



Organization: BUILD
Program: BUILD at Friendship Tech
Proposed Investment: \$20,000
Benefit-cost ratio: 16:1

Evaluation prepared by: Mark Swartz
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BUILD provides real-world entrepreneurial experience for high school students, promoting achievement, leadership, and professional success. They offer an elective business entrepreneurship course during freshman year with a once-a-week after-school mentor session, and then after-school support and guidance for the remaining years. In addition to the Metro DC area, BUILD operates in the Bay Area (where it was founded; the Tipping Point Community is a funder), Boston, Los Angeles, and New York.

The students at Friendship Tech will acquire the coding knowledge from their core school-day classes that will equip them to launch web and mobile apps, games, and other digital-based businesses. Friendship Tech Prep is a Tier 2 charter school located in Ward 8, is 98.6% African American, and enrolls 72.7% at-risk students; 70% of BUILD 9th graders are on track to graduate on time.¹

We recommend this investment for three reasons:

- **Model.** BUILD develops deep relationships with its partner schools and, in particular, pays the teachers a considerable amount for their time and involvement.
- **Infrastructure and leadership.** The organization has a thorough culture of data, and its entrepreneurial orientation permeates everything they do. The national office empowers the local executive directors to put their own stamp on their programs. BUILD DC's executive director Bryce Jacobs is an experienced social entrepreneur who founded the Sela Public Charter School.
- **Area of focus.** The Lever Fund has made a thorough study of a variety of tech-focused programs. Without a doubt, technology jobs are plentiful in our region, and given the right training, low-income adult learners could potentially find coding, IT, and other technology careers that pay a family-sustainable wage. Out of all our options, BUILD emerged as the smartest choice because the technology focus is well supported by academic and entrepreneurial foundations.

After many years of discussion and planning, BUILD recently launched its pilot for tech-based businesses at Friendship Tech, one of the two charter high schools operated by the Friendship network, both of which post graduation rates well above the city average. Because the students at Friendship Tech are already computer literate, they generally have the skills necessary to develop their own apps, with guidance. Scratch (<https://scratch.mit.edu/educators/>), an elementary coding program developed by MIT, has proven to be a useful tool for these students. General Assembly is involved in this local initiative and is providing ongoing curricular assistance.

¹ http://www.dcpccb.org/sites/default/files/Friendship_PCS_Technology_Preparatory_Academy_High_HS_2014-15.pdf

Metrics

All Lever funding will go to support the general operations of the BUILD classroom at Friendship Tech. As the pilot is evaluated, further components may be added to it, but currently the budget for this program is \$100,000 to serve 35 students annually.

The Lever Fund's \$20,000 investment will therefore cover about seven students. We project that, without our intervention, 5 (71%) of these 7 students would graduate high school and that with our intervention, 7 (100%) will graduate high school. We value these two additional graduations at \$95,000 each (\$50,000 for increased earnings and \$45,000 for improved health), resulting in \$190,000 in benefits.

Because BUILD reports a boost in both college enrollment and college persistence in its alumni, we also project that, thanks to the Lever Fund, 5 (71%) students will enroll in college after graduation and persist for at least two years, rather than 3 (42%). We value these four extra years (two years each for two of the students) at \$128,000, or \$32,000 per year.

Note that while the Lever Fund values the technology opportunities and exposure provided by BUILD, we do not account for future earnings based on the sector that the students will eventually enter.

Individuals served	7
Wage boost	\$318,000
Investment amount	\$20,000
Benefit-cost ratio (projected)	16:1