



Capital Schools Named One of Nation's Top 20 Most Promising Startup Companies

*Autism Private School Company
Only Startup in Washington, DC Area to Make the List*

Highlights

- *Venture Capital Journal* honors Capital Schools as one of the nation's "Top 20 Most Promising Startups" (#14 out of over 1,200 companies evaluated)
- Capital Schools was the only Washington, DC area company to make the list, which was dominated by Silicon Valley technology companies
- Washington, DC is a unique "cluster" for education innovation and research
- Company manages and operates private schools for children with autism, as The Auburn School
- Founder is successful and award-winning educational and social entrepreneur
- Currently, the CDC estimates 1 in 110 children are on the autism spectrum
- April is National Autism Awareness Month

WASHINGTON, DC, April 6, 2010 – Today, Capital Schools, Inc. announced it had been honored by *Venture Capital Journal* as one of the nation's Top 20 Most Promising Startups. Capital Schools was the only Washington, DC area company to make the list, ranking 14th overall. While most of the companies represented were Silicon Valley technology companies, Capital Schools was selected for its unique focus on schools and educational programs for students with autism. The company's mission is to create national model schools and educational programs for children with autism spectrum disorder and other specialized learning needs. Its first school, The Auburn School, opened last fall in Herndon, VA. New campuses are planned for Montgomery County and Baltimore, MD. The company's long-term plans include national replication.

"We are very honored to receive this recognition," said company founder, Erik Heyer. "Our inclusion on the list of the nation's Top 20 most promising new companies is a significant acknowledgement of the national importance of our mission, and of the rapidly growing need to create educational programs for children on the autism spectrum. Our team is inspired and encouraged by this and we look forward to continuing our work to help a truly gifted group of children achieve their full potential."

In selecting companies for the list, *Venture Capital Journal* carefully evaluated over 1,200 startups nationwide. Companies were evaluated over several months based on factors including quality of the management team and potential market size. The review team noted the significant and growing need for Capital Schools' programs. Read more on the process from the VJC editor's blog here: <http://www.pehub.com/67715/vcj-20-most-promising-startups-the-full-list/>.

Capital Schools was intentionally located in the Washington, DC area to draw upon the region's unique, high density cluster of education leaders, researchers, academic institutions, associations, funders, and national model schools. The company is backed by Novak Biddle Venture Partners of Bethesda, MD, one of the few venture capital firms nationally with a significant track record in education investing. Novak Biddle was an early investor in educational technology leader Blackboard Inc. and also backed SpectrumK12, a CODiE award-winning provider of special education software solutions and professional development.

Nationally, incidence rates of autism have been rising sharply over the past decade. The Center for Disease Control currently estimates that 1 in 110 children are on the autism spectrum. Given the rapid increase, high quality educational options for students with autism and related challenges are in very short supply.

The Auburn School program features an individualized educational program supporting both social skills and academic development. It features small class sizes; research-based instructional methodologies; a highly-trained faculty and staff; and an educational environment designed to meet the needs of bright students with challenges in social skills and communication.

About Capital Schools

Our mission is to create national model schools and programs for children with autism spectrum disorder and other specialized learning needs. As an organization, we are committed to the highest standards of educational excellence. Our founding team includes experienced and award-winning national leaders in education, social entrepreneurship and business. Our first school, The Auburn School, was established in September 2009. We will be replicating The Auburn School model regionally, and nationally over time. We will also be developing new school models to meet the needs of similar populations. For further information, please call (202) 715-3720, or visit www.capitalschools.org. For more information on The Auburn School, please visit www.theauburnschool.org.

About Novak Biddle Venture Partners

Novak Biddle Venture Partners is a leading early stage venture capital firm focused on unique, cutting-edge investments in the Eastern United States, as well as targeted opportunities nationwide. With \$580 million under management, Novak Biddle operates five venture funds that currently provide equity financing and management assistance to 42 portfolio companies. Novak Biddle continues to seek business situations where the combination of ideas, dollars, experience, and relationships can create long term, sustainable value. A sampling of companies funded by Novak Biddle include: RFID first-mover Matrics, voice over IP trailblazer Telogy, education technology leader Blackboard Inc., SpectrumK12 and intelligent video surveillance pioneer ObjectVideo. For more information, visit www.novakbiddle.com.

###