

PRESS RELEASE

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Equity and Sustainability at the Heart of New Phalen Academies, Promise Prep Partnership

INDIANAPOLIS – Promise Prep and Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA), each led by two of Indianapolis' strongest educational leaders of color, are partnering their bold and innovative models to improve education for children on Indianapolis' Far Eastside.

For the 2022-23 school year, Promise Prep will join the Phalen Leadership Academies network, which includes schools across the country. The merger of these institutions aims to blaze a brighter trail for children and families on the Far Eastside by creating strong and collaborative academic programming for students, continuing expansion of wrap-around services for Far Eastside families and community members, and becoming one of the most multifaceted and transformative school networks in Indianapolis.

"We are boldly pursuing collectivism and working alongside other strong minds to make our school and community stronger for our families and children," says Geoffrey Fenelus, Founder and Executive Director of Promise Prep, who will continue to support the campus while also joining PLA's National Leadership Team. "Ideals of individualism have overcome our educational space, and it's creating impossible barriers for children and families to overcome. When we work together, we can remove those barriers and focus on children and strong outcomes."

Promise Prep will retain its autonomy as a charter school authorized by the Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation (OEI), but families can expect more collaboration and access to more supportive resources. The overarching goal is to uplift communities by eradicating generational poverty through equity in education and providing community members with the services and support to gain economic parity.

"I couldn't be more excited to support Geoffrey Fenelus and the Promise Prep team as they pursue this partnership with Phalen Leadership Academies," said Patrick McAlister, Director of Charter Schools at OEI. "With support from a high-quality network like PLA, which has deep roots on the Far East Side, Promise Prep is well-positioned to continue its work creating opportunities for students and families."

"The Mind Trust is pleased with the collaborative spirit of both Promise Prep and Phalen Leadership Academies.. This merger is a groundbreaking partnership that will benefit Far Eastside students and families. It also has the potential to serve as a model for our entire

community as Indianapolis works to increase educational opportunities for our children," said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust.

"I believe that the union between Geoffrey Fenelus and Earl Phalen is one of great power. Geoffrey can learn a lot from Earl Phalen's years of experience and vice versa," said Paula Barnett, a resident leader of the Far Eastside Community through the Collective Impact Council and K-8 Task Force.

Last year, PLA launched PLA University, its free adult job training program, in Indianapolis and Texas. The network also launched the first state-of-the-art Arts and Cultural Center on the Far Eastside, followed by developing PLA's health and wellness center, The Sean Cowdrey Complex. Promise Prep scholars will also now have a free summer learning program, free daily in-school tutoring through Reading Advantage and Mathnasium.

"There is a dire need to rethink what we are doing in this landscape," said PLA Founder & CEO Earl Martin Phalen. "We must reimagine organizational approaches to education in Indianapolis and across the country. Our goal is to serve more children and to uplift more communities. We are excited to welcome the families of Promise Prep to the PLA network. Geoffrey and I will work together diligently to create more positive outcomes for not just the families at Promise Prep but for all our scholars. They deserve the opportunity to reach their fullest potential."

Phalen and Fenelus believe in creating great schools that collaborate, grow, and build together. Promise Prep now has an even more significant investment in fostering collaborative and trusted partnerships and rapport with its families and community. Now, Phalen and Fenelus will work together across the country to ensure that schools deliver on the promise of equitable education for all children.

About Promise Prep

Promise Prep is a single-site public charter school founded in August 2021 on the far Eastside of Indianapolis. Currently serving over 53 students in grades K-2, the school will grow by one grade level each year until full capacity of K-6. The Promise Prep model is boldly designed to eradicate generational poverty within the community by aligning students with college and career preparedness through a rigorous and engaging curriculum. The school invests in deep community and family engagement to provide holistic support and programming to members within the community. To learn more, visit PromisePrepIndy.org.

About Phalen Leadership Academies

Phalen Leadership Academies is a non-profit network founded in 2013. It is also the largest Black-led organization partnering with schools and districts to turn around failing schools. They currently serve 10,583 scholars at 25 schools across the country. They provide a rigorous and personalized educational experience to raise achievement for historically underserved students. Phalen offers unique programming outside of their educational model, including Summer Advantage (summer learning), Reading Advantage (tutoring), PLA University (workforce development for adults), and Black History 365 (social studies curriculum). Phalen Leadership Academies has transformed 10 F and D-rated schools into A and B-rated schools. For more information, visit PhalenAcademies.org.