

The Hill Center

3200 Pickett Road • Durham, NC 27705

919-489-7464 • www.hillcenter.org



Plan: With an innovative, research-validated educational solution for the problem of school failure, The Hill Center in Durham, North Carolina will undertake a “Sharing the Solution” scale-up initiative to significantly increase its social impact and help greater numbers of struggling learners in public schools achieve academic success.

Problem: Approximately 20% of America’s children do not develop basic reading and writing skills, condemning them—without some drastic intervention—to a trajectory of school failure and often, dropout. In a 2011 study of nearly 4,000 students by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, it was found that students who don’t read proficiently by 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to drop out of school than proficient readers.

Solution: Hill has designed intensive remediation programs that enable trained teachers to address gaps in student skills and learning from ages 3 through 18 and can be implemented in a systemic, sustainable approach in public schools. Hill’s “solution” integrates three components for an innovative approach that helps public schools better serve struggling learners:

1) Teacher Training/Certification, 2) Follow-up Support and Mentoring for Teachers, and 3) a Universal Database for Progress Monitoring and Data-driven Instructional Decisions.

Evidence: Hill has over 10 years’ experience working with public schools implementing its Program Model. Multiple research studies by RTI International, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington document the success of Hill programs with struggling learners, many of whom were 2 to 3 years below grade level. In two research studies completed in 2012 with over 500 public school students, the number of students who were performing at the lowest level on state reading assessments was reduced by 50% after only one year of Hill instruction. Hill programs were equally effective in closing the achievement gap for elementary and middle school students, students identified to receive Exceptional Children’s services, English Language Learners, and minority students.

Scaling Strategy: Hill will pursue the following strategies to scale its impact:

- **Build Partnerships and Train Teachers:** Hill will partner with additional districts in North Carolina to establish Program Models and significantly increase number of teachers trained.
- **Leverage Existing Relationships:** Since its inception, Hill has developed and maintained strong relationships that have supported its growth efforts. Essential to this support have been “champions” who have become advocates and funders. With hundreds of foundations, corporations, and individuals who believe that “no child left behind” should not be just a motto, but a moral imperative, Hill programs are a proven strategy to achieve that vision.
- **Establish New Relationships:** In order to increase penetration of public school systems outside current spheres of influence, Hill will seek new relationships and funding partners to become “champions” of its cause, including full utilization of national foundation registries that bring together funders, investors, and nonprofits.
- **Fully Utilize Technology/Expand Distance Learning Offerings:** To maximize labor resources and minimize cost to schools, Hill will utilize state-of-the-art technology to deliver training services and support. This will involve the use of new technology resources as well as further development of on-line courses for teachers.

Capital Needed: Hill’s scale-up will require \$11 million over three years, with \$3.7 million already secured or identified. The Sharing the Solution Scale-Up will expand to 9 additional school districts over 3 years, enable Hill to train and certify 636 additional teachers, and support the academic success of 10,000 students.

Capacity: To support scale-up, from 2006-2011, Hill secured \$12 million from major national and international foundations and private donors to build its teacher training center with state-of-the-art distance learning technology, further develop innovative curriculum, and prepare to deliver high-quality teacher training and strong outcomes at even greater scale. Hill’s management team is made up of highly-experienced staff with significant education, business, and fundraising experience; and the 24 member Hill Board of Directors provides national and international expertise in education scale-up, business development, and marketing.