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Contact:  
Ann McColl, CEO  
The Innovation Project  
919-610-5910

## **The Innovation Project Launches Network to Transform Early Learning by Reimagining School and District Approaches to Problems of Practice**

RALEIGH, NC (July 17, 2018) – The Innovation Project (TIP) announces the launch of its Early Learning Network, a collaboration of district-run elementary schools that will design and implement innovative strategies to transform the early learning experience to dramatically improve student outcomes.

The Network is funded by a three-year, \$982,445 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan.

“TIP’s Early Learning Network will empower principals and school teams to pioneer innovative approaches to educating hard-to-reach students, with an emphasis on their early years,” said Ann McColl, TIP’s Chief Executive Officer. “With the Kellogg Foundation’s generous support, we are bringing together some of our state’s most thoughtful and creative elementary educators and giving them tools, support, and a professional community to be bold and to think outside the box in determining what will move the needle for their students.”

The Network will include 15-20 elementary schools each year of the three-year grant term. TIP will partner with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University to lead Network schools through an intensive process to define learner-centered goals and strategies to improve early learning outcomes. TIP and the Friday Institute are also developing a groundbreaking leadership development program and system of supports to prepare Network principals for the unique opportunities and challenges of running innovative, entrepreneurial schools. Finally, TIP staff will work closely with superintendents and their teams to strengthen district systems and processes to support and empower school leaders and design teams.

Through this initiative, TIP will enable innovative North Carolina district and school leaders to become an indispensable part of the transformation of the state’s approach to early learning. The Network’s goals focus on improving district and school operations; engaging participants in deep, authentic school improvement processes grounded in community needs; and using iterative design to transform student experiences to improve academic outcomes and social-emotional wellbeing.

“This Network lies at the intersection of TIP’s work on redesigning schooling and learning, supporting capable, entrepreneurial leaders and educators, and positioning schools as the hubs of their communities,” McColl said. “We are thrilled to be partnering with the Kellogg Foundation to ensure children thrive and live in equitable communities.”

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### **About The Innovation Project**

The Innovation Project (TIP) is a collaborative working group of forward-thinking North Carolina district superintendents with a team of staff and collaborators. We ground our work in objective evidence while acknowledging the need to thoughtfully consider and implement promising, pioneering practices. New TIP projects emerge from rigorous analysis of research and national best practices, which inform superintendents' engagement in iterative design processes.

TIP's work is driven by five overlapping themes: innovate, connect, empower, transform, and inspire. These touchstones orient our approach to decision-making and guide our project design.

### **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).

### **About the Friday Institute**

The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University's College of Education brings together research, practice and policy to lead the transition from industrial-age schools to a personalized, flexible, technology-enhanced education system that will prepare students for success in further education, careers, and civic life in the global, digital-age world. They conduct research, develop educational resources, provide professional development programs for educators, advocate to improve teaching and learning, and help inform policy-making. Visit [fi.ncsu.edu](http://fi.ncsu.edu) to learn more.