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Talbot Consulting Helps Mount another Rung in the Newark Public Schools Ladder of Success

New York – September 16, 2011 – The **Newark Leadership Academy** (NLA), a new public high school serving at-risk, high-risk, and/or out-of-school youth who reside in the city of Newark, was brought from vision to reality with the project management expertise of Leslie Talbot, when it welcomed its inaugural class on September 6, 2011.

It has been just over a year since Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced his gift of \$100 million, through the **Foundation for Newark's Future** (FNF; foundationfornewarkfuture.org), to improve the chronically troubled public schools in the City of Newark. The FNF has since invested \$500,000 in school startup monies to NLA via its partner organization, **YouthBuild Newark** (YBN; youthbuildnewarknj.org). NLA is one of the newest alternative high schools added to the **Newark Public Schools'** (nps.k12.nj.us) portfolio of new schools.

YouthBuild Newark enables low income youth to complete their secondary educational goals and lead productive, self-sufficient lives. YBN's founder, Robert Clark, has a history of actualizing alternative education models that promote student achievement and provide a profound impact on the lives of Newark's young people.

To ensure a successful school opening, Clark contracted Talbot, Principal of **Talbot Consulting** (TC; talbotconsulting.com), to manage NLA's startup planning and implementation. Talbot was charged with re-designing YBN's highly successful youth development program into a diploma-granting accelerated learning model. TC is an established strategic partner to state and local education institutions and agencies, charter management organizations, school design teams and new school startups. "Leslie Talbot and her firm were indescribably instrumental in the realization of the Newark Leadership Academy. Her expertise and meticulous attention to detail enabled us to leap from planning to implementation." SanDonna Jones, Director of Grants and Administration, YouthBuild Newark, Inc.

"Talbot Consulting has been an invaluable asset to this project" says Clark. This was not the first project TC has completed with YBN. In 2008 TC was retained by **YouthBuild USA** to support local affiliates who had received sub-grants from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's** (gatesfoundation.org) National Schools Initiative (NSI). It was then Talbot met Clark and his staff and forged an on-going affiliation with the organization YBN.

Talbot has long been a proponent of education reform and commends the **Teach for America** (TFA; teachforamerica.org) veteran and newly appointed NPS Superintendent, **Cami Anderson**, for her vision to address the learning needs of struggling students. “NLA is a national model of excellence in alternative education; it’s a second chance,” says Anderson. “Its methods are proven and its leadership team in Newark is top notch. NLA gets it. We are excited to open this school and reaffirm our commitment to prepare all of Newark’s kids to be college and career ready.”

“Cities like Newark have school systems that have failed to meet the needs of atypical students – those who for whatever reason are unable to flourish within traditional school settings. Contrary to common belief, these young people possess a great deal of promise. Oftentimes they just require individualized attention and learning plans, the best and brightest teachers and student services staff, and tender loving care. Unfortunately, atypical students rarely are afforded a choice of quality school options. Through its *portfolios of new schools* plan, Newark Public Schools is well on its way to providing viable options for over-age and under-credited student populations” says Talbot.

Leslie Talbot, Founder of Talbot Consulting (talbotconsulting.com), is formerly SVP for K12connect, Inc. and Director of Research & Evaluation at Teach For America. The Detroit native is a graduate of Stanford University and Columbia University, Teachers College. She currently resides in New York City.

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