah Piller teaches at Yeshiva Shearis Yisroel (AP Photo/M. Spencer Green)
▼ Chicago students at a residential science camp (AP Photo/Champaign News-Gazette, Darrell Hoemann)

Public schools in Illinois are primarily funded by property and sales tax. As a result suburban public schools in Cook County and beyond typically fare better in testing than their inner-city counterpart. Special education and services are available at all public schools throughout the city.

By far, the largest non-public school system in Chicago is the catholic parochial school system with over 100,000 students. The region also has many Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic schools as well as a host of secular schools including Montessori, Waldorf, and many others.



(AP Photo/ Charles Rex Arbogast)