



NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 23, 2011

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SECOND ROUND OF i3 AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Second round i3 investments to turn around four schools and together with the first round of awards, ultimately reduce the number of academically unacceptable high schools in the RSD by 50%

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Today New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) and the Recovery School District (RSD) announced the second round of award recipients for the federally funded Investing in Innovation (i3) grant. Collegiate Academies has been awarded \$1.8 million, the Choice Foundation has been awarded \$887,198, and New Orleans College Prep has been designated to receive an award of \$1 million. These awards are tied to the turnaround of four academically unacceptable schools – three high schools and one elementary school in New Orleans. To maintain funding, all i3 award recipients must meet aggressive grant milestones that are designed to monitor ongoing student achievement, growth and expansion readiness. All award winners currently manage open-enrollment charter schools in the city and must commit to maintaining an open-enrollment policy at the schools the i3 awards will fund.

The i3 applicants' ability to impact student academic achievement is measured by effect size, a stringent growth measurement of a school's ability to improve student learning over time. All three organizations achieved the required statistically significant i3 effect size of .1 or higher in Math or Reading (with neither Reading nor Math being statistically significant and negative.) Demonstrating an effect size at this level means that an operator is increasing student learning at a well above average rate consistently over a two-to-three year period. See *list of New Orleans Charter Schools (Open-Enrollment, No Academic Exit Criteria) Eligible to Apply for 2011-12 and 2012-12 i3 Awards based on Effect Size at www.nsno.org.*

"As we continue to strive for excellence citywide, these awards enable us to continue to increase opportunities for more students in New Orleans," said Sarah Newell Usdin, founder and CEO, NSNO. "We have tremendous momentum in the city and must remain committed until every child here attends a school that truly prepares him or her to succeed. The i3 selection process is intentionally rigorous, and all winners must meet ongoing student achievement milestones to maintain funding even after they are selected. This process ensures that we're thoughtfully investing in schools that have demonstrated an ability to dramatically improve academic achievement for all children – including those who have been underserved for years."

John While, RSD superintendent, considers the caliber of the second round i3 applicants to be outstanding. "These operators have risen to meet the challenge of providing a quality education to students," he said. "As our 100-Day planning process continues, these i3 grant recipients serve as models of our core principles: excellence, equity and community. They have met the bar that will be set for all our schools, and must continue to drive up student achievement, provide schools that meet the needs of all students and engage the community in a meaningful way.

The Choice Foundation (**Lafayette Academy–i3 Effect Size .17 Math and .05 Reading**) has been awarded \$887,198 to open a K-8 school in the 2012/13 school year serving at least 400 students that will be tied to the closure of an academically unacceptable elementary school. “We are excited to expand and provide both academic opportunity and comprehensive support for additional students and their families in the city,” said Mickey Landry, principal and headmaster Lafayette Academy. “Our team has proven a commitment to the level of leadership and partnership this work takes and we look forward to continuing those efforts to serve additional communities.”

Collegiate Academies and New Orleans College Prep awards are tied to the turnaround of three academically unacceptable high schools. These, together with the previous i3 award tied to the turn around of Clark High School in the 2011-12 school year by FirstLine Schools, are expected to result in reducing the number of academically unacceptable high schools in the RSD by 50%.

Collegiate Academies (**New Orleans Science and Math Academy (Sci Academy) - i3 Effect Size .11 Math and .13 Reading**) has been granted two awards totaling \$1.8 million to open two high schools tied to the closure of two academically unacceptable high schools. These schools will immediately serve at least 200 high school students in the 2012-13 school year and will grow to serve more than 800 students in 2015. “At Sci Academy, we have demonstrated an ability to remain focused on results for the scholars we serve,” said Ben Marcovitz, founder, school leader and principal New Orleans Science and Math Academy. “Our entire community takes pride in their achievements that have earned us the designation of the top open-enrollment high school in the city for three consecutive years. We look forward to expanding to provide what is working for three times as many families over the next four years.”

New Orleans College Prep (**NOCP-i3 effect size .20 Math and .06 Reading**) has been designated to receive an award of \$1 million to assume the management of and turn around an academically unacceptable high school. Funding for this award is predicated upon NOCP meeting strict, interim student achievement benchmarks starting in January 2012. NOCP has demonstrated significant proficiency in taking all students at all levels throughout the school year and quickly accelerating their academic attainment – resulting in the fifth highest i3 effect size among all RSD charter schools (2007 to 2010). NOCP and the Walter L. Cohen Alumni Association independently have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to demonstrate their intent to partner on the management and turn around of Cohen starting in the 2012-13 school year. This turnaround will immediately serve an additional 125 high school students and expand to serve a total of approximately 500 by 2015. “At New Orleans College Prep, our priority has always been to meet the needs of all students wherever they are and work with them to increase achievement at every level,” said Ben Kleban, founder and director, New Orleans College Prep. “This i3 award will support our continued partnership with Cohen to take on the hard work of turning around that school to provide significantly better opportunity for the students and families currently served.”

With this announcement, NSNO and RSD have made seven i3 grant awards this calendar year. In addition to these four grant awards, three previously awarded operators will turn around schools in the 2011-12 school year. While these awards provide the opportunity to significantly impact the identified needs citywide, i3 applications are submitted and recipients are selected based on the level of quality they can demonstrate without being tied to a specific turnaround site.

The i3 recipients, however, must have an approved charter from the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to operate a school. In a separate process administered by the RSD, school assignment preference is given to operators that receive an i3 grant, demonstrate a community partnership, and receive a recommendation from a BESE-approved third-party evaluator.

This announcement follows an intense selection process. Applicants submitted highly detailed written applications in early May and underwent both existing school site visits and intense leadership team interviews in late May and early June. Areas assessed included: school design, curriculum, instruction,

leadership experience/competencies, organizational structure, staffing, professional development, community engagement, student enrollment/retention, governance, operations and finance.

The New Orleans i3 Project plans to grant up to 19 awards over five years. The intent and purpose of the i3 program is to virtually eliminate academically unacceptable schools in the city by 2016. The next i3 award application period (2012/13 Fall Round) will begin in the fall of 2012. 2012/13 Fall Round applicants must achieve the required i3 effect size including final 2010/11 test scores. NSNO and RSD expect The New Orleans i3 Project evaluator CREDO (The Center for Research on Educational Outcomes at Stanford University) to release this assessment in September 2011.

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 5 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 with a variety of stakeholders to support a performance-driven environment.

Recovery School District

The Recovery School is a statewide 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. In the 2011-12 school year, the RSD will include 15 traditional public schools and 50 public charter schools in New Orleans, as well as 35 schools in other parishes around the state.

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