

National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

Welcome to the Webinar!

Expanding the Supply of High-Quality Charter Schools: Innovations in Incubation

We will be starting soon.



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The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and administered by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, under contract number ED-04-CO-0109/0004.

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About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Presenters

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Vice President, The Mind Trust
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Expanding the Supply of High-Quality Charter Schools

Innovations in Incubation

Joe Ableidinger



Ethan Gray



Webinar Overview

- Incubation is a promising strategy for accelerating the growth of high-quality charter schools.
- CEE-Trust members include established and emerging city-based incubators.
- Their experiences reveal **four critical focus areas** for charter incubators and **innovative responses to the challenges of incubation** in each area.
- Policymakers can support incubation through policy change in five major areas.

The Need for Charter Incubation

Limitations of current charter growth

- Top charter schools and CMOs reach too few students
- Need new strategies to expand available options
- Most charters and CMOs anticipate limited growth

Limited supply of promising leaders

- Critical shortage of quality charter leaders
- Too few paths to school leadership
- Insufficient support for top leadership candidates

The Promise of Charter Incubation

Up-front screening and targeted investment

- Rigorous screening, cultivating only prospective school leaders that show exceptional promise
- Invest substantial resources in promising candidates

Accelerate charter sector growth

- Intentionally build supply of promising leaders
- Create more hospitable environments for new charters to open and thrive

Early Evidence Suggests Incubation Pays Off

Established incubators have accelerated charter sector growth in their localities...

- Achieved strong results in incubated schools
- Created hospitable environments for incubation
- Helped recruit proven charter models

...but it is still too early to draw conclusions.

- Few established incubators
- Limited data

What is CEE-Trust?

18 members include mayors' offices, city-based education reform organizations, and foundations dedicated to expanding education entrepreneurship

- The Teaching Trust - Dallas
- The Thomas B. Fordham Institute – Dayton
- The Rodel Foundation of Delaware – Delaware
- Innovative Schools - Delaware
- The Donnell-Kay Foundation – Denver
- The Skillman Foundation – Detroit
- The Mind Trust – Indianapolis
- The Kauffman Foundation – Kansas City
- The Hyde Family Foundations – Memphis
- Charter School Partners – Minneapolis
- Office of the Mayor Metropolitan Nashville & Davidson County – Nashville
- Newark Charter School Fund – Newark
- New Schools for New Orleans – New Orleans
- The Blue Ridge Foundation New York– New York City
- The Arizona Community Foundation – Arizona
- Rhode Island Mayoral Academies – Rhode Island
- The Office of Mayor Kevin Johnson – Sacramento
- The Office of Mayor Francis Slay – St. Louis



Member Characteristics

- All have track records of developing and leading change efforts in their cities
- Members engage in reform by:
 - Launching or growing education ventures
 - Partnering on collaborative projects
 - Sharing best practices and lessons learned

CEE-Trust Charter Incubation Working Group

- Formed to explore topic of charter incubation: intentionally building the supply of high-quality charter schools and CMOs without engaging directly in school management.
- Includes new and experienced incubators and others considering incubation
- Collaborate around common challenges, lessons learned, and potential partnerships

CEE-Trust Charter Incubators – Defining Characteristics

Strategic focus on leadership development

Expertise in new starts

Selective screening for high-potential school leaders

Publically accountable for leaders' success or failure

Strong community ties

Four Critical Focus Areas for City-Based Charter Incubators



Attracting and developing effective school or CMO leaders



Partnering strategically to help leaders open and operate high-quality charter schools and CMOs



Championing charter schools and school leaders in the community



Coordinating advocacy to support charter schools and new charter leaders



Attract and Develop Effective Leaders

- Look to a wide range of local sources for leadership talent
- Search regionally or nationally to meet talent needs
- Recruit and train leadership teams
- Carefully vet and remove candidates who fall short



Partner Strategically

- Pool resources and share strategies and tools among charter leaders
- Match internal capacity with external partnerships
- Network with external partners to access human capital pipelines



Champion Charter Schools and School Leaders in the Community

- Build exceptional boards
- Introduce leaders to communities well in advance of school opening
- Facilitate deep and ongoing community engagement



Coordinate Advocacy to Support New Charter Leaders

- Develop strategic partnerships and build coalitions among operators, authorizers, and districts
- Advocate for public and philanthropic funding
- Publicize school-level and city-wide victories

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation

- Eliminate charter caps, but set a high bar for new charter approvals
- Mandate and hold authorizers accountable for closure or restructuring of low-achieving charter schools
- Fund charter schools equitably for operations and facilities
- Provide charter school leaders substantial operational autonomy
- Streamline approval and governance policies for charter models once they prove successful

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation: Eliminate Charter Caps

What can policymakers do?

- Eliminate charter school caps
- Empower a range of authorizers and hold them accountable

How will eliminating caps help incubators?

- Cities and states that support growth and focus on quality are more attractive places to start schools
- Possible “smart caps” that eliminate limits on growth of networks that demonstrate excellent results

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation: **Hold Authorizers Accountable**

What can policymakers do?

- Hold authorizers accountable for approving, monitoring, and if necessary closing charter schools
- Do not count closed schools against authorizer caps

How will it help incubators?

- Closing failing schools can benefit prospective charter school operators, including incubated school leaders, by freeing up space under state charter caps
- Charter markets with reputations for quality may attract more promising leaders

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation: Fund Charters and Incubators

What can policymakers do?

- Reduce funding disparities between charters and district schools for operations and facilities
- Allocate public funding to support incubation

How will it help incubators?

- Funding equity will allow charters to optimize operational efficiency and improve performance
- Public funding can provide sustainable support while allowing careful monitoring of incubators' results

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation: Grant Leaders Operational Autonomy

What can policymakers do?

- Grant charters exemptions or waivers from restrictive laws in areas such as staffing, curriculum, budgets, and scheduling
- Restrict ability of authorizers to infringe on leaders' autonomies in key operational areas

How will it help incubators?

- States that grant charters more significant autonomies may attract and retain more promising leaders

Top Five Policies to Support Incubation: Streamline Policies to Reward Results

What can policymakers do?

- Permit access to streamlined approval processes for successful incubators
- Permit boards to oversee multiple schools

How will it help incubators?

- Reward successful track record for incubated schools
- Efficient sharing of screening responsibility between incubators and authorizers
- Make it easier to recruit exceptional board members

What Makes Charter Incubation More Compelling than Other Education Reform Strategies?

Relative costs of incubation

- One-time incubation investment of \$200-\$500k
- SIG grants average \$2.59 million over three years
- Turnarounds and other reforms involve ongoing costs

Incubation alleviates major risks of new starts

- By design, incubation helps alleviate risk by focusing on screening and supporting highest-potential leaders
- Most efforts to fix low-performing schools have failed due to incremental reforms and lack of rapid retry

PUBLIC IMPACT is a national education policy and management consulting firm based in Chapel Hill, N.C. We are a small, growing team of researchers, thought leaders, tool-builders, and on-the-ground consultants who help education leaders and policymakers improve student learning in K-12 education. We believe that if we focus on a core set of promising strategies for change, we can make dramatic improvements for all students.



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CEE-TRUST - founded in 2010 by The Mind Trust - is a growing network of 18 city-based non-profits, foundations, and mayors' offices that support education innovation and reform. CEE-Trust's goal is to accelerate the growth of high-impact entrepreneurial education solutions in member cities. CEE-Trust achieves this goal by designing collaborations between cities, identifying and documenting best practices, hosting events, and producing analysis of cutting edge issues.



CEE - TRUST

The Cities for Education Entrepreneurship Trust

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Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Thank you for participating.

- We look forward to your participation in future webinars hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center.
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

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