



MEZZANINE-STAGE FINALISTS

The Hill Center

The Hill Center | www.hillcenter.org

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Scaling Initiative: 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 struggling learners in public schools achieve academic success. Scale-up will be accomplished through a “Promote a Model” approach that will scale-out geographically across eastern North Carolina.

Problem: Approximately 20% of America’s children do not develop basic reading skills, condemning them — without some drastic intervention — to a trajectory of school failure and often, dropout. A 2011 Annie E. Casey Foundation study of nearly 4,000 students, found that students who didn’t read proficiently by 3rd grade were four times more likely to drop out of school than proficient readers. The societal costs of unnecessary grade retention, special education placement, and high dropout attributable to failure to learn to read are enormous.

Solution: Hill’s intensive reading remediation program enables trained teachers to address gaps in skills for students ages 3 to 18 and can be implemented in a systemic, sustainable approach. Hill’s solution integrates three components to help public schools better serve struggling readers: 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 of Results: Hill has over ten years’ experience working with public schools implementing its Program Model. Multiple research studies by RTI International, Duke University, and UNC Wilmington document the success of Hill programs with struggling readers, many of whom were 2 to 3 years below grade level. In two research studies completed in 2012 with over 500 students, the number of students 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 students identified to receive Exceptional Children’s services, English Language Learners, and minority students.

Scaling Strategy: Hill will scale-up through the following strategies:

- **Build New School District Partnerships** to significantly increase the number of teachers trained in HillRAP.
- **Leverage Existing Relationships** with funders who have supported Hill’s growth to date.
- **Seek New Relationships and Funding Partners** to become champions of Hill’s efforts, including utilization of national foundation registries and virtual contribution centers.
- **Utilize Advances in Technology and Expand Distance Learning Offerings** to maximize labor resources and minimize cost to school districts.

Capital Needed: Hill’s scale up initiative will require \$11 million over three years, with \$3.7 million already secured or identified and \$7.3 million left to raise. The Sharing the Solution Scale-Up will expand to 9 additional school districts over 3 years and will enable Hill to train and certify 636 additional teachers, supporting the academic success of 10,000 students.

Capacity: To support scale up, from 2006-2011, Hill raised \$12 million 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 highly-experienced, with significant education leadership and fundraising experience. The 24-member Hill Board of Directors provides significant national and international expertise in education scale-up, business, and marketing.