



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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While the U.S. Public Education System Struggles to Fix ‘Drop Out Factories,’ a Small Group of Teachers Have Found the Answer

Indianapolis, INDIANA – Education, now more than ever, remains the passport to a successful future for our nation’s children and to prosperity for the United States. According to research compiled by America’s Promise Alliance (APA), the nation’s largest partnership dedicated to improving the lives of young people, students who complete a course of education through high school and who graduate are much more likely to be employed, make higher annual incomes, are more likely to vote, and are less likely to engage in criminal or other at-risk behaviors.

However, research indicates that our nation’s public schools are not delivering on the promise of a good education for far too many children. Despite recent progress, a 2016 study by APA and Johns Hopkins University indicates that there are still approximately 1,000 “dropout factories” in the United States, which are high schools that graduate 60 percent or less of their students on time. These schools have historically failed at least a million children every year for decades.

In one city, a team of experienced educators will no longer tolerate failing schools and has developed a remarkably successful solution. Project RESTORE (Reshaping an Entire School by Taking Ownership of a Rigorous Education), created by a group of veteran teachers and school leaders from Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), is a school-reform model that results in fast school turnaround and impressive improvements in student achievement. Created as a pilot project within a single failing IPS school in 2008, the program has already accumulated a strong track record of proven results and has had an unprecedented impact on the performance of some of our country’s worst schools.

Using the RESTORE model, the team led its first school - which was one of the worst-performing public schools in Indiana - from receiving an "F" rating from the state to receiving an "A" within just three years. The team dramatically improved student achievement, raising children’s writing proficiency rates from 29% to 96% and math proficiency rates from 42% to 92%. At another school where nearly 90% of children live in poverty, which had received three consecutive "C" ratings before being rated as "failing" in 2011, RESTORE led the school to an "A" rating in only one year.

In what is perhaps Project RESTORE’s most impressive move, ***the team achieved these results with no additional funding and with each schools’ existing staff members and teachers.*** RESTORE’s success is driven by drilling down on and effectively implementing the key pillars of their approach to school improvement, including: fast-paced responses to problems, a rigorous curriculum and frequent assessments, strong outreach to families, consistent and effective discipline, and strong support for teacher improvement and professional development.

“Too many of the 50 million children across America still attend failing schools. We are proud to say that we have developed a solution for turning around failing schools that works, that is efficient, and that truly helps children achieve and perform at their very best,” said Nicole Fama, Project RESTORE Coordinator.



Project RESTORE's impact continues to grow and shows no signs of slowing down. The team was recently approved to turn around performance at one of Indianapolis Public Schools' very worst-performing schools - the school has received an "F" rating since 2010, and nearly two-thirds of children fail standardized tests - after hundreds of parents signed a petition demanding that the project be implemented. The team's goal is to move the school to an "A" rating within one year.

If you would like to know more about the tremendous impact of this program and how it represents a clear solution to one of our nation's most persistent educational crises, please call Earl Martin Phalen, Founder and CEO of the Phalen Leadership Academies, at 617-818-1959.

About Project RESTORE

Project RESTORE is part of the Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA). PLA is a nonprofit network of public charter schools that was approved in 2012 to ultimately serve over 10,000 students (called "scholars") annually across Indiana. In 2014-2015, 100% of PLA's third-grade scholars passed the state IREAD-3 examination, demonstrating proficiency on the standardized reading exam. For more information about PLA, visit www.phalenacademies.org.