For Immediate Release
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The Mind Trust awarded $3.75 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to support partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools

The grant will fund the continued growth and ongoing support of Innovation Network Schools in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis - (January 13, 2020) - The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, today announced it has been awarded a $3.75 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to continue growing and supporting Innovation Network Schools in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS).

In 2014, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation that gave IPS the ability to create Innovation Network Schools, a category of schools that is part of IPS. Innovation Network Schools operate with full autonomy and are governed by independent nonprofit boards. School-level Innovation Network School leaders are empowered to make operational and instructional decisions to best meet the needs of their students, including hiring staff, designing their own curricula, and extending the school day and year. At the same time, Innovation Network Schools have access to IPS district buildings and, if they choose, district services. Innovation Network Schools’ enrollment, student assessment scores, and other performance data are counted within IPS’ overall totals.

After the passage of the Innovation Network School law, The Mind Trust, IPS, and the Indianapolis Mayor’s Office formed a deep partnership to leverage this opportunity to dramatically improve public schools in Indianapolis. This joint effort has established Innovation Network Schools as an effective strategy to improve and strengthen Indiana’s largest public school district.

“This collaborative partnership aims to build an education system that provides opportunity for every Indianapolis student,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “Our city’s public school students and families are deserving of this kind of transformative work, and I am grateful to Lilly Endowment for its continued investment in our community.”

Currently, there are 20 Innovation Network Schools operating within IPS boundaries, 19 of which have received significant support from The Mind Trust. This year, 29 percent of IPS students attend an Innovation Network School and IPS’ overall enrollment has increased four out of the last five school years, a boost driven by the growth of Innovation Network Schools.

“Indianapolis Public Schools believes that Innovation Network Schools are a critical component of our school improvement strategy,” said IPS Superintendent Aleesia Johnson. “I am grateful for Lilly
Endowment's continued support of this partnership, which will ensure the short- and long-term success of these schools and their students.

Innovation Network Schools have seen promising early improvements in academic outcomes. In January 2019, Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) released findings that indicate, on average, students in Innovation Network Schools made learning gains equivalent to 53 days of additional learning in reading and 89 days of additional learning in math relative to their peers in traditional public schools.

“We continue to see that students and families are finding academic opportunity in Innovation Network Schools,” said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. “We are thankful for Lilly Endowment’s continued support of this partnership and remain focused on our mission to ensure all Indianapolis students have access to a high-quality school.”

Since 2007, Lilly Endowment has awarded more than $30 million to help fuel The Mind Trust’s transformative work in the Indianapolis K-12 education system.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.
Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

About The Mind Trust
The Mind Trust is an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit that works to build a system of schools that gives every student in Indianapolis, no exceptions, access to a high-quality education. The Mind Trust does this by building a supportive environment for schools through policy and community engagement, empowering talented educators to launch new schools, and providing existing schools with the supports they need to hire world-class talent and achieve excellence. Since 2006, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 29 schools and helped place more than 1,500 teachers and school leaders in Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at themindtrust.org.