Entrepreneur Planning Grants (Pre-Operational): Application Process

GMS will provide planning support to the most promising entrepreneurial leaders and boards developing new Minneapolis charter schools. Pre-operational schools are potentially eligible to receive a grant of $50,000 and access to technical assistance programs. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but please note that the review process may take two to three months.

Step 1: Applications may be submitted by invitation only following an introductory meeting with a school's designated representative(s) and based on whether it meets the following requirements:

- School has been approved by an authorizer.
- 501(c)(3) application to IRS for nonprofit tax-exempt status is pending or approved.
- At least one founding board member has prior experience as a staff or board member of a charter school.
- Desired founding leader has been identified or hired.
- At least one member of the founding team (leader and board) has entrepreneurial experience leading start-up projects or organizations.
- At least one member of the founding team has K-12 academic leadership experience.
- Core components of the school model have strong evidence of student academic success and/or were developed through a formal program for innovative school design (e.g. New Schools Venture Fund's "Design Camp", Bush Foundation's "School Design for Individualized Learning").

Step 2: Invited applicants should submit a two to five page proposal (not including attachments) explaining how the proposed school meets the following criteria and/or referencing those sections and pages of the school's application to its authorizer where they are clearly addressed.

Founding Team

1) Do the school's founding leader and/or other members of the founding team have a demonstrated track record of achieving entrepreneurial <u>and</u> student academic success?
2) Does the school's founding board have the governance skills and capacity necessary to oversee and support the school's successful start-up?
3) What expertise and skill gaps in the founding leader's (or leadership team's) experience have been identified? How will those be addressed during the pre-operational phase?

School Model

1) Do the core components of the school's model have strong evidence of student academic success and/or were developed through a formal program for innovative school design (e.g. New Schools Venture Fund's "Design Camp", Bush Foundation's "School Design for Individualized Learning")?

2) Has the school articulated a comprehensive, integrated plan to implement the proposed model that addresses all essential areas for a successful opening (e.g. talent, operations, data-driven progress monitoring, etc.)?
3) Would the school have a strategic impact on K-12 education in Minneapolis, such as by offering an innovative model, serving a neighborhood or community with limited access to high-performing schools, and/or diversifying the leadership of the city's schools?

Community Standing

1) Does the founding team have strong and authentic ties to the neighborhood or community the school plans to serve?
2) Is the school receiving foundational support from other organizations (e.g. school model development, sourcing of board members, providing staff for pre-operational work, student recruitment, pre-operational funding, in-kind contributions, etc.)?

Attachments

1) Application to authorizer
2) Resume of identified/hired founding leader
3) Current board roster & bios (if changed since authorizer application)
4) Charter contract performance goals (if finalized)

Step 3: GMS staff will conduct an interview with the leadership of the school's founding team to address any remaining questions about the school's proposal. Schools that receive a recommendation for grant funding by the GMS team will be brought to the GMS Board for final approval.

Schools interested in this grant program should contact Morgan Brown at mbrown@greatmnschools.org or 952-297-6791 with any questions and/or to schedule an introductory meeting.