



# Successes, Opportunities, and the Challenges that Lie Ahead

New Schools for New Orleans 2014 Annual Update





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Our mission is to deliver  
on the promise of excellent  
public schools **for every  
child in New Orleans.**

With their high school graduation right around the corner, fifty-five students took to the podium on May 1, 2014 just a few blocks from our office to announce their college plans for the fall. They represented New Orleans' largest group of high school graduates since Hurricane Katrina. Mayor Mitch Landrieu and other city leaders proudly celebrated the Class of 2014's academic accomplishments: the highest average ACT score in New Orleans history, over 2,500 students citywide that earned acceptance letters to college, and more than \$53 million in merit scholarships. It was a moment that called to mind how far we have come as a city since 2005.

At NSNO, we are proud to have partnered for nearly a decade with educators, parents, and students working to improve our city's schools. We often tell the story of New Orleans' transformation in terms of data-based metrics — closing the achievement gap with the state on reading and math assessments, dramatically reducing the number of students trapped in persistently failing schools, improving graduation rates, and overall achievement growth among students with disabilities. We focus on these metrics because they hold NSNO and our partners to the highest standard: New Orleanians deserve schools that empower educators to meet the diverse needs of the city's families and that generate excellent academic outcomes. We have not yet realized that vision. Our work will not stop until every student has the type of bright future that awaits the fifty-five exceptional graduates on stage last spring.

The next phase of this work will require citywide collaboration and an unrelenting focus on improving instruction to engage and challenge all students. Looking forward as co-CEOs, we are honored to strengthen NSNO's partnerships and shape the organization's strategy and programming. To Sarah, Matt, and Neerav: thank you for launching and sustaining this organization. Any impact that NSNO has on families and schools can be traced back directly to your vision and tenacity. To leaders and educators in New Orleans and throughout the country: we need your input and guidance to get this right. We look forward to hearing from you and partnering with you now and in the future.

As you will see in the following pages, NSNO expanded and launched a range of initiatives in 2014. We sought out strategically important opportunities to accelerate New Orleans' academic growth. We invested in great public schools to serve families, we helped existing schools become more effective, and we highlighted and began to address citywide barriers to excellence. NSNO's strategy will continue to evolve as the landscape in New Orleans changes. We know that current efforts are only a part of a long journey. The opportunities — and challenges — of building an excellent decentralized public school system continue to surprise and excite us.

In May, soon-to-be graduates from a diverse set of New Orleans high schools will take the stage to represent their peers once again. To get to this point, dozens of educators will have committed thousands of hours to their education. Parents, families, and community members will have encouraged their passions and progress. It is our hope that the Class of 2015 will continue to push the bounds of what most observers thought possible for a high-poverty urban school district. And it is our great honor to work alongside all of you to ensure this progress continues.

Sincerely,



*Michael Stone & Maggie Runyan-Shefa, Co-Chief Executive Officers*



# Mission and Strategy

**New Orleans has transformed itself since 2005 into the nation's first predominately charter system. As a strategic leader in the city, NSNO continually refines its approach to meet the needs of these schools and the families they serve. All of our work connects back to our mission: Delivering on the promise of excellent public schools for every child in New Orleans.**

Attending a rigorous, caring, effective school can unlock individual potential. Such schools position students to succeed in college and in careers of their choosing. NSNO has developed an organizational strategy to ensure that more New Orleans families have the opportunity to send their daughters and sons to such a school.

NSNO drives change in three ways: 1) we invest in the launch or expansion of high-performing open-enrollment public charter schools, 2) we help schools become more effective by providing them with direct support to help accelerate academic improvements, and 3) we coordinate solutions to citywide challenges to remove barriers to academic excellence.

The hard work of educators, parents, and students is bearing fruit. Compared to 2010, last year an additional 12,000 students attended schools that earned an “A” or “B” from the Louisiana Department of Education.

The following sections provide more detail on the tremendous academic progress in New Orleans — and the mountain still left to climb together.

## **#1 Invest in great public schools**

We invest in the launch or expansion of high-performing, open-enrollment public charter schools

## **#2 Help schools become more effective**

We provide schools with direct support to help accelerate academic improvements

## **#3 Coordinate solutions to citywide challenges**

We develop strategies that address challenges and remove barriers to academic excellence

**High-quality options for all New Orleans students**



# Overall Academic Performance

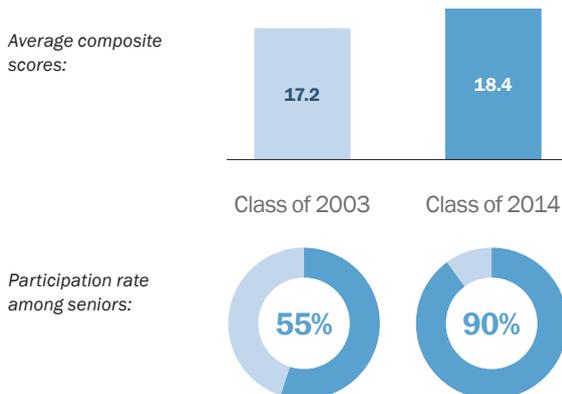
**New Orleans students continued their steady academic improvement in 2014. High school performance was particularly encouraging this year. Most importantly, gains on state assessments are translating into real opportunities for New Orleans students. Recent graduates from New Orleans high schools have begun to enroll in postsecondary education at rates that top the state average – increasingly with state TOPS scholarships to support their college success.**

Mirroring a citywide trend in elementary and middle school academic achievement, New Orleans high schools have nearly closed the performance gap with the state. Schools showed growth on all six End of Course tests in 2014, and aggregate performance improved at twice the statewide rate (7 points vs. 3 points across the state).

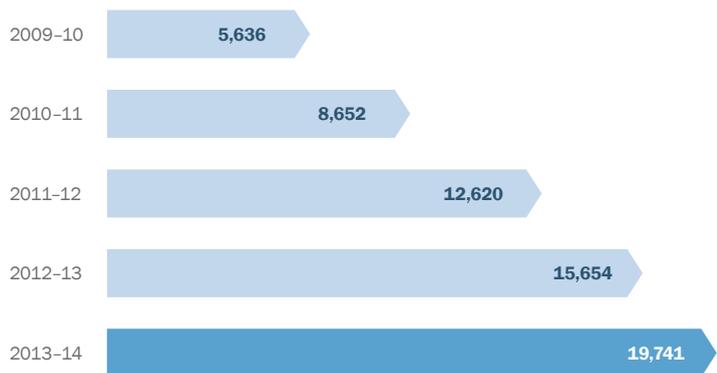
New Orleans recorded its highest average ACT score in history in 2014 — 18.4, with Recovery School District — New Orleans schools driving citywide growth and improving by approximately 1.5 points since 2005. This improvement coincides with a dramatic increase in the ACT participation rate, as state policy now mandates nearly all students take the ACT before graduating.

Great open-enrollment schools — those without academic, foreign language, or neighborhood criteria to enroll — are vital to ongoing citywide transformation. Just 1-in-20 open-enrollment school seats met NSNO’s “high-quality” bar in 2010 (“A” or “B” letter grade, or rapid student academic growth). Now, 1-in-3 seats meet this standard – still too few, but real progress toward our shared citywide goals.

## ACT PERFORMANCE



## HIGH-QUALITY SEATS IN NEW ORLEANS-AREA SCHOOLS



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, Center for Research on Education Outcomes

In May 2014, at the inaugural Senior Shout Out Day — pictured below — graduating seniors representing nearly every high school in the city gathered with their families, educators, and local leaders to celebrate the more than 2,500 public high school graduates of 2014. Collectively, graduates were accepted to over 345 different colleges, representing 42 states and six countries outside of the United States, with over \$53 million earned in scholarships.



# Special Education

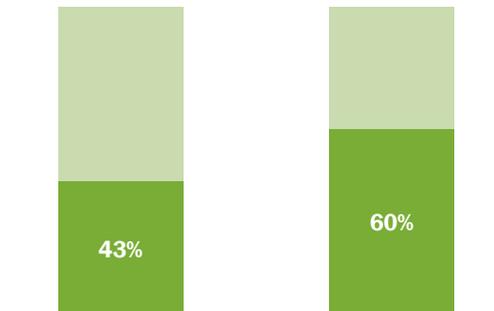
**Federal monitoring reports indicate that fewer than 10% of students with disabilities in New Orleans earned a diploma in the years prior to Hurricane Katrina. Nearly 60% graduate high school today, and New Orleans has surpassed the Louisiana average. Outcomes have improved, but too many of our students with special needs are still falling behind their peers. In 2014, NSNO led a focused effort to support charters in serving all students in settings that both challenge and nurture them.**

Nationally, services and supports for students with diagnosed disabilities often leave these students falling behind the academic progress of their peers. New Orleans charter schools have made tremendous strides in building effective special education programs, and in 2014 NSNO deepened its engagement on challenges that remain in this space.

NSNO launched a comprehensive special education strategy in fall 2013, with particular focus on catalyzing programs and settings to serve students in moderate-to-intensive disability categories. In partnership with the Recovery School District (RSD), NSNO awarded four expansion grants for operators already running high-performing programs. Seven additional planning grants allowed charter operators to envision and design new settings. In total, NSNO investments will help schools create placement options for nearly 250 of New Orleans' most vulnerable students.

Targeted support from government partners can create the conditions for further improvement. In 2014, the RSD adjusted the formula that determines per-pupil funding for its schools. More resources will flow to students who need the most support – another key step towards equity and excellence in New Orleans. Orleans Parish School Board and the RSD also partnered to create an innovative joint fund to supplement school allocations for the students in the city who face the greatest challenges. Finally, RSD will develop a new therapeutic setting aimed at serving students with severe behavioral health needs to fill a longstanding gap in New Orleans' array of services for students.

**COHORT GRADUATION RATE  
FOR CLASS OF 2014  
(STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES)**



*Louisiana Department of Education  
April 2015*

Louisiana Statewide

New Orleans RSD+OPSB

“There is not a principal or teacher in New Orleans today who would tell you that we have it all figured out. Yet, there is little doubt that the system today is providing kids and families with better options than ever before.”

– Rahel Wondwossen in Education Post blog post “A New Orleans High School Where Students With Disabilities Thrive” on January 12, 2015

# Personalized Learning

**Family choice is the cornerstone of New Orleans education reform. In 2014, NSNO helped spur the development of excellent options to meet parent demand for schools with personalized instruction and innovative integration of technology. With NSNO support, school operators will use these tools to put more students on the path to academic success and college readiness.**

As New Orleans charter operators build increasingly vibrant school cultures and rigorous academic programs, they are looking for the next horizon. In discussions with NSNO and local philanthropic partners, many schools indicated that they aspire to move towards models that personalize instruction for all students. They believe that this student-centered approach is integral to continued academic growth.

As part of our work with the Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC), NSNO provided a range of opportunities for New Orleans educators to immerse themselves in the core components of personalized learning in 2014. We cohosted four open-invitation workshops, pictured below, that allowed schools to test ideas and problem-solve with national experts. Workshops focused on use of technology and online platforms, real-time student performance data, small group instruction, and competency-based progression through academic content. Participating schools have already begun piloting some of these components, and three schools will begin implementing plans to fully personalize their school models in fall 2015.



Einstein Charter School, Above; New Orleans Charter Math and Science High School, Facing



# Charter School Investments and Performance



Since our founding, NSNO has facilitated the launch, expansion, and replication of some of the city’s highest performing charter schools. Our investments help ensure quality operators and promising entrepreneurs have the resources they need to grow – so that every year, more families have access to more high-quality schools. In 2014, we made three investments in new or expanding public schools, enabling proven operators to grow to serve more than 1,000 additional students.

In past years, NSNO supported strong operators in tackling the challenge of transforming failing schools in the city. This year, we focused our school investments elsewhere, as no low-performing school in New Orleans required a full turnaround in 2014-15 for the first time since 2008. Maintaining this flexibility allows NSNO to shape investments and ensure that our resources help move New Orleans towards excellence as quickly as possible.

In spring 2014, NSNO awarded Arthur Ashe Charter School and John Dibert Community School at Phillis Wheatley — both part of the FirstLine Schools network — grants from the NOLA Charter Excellence Fund (NOLA CEF) to expand and serve more students. In 2013, Dibert and Ashe were two of only twenty-four schools statewide to earn an “A” or “B” letter grade while serving a high-poverty population (>90% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch).

As seen in the chart below, educators in the FirstLine Schools network received some of the highest ratings in the state on value-added measures. In addition to rigorous classroom instruction, FirstLine emphasizes educating the whole child through developing students’ sense of adventure, curiosity, and possibility. With programs like visual arts, bike repair, Edible School Yards, experiential learning, and travel opportunities, students discover passions and develop as individuals.

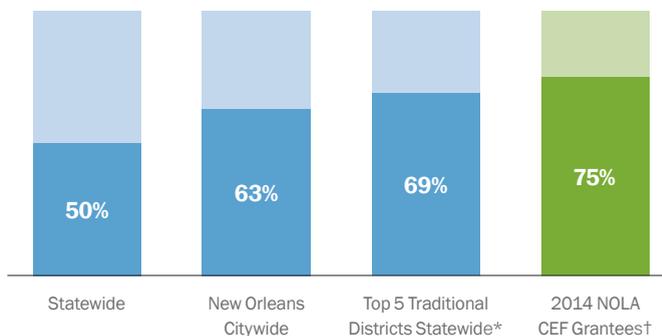
## HIGH-IMPACT INSTRUCTION

Teachers above 50th percentile statewide on Compass value-added measure

\* Weighted average for Ascension, DeSoto, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and St. Charles Parishes.

† Weighted average for FirstLine Schools and KIPP New Orleans.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education Compass Report, October 2014





# Charter School

## Investments and Performance, Cont.

NSNO also supported the growth of the successful KIPP New Orleans network in 2014. KIPP East Community Primary (KECP), the network's 10th school, opened in the summer of 2014 with a rigorous academic program and a school culture that prioritizes character education and student exploration. Both the blended learning academic model and the regular inclusion of dance as an enrichment experience, pictured at right, contribute to KECP's values education and its holistic approach to student development.



KIPP East Community Primary, Above and Facing



# Talent Development Organizations

## Investment and Performance

**At the heart of New Orleans' academic transformation are thousands of educators who dedicate themselves to delivering great instruction to the city's students. NSNO has cultivated partnerships with organizations that recruit new and experienced teachers, train school leaders, and provide outstanding coaching and guidance to schools. These efforts bolster the work happening in schools across the city to better serve students.**

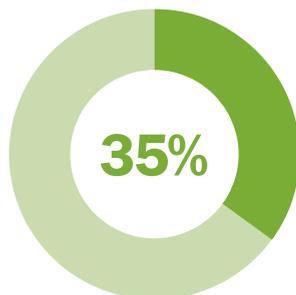
Effective, autonomous schools and innovative talent development organizations have made New Orleans a hub for great educators since Hurricane Katrina. The ecosystem of talent organizations works hand in hand with charter operators to drive improvements in teacher efficacy — and, in turn, student performance. The collaboration is working: 35% of New Orleans' teachers ranked in the top one-fifth of all teachers statewide, as measured by state value-added results.

One partnership, Relay GSE's National Principals Academy Fellowship (NPAF) provides school leaders with an unprecedented professional development opportunity from a top national provider. 32 New Orleans leaders in two cohorts have participated in rigorous yearlong training. They leave the fellowship with skills and proven strategies that drive the academic success of their students: data-driven instruction, creating a culture of high expectations, conducting meaningful observations, and providing high-quality feedback to teachers.

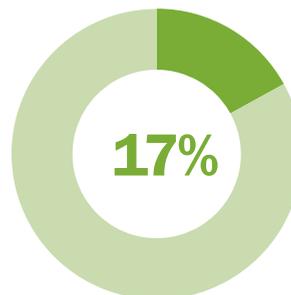
### TRANSFORMATIONAL TEACHING

Teachers above 80th percentile statewide on  
Compass value-added measure

Source: Louisiana Department of Education Compass Report, October 2014



RSD-NO and OPSB



Median traditional school  
district in Louisiana

“Participating in Relay’s NPAF has been a game-changer for me. Relay offers a systematic approach for developing teachers that increased learning outcomes for our students. I was able to better observe and coach my teachers in their practice and in using data to drive their instruction.”

– Sabrina Pence, Chief Academic Officer, FirstLine Schools

NSNO Investments in  
the New Orleans Talent  
Development Ecosystem



# Direct School Support Programming

**For New Orleans children and families to truly have choice among many high-quality options, all schools must continue to improve. In 2014, NSNO provided direct support to over 60 schools in the city through School Quality Reviews, Common Core transition support, interim assessment support, teacher effectiveness support, and direct coaching.**

## **SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEWS**

During each review, a team of local educators analyzes the school's leadership, culture, and instruction to provide the school leader with support and resources to enhance the school's performance. We have placed an emphasis on aligning our process to academic studies of effective practices of high-performing schools (Fryer et al.). In the 2013–14 school year, NSNO's Schools Team conducted 33 reviews of local schools, impacting over 10,000 students.

## **COMMON CORE IMPLEMENTATION**

To prepare New Orleans students to compete on a global level, teachers are aligning instruction to more rigorous standards. NSNO is facilitating professional development opportunities, resource sharing, and collaboration among 59 schools — reaching 30,000 students — in support of effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

## **HIGH SCHOOL CONSORTIUM**

NSNO is working with 15 local high schools and middle schools – serving over 7,500 students – to develop common interim assessments, share best practices, and provide Common Core support to enhance high school performance. During the 2013–14 school year, we also held five College Counseling Convenings for high schools across the city to share best practices and develop the skills and expertise necessary to more effectively promote college access and completion for their students.

## **TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND**

In 2010, NSNO received a five-year, ~\$13 million US Department of Education Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grant to drive teacher improvement through a cycle of observation, feedback, and targeted professional development. Through this program, NSNO supports 29 local charter schools serving more than 13,500 students across the city.

## **EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE**

NSNO coordinates data-sharing across 17 schools, builds capacity of leaders to support teachers in data-driven instruction, and coordinates information-sharing on building and expanding outstanding pre-k opportunities. More than 10,000 students are impacted by this initiative.

## **REAL TIME TEACHER COACHING**

Through Real Time Teacher Coaching, NSNO's Director of Teacher Support, Audrey Sanchez, provides targeted support to coaches and teachers that enhances the academic and cultural experiences of students. She observes teachers and delivers live feedback through the use of an earbud. In the 2013–14 school year, this innovative strategy reached 15 schools, 164 teachers, and over 5,000 students.

Quote about NSNO's Real Time Teacher Coach:

“Audrey has been crucial support for our teachers and coaches who haven’t broken through their classroom culture challenges as soon we planned. She’s able to come in, provide great coaching, support teachers in improving, and support our coaches in focusing on other challenges.”

– Ron Gubitz, PK-5 School Leader, ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy

“New Orleanians deserve schools that empower educators to meet the diverse needs of the city’s families and that generate excellent academic outcomes.”

– Michael Stone & Maggie Runyan-Shefa, Co-Chief Executive Officers

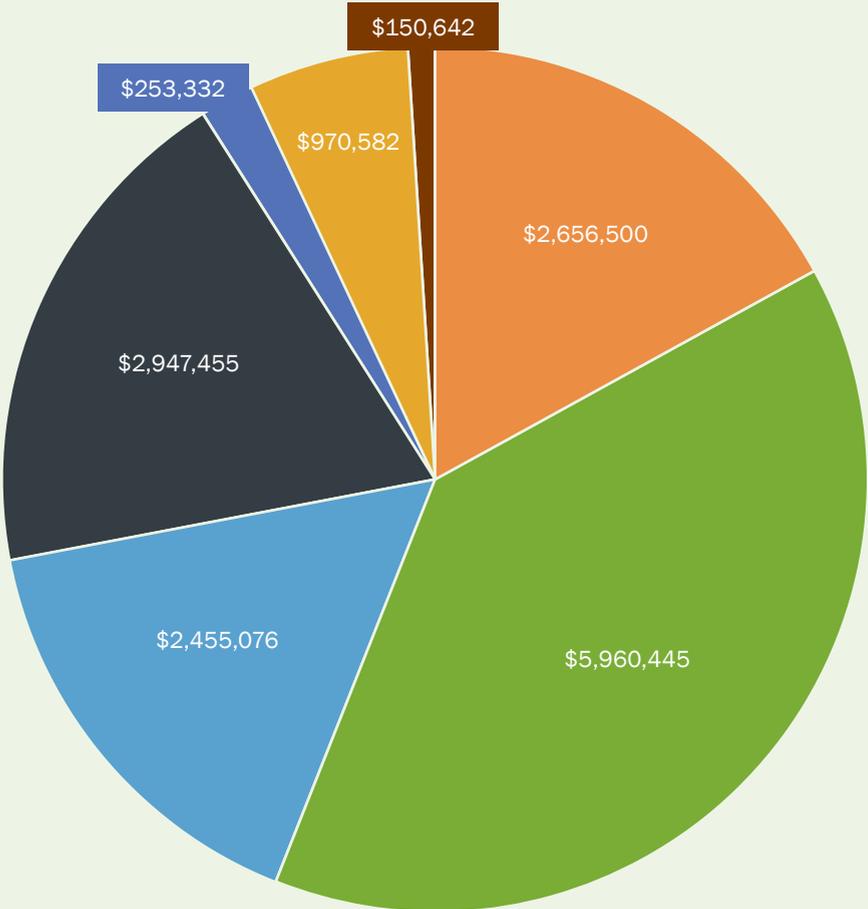


# Financials

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>Revenue and Support</b>			
Grants and contributions	11,688,861	2,259,564	13,948,425
Donated use of facilities	11,811	-	11,811
Interest income	5,628	-	5,628
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>11,706,300</b>	<b>2,259,564</b>	<b>13,965,864</b>
<b>Net Assets Released from Restrictions</b>			
	2,660,017	(2,660,017)	-
<b>Total Revenue, Support, and Net Assets Released from Restriction</b>	<b>14,366,317</b>	<b>(400,453)</b>	<b>13,965,864</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program Services			
School development accelerator	8,616,945	-	8,616,945
Landing pad	5,402,531	-	5,402,531
Strategic leadership	253,332	-	253,332
Supporting Services			
Management and general	970,582	-	970,582
Fundraising	150,642	-	150,642
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>15,394,032</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,394,032</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(1,027,715)</b>	<b>(400,453)</b>	<b>(1,428,168)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>			
Beginning of year	4,385,041	4,959,887	9,344,928
End of year	3,357,326	4,559,434	7,916,760

**2014 FISCAL YEAR EXPENSES\***

- School Development Accelerator
- i3
- Landing Pad
- TIF
- Strategic Leadership
- Management & General
- Fundraising



*Investing in Innovation Grant (i3): \$28 million – 83.33% – from the Federal Department of Education and \$5.6 million -16.67% – in private matching funds over five years*

*Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF): \$13.9 million funded 100% from the Federal Department of Education over five years*

*\* Budget is aligned to FY2014 Strategic Pillars*

# Donors and Board

## **\$3,000,000 & ABOVE**

US Department of Education

## **\$1,000,000 & ABOVE**

Laura and John Arnold Foundation  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Doris and Donald Fisher Fund

## **\$250,000 – \$999,999**

Next Generation Learning Challenges  
The Walton Family Foundation  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation\*  
Michael and Susan Dell Foundation\*  
Goldring Family Foundation and Woldenberg Foundation  
Carnegie Corporation of New York\*

## **\$100,000 – \$249,999**

Baptist Community Ministries  
Patrick F. Taylor Foundation†  
Zemurray Foundation†  
The J.P. Morgan Charitable Giving Fund\*  
Booth-Bricker Fund  
The Toler Foundation  
Ella West Freeman Foundation

## **\$50,000 – \$99,999**

Colorado League of Charter Schools  
Entergy Corporation

## **\$25,000 – \$49,999**

Capital One Bank  
The Selley Foundation  
Ken Hirsh  
The Stephen and Sandy Rosenthal Foundation

## **\$10,000 – \$24,999**

Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Foundation  
Pro Bono Publico Foundation  
Loving Family Fund  
United Air Lines, Inc.

## **\$9,999 & BELOW**

Clein Lemann Esperanza Fund  
Gray and Mary Kay Parker Iberia Bank  
Namaste NOLA Fund  
Reily Foundation/The Reily Legacy Fund  
Ruth U. Fertel Foundation  
Mr. & Mrs. J. Thomas Lewis Fund  
Richard and Sarah Newell  
Gifts in honor of the wedding of Hannah Blumenthal and Quentin Chu  
Stephanie Green  
Allison Lewis and Pierre Stouse Family Fund  
Kristin Kranias  
Erik Bengtsson

## **BOARD LEADERSHIP**

Stephen Rosenthal  
*Board Chair*  
Hunter Pierson III  
*Board Vice-Chair and Treasurer*  
Ruth Kullman  
*Secretary*

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Mary Kay Parker  
David Sylvester  
Michael Brown  
Christine Jordan  
Sarah Usdin  
David Harris  
Michael Stone  
*Co-CEO*  
Maggie Runyan-Shefa  
*Co-CEO*

## **MEMBERS EMERITUS**

Ian Arnof  
Anthony Recasner, Ph.D

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\* These organizations contributed matching grants that facilitated the US Department of Education's Investing in Innovation award.

† Pledges were received prior to the start of FY 2014, but were used to support programming in FY 2014.





**NEW SCHOOLS**  
FOR NEW ORLEANS

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