First Book Insights

First Book proposes to launch a new research service — First Book Insights — that will provide unprecedented access to and critical information from a large aggregated network of teachers and program administrators serving children in need and their families. First Book Insights will deliver data relevant to education issues regarding low-income student populations, as well as their parents and care givers, through strategies including surveys, focus groups, data analytics and in-depth interviews. In addition, First Book Insights will be capable of running comparative studies in the general population to further illuminate the issues and solutions necessary.

THE NEED

According to McKinsey & Company, the failure to provide educational opportunities to children in need imposes the equivalent of a permanent economic recession on our nation.[i] Closing the participation gap for children from low-income families must be a national priority. At present there are more than 32 million children growing up in low-income families. The future of these children and indeed the future of our economy and our democracy depends on elevating the educational opportunities for this population. Insightful and broad ranging data analysis regarding their educational needs, health concerns, school resource needs, and particular challenges such as language barriers, is not easily obtained. How can unmet needs be assessed and affordable solutions provided without current assessment data regarding these needs?

Using the most recent technology to tap into its proprietary database, First Book Insights will facilitate analysis of research findings on needs, curricula and products and provide market data focused on a critical segment of our nation's children. Previously unavailable or hard to obtain information across the entire educational field will be easily available from a full spectrum of front line educators.

THE SOLUTION: FIRST BOOK INSIGHTS

First Book, a nonprofit social enterprise that provides new books and educational resources to children in need, proposes to launch First Book Insights, a data research service. First Book Insights will (a) gather information on the needs of underserved children through their educators and parents and (b) make market and educational research easily available across the social sector. First Book has a proven track record of not only reaching and engaging educators serving kids in need but also supplying fast, accurate and affordable data on those children. When shared with relevant stakeholders, this information can fuel a data-driven, coordinated strategy across the entire learning landscape – from academicians, content creators and administrators to the parents, teachers, and caregivers on the front lines. Researchers, educational policymakers, and companies will gain the unprecedented opportunity to deepen their understanding of the needs, challenges and views of educators on the front lines and use powerful new tools to advance equal education for all children.

First Book Insights services will strengthen the capacity of the educational sector to use reliable market research data to streamline and target resources in a critical sector where funding is limited.

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Aggregated and Engaged Network. As part of its impact model, First Book has aggregated the largest and fastest-growing online community of classes and programs serving our nation's children in need. The First Book Network currently has over 275,000 members comprised of educators and teachers serving children in need in schools and informal settings in all 50 states. It is the largest network of its kind and is growing at a rate of 5,000 members per month. The First Book Network is on track to have 300,000 members by the end of 2016 and 500,000 by 2017. First Book with its growing proprietary database of teachers, administrators and education specialists is uniquely positioned to provide access to the base of the economic pyramid in the US and Canada. First Book has developed the country's first and only supply pipeline (First Book Marketplace) capable of reaching any school or program serving children in need.

First Book Network members work daily with children ages 0 -18, in school settings and in a wide range of informal settings, including community organizations, libraries and museums, after school programs and early childhood programs. The Network represents the full geographic range, from urban to rural and reaches over 2/3 of Title I school district communities nationwide.

Significantly, the First Book Network is a vibrant, responsive and engaged population.   First Book members are also proportionally representative of the universe of educators and programs serving children in need and reach through them to their parents, strengthening our ability to explore the insights of this unique database.

Early Success. First Book's own early research and regularly conducted surveys of its Network, including ongoing tracking and topic-specific inquiries, have demonstrated that this network has a keen interest in sharing its voice through rapid, engaged responses:
  - A higher than normal percentage (30%) of the Network has a high propensity to respond to surveys voluntarily and add their voice to the First Book movement/participate in a panel.
  - When an incentive is offered for participation, the percentage increases.
  - First Book Network members respond quickly to surveys with the response time for a statistically significant sample within 48 hours on average, with no follow up communication/request.
  - The First Book Network has a core of very loyal supporters who see First Book as a trusted organization (72%).

This responsiveness creates a dynamic two-way channel that is primed to apply the most recent database technology to link this growing Network of teachers and educators who serve children in need to content creators, educational researchers and companies who want to better serve this market.

> *First Book is on the leading edge…again. First Book has pioneered innovative literacy solutions for children, families and educators for over two decades. Their deep expertise, unique reach into low-income communities and thirst for new knowledge and asset-based solutions make their team an ideal partner for creative research partnerships that will build more effective teaching and learning models.*
> **Dr. Michael Levine / Founder and Executive Director**
> **Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop**

Promise for a Scaled Enterprise. This unique resource makes possible an understanding of the challenges and opportunities children and those who work with them face every day in their efforts to read, learn, and succeed.

First Book will launch a subsidiary enterprise—First Book Insights—as a catalytic source of information, devoted to maintaining accessibility for educational researchers, content creators and those engaged in providing services to low-income populations.

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First Book Insights will facilitate efficient aggregation of these educators' views toward:

- ✓ Discovering **patterns of need among underserved children**;
- ✓ Creating proof of concept opportunities to **evaluate cutting-edge strategies, materials and content;**
- ✓ Exploring **faster time-to-market for proven research** and breakthrough strategies to be placed in the hands of educators and caregivers serving the base of the economic pyramid;
- ✓ Eliciting low-income **family responses** through a safe, supportive ecosystem;
- ✓ Testing **resources** that synthesize verified strategies into easy-to-implement materials and trainings;
- ✓ Launching **feedback systems** to provide real-time evaluation of content and educational strategies; and
- ✓ Tracking **changes in attitudes**, behaviors and beliefs over time among key sub-audiences of teachers and administrators.

Technology Platforms. First Book Insights will be able to provide the necessary technical support that can create surveys and analyze the data in actionable ways. Creating this direct research-to-user feedback loop in the trusted First Book environment will have positive implications across the social sector for testing, speed of adoption, secure interactions, a voice for the underserved and rich collaboration among the partners.

First Book has invested in its technology foundation over the last 18 months and is preparing for modifications needed to implement First Book Insights. Solutions for applications include:

- ✓ **Application 1: Survey options**
  - **Solution:** First Book utilizes the Qualtrics Research Suite, a sophisticated online platform for initiating online surveys and analyzing the results. We will leverage the export of this data to a new data warehouse and integrate it with the database of registrant information, activity and behavior in our Network to provide deeper insight.

- ✓ **Application 2: Big data analytics**
  - **Solution:** First Book is already engaged with Palantir Technologies, a renowned data analytics firm, to analyze existing First Book Marketplace and registration data, determining meaningful patterns and opportunities for First Book to expand the Network to an estimated 1MM additional educators serving children in need. Dashboard level tools permit analysis of First Book's data in light of externally available data from a variety of sources. First Book envisions an "ecosystem" whereby outside organizations can add their complementary data to provide breakthrough insights on the base of the economic pyramid.

- ✓ **Application 3: Breakthrough research feedback loop**
  - **Solution:** A growing network of educators and program leaders serving the base of pyramid utilize the First Book Marketplace to gain access to affordable resources. This audience will be able to provide online feedback regarding resources through mechanisms such as 1) online ratings and reviews, potentially in collaboration with partner Common Sense Media; 2) integration with social networks; and 3) deeper insights through business intelligence tools that can analyze transactional data across the Marketplace.

- ✓ **Application 4. Virtual focus groups**
  - **Solution:** In addition to this, First Book will improve teleconferencing capabilities with the addition of higher network bandwidth, cameras and projectors for conference rooms and cameras for constituents to participate in the focus groups.

Methodology. First Book Insights will use our expanded technological capacity to offer several ways to bring together stakeholders focusing on data collection, analysis and content design. These will include:

<u>Data Collection and Analysis</u>

- ✓ **Expanded Targeted Survey Options including Parent Engagement**: First Book Insights will conduct targeted surveys of educators serving specific age groups, sectors, geographies and extending to families. These will quantify behavioral trends, identify best practices and validate feedback. Drawing from expertise cultivated from regularly surveying its unique and responsive network, First Book will be able to evaluate the survey responses and then work with partners to develop content that is driven by the field of formal and informal educators who are working with millions of children in need.

  - **Proven capability: affecting content for low-income populations.** First Book administered surveys to determine Network needs for board books. The survey response indicated a strong interest in bilingual editions of classic children's books, including *Good Night Moon* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. First Book negotiated with publishers to create unprecedented, never-before-available bilingual editions. To date, First Book has provided more than 140,000 copies of these titles to the First Book Network.

  - **Proven capability: reaching families.** First Book's survey of its members identified family engagement as the number one (86%) major academic challenge faced by educators in its Network--even more of a challenge than reading at grade level (65%). To address this concern, First Book worked with the Search Institute to use its research-based framework around traits that support strong families to create 'Building Strong Families with Stories,' a collection of books with aligned resources. First Book and Search Institute created the supplemental tip sheets that provided discussion prompts, key ideas for parents to use with that book to draw out the particular family strength the book was meant to illustrate.

- ✓ **Big Data Analytics:** First Book Insights, through its work with leading technology experts Palantir Technologies, will analyze registration and usage data and map this knowledge against outside relevant datasets to gain new insights about the interests and behavior of the First Book Network and apply those insights to partner-driven research projects.

  - **Proven capability: deriving meaningful analytics.** First Book mapped its extensive registration data against four major data sets relevant to children in need: U.S. Census, National Center for Educational Statistics, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, and Enroll America. The First Book statistical analysis confirmed that First Book members are representative of the universe of educators and programs serving children in need, strengthening our ability to explore insights of this unique data base.

- ✓ **Virtual Focus Groups:** First Book Insights will use easy to access technology to conduct virtual focus groups that will provide researchers and content innovators with insightful, timely and direct feedback from First Book's educators and programs. First Book Insights will recruit practitioners from different sectors serving children in-need from across the country, including those who are education activists in their community. These educators will gather virtually to inform content offerings, delivery mechanisms, communication plans and usability in a cost effective and sustainable way.

  - **Proven capability: implementing use cases.** First Book partnered with the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop to conduct virtual focus groups of the First Book Network and learn how educators would use digital games, tools and resources in formal and informal education

settings. Based on these virtual focus groups, the two organizations developed a data-driven strategy for an eGames and digital product distribution channel that builds capacity for new stakeholders.

Content Design

- ✓ **Translating Research into New Content:** First Book Insights will analyze research findings to inform and guide publishers and content creators in their efforts to design engaging, effective content that resonates with educators who work with children in need.   By testing new resources with the First Book Network and evaluating impact, content creators can make adjustments that increase relevance.
  - • **Proven capability: translating findings into impact.** First Book conducted a health needs assessment of its Network to learn about which resources educators needed to support health and well-being. The assessment identified social and emotional development as a top concern and underscored the need for resources that educators/program leaders can use to help students deal with emotions that impact classroom behavior and learning. First Book partnered with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), recognized experts in the field, and created packages of resources that included curated book lists of the highest quality children's books on the topic plus tip sheets or reading guides to go with each book.

Sample Use Cases

- ✓ **Researchers: Guidance on Focus and Parameters of Study.** A research group interested in studying the impact of a specific curriculum on the low-income population or how to customize the elements of a project for higher impact can turn to First Book Insights to save time, develop pertinent hypotheses, and target more robust findings. For example, the question may be "what type of support or teacher coaching will work to increase teacher empowerment in the classroom?" Because the needs in schools in low-income areas will vary, and because research takes months, if not years to complete, every effort to improve the learning environment will be slow and constantly changing. With a robust set of surveys and focus group interactions of the First Book Network, researchers will be able to sharpen ideas and rapidly identify whether "individual coaches" or "easy-access how-to online videos" or "supplemental library assistants" is the right tool to study first and bring to the school systems.
- ✓ **Content Creators: Customization for New Audience.** Content creators guess whether their products will be widely accepted and used. They have to spend large marketing budgets on promoting sales and still don't know if they will succeed. The population of educators of children in need form a brand new market for content creators, whether egame developers, books with diverse content, or grab-and-go snacks. If we know what they need, they are a large untapped market, albeit one that must be offered products at deep discounts. Being assured ahead of time that products are desired and can be available on the First Book Marketplace makes this a win-win-win. Using First Book Insights, we will be able to map specific interests to population centers and data analysis will help develop projections on volume of sales and next stage needs.

PARTNERS, BENEFITS, TECHNOLOGY, COSTS AND PROJECTIONS

Partners. First Book has formed an initial group of partners to launch First Book Insights with a high profile, powerful and immediate rollout that will attract other best and brightest content creators to the concept. This is a partial list:

- ✓ Researchers who have studied behavior and use cases.

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- Michael Levine and Lisa Guernsey, authors of *Tap, Click, Read*; Mr. Levine is executive director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center. Ms. Guernsey is director of the Learning Technologies Project at New America and deputy director of their Education Policy Program. Both are experts in the field of digital learning.
- Susan Neuman, Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. Ms. Neuman was Assistant Secretary of Elementary ad Secondary Education in the US Department of Education during the George W. Bush administration.

✓ Researchers who have developed content.
- Ellen Galinsky, President and Co-Founder of the Families and Work Institute, author of *Mind in the Making*'s breakthrough research on development of executive functions in children. Ms. Galinsky helped establish the field of work and family life while at Bank Street College of Education.

✓ Researchers who have conducted surveys and data analysis.
- Vince Breglio, President of Breglio and Associates Consulting and leading market researcher. Mr. Breglio was Senior VP at Harris Interactive and served in senior executive capacities at Wirthlin Worldwide.

Benefits. The benefits to a funder are in several categories and fully realized in the first year:
✓ Contribution is tax deductible.
✓ Marketing and promotional extensions customized for corporation, corporate foundation, family or other foundation, or other consortium of leaders. The elements could include:
- press outreach, owned and social media promotion
- appearance on the First Book web properties
- data to support Social Return on Investment (SROI) in articles, social media, press

✓ White paper issued on the concept and impacts
✓ Employee recruitment advantages for a new generation concerned with SROI.

Cost. The estimated startup cost to launch First Book Insights is $600,000 for the first two years ($350,000 for technology builds and $250,000 for partner and Network engagement and implementation). The platform will be an extension of, and linked to, the First Book Marketplace, currently offering access to resources for all educators in the growing Network. The funding will enable initial elements including:
✓ Developing customized partnership packages to target categories of research
✓ Designing a robust and automated feedback loop
✓ Engaging data analytics provider on topics of particular interest
✓ Identifying and implementing sustainable virtual focus group technology
✓ Exploring revenue-generating opportunities for future sustainability
✓ Establishing First Book as the go-to resource for discovering best-**i**n-class approaches and for researchers and innovative content creators to gather national practitioner feedback and refine proven research

Sustainability and Capacity Building. First Book Insights will assess fees for access, surveying and related processes on a sliding scale basis, giving all stakeholders in the education sector, from non-profits to corporate

enterprises, access to First Book Insights services and data in a traditional B2B transaction. The fee structure will sustain and grow the foundational social enterprise.

Projections. First Book Insights will launch on a 24-year foundation of First Book's proven models of distribution and impact, as well as data driven observations and extensive engagement with leaders in the field and the 275,000 strong First Book Network of educators who serve children in need. Measurable impact categories for the first two years include:

- ✓ Identify three research categories for early focus with outside partners, such as eLearning technologies or development of problem-solving competencies
- ✓ Develop surveys and focus group content with pilot partners
- ✓ Create and release preliminary white paper on research findings, using data analytics in one category
- ✓ Grow Network of educators to 300,000 by the end of 2016 and 500,000 by the end of 2017

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[i] http://mckinseyonsociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/achievement_gap_report.pdf

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