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**New Research Report Highlights Successes of Philadelphia's
Educational Turnaround Efforts**

***Research for Action report highlights strong gains in math and reading scores
at Renaissance Charters and District-run Promise Academies***

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The Philadelphia School Partnership, a nonprofit organization that is working to raise a \$100 million “Great Schools Fund” to provide growth capital for the creation and transformation of high-performing schools, issued the following statement in response to a new report released today on the progress of the Philadelphia Renaissance Schools Initiative. The report, prepared by the independent nonprofit organization Research for Action, highlights strong first-year gains in math and reading scores, and student attendance, at all 11 elementary and middle schools placed in turnaround mode in 2010 through the Initiative. Four are District-run turnarounds (Promise Academies), and seven are run by charter management organizations (Renaissance Charters). Statistically significant, relatively consistent gains were seen across the board at the K-8 schools.

“Four points jump out of this report,” said Mark Gleason, Executive Director of the Philadelphia School Partnership.

“First, dramatic improvement can happen quickly. There’s this mythology in education that change can only happen slowly. The Renaissance Initiative proves otherwise.

“Second, education reform is scalable. The combined enrollment of all Renaissance schools—both the 2010 cohort included in the study and the new 2011 cohort—is more than 14,000. At this rate, with strong school leadership and focus, the District could transform most of the 20% worst performing schools in the city in just six years.

“Next, four of the schools showing gains are District schools employing union teachers. In those schools, the union made contract concessions to allow for increased instructional time and some changes to hiring protocol. Let’s give the union credit. Teachers want great schools just as much as we all do, and these schools show that under the right conditions union teachers can deliver.

“Finally, these early Renaissance results demonstrate that variety works. The 11 schools reporting gains are managed by a total of five different operators, all with some overlapping characteristics but using different strategies and approaches. This is strong evidence that we can put more kids in quality classrooms faster with a system of great schools than with one monolithic system.”

The Research for Action report, which is available online at www.researchforaction.org, offers an evaluation of the Renaissance Schools program at the 18-month mark. According to RFA, the study focused on determining whether the first group of 13 schools – including two high schools that didn't register strong first-year gains – made early progress toward the longer-term goal of dramatically improving student outcomes.

The Philadelphia School Partnership has worked closely with Mayor Michael Nutter, state Secretary of Education Ronald Tomalis, the School Reform Commission, charter school leadership, and other educational leaders on the formation and implementation of the Great School Compact, which represents a collective commitment to collaboratively transform or replace the worst-performing schools in the city, representing 50,000 students, by 2016-17.

About the Philadelphia School Partnership

PSP is a nonprofit organization founded in October 2010 that invests in the creation, expansion and maintenance of great schools in the City. PSP intends to raise a \$100 million “Great Schools Fund” in support of education reform in Philadelphia, and to invest those funds as growth capital to support the transformation, expansion and startup of high-performing schools in the charter, District and private sectors.

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