

New School Implementation Investments (Years 1-3): Application Process

Great MN Schools (GMS) will provide implementation funding to new Minneapolis schools that demonstrate the greatest potential for becoming rigorous and relevant schools with high-performing outcomes for students. Funding will be provided to support schools during their first three years of operation, up to a maximum of \$750 per student. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but please note that the GMS review process may take 2-4 months.

Eligible schools must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Authorizer's affidavit for the school has been approved by the MN Department of Education (MDE) and charter contract has been signed.
- 2) School will open within 18 months or is currently in its first 2 years of operation.
- 3) 501(c)(3) application to IRS for nonprofit tax-exempt status is pending or approved.
- 4) School's Director/Principal has been hired.
- 5) School has secured adequate funding to cover pre-operational costs.
- 6) School has been awarded a grant by the [New Schools Venture Fund](#) or [Charter School Growth Fund](#).
- 7) At least 40% of intended/current student population will be/are from low-income families.
- 8) At least 50% of intended/current student population will be/are Minneapolis residents.
- 9) School is not part of an existing local charter school network. (Note: For new schools affiliated with a local network, please see GMS information on [School Replication & Expansion](#).)
- 10) School is financially sustainable on public funding at full enrollment (as demonstrated by 5-year budget plan – see below).

Interested applicants should contact GMS staff to discuss the above eligibility criteria prior to submitting the written proposal described in Phase I below. (Please contact Morgan Brown at mbrown@greatmnschools.org or 952-297-6791.)

Phase I: Written Proposal & Leadership Interview

School applicants are requested to submit the following information and documents. (The targeted request below assumes that the school previously applied to GMS for an [Entrepreneur Planning Grant](#). If the school did not apply for that grant during its pre-operational phase, GMS will likely request additional information from the applicant.)

- 1) Proposal of 2-5 pages (with up to 20 pages of specified attachments) that addresses the following:
 - Confirmation that the school meets the eligibility criteria by [completing the provided form](#).
 - Brief background on the school, including its target student population and progress on key planning and implementation milestones to date.
 - The school's board-approved budget for the current fiscal year and next fiscal year (if applicable).
 - School leader(s) track record of running great schools and/or driving strong student achievement. (Applicants may attach supporting materials.)

- The goals section of the school's charter contract and any related annual goals or benchmarks the school's board has approved. (Applicants may attach supporting materials.)
- Evidence of parent/community engagement and support in the target neighborhood(s). (Applicants may attach supporting materials.)
- Confirmation that a facility has been secured (e.g. signed lease agreement) or evidence of a sound and timely plan for identifying and leasing a facility.
- Roster of board members (with officers and committee chairs identified) and bios for each member.

2) Completed 5-year budget plan using financial model template provided by GMS.

After reviewing the application, GMS staff will request an interview with representatives from the school's founding team to learn more about its proposed or existing school, including the leadership team, school model, community engagement efforts, human capital plan, financial plan, and operations. The applicant's interview team may be up to 5 people and should include the Director/Principal and Board Chair.

Phase II: Due Diligence

After completion of Phase I, successful applicants will enter a customized due diligence phase intended to address identified areas of concern, based on the Phase I review process. This provides an opportunity for the GMS team and the school's leadership to learn more about each other, through content deep dives, leadership team and board meeting observations, school visits (if applicable), and ongoing dialogue.

GMS Board Decision

Schools that receive a staff recommendation for GMS support will be brought to the Board of Directors for final funding consideration. Prior to the release of any funding awarded by the Board, GMS and the school's board of directors will approve a grant agreement addressing terms and conditions, progress milestones, and reporting.

Questions: Please contact Morgan Brown at mbrown@greatmnschools.org or 952-297-6791.

(Revised August 2019)