

INTRODUCTION

NewSchools Venture Fund is pleased to share this second installment in our *Practices from the Portfolio* series of publications. As a venture philanthropy firm that invests in education entrepreneurs and supports them as they grow to scale with quality, one of NewSchools' greatest assets is its ability to connect education entrepreneurs with each other and with other leaders, and to enable them to share ideas and knowledge in order to accelerate the pace of systems change for underserved students in public schools. In our engagements with the entrepreneurial education organizations we support, we have found that these entrepreneurs have much to share with—and much to learn from—one another.

We launched the *Practices from the Portfolio* series in order to capture, synthesize, and share this powerful knowledge residing within the NewSchools portfolio. For the first volume of *Practices from the Portfolio* (<http://www.newschools.org/about/publications/practices-from-the-portfolio-volume1>), we identified some of the most effective practices in use by the organizations in our portfolio and produced a set of case studies organized around three areas: human capital, organizational growth, and educational curriculum and quality.

For this second volume of *Practices from the Portfolio*, we identified four critical challenges faced by charter management organizations (CMOs) as they grow to scale. For each challenge, we profiled the practices that three organizations within our portfolio have developed in response. We then collected relevant documents and templates used by these organizations. We believe the resulting set of tools, which are detailed below and cover challenges that range from human capital to performance to home office operations, will inform practitioners as they grapple with these same challenges.

Entrepreneurial education organizations find that one of the biggest challenges they face as they grow is finding and preparing the school leaders they need to achieve at high levels. In ***Principal Selection, Development, and Evaluation***, we describe how three organizations in NewSchools' portfolio – New Leaders for New Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, and Achievement First – have developed strategies to select, train, support, and evaluate school leaders.

As education organizations grow to scale, they must create systems for collecting and managing data about their own performance and about the students they serve. In ***Performance Dashboards***, we describe how three organizations in NewSchools' portfolio – Leadership Public Schools, Aspire Public Schools, and Uncommon Schools – have used documents called “performance dashboards” to collect and measure performance across their operations, finances, and education functions. In ***PowerSchool Student Information Systems***, we describe how three organizations in NewSchools' portfolio – Aspire Public Schools, The Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools, and Uncommon Schools – have implemented PowerSchool software to maintain up-to-date, accurate student data.

As an education organization grows, so too does its physical plant, and it must develop an effective strategy for ensuring that its facilities continue to meet the needs of students and educators. In ***Facilities Management and Maintenance***, we describe how three organizations in NewSchools' portfolio – Mastery Charter Schools, Aspire Public Schools, and Lighthouse Academies – have developed approaches to school facility management and maintenance.

We would like to thank all of the organizations whose practices are profiled here for their willingness to share openly with others and for the time they spent working with us to produce these tools. We believe this compilation exhibits the depth of knowledge and experience embedded in the NewSchools portfolio and highlights the value of sharing effective practices across these organizations as they work to transform public education for underserved students. We look forward to the reflections, conversations and strategic decisions that they will bring about within and among your organizations.