For Immediate Release
Media Contact:
Kateri Whitley
kwhitley@themindtrust.org
c: 317-801-9682

The Mind Trust awarded $1.54 million to support Indianapolis schools during critical transition period

Indianapolis — (June 25, 2020) — The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit organization, today announced it has been awarded up to $1.54 million dollars to support Indianapolis schools during the critical period following an abrupt shift to e-learning caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Mind Trust received grants from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation to support a math instruction pilot and from Glick Philanthropies to support professional development for teachers and school leaders on e-learning and social-emotional learning.

The Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation has awarded The Mind Trust up to $1,515,000 over three years to fund a mathematics instruction pilot program. The pilot will be administered in partnership with Instruction Partners and will include eight Indianapolis public schools from three local school networks: Christel House Schools, Tindley Accelerated Schools, and Victory College Prep.

“Research shows teachers are the single largest in-school driver of student achievement, and we need to ensure they are receiving evidence-based training on how to teach math effectively,” said Claire Fiddian-Green, President and CEO of the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation. “Understanding and applying math is critical to success in the labor market, as many high-wage, high-demand jobs are in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. Unfortunately, only 35% of Marion County students passed the math portion of last year’s ILEARN and the outcomes for Black students and students from low-income families were even worse. This pilot has the potential to improve math learning outcomes for all students by providing targeted training to help current classroom teachers deliver math instruction more effectively.”

Due to the shift of math instruction from a procedural model to a conceptual one as a result of more rigorous state standards, many teachers must now teach math in a vastly different way than how they learned the subject in elementary school. While this shift is meant to help students retain concepts better, educators have not always had the necessary support to help them deliver this new framework of instruction effectively.

The pilot will create scalable models for building teacher math instruction skill and efficacy that have been proven to lead to dramatically improved student learning. Additionally, the pilot will
develop and codify leadership monitoring systems and teacher supports that foster and maintain the conditions for strengthened mathematics instruction and student learning. Ultimately, The Mind Trust and Instruction Partners hope to translate the work and lessons of this pilot to other networks, schools, and districts in Indianapolis and cities across the country.

The math portion of ILEARN, the Indiana state assessment, measures student learning based on the conceptual instructional model. In the 2018-19 school year, only 34.6% of Marion County students passed the math portion of ILEARN. More alarmingly, only 22% of Black Marion County students and 12.7% of Black Indianapolis Public School students passed the math portion of ILEARN. This proficiency gap contributes to a cycle of racial inequities in student learning and future workforce opportunity. The pilot aims to help break that cycle by creating a school-wide impact on how educators teach math, leading to understandings that will result in improvements in student outcomes across the city.

“Instruction Partners has been a leader in research on effective instruction and student learning for years, and we are excited to partner with them to target their expertise on improving outcomes for students in math,” said Tina Seymour, Senior Director of School Support for The Mind Trust. “We believe this pilot will have a significant impact, especially for students of color. We are grateful to the Fairbanks Foundation for their support to bring this bold, important work to schools in our city.”

Since 2017, The Mind Trust has partnered with Instruction Partners to provide targeted support to help improve instruction and student learning for 14 public schools in Indianapolis. Professional development opportunities offered by Instruction Partners have been well-received and popular with local educators.

“Strengthening math instruction is critically important. In light of COVID-19, mitigating learning loss is even more essential, especially for systemically marginalized students,” said Emily Freitag, CEO of Instruction Partners. “We are excited and humbled to be partnering with some incredible school and school system leaders who are committed to finding ways to bolster teaching and learning, even in these challenging contexts. With the Fairbanks Foundation's support, we will work together to create scalable models for building teacher capacity that is rooted in high-quality curriculum, and to unlock breakthrough learning that can power more significant improvement across schools.”

The Glick Fund has awarded The Mind Trust $25,000 to fund professional development for educators focused on e-learning, social-emotional learning, and self-care. After school buildings closed abruptly in March, many shifted quickly to e-learning. Through its work as a founding partner of the Indianapolis E-Learning Fund, The Mind Trust has learned that teachers and school leaders are highly interested in professional development that can help them adapt and prepare for a school year that could see additional extended periods of virtual instruction.

“We are grateful to the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation and Glick Philanthropies for investing in our city’s schools and educators during this critical time,” said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. “This funding will help develop Indianapolis educators and support needed progress to ensure educational equity for all students in Indianapolis.”

###
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, diverse educators to launch new schools, and providing existing schools with the support they need to hire world-class talent and achieve excellence. Since 2006, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 37 schools, 13 education nonprofit organizations, and helped place more than 1,500 teachers and school leaders in Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at themindtrust.org.