

DRAFT: NOT FOR RELEASE
EMBARGOED UNTIL DEC. 6, 2011 AT 10:00 a.m. CST

Contact: Media Relations
Phone: +1.206.709.3400
E-mail: media@gatesfoundation.org

**GATES FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS AVAILABLE FOR
CITIES SUPPORTING COLLABORATION, BOLD REFORM AND HIGH-PERFORMING
SCHOOLS**

*Several Communities Eligible to Compete for Grant Funds and Program-Related Investments
Totaling More Than \$40 Million*

Chicago – To support its goal of preparing more students for success in college and career, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is proud to announce more than \$40 million in competitive funding for cities that have signed Charter-District Collaboration Compacts.

The Compacts, first announced in December 2010, are signed by leaders from district schools, charter schools and local communities who pledge to share best practices, innovations and resources among charters and districts. This strategic collaboration is designed to prepare more students for college by working collaboratively on areas like teacher effectiveness, college-ready tools and supports, innovative instructional delivery systems and school models, and improved student-level data use.

The funds announced today are a mix of competitive grant dollars for Compact cities to scale their existing work, and Program-Related Investment dollars to support facilities investments in the highest performing schools.

Leaders in Chicago and Spring Branch (TX) are announcing their Compacts today, and represent the two newest Compact communities. They are joining Baltimore, Boston, Central Falls, R.I., Denver, Hartford, Conn., Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Nashville, Tenn., New Orleans, New York City, Rochester, N.Y. and Sacramento, Calif., for a total of 14 Compact cities. In addition to these 14, the foundation is working closely with several other cities that are likely to announce their compacts in the coming weeks.

“These communities are setting examples for mayors, districts and charter school leaders across the country to work collaboratively, learn from each another and build upon successful practices,” said Vicki L. Phillips, director of Education, College Ready, at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Ultimately, they have the same goal—to ensure all students succeed—so it just makes sense for them to be on the same team. We applaud these communities for publicly committing to work together and do whatever it takes to radically increase the number students prepared for college and career.”

While each of the Compact cities receives a modest investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to advance the work outlined in the Compact agreements, the foundation has not historically made significant monetary contributions to this work.

“We like what we’ve seen, and we’d like to see more of it,” added Philips. The RFP and PRI funds will be used to further the efforts in Compact cities to work together and accelerate student achievement and college-readiness in their communities. And, in conjunction with the larger grant eligibility, the foundation intends to make a small number of program related investments (PRIs) to support mutually beneficial financing and facility use proposals to increase the number of students in high-performing schools. These PRIs may be in the form of low-cost loans, credit enhancements or risk-sharing structures that leverage external funding and can serve as proof points towards the ultimate goal of open access to buildings for all high-performing schools, regardless of governance.

“These Compact cities see common ground, rather than the battle grounds that have characterized the past,” said Don Shalvey, Deputy Director of US Programs, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “They are committed to quality for every student, expanded public school choices and a “can do” spirit that honors teachers and the youngsters they serve,” he added.

Each District-Charter Collaboration Compact is signed by the district superintendent and multiple charter school leaders, with support from other partners in the city, which can include the mayor, local teachers’ unions, and school board members. As part of these efforts, districts commit to replicating high-performing models of traditional and charter public schools while improving or closing down schools that are not serving students well.

Additionally, the Compacts address equity issues that have often led to tensions between public charter and traditional schools, such as whether both school’s students have access to necessary funding and facilities and whether charter schools are open to all students, including those with special needs and English Language Learners. The Compacts also include commitments among district and charter partners to work together on areas like measures of effective teaching, implementation of the [Common Core State Standards](#), and improved use of student data, to improve college readiness rates.

“We have been at this for many years, and this Compact truly signifies a breakthrough for Chicago families,” said Phyllis Lockett, president and CEO of New Schools for Chicago. “By working collaboratively, we forged a real path to expand school choice and high quality charter options throughout our city.”

The Center for Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at the University of Washington will publish annual reports to measure the overall progress of the participating cities and outline the steps being taken to ensure proper implementation.

To learn more about the District-Charter Collaboration Compacts and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s education strategy, please visit www.gatesfoundation.org/education.

###

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*