



Meet the People Who Will Take Over Failing IPS Schools

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By Jill Glavan

INDIANAPOLIS — The Mind Trust and Indianapolis Public Schools announced Thursday the first fellowships that will allow for the re-creation of three failing schools.

Chosen to take up the task are a current IPS principal, a former senior analyst with the U.S. State Department and a national group already running an Indianapolis school.

Lauren Franklin, principal at IPS' Francis W. Parker Montessori School, proposed a similar Montessori model that will serve all grades K-12.

"It's a very hands-on philosophy. You're not going to see textbooks and worksheets and students at desks and in chairs in our classrooms," Franklin said.

Even more unique is the idea that comes from Heather Tsavaris.

"At every turn in this process, every time I would get a phone call, I was shocked," Tsavaris said.

That's because Tsavaris is not a longtime educator. For years, she worked in anti-terrorism at the U.S. State Department, studying why young people joins terrorist organizations.

How does that translate into a school? Tsavaris saw entrepreneurship as the path to get kids out of those groups and empower them.

"(I'll build) a school about entrepreneurial thinking, a school about mindset. ... A school that really empowers young people," Tsavaris said.

Finally, there is the Phalen team, led by Earl Martin Phalen and current Arlington High School administrator Marlon Llewellyn.

The two proposed a "blended learning" model K-6 that is similar to the Phalen Leadership Academy, launched as a charter school downtown in 2013.

"We have two teachers, a teacher and a TA per classroom and so you're really allowed to individualize instruction," Phalen said.

The school will also run longer days and year-round instruction, keeping kids in the classroom through the summer months.

The Phalen team will get one year under the fellowship, with plans to launch inside an existing IPS school in 2015. Franklin and Tsavaris will each get two years of intensive training and planning, launching schools in 2016.

The IPS School Board will still need to approve the fellowships to finalize them.

<http://fox59.com/2014/06/26/first-fellows-chosen-to-take-over-recreate-failing-ips-schools/#axzz35rMoy9gX>