



PLA@103 FAQ

What is an Innovation Network School?

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 IPS administrative practices and many state regulations, giving them the autonomy and accountability that are hallmarks of high performing schools.

What schools are eligible to become Innovation Network Schools?

IPS is authorized 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.

Is this a school takeover?

No. The new schools were made possible by a 2014 state law giving IPS the unprecedented authority to replace chronically under-performing or underused schools with high-quality, autonomous public schools within the school district. However, the new schools will operate within the IPS system.

Who will run the school?

At each site, IPS will select a leader or management team to operate the school under a contract. Operators also have access to district buildings at no cost. What's more, they are exempt from IPS administrative practices and many state regulations, giving them the autonomy and accountability that are hallmarks of great schools.

At Francis Scott Key #103, the Phalen Leadership Academies (PLA), a nonprofit educational organization in Indianapolis, was chosen last month by the IPS board to operate the new school as **PLA@103**.

Is PLA a for-profit business?

No. It is a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve educational opportunities for underserved Indianapolis children. Its founder, Earl Martin Phalen was first recruited to Indianapolis in 2008 by The Mind Trust and soon after launched Summer Advantage USA, which provides educational opportunities for underserved children during the summer months. He then launched his first Phalen Leadership Academy, a charter school that incorporates traditional and computer-based instruction, in 2013.

How were they chosen?

School operators are selected through The Mind Trust's *Innovation School Fellowship*, a partnership to help IPS create high quality Innovation Network Schools within the district. Applicants may be current principals and educators, leaders of charter school networks and other professionals who have the ability to run a successful organization.

Is this a charter school?

No. Charter schools operate outside the IPS school district, while PLA@103 and other Innovation Network Schools will operate within IPS. But similar to charter schools, PLA@103 will have the freedom to innovate at the school level and make decisions that are best for their students in the classroom. PLA does operate a separate charter school in Indianapolis and will bring many philosophies from that school to PLA@103. But Innovation Network Schools are not charter schools.

When will the school open?

The new school is scheduled to open for the 2015-2016 school year.

What will happen to current students of Francis Scott Key #103?

Students currently attending the school will be able to remain at the school.

What will happen to Francis Scott Key's current teachers?

Since the new school will be operated by PLA's management team, current personnel will be evaluated for positions within the new school.