MAYOR BALLARD ANNOUNCES THREE NEW MAYOR-SPONSORED CHARTER SCHOOLS

INDIANAPOLIS - Mayor Greg Ballard today joined leaders in charter school education to announce the addition of three Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools in Indianapolis:

- The Indiana Aerospace Junior/Senior High School
- The Paramount School of Excellence
- The Irvington Community School

“I congratulate each of these schools, but I also expect amazing things, and we will hold them accountable for the results they promised to achieve,” said Mayor Ballard. “It is critically important that entrepreneurial reformers like these continue to be given the opportunity to re-make public education.”

Applications for Charters were evaluated through a rigorous process by the City’s Charter School Board headed by former Lt. Gov. John Mutz. Over the course of 3 months, each applicant’s proposal was thoroughly vetted multiple times by the Mayor’s Board, staff, and experts in the fields of curriculum, governance, and finance. In order to ensure that the public has full access to all decision-making, the Mayor’s Board held two televised public meetings and each applicant’s proposal is available on the City’s website.

“Less than one-quarter of applicants make it through the Mayor’s rigorous process,” said Karega Rausch, City’s Director of Charter Schools. “Each of these applicants has put forth a comprehensive, innovative, and ambitious plan to serve students and families well, and we are excited to see these plans in action”.

According to the most recent Public Opinion Survey of Education conducted by Indiana University each year, citizens of Central Indiana support the creation of more charter schools by a 2-1 margin. Even more telling from this survey is that minority and low-income families showed the highest support for the creation of more public charter schools. Enrollment in Mayor-sponsored charter schools has shown substantial gains each year, including 17 percent from 2008 to this 2009.

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Indiana Aerospace Junior/Senior High School

School Characteristics

- Opening Fall, 2010
- Will serve 140 students in 7th grade only in 2010. At capacity, will serve 690 students in grades 7-12.
- The school will offer an extended school year, with 200 instructional days, some 20 days longer than traditional public schools. In addition the school will use a Block-4 schedule allowing for deeper mastery of curricular content.
- Proposed Location: Indianapolis Aviation Technology Center at the Indianapolis International Airport; 2175 S. Hoffman Road, Indianapolis, IN 46241

Defining Attributes

- Aviation/Aerospace Curriculum: The school has a unique educational model unlike any other in the state of Indiana. The school’s educational model infuses aviation and aerospace themes into a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum. All students will be required to complete a Core 40 with Academic Honors Curriculum.
- Internships with Local Aerospace Industry Firms: Upon graduation, students will have completed more than 300 hours of shadow experiences and internships with local aerospace industry firms, giving them vital hands on experience and knowledge prior to furthering their education at the post-secondary level.
- Strong Dual-Credit Partners: Vincennes University, Purdue University, and Indiana State University have agreed to be the school’s dual-credit partners. Upper high school students will take classes instructed by professors at these universities, and will receive both high school and college credit for these courses after successful completion. Dual-credit students will be able to specialize in elective fields such as aviation and management, engineering, piloting, aviation mechanic, and healthcare.
- Strong Community Support and Partnerships: In addition to partnerships with Vincennes University, Purdue University, and Indiana State University, the school has received letters of support from Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita, the Indiana Wing Civil Air Patrol, the Weir Cook Cadet Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, Chance Aviation Aircraft Parts, Experimental Aircraft Association, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, D.L. Bogard and Associates, Inc., and a teacher.
- Fulfilling a Vital Student & Industry Need: Data suggest that students are being lost in the fields of science, mathematics, and engineering. In addition, the school plans to address the underrepresentation of students of color and women in these fields, with the hope of getting more of these students into career fields such as engineering, piloting, air traffic control, logistics personnel, and health care.

Contact:
Mr. Roger Tomey, (317) 889-4756, rogertomey@comcast.net
Paramount School of Excellence: A Challenge Foundation Academy

School Characteristics

- Opening Fall, 2010
- Will serve 465 students in grades K-5 in 2010. At capacity, will serve 645 students in grades K-8.
- The school will feature an extended school year (190 instructional days), will run from 8:00 to 3:00, and will offer families before (7:30 a.m.) and after (5:30 p.m.) care
- Proposed Location: 3020 Nowland Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46201

Defining Attributes

- Countering effects of School Closings: The school’s proposed location in NESCO will counter the negative effects on parents and students of the planned closing of at least one traditional public elementary school in the area.
- Indianapolis’ premier “Green School”: The school has developed specific environmental standards and is fully committed to waste reduction, reuse/recycling, green-friendly paper/printing use, natural and biodegradable cleaning materials, anti-bacterial and chemical free ingredients, and efficient power consumption through the use of fluorescent light bulbs and wind power. In fact, the school plans to erect a 150-ft wind turbine to help power the school.
- Home & Solace Program: In an effort to alleviate or minimize the impact of financial and housing instability on student learning, the school has developed partnerships with a number of organizations to acquire and renovate homes in the NESCO area, and then allow parents of students at Paramount or other economically disadvantaged parents attending traditional public schools in the area to lease and/or lease-to-own these homes at below market rates.
- Strong Academic Program: The school will use the research-validated Core Knowledge Sequence, and will invest heavily in the infusion of technology into its curriculum. In addition to core academic instruction, the school will have a strong character education, physical education, music, art, and world language program.
- Results-Based Leadership: The school will be managed by Dr. Michelle Thompson from the Institute for School Excellence. Dr. Thompson has amassed an impressive track record of leading public charter schools such as the Christel House Academy, Hope Academy, and the Challenge Foundation Academy.
- Strong Community Support: The school has received letters of support from the Oakland Block Neighborhood Association, the Brookside Neighborhood Association, the East 10th Street Civic Association, the Oakland Avenue Neighborhood Association, and multiple parents and homeowners in the area.
- Creative Re-Use of Underutilized Commercial Property: The school’s proposal includes renovation of an underutilized property, doubling its size from 22,000 square feet to 70,000 square feet. In addition, the school plans to use the building itself as an interactive teaching tool, through the creation of four “Discovery Zones” that will integrate cognitive and sensory learning.

Contact:
Dr. Michelle Thompson, (800) 778-9334, michelle@schoolexcellence.org
Irvington Community School

School Characteristics

- Open since Fall, 2002
- Currently serves 620 students in grades K-11 on two campuses. At capacity, will serve 789 students in grades K-12.
- The school offers an extended calendar – 193 instructional days – and an extended school day. In addition, the school provides both before- and after-school offerings.
- Current Locations: K-8 Campus – 6705 East Julian Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46219. 9-12 Campus – 6040 East Pleasant Run Parkway, South Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46219
- Class sizes range from 22 to 24 students per classroom.
- Irvington offers a combination of a liberal-arts program aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards, award winning arts program, extensive physical-education program, and world language opportunities.

Record of Achievement

- Academic Achievement: The school has met federal academic achievement standards every year of operation except one. In addition, it has been named Exemplary by the Indiana Department of Education.
- Financial Achievement: The school has received three consecutive Indiana State Board of Accounts examinations without significant comment.
- Parent Demand: The school has had significant waiting lists – in some years approaching 600 students. Over the course of the last four years, the school has had waiting lists large enough that an additional 1-2 new elementary schools could have been opened.
- Parent Satisfaction: Eighty-one (81%) percent of parents rated the quality of education as “Excellent” or “Very Good” on a recent survey.
- Infrastructure Development and Revitalization: Irvington’s elementary/middle school building is a 35,000 square feet, and is the first new school building in the area in generations. In addition, for its high school program, the school purchased and renovated a 32,000 square foot building that was underutilized in the Irvington community.
- Keeping Families in Indianapolis: Parent representatives have suggested that Irvington has been a critical part of their decision to remain in Irvington.
- Teacher Professionalism: The school offers a competitive teacher salary and has developed a pay for performance bonus structure based on student and teacher performance.

Contact:
Mr. Tim Ehrgott, (317) 357-5359, tehrgott@ics-charter.org