



# Trust for Learning

A Collaborative Fund

## Funders Launch Collaborative Effort to Create More Self-Motivated Learners and Innovative Problem Solvers in Nation's Schools

*Trust for Learning Will Promote Changes in How, What, and When Children Learn And Expand Availability of Proven Methods for Disadvantaged Students*

Boston—June 6, 2013—As states and communities nationwide focus on raising academic standards, introducing more rigorous assessments, strengthening teaching, and promoting more time for students to master core academic content, a group of donors has launched a new fund to advance a fundamentally different approach to educating young people.

A growing number of foundations—including the Fairfield, Conn.-based McCall Kulak Family Foundation, the Boston-based McTeague Catalyst Fund, and the Dallas-based Harold Simmons Foundation—have joined forces to establish Trust for Learning, a collaborative fund that supports proven approaches that help more children become the independent, self-motivated, and mature problem solvers so highly prized by employers and higher education today.

Trust for Learning advances improvements in education based on research on brain development and learning that indicates that academic achievement and socio-emotional competence are vitally interrelated. The most effective way to foster high levels of learning is to foster these aspects of children's development.

### **Learning from How Children Learn**

“Children are built to learn,” says Laurie McTeague of the McTeague Catalyst Fund. “They are hard-wired from birth to gather knowledge every moment, and to put what they learn to use. Trust for Learning supports efforts that educate young people the way they most naturally learn—by exploring and expanding on their own interests, manipulating real things, and by working independently and with others.”

“Trust for Learning seeks to advance changes in what we teach, how we teach, and when we teach,” says Marianna McCall of the McCall Kulak Family Foundation. “Our aim is to work with policymakers, parents and preschool and public school educators to ensure that we

begin a child's education in the earliest years, build social-emotional skills along with academic skills, and place the child at the center of the education design.”

The funders will promote proven models, such as Montessori education, that are not widely available to lower-income students and families. These models, experts say, help students develop into exceptional learners who also have the non-cognitive skills that are crucial to

success, including social competence, character, creativity, emotional well-being, self-awareness, and resilience. They promote hands-on, self-paced, and collaborative learning that helps children reach their fullest potential. The fund aims to ensure that these approaches take into account the crucial role of the family in helping children learn and grow from their earliest years.

### **Building a National Infrastructure for Expansion**

Trust for Learning will support coordinated action across a broad range of national organizations. The fund will emphasize communications and advocacy efforts, research, and strengthening the infrastructure of current programs to allow for their expansion through support for teacher education, policy development, public-school outreach, and capacity building.

“Not everyone can afford to send their children to private schools that make these options available,” notes Stephanie Miller, executive director of Trust for Learning. “We want to open new doors for high quality early learning and raise the quality of delivery of early childhood education by having these approaches more broadly used in child-care organizations and schools that are ready to adopt them.”

### **More Funders Wanted**

Trust for Learning is intentionally being built to involve funders at the national and regional/state/community levels. The organization will host an inaugural meeting for funders in Portland, Ore., on July 31, 2013, to discuss the goals and purpose of the fund and its strategies to build support for the expansion of developmentally informed approaches to education.

### **About Trust for Learning**

Trust for Learning is a collaborative fund focusing on the interrelation of three pillars of high quality early childhood education: start a child's education in the earliest years, build social-emotional skills along with academic skills, and place the child at the center of the education design.

Trust for Learning operates under the fiscal sponsorship of Third Sector New England.

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