

CRPE and the Portfolio Strategy

What Is the Portfolio Strategy? The goal of the portfolio strategy is that *every family can choose a great school for every child*. Big cities must educate children with vastly different academic preparation, language backgrounds, and ways of learning. To meet these needs, a city must have diverse public schools, and educators must have the freedom to do what works best for the students they have. Parents must also be able to choose the school that is the best match for their child.

Under these circumstances, good public oversight must emphasize adaptability and problem solving. Finding the right mix of schools requires a search for alternatives, disciplined trials, candid assessments of results, and adjustments in light of experience. Doctrines and ideologies only get in the way. Cities need to follow the evidence.

CRPE formulated the portfolio strategy as a pragmatic approach by which city leaders can develop a diverse mix of public schools, all educating children to high standards. Cities using the portfolio strategy offer all schools and educators professional freedom of action, equitable financial support based on student needs, and freedom to innovate in search of improved student learning. Portfolio cities support effective schools and educators anywhere they can find them, whether among existing district-run schools or from other sources, including via chartering.

What Is CRPE? CRPE is a university-based, K–12 education policy research center. Our work focuses on one big question: how do we square public oversight with school effectiveness? Answers to this question are desperately needed in America's cities, where all schools must struggle against over-regulation and unstable political oversight.

For more than 20 years, CRPE has developed evidence-based ideas and system-wide solutions for K–12 public education. CRPE is part of the University of Washington Bothell and is funded entirely through philanthropy, federal grants, and contracts. We publish peer-reviewed results ourselves and in professional journals and quality academic presses and retain editorial control over all of our publications. Our research analysts hold PhDs and Masters degrees in education policy, political science, and public administration. Our publications and funding sources are publicly available at crpe.org.

What Is CRPE's Role with the Portfolio Strategy? CRPE's core mission is to do the analyses that help cities—and the states that set the rules for them—develop flexible but rigorous methods of public oversight, implement and test them, and continuously learn from experience. We also help cities and states learn from one another by documenting successes and failures and suggesting next steps.

Additionally, we pursue a broader research strategy on financing schools equitably, protecting student rights in a system of school choice, and recruiting and supporting effective educators.

What Is the Portfolio Network? CRPE convenes a group of civic and education leaders in over 45 cities (representing almost 5 million students) who are using the portfolio strategy to improve the match between the needs of students and the schools available. The **Portfolio Network** includes district superintendents, mayor's staff, school board members, charter leaders, and state and community leaders. CRPE provides research on effectiveness, candid assessment of failures, and potential solutions to problems encountered in implementation.

Learn more about the portfolio strategy and the Portfolio Network, and find all related publications, tools, and resources here: <http://www.crpe.org/research/portfolio-strategy>