Innovation School Fellowship FAQs

Q: What type of training and support is provided through the Innovation School Fellowship?
A: Fellows will receive extensive support before launching an Innovation Network School. Support will include:
• Opportunities to visit some of the nation's best schools and engage with their leaders;
• Opportunities to get extensive feedback and advice from local and national school-design and school-operations experts on their school designs at two key stages of development, as well as ongoing expert counsel and feedback on their developing plans;
• Access to the national school-incubation working group in which The Mind Trust participates and helped launch; and
• Sessions with IPS leaders to confer on issues such as district budgeting practices, facilities management, assessments, services, and federal and state reporting requirements.

Q: What are the expectations for Innovation School Fellows upon completion of the Fellowship?
A: During the planning period, each Fellow will present his or her Innovation Network School model to the IPS Board of Commissioners. If the IPS Board approves the Fellow to launch an Innovation Network School, the Fellow will launch and lead the school in the year immediately following his or her Fellowship or as otherwise agreed to by the Board and Fellow. In the years following the Fellowship, each Fellow will lead his or her school (as principal or head of school) according to his or her Innovation Network School agreement.

Q: Can more than one person apply to the Innovation School Fellowship?
A: The Innovation School Fellowship is designed to fund the salary and benefits of one leader for the duration of the fellowship during which he or she will design and plan the launch of his or her Innovation Network School. The Fellow can assemble a team to help support his or her efforts, but only the Fellow receives a salary and benefits from The Mind Trust. If two leaders want to share resources and together spend the fellowship time designing and launching one school, they may propose a plan to do so, recognizing the amount The Mind Trust is investing is designed for one person. The only condition is that at least one person must focus full-time for the duration of the fellowship on the design and launch of the new school.

Q: Who employs Innovation School Fellows, and are they eligible for salary and employee benefits?
A: Innovation School Fellows are full-time employees of The Mind Trust for the duration of the Fellowship. All Fellows will receive a competitive salary and are eligible for medical, dental and retirement benefits. The Fellowship is a full-time responsibility: Fellows may not have additional employment, consulting contracts, or other professional responsibilities, although The Mind Trust is open to alternative employment arrangements to deal with special circumstances.

Q: To participate in the Innovation School Fellowship, do I have to live in Indianapolis?
A: While applicants do not need to live in Indianapolis at the time of application, selected Fellows will need to reside in Indianapolis during the fellowship and upon launch of the Fellow's Innovation Network School.

Q: Is the Innovation School Fellowship specific to Indianapolis?
A: Yes. All Innovation Network Schools will be launched within Indianapolis Public Schools.

Q: Do you require written letters of recommendation for an Innovation School Fellowship application?
A: Yes. All candidates invited to submit a Full Application must have three written letters of recommendation. Applicants invited to submit a Full Application will be provided more information on letter of recommendation guidelines.

Q: Who makes the final selection of the Innovation School Fellows?
A: Several education experts will serve on the final selection committee, including representatives from The Mind Trust, IPS staff and the IPS Board, the Mayor's Office and The Mind Trust's Board, along with several national and local school design and operations experts. The final selection committee will recommend to The Mind Trust's Board which finalists should receive an Innovation School Fellowship. The IPS Board also will review and make a final determination of whether fellows are granted approval to start an Innovation Network School.

Q: Will The Mind Trust share any information submitted by applicants for the Innovation School Fellowship application with anyone not part of the review process?
A: No. All information submitted to The Mind Trust will be kept strictly confidential. The Mind Trust staff, IPS Board members and key IPS staff, and members of the selection committee will have access to view applications, but all material will be kept confidential.

Q: What role will IPS play in the Innovation School Fellowship planning time?
A: The IPS Board of Commissioners will determine which Fellows are awarded Innovation Network Schools.
IPS staff and The Mind Trust will work closely together to ensure Fellows are making the progress required to be successful. For example, IPS will support the Fellows' development by leading sessions on issues such as district budgeting practices, facilities management, assessments, services, and federal and state reporting requirements.

Q: What criteria will be used to select Fellows?
A: Fellows will be selected based on a wide range of criteria and with the input of local and national school design and innovation experts. The two most important criteria include a compelling or innovative school model that will ensure all students receive an excellent education, and an entrepreneurial leader who has the demonstrated ability to launch a successful new initiative.

Q: Do I need to have classroom experience to be a candidate for the Innovation School Fellowship?
A: The Mind Trust and the selection committee will consider applicants from all backgrounds.