



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Mind Trust awards fellowships to replicate three high-performing charter schools.**

Indianapolis—(August 1, 2018)—Today, The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, announced the selection of school leaders at three of Indianapolis' highest-performing charter schools for its Charter School Fellowship. Through the fellowship, **Darius Sawyers** of Paramount Schools of Excellence, **Carroll Bilbrey** of Indianapolis Classical Schools, and **Naomi Nelson** of Christel House Academies will lead the replication of their respective schools' high-performing models.

The Charter School Fellowship provides talented educators with one or two full years of planning time and resources to design and launch their new school. In addition to covering the cost of salary and benefits, The Mind Trust provides Fellows with a robust portfolio of supports. Fellows have access to an extensive network of local and national experts, professional development experiences, community engagement training, and the opportunity to travel to and learn from the nation's best schools.

"The Charter School Fellowship provides the crucial planning time and support needed to grow new high-quality schools in Indianapolis," said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. "We're tremendously excited to support these new Charter School Fellows in expanding the impact of three of Indianapolis' highest-performing charter networks."

The Charter School Fellowship is one of The Mind Trust's several pathways for supporting the launch of high-quality schools in Indianapolis. In total, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 24 schools, 7 of which opened this fall.



**Darius Sawyers** most recently served as the assistant principal at Paramount School of Excellence Brookside. He previously served on the leadership team of Phalen Leadership Academy @ IPS 103 and is an alumnus of Teach For America Indianapolis. An Indianapolis native, Darius is a K-12 graduate of Indianapolis Public Schools. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University, Bloomington, his Master of Arts in Teaching from Marian University, and is currently completing his Master of Education in Education Leadership from Columbia University through Teach For America's Indianapolis Principal Fellowship.

Darius will use the Fellowship to develop Paramount Schools of Excellence's third campus. The new school will incorporate the hybrid instructional model of Paramount's award-winning Brookside campus. The model blends effective direct instruction, efficient independent student work time, and real-world problem-solving extensions. The new school will focus these real-world problem-solving extensions on STEM-related content, providing students with an early introduction to subjects they might encounter at a STEM-focused high school or post-secondary pathway.



**Carroll Bilbrey** currently serves as the Social Studies Department chairperson for Indianapolis Classical Schools, overseeing all social studies instruction at Herron High School and Riverside High School. As a teacher, Carroll led his students to achieve exceptional pass rates on AP exams – on the AP World History and AP Human Geography exams, his students exceeded the national average by 14 percentage points and 28 percentage points, respectively. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Purdue University and his Master of Business Administration in Education Leadership from the University of Indianapolis through the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship.

Carroll will use the Fellowship to develop the third campus of Indianapolis Classical Schools, whose mission is to create a community of scholars that advances timeless ideas and content, builds a culture of respect and trust, and engages in an urban environment in order to prepare students to be world-class citizens. The school will replicate the network’s successful classical, liberal arts model.



**Naomi Nelson** recently joined Christel House Schools as a School Leader in Residence at the Christel House Academy South High School. Previously, she worked in a leadership role with Indianapolis Public Schools as a Special Education Specialist, and before that as a special education teacher at Indianapolis Lighthouse and Charter Schools USA. Naomi was a 2004 Teach For America Atlanta corps member, where she taught science. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Indiana University, Bloomington and a Master of Science in Secondary Education through the Woodrow Wilson fellowship program at IUPUI. Currently, Naomi is a member of the Teaching Leadership Program at Marian University.

Naomi will use the Fellowship to help launch a college prep high school that will serve students from both Christel House Academy South’s and Christel House Academy West’s K-8 programs. Christel House Schools utilize a holistic model comprised of a high-quality, challenging, standards-based academic curriculum with related arts and extracurricular activities; on-site mental health and social services; a strong character development program; and active outreach to parents and families. Christel House Academy South was recently named a National School of Character.

#### **About The Mind Trust**

The Mind Trust is a nonprofit striving to give every Indianapolis student access to an excellent, high-quality public school. The Mind Trust does this by recruiting and empowering top talent, launching and supporting new, innovative and high-quality public schools in Indianapolis, and engaging community stakeholders in conversations about innovation in public education. Since 2006, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 24 schools and attracted and placed more than 1,000 teachers and school leaders into Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at [themindtrust.org](http://themindtrust.org).