The Mind Trust picks longtime educator as next Charter School Fellow, hires Oscar Gutierrez to drive facilities innovation

INDIANAPOLIS – The Mind Trust has awarded longtime educator and principal Aleicha Ostler its Charter School Fellowship and has hired Oscar Gutierrez as Senior Director of Facility Strategy and Financing.

Through her fellowship, Ostler will launch a new K-8 charter school that expands upon the success of her current Indianapolis Public School (IPS) magnet school, SUPER School 19. Gutierrez will provide a new layer of support for autonomous schools in Indianapolis by developing innovative and sustainable facility and financing strategies. Together, Ostler and Gutierrez help advance The Mind Trust’s efforts to dramatically increase the number of Indianapolis students who receive a high-quality education.

Ostler spent 16 years working in various capacities at IPS. She worked in teaching and leadership positions at Otis E. Brown School 20 and Eleanor Skillen School 34. As principal of Frederick Douglass School 19, she led the school from an “F” to an “A” on the state’s accountability measures and transitioned to a SUPER School magnet program.

Through the Charter School fellowship, The Mind Trust provides innovative educators with the resources, supports and sufficient planning time to expand their own capacity and launch high-quality, autonomous, public schools that operate independently of school districts. In addition to salary and benefits, fellows gain access to an extensive network of experts and experiences, executive coaching, community engagement training and the opportunity to travel to and learn from the nation’s best schools.

“Aleicha Ostler is a highly regarded school leader,” said David Harris, founder & CEO of The Mind Trust. “She has a strong background and has used her model not only to turn around an underperforming school, but to successfully transition a traditional elementary program into a leading magnet school in our city.”

SUPER School – which stands for “Students Understanding through Powerful and Energetic Routines” – is based on research showing a strong relationship between motor and cognitive processes. Ostler plans to expand upon this model in a new school, scheduled to open in Fall 2019.

Gutierrez previously served as the City of Fishers’ first Controller, where he oversaw its Town to City financial transition and earned Fishers the distinction of being the only Indiana city with a AAA credit rating from Standard and Poor’s. Before his work in Fishers, Gutierrez held the same position for the City of Lawrence, where he increased cash reserves by 200 percent and helped upgrade the city’s credit rating.
“Oscar’s unique professional background and unwavering belief in the potential of all children make him an ideal fit for this critical leadership role. We could not be more excited for Oscar to lend his considerable expertise to fuel the growth of high-quality schools in Indianapolis by advancing innovative facility solutions.” said Brandon Brown, The Mind Trust’s Senior Vice President of Education Innovation.

“Every child deserves a high-quality education that will provide them with the ability to reach their full potential and thrive in tomorrow's economy” said Gutierrez.

Prior to his experience in municipal government, Gutierrez worked in various financial management capacities at the Department of Defense, for which he was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal and Joint Service Achievement Medal. He continues to serve as a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and active reservist in the Army Reserves, a Military Finance Instructor for the US Army, and is a US Air Force Veteran.

Gutierrez teaches as Adjunct Associate Faculty at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Gutierrez has been recognized as Indianapolis Business Journal's 40 under 40, as well as Indy's Best and Brightest winner in the field of Government by Junior Achievement of Central Indiana.

Gutierrez serves on the board of Avondale Meadows Academy, the Indiana Latino Institute, Folds of Honor of Indiana, and USO of Indiana. He was formerly a trustee for the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library, where he helped develop the library’s 2015-2020 strategic plan, and the commissioner for the Indiana War Memorials.

Gutierrez is a graduate of Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey (BA) and holds a Master Project Manager certification from the American Academy of Project Management. He is a native of Toluca, Mexico and immigrated to the United States in 1991.

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