

Successful city schools seek to branch out

EDUCATION | Disney Magnet, Burroughs would 'franchise'

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Walt Disney Magnet, the city's first magnet school, and Burroughs Elementary, a successful neighborhood school, would be turned into "franchises" with multiple campuses under a proposal to be unveiled today by Chicago Public School officials.

Disney's heavy arts and technology emphasis, including its animation laboratory, and Burroughs' classes for parents and kids that run as late as 8 p.m. would be among several features to be replicated as part of the new CPS "Performance Pipeline Project."

Although multiple campuses of successful charter schools exist in Chicago and nationwide, the new CPS "Performance Pipeline Project" is believed to be the first time any U.S. school district has franchised its own, traditional public schools, said Phyllis Lockett, CEO of the Renaissance Schools Fund.

If successful, Disney, now in Up-



Disney Magnet School Principal Kathleen Hagstrom (left) is joined by principal-in-training Bogdana Chkoumbova, who is expected to become the new principal of a Disney school franchise. | BRIAN JACKSON-SUN-TIMES

town, and Burroughs, now in Brighton Park, could spin off two or three extra campuses, Lockett said.

"What we're learning is there's power in a network," Lockett said.

Chicago Schools CEO Arne Duncan is expected to propose 19 new schools today, including the two

"franchise" campuses. The venture is part of Mayor Daley's Renaissance 2010 initiative to create 100 new schools by 2010. About 55 have opened so far.

Disney-2 and Burroughs-2 would be located in existing schools or buildings in areas with low-per-

forming schools in an attempt to transplant success into so far unsuccessful areas, officials said.

"We don't know if the new school will be north or south," said Disney Principal Kathleen Hagstrom. The Disney hallmarks to be replicated include lots of art and technology,

Chinese language classes, and monthly teacher training. Disney 2 will either hold its own animation lab or kids will travel to Disney 1 to use its unique animation technology — donated by the daughter of Walt Disney, known for his breakthrough animation techniques.

While each Disney classroom now holds computers, Disney 2 hopes to knock down the walls between every set of two classes and have them share a computer lab. And while Disney 1 currently boasts one two-week art project per grade, Disney 2 hopes to have kids complete four art projects per year.

Burroughs Principal Rich Morris said he hopes to stock Burroughs-2 with after-school classes for parents such as cooking and English language classes. Kids would get homework help and sports after school. Burroughs 2 also would boast a 20-minute recess, a longer school day, a middle-school-within-a school with its own electives.

Both principals hope some of their teachers will agree to work at their franchise campuses, and Disney principal-in-training Bogdana Chkoumbova is expected to become the Disney 2 principal, and Burroughs principal-in-training Ethaa Netterstrom is being trained to take over Burroughs 2.