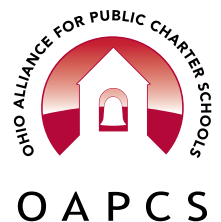




BEST  
COOPERATIVE PRACTICES  
CHARTER & TRADITIONAL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**PROCEEDINGS PUBLICATION 2010**





December 15, 2010

Conference Participants and Supporters of Cooperative Practices:

It's a pleasure to present the 2010 "Proceedings Publication" of the national conference on *Best Cooperative Practices between Charter and Traditional Public Schools*.

Embedded within the origins of this conference were the hopes that demand for innovation and reform in American education would transcend "tribal" differences. Collaboration is a powerful multiplier of invention, but it is also a source of satisfaction in partnership.

It is my sincere hope that the cooperative practices exhibited at this conference will serve not only as models for possible replication, but that they will also provide the ignition to spark other innovative ideas for collaboration in public education.

What America's children need today is a highly effective public educational system that prepares them well for the occupational and economic realities of the twenty-first century. As a community of "camps," we will disappoint them in our efforts; in collaboration, we will engender their gratitude.

Thank you to all the representatives of these promising collaborative practices for sharing your good work, to the Denver and Cleveland public school districts, the Arizona, New Mexico and Massachusetts charter school associations for your foresight in co-hosting, and the Ohio Grantmakers Forum, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, the Knowledge-Works Foundation and KidsOhio for your generous sponsorships, and for support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

We look forward to the prospect of this becoming the first of a continuing series of proceedings on Best Cooperative Practices between Charter and Traditional Public Schools.

Sincerely,

William J. Sims  
President and CEO  
Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools



## welcoming address



ARNE DUNCAN *Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education*

Hi I'm Arne Duncan. Welcome to this important conference on best cooperative practices between charter and traditional public schools. And I want to say a special thanks to the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools for conceiving of and promoting a national conference on this subject.

I would also like to thank the co-hosts of your conference: the Denver Public Schools, Cleveland Municipal School District, the Arizona and New Mexico and Massachusetts Charter School Associations as well as the Ohio Grantmakers Forum for their sponsorship.

We are in the middle, of what I and others are calling a quiet revolution in school reform. Elected officials, administrators, teachers, unions, parents and students themselves are demanding better schools and working hard every single day to create them. We see this revolution happening in response to Race to the Top. Forty-six states work together to create bold plans to reform their schools. We were able to fund 11 states and the District of Columbia but we are supporting the rest of the nation's states as they implement their bold reform plans. We hope to continue the momentum with funding in future years.

We also see in the unprecedented response to the Investing in Innovation program, the I3 Fund, we had more than 1700 applicants and the foundation community provided matching funds to support the next generation of reforms that would lead the way for decades to come. We are also seeing hundreds of communities coming together and applied for funding for promise neighborhoods initiative. They are dedicated to cradle to career services that will improve education achievement for children in some of our nation's toughest neighborhoods and communities. This revolution is happening in public schools all across the country, urban, rural, and suburban. It's happening in both charter and traditional public schools.

I am so pleased that every one of you is part of that effort. And I am happy to know that you are working together to support school reform. We need more examples of charter school leaders working with the leaders in traditional schools. We need you working together to build great schools and provide students with world class education they desperately need and deserve. We can't let historical tensions or rivalries stop us or get in the way of where we need to go. No third grader in the country really cares or knows, frankly, whether they go to a charter school, traditional school, gifted school or magnet school. All that child knows is whether they have a great teacher in the classroom whether the principal knows who they are and whether they have a chance to fulfill their tremendous academic and social potential.

We all have to work together to create schools that can keep that promise. I am so grateful to all of you for participating in this critically important dialogue. Education is everyone's responsibility. We all have to move outside our silos and work together to create great schools for our children. Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your courage, and thank you for the difference you are making in the lives of your children. I hope you have a great conference.

# conference sponsors

Made possible with a grant from the Ohio Grantmakers Forum,  
with support from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



## OHIO GRANTMAKERS FORUM

Ohio Grantmakers Forum is an association of foundations, corporate contributions programs and other grantmaking organizations. Its mission is to provide leadership for organized philanthropy in Ohio and to enhance the ability of members to fulfill their charitable goals.

## OHIO ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools (OAPCS) is a non-profit, non-partisan and independent membership organization dedicated to the enhancement and sustainability of quality charter schools through standards, values, best practices, business and financing resources, and technical assistance programs.



## KNOWLEDGEWORKS FOUNDATION

KnowledgeWorks strives to be the leader in developing and implementing innovative and effective approaches to high school education in the United States. Our work primarily focuses on redesigning urban high schools, developing STEM and Early College high schools, and supporting student-centered approaches to delivering real learning and results in our schools.



## THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute is a non-profit think tank dedicated to advancing educational excellence. We promote policies that strengthen accountability and expand education options. Our reports examine issues such as the No Child Left Behind Act and school choice. The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, our sister non-profit, sponsors charter schools in Ohio.



## KIDSOHIO.ORG

KidsOhio.org's mission is to improve the education of Ohio's nearly three million children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. With a statewide reach and a special focus on Columbus and Central Ohio, KidsOhio.org:

- Analyzes data so that education policy decisions are based on a careful analysis of facts;
- Identifies best education improvement practices from other localities and helps to replicate them in Columbus and statewide; and
- Advocates for effective public schools that meet the unique education needs of each child.



# conference co-hosts



## OHIO ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools (OAPCS) aspires to provide children with greater educational opportunities by improving the quality and fostering the growth of Ohio's public charter schools.

## DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Denver Public Schools district is home to seven schools that are rated excellent by the state of Colorado. The district's mission is clear: "...to provide all students the opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our society." Its values are highly skilled faculty, robust professional development, real-time assessment data and a safe and orderly environment.



## MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association's (MCPSA) mission is "to serve, support, and advocate for Massachusetts charter public schools as they strive to achieve the goals of their charters." The MCPSA is a school-based membership association representing its constituents, the charter public schools in the Commonwealth.



## CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District envisions 21st Century Schools of Choice where students will be challenged with a rigorous curriculum that considers the individual learning styles, program preferences and academic capabilities of each student, while utilizing the highest quality professional educators, administrators and support staff available.



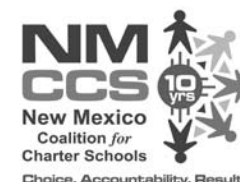
## ARIZONA CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

The mission of the Association is to promote and support high student achievement through the academic and operational success of Arizona's charter schools. Working alongside schools, parents, policymakers, and the media, the Association continuously advocates for quality schools and increased educational choices across Arizona.



## NEW MEXICO COALITION FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Our vision is to re-shape public education into a system of highly accountable schools responsive to the individual needs of our diverse citizenry. To increase student academic achievement by serving charter schools and advocating for charter school quality, growth, and autonomy. Its values are excellence, equity, leadership, integrity, and impact.



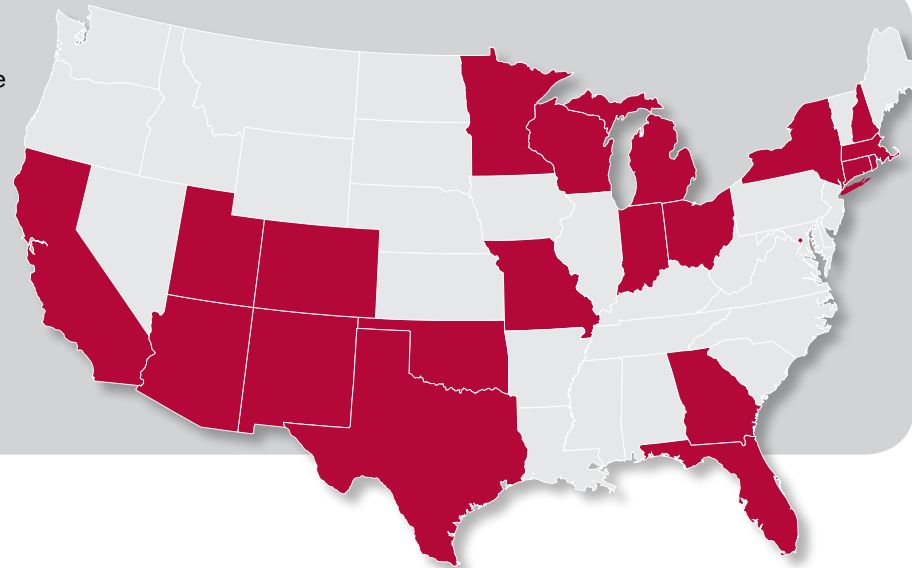
# 21



William J. Sims, welcomes conference participants

## states attended the conference

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- New York
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- Utah
- Wisconsin



Adam Porsch, Program Officer,  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



Arne Duncan,  
U.S. Secretary of Education



George Espy, President,  
Ohio Grantmakers Forum

## program of events

### Best Cooperative Practices Between Charter and Traditional Public Schools Conference

SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2010 COLUMBUS, OHIO

#### INTRODUCTORY SESSION

##### WELCOMING SPEAKERS

- WILLIAM J. SIMS, *President & CEO*, Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- DEBORAH S. DELISLE, *State Superintendent*, Ohio
- ARNE DUNCAN, *Secretary of Education*, U.S. Department of Education
- GEORGE ESPY, *President*, Ohio Grantmakers Forum

#### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- CHRISTINE FOWLER-MACK, *Chief of Staff*, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- TONY ROBERTS, PH.D., *CEO*, Georgia Charter Schools Association
- DR. NOEMI DONOSO, *Chief of Innovation and Reform*, Denver Public Schools

#### SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- DISTRICT/CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT
- ADAM PORSCH, *Program Officer - College Ready*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

#### TEN PROMISING PRACTICES PRESENTATIONS

#### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### PANEL DISCUSSION:

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO CHARTER-DISTRICT COLLABORATION:  
WHAT WORKS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

#### PANELISTS

- WILLIAM J. SIMS, *President & CEO*, Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools – *Panel Moderator*
- LISA GROVER, *Executive Director*, New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools
- PARKER BAXTER, *Director of Charter Schools*, Denver Public Schools
- NANCY PAULU, *Charter School Program Staff*, Office of Innovation and Improvement,  
U.S. Department of Education
- STEVE BURIGANA, *CEO*, Resource Network, Inc.
- ERIC PAISNER, *Vice President, Knowledge & Partnerships*, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

## national best practices selection committee

A nationwide search was conducted to find the most promising and innovative collaborative practices between charter and traditional public schools. For this search, we wanted to select practices that showed strong collaboration, originality, inventiveness and the ability to replicate. As a result, we received many practices from across the country. In order for us to select these transcendent cooperative practices, we asked the following education and organization leaders to lend their expertise.

Our conference partners would like to thank the following individuals for lending their time and expertise to this project.

### SELECTION COMMITTEE

**WILLIAM J. SIMS**

*Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools*

**TERRY RYAN**

*Thomas B. Fordham Institute*

**GEORGE ESPY**

*Ohio Grantmakers Forum*

**MARK REAL**

*KidsOhio.org*

**ANDY BENSON**

*KnowledgeWorks*

**LISA GRAY**

*Ohio Gates Consortium*

**DAVID DRESSLAR**

*CELL, University of Indianapolis*

**KENNETH SURRATT**

*CREDO, Stanford University*

**JANET SCHILK**

*Ohio Department of Education*

**DR. MARC KENEN**

*Massachusetts Charter PSA*

**DENISE MUND**

*Colorado Department of Education*

**ANN BISCHOFF**

*KidsOhio.org*

**EMMY PARTIN**

*Thomas B. Fordham Institute*

**MARIANNE LOMBARDO**

*Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools*

**STEPHANIE KLUPINSKI**

*Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools*

“

*I have said many times that there is a role for charter schools in our community. Charter schools are here precisely because we've had failing schools. The whole point is to give parents and students in our communities an acceptable choice.*

*There are recent studies that suggest charters are effective with low-income students. We will work with charter schools and learn from them. If we are truly committed to change, then we must be open to the charter school movement.*

”

**EUGENE T.W. SANDERS**

*Chief Executive Officer,  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District*

## directory of promising cooperative practices

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*Phoenix, Arizona*
- 10** Collaboration: Working Together to Educate Cleveland's Children  
*Cleveland, Ohio*
- 12** Care Team Collaborative Framework  
*Ohio*
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*Sante Fe, New Mexico*
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*Hartland, Michigan*
- 18** D.C. Data Summit  
*Washington D.C.*
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*Denver, Colorado*
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# Grass Roots Value-Added: How the Arizona Growth Model was Born

**LOCATION:**  
Phoenix, Arizona

**STRAND:**  
Performance Management

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Arizona Charter Schools Association  
Arizona Department of Education  
Scottsdale Unified School District

STATE: **Arizona**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **1,191,311**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **23%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **57%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **474**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **24%**

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## SUMMARY

The Arizona Growth Project is a collaboration between the Arizona Charter School Association (ACSA), public school districts, and the state board of education. The Project places student-level growth data into the hands of school leaders and teachers across the state, who then use the data to assess student growth across all types of public schools.

## MOTIVATION

Arizona, like other states, was amassing a great deal of state assessment data, but educators became increasingly concerned that the data was telling just part of the story on school effectiveness. Improving student learning requires good information on how the student has performed historically, particularly when compared to peers. Educators wanted the student performance data to show not only levels of achievement, but also student progress, and they needed timely data so that they could spot a student's weak areas in order to give the student extra help to meet state standards. Additionally, stakeholders in both district and charter schools saw the development and use of a growth model as an opportunity to engage teachers in collaborative, data-driven decision making.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

In 2007, ACSA joined the Building Quality Charter Schools initiative. The goal of the initiative was to develop common measures of school quality that could be used across states, including a value-added measure of student level growth. ACSA worked with the Arizona Charter School Board to obtain permission from the Arizona Department of Education to access the student data. With this data, ACSA calculated student growth models to aid in the performance evaluation of Arizona's charter schools. Then ACSA presented the data to stakeholders and shared the calculations with all districts and charters. That openness allowed district partnerships to emerge.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

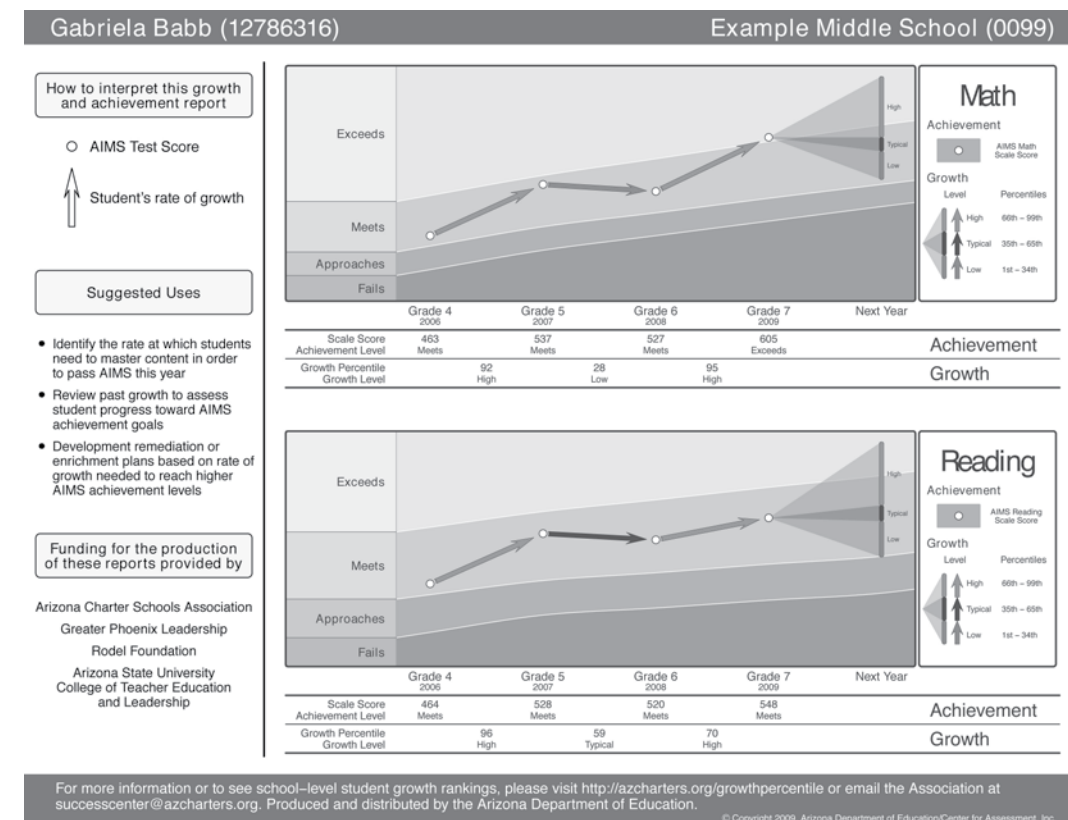
The Arizona Growth Model shines a spotlight on Arizona's most effective schools—district and charter—that produce the highest sustained academic rates of growth in students. This helps parents, schools and policymakers to focus on quality schools moving students academically forward and those schools that may need intervention as students struggle to learn and understand state standards in math and reading. Most importantly, the collaboration directly benefits over 700,000 school children in Arizona.

## MAKING IT LAST

The most important factor in facilitating success is to have common goals and vision—synergy around the key best practices of data-driven decision making and professional learning communities. Early on, there was an initial distrust of the Association, due to its work with charter schools. The skepticism lessened over time, with the support of key district and state level leaders. The collaboration has broken down communication barriers and improved years of mistrust between charter schools and traditional districts in Arizona. The increased trust is the key to the success of this practice.



Rebecca Gau, Vice President of Arizona Charter Schools Association, explains the Arizona Growth Model to conference attendees.



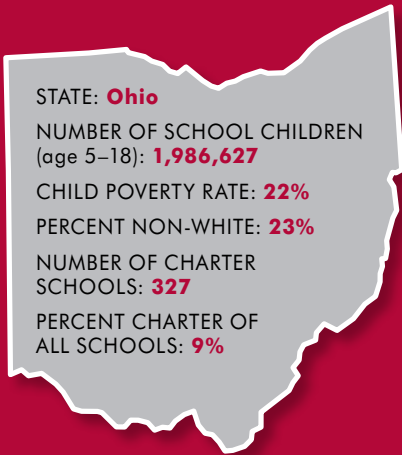
Arizona's Growth Model: Illustrating a Student's Historical and Projected Achievement and Progress

**LOCATION:**  
Cleveland, Ohio

**STRAND:**  
Curriculum and Instruction

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

- Breakthrough Charter Schools:
- Citizens Academy
- Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School
- The Intergenerational School
- Village Preparatory School
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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# Collaboration: Working Together to Educate Cleveland's Children

## SUMMARY

**B**reakthrough Charter Schools is a network of independent, high-performing charter schools that are authorized by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). Beyond having the same authorizer, CMSD and Breakthrough are exploring other collaborations, including leasing unused CMSD buildings to Breakthrough schools, co-locating building space with district schools, and sharing best practices.

## MOTIVATION

Breakthrough Charter Schools formed out of a mutual desire for three high-performing charter schools—Citizens Academy, the Intergenerational School, and E-Prep—to take advantage of economies of scale in order to ensure their own long-term financial sustainability. The schools all recognized that they were increasingly vulnerable to state budget cuts, expanding regulations, political opposition in Ohio, and other challenges. Breakthrough partnered with CMSD, primarily in order to access unused district facilities. This step was necessary to make Breakthrough's expansion model financially feasible. CMSD benefited from the relationship by being able to incorporate the Breakthrough schools' achievement scores and enrollment into the district's aggregate.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

This collaboration began when one of the charter school's leaders approached the other two schools to explore ways for them to work together in order to ensure their long-term sustainability. Previously, CMSD had reached a sponsorship agreement (Ohio calls authorizers "sponsors") with one of the three schools. The other two schools then reached out to CMSD and sought a similar sponsorship.

Breakthrough Schools was recently awarded \$2 million to open four more facilities. The money comes from the Charter School Growth Fund, a national group that invests philanthropic venture capital in

the nation's highest performing charter school operators to dramatically expand their impact on low-income and minority students. The award to Breakthrough marks the first time the Growth Fund has helped a charter group in Ohio.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Breakthrough Schools aim to provide the best use for vacant district facilities as it works to increase the district's academic results and enrollment rates.

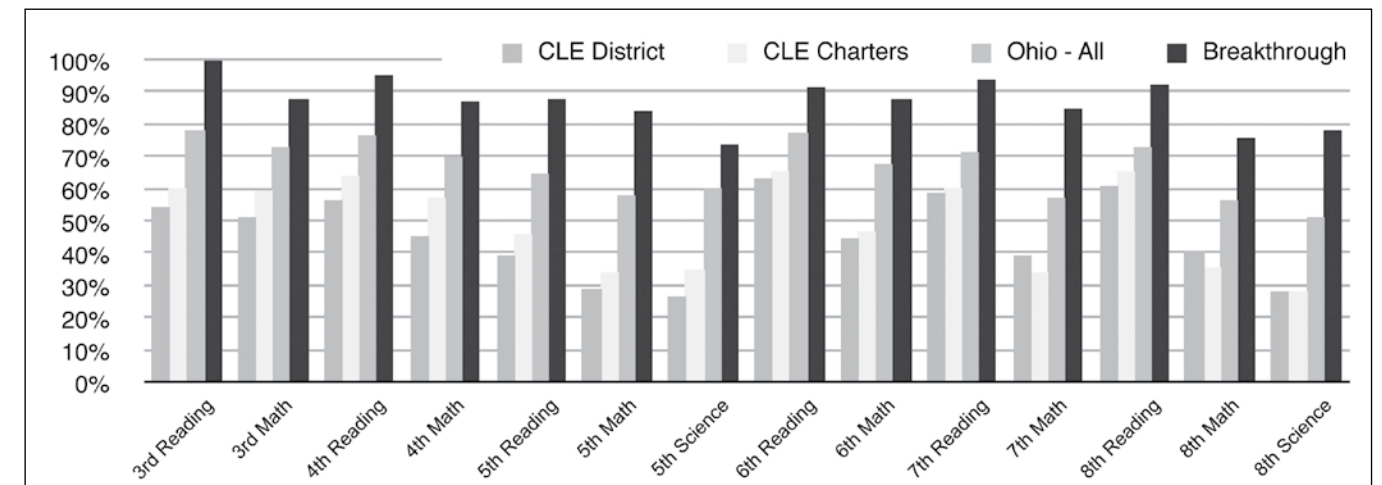
Also, Breakthrough is working with a local college, Ursuline, to design a teacher training institute that prepares students to teach in urban schools. The students must have a bachelor's degree and a desire to teach urban students. They will spend a year practice teaching in a Breakthrough school, working alongside a mentor teacher, while taking teacher credentialing courses at Ursuline. Upon completion, the graduates may end up at a Breakthrough school, or another urban district or charter school.

## MAKING IT LAST

CMSD has developed a process for leasing vacant buildings to Breakthrough Schools or sharing facilities between district and charter schools. In addition, CMSD is in the process of creating an office that will manage the district's portfolio of specialty and charter schools. Breakthrough Schools also hopes to bring proven, innovative practices to the district that will be shared with and used by other schools.



*Students from Citizens Academy, one of the many excellent schools that is part of the Breakthrough network*



*Percent of Students Passing the Ohio Achievement Assessments in 2010: Comparing Cleveland District, Cleveland Charters, Ohio, and Breakthrough Schools*

# Care Team Collaborative Framework

**LOCATION:**  
Ohio

**STRAND:**  
Conditions for Learning

**COUNTIES INVOLVED:**  
Coshocton  
Franklin  
Mahoning  
Morgan  
Muskingum  
Richland  
Seneca

## SUMMARY

Care Team Collaborative has provided training, support, and technical assistance to seventeen school districts in six Ohio counties since 2003. The Collaborative dispatches teams of social service experts to district and charter schools. These professionals provide social services directly to students; they also train educators to address students' nonacademic needs, such as mental and physical health, legal concerns, and child protection. Such nonacademic needs, if left unmet, pose a serious barrier to learning.

## MOTIVATION

Recognizing that students' nonacademic problems had an adverse effect on schools' overall academic performance, school leaders from Muskingum County came together and formulated a plan to address these nonacademic problems.

## CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT



(right to left) Lisa Grover, New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools, Eric Paisner, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Nancy Paulu, U.S. Department of Education

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

County leaders—including representatives from all the county's school districts and all major social service organizations (and many smaller ones)—designed a strategic plan. A private organization, Care Team Concepts, LLC, then implemented the plan. Utilizing a grant from the Ohio Department of Youth Services, the first Care Team served both a low-performing public district school and a charter school that served the largest population of at-risk students in the county. Based on a demonstrable positive impact on academic outcomes at these schools, the original team concept expanded into Care Team Collaborative, which serves many different schools, both charter and traditional, in six different districts.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The Ohio legislature recently passed a law requiring traditional public schools, but not charter schools, to utilize such collaborative teams to facilitate family and civic engagement in children's education. The Collaborative has been proactive in including charter schools in this program. Further, the Collaborative has provided opportunities for charter and district schools to share their best practices and learn from each other.

There are many signs of impact from schools that work with Care Team Collaborative. Students in Care Team Schools between the years 2005 and 2008 received 359 more days of instructional time than similar schools due to decreased out-of-school suspensions. At West Muskingum Middle School—which is a Care Team School—there was a 50 percent drop in out-of-school suspensions from the 2005-06 school year to the 2006-07 year.

## MAKING IT LAST

Funding is a perpetual challenge to the Collaborative. For other communities seeking to implement similar plans, the preconceptions of district and social service leaders are a challenge. Social service organizations typically work with traditional public schools—not charters—when designing plans for improved services to children and families. The Collaborative was fortunate to have worked with county Family and Children First Councils to ensure that charter schools' needs were included. In turn, this relationship helped charter schools.

## A CLOSER LOOK

The Care Team Collaborative helps communities achieve measurable improvements related to various tiers of Ohio's Comprehensive System of Learning Supports (CSLS). CSLS addresses twin improvement priorities: Addressing and preventing non-academic barriers to learning, especially for students manifesting needs for health and social service and maximizing opportunities for student learning and healthy development during out-of-school time. These twin improvement priorities enable schools and districts, working in partnership with families and the community, to "get the conditions right" for learning, academic achievement, and success in school. Three core components help organize both academic and behavioral programs, services, strategies, and supports falling under the CSLS umbrella.

### COMPONENT 1:

Universal programs and services for everyone.

### COMPONENT 2:

Selective programs and services for specific populations with identifiable needs and risk factors.

### COMPONENT 3:

Intensive programs and services for selective populations with multiple, co-occurring needs (e.g., school problems, mental health needs, health disparities, juvenile delinquency) and includes provisions for cross-system intensive interventions.

STATE: **Ohio**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN  
(age 5–18): **1,986,627**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **22%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **23%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER  
SCHOOLS: **327**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF  
ALL SCHOOLS: **9%**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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# Transformative Education through Mentorship

**LOCATION:**  
Sante Fe, New Mexico

**STRAND:**  
College & Career Readiness

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Monte del Sol Charter School  
Capital High School

## SUMMARY

Successful mentoring programs can accomplish many goals that benefit students, businesses, and the city. With help from a three-year grant from the City of Santa Fe, Monte del Sol Charter School is distributing its award-winning mentorship program to a district high school. The program better positions youth to obtain high-paying jobs while giving them the skills and confidence they need to thrive in school and work. The program also supports business growth by providing the foundation for a skilled work force, and it provides community business relationships that encourage students to remain and work in Santa Fe after graduation.

## MOTIVATION

Monte del Sol's ultimate goal is to help more students graduate from Santa Fe area schools with the skills, desire, and vision to become community leaders. Monte del Sol was looking beyond the goals it had for its own school and seeking to improve the educational outcomes and employment prospects for as many children as it could reach. The school's mentorship program had proven success, and the school wanted to use its extensive expertise and accumulated knowledge to disseminate the program into traditional public schools.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

In 2008, the City of Santa Fe funded Monte del Sol Charter School's proposal for dissemination of its Mentorship Training Program (MTP). The funding provides for extending the mentorship experience to students from public non-charter schools in Santa Fe. Monte del Sol's proposal outlined a "dissemination plan" to seed its mentorship program into these schools and support the program's development into a sustainable, self-contained mentorship program.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

In the first year of the contract, Monte del Sol worked with Capital High School (CHS), a public, non-charter school, to identify on-site coordinators, conduct outreach to CHS students and faculty, and train CHS staff to run a mentorship program. Year two built upon the work done in the first year and initiated a seed mentorship program at CHS. Eighteen students from CHS participated in the MTP in the following fields: medical, media arts, biology, education, emergency services, law, auto mechanics, and architecture. Furthermore, four CHS staff successfully completed training in the mentorship program and worked with Monte del Sol staff throughout the year to run the program and support the participating students and mentors.

## MAKING IT LAST

The MTP at Capital High School has been while successful but remains relatively small. The key to growing and sustaining the program is to expand participation at CHS and magnify the influence of the program within the school by making it more visible and expanding the culture of mentorship. To that end, in year three of the dissemination plan, forty to fifty CHS students will participate in the program. Also, Monte del Sol staff will build upon the initial work done with CHS staff on making mentorship part of the curriculum, establishing a single school director for the program, and allowing students to receive academic credit for their participation.

The City of Santa Fe is recommending the extension of the contract for an additional one-year term. The city has determined that the project benefits the city's economic development efforts in many ways. The original proposal, approved in 2008, received funding of \$35,000. Due to budget cuts, funding was reduced in 2009 to \$31,000. The contract allows for renewal of the agreement for an additional one-year term, and the renewal can occur up to four times.



## How Monte del Sol's Mentorship Training Program promotes Santa Fe's economic development:

- Directly cultivates a skilled workforce in Santa Fe.
- Engages and integrates the interests of the business community with the education of Santa Fe's youth.
- Promotes the adoption of a proven successful mentorship program by Santa Fe public schools.
- Increases skills, options, and pathways for youth and better positions them to obtain high-wage jobs in five target economic sectors.
- Places local businesses into contact with trainable new employees (i.e., students).
- Supports business growth by providing the foundation for a skilled workforce.
- Helps reduce the city drop-out rate by engaging students who currently are poorly served by the school system.
- Aims to ensure that upon graduation, 80 percent of participants will either obtain permanent employment or enroll in higher education.

STATE: **New Mexico**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5-18): **354,127**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **25%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **71%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **67**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **8%**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Angela Ritchie, Principal, Monte del Sol Charter School (pictured top right) shares pictures of their mentorship program in her conference presentation.

# Smart Character Choices

**LOCATION:**  
Michigan

**STRAND:**  
Conditions for Learning

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Randels Elementary School –  
Carman Ainsworth School District  
Charyl Stockwell Academy  
Chatfield School  
The Dearborn Academy  
Creative Technologies Academy

## SUMMARY

**S**mart Character Choices (SCC) is a character education program founded on the belief that behavior is guided by one's personal actions and thoughts and not by fate or luck. The program was designed and implemented by The Charyl Stockwell Academy (CSA), a charter school in Michigan. CSA recruited other schools—both traditional and charter—to participate in a research project to determine the program's efficacy. Some schools were in a control group; others (three charters, including CSA, and a traditional school) were assigned to a program group.

## MOTIVATION

A four-year research and implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Office Partnerships in Character Education program made the SCC possible. Originally, the program was confined to charter schools. But after the first grant research showed a significant student effect, the project leaders wanted to determine if a similar effect could also be achieved in traditional public schools.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

When CSA received a second four-year grant from the same organization, it expanded the program to include traditional public schools. The collaboration began at the initiation of the leaders of the SCC project. One of the project directors had worked previously with a school district in the state and was familiar with the core philosophies and theories of the program. A meeting was arranged between the project director and the district leadership, and a partnership formed.

All schools were randomly assigned into a control group and a program group. Randels Elementary, a traditional public school in Flint, was assigned to the program group; the other three program schools were charter schools. The control group (which received no materials or professional development) included one traditional public school and three charter schools; this group also participated in all of the data collection.



*School staff members participating in a workshop on training new staff*

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Over the course of the project, Randels Elementary saw a 28 percent increase in parent satisfaction of the school (and specifically, in their perception of the school climate). Student perceptions of school climate/culture increased by 11 percent, and staff perceptions increased by 4 percent. The Student Need Survey data showed a significant gain in student perceptions of how well their five basic needs were being met in the school environment. All of these results are statistically significant from the evaluation team review of all data.

Another exciting finding at Randels was an increase in student attendance rates. Less than 8 percent of students at Randels Elementary were absent ten or more days of school during the first semester of the 2009-2010 school year, compared to the district average of 15 percent for all five elementary schools. Prior to implementing Smart Character Choices their absentee rate exceeded the district average.

## MAKING IT LAST

Although the grant funding ended in the summer of 2010, all of the schools involved are continuing to implement the program. Sustainability was built into the program through a workshop that equipped a key group of staff members at each school with the tools and materials to train new staff.

In addition, six new schools recently began to implement SCC, and each school has committed fiscal resources for full implementation. The program's effectiveness—and the research to show that effectiveness—have been instrumental in the growth of SCC. Once the program has been fully implemented, each school can support the program without the need for an on-going contract with SCC.

The most significant challenges to collaborating with traditional public schools were the preconceptions that traditional public school staff held toward charter schools. These challenges were overcome through open communication and a commitment to building strong relationships with the key personnel at all the schools.

STATE: **Michigan**

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18):  
**1,764,672**

CHILD POVERTY RATE: **23%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **29%**

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **232**

PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **6%**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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# D.C. Data Summit

**LOCATION:**  
Washington, D.C.

**STRAND:**  
Performance Management

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Friends of Choice in Urban Schools;  
New Leaders for New Schools (D.C. office), and The Achievement Network (D.C. office).  
Over 50 leadership teams from D.C. public charter schools and DCPS schools registered for the conference.

## SUMMARY

The first annual D.C. Data Summit was held in 2010. The one-day event focused exclusively on using data to drive instructional decision making at both the administrative and teacher level. Organized by three educational organizations—Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS), New Leaders for New Schools, and the Achievement Network—the Summit brought together over fifty school leadership teams from D.C. traditional public and charter schools.

## MOTIVATION

The goal of the summit was three-fold: to help leaders at district and charter schools understand the connection between measurable goals, performance indicators, data collection, and data quality; to develop concrete plans for capturing and monitoring data that measures progress toward goals; and to share best practices and ideas.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Two organizations (FOCUS and New Leaders for New Schools) had separate plans to hold a performance management training event for D.C. schools. The organizations decided to hold the training together in the format of a one day summit open to both traditional and charter schools. They then recruited a third organization, the Achievement Network, to join them as organizers.

The conference was by invitation only, as participants needed to have a significant amount of data, including school performance reviews, information on discipline, school-wide survey results, staff retention data, and compliance information. Groups were divided into three cohorts based on their ability and their relationship with the hosting organizations, who each conducted a two-hour working session for the cohorts.

Many community partners helped make the Summit happen. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education was the biggest investor. Other partners included CityBridge Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, and the NewSchools Venture Fund.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The first Summit reached 75 percent of the area charter schools and 25 percent of the district schools, representing approximately 33,000 public school students.

The evaluation summary from participants showed that nearly 90 percent of attendees found the topic important and useful to their work, and 87 percent stated that they would use what they learned at the Summit in their work.

The D.C. Data Summit provided the opportunity for three organizations to work together and identify future areas for collaborative work. It helped build relationships among participants and helped people understand that they can accomplish more working together than independently.

## MAKING IT LAST

The three hosting organizations from the first are currently planning a second D.C. Data Summit. The organizers identified several factors that led to a successful event: start organizing as early as possible; find affordable facilities with adequate space; set aside specific time for networking; and limit the guest list to small teams from each school.

## CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT



The Arts & College Preparatory Academy students perform at the conference.



# D.C. Promise Neighborhood Initiative

**LOCATION:**  
Washington, D.C.

**STRAND:**  
Conditions for Learning

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Chávez Parkside Middle School and High School  
Neval Thomas Elementary School  
Kenilworth Elementary School

STATE: **D.C.**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **75,664**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **32%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **80%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **95**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **40%**

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## SUMMARY

The D.C. Promise Neighborhood Initiative (DCPNI) has been established to plan and coordinate a pipeline of high-quality educational opportunities “wrapped” by evidence-based social supports for children and youth from birth to age twenty-three in Washington, D.C. The DCPNI pipeline will produce outcomes that reverse poor academic performance, numerous public health issues of epidemic proportions, chronic unemployment and poverty, and widespread violence. The ultimate goal of the Initiative is to advance children successfully through school, into college, and onto successful careers. The DCPNI draws much of its learning and inspiration from two sources: The America’s Promise Alliance and the Harlem Children’s Zone.

## MOTIVATION

In October 2008, Irasema Salcido, the founder of the Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy, convened a small group of community residents from the Parkside-Kenilworth area of D.C. and other school supporters to discuss ways that Chavez and its Parkside campus neighbors could partner to promote academic achievement and college access for their children. While the two other Chavez campuses on Capitol Hill and Columbia Heights were doing well, her Parkside Middle and Upper Schools, which draw about a third of their enrollment from Parkside-Kenilworth, had suffered below-average DC CAS scores during their first years of operation. Taking lessons from the Harlem Children’s Zone model, the initial DCPNI Steering Committee set its sights on developing a comprehensive approach to academic and life success for neighborhood children by involving the whole community, connecting with the neighborhood elementary schools, and building a cradle-to-college-to-career pipeline of supports for students and their families.



*Irasema Salcido, CEO & Founder, Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy, presents the D.C. Promise Neighborhood Initiative.*

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Fueled by the vision of an initial Steering Committee and deep engagement from residents and other partners, the Initiative spent its first year using volunteer and contributed staff time (from organizations like America’s Promise Alliance, which became involved based on the strong interest of its chairperson Alma Powell) to build a strong foundation of local and citywide leadership, as well as to develop its capacity to fundraise for and operate a cradle-to-college initiative. Once the complexity and time demands of developing the Initiative became too high to do with volunteers alone, DCPNI hired paid consultants to facilitate and support the work of all stakeholders.

In late October 2010, Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools, the applicant agency for DCPNI, became one of twenty-one recipients of U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhood planning grant. There were 329 applicants.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

DCPNI will implement the first-year of its Promise neighborhood in one year. The Initiative anticipates only serving a small percentage of the 2,000 children in the neighborhood intensively during this year. By the fifth year, they hope to be serving more than half of the children intensively, as well as replicating the Initiative in another distressed neighborhood in DC.

Over \$800,000 in cash and over \$700,000 in in-kind commitments are being used to plan and start implementation of the Initiative. DCPNI is still developing its staff and budget projections for first-year implementation, which will begin in October 2011. The Initiative anticipates that the program will cost several million dollars per year to operate.

## MAKING IT LAST

DCPNI offers a planning structure that emphasizes inclusion of all key partners—e.g. residents, civic leaders, school personnel, providers, government officials, etc.—strong resident voice, and results-based planning focused on data and the identification of evidence-based strategies and programs. The DCPNI planning process is highly relational and depends on all stakeholders making and keeping core commitments. At the core of every aspect of the planning structure is community engagement that promotes leadership and ownership of the DCPNI among Parkside-Kenilworth residents. Also at the core of the planning structure are Results-Driven Work Groups (RDWG’s), which use data, evaluation and research on evidence-based approaches to plan and monitor solutions within and across the 10 DCPNI goals. There is one RDWG per goal and the membership of each RDWG is a cross-section of neighborhood residents, the four target schools, local service providers, government officials, funders, policy experts, and other DC stakeholders. The RDWG’s intentionally bring together content-area experts and systems officials with residents and providers who can make things happen on the ground. RDWG’s will present recommendations to the DCPNI Advisory Board and Principals Council for approval and, then, to DCPNI staff and partners for implementation.

Although school leadership might be the most practical way to characterize the single most important factor in DCPNI’s success to date, trust has been the key. When Irasema Salcido set out to improve student achievement for her charter school, she reached out to Parkside-Kenilworth community residents and the traditional public school principals first. By engaging those who would be most affected for their opinions first, and then following with intensive outreach to “external” stakeholders like DC funders, content experts, and non-local service providers, she established a basis for trust and credibility in the Initiative that continues to grow.

# Sharing Enrollment and Campuses in Denver

**LOCATION:**  
Denver, Colorado

**STRAND:**  
Facilities/Operations

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Denver Public Schools  
DSST Public Schools  
EdisonLearning  
KIPP Colorado  
The Odyssey School  
Soar Charter School  
Venture Prep  
West Denver Prep

## SUMMARY

The Denver Public Schools (DPS) highlighted two collaborations between traditional schools and charter schools. In the first collaboration, two charters and one district middle school share a common enrollment zone. Every student living in that zone of the city is guaranteed a spot at one of the schools. In the second collaboration, DPS has converted under-utilized district school buildings into shared campuses that house multiple schools.

## MOTIVATION

DPS began these initiatives as part of a two-prong strategy: first, to incentivize the development of new schools by reducing facilities costs; and second, to generate district revenue and increase efficiency.

*Below: Parker Baxter, Denver Public Schools  
Right: Noemi Donoso, Denver Public Schools*

STATE: **Colorado**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5-18): **848,855**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **17%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **40%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **149**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **9%**

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*The Dr. Evie Garrett Dennis Campus*

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

DPS went to Chicago and New York to research best practices for shared school facilities and new school development. DPS launched the Call for Quality Schools program (which asked for proposals for new schools) and the Shared Campus Initiative at the same time as part of a coordinated, multi-prong reform strategy.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The collaborations are going strong and will expand each year. DPS expects to add another four shared campuses next year and two new regional shared enrollment zones. In the past three years, the district has facilitated the creation of 24 new charter and autonomous district schools, almost all of which are now co-located in district facilities.

Furthermore, in addition to sharing space, Denver's district-managed schools and its charter schools are also sharing common responsibilities as public schools, including serving students with special needs, teaching English language learners, and cooperating as a community of schools to ensure equity of opportunity for all.

## MAKING IT LAST

Significant capital investment may be necessary to create facilities appropriate for co-location. In DPS's case, a voter-approved \$20M in funding in 2008 has been critical to the initiative's success.

As charter schools become more and more integrated into Denver Public Schools, and especially as new charter schools are used to replace or right-size existing traditional schools, it is essential that these new schools and the district work together to create an equitable playing field in which all schools, both charter and traditional, push each other, succeed together, and collaborate for the common good. Having these common goals and visions will help make the collaborations succeed in the long-run.



**DR. EVIE GARRETT DENNIS CAMPUS  
DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**PROJECT FACTS:**

Overview: 35-acre, multi-building campus ("college-style"), intentionally designed to house multiple educational programs. The campus is DPS's first LEED Certified facility.

Project Funding: \$48.5 million (2008 bond)

Project Cost: \$42.7 million

Savings: \$5.8 million\*

Ground Breaking: June 2009

Completion: June 2010

Architect: DLR Group

Contractor: Saunders Construction

Developer: HC Development/Oakwood Homes

Tenants: SOAR K-5 Charter School and

Denver School of Science & Technology 6-12 Charter School

\* Project savings directed toward design and construction of 5th campus building, Vista Academy, the district's 2nd Multiple Pathways Center. Projected completion; Spring 2011

**LOCATION:**

Baltimore, Maryland and Washington D.C.

**STRAND:**

Curriculum & Instruction

# Partnership Turnaround Initiatives: Friendship Public Charter School, Inc.

**SUMMARY**

**F**riendship Public Charter School, Inc., along with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) and D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) are partnering to close the achievement gap in some of the lowest-performing schools in the districts. Together, the organizations have combined their experience, resources, and passion for education as they work collaboratively to change failing schools into environments of success. And it is working so far: all of the partnership schools have seen positive results in academic achievement and attendance. Funding from the Gates Foundation and the World Bank, and tutoring assistance and health-related services from George Washington University and Georgetown University are just some examples of the partners that work with the districts and Friendship schools to turn the schools around.

**MOTIVATION**

These partnerships are motivated by a desire to take a failing school and cultivate an environment of success. The tangible goals from the districts focus on increasing academic achievement, attendance rates, and graduation rates. These goals reflect the need to alter both the academic environment as well as the school culture. To achieve these ends, Friendship incorporates a holistic approach to serving the child, supporting teachers and administrators, and creating a school environment that promotes high expectations. Friendship sets additional goals such as decreased student dropout rates, decreased incidents of violence, drugs, or weapons, and increased college acceptance and scholarship rates. Recognizing the importance of teachers in making these changes realities, Friendship provides instructional coaching and professional development in creating a support system to ensure the best teaching strategies are used and the best teachers are in each classroom.

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**

BCPS partnered first with Friendship to turn around two schools in 2008, with DCPS following suit with Anacostia Senior High School becoming a partnership school in 2009. Both school districts sought to have the focused resources of Friendship target these low-performing schools in ways that district resources could not sufficiently do themselves. The agreements with the districts provided for a planning period for Friendship to develop a strategy best suited to the unique needs of each school. In implementation, Friendship had much autonomy to restructure leadership, create intensive interventions for students, and provide high quality professional development for teachers. The districts continued to provide some services for each of these schools, allowing Friendship to focus its attention on creating and sustaining positive reforms. With the partnership schools still under district jurisdiction, a mutual support system developed that promoted the goals of all organizations involved.

**MAKING AN IMPACT**

The partnership schools have proven immensely successful in their first few years of operation. All the schools, both in Baltimore and D.C., produced positive results in academic achievement and attendance, reflecting an increased quality of the school environment and the academic culture. Beyond these standard goals, Baltimore City Public School survey data show further improvements in the school climates of Friendship Academy of Science and Technology (FAST) and Friendship Academy of Engineering Technology (FAET). Additionally, graduation rates increased in the D.C. partnership high school, Anacostia.

**MAKING IT LAST**

As with any strong educational movement, the growth of these partnerships is driven by results. As long as Friendship continues to achieve in these environments, relationships will be bolstered with school districts. The communication between partners has been a vital factor in the success of these schools, as the willingness to work cooperatively has prompted pragmatic conversation and effective action.

The dynamic of partnership schools presents some challenges in balancing support, accountability, and autonomy, but it also provides a unique opportunity for fostering a strong relationship between districts and charter management organizations. For Friendship, the relationship ties with BCPS and DCPS have constantly been reinforced by the commitment to turning around these schools for the sake of the children. With this common foundation, Friendship and the districts maintain an open dialogue and flexibility to meet new needs as they arise throughout the year.

**NOTABLE DEMONSTRATED OUTCOMES**

- By 2009, Friendship's two academies ranked first and second among Transformation Schools in sixth grade reading and mathematics. (FAET: 76.9% proficient or advanced in reading, 64.9% in math; FAST: 70.6% proficient or advanced in reading, 60.5% in math)
- At Anacostia, after its first year of operation, graduation rates increased from 59% to 79% and daily attendance increased from 48% to more than 70%, with 9th grade attendance exceeding 80%.
- The number of disciplinary incidents at FAST plummeted from over 700 in 2006-07 (before Friendship's full implementation) to less than 40 in 2008-09.
- Attendance at FAST has increased from less than 50% in 2007-2008 to nearly 81% in 2008-2009.
- Over 1,600 four-year college and community college applications were submitted from Anacostia High, with a 90% college acceptance rate.

STATE: **Maryland**  
 NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5-18): **968,796**  
 CHILD POVERTY RATE: **12%**  
 PERCENT NON-WHITE: **49%**  
 NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **36**  
 PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **2.5%**

Please see page 20 for information regarding the Washington, D.C. statistics.

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# Charter and Traditional School District Enrichment Through Innovative Facilities Agreements

**LOCATION:**  
San Antonio, Texas

**STRAND:**  
Facilities

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Henry Ford Academy:  
Alameda School for Art & Design  
San Antonio Independent School District

## SUMMARY

In San Antonio, a unique collaboration has emerged which combines the sharing of school facilities with the sharing of curricular resources. The Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School For Art + Design (HFA: ASAD) is a college-preparatory charter school that leases underutilized school facilities from the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). HFA: ASAD also shares its curriculum with SAISD schools.

HFA: ASAD has occupied the SAISD building for two years and pays all occupancy costs. In turn, HFA: ASAD has provided its arts curriculum—which consists of twelve art and designed-focused courses—to SAISD, and it will provide updates to SAISD as they are

*Students of Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art & Design.*



*Shannon Clements, Executive Director, Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art and Design*



*Jeffrey D. Flores, Superintendent/Principal, Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art and Design*

developed. Also, HFA: ASAD is sharing teacher professional development for the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies curriculum—an academically, standards-based curriculum that integrates academic learning with realistic applications—and for its Senior Mastery Process, a capstone project that includes off-site internships and career exploration courses.

## MOTIVATION

HFA: ASAD is part of a national network of small schools (Henry Ford Academies) that are all developed in partnerships with local organizations and that all aim to have impact on the entire community. Before opening the school, the founders had searching for quality, cost-effective facilities for the school. The likelihood of low renovation costs made repurposing an existing school building the most attractive option, but it also had the potential to be the most politically charged, given that charter schools often face opposition from school districts when attempting to acquire unused district school buildings. Still, HFA: ASAD found that SAISD—while cautious—was also open to discussing the transfer of facilities. SAISD's relatively open-minded attitude stems from district leaders who recognized that charter schools are here to stay and that districts and charter schools should share resources in order to reap mutually beneficially rewards.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Community leader and HFA: ASAD board member, Henry R. Muñoz III, was instrumental in bringing the traditional school district and charter school together. He initiated the discussions and helped to take them beyond a typical landlord/tenant agreement to a collaborative best practice that leverages existing resources, such as unused facilities, innovative curricula, and professional development opportunities, to advance public education for all students in the district, whether they go to a public charter or traditional public school.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

HFA: ASAD opened in the fall of 2009, ready to provide its students with excellent educational outcomes through its college-prep culture and intensive arts and design preparation. It also shares its curriculum and professional development with district schools. Furthermore, HFA: ASAD was designed to impact the community. One of the most immediate ways it has done so is by giving new life to a treasured building. The building is no longer a victim of vandalism. It has essentially had a facelift, complete with a new exterior mural—created by the school's students—that conveys the goals of the school. The school's transformation reflects and encourages optimism in the community.

## MAKING IT LAST

One of the strengths of this cooperative practice is the entities' resourceful use of many existing assets, such as facilities and curriculum, to create new learning opportunities for students. The Henry Ford Learning Institute, the nonprofit organization developing the Henry Ford Academy provided network, funds for technical support and additional grants. HFA: ASAD spent \$45,000 in upgrades and pays \$4,400 monthly in occupancy costs. The investment of professional fees from SAISD and HFA: ASAD was greatly reduced by the generous sharing of draft partnership documents from YESPrep Public Schools in Houston, Texas. For other schools and districts that are considering such a cooperative practice, HFA: ASAD suggests that agreements are implemented at three to six months prior to anticipated building occupancy, although it might be helpful to initiate discussions even sooner. Also, cooperating practices should consider their existing assets when seeking to collaborate assets.

STATE: **Texas**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **4,698,464**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **24%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **63%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **496**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **6%**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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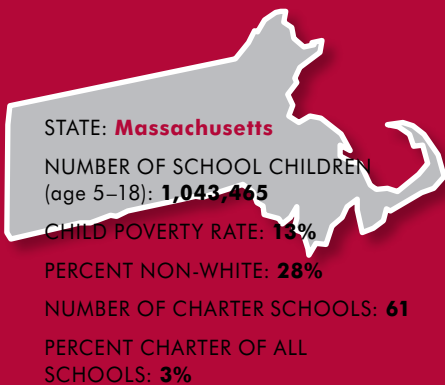
sclements@hfli.org

**LOCATION:**  
Haverhill, Massachusetts

**STRAND:**  
Operations

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School  
Haverhill District Schools



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## Partnerships in Service of Children: Hill View Montessori Charter Public School and Haverhill Public Schools

### SUMMARY

Recognizing that the relationship between district and charter schools is often hostile, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVM) adopted a collaborative philosophy when the school was founded. HVM made an effort to cultivate a strong relationship with Haverhill Public Schools, and it paid off. As a result of the good relationship, the school and district have collaborated in many different areas, and HVM recently was able to lease a disused school building from the district.

### MOTIVATION

Like all schools, HVM and Haverhill's collaborations are motivated by a desire to maximize their limited resources. Additionally, instead of viewing district schools as rivals, HVM's founders deliberately incorporated a cooperative attitude into the school's philosophy and program, starting with a few simple yet effective strategies.

[See following page.]

### MAKING IT HAPPEN

HVM's founders contacted Haverhill in 2002 as they were drafting the school's charter. The charter school's founders met with school officials to announce their plans to open a charter school within the district and to openly discuss the anticipated impact on the district. Giving Haverhill advance notice and communicating with them from the start helped create an environment more conducive to conversation and collaboration. As HVM's plans progressed, the founders continued to update Haverhill, especially in areas that directly impacted the district. Haverhill reciprocated by inviting the founders to a school committee meeting where Haverhill's superintendent discussed the charter school application.

### MAKING AN IMPACT

Open communication has led to repeated collaboration between HVM and Haverhill. The district gained financially from leasing a building to the school. Second, utility rates for the city were much lower than the rates the charter school could obtain on their own, due to the district's purchase of electricity, oil, and gas through a regional collaborative. A district administrator brokered an agreement to maintain the utilities under the city's budget and have HVM reimburse the city directly. A third financial gain resulted from collaboration on transportation. Under the law, the district school system is required to provide transportation for its resident charter students. HVM planned to operate a longer school day and a longer school year than the district schools, necessitating additional busses. The charter school asked parents to transport students for the extra two weeks of school, and they also agreed to begin the school day a bit later than originally planned so students could utilize the existing bus routes. The bus company realized that several drivers had routes that finished early and assigned them to the charter school after their regular route ended. By doing so, HVM's day could still end 45 minutes later than the last dismissal time of the other public schools, and the bus drivers would only have to work an additional half-hour each day to finish the HVM bus routes. The financial obligation was approximately one third the cost without collaboration. Additionally, HVM and Haverhill also share physical education resources (fields) and offer each other slots during professional development training sessions.

### MAKING IT LAST

HVM and Haverhill continue to work according to a philosophy of collaboration. Though HVM now has a building of its own and no longer leases from the district, the two organizations continue to collaborate to achieve mutually-beneficial results. For instance, HVM plans to share some of its Montessori materials and curriculum with district teachers. Central to HVM's philosophy of collaboration are the eight "soft skills" that HVM identified at its inception.

### EIGHT TIPS FOR BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONS

**1. Lead by example, modeling respect** Maintain your professionalism, and demonstrate your respect for others working for the best interests of the community's children. As charter and district leaders, it is critical that you show respect for one another, and keep in mind that both charter and district leaders are trying to do what is best to support your city's public school children. When individuals in leadership roles conduct their relationships with respect, they encourage others to do the same, and they certainly provide a positive model for students.

**2. Put yourself in the other person's shoes** Consider the impact of key decisions on other public schools. Meet to communicate high-impact issues early. Open lines of communication and consideration of others' perspectives will support collaboration and may allow you to envision plans that increase benefits to the entire public school system.

**3. Pursue positive public relations** Educate everybody about what you are doing, keeping in mind that there should be no need to criticize someone else's school to validate your own. If you need to stand apart and voice divergent views, do so respectfully. Charter school leaders must market their schools to ensure adequate enrollment in a context of educational options and school choice. Districts, too, need to help the public understand the good things they are doing. Negative communication will only contribute to a contentious environment, and in such an environment, it's students who lose out.

**4. Build bridges** Make connections with others who support public education, whether that education is district or charter. Think broadly when building bridges and forming networks. Include not only educators, but also other organizations and service providers in the city—such as children's services agencies, historical societies, environmental groups, and civil rights groups. Inform these groups about what you are doing and arrange to collaborate on a project. The individuals in such organizations can convey positive attitudes about charter and district schools, attitudes that can become part of the fabric of your town or city.

**5. Demonstrate commitment to public education** Understand and support the various public education efforts in your city. Have a positive impact on education outside of your own school by becoming a member of a group supporting another school, such as a charter or district school committee or site council. Be aware of the course of public education in your community by attending or keeping informed about school committee and charter school board meetings. By understanding and showing commitment to larger public education efforts, you will earn the respect of other public educators, build important relationships, and provide support for further collaboration.

**6. Consider all public educators as partners** Extend invitations to other public educators, and make all parties feel welcome in common endeavors. Keep the focus on win-win activities, such as jointly written grants. Encourage others to attend school events and meetings, and to visit your school. By extending invitations and opportunities to other educators and making them feel comfortable, you provide the foundation for new and productive partnerships.

**7. Support problem solving efforts** Work together to devise creative solutions. Brainstorm collectively and share expertise in an effort to solve problems. As you think and learn together, pooling resources, the possibilities for benefit expand. Moreover, helping others solve problems builds common commitments and encourages further cooperation. Work together to devise creative solutions.

**8. Focus on benefits for children** We're all involved in education for the same reason—to benefit the children in our communities. Working together can extend benefits and provide models of productive and respectful relationships.



**LOCATION:**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**STRAND:**  
College and Career Readiness

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Indianapolis Metropolitan High School  
Ben Davis High School  
Arsenal Technical High School  
Arlington Community High School  
George Washington Community High School

STATE: **Indiana**

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18):  
**1,141,592**

CHILD POVERTY RATE: **20%**

PERCENT NON-WHITE: **23%**

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **49**

PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **3%**

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## Jobs for America's Graduates Collaboration: Charter and Public Schools Working Hand in Hand Preparing Youth for Life after High School

### SUMMARY

The Jobs for America's Graduates program (JAG) is a national program that assists students with graduating on time and transitioning to life after high school. The curriculum combines core workplace competencies with mentoring and experiences such as college tours, classroom speakers, and various hands-on activities, such as organizing food drives. Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, a charter school operated by Goodwill Educational Initiatives, began a JAG program. That program has since expanded to four non-charter public schools. Partner schools share staff and resources and work together to provide internships, workshops, and other opportunities for students across all schools.

### MOTIVATION

At the time the JAG partnership began, Goodwill was already operating mentoring programs at several non-charter public schools. Goodwill determined that serving these same students through the JAG program would provide more effective support to students and their families through mentoring, after school facilities for academics and enrichment, and an established career readiness and college exploration program. Goodwill selected schools to partner with that were looking to improve academic scores, graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment. Further, the superintendent of Indianapolis schools was interested in JAG and wanted the program to expand to all of the district's schools.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN

Goodwill was already running its JAG program at Metropolitan High School and submitted a proposal to run additional JAG programs. Goodwill's founder met with the JAG director and administrators from all schools involved at the IPS administrative offices.

All participating schools contribute resources to JAG. The Metropolitan High School provides the Program Manager, Program Assistant, two Coordinators, and the JAG Specialist with office and classroom space. Each public school also provides the JAG Specialists with classroom space, office equipment, and school furniture.

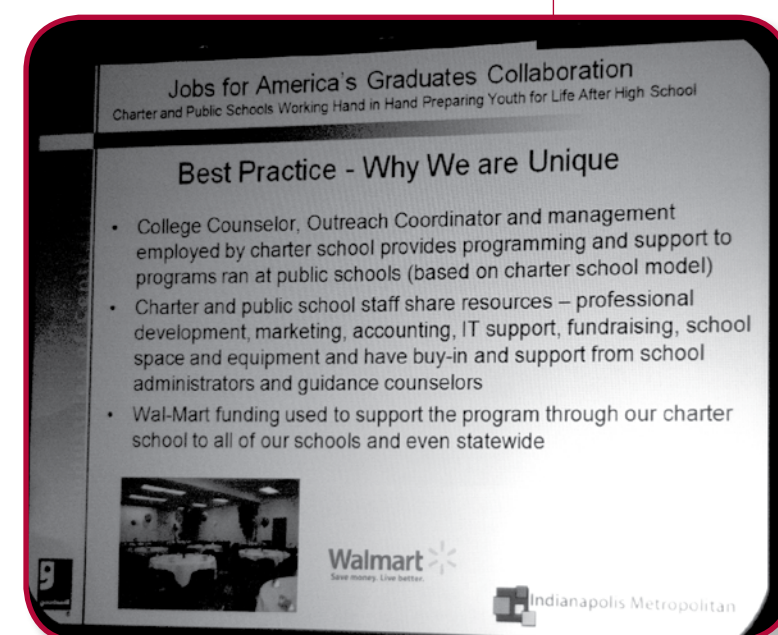
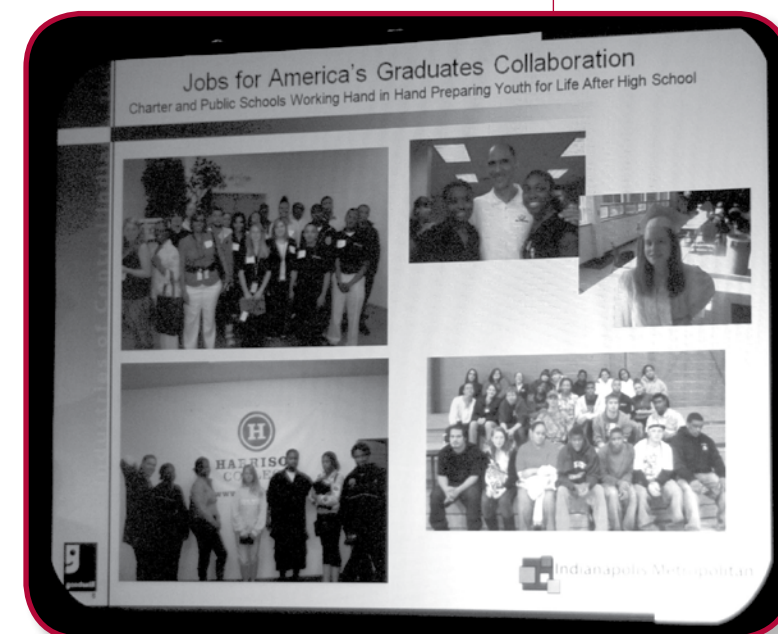
### MAKING AN IMPACT

In its first year, over 255 students were served at five schools with a graduation rate of over eighty-five percent. This proven success has generated interest in the program from both students and staff.

### MAKING IT LAST

In its second year, the partnership remains strong. Building relationships between the partners remains an integral part of the program's success. To facilitate good relationships, Goodwill learned that it is helpful to have a good Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each school, one that outlines roles and responsibilities. Good communication with participating schools is also important. Goodwill sends newsletters, e-mails, and program updates to school administrators. School staff is also invited to JAG events and activities where they get a first hand perspective of what takes place at their schools.

An obstacle that may be more difficult to overcome is finding eligible students for the program. Due to federal funding, students need to meet stringent eligibility guidelines to participate in JAG. There have been issues with counselors enrolling some ineligible students into the program.



Participating Schools

# Cooperative Partnership to Support a Spanish Immersion Continuation Program

**LOCATION:**  
Forest Lake, Minnesota

**STRAND:**  
Instruction and Curriculum

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
District 4116 Lakes International Language Academy  
District 831 Forest Lake Area Schools

## SUMMARY

Lakes International Language Academy (LILA), a public charter elementary school, emphasizes second-language acquisition by immersing learners in Spanish from kindergarten through sixth grade. To provide students the chance to continue second language acquisition after sixth grade, LILA worked with the traditional school district in which it geographically resides, Forest Lake Area School District, to develop the Spanish Continuation Program at a district high school and junior high school. Now, LILA alumni take up to three content classes in Spanish in grades seven through ten. LILA took this approach, rather than expanding grades at its school, to avoid additional facilities and resource costs and to enable students to participate in curriculum electives and after-school activities that could not be as effectively offered at LILA.

## CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT



(right to left) Paula Lasley, ACPA, William Sims, OAPCS, Stephanie Klupinski, OAPCS, Marianne Lombardo, OAPCS

## MOTIVATION

LILA wanted to provide second-language opportunities for students as they left the charter elementary school. LILA could have established a new charter school that provided its own academically rigorous program to students in grades seven through twelve, but as a charter school on a bare bones budget, it would not have been able to provide the wide variety of elective and after-school choices, including athletic programs, that exist at traditional district junior and high schools.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

A previous attempt to start a Spanish immersion program with the district had failed. Negative feedback from the larger community, combined with financial constraints, prevented the Forest Lake district from moving forward, even though a task force composed of parents, teachers, administrators and board members, language learning experts, and local business people recommended the program. The community group then pursued the charter school option, resulting in LILA.

After LILA opened, it formed its own “language maintenance” task force to consider next steps for future alumni. This task force looked at all options available to LILA, including expanding the charter to upper grades, starting a new charter school, or approaching nearby districts to collaborate on a program within their districts. When LILA approached Forest Lake Area School District in 2005, people who served on that initial District 831 task force were still there and highly supportive of the partnership. LILA’s task force ultimately chose collaboration with the district as the best choice for LILA students and their families.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The Continuation Program is now well established, with increasing transfer of enrollment from LILA to the district schools. This fall, 90 percent of LILA’s 2010 sixth graders chose to enroll at the district junior high. Through the collaboration, LILA works with the district to design curriculum and delivery methods, to apply for grants to support program developments, and to hire staff to create an optimal continuation program.

The collaboration demonstrates one purpose of charter schools: to act as education laboratories and share expertise and innovations with traditional districts to spur excellence in education. Moreover, this partnership has spilled over into other initiatives including cooperative grant applications, translation services for District 831, and student travel abroad experiences. District 831 has also begun a partial Spanish immersion program in two of its elementary schools. LILA acted as a source for trusted advice and expertise during start-up, and continues in a supportive, unofficial advisory role.

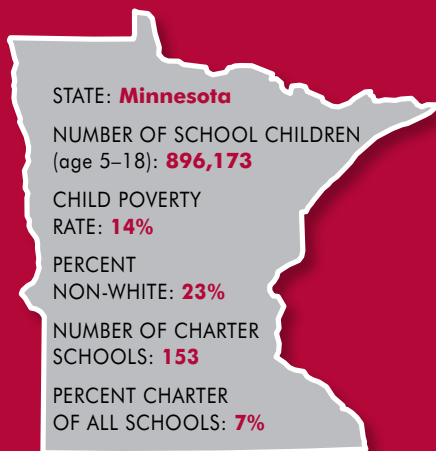
## MAKING IT LAST

Families committed to language learning find the program essential to maintaining and further developing their students’ proficiency in Spanish. At this time, the program has begun to act as a revenue-builder; it will not only pay for itself, but also add to the general fund for other District 831 needs.

The partnership has been the result of a “perfect storm.” Trust and respect across organizations have been established. Both partners have benefitted from having the right leaders and teachers in place and shared a common vision for students’ needs. However, the key to making these factors come together has been the bottom line. Moving any district through policy and change requires focus on involved budgets, particularly in economically challenging times.

Collaborators should understand what makes them valuable to their partner. LILA’s enrollment of about 600 students, combined with its rigorous curriculum and attraction of students from eighteen school districts, equates to the “graduation” of a sizeable pool of successful sixth graders. LILA knows it can provide another district a revenue stream and opportunity to fill unused building space. Likewise, the district knows that it has transportation, extra-curriculars, and amenities such as an industrial technology laboratory and cooking facilities, as well as other resources that a charter school would be challenged to access or obtain.

Clearly recognizing what each partner stands to gain from a fund perspective, as well as programmatically and from a marketing perspective, is essential to partnership success and needs to be continually reviewed.



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# New Teacher Induction Promotes Integrated Professional Culture

## LOCATION:

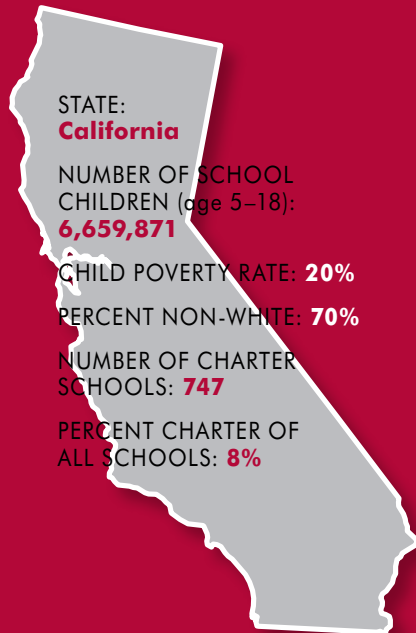
San Jose, California

## STRAND:

Performance Management and Conditions for Learning

## CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:

Discovery Charter School and the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (Consortium of 8 Charter Schools and 15 Traditional Public School Districts within the Santa Clara County Office of Education)



## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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## SUMMARY

The Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) is a consortium of eight charter schools and fifteen traditional school districts throughout Santa Clara County, California. SVNTP serves as a laboratory for the New Teacher Center (NTC), a national nonprofit dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating teacher effectiveness. SVNTP’s comprehensive teacher induction program employs the NTC’s Formative Assessment System (FAS), leading teachers in their second year towards achieving results similar to teachers in their fifth year. New teacher mentoring is provided by intensively trained veteran teachers.

## MOTIVATION

Charter school teachers are 2.3 times more likely to leave the profession than their traditional public school counterparts (Stuit & Smith, 2009). Thus, SVNTP recognizes that targeted assessment and support of new teachers is critical to school success. Interaction with veteran teachers affects how new teachers understand and respond to student learning needs. Regrettably, recent research indicates that new teachers continue to work in isolation, are expected to be prematurely expert and independent, and seldom share responsibility with veteran colleagues for student learning (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007). SVNTP and its partner schools recognize this pattern and are working to reverse it.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Through California-wide Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programs, new teachers in charter and traditional public schools receive two years of mentored induction. The Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) began in 1998 as a function of the Santa Clara County Office of Education and a means of sustaining new teacher induction programs across Santa Clara County. The SVNTP—along with its peer, the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project—developed a comprehensive set of tools and processes (called “FAS”) that support

new teacher performance management while also improving conditions for learning. FAS provides longitudinal data about new teacher instructional practices, the influence of instructional adaptations on student achievement, and other aspects of a new teacher’s progress along a continuum of teacher development. These data are used to identify professional learning goals as well as progress toward goals.

The various charter schools affiliated with SVNTP have unique relationships with their local traditional school districts. Through the SVNTP’s professional development, each affiliated school gains shared professional experience with all others.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Portfolios of practice that result from FAS processes can be used to substantiate applications for professional credentials/licensure as well as career ladder programs. They also help to substantiate state and district-level policies that support allocation of induction resources leveraged to improve schools. With all this in mind, the data that has been collaboratively collected, analyzed, and applied through FAS processes is significant for whole school improvement—especially improvements that benefit conditions for learning. FAS have been used in more than forty states and five countries. Through FAS usage, schools such as Discovery Charter School have produced measurable reading and math gains.

The value added of SVNTP affiliation is a comprehensive set of tools, protocols, and professional relationships that buoy one’s professional practice in service to new teachers and their students. Through the collaboration, all SVNTP affiliates learn more about how to “work smarter, not harder” in their efforts to achieve accelerated teacher effectiveness as determined by student achievement growth.

The goal is to create new habits of mind for learning and working together in data-driven, collaborative learning communities.

## MAKING IT LAST

One obstacle to ongoing implementation has been funding reductions for mentoring/induction programs. Other challenges include new teacher layoffs and the allocation of new responsibilities for existing personnel to offset staffing reductions. But the most frequently cited obstacles are time and inter-agency coordination. Collecting data, calibrating it with colleagues, analyzing its implications, and determining applications requires a substantial amount of time to work professionally together without significant interruption. This is difficult given the challenges of responsibilities beyond classroom teaching.



“

*Charters are Public Schools, serving our kids with our money. Instead of standing apart, charters should be partnering with districts, sharing lessons, and sharing credit.*

”

ARNE DUNCAN

Secretary of Education,  
U.S. Department of Education

**LOCATION:**  
Somerville, Massachusetts

**STRAND:**  
Curriculum & Instruction

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School  
Winter Hill Community School  
Arthur T Healey School with leadership from the Somerville Public School District Central Office

STATE: **Massachusetts**

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **1,043,465**

CHILD POVERTY RATE: **13%**

PERCENT NON-WHITE: **28%**

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **61**

PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **3%**

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Chief Academic Officer

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## School Improvement through District/Charter Collaboration Using the Collaborative Inquiry Model

### SUMMARY

**P**rospect Hill Academy—a k-12 Charter School—worked with the Somerville School District on implementing an adaptation of Collaborative Inquiry (CI). CI is Prospect Hill Academy's core model for improving classroom instruction and student achievement in the two lowest performing schools in the district. The theory of action underlying CI is that student achievement improves when teachers collaborate on an ongoing basis to design instruction, assess learning, analyze and interpret assessment results, revise curriculum, and adapt instruction in response. A team of administrators from the charter school and the two district schools spearheaded the implementation of the CI model in Somerville Public Schools. In addition, a full-time CI coach and grant coordinator split her time between the three schools involved, working closely with principals and teachers at each school. Both schools demonstrated marked academic improvement.

### MOTIVATION

The Somerville School District had already begun a more collaborative, data-driven culture, but it wanted to develop a sustainable model for teacher collaboration with the ultimate goal of improving student performance. Being familiar with the CI model used at Prospect Hill Academy charter school, the district wanted to determine whether the CI program could be productively scaled up.

### CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT



Kenneth Surratt of CREDO/Stanford University



Christine Fowler-Mack of Cleveland Municipal School District



Tony Roberts, PhD, Georgia Charter Schools Association

### MAKING IT HAPPEN

Somerville School District partnered with PHA, submitting a joint proposal to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for a year-long dissemination grant focusing on spreading CI practice at their district's two-lowest performing schools. Principals from those district schools, along with a top teacher at Prospect Hill Academy, served as CI coaches at the district schools.

### MAKING AN IMPACT

At the end of the 2009-10 school year, one of the district schools had made adequate yearly progress in mathematics, and the other district school made adequate yearly progress in English/language arts. Also, teacher teams from these schools that participate in CI outperformed comparable non-participating classrooms.

### MAKING IT LAST

Although a number of elements contributed to the success of this effort (including teacher buy-in, strong leadership, and open lines of communication), the single most important factor was the common goal and vision for the work shared by both charter and district members of the collaboration leadership team.

Many of the greatest successes of the year—curriculum mapping, school visits, model lessons, and ultimately growth in student learning and achievement—were built into the action plan later in the year as observation and data indicated that they were areas of interest and need that would contribute to the shared goal and vision. In many ways, the structure for the planning of the year aligned with the stages of an inquiry cycle itself: identify the goal, collect data, implement a plan of action, reassess, and repeat. The formal collaboration between Prospect Hill Academy and the Somerville district ended in August of 2010 because the project was funded by a one-year grant. However, teachers from the district schools continue to attend professional development from Prospect Hill, and they continue to work together to implement their newly aligned curriculum maps.

### OUTCOMES

- 78.6% of teachers involved in CI said that their principal provided a high or very high level of support for their collaboration.
- 71.4% of teachers said this professional experience was much better or better than their previous professional development
- 92.4% of teachers said they would participate in an additional CI cycle next year.
- 71.4% felt that their CI group could function without an outside facilitator next year.

# Study Tours: A Model for Facilitating Effective School Visits

**LOCATION:**  
Massachusetts

**STRAND:**  
Conditions for Learning

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
27 charter and 11 district

## SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Center for Charter Public School Excellence organized two Study Tour programs. Through both programs, teams of educators had the opportunity to spend a day visiting high-performing charter schools. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education and the state of Massachusetts.

## MOTIVATION

The goal of the Keeping the Promise (KTP) tour was to allow people applying to open a charter school—as well as educators from underperforming charter and district schools serving low-income communities—to tour high-performing charter schools in order to study their practices. The hoped-for outcome was to make it possible for more schools to replicate the effective practices of these high performing schools. The Expanded Learning Time (ELT) study tours were designed to allow people to get a deeper understanding of how expanded learning time (longer school days and school years) can work.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Massachusetts charter schools' thirty-four study tours were made possible through two separate initiatives. KTP was funded by the United States Department of Education Charter Schools Program, Office of Innovation and Improvement. ELT was funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Acting as a facilitating organizer, the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) assisted the high-performing charter schools in showcasing their exemplary practices and trained the high-performing schools' teachers and leaders to serve as hosts/consultants during tours. MCPSA also helped to tailor a second visit, if requested by district school and/or charter applicants. In addition, MCPSA marketed the tours and enrolled participants. Finally, MCPSA analyzed the needs of the touring charter applicants and district schools and matched them to the appropriate exemplary schools.

After the tours, MCPSA facilitated follow up by the host schools; it also provided ongoing support and held a Keeping the Promise forum.

Other components of KTP included a video (“Beating the Streets”), as well as research on the shared key practices among the five participating schools. The ELT initiative was also complemented by the publication of research on ELT at nine charter school. MCPSA also facilitated these additional components.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Since the practices implemented varied, no ultimate or common goal was measurable among the visiting schools. For ELT, participation was the only measure of success: 107 individuals participated in ELT, exceeding the organizers' goal of 105 participants.

The KTP Study Tours' outcome was measured in terms of participation and the percentage of schools that replicated the exemplar schools' practices. Out of 43 schools eligible to attend—30 charter and 13 district schools—38 (which is 88 percent) participated in the tours. Twenty-seven were charters and the other 11 were district schools. Among the 27 participating “priority” schools—underperforming schools serving low-income communities—93 percent reported that they had implemented a practice of the school they toured.

## MAKING IT LAST

Trust was the key to the success of the projects. The success of KTP Study Tours, which was the more extensive of the two projects, depended on making school visitors feel comfortable.

The primary obstacle for both Study Tours was low interest among district schools in attending an event at a charter school. The MCPSA had to perform extensive recruiting and promotion to overcome this bias. Other obstacles included lack of preparation by visiting schools, lack of buy-in by visiting schools, scheduling conflicts, staff changes, competing priorities and commitments of visiting schools, and mismatches between host school and visiting schools.

Another concern was that some invitees felt that they were being invited because their schools were “failing” and needed the assistance of a charter school. This perception negatively affected enrollment. In some cases, even those schools who visited the other schools lacked enthusiasm. The MCPSA addressed this problem by designing Study Tours to be judgment-free. Host schools were encouraged to identify and own up to their shortcomings, and the majority of schools also emphasized that they were still works in progress.



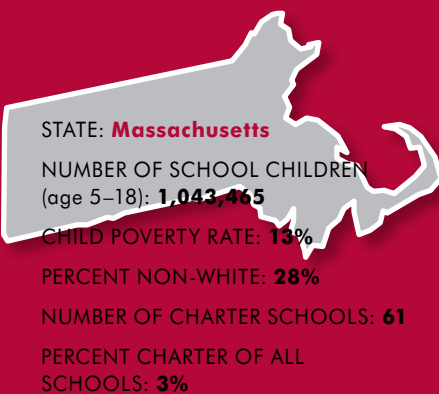
“

*What America's children need today is a highly effective public educational system that will prepare them for the occupational and economic realities of the twenty-first century. As a community of “camps,” we will disappoint our children. In collaboration, we will engender the gratitude of our children.*

”

**WILLIAM J. SIMS**

*President and CEO, Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools*



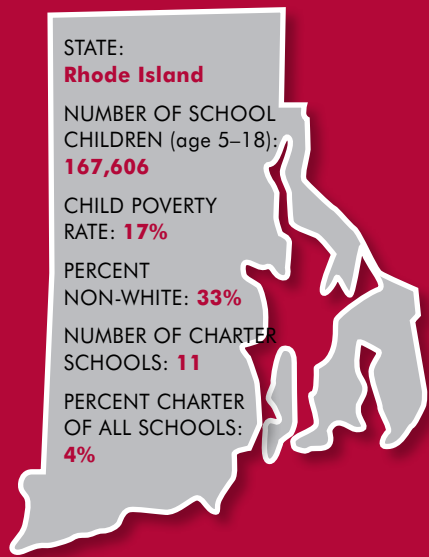
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**LOCATION:**  
Central Falls, Rhode Island

**STRAND:**  
Curriculum & Instruction

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
The Learning Community  
Central Falls School District



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**  
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Further detail on this partnership is available at:  
[www.thelearningcommunity.com](http://www.thelearningcommunity.com)

# The Growing Readers Initiative: A Ground-Breaking Approach to Professional Development

## SUMMARY

**B**ased on a shared commitment to proving that poverty is not a barrier to achievement, the Learning Community and the Central Falls School District have a long-term partnership dedicated to improving student performance. The partnership occurs on multiple levels: in classrooms, with principals and specialists, and at a district level. Classroom teachers, the linchpin of school reform, are using assessment data to inform their practice in ways not possible two years ago and, perhaps most importantly, they are embracing these new approaches. Through listening and relationship-building, even teachers who were vocally skeptical initially now support the partnership.

## MOTIVATION

The Learning Community was founded in 2004 by Meg O’Leary and Sarah Friedman as an independent district that reported directly to the state. Based on years of experience working on professional development in Providence public schools, O’Leary and Friedman created a new school designed to address the common obstacles urban classroom teachers face. Their vision was a school as a laboratory for professional development—a learning community not just for one school, but for educators throughout the state and the region.

Central Falls Superintendent Fran Gallo’s initial interest in collaborating grew from her feeling of responsibility toward all Central Falls school children, whether they are in the district schools or not.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Superintendent Gallo’s visit to The Learning Community led her to arrange a series of open observation days at the school for principals, district administrators, and teachers. These visits allowed people to observe and discuss instruction at varying grade levels. They raised

common concerns about charter schools: “What’s the poverty level? How does your lottery work? Do you have special education students? Are your teachers certified?” Teachers who visited left with an understanding that they were serving the same students.

Central Falls and Learning Community leaders realized they had important things in common. Both groups were focused on success for all students. Both had a corps of excellent teachers. And both believed that the fundamental unit of school change is not the state, the district, or the school, but the classroom.

Conversations began about a partnership and quickly focused on reading instruction as a key driver of success and a fundamental job of the early grades. Assessments suggested that district students struggled with comprehension, leading to difficulty with state standardized tests. The Learning Community proposed an initial design based on achieving immediate and tangible results recognizable to classroom teachers and building sustainable systems of support. A pilot was launched in August 2008. The initiative includes a system of in-classroom modeling, coaching, and debriefing to support teachers as they grow; a quarterly assessment system and support to analyze student performance; and additional support for students who need more help.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The results of the partnership thus far can be described in two key areas: student achievement and trust. The partners knew early that results were critical to momentum. In the pilot year reading scores made a 39-point gain in one school. In the 2009-10 school year, the second year of the partnership, 41 classrooms participated, and a 30-point gain in scores was achieved.

Also, any real partnership requires trust. This work began by listening to the challenges classroom teachers faced and working to build new systems of support for learners. Historically, professional development has often ignored the long history of failed initiatives. The partnership took time up front to acknowledge teacher concerns, remedy what they could, and move on. This helped build a necessary foundation of trust and enabled them to craft a plan that addressed the real daily obstacles to implementation that only a teacher would know.

The team’s hard work to respond to teacher concerns, as well as the clear results for students, is building trust among all partners.

Currently the partnership is working in over forty classrooms across the district, with a continued focus on refining and strengthening instruction and support in reading. The work is positioned to build the capacity of the district and its teachers and not to create a dependency on the partnership.

## MAKING IT LAST

This partnership continues to grow. The number of Central Falls district students reached by this partnership will increase tenfold over the first four years. In 2011-12, the partnership will reach every K-5 classroom in the district, which amounts to 1,400 students, representing nearly half of the district.

One factor that clearly has made this work possible in Central Falls is clarity on a common vision. All parties from the classroom to the main office are focused on ensuring that every student succeeds in reading. With this common goal in place, all parties have been willing to adapt, grow, and ask hard questions in service of student achievement. This work will continue to be successful if partners remain focused and prepared to do whatever it takes to reach every student.

A key component of the continued success of this work is the relationship between the leadership of the district and the charter school.

Challenges to this work include a national discourse that historically has been an us-versus-them approach and creates suspicion among traditional public school teachers; a history of poorly managed reforms; and practical issues, such as a lack of opportunity for classroom teachers to explain the barriers they face and have those concerns inform allocation of district resources.

# UCAS, an Early College Partnership School

**LOCATION:**  
Orem, Utah

**STRAND:**  
Curriculum, Instruction,  
and Operations

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**

Utah County Academy of Sciences  
(UCAS)  
Alpine School District  
Nebo School District  
Provo City School District

STATE: **Utah**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL  
CHILDREN (age 5–18): **580,719**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **12%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **24%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER  
SCHOOLS: **66**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF  
ALL SCHOOLS: **7%**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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*Assistant Principal*  
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## SUMMARY

The Utah County Academy of Sciences (UCAS) is a math, science, and engineering early college public charter high school with strong partnerships with three local school districts and Utah Valley University (UVU). The partners work together to address education issues and to provide a quality education for students. The university provides access to on-campus regular college classes as well as concurrent enrollment college classes taught by master level high school instructors in the high school building. The local districts provide mailing lists, administrative advice, and purchasing services to the charter high school. Each partner provides one school representative and four parents to sit on the governing board of UCAS. The strong partnerships forged between educational institutions provide students with options and opportunities to fit their unique needs.

## MOTIVATION

Utah's early college high schools began with a meeting between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and former Utah Governor Scott Leavitt while the airport was closed during a winter snow storm in Salt Lake City. They saw a need to establish small schools located on the state college campuses to meet the needs of academically prepared high school students. Three schools opened using three different models. A year later, UVU's president met with the three local superintendents to determine if such a school could benefit students in Utah County. The goals for the school included providing an low-cost educational option for academically prepared high school students who were interested in moving directly to college level work; exploring ways to make the transition to college more successful; developing a critical core of high-performing students in math, science, and engineering; and helping minority, low-income, and first generation students go to college.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

UVU—with support from the governor's office—initiated the original conversations regarding an early college high school. The three Utah County superintendents agreed to the concept and selected the school's principal. The principal met with state and district leaders and worked to receive a grant from the Gates Foundation.

The school staff met with all the education partners to determine the type and extent of the partnership that could exist between the entities. A "Memo of Understanding" (MOU) was developed jointly for each partner. The MOU was accepted and signed by each superintendent, principal, or university president. Some of the partnerships are very close, while others are more distant. Each is unique for the specific district. Each partner is asked to provide a representative to serve on the UCAS Board of Trustees. This creates a link between partners, gives the districts a hand in management decisions, and ensures that communication flows between the organizations. This has worked very well and has not limited the creativity of the school.

Each year, UCAS hosts a "Report to the Partnership" luncheon for all participants. Success stories and statistics are shared, input is received, and relationships are discussed at the meeting.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The Utah Early College Academy demonstrates what can happen when innovative and committed educators bravely cross territorial boundaries and work together for the good of students. UCAS was recognized by U.S. News and World Report magazine as one of America's Best High Schools.

Eighty percent of the graduating classes of 2007 and 2008, and 90 percent of the class of 2009, earned their associate's degrees from UVU.

## MAKING IT LAST

The partnerships have evolved over time. Based on the experience of UCAS, honest and open communications is the most critical element in the success of educational partnerships. A high level of trust develops as the parties work together toward common goals. If the parties trust each other and are able to talk to each other, they will work to overcome the differences that occur.

## CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT



Greg Brown, *The Graham Family of Schools* and  
Mark Real, *KidsOhio.org*

UCAS is planning to continue these relationships for many years. The school anticipates that the MOA may need to be modified periodically, depending on changed circumstances. As long as the partnerships are win-win, UCAS believes that they will continue.

Based on national reports, it appears that the two greatest dangers to a continuing mutually beneficial relationship between districts and charters are changing personnel and politics. If a significant change in personnel or policy occurs in either partner then the MOU may need to be renegotiated. State or national policy changes may put charters and districts in an adversarial role. This would strain the relationship and make it more difficult to succeed.

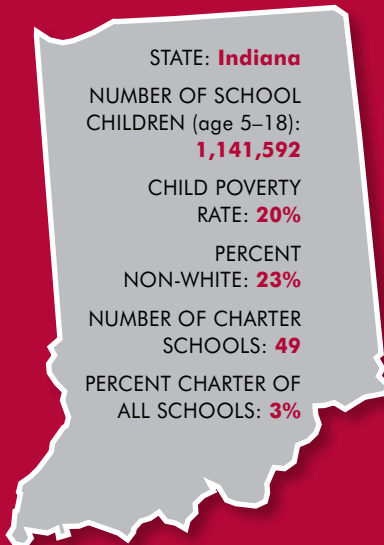
Each district partner donates the time of an administrator to attend and participate in UCAS Board meeting once a month for one or two hours. The other services provided have either shared costs or are part of an informal give-and-take where funds are not exchanged. No district funds are used by UCAS.

While UVU does not directly spend money on UCAS, they are leasing classrooms to UCAS for less than market rate. The university has been willing to work with UCAS because of the benefit that they see in having a core of prepared new students in their math, science, and pre-engineering classes. The cost associated with any special project such as electrical wiring for a computer lab is covered by UCAS.

**LOCATION:**  
Indiana

**STRAND:**  
Conditions for Learning

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Hoosier Academies



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**  
Mr. Lynn Black, *Head of Schools*  
Hoosier Academies  
2855 N. Franklin Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46219  
(317) 495-6494  
lblack@k12.com

# An Uncommon Partnership: Hoosier Academies Virtual and Hybrid Schools, Indiana Department of Education and Indiana Parents

## SUMMARY

A number of organizations—including the Indiana Department of Education; Ball State University; the Indiana Public Charter School Association; K12, Inc., and the Hoosier Academies Learning Coaches (parents)—are working together to create a single, statewide virtual charter school. These organizations also designed a “Family Accountability Plan” to spell out specific expectations for students and their families.

## MOTIVATION

This practice was motivated by the recognition among the partners that the most efficient way to serve Indiana students via an online charter school was through a single virtual school.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

The Indiana Legislature authorized a two-year virtual pilot school program and selected Hoosier Academies as the pilot school for the first year of the program. Critical to Hoosier’s being chosen was its hybrid or flex model, which utilizes online learning at home—with a parent as the teacher—as the primary method of instruction, but also includes a significant amount of instruction in a brick and mortar environment. This model has allowed Hoosier to work closely with the Indiana Department of Education to improve its school model and to develop best practices that can be utilized by the DOE throughout the state.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The Hoosier Academy is an exciting development in education reform in Indiana, not just for bringing the option of a high quality, free, online and brick and mortar hybrid education to students and parents, but also for bringing together a partnership of educational professionals

## HOOSIER ACADEMIES FAMILY ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN 2010-11

### ON-BOARDING AND TRAINING

Learning coach (i.e., parent) and student are expected to attend parent orientation. The family accrues points—essentially demerits—for failing to attend. 2 points for missing.

### ATTENDANCE, PROGRESS, AND WORK SAMPLES

Benchmarks are set for attendance at Learning Center (i.e., brick and mortar) and for Virtual attendance; for being on-time on live-attendance days and home days; and for making satisfactory weekly progress in math and language arts instruction. Families accrue points for failing to meet these benchmarks. 1 point for each incident of non-compliance.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Parents attend in-person or call-in conferences as scheduled by teachers. The family accrues points for failure to attend. 2 points for missing.

### SCHOOL AND STATE REQUIRED TESTING

In both Fall and Spring, students must complete the four content areas (math, reading, language arts and science) of the Scantron “Performance Series” and the NWEA within set deadlines (3 points for each missed requirement); students must also complete ISTEP+Applied Skills and ISTEP+Multiple Choice (five points for each missed requirement.)

committed to making this a success. Student needs are being met, and the state is advancing knowledge on delivering education in new formats. The Parent Accountability Plan will inform educational practitioners on how to set expectations and areas of responsibilities that lead to successful school and family partnerships.

Hoosier’s curriculum meets or exceeds Indiana state standards, and Academy students participate in all state diagnostic, achievement, and standardized testing, as do all other public school students. Students are expected to participate in five hours of instruction each day, and attendance is closely monitored. Interventions are enacted after twenty-five lost learning hours, and students may be reported truant to the home district after fifty lost learning hours if parents remain uncooperative in rectifying the problem. Enrollment was 295 students the first year (2008-2009) and 425 the second year (2009-2010). From 2008-2009 to 2009-2010, the percentage of students passing math assessments increased from 69 to 80 percent, and English assessments from 74 to 81 percent, and both schools have posted better than average growth for each of their two years of operation.

## MAKING IT LAST

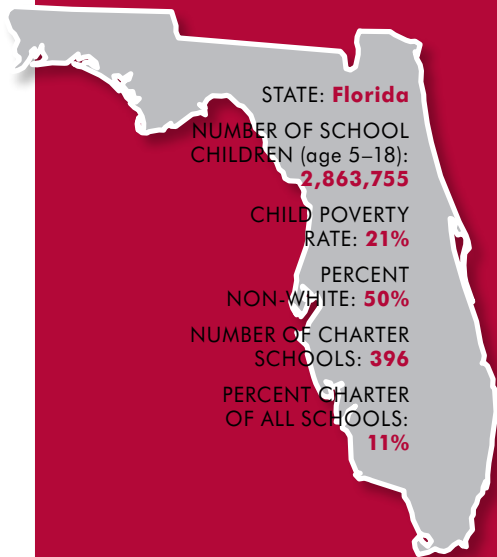
Hoosier expects to implement the plan again for the 2010-2011 school year. Collaborating with parents through the Family Accountability Plan increases the chances of parents being fully engaged in their children’s education and thereby improves student achievement. Parents who are not fully committed are removed from the program.



**LOCATION:**  
Temple Terrace, Florida

**STRAND:**  
Operational Efficiencies and Communications

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Hillsborough County Charter and District Schools



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**  
Cametra L. Edwards, Ph.D., *Principal*  
Village of Excellence Academy  
8718 N. 46th Street  
Tampa, FL 33617  
(813) 988-8632  
(813) 983-0683 fax

# What's Best for Kids: The Hillsborough County Public and Charter School Advisory Council

## SUMMARY

The superintendent of Hillsborough County School District—the eighth largest in the nation—created the Charter School Advisory Council (CSAC) in order to provide the best education to all students. Top officials from the district and Charter School Leaders-FL (an operator group) meet monthly to address and solve issues. The council adopted a simple but profound mantra: to place the best interests of children ahead of political agendas or desires for control and autonomy. The council has helped shift a once-hostile climate to a community working together to serve students. This collaborative has already dramatically improved communication between charters and the district while allowing them to reap the benefits of sharing resources and expertise.

## MOTIVATION

The district superintendent initiated CSAC because of the need for close collaboration and partnership between district and charter schools in the county in order to provide the best education for all students.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

CSAC consists of the executive committee from the Charter School Leaders-FL (CSL-FL), a charter school operator group, and top officials from every department of Hillsborough County Public Schools. CSAC holds monthly meetings and prepares agendas ahead of time. Members of the council can address many issues and concerns at these meetings because the appropriate official from every department is present. Further, when an issue requires follow-up, members of the council work with their own department to provide a timely resolution, and they report to the council via e-mail or in-person at the next meeting. The district staff also brings concerns to the executive committee, who then work with charter school operators



*Hillsborough county students hard at work.*

to address those concerns. The ultimate focus of all council meetings is working together to create the best learning environment for all children in Hillsborough County.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

CSAC has made an impact in many areas of education in Hillsborough County. Examples of outcomes include that the council has helped county schools—both district and charter—to leverage resources, improve professional/ staff development, and facilitate improvement in underperforming schools.

CSAC can point to many concrete examples of the council's impact. To name only one example, district schools have made scanning equipment available to charter schools. As a result, these charter schools now have data systems available to implement a proven continuous-improvement model called The Achievement Series, and district schools have provided training to charter schools in implementing this program.

Also, CSAC has opened the door for charter and district schools to continue their collaboration by sharing resources and expertise. Other charter and district schools throughout the state have taken notice, requesting that Hillsborough personnel share their expertise by serving on state panels and by delivering joint presentations between district and charter schools at state and local conferences. Hillsborough has experienced a thirty percent increase in requests for support from others throughout the state. Similarly, the CSL-FL leadership has received double its usual requests for assistance.

## MAKING IT LAST

CSAC continues to meet monthly to facilitate communication, project management, problem solving, and innovation in district-charter partnerships. These regular meetings have evolved into a best practice, with the goal of improving school performance, operational efficiency, and student learning. The mutual respect and tolerance of diverging viewpoints underlying these relationships helps encourage innovative thinking and continued participation.

A challenge to this collaboration is uncertainty over whether the political climate will continue to be supportive of school choice in general and charter schools in particular. External forces affecting the collaboration are ever-changing and must be confronted on a continuing basis.

As with most collaborations, funding is also a challenge. Specific funds are not available to support the initiative. Therefore, charter school personnel donate approximately five percent of their work time to activities related to operating and participating in the council. In dollars, this work amounts to nearly \$50,000 annually. The district offsets these costs through pass-through per-pupil funding from the state department of education.

# Tri-City Alternative Chemistry Curriculum Project

## LOCATION:

Midland, Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan

## STRAND:

Curriculum and Instruction

## CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:

Windover High School

Bay Arenac Community High School

Omni Adult and Alternative Education

## SUMMARY

Schools serving at-risk students are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to science education. They face challenges that mainstream schools may not, often lacking funds to supply needed classroom equipment and materials, curriculum, and capacity. But the students that attend such schools are in dire need of scientific knowledge, and they deserve a chance to learn about science careers.

This best practice demonstrates how non-mainstream high schools serving non-traditional, at-risk students, can successfully partner to meet shared needs. Working with the American Chemical Society and various foundations, three alternative high schools participate in a program that brings resources to the schools, including laboratories, equipment, textbooks, and a curriculum aligned with the state goals and targeting alternative students. By the end of the 2009-10 school year, 110 students had earned chemistry credit and a certificate from the American Chemical Society acknowledging their achievement.

## MOTIVATION

To increase academic rigor for all students, the Michigan Department of Education mandated the teaching of chemistry or physics in all Michigan high schools. Small schools and schools serving at-risk students were at a distinct disadvantage—having never offered these courses, they lacked funds to supply needed classroom equipment and materials, curriculum, and capacity. A local member of the American Chemical Society (ACS) took the lead to get the ACS to work with local schools and other organizations to develop and implement an chemistry program for alternative students.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

The project began in the spring of 2008. John Blizzard, the owner of a science research firm and the current chair of the Midland Section of the American Chemistry Society, decided he wanted to expand and improve chemistry education in area schools. He initiated contact with teachers and school administrators representing three different demographic and geographic locations. He then established partnerships with Dow Corning Corporation and two foundations to finance the implementation of a chemistry program that balanced the needs of students and the rigor of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, the state's graduation requirements.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

This collaboration is ongoing. The goal of the Tri-City Alternative Chemistry Curriculum Project is not merely to enable students to meet a graduation requirement, but to prepare students for science careers and to produce science-informed citizens.

Another goal of the project is to create a program that can be replicated by other schools. The curriculum can also be adapted to serve other students, such as youth in correction facilities and other settings where chemistry knowledge is lacking, but greatly needed to prepare students for future success.

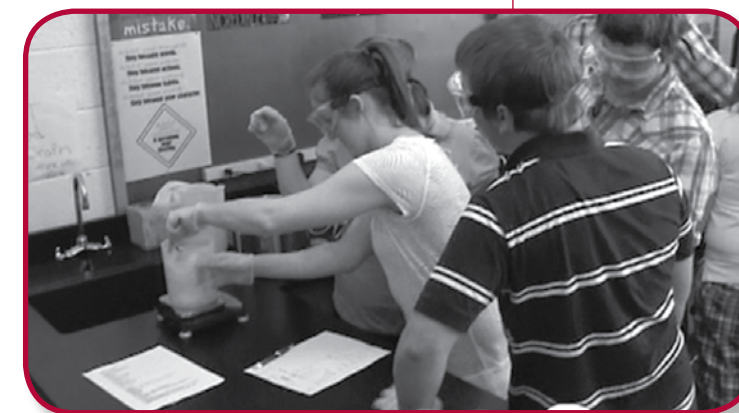
The organizers are in the process of refining the curriculum to publish a teacher resource to help other schools and organizations replicate the model.

## MAKING IT LAST

Resources needed to sustain this project are continued financial support and release time for teachers to collaborate. The most important tool making this collaboration a success is the fact that the group members have a common goal and vision. Participants are passionate about seeing these students graduate with chemistry knowledge and ensuring that teachers have the resources to see that this vision becomes a reality.

A major challenge was finding funding and supplies to initiate and sustain the project. This need was met by local community foundations donating funds through grants.

Another challenge was creating curriculum to meet the needs of alternative students. ACS scientists provided mentorship to the teachers involved.



*Tri-City Alternative Chemistry Curriculum Project students.*

STATE: **Michigan**

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **1,764,672**

CHILD POVERTY RATE: **23%**

PERCENT NON-WHITE: **29%**

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **232**

PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **6%**

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Nancy Vossen

Windover High School

32 S. Homer Road  
Midland, MI 48640

(989) 832-0852

Nancy@Windover.org

# Value-Added Alternative Energy

**LOCATION:**  
McGuffey, Ohio

**STRAND:**  
Facilities & Curriculum and Instruction

**CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:**  
Upper Scioto School District  
Contiguous Districts  
Upper Scioto Wind Academy

## SUMMARY

The Wind/Energy Academy is a charter school that brings together the efforts of seven school districts, as well as Rhodes State College, Ohio Northern University and the University of Northwestern Ohio, to provide students of all ages with knowledge and skills directly transferable to the job, while also saving the school district money. Students at the Wind/Energy Academy not only learn about wind and solar energy, but they also monitor the wind turbines and observe how energy is being provided for the school in a 4,000 square foot, state-of-the-art Green Lab. The lab is also provides career-technical and workforce training to displaced adults.

STATE: **Ohio**  
NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18): **1,986,627**  
CHILD POVERTY RATE: **22%**  
PERCENT NON-WHITE: **23%**  
NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: **327**  
PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: **9%**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**  
Wind/Energy Academy Staff  
Upper Scioto Wind Academy  
P.O. Box 305  
McGuffey, OH 45859  
(419) 757-0149



Value Added Alternative Energy Presentation

## MOTIVATION

Economic development was sorely needed in the area. Research found that the district is situated in one of the best wind resource areas in the state and had 640 acres of land, which could be used for clean energy production.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

This project began as a response to economic development issues.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

The Wind/Energy Academy made history by hosting the largest wind power project on a K-12 campus. Working with other district schools that have solar panels, the combined efforts of all the schools met nearly half of the district's energy needs, and they have made the Upper Scioto Valley School District the first in the nation to be powered by both wind and sun.

An additional 200 wind generators will be built on adjoining property owned by Upper Scioto Valley Schools. The Academy operates a website where anyone can access real-time energy production data on the turbines: <http://northernpower.kiosk-view.com/usv>.

The school is also investigating the ability to harness energy from Algae and has developed Alternative Energy curriculum with several of the area colleges and universities. In addition to preparing Academy students, the Green Lab at the school also has established partnerships with the Hardin County Jobs and Family Services and the regional Community Action Agency to provide workforce training to adults.

## MAKING IT LAST

The program remains operational as the fully-developed and tested alternative energy program is implemented. By providing career-tech and potential post-secondary course work, as well as adult college credit and green energy training for adults, the collaboration can certainly grow. Fiscal constraints, however, cause concerns while the school awaits the potential of the wind farm in the next two years. Despite these fiscal concerns, the Academy remains forward-looking, planning to increase alternative energy course offerings and increase income from outside alternative energy projects (specifically, a wind farm); build additional business and industry partnerships to create more opportunities for student internships, and job training and career options for both students and community members.



## WHY IS THIS PRACTICE UNIQUE?

- Interdisciplinary alternative energy-focused curriculum integrated K-12 to increase understanding of the new energy revolution
- Career-Tech programs available to students in alternative energy production and distribution with land lab on campus and college course credit options
- Expand occupational opportunities for students and community members through exposure to and training in alternative energy through post-graduate educational offerings (adult education)

# Moving Beyond Co-Locating to Co-Operating Campuses

## LOCATION:

Los Angeles, CA

## STRAND:

Facilities

## CHARTER AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVOLVED:

Synergy Charter Academy  
(a Synergy Academies school)

Quincy Jones Elementary School  
(a Los Angeles Unified School District school)

## STATE:

California

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 5–18):  
6,659,871

CHILD POVERTY RATE: 20%

PERCENT NON-WHITE: 70%

NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS: 747

PERCENT CHARTER OF ALL SCHOOLS: 8%

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Meg Palisoc, Teacher, Co-Founder,  
and Chief Executive Officer

Synergy Academies

P.O. Box 78638  
Los Angeles, CA 90016

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megpalisoc@gmail.com

www.WeAreSynergy.org

## SUMMARY

In fall 2010, through the efforts of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Synergy Academies, a district school and a charter school began to co-operate an entire school campus. This marks the first partnership between a district and charter school in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) where the two schools are both intentionally working together to co-operate a school campus and not just co-locate on it. The purpose of this partnership is to strengthen students' overall academic achievement at both schools by working together and sharing best practices. Under this model, Synergy Charter Academy and Quincy Jones Elementary School students have lunch and recess together, and joint staff meetings and parent meetings are held throughout the year. This partnership is just getting under way but offers exciting collaborative opportunities and great promise to students of Synergy Academies and the Los Angeles Unified School District.

## MOTIVATION

Synergy was started by former LAUSD teacher. It was always Synergy's founders' goal to have a system-wide impact by sharing its best practices with LAUSD. The goal was for all teachers and students, regardless of which type of school they attended, to experience and attain academic success. Prior to this collaboration, Synergy Charter Academy had spent the last six years in a difficult joint-use arrangement, under which Synergy students and staff had to pack up their classrooms every week in order for its lessor to utilize the rooms in the evenings and on weekends. Despite these facilities challenges, Synergy students' academic achievements catapulted from among the bottom ten percent of all students statewide to among the top ten percent of all students statewide.

Meanwhile, LAUSD was building a new elementary school within five hundred feet of Synergy's leased facilities. LAUSD's leaders had visited Synergy's leased facilities and witnessed the academic gains Synergy was able to obtain in challenging facilities. Both Synergy's and LAUSD's leaders decided to collaborate together at the new school campus in order to help all students at both schools succeed academically.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

The idea for the co-operatively-run campus model originated five years ago when Meg Palisoc—the co-founder and chief executive officer of Synergy—began meeting annually with Carmen Schroeder, LAUSD Local District 5 (LD 5) Superintendent. They discussed how Synergy and LAUSD could collaboratively operate a brand new LAUSD campus (Central Region Elementary School 17, later named Quincy Jones Elementary School) that was scheduled to open in the fall 2010. The purpose of this collaboration was to blend LAUSD's expertise in building new facilities with Synergy's expertise in operating a high-performing urban school.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

This co-operative is still in the start-up phase. Currently, both schools have the same bell schedule where students and staff have recess and lunch at the same times. The schools have held several staff meetings and parent meetings together. They have also had joint safety drills on campus. In the future, both schools would like to spend more time on sharing best practices with each other. While the school leaders have a strong positive relationship, it will take time for the teachers and support staff to get to know each other. Overall, both schools are thriving and moving forward with being a national model for how to collaborate together on the same campus.

Synergy is working with other LAUSD teachers to replicate this co-operative model at the middle school and high school levels in South Los Angeles via LAUSD's Public School Choice process. If Synergy and LAUSD are able to replicate this model at the middle school and high school levels, then over 4,000 students in grades k-12 will be affected by this collaborative model within the next one to two years.

## MAKING IT LAST

The key to making collaboration last is school leadership. The school leaders set the tone for the rest of the staff regarding whether there is a true partnership taking place between the district school and the charter school.

One challenge to forming this collaboration was that there was no money available to support this process. Thus, both Synergy and LAUSD had to use their existing resources, and staff from both schools put in significant over-time. Ideally, it would be helpful if each school had additional funds to pay for a full time staff member to oversee the collaboration process for the first few years.

Also, since both schools moved into a new facility together, numerous details had to be taken care of, including ordering furniture and equipment; testing the equipment in buildings; learning how to operate new systems; and negotiating contracts and agreements. Additionally, it would be helpful if funds were available for new instructional materials, supplies, and textbooks, so that both schools could purchase similar materials in order to learn from each other's best practices and to ensure that one school did not have significantly more resources than the other. Furthermore, funds are now needed to pay for an outside research group to study this collaboration and to track students' achievement data over time.

Another potential challenge is the discrepancy in money and resources between district schools and charter schools. Charter and district schools often have different levels of funding and different expenses.

Finally, the greatest challenge to planning a collaborative high school model has to do with athletics. It is uncertain whether the California Interscholastic Federation will allow students from multiple schools sharing a single campus to compete on the same athletic teams under one high school campus name.

## GATES FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES District-Charter Collaboration Compact

**T**HE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION is committed to ensuring that by 2025, eighty percent of students will graduate high school college-ready. As one element to achieving this goal nationally, school districts and public charter schools must find ways to innovate, share knowledge, and build on each other's strengths in pursuit of a common mission. To that end, the Gates Foundation is supporting a group of cities that are making a real public commitment to change the historically antagonistic relationship between districts and charters and to work together to benefit all students. On December 7, 2010, nine cities—Baltimore, Denver, Hartford, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, New York City, and Rochester—announced compacts between their districts and public charter schools, marking a significant step toward expanding and institutionalizing collaboration in an area that has seen far too much contentiousness.

The compacts developed by these first nine cities represent a bold commitment among district and charter leaders to: (1) find innovative solutions to specific challenges, such as building a pipeline of highly effective teachers or implementing a common enrollment system across all schools; (2) address persistent tensions that impede district-charter collaboration, such as by providing charters equitable access to funding and facilities or by ensuring that charters serve high-needs students, including English language learners and special education students; and (3) share knowledge and best practices among public charter and district schools.

By joining the compact initiative, the district and charter signatories have also committed to replicate high-performing school models and to improve or close down schools that are not effectively serving students, whether the schools are run by a district or charter operator. Cities with a bold compact are eligible for a modest investment from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to advance the goals outlined in their compact; they will also be eligible to apply for a larger, competitive investment through a Request for Proposals in the coming months. A second cohort of cities in the District-Charter Compact initiative will be announced in spring 2011.

For more information, please contact Adam Porsch, *Program Officer*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at [Adam.Porsch@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:Adam.Porsch@gatesfoundation.org) or (206) 709-3120.

**BILL & MELINDA**  
GATES *foundation*

## 2010 conference attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	NAME	ORGANIZATION
Brian Abney	Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc./Ben Davis High School	Edna Chapman	Springfield Academy of Excellence
Alper Akyurek	HSA-Elementary School (Northeast Columbus)	Chris Clarke	Riveredge, LLC
Chad Aldis	School Choice Ohio, Inc	Shannon Clements	Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design
Beth Anderson	Phoenix Charter Academy	Elizabeth Cooley Nelson	Center on Reinventing Public Education
Brian Anderson	Massachusetts Center for Charter Public School Excellence	Donne Copenhaver	Ashland County Community Academy
Geoffrey Baker	New Teacher Center	Tracie Craft	Black Alliance for Educational Options
Clark Baron	Utah County Academy of Sciences	Crystal Craig	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Nikki Baszynski	Moritz Law School/Education Law Society	Heidi Custer	Education First Consulting
Parker Baxter	Denver Public Schools	Deborah Delisle	Ohio Department of Education
Darren Beck	Utah Association for Public Charter Schools	Noemi Donoso	Denver Public Schools
Janet Begin	Hill View Montessori Charter Public School	David Dresslar	CELL/University of Indianapolis
Keith Bell	Columbus City Schools	Don Duran	New Mexico Public Education Department, Charters Schools Division
Andrew Benson	KnowledgeWorks	Lisa Duty	KnowledgeWorks
Tom Birmingham	Boston Plan for Excellence	Cametra Edwards	Village of Excellence Academy
Ann Bischoff	KidsOhio.org	Teresa Elliott	Texas Charter Schools Association
Lynn Black	Hoosier Academies	Jane Ellis	Self-Help
Amy Black	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools	Pieter Elmendorf	Dohn Community
Mary Bogle	DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative	Cheryl Emrich	Portage County Educational Service Center
Marcia Bowser	Upper Scioto Wind/Energy Academy	Matt Erickson	Office of Budget and Management
James Bowser	Upper Scioto Wind/Energy Academy	Jennifer Ervin	Upper Scioto Wind/Energy Academy
John Bray	Charter School Center	George Espy	Ohio Grantmakers Forum
Greg Brown	The Graham School	Lisa Farmer Cole	Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Jennifer Brzoski	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools	Jeffrey Flores	Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design
Joseph Buckalew	Life Skills Center of Columbus North	Christine Fowler-Mack	Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Steve Burigana	Resource Network Inc.	Deborah Franklin	Mansfield Elective Academy
Kelly Cadman	Georgia Charter School Association	Sarah Friedman	The Learning Community
Roseann Canfora	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	Heather Gardner	MAPSA
P.R. Casey	Ohio Department of Education	Rebecca Gau	Arizona Charter Schools Association
Johanna Caslander	Discovery Charter School	Patrick Gavin	Friendship Public Charter School
Darlene Chambers	Ohio Council of Community Schools	Thaly Germain	New Leaders for New Schools
		Jessie Gerson-Niedler	Prospect Hill Academy Charter School
		Jeremy Giller	The Learning Community

# 2010 conference attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Danny Goldberg	Wisconsin Charter Schools Association
Andrea Goldwater	Hoosier Academies
Nabila Goma	Bridge Academy of Ohio
Christina Grant	Teach For America
Dannie Greene	Ohio State Board of Education
Janet Grigg	Oklahoma Charter School Association
Stephanie Groce	Columbus City Schools
Rep. Cheryl Grossman	Ohio House of Representatives
Lisa Grover	New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools
Patricia Hanna	The Ohio State University, Project KNOTtT
David Hansen	National Alliance for Charter School Authorizers
Roger Harris	Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
Adrienne Hatten	Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
Kaaren Heikes	The Northwest Center for Educational Options
John Helmholdt	Grand Rapids Public Schools
Stephanie Henry	Henry Design, Inc.
Caroline Hill	E.L. Haynes High School
Heather Hill	The Ohio State University, School of Teaching & Learning
Kerry Hill	Focus Learning Academy of Southwestern Columbus
Jenna Hodgens	Hillsborough County Public Schools
Joni Hoffman	Ohio Department of Education, Office of Community Schools
Mary Hopmann	KidsOhio.org
Patricia Hughes	Buckeye Community Hope Foundation
Keisha Hunley-Jenkins	KidsOhio.org
Nick Joch	Thomas B. Fordham Institute
Ryan Jolley	OSU Law
Cindy Kicinski	Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc./Indianapolis Metropolitan Charter High School
Stephanie Klupinski	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Mike Kooi	Florida Department of Education
H. Thomas Kose	Noble Academy-Cleveland
Raymond Lambert	Ohio Connections Academy, Inc.

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Rep. Peggy Lehner	Ohio House of Representatives
Bill Leibensperger	Ohio Education Association
Eileen Liponis	New Hampshire Chartered Public School Association
Marianne Lombardo	Ohio Alliance of Public Charter Schools
Nancy London	Hill View Montessori
Richard Lukich	Constellation Schools LLC
Julie Lundgren	Lakes International Language Academy
Kathleen Madden	Office of Community Schools
Doug Mangen	Mangen & Associates
Melissa Martyr-Wagner	Lakes International Language Academy
Anne McClellan	YES Prep
Carey McDonald	Ohio Department of Education
Lauren McGarity	WinWin Academy
Sharon McGraw	Horizon Science Academy Cleveland
Eileen Meers	The Graham School
Wade Melton	Hardin County Juvenile Court
James Merriman	New York City Charter School Center
Mark Michael	Ohio Department of Education
Jensie Miksich	Opiquo
Chad Monahan	Educational Resource Consultants of Ohio
Robert Moyer	Bay-Arenac Community High School
Ann Mullin	The George Gund Foundation
Kim Murnieks	Ohio Department of Education
Gary Naeyaert	Michigan Association of Public School Academies
Bill Nelson	Ohio Department of Education
Emily Nemeth	Ohio Department of Education
Jennie Niles	E.L. Haynes School
Tina Nilson-Hodges	New Roots Charter School
Jeff Noel	FOCUS (Friends of Choice in Urban Schools)
Sam Obenshain	New Mexico Public Education Department/Charter School Division
Eric Paisner	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Meg Palisoc	Synergy Academies
Cheryl Parchia	Scholarts Preparatory School

# 2010 conference attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Andrew Pasquinilli	Life Skills Center of Southeast Columbus
Nancy Paulu	United States Department of Education
Sarah Pechan	School Choice Ohio
Ron Pepple	Striving To Engage Potential
Sylvia Perez	The Cleveland Foundation
Nancy Pettigrew	The Healthy Workplace, Ltd.
Ed Pfeiffer	Akron Digital Academy
Adam Porsch	The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Stacie Porter-Bilger	Hoosier Academy K-8 Learning Center
Paul Preston	Ohio Department of Education-Office of Community Schools
Mark Real	KidsOhio.org
Dennis Reardon	State Board of Education
Michelle Reed	Wright State University
Gloria Redding	Ohio Department of Education
Celia Ripke	Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
Angela Ritchie	Monte del Sol Charter School
Tony Roberts	Georgia Charter Schools Association
DeEdward Robinson	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Naomi Rubin DeVeaux	Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
Terry Ryan	Thomas B. Fordham Institute
Irasema Salcido	Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy
Cheri Shannon	Missouri Charter Public School Association
Michael Sharpe	Connecticut Charter Schools Network
Karen Shepherd	Romig Road Community School
David Shirley	Interactive Media & Construction Academy
Nancy Shreder-Vossen	Windover High School
William Sims	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Jennifer Sims	K12 Inc.
Denis Smith	Ohio Department of Education, Office of Community Schools
Peter Spadafore	Michigan Association of School Boards

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Susan Stagner	Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Scott Stephens	Catalyst Ohio
Frank Stoy	Lucas County ESC
Mary Ann Sullivan	CELL/University of Indianapolis
Kenneth Surratt	CREDO/Stanford University
Kristin Sutton	Ohio House of Representatives
John Taracko	Ohio Department of Education, Office of Community Schools
Steve Tate	Ohio Department of Education, Office of Community Schools
Monique Taylor	Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
Sue Taylor	Ohio Federation of Teachers
Ruth Teeters	Virtual Community School of Ohio
LaShawn Terrell	Akron Digital Academy
Dan Thoene	High Tech Middle School
Gary Timko	Community Research Partners
Michele Timmons	Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center
Dr. Anna Trevino	Utah County Academy of Sciences
Piet van Lier	Policy Matters Ohio
Diane Vance	Charyl Stockwell Academy and CS Partners
Jason Wall	Ohio Council of Community School
Gisele Watson-James	Par Excellence Academy
Perry White	Citizens' Academy
Helen Williams	The Cleveland Foundation
Cindy Wilson	Aurora Academy
Charlie Wilson	The Moritz College of Law at the Ohio State University
Sherman Woodard	Ben Davis High School
Michelle Wright	New Roots Charter School
Jinhui Xu	Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
John Zitzner	Friends of E-Prep Schools

For more information regarding the conference,  
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