



FINANCIAL FACTS ABOUT NEW ROOTS CHARTER SCHOOL

THE MYTH: The current financial crisis faced by the ICSD is caused by New Roots.

THE FACTS: The ICSD is facing a challenging time, but most of the shortfall is a result of potential state funding cuts. The loss of nearly \$3 million in educational funding from the State has nothing to do with New Roots. *And New Roots itself does not constitute an educational funding cut.* The money “cut” from the ICSD budget for New Roots is the money that follows each student to his or her new school. This loss will be offset by the savings realized by the ICSD in no longer serving that student. Further, to support a smooth transition for the district, New York State has significant funds earmarked that could offset the amount redirected to New Roots from the ICSD for up to five years. These funds could amount to an additional \$1 million in educational funding flowing into Ithaca for the first year alone! This combination of factors could actually serve to neutralize the fiscal impact of New Roots during our start-up years.

THE MYTH: The opening of New Roots will require the ICSD to raise tax levies and institute programmatic cuts and staffing layoffs.

THE FACTS: Some students will choose to go to New Roots and a portion of the money used by the district to educate these students will follow. This will require an adjustment, but not necessarily any increases in taxes or a loss of educational quality for ICSD students because the district will recognize *cost reductions* by no longer educating the students who leave. Staff reductions at IHS may be part of these savings, but according to the New York State Charter Schools Association, school districts usually achieve these reductions through normal attrition due to retirement and other factors. Furthermore, New Roots will be adding teaching positions, so there will be no overall loss of teaching jobs in Ithaca. Remember, the total impact of New Roots during the first year will be 1.5% of the ICSD budget, and less than 3% when we reach full enrollment. Studies of districts with charter schools in upstate New York show that taxes in these districts DO NOT increase at any greater rate than those without charter schools. Finally, the critical issue here is to provide the best education for all our kids -- some will be better served at New Roots. For these kids, what is the cost of not starting New Roots?

THE MYTH: The best way to save IHS from program cuts, and the tax payers from tax levies, is to stop New Roots.

THE FACTS: New Roots has already received its charter from the State of New York. That process is done -- New Roots will open in September. At this point, it would be much more productive to lobby Albany lawmakers to find creative ways to retain the educational funding that may be cut.

THE MYTH: In these times of hardship, it is the wrong time to start a new school, and we should just wait.

THE FACTS: This is exactly the right time to start New Roots. **FIRST**, the process to start a charter school can't simply be turned on and off like a light switch. New Roots went through an extremely rigorous and competitive process to attain its charter and receive *three quarters of a million dollars* in start-up funds. This money is available from the **federal government** now. Not later, but now. **SECOND**, New Roots will act as an economic stimulus for Ithaca. It will provide jobs, and revitalize downtown by bringing hundreds of people a day to the Commons. **THIRD**, New Roots will foster students' development as the innovators and entrepreneurs our society needs to revitalize the economy. **FOURTH**, Sustainability education is the next innovation in education and by leading the way, New Roots and Ithaca will be extremely competitive for educational grants. **FIFTH**, if not now, when? Ithacans have been lobbying the ICSD for at least a decade for more educational choices, to no avail. LACS can accept only about 1 in 3 of the students who apply. There is clearly a demand for more choice in Ithaca, and the ICSD has not responded adequately to this demand.