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The Mind Trust names third round of education fellows to help transform struggling IPS schools

INDIANAPOLIS – The Mind Trust, joined by the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and Mayor Joe Hogsett, today announced the third cohort of Innovation School Fellows, talented education innovators who will design, launch and operate “Innovation Network Schools” to replace chronically low-performing schools in IPS.

Innovation Network Schools are public schools made possible by recent state laws allowing school districts to convert existing district schools into new, autonomous schools exempt from most district and state practices and regulations. In exchange for this autonomy, the schools are held to the highest academic standards. While autonomous in daily operations, they remain as district schools, approved and held accountable by district school boards.

The Mind Trust partnered with IPS and the Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation to create the Innovation School Fellowship to supply a pipeline of talented educators to launch and run these new schools. The new fellows – who will launch their schools in either 2017 or 2018 – are:

- **Shy-Quon Ely II & Brooke Beavers (IN)**. These educators co-launched the Tindley Summit Academy on the city’s eastside, which was the second highest performing elementary school among Mayor-sponsored charter schools on the state’s reading exam in 2015, with a pass rate of 88%. Even with a new, more rigorous state exam, the school surpassed the state average for English and outperformed other schools with similar student populations.
- **Kelly Herron & Chrystal Westerhaus-Whorton (IN)**. Herron is a founding staff member at the successful Avondale Meadows Academy on the city’s near northeastside and has served as curriculum director, assistant principal and principal, improving its state rating from a “C” to a three consecutive “A’s.” Westerhaus-Horton has been as a teacher and assistant principal with the Tindley Schools network in Indianapolis. During her four years as a teacher, 90% of her students were proficient on ISTEP+, featuring a 100% pass rate in 2013. As an assistant principal, her school earned an “A” and was one of the highest performing charters in Indianapolis.
- **Emma Hiza (CA)**. Hiza is an educator, curriculum designer and program director who has worked extensively in education and public health both domestically and overseas. Her work includes classroom instruction, curriculum design and teacher training in the U.S, Bangladesh, Rwanda and Kenya. She has worked in public education in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, DC and internationally with Partners In Health, the Asian University for Women and the McKinsey Social Initiative.
- **Tommy Reddicks & Kyle Beauchamp (IN)**. These leaders of the innovative and successful Paramount School of Excellence (PSOE) on the city’s near eastside have led their school to “A” state accountability grades with an innovative, environmentally focused curriculum. PSOE’s STEM-centered approach has resulted in housing a state-of-the-art planetarium and fielding an internationally competitive student robotics team. Its distinctive wind turbines, operating urban farm and greenhouse exemplify the school’s environmental interests
- **Earl Martin Phalen (MA) & Nigena Livingston (IN)**. These experienced leaders will open a new middle school replicating the successful Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA) model already in place at two existing schools in Indianapolis – an IPS Innovation School on the city’s far eastside and a charter school on the near northside –

which already have redefined public education for hundreds of local families. At the charter school, while the vast majority of students live below the poverty line, 100% of its third graders passed the state's reading exam. The Innovation School, in under a year, saw a 20% increase in enrollment as more families chose to move their students into the new and improved school.

Fellows receive salary, benefits, office space and technical assistance from The Mind Trust while they spend up to two years developing their school model. They then must earn approval from the IPS Board of Commissioners to officially launch the school.

This third cohort will join fellows selected in 2014 and 2015 who have opened or are about to open new schools in IPS. The first cohort resulted in PLA@103, one of the state's first Innovation Schools, which saw a 20 percent increase in enrollment already this year. From the second cohort of fellows, Kindezi Academy will open in IPS this fall, and two fellows currently are designing new schools for launch in 2017.

IPS is the first district in the state to launch Innovation Networks Schools.

"The Innovation School Fellowship is an exciting opportunity for educators to design and propose new schools," said Dr. Ferebee. "We appreciate the investment of The Mind Trust in another talented group of leaders seeking to serve IPS students and families. We look forward to continued partnership with the Mayor's Office and The Mind Trust to support fellows throughout the planning process."

"The collaborative relationship between our Office of Education Innovation, the Indianapolis Public Schools and The Mind Trust speaks to our commitment to continued transformation and innovation in public education," explained Mayor Hogsett. "We are proud of the impact our efforts are having on students and will continue to build upon our national brand as an incubator for educational thought leaders."

Selection Process. Applicants from around the country included current principals and teachers, leaders of charter school networks and other professionals who have the expertise to run a successful organization. To select the fellows, The Mind Trust called upon a distinguished panel of local and national education and community leaders to review applications, interview candidates and recommend the final class to The Mind Trust board of directors for approval.

"Innovation Schools already are starting to have a positive effect on student achievement, parental involvement and educator empowerment in Indianapolis," said David Harris, founder & CEO of The Mind Trust. "We are excited that so many talented and experienced educators are joining this community effort to be the city that truly transforms public education so that it benefits every Indianapolis family."



Innovation School Fellows | **Shy-Quon Ely II & Brooke Beavers**

Shy-Quon Ely II & Brooke Beavers bring to the fellowship their experience co-leading a successful school in Indianapolis that is producing exceptional academic results for its students.

Shy and Brooke co-launched the Tindley Summit Academy and currently serve as co-principal of the school. In 2015, it was the second highest performing elementary charter among Mayor-sponsored charter schools on the state's reading exam with a pass rate of 88%. Even with a new, more rigorous state standardized test, the school surpassed the state average for English proficiency and outperformed other schools with similar student populations.



They propose to launch an elementary school that propels scholars academically through an accelerated curriculum that focuses on neuro-scientific instruction and learning, staff and community collaboration, as well as a holistic emphasis that incorporates physical, nutritional and mental wellness.

The school will draw upon the research of the "accelerated school" philosophy in which the culture is driven by all stakeholders. The educational foundation will center on the latest research in neuroscience; brain compatible teaching and learning; and the mindsets, attitudes and techniques consistent with this research.

Before entering education, **Shy** founded FusiK MusiQ, an academic and character enrichment program for K-12 students in Indianapolis. He then led his students to achieve at high levels in the classroom at Tindley Preparatory Academy before becoming an administrator with the Tindley Schools. He earned a bachelor's degree in health science from Purdue University, an MBA from Indiana Wesleyan University and an education administration license from Marian University. He currently is working on his doctorate in educational leadership at Indiana State University.

Brooke has more than 14 years experience as a teacher and an administrator overseeing academics and instruction. Prior to moving to Indiana, Brooke was an elementary teacher in her hometown of Moreno Valley, California. In Indiana, she taught at Crestview Elementary School and Tindley Accelerated School before becoming the inaugural assistant principal of academics at Tindley Collegiate Academy. Under her leadership, the school earned an "A" from the state and was the highest performing charter school among Mayor-sponsored charters during the 2013-14 school year. In 2013, she received the "Tindley Torchbearer" award after being named "Teacher of the Year" at her school.

She received a bachelor's degree from the University of California-Riverside and a master's degree in teaching from Chapman University in California. She earned a school administrator's license from Marian University and is currently working on her doctorate in educational leadership at Indiana State University.





Innovation School Fellows | **Kelly Herron & Chrystal Westerhaus-Whorton**

Kelly Herron and Chrystal Westerhaus-Whorton are two seasoned educators who are proposing the new Avondale Meadows Middle School (AMMS), which will provide students, grades five through eight, and their families a high-quality education focused on college preparation.



This new school would be an extension of the highly successful elementary school model in place since 2006 at Avondale Meadows Academy on the city's near northeast side. The new middle school will emphasize college preparation and will require students to complete middle school at or above grade level. Through well-coordinated support, strong family and community partnerships and close attention to results, this school will provide students the instruction, support and motivation they need to succeed as future college graduates and life-long learners.

AMMS will embrace research-based instructional practices and high academic standards. It also will maintain close alignment between curricula and assessments, strategically employ technology to enhance instruction, actively cultivate strong work habits and good character and focus intensely on the skills and experiences associated with college preparation.

Kelly has been an integral part of the success of Avondale Meadows since she joined the team as a founding staff member in 2006. She has served as director of curriculum, assistant principal and principal, leading the school to improve its state rating from a "C" to a three consecutive "A's." Her extensive knowledge of the school model and deep relationships with students, families and the community prepare her to build upon the success of the original school. She holds a degree in elementary education from Xavier University.

Chrystal has served as a teacher and assistant principal with the Tindley Schools network in Indianapolis for the past several years. During her four years as a sixth grade teacher at Tindley Accelerated, more than 90% of her students achieved proficiency on the state's standardized tests, featuring a 100% pass rate in spring 2013.

During her two years as assistant principal of culture at Tindley Preparatory Academy, she utilized data-driven decision making by analyzing student discipline data to create a positive culture for student motivation. Under her leadership, the school earned an "A" rating and was one of the highest performing charters in Indianapolis. She holds a degree in elementary education from Purdue University and a master's degree in urban and educational leadership from Indiana University.





Innovation School Fellow | **Emma Hiza**

Emma Hiza is the co-founder and executive director of Thrival Academy, a study abroad public high school providing students from underserved communities access to personalized and culturally immersive education.

The Thrival Academy model is a one-year, publicly-funded, credit-bearing study abroad experience split into three parts: two months in Indianapolis pre-departure, five months of in-country study and return and capstone completion for the final two months of the academic year.

Her proposed school in Indianapolis will serve 10th and 11th graders.

Teachers at Thrival Academy-Indianapolis will be advisors who work individually with students to help them develop personal learning plans and provide academic content. The school will utilize project-based learning, with small group projects focused on content mastery and longer projects grounded in the context of the international community utilizing design thinking to identify and address a problem.

The school also will feature blended learning, with students participating in credit-bearing, self-paced, virtual courses. The advisors will supplement this learning with individualized tutoring and projects. Also while abroad, students will engage in culturally immersive internships in the international community two days per week.

Thrival Academies also is launching a 20-student pilot program in Oakland in Fall 2016.

Emma is a passionate and experienced educator, curriculum designer and program director who has worked extensively in education and public health both domestically and overseas. Her work includes classroom instruction, curriculum design and teacher training across various contexts in the U.S, Bangladesh, Rwanda and Kenya. She has worked in public education in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, DC and internationally with Partners In Health, the Asian University for Women and the McKinsey Social Initiative

She earned a bachelor's and master's degrees from John Hopkins and a master's degree from Arcadia University.





Innovation School Fellows | Tommy Reddicks & Kyle Beauchamp

Tommy Reddicks and Kyle Beauchamp, two leaders of the innovative and successful Paramount School of Excellence (PSOE) on the city's near eastside, will launch a new pre K-5 school modeled after the current Paramount model.

The school will cultivate student and staff success with an emphasis on academic rigor, data-driven approaches, environmental education and meaningful community engagement.



PSOE, a K-8 mayor-chartered public school, is one of the most inventive schools in Indianapolis, earning "A" state grades with an innovative, environmentally-focused curriculum. With a goal of delivering world-class experiences, PSOE challenges the traditional boundaries between subject areas, creating a culture of constant creativity and connectivity within the school's curriculum. Integral to its approach to education is the school's use of technology, cross-curricular investigations and on-site Discovery Centers. PSOE's STEM-centered approach has resulted in housing a state-of-the-art planetarium and fielding an internationally competitive student robotics team. Its distinctive wind turbines, operating urban farm and greenhouse exemplify the school's environmental interests.

Both the original and new location will be united by Paramount's mission to inspire learning through an unparalleled academic approach and transform communities by changing lives. The school will utilize data and a multi-tiered system of support that provides for continuous and research-based interventions, anchored in responsive assessment and instruction for struggling learners. PSOE also utilizes a behavioral management system called "Recovery," that protects the classroom environment while supporting students who need additional academic and behavioral assistance. Through a "Family Allies Community Team," the school will make meaningful connections with every school family within the school year.

Tommy is currently the executive director of PSOE. Under his leadership, PSOE has been an A-rated school for the past two years, receiving all possible points for growth while surpassing the state's average proficiency rate. He previously served as assistant principal at Knowledge Quest Academy in Colorado and was a music teacher at Flagstaff Academy and Pinnacle Charter School. He holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in music education from the University of Wyoming.

Currently an assistant principal of PSOE, **Kyle** will lead the new Paramount location. He previously was the lead teacher at Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, a teacher at Elmhurst High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Farwell High School & Middle School in Michigan. Kyle holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Central Michigan University and earned a master's degree in educational leadership and a principal's license from Indiana Wesleyan University.





Innovation School Fellows | **Earl Martin Phalen & Nigena Livingston**

Earl Martin Phalen & Nigena Livingston will open a new middle school that will replicate the successful Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA) model already in place at two existing schools in Indianapolis.



PLA's two schools in Indianapolis – a charter school on the near northside and an Indianapolis Public Schools' (IPS) Innovation School on the city's far eastside – already have redefined public education for hundreds of local families. At the charter school, while the vast majority of students live below the poverty line, 100% of its third graders passed the state's reading exam. The Innovation School, in under a year, saw a 20% increase in enrollment as more families chose to move their students into the new and improved school.

Core pillars of the schools include exceptional educators, extended learning time, personalized learning, a rigorous curriculum, enrichment courses and close collaboration with parents. Likewise, PLA's middle school will implement a research-based program that includes great school leadership, an exceptional teacher leader in every classroom, increased learning time and cutting-edge use of technology.

Widely recognized as one of the nation's top social entrepreneurs, **Earl** is the founder & CEO of Summer Advantage USA and PLA. He was recruited to Indianapolis in 2008 as a part of The Mind Trust's Education Entrepreneur Fellowship, through which he launched Summer Advantage, which provides educational opportunities for underserved children during the summer months. With financial and technical support from The Mind Trust, he then launched PLA's first charter school in 2013.

In 2014, Earl was awarded an inaugural Innovation School Fellowship from The Mind Trust, through which he partnered with IPS to take leadership of one of its persistently low-performing schools and transform it into the state's first "Innovation School." Earl graduated from Yale University and the Harvard University Law School.

Nigena has served as a principal for six years, where she has history of successfully transforming school culture and student achievement. She was the founding principal of Lighthouse Academies in Arkansas and also served as principal and instructional coach at University Preparatory Academy in Detroit, where she was recognized by Excellent Schools Detroit for her work helping her students "beat the odds."

She earned a degree in health and human services from the State University of New York and a master's degree in educational leadership from Grand Valley State University.

