



December 4, 2015

Indianapolis Public Schools

School Autonomy/Innovation December Update

As we enter the home stretch of the first semester, Indianapolis Public Schools is excited to share the progress made regarding Autonomy and Innovation and in our district and a look ahead at what's next.

Earlier this fall, the Board of School Commissioners voted to support the district's framework for Autonomy and Innovation, which outlines three tiers of school flexibility and independence: Traditional Schools (district-managed), Autonomous Schools (site-managed) and Innovation Schools (partner-managed). As IPS leaders work to continue building upon this framework, we will see a gradual transition to the varying levels of flexibility. No school will be forced into an overnight implementation of an autonomous management structure; our administration team is leading the work as schools are coached into readiness for the level most empowering to their students, staff and families.

Next week, Board commissioners will be joined on a work retreat by members of the administration to discuss next steps for the Autonomy/Innovation framework. Anticipated progress include specified definitions of what flexibility will look like for Autonomous schools.

The application process for schools interested in joining our first cohort of Autonomous schools is underway! Principals seeking to become part of this exciting academic success strategy were invited to submit an application outlining the mission and vision of their school, evidence of the school's positive performance and support of the internal and external school communities to show readiness for the transition to Autonomy. Schools with strong applications are meeting with district leaders for interviews to discuss their plans and how increased management flexibility might benefit the school community.

Six to eight schools will be chosen for the pilot Autonomy group; selections will be announced by the end of January. That will be just the beginning of the transition to Autonomy; a series of work sessions will guide principals to fine-tune their plans for 2016-2017 and to develop school-based budgets for the coming year.

In addition to the first group of Autonomous schools, IPS expects to welcome new Innovation schools next year. This week The Mind Trust announced that two strong IPS schools, Cold Spring School and George H. Fisher School 93, are the first recipients of the organization's Educator Empowerment Grants. Each school will receive \$50,000 to support the development of plans for proposed Innovation Network Schools. Principals at both schools will engage resources from The Mind Trust as they prepare to present plans for converting their schools to Innovation Network before the Board of School Commissioners in the spring. More information about the grant can be found in the press release [here](#).

The growth of Autonomy and Innovation in IPS is truly a community effort; we need the support of our schools, families and community partners to ensure success for our students. For more information, you can view our [Autonomy in IPS page here](#). We also invite our parents, teachers, neighbors and friends to share your questions and thoughts via email – you can reach our Autonomy team at autonomyinips@myips.org.

<http://www.myips.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=74&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=18396&PageID=1>