



NEWS from The Mind Trust

For immediate release:
Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Media Contact:
Steve Campbell, 317-803-7071
scampbell@themindtrust.org

The Mind Trust fellowship results in approval of first IPS ‘Innovation Network School,’ gives autonomy to transform under-performing schools

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) Board of Commissioners this evening approved the Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA) to start IPS’ first Innovation Network School, a transformative, new approach to public education that gives traditional IPS district schools new freedom and flexibility to innovate in the classroom.

PLA’s newly approved school, which is scheduled to open in the 2015-2016 school year, was incubated as a part of The Mind Trust’s Innovation School Fellowship, a partnership with IPS and the City of Indianapolis to help IPS create high-quality Innovation Network Schools within the district.

“IPS is happy to welcome Phalen Leadership Academies,” said IPS Superintendent Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee. “As we launch our inaugural school developed under Public Law 1321 we look forward to a future of innovative instruction and academic excellence for our students.”

"Innovation is reshaping public education in Indianapolis," said Mayor Greg Ballard. "Increasing access to high quality schools is an important driver in strengthening our city's neighborhoods and improving educational outcomes."

Through the fellowship, The Mind Trust selects prospective school leaders to receive salary, benefits, office space and technical assistance from local and national experts while they develop their school model. Fellows spend up to two years designing their school and then seek Innovation Network designation from the IPS Board. Applicants may be current principals and educators, leaders of charter school networks and other professionals who have the ability to run a successful organization.

The Mind Trust already awarded two fellowships, including one to PLA’s Fellows Earl Martin Phalen and Marlon Llewellyn, in 2014. It is accepting applications through February 23, 2014 for a second round of fellows for 2015. More information can be found at themindtrust.org.

“This new effort will provide these public schools with the freedom, flexibility and autonomy to make decisions at the school level that best meet the needs of their students and families.” said David Harris, founder & CEO of The Mind Trust.

About Innovation Network Schools. Innovation Network Schools are autonomous public schools that will operate under a contract with IPS and will have access to district buildings at no cost. What’s more, they are exempt from from IPS administrative practices and many state regulations, giving them the autonomy and accountability that are hallmarks of high performing schools.

The new schools were made possible by Public Law 1321, a state law supported by IPS and passed in 2014 that gives IPS the unprecedented authority to replace chronically under-performing or underused schools with high-quality, autonomous public schools within the school district.

About PLA. Phalen was first recruited to Indianapolis in 2008 as a part of The Mind Trust’s *Education Entrepreneur Fellowship*, which attracts talented educators to Indianapolis to create new ventures that benefit local public schools, teachers and students. As a result, Phalen launched Summer Advantage USA, an effort to provide educational opportunities for underserved children during the summer months.

Phalen, with support from The Mind Trust, then launched its first Phalen Leadership Academy, a charter school that incorporates traditional and computer-based instruction in the classroom, in 2013. PLA has plans to launch four other K-8 schools in Indianapolis, in addition to the Innovation Network School in IPS.

Other key facts about Innovation Network Schools:

Scope. IPS is authorized to enter into a contract with a leader or school management team to replace a school that received a D or F in each of the last three years with an Innovation Network School; or establish a new Innovation Network school in a vacant, underutilized, or under-enrolled school building, provided that school did not receive an A or B in the most recent school year.

Funding. Enrollment counts towards IPS' enrollment, and local, state and federal funding will be included in the funding distributions that IPS receives. The actual per-pupil funding an Innovation Network School receives will be determined by its contract with IPS.

Accountability. Innovation Network Schools are subject to the same state accountability framework that applies to other IPS schools, and the annual A-F grades of these schools will be factored into IPS' overall letter grade. IPS may set additional performance goals and metrics in its contract with the school management team. Failure to meet these goals and metrics constitute grounds for the district terminating its contract with the school management team.

Services. School management teams receive use of an IPS school building, the accompanying real property, and the building's contents as provided in the agreement with IPS. IPS may provide transportation, maintenance, security, janitorial, and other services to the new schools.

Regulations. Innovation Network Schools are exempt from the same statutes and regulations as charter schools, with the exception of a specific set of state regulations regarding curriculum, school performance and improvement, graduation requirements and other rules.

ABOUT THE MIND TRUST

The Mind Trust is the nonprofit that strives to give every Indianapolis student access to an excellent, high-quality public school. The Mind Trust: (1) recruits and empowers talented organizations and educators to work in and serve local public schools, (2) launches and supports new, innovative and high-quality public schools in Indianapolis, and (3) engages community stakeholders in conversations about innovation in public education. Now approaching its 10th year, The Mind Trust has impacted more than 113,000 Indianapolis public school students, recruited a network of 18 schools and organizations and has raised more than \$42 million to bring innovative ideas into Indianapolis classrooms.