

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: March 17, 2011

**Media Contacts:**

New Schools for New Orleans:

Jennifer Conway

Communications Director

504-274-3620, [jennifer@nsno.org](mailto:jennifer@nsno.org)

Recovery School District:

Tammy Barney

Executive Director for Communications and Outreach

504-373-6200 x20088, [tammy.barney@rsdla.net](mailto:tammy.barney@rsdla.net)

**DIVERSE SET OF NEW ORLEANS CHARTER SCHOOLS DEMONSTRATE  
SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

*Assessment will be used as part of selection criteria to determine i3 application and award eligibility for 2011 and 2012 school openings.*

*NEW ORLEANS, La.* – A new assessment prepared by CREDO (Center for Research on Education Outcomes) and used to determine i3 eligibility lists 23 charter schools in New Orleans that demonstrate significantly better results in math and/or reading than their traditional district-run school counterparts.

The assessment chronicles CREDO’s rigorous evaluation of charter schools’ “effect size,” a measure of a school’s ability to impact student learning over a three-year period. New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) and the Recovery School District (RSD) will use these effect size scores, in conjunction with other stringent criteria, to award 2011 School Opening Investing in Innovation (i3) grants next month. The i3 grants will fund charter schools to assume management of and turn around academically unacceptable New Orleans schools. (See “The New Orleans i3 Project: 2011 and 2012 Award Eligibility and Selection Criteria” for details.)

“By evaluating individual student growth at a given school, we have data to better understand which schools have demonstrated an ability to bring New Orleans students up to or above grade level consistently,” said Neerav Kingsland, chief strategy officer, NSNO. “At this point, the city has made enormous progress. We’re seeing charter schools with a variety of approaches and philosophies having a significant impact on student learning. But there is still a need to provide opportunity for high-performing schools to turn around the remaining lower achieving ones. This selection process allows us to identify schools each year that are both qualified and ready to do that.”

The current assessment also will be used to determine i3 application eligibility for 2012 School Openings:

- Only charter school operators that achieve a statistically significant effect size of .1 or higher in reading or math (with neither reading nor math being statistically significant and negative) are eligible to apply for an i3 award.
- For charter school organizations operating more than one school, ALL schools operated must achieve a statistically significant effect size of .1 or higher in reading or math (with neither reading nor math being statistically significant and negative) for the operator to be eligible to apply for an i3 award.

CREDO will run the school-by-school effect size assessment annually. Each report will include the most recent year’s test scores and will be used as the effect size measure for the next i3 application cycles.

“Sizeable effect sizes mean that, academically, students are growing faster in each grade and making progress toward high school graduation,” said RSD Deputy Superintendent Kevin Guitterrez. “Understanding a school’s current ability to advance students, coupled with a thorough review of leadership qualifications and expansion strategies, provides confidence as we continue to uphold our responsibility as a district to provide strong choices citywide.”

### **Investing in Innovation (i3) Award**

In October 2010, New Schools for New Orleans and the Recovery School District were awarded a \$28 million validation grant by the U.S. Department of Education through the Investing in Innovation competition, and secured the required \$5.6 million in matching funds. The award will fund a five-year project called “Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model.” The goal is to expand New Orleans’ innovative charter model citywide, and then apply the model to other struggling urban school districts. The heart of the New Orleans i3 Project involves creating a permanent infrastructure to turn around the bottom five percent of academically unacceptable schools in New Orleans using high-performing charter management organizations. The project will begin in the 2011-12 school year and then replicate the New Orleans model in Memphis and Nashville, TN.

### **New Schools for New Orleans**

New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and developing the people, resources and environment necessary to achieve excellent public schools for every child in New Orleans. Founded in April 2006, NSNO is committed to building and maintaining a high performing system of schools. Specifically, NSNO has helped drive dramatic student achievement gains in New Orleans in three key ways: recruiting, placing and/or developing quality teachers and principals in partnership with proven providers; maintaining a strategic charter development strategy that has evolved from launching and supporting new open enrollment charter schools to working with operators and service providers to expand successful operators; and, collaborating a variety of stakeholders to support a performance-driven environment.

### **Recovery School District**

The Recovery School District is a special school district administered by the Louisiana Department of Education. Created by legislation passed in 2003, the RSD’s mission is to provide the supports and interventions necessary to put academically struggling schools on a path toward success. Currently, the RSD includes 22 traditional public schools and 46 public charter schools in New Orleans.

###