

August 5, 2010

Press Release

Today the U.S. Department of Education announced a huge win for the city of New Orleans. **New Schools for New Orleans** (NSNO), the **Recovery School District** (RSD) and the **Achievement School District** (ASD) of Tennessee partnered on a successful application to the Investing in Innovation (i3) program of the Department of Education. **The result: a \$28 million dollar grant.** However, all grant recipients must secure a 20 percent match from the private sector to receive their awards – given this requirement, NSNO and its partners will work hard to raise the remaining \$5.6 million over the next month to meet the federal due date of September 8th.

The award will be used to build the capacity to annually turnaround the lowest performing 5% of schools in New Orleans. NSNO Founder and CEO, Sarah Usdin notes that: "This is such a phenomenal outcome for the students in New Orleans. This grant truly puts New Orleans on a path to ensure that all children in our city will receive an excellent education. The vast majority of the grant will flow directly to New Orleans charter schools who are doing the hard work of serving New Orleans students. NSNO is thrilled to be the lead applicant, but this is a citywide effort. This money provides the necessary resources for New Orleanians to band together to ensure that we continue to fight for excellence."

Nationally, there were a total 49 winners out of more than 1600 applicants competing for \$650 million in grants. The highest grants awarded were for up to \$50 million (4 grants). The second highest were for up to \$30 million of which 15 grants were successful, including the grant to New Schools for New Orleans, the Recovery School District and Tennessee's Achievement School District. The competition was intense both in the number of applicants and, according to the Department of Education, in the quality of applicants.

Above all, this is validation of New Orleans' reforms. In making this grant the Federal Department of Education is sending a strong signal that New Orleans is on the cutting edge of national school reform. This grant will go far to solidify our gains, as well as spread the momentum for reform to Nashville and Memphis.