



Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago

2641 South Calumet Avenue

Chicago, IL 60616

School Code: 141-384

Office: (312) 949-9400

Fax: (312) 949-9142

College Prep: Ext. 411 or 410

Website: www.ywlcs.org

School Profile

Co-Director Michelle C. Russell

Co-Director Chandra D. Sledge

College Counselor Regina Charles Lira

College Counselor Rosalyn Pedraza

The Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago (YWLCS) was founded in 1999 and was the first single-sex public school to open in Chicago. The granting of the charter was the culmination of eighteen months of hard work by twenty-three women who were determined to create a school which offers urban girls a college preparatory education emphasizing math, science and technology; areas where women, particularly women of color, have long been seriously underrepresented.

Vision

All young women have the skills, tools and opportunities to develop as ethical leaders shaping their lives and the world.

Mission

The Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago inspires urban girls to engage in rigorous college preparatory learning in a small school focused on math, science and technology that nurtures their self-confidence and challenges them to achieve.

Who We Serve

Located in the historic Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago, our student body is comprised of students from 30 different communities in Chicago, with one-third from the Historic Bronzeville, Bridgeport and other Near South Side neighborhoods near the school.

Enrollment: 344 students in grades 7-12

Class of 2010: 52

Free/Reduced Lunch: 92%

African-American 77%

Latina 15.2%

White 7.1%

Asian .7%

Faculty

Of our 30 faculty members; 72% hold master's degree or beyond. 98% of our faculty is certified and 10% percent of our teachers are Nationally Board Certified Teachers. The student to faculty ratio is 11:1.

Curriculum

Our curriculum includes Math, Science, Technology and Humanities every year with. Our approach is inquiry-based teaching with an integrated arts curriculum. We evaluate students on a performance-based assessment of student achievement. All students are required to complete internships in Chicago businesses and institutions and a college prep course.

Science

All students at YWLCS take year-long Science courses every year from grades 7 through 12. We use a hands-on, experiential approach to science which helps students gain an understanding of concepts and processes such as chemical interactions, biological effects of chemicals, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and the difference between science and public policy.

Humanities

Humanities courses combine Literature and English Language Arts with Social Studies to broaden our students' understanding of what it means to be human and why it is important to have a social just world. Special emphasis is placed on the lives, work and history of women and people of color.

Reading and Writing

Students at every grade level take a separate Reading and Writing class, in addition to Humanities and START, which meets 2-3 times per week (depending on the grade level). Reading and Writing classes focus on building solid language skills and developing strategies that can be used in every subject area to better understand textbooks, novels, word problems, and real-world reading. Writing instruction focuses on helping students communicate their ideas clearly in school, in the workplace, and in everyday life.

Interactive Mathematics Program

The Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP) curriculum integrates traditional material (algebra, geometry and trigonometry) with additional topics recommended by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards, such as statistics, probability, curve fitting, and matrix algebra. IMP units are generally structured around a complex central problem. Although each unit has a specific mathematical focus, other topics are brought in as needed to solve the central problem, rather than narrowly restricting the mathematical content. Ideas that are developed in one unit are usually revisited and deepened in one or more later units.

Technology

Technology lies at the center of every course taught at the YWLCS. Students learn how to plan, design and present information using programs like Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and Macromedia Dreamweaver.

Visual Arts

Visual arts play a key role in bringing academics to life. Art projects are designed to increase students' understanding of the expressive qualities of the arts, and how artists and their works shape culture and increase understanding of societies past and present. While students will develop technical skills through projects in a variety of media (pencil, pen and ink, watercolor, ceramics, collage, papier mache, printmaking), the real focus of art instruction is to develop students' capacity for creativity and their ability to see the world in a new way. Art projects are frequently integrated with studies in other classes such as science and humanities.

World Languages: Spanish

Students strive to understand and interpret written and spoken Spanish well enough to be able to use the language both within and beyond the school setting. The [Rassias method](#) is an integral part of our language instruction. The aim of the method is to provide a non-competitive atmosphere where the student is highly motivated and feels comfortable with the language in as short a time as possible.

START: Students & Teachers All Reading Together

START is YWLCS's reading initiative. Every morning, between 8:30 and 9:00 A.M., all students and teachers meet in small groups to read, discuss, and write about books. The goals for the START program include promoting a love of literature, creating a school climate of reading as a valued activity, as well as introducing and reinforcing reading strategies including summarizing, predicting, clarifying, questioning and visualizing.

College and Career Prep

In Senior Academy (grades 11-12), the College Prep seminar plays an important role in preparing students for their life after high school graduation. Students are encouraged to do a lot of self-examination as they navigate their junior year. They are exposed to many resources that will make the process of decision making a little bit easier. The course requires a considerable amount of independent work and study.

The 10th grade Internship program serves as a bridge between the academic world and the world of work. It helps students integrate the general skills and knowledge acquired through their liberal arts education at YWLCS with the specific requirements of an occupation or community based organization.

Assessment and Transcript Explanation

The Young Women’s Leadership Charter School does not use the traditional letter grade system (A, B, C, D, and F) for student assessment. Instead of letter grades, we communicate information on Academic Outcomes and Learning Behaviors using a 3-tiered system:

- High Performance
- Proficient
- Not Yet

Students who receive a “Not Yet” on an Academic Outcome are required to revisit the material and do additional assignments or independent study in order to demonstrate proficiency in that outcome at a later date.

Academic Outcomes

Each course has a set of specific course outcomes for each trimester. The academic outcomes articulate what a student must know and/or be able to do to demonstrate proficiency in each subject area. Students are formally evaluated every trimester on their ability to meet the academic outcomes in each course. During the trimester, teachers use rubrics and other feedback instruments to report student progress toward meeting the course outcomes.

Learning behaviors

In order for each student to accomplish her academic goals, she needs to practice the behaviors of a successful student. Each trimester, students are also evaluated on specified learning behaviors in each class.

Course Credit, Promotion and Graduation

Course credit is awarded when a student demonstrates a proficiency in at least 70% of the course academic outcomes and learning behaviors for the year. In order to be promoted to the next grade, the following levels of overall proficiency (in all courses combined) are required. These percentages are cumulative and include outcomes from all previous trimesters in all years at YWLCS.

9th to 10th grade	70% of total outcomes at overall proficient or better
10th to 11th grade	75% of total outcomes at overall proficient or better Pass 10 th grade promotion presentation
11th to 12th grade	80% of total outcomes at overall proficient or better
Graduate	85% of total outcomes at overall proficient or better Pass senior promotion presentation Earn 26 credits or more

Estimated Range of YWLCS Grades Compared To Traditional Letter Grades

Academic Standing	Overall Cumulative %	Overall Cumulative High Performance %	Traditional Letter Grade Ranges
High Honors	85 – 100%	40 – 100%	A+, A, A-
Honors	80 – 100%	30 – 39%	A-, B+, B
Proficient	80 – 100%	1-29%	B, B-, C+
Proficient	70 - 100%	0%	C+, C

- The combination of a student’s overall cumulative percentage and cumulative High Performance percentage determines a student’s academic standing of Proficient, Honors or High Honors.
- GPA: Approximate grade point averages calculated to give colleges/universities a better idea of where our percentages might fall within a range of traditional grades in a 4.0 scale.
- We award credit once at the end of the year and evaluate student progress in trimesters. Grades for students are available in November, March, and June. In order to earn credit in each class a student must earn 70% or higher.