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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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New York Chooses HOPE Foundation's 'Failure Is Not an Option' Approach with SIG Monies

Developing the Leadership to Change School Culture Is Key for New York and Eight Other States

BLOOMINGTON, IND. – (April 8, 2011) – Today an additional 10 schools opted to include the HOPE Foundation's *Failure Is Not an Option*[®] process for improving low-performing schools in their School Improvement Grant applications. They join schools throughout the country that have selected the leadership capacity-building [Intensive School Reform](#) model for their "Transformation Model"—one of four models approved by the US Department of Education for addressing low-performance. The common theme in these schools seems to be a growing agreement among many that shifting the schools' culture is critical to sustaining success.

"Having been responsible for support to low-performing schools in New York City for much of my career, I have come to the conclusion that simply 'restructuring' the instructional program as an intervention is doomed to failure without a significant accompanying cultural change," indicated Ben Waxman, Network Leader for CEI-PEA.

"Schools rarely fail because of the programs they attempt to implement, but rather they fail because the capacity to implement is thwarted by the present culture. The HOPE Foundation provides the persistently low-achieving schools with a methodology and construct to make school cultural change."

Unlike many of the new and larger entrants into the area of school turnaround, the HOPE Foundation has a decade-long track record of success in both turning around low-performing schools and in enhancing overall performance within an entire district or region. The [Intensive School Reform](#) model, based on the principles found in the Award-Winning book *Failure Is Not an Option*[®] (Blankstein, 2004; 2010), is the only one in America receiving support from both the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National Education Association (NEA).

"AASA is pleased to offer a powerful tool like the *Failure Is Not an Option*[®] approach to our membership," said Dan Domenesch, Executive Director of the (AASA). "We are impressed to see how entire districts using this process are able to collaborate in the face of significant challenges."

John Wilson, Executive Director of NEA said "The NEA believes that the HOPE Foundation offers a model of proof and promise to schools striving to make the right kind of change to help students succeed. The HOPE Foundation has shown – over and over again – that its collaborative model of school improvement is sustainable and effective."

The efficacy of this approach was the subject of a study released last week by the American Institutes of Research. The report indicated that there was a "strong correlation" between implementation of the model and student achievement gains in the Mansfield ISD schools studied outside of Dallas, TX.

Of the total 2,138 schools eligible for improvement grants, 833 have received funding thus far. The "Transformation Model" has been selected by 72% of those receiving grants. Schools in Wyoming, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina and New York have begun their work with the HOPE Foundation.

More are slated to begin over the summer.

“People are beginning to understand that programs don’t carry well because they don’t fit all contexts. Building a robust leadership team to shift the schools culture, however, has led to sustainable successes in our schools and districts since 2001,” said Alan Blankstein, President of the HOPE Foundation.

According to Waxman, hopes for a new and sustainable culture are realistic.

“The success experienced by IS 192 in Queens, once a school on the brink of closure, is an example of the value of cultural change. Through the HOPE Foundation support, reform has taken hold, a strong student support culture has been created and increased student achievement has resulted.”

For the full report or to find our more information on Intensive School Reform and the HOPE Foundation, visit www.hopefoundation.org or call (800) 627-0232.

There will be a free webinar for schools and district leaders to discuss SIG guidelines for the "Transformation Model", providing a successful framework for success, and why relational trust is key to successful transformation. The ["How to Make a Transformation Model Succeed" Webinar](#) is April 20th at 3:30pm EDT.

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About HOPE Foundation

Since 1989, the HOPE (Harnessing Optimism and Potential through Education) Foundation – a non-profit 501(c)(3), whose Honorary Chair is Archbishop Desmond Tutu – has led the way in creating learning communities where student success is the only option. HOPE helps to develop high-performing leadership teams and school cultures where *Failure Is Not an Option*[®] for any student. For more information about HOPE Foundation, visit www.hopefoundation.org.
