CITY TO RECEIVE UP TO $1.3 MILLION FOR NEW COMMUNITY-ANCHORED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced that the Walton Family Foundation pledged to award up to $1.3 million to promote and establish new community-anchored Mayor-sponsored charter schools. The new initiative – CEOs for New Schools – will use a $125,000 matching grant to seed five community-based organizations to consider establishing new schools, and if these organizations successfully submit a charter school proposal and meet the Foundation’s quality criteria, an additional $225,000 in start-up funding will be provided for each new school.

“Among the most successful and innovative schools in Indianapolis are those established by and affiliated with strong community-based organizations,” said Mayor Ballard. “By anchoring these new schools with community partners, CEOs for New Schools will advance the number of Indianapolis students who can access high-quality schools in our city.”

Through a competitive application process, the top five selected organizations will each receive a $12,000 development grant as well as assistance from the Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation and Indiana Public Charter Schools Association to explore the type of school they want to create and/or recruit to Indianapolis. The applicant will then work with the Indiana Public Charter School Association and other support organizations on their leadership, organizational, financial, academic, and facility plans. If the organization successfully submits a charter petition through the rigorous evaluation process established by the Mayor’s Office, it will be eligible to apply for an additional $225,000 from the Walton Family Foundation for start-up expenses.

Most Mayor-sponsored charter schools have been established and anchored by Indianapolis-based community organizations. Founding roles vary but typically include leading the school planning and design process; participating in community coalitions that plan and/or launch the new school; managing and operating the academic and operational functions of the school; and providing various forms of ongoing support. Some examples include the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School (Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana), Hope Academy (Fairbanks), Andrew J. Brown Academy (Indiana Black Expo), Stonegate Early College...
High School (Ivy Tech Community College), Christel House Academy (Christel House International), Flanner House Elementary School (Flanner House, Inc.), Herron High School (The Harrison Center for the Arts), and the Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School (Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce), among others. The resources and institutional capacity these groups bring – such as an intimate knowledge of Indianapolis, access to capital, in-kind services, organizational leadership and capacity, leveraging relationships with other community leaders and constituents, an entrepreneurial skill set, and a track record of results-oriented success – are significant factors contributing to each school’s successful outcomes. Often, these organizations are already engaged in youth or affiliated services, and by founding and operating a school are able to create a comprehensive system of interconnected services for students and families.

Charter schools are independent public schools that have control over their own curriculum, staffing, organization and budget. In exchange for this freedom, they must meet the highest academic and organizational standards. Eighteen Mayor-sponsored charter schools are currently in operation with five more scheduled to open this fall. For more information on Mayor-sponsored charter schools, visit www.indy.gov/mayor/charter.

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