



Feuerstein-Centered Charter School Opens Its Doors

(August 2008) The Robert H. Faulkner Academy Public Charter School in Marion, Indiana opened its doors to a full house. One hundred and ninety eight students walked into a refurbished building to be greeted by the new principal, Joseph Chambers, and nine teachers. The new teaching staff comes to central Indiana from four states: Indiana, Maine, North Carolina and Ohio.

In early August, **iRI** Vice-President Dr. Meir Ben Hur spent a week at the school training all faculty, the principal, and several board members on **iRI**'s flagship program *Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) – BASIC*. In the first year, teachers will dedicate one period per day developing students' emerging cognitive functions. Teachers will help students bridge their developing impulse control, precision, accuracy, and other functions into reading, math, and other areas of the curriculum.

"We are excited. There are so many students here that this Charter can benefit. There are more than we have space for," said Faulkner Board President Jeremy Case. Board Member Carison Adams added, "We had to go to a lottery so that all the applicants could have an equitable chance."

In the second week of preparation, **iRI** Lead Reading Trainer and Indiana Wesleyan University Faculty Member Dr. Gwen Lavert readied the teachers to utilize a balanced reading curriculum. Lavert commented, "Because reading is the most important skill area, we are preparing the Faulkner faculty for a consistent approach. With our balanced reading practice, we want to make sure that the cognitive functions our students are developing with FIE enrich all the learning our students will do."

"This is the third charter school to adopt Feuerstein's work," celebrated **iRI** CEO Jim Bellanca. It is already well on the path to becoming an Enriched Learning School. The faculty is building its behavior management system around Feuerstein's cognitive functions. After the first two weeks of school, students already were making a positive adjustment to teachers' expectations that students regulate and self-direct their behavior.

"Many of the students came here with poor discipline records. Some were identified as major problems," said social worker, June Adams. "We are not seeing that because faculty are on board with tough love that places the responsibility on the student's self control. They are held tightly accountable to 'stop and think' about what they are doing in and out of the classroom. They know we expect them to change whatever happens that was not acceptable. Those few who have had difficulties are surprised about how we are responding."

Faulkner joins Voyageur, a Hawaii Public Charter School, in Honolulu and the Jacob Shapiro Elementary School in Oshkosh, Wisconsin as charter schools built around the Feuerstein Method to enrich student learning.

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