

PUBLIC IMPACT



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC IMPACT NAMES FOUNDING

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK MEMBERS

Founding Members Commit to Creating an Opportunity Culture and Extending the Reach of Excellent Teachers to More Students

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—[Public Impact](#) today announced its selection of four founding members of a national network of charter school organizations that will create an Opportunity Culture for teachers and extend the reach of excellent teachers to more students:

[Foundations College Prep \(Chicago\)](#)

[Ingenuity Prep \(Washington, D.C.\)](#)

[Touchstone Education \(Newark\)](#)

[Venture Academy \(Minneapolis\)](#)

In 2011, Public Impact launched an initiative to help the U.S. close achievement gaps and meet rising global standards by extending the reach of excellent teachers to more students. The Public Impact team published [school model summaries](#) and [detailed models](#) that use job redesign and technology to reach more students with excellent teachers, for more pay, within available budgets. Most models create new teaching roles, form collaborative teams, and enhance teacher development. All teachers and staff have the opportunity, in every role, to develop to their full potential through collaboration with and leadership from excellent teachers. Advancement allows more pay and greater reach. Public Impact calls this an Opportunity Culture, as explained in greater detail in an [infographic](#), [slide show](#), and [videos](#)—all

available free of charge at OpportunityCulture.org. The website also provides [tools](#) for school design teams and related [publications](#).

This new national network is a critical part of Public Impact's effort to work with implementation sites to prototype new school models. "With the chance to start from scratch," said Bryan C. Hassel, co-director of Public Impact, "these schools are on the leading edge of a national effort to reach all students with gap-closing, bar-raising teachers."

Each organization will start as a single school, but collectively, they plan to scale up their models to serve tens of thousands of students. They join more established charter networks, such as [Rocketship Education](#), already engaged in extending the reach of excellent teachers in their schools.

Public Impact will advise the founding network schools on design and implementation, enable them to share lessons with one another, and profile each school in a case study of the school's efforts.

In addition, Public Impact is helping district schools transform themselves into an Opportunity Culture. In Charlotte, N.C., and Nashville, Tenn., Public Impact and its partners are providing seven district schools with intensive design and implementation assistance. These schools plan to extend the reach of their excellent teachers to more students, directly and by leading other teachers, starting in fall 2013.

Funding for the new charter school network is provided by [The Joyce Foundation](#). In addition to Joyce, the Opportunity Culture initiative is made possible in part by funding from [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#), the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), and the participating schools' and districts' funders.

See below for more information on the founding members of this network.

For more information, please visit www.OpportunityCulture.org. To learn more about becoming one of Public Impact's Opportunity Culture implementation sites, please visit <http://www.opportunityculture.org/our-initiative/participating-sites>. To arrange an interview with Dr. Bryan C. Hassel, contact Carol Williams at carol_williams@publicimpact.com; 919.240.7955.

Foundations College Prep (Chicago)

[Foundations College Prep](#)'s mission is to empower underserved youth to thrive in college and life by teaching them to think critically, live with honor, and strive for a better self and world. The school also aims to develop the knowledge, tools, and sustainable systems to support successful replication and broader change beyond its walls. Foundations is a 2012 Next Generation Learning Challenges grantee.

Foundations College Prep will open its doors in fall 2014, with plans to provide a rigorous, 6th-through 12th-grade college preparatory experience for students on the far South Side of Chicago. The school's plan to redesign the school day focuses on maximizing the impact of its great teachers. Students will have flexible schedules and varied class sizes that best fit instructional objectives and teacher strengths. Digital-learning opportunities will enhance their teachers' ability to focus on personalized, higher-order thinking.

Strategic scheduling supports meaningful, diverse roles for teachers as they progress in their careers. The school plans to have its great teachers oversee more students with targeted resources, and to reward them for increased responsibility and impact.

"We reimagine a teaching profession that elevates, rewards, and extends the reach of great teachers, building an environment that raises the bar for excellence, but does not require heroics," said Micki O'Neil, co-founder of Foundations.

Ingenuity Prep (Washington, D.C.)

[Ingenuity Prep](#) will open in Southeast Washington, D.C., in August 2013. Initially serving preschool through kindergarten, the school intends to add a grade each year and eventually serve students through high school. With a commitment to preparing its students to succeed in college and become civic leaders, Ingenuity Prep's model will include:

- An extended day and extended year schedule
- Teams of content-specialized teachers that loop with cohorts of students across grade-level bands (PS–PK, K–2, 3–5, etc.)
- A teacher career pipeline with resident, associate, lead, and master teacher positions
- A small-group, blended-learning instructional model using multiple teachers in each classroom and digital content to ensure students' learning is personalized and differentiated
- Several hours a week of instructional time focused on Ingenuity Prep's civic leadership competencies: social-emotional literacy, collaborative problem-solving, social studies, and service learning

According to Ingenuity Prep Co-founder and Head of School Aaron Cuny, more learning time and increased efficiency in its model—most notably in extending the reach of great teachers—will help the school's students build strong skills in the traditional core content areas and develop a broader set of 21st-century skills that will prepare them to be true civic leaders.

Touchstone Education (Newark)

[Touchstone Education](#)'s mission is to use an innovative combination of online learning and effective instruction to provide students with a personalized education that prepares them to

achieve at the highest levels in college, work, and life. In 2012, Touchstone received a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant.

"Touchstone Education is thrilled to be working with Public Impact on this important work," Touchstone CEO Ben Rayer said. "A key part of our school design focuses on increasing the effectiveness of teachers and extending the reach of best instructors. We are excited to partner with Public Impact and its other partners to learn from others and improve our schools."

Touchstone's flagship school, Merit Prep Newark in New Jersey, will reach more than 600 students in grades 6–12 at full capacity. Merit Prep's instructional model includes personalized learning plans with academic and nonacademic goals, access to online curricula, mastery-based learning at an individualized pace, and targeted small-group instruction.

Teachers at Touchstone proceed on a career path from associate teacher (novice) to master teacher. At the master teacher level, teachers can earn up to \$100,000 a year. Master teachers take responsibility for all students in a content area, teach the most difficult parts of the curriculum, and train and develop other teachers. As a result, all students have access to the methods and materials of a master teacher in every core content area.

Venture Academy (Minneapolis)

[Venture Academy](#) aims to ignite the passion of every student to become innovators and entrepreneurial leaders who change the world. Venture blends self-directed and experiential learning, exceptional teacher coaching, and personalized digital content to prepare its students for college and purposeful life missions by age 16. Venture Academy is a 2012 recipient of a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant.

In August 2013, Venture Academy will open as a grades 6–12 school in Minneapolis. The school will focus on building advanced literacy, STEAM skills (science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and math), and entrepreneurial mindsets. Using independent learning, Socratic seminars, and team projects, students will forge personalized pathways and take ownership of their learning informed by one-on-one coaching and real-time data.

Venture plans to extend the reach of excellent teachers by optimizing student self-direction and the best of blended-learning tools and content to enable a higher student-to-teacher ratio in the classroom. Venture uses real-time coaching and collaborative teaching to create a "try-measure-learn-iterate" culture of learning for all staff, and pays teachers more for excellent results.

"Extending the reach of exceptional teacher 'edupreneurs' allows Venture to create a financially sustainable learning design that encourages student ownership while rewarding talented educators," CEO Jon Bacal said.

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About Public Impact

Public Impact is a national education policy and management consulting organization based in Chapel Hill, N.C. It includes professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers. Public Impact's mission is to dramatically improve learning outcomes for all children in the U.S., with a special focus on students who are not served well. The firm employs several strategies to achieve its mission, including:

- Devising and advancing visionary but practical ideas about how to improve K–12 education;
- Scanning both education and cross-industry research to bring the most effective policy and management practices to education leaders;
- Creating user-friendly tools that help educators, policymakers, and parents; and
- Working with leading nonprofit and public agencies to implement cutting-edge ideas.

For more information on Public Impact, see publicimpact.com.