



NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS

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THREE CHARTER SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE INAUGURAL NEW ORLEANS i3 AWARDS

Competitive i3 selection process results in funding of \$2.33 million to turn around academically unacceptable schools in the 2011/2012 School Year

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Today New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) and the Recovery School District (RSD) announced the inaugural slate of i3 award recipients. KIPP New Orleans Schools, FirstLine Schools and Crescent City Schools will receive a total of \$2.33 million to assume management of and turn around three academically unacceptable New Orleans schools. As part of the i3 award process, applications are submitted and recipients are selected based on their potential to serve students in academically unacceptable schools. Specific school assignments are made by the RSD in a separate process.

These first recipients constitute three of up to 19 awards to be given over the next five years. The next i3 award application process will launch in April for the 2012-13 school year.

The announcement follows a rigorous selection process. Applicants submitted highly detailed written applications and underwent intense leadership team interviews. Areas assessed included: school design, curriculum, instruction, leadership experience/competencies, organizational structure, staffing, professional development, community engagement, student enrollment/retention, governance, operations and finance. For existing operators, significant impact on student achievement also was a requirement. The intent and purpose of the i3 program is to turn around the remaining academically unacceptable schools in New Orleans. Over the five-year period, i3 awardees also will be required to undergo periodic reviews at the turnaround school site and meet specific student achievement milestones.

“These awards mark a tremendous step forward in our effort to increase opportunity for all students in New Orleans,” said Sarah Newell Usdin, founder and CEO, NSNO. “The i3 selection process is rigorous because every child deserves to attend a school that truly prepares him or her to succeed. The selection process ensures that we’re expanding our capacity to do this school by school, with operators who’ve demonstrated their ability to impact student achievement at well above average rates.”

RSD Deputy Superintendent Kevin Gutterrez agrees. “The U.S. Department of Education awarded this grant to replicate and sustain the growth of successful models launched under the RSD to turn around low performing schools, and to support governmental partnerships with nongovernmental organizations like New Schools for New Orleans,” Gutterrez said. “These turnarounds are done in a thoughtful manner, giving us the ability to grow and expand local school providers.”

Both FirstLine Schools and KIPP New Orleans Schools currently manage charter schools in the city. They have demonstrated significant growth in student achievement as measured by CREDO’s analysis of effect size (a measure of a school’s ability to consistently improve grade level performance over time). Crescent City Schools, a new operator, devoted meticulous attention to building its leadership team, financial model and school plan. The i3 program accepts new charter operator applicants to ensure continued innovation in

the education reform process.

“It has been exciting to play a part in the dramatic transformation in New Orleans,” said Rhonda Kalifey-Aluise, executive director of KIPP New Orleans Schools. “KIPP New Orleans Schools has demonstrated a commitment to the city and is proud to provide opportunity for additional students as an i3 award recipient. New Orleans continues to lead the nation in education reform, and as a leading charter organization in New Orleans, we recognize the responsibility that entails.”

“Being selected to receive an i3 award supports FirstLine Schools’ commitment to providing great schools for all students and families in New Orleans,” said Jay Altman, CEO of FirstLine Schools. “This is our home. Our entire team is committed to working tirelessly to continue to create and inspire quality public education that is supported by communities across the city now and in the future.”

“As a new operator, receipt of an i3 award ensures that we will have the resources needed to provide life-changing educational experiences for elementary school students,” said Kate Mehok, founder and CEO of Crescent City Schools. “Every child deserves a great school, one that prepares them for high-school, college, and beyond.”

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

Recovery School District

The Recovery School 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 23 traditional public schools and 46 public charter schools in New Orleans.

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