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| **Innovation School Plan**  **Guidance Document** |
| **IMPORTANT NOTE:** This document was collaborativelydeveloped by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, and the Center for Collaborative Education. It is intended to serve as a template for applicants to utilize in their local approval processes. ***This tool can and should be adapted for local use as appropriate.*** |

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# **Innovation Plan Submission Requirements**

As specified by state law, there are two major stages to the approval process for an Innovation School. A **Prospectus** must be approved by a three-person screening committee, and then a fully detailed **Innovation School Plan** must be developed and approved by the innovation plan committee and then approved by teachers (in the case of conversions) and the local school committee. For more detailed information on the Innovation School approval process please see <http://www.mass.gov/edu/innovation-schools.html>.

This document outlines the requirements for the **Innovation School Plan**. *Note: It is appropriate to use the Prospectus as a starting point for the Plan; however, ultimately the Innovation School Plan should reflect the collaborative work of the Innovation Plan*

*Committee. Some aspects may deviate from the original Prospectus, and that is allowable and appropriate.*

*Many of the template prompts for the Innovation School Plan are similar to the template for the Prospectus, however there are additional prompts for the Plan, indicated in* ***bold*.**

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| **Format and Submission Requirements** | The Innovation Plan is limited to 50 pages of text, excluding required attachments.  The Innovation Plan and Measurable Annual Goals must:   * Be prepared on plain, 8 ½ x 11” size paper suitable for reproduction. * Contain one-inch margins * Use 11-point font, or larger * Include a Table of Contents that includes attachments * Include page numbers in the bottom right hand corner of each page, including attachments   ***At each stage submit to district Superintendent:***   * One (1) bound or stapled original copy, * One (1) unbound copy suitable for photocopying, and * An electronic copy of the Plan and MAGs. |
| **Where to Mail and/or Drop-off Prospectuses** | Superintendent’s Office  Name of School District  123 Main Street  Anytown, Massachusetts 12345  *Please Note: All documents submitted become a part of the public record.* |

# **Innovation School Information Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposed Innovation School Name: |  |
| New/Conversion/Academy within a school: |  |
| Proposed School Address (if known): |  |
| Lead Applicant Name: |  |
| Lead Applicant Phone Number(s) : |  |
| Lead Applicant Fax Number(s) : |  |
| Lead Applicant Email Address: |  |

If conversion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Existing School Name: |  |
| Existing School Address: |  |

Proposed Innovation School opening school year: 🞎 2013-14 🞎 2014-2015

Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): 🞎 3 years 🞎 4 years 🞎 5 years

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School Year** | **Grade Levels** | **Total Student Enrollment** | **Total number of Staff** |
| First Year |  |  |  |
| Second Year |  |  |  |
| Third Year |  |  |  |
| Fourth Year |  |  |  |
| Fifth Year |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |
| At Full Enrollment |  |  |  |

# **Innovation Plan Certification Statement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposed Innovation School Name: |  |
| Proposed City/Town Location: |  |

Names of innovation plan committee members (no more than 11 individuals) selected in accordance with state law:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Affiliation** | **Name** | **Vote (yes or no)** |
| Lead applicant: |  |  |
| Superintendent or designee: |  |  |
| School committee member or designee: |  |  |
| Parent who has one or more children enrolled in the school, or in the case of a new school, in the district: |  |  |
| Teacher employed by district (selected from among volunteers) |  |  |
| Teacher employed by district (selected from among nominees submitted by the local teacher’s union) |  |  |
| Member: |  |  |
| Member: |  |  |
| Member: |  |  |
| Member. |  |  |
| Member: |  |  |

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this innovation plan is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and has been approved by a majority vote of the innovation plan committee.

**Signature of Lead Applicant Member \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

# **Innovation School PLan**

## I. Executive Summary

### Summarize the proposed school’s mission and educational program, the community’s need for this school, and the major autonomies to be utilized to achieve that mission. Limit 2 pages.

## Strategic Change Chart

Include a chart (similar to below) summarizing the major proposed changes in the prospectus and outline their intended impact on student achievement.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Current school or**  **district practice** | **Proposed change in practice** | **Expected impact on**  **student achievement** |
| *Example:*  *No common planning time in current schedule.* | *Example:*  *We will utilize schedule autonomy to adjust school schedule and teacher assignments to include common planning time for middle school grade level teams* | *Example*   1. *Increased understanding of student needs and successful practice will lead to increased student achievement.* 2. *Increased support and team-development of curriculum will increase effectiveness of differentiation to address all learners’ needs.* |

## III. Public Statement

Include a statement of 100 words or less summarizing your proposed school. ***This statement will be shared with the media.*** Please be sure to include the school’s proposed location, projected grade span, projected enrollment, and districts served.

## IV. Mission, Vision, Statement of Need, and Proposed Partnerships

### Mission Statement

The mission statement defines the core purpose and key values of the school and informs the public about the students the school intends to serve. It should be consistent with high academic standards and be succinct, meaningful, and measurable. A school’s mission statement provides the foundation for the up-to-five-year term of the school’s innovation plan. Therefore, the mission statement should be reflected throughout all sections of the plan.

Provide the mission statement. The mission statement should:

* Speak to the value of the proposed school.
* Inform the public about the students the Innovation School intends to serve.
* Be consistent with high academic standards and student success.

### Vision Statement

A vision statement should provide readers with an image of the future the applicant group wishes to create. The vision statement should articulate what the school will achieve for the community – students, parents, teachers, board members, and beyond. An effective vision statement aligns with the mission statement and is meaningful and measurable. It also serves as a vivid organizing principle that helps all stakeholders focus on the desired targeted outcomes.

Provide the vision statement. The vision statement should:

* Illustrate a compelling image of the school’s future.
* Describe the ways in which the school will positively impact all stakeholders in the school.
* Align with the mission statement.
* Describe a day in the life of a student and teacher in the school once the innovation plan is in place.

### Statement of Need

Innovation Schools are to be established for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement by utilizing increased autonomy and flexibility. An Innovation School may be established as a new public school or as a conversion of an existing public school or established as an academy within a larger school. An Innovation School may be operated primarily by school faculty and leadership or in collaboration with one or more external partners.

When providing the school’s statement of need, applicant groups should:

* Speak to why this Innovation School is needed in the proposed district(s).
* Describe the student population the school will serve and the needs of this population.
* Describe the specific issues, challenges, or needs that can be addressed or improved by establishing an Innovation School.
* For conversions: Describe what the applicant group perceives as barriers presented by the current school structure or roadblocks to successful implementation of the current school improvement plan that would require Innovation status to address.
* For conversions: Describe specific areas of the current school improvement plan – with a focus on student achievement – that would be addressed by increased autonomy with respect to curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, staffing, and district policies.

### Primary Proposed Partnership(s), if applicable

* Identify the proposed external partner(s) that will be primarily responsible for developing the innovation plan under which the school will operate and in which the external partner(s) are responsible for meeting the terms of the performance contract, and explain why the partner(s) were chosen.
* Describe the nature of the proposed partnership(s) that will serve as the foundation of the Innovation School and why such a partnership is necessary to achieve the mission of the school.
* Provide evidence of the capacity of the partner(s) to develop and operate the proposed Innovation School.

## V. How will Autonomy and Flexibility Be Used To Improve School Performance and Student Achievement?

### A. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Innovation Schools have the freedom to choose and/or develop curriculum models that best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school and that best serve the needs of the expected student population.  Regardless of whether the curriculum is purchased or internally developed, it is important that it aligns with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) since Massachusetts Comprehensive Accountability System (MCAS) tests are based on the learning standards outlined in the MCF, which include the new Common Core Standards (CCS).  Additional information about the MCF and CCS can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/>.  Secondary schools are also advised to coordinate curriculum and course decisions with the recommended Massachusetts High School Program of Studies (MassCore).  Additional information about MassCore can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/masscore/>.  Innovation Schools also have the freedom to determine the instructional methods that will be used to deliver the chosen curriculum model(s), as well as the local assessments used to track student progress and inform instruction.

When describing how the school will use curricular autonomy, applicant groups should:

* Describe the school's instructional and student assessment philosophy and how this aligns with the school’s mission.
* Discuss any special academic/curricular themes the Innovation School will feature, if any.
* Generally describe the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments that will be used by the school.
* If this differs from the school or district’s current curriculum, instructional methods, or assessments, explain why a change is necessary.
* Describe the implementation of the educational program in terms of the daily or weekly organization of students and faculty groupings (e.g., multi-grade, tracking, team-teaching, etc.). and target class sizes and teacher-student loads.
* **Describe the school's approach to literacy and numeracy instruction for diverse learners.**
* **Describe how the curriculum will address the needs of English language learners, and students with special needs.**
* **Describe your proposed plan to assess student performance beyond MCAS. What formative and summative measures will you use to determine student progress and success?**
* **If this differs from the district’s current curriculum, instructional methods, or assessments, explain why a change is necessary.**
* ***For conversions*, explain how the chosen curriculum, instructional program, and assessments differ from the school’s current practice and why changes are necessary.**
* **Describe the proposed exit or graduation requirements and how the school will measure student progress to determine whether they are ready for graduation.**
* **Describe how the chosen curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments are expected to improve school performance and student achievement and are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.**

### B. Schedule and Calendar

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own school schedule and calendar for both staff and students, with the goal of maximizing quality instruction for students and professional development for staff.

When describing how the school will use school schedule and calendar autonomy, applicant groups should:

* Provide reasons for why the proposed school calendar and schedule are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
* Describe the school calendar and daily/weekly schedule for students and how the program or calendar is enhanced and/or expanded. Include the number of days school will be in session, the daily hours of operation, and the way the school will be organized for instruction, independent study, and extra or co-curricular activities. Please be specific in describing these items and refer to the state requirements on minimum number of school days and instructional hours as described in 603 CMR 27.00, available online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html>.
* Describe the calendar and daily/weekly schedule for staff, and how time will be used to maximize **professional development** and **collaborative planning** time focused on instruction and student learning.
* Describe how the proposed school calendar and schedule differs from the school’s current calendar and schedule and why changes are being made.
* **Specifically identify collective bargaining provisions related to schedule and calendar that are proposed to be waived or modified.**

### C. Staffing

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own staffing policies and procedures through waivers or exemptions from district policies, contracts or collective bargaining agreements (approval by two-thirds of the current teachers is required for conversion schools, and negotiation of waivers or modifications to the collective bargaining agreement is required for new schools).

When describing how the school will use autonomy over staffing policies and procedures, applicant groups should:

* Provide reasons for why the proposed staffing structure is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
* Provide a staffing chart and narrative staffing plan which includes a description of the leadership structure.
* Describe how the proposed staffing pattern and job descriptions/roles will differ from the traditional district or school patterns and how the staffing pattern will ensure adequate instruction and services to special education and English language learners.
* Describe the school’s working conditions for administration and staff, and the general areas in which working conditions will diverge from district policies or collective bargaining agreements, including collaborative planning time for faculty.
* **Describe the process by which the school will annually determine the working conditions for staff.**
* **Describe how the decision-making process will ensure broad staff support for the working conditions that are determined.**
* **Describe how the school principal, administrators, faculty, and staff will be recruited, employed, evaluated and compensated in the proposed school and any proposed waivers or modifications of district policies or collective bargaining agreements.**
* **Specifically identify provisions for which working conditions will diverge from collective bargaining agreements. Be sure to note whether the school will hire staff regardless of their current status and how the school will deal with excessing staff (into the district pool) that do not fulfill the needs of the school.**
* **Describe how the approved working conditions will be communicated to all current and prospective staff in a manner that ensures understanding and commitment by all staff within the school.**

### D. Professional Development

Innovation Schools have the freedom to create their own professional development plans according to the needs of the students, staff, and faculty of the school.

When describing how the school will use autonomy related to professional development, applicant groups should:

* **Describe the school’s plan to provide high-quality professional development and support/resources to its administrators, teachers and staff to assist in the implementation of new curriculum, instructional methods, assessments, and other programmatic structures.**
* Explain how plans for professional development differ from the school’s current practice and/or district requirements and why these changes are necessary.

### E. District Policies and Procedures

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own unique policies and procedures that are different from those of the district.

When describing how the school will use autonomy related to district policies and procedures, applicant groups should:

* Provide reasons for why the proposed governance and decision-making structure is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
* Describe the school’s proposed governance and decision-making structure. Explain how the proposed governance structure differs from the school’s current structure and why the changes are necessary.
* Describe the process by which decisions about major policies, programs, and budget will be made and how staff and parents will be involved.
* **In the chart below, or in a similar table**, identify any other areas in which the school will seek flexibility and autonomy from the district. For each area, provide an outline of the policy or procedure and reasons why flexibility from the district is necessary for the school to achieve its mission. Possibilities may include but are not limited to:
* Enrollment process
* Homework policy
* Code of conduct
* Parental involvement
* Principal selection and evaluation
* Teacher supervision/support
* Promotion/graduation standards

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Current Policy or Procedure** | **New Policy or Procedure Utilizing Autonomy** | **Reason Why Flexibility Is Needed** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

* **If the school has developed an MOU, list here and include in Attachments.**
* **Provide an organizational chart.**
* ***Governance*: Many Innovation School plans include increased control over decision-making and distributed leadership, most often provided through instituting new structures of Leadership Teams and/or starting Governing Boards. Should your Innovation School propose to utilize either of those structures, include detailed descriptions to the prompts below:**
  + **Describe the proposed governance structure. If applicable, explain how the proposed governance structure differs from the school’s current structure and why the changes are necessary.**
  + **Provide reasons for why the proposed governance and decision-making structure is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.**
  + **Describe the role of the school council as it relates to governance and the decision-making process.**

### F. Budget

Innovation Schools are intended to be a fiscally-neutral reform option. At the present time, no additional ongoing operational funds will be available to an Innovation School, but the school may propose to use increased flexibility and autonomy over the funds allocated to the school by the district.

Innovation Schools may request a lump sum per pupil budget in which the school has complete discretion to spend funding in the manner that provides the best programs and services to students and their families. This could include:

* A lump sum per pupil budget, the sum of which is equal to other schools within the grade span; and
* District itemization of all central office costs, and freedom on the part of Innovation schools to choose to purchase identified discretionary district services or to not purchase them and include them in the school’s lump sum per pupil budget.

*Additional information from the Innovation Schools statute:*

* An Innovation School may retain any unused funds and use the funds in subsequent school years.
* An Innovation School may establish a non-profit organization that may, among other things, assist the school with fundraising.

When describing how the school will use budget autonomy, applicant groups should:

* Outline the proposed use of budget autonomies for the school.
* Provide reasons for why these budget autonomies are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
* Identify specific priority areas (staffing, services, etc.) that the school proposes to direct funds to, how this may differ from traditional school spending structures in the district (e.g., describe whether teachers will be paid differently or if contracted services will be utilized to provide certain services.)
* Provide reasons for why these budget autonomies are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
* **As applicable, explain the proposed financial arrangement with the local district that ensures the Innovation School’s autonomy over its operations and ensures that the school receives district funds equitably. Please be sure to discuss the following:**
* **How funds will be allocated to the Innovation School (e.g., weighted lump sum per-pupil formula).**
* **If and how the Innovation School will be able to access central district services (e.g., district instructional coaches, textbooks, professional development) in exchange for an equivalent adjustment in the funding they receive from the district.**
* **How the Innovation School will access funds and procure goods and services.**
* **Provide a three-year school-level budget which includes a detailed description of how funds will be used differently in the school to support school performance and student achievement.**

## VI. Capacity of Applicant Group

Along with operational autonomy and flexibility, Innovation Schools take on additional responsibilities for stewardship of public funds. It is important that individuals proposing to start an Innovation School possess a wide variety of skills and qualifications that will enable them to develop and sustain a high performing school. Members of an applicant group may eventually work at, oversee, advise, or govern the proposed Innovation School.

When describing the capacity of the applicant group, applicant groups should:

* **Describe the planning process utilized by the innovation plan committee to develop the proposal.**
* Summarize each member of the applicant group’s experience and qualifications briefly within the text of the document. The experience and qualifications should demonstrate that the applicant group and/or proposed leadership of the school:
* Have experience and qualifications necessary to implement the proposal;
* Demonstrate the capacity to found and sustain a high performing Innovation School;
* Can manage public funds effectively and responsibly;
* Include members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, development and law; and
* Have tangible ties to, and broad and diverse representation from the community(ies) the school will serve.
* If the applicant group includes the proposed school leader(s) (or any other position at the school), indicate the process used to determine that the individual(s) is the best candidate for the position and why s/he has the capacity to effectively utilize additional autonomy.
* *For conversions:* Describe the school’s preparedness and capacity to convert into an Innovation School.
* **Please attach a statement of commitment and resume for each Innovation School Committee member and specify whether the individual is proposed to be a board member, school leader, or to hold any other positions at the school. (Statements of commitment and resumes in the attachments are not counted toward the page limit.)**
* **Attach letters of support from key partner organizations (these attachments are not counted toward the page limit).**

VII. Timetable for Development and Establishment

It is important that the applicant team have a thorough plan for the development and establishment of the proposed Innovation School once approved.

When describing the timetable for the development and establishment of the proposed Innovation School, applicant groups should:

* Provide a communication plan that includes timeline and process for apprising and allowing input from all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and community, as appropriate.
* **Provide a description of the process that has been used to involve appropriate stakeholders in the development of the innovation plan.**
* Include a proposed timetable for the development and establishment of the Innovation School. **Include a timeline of major activities to be conducted over the period of time prior to the school’s opening that will ensure a successful launch of the school.**

The timeline should address such aspects as facility, operations, budget, staff hiring, student recruitment and enrollment, curriculum, assessment, student support, and public and family engagement, ensuring that all are in place by the time school opens.

## VIII. Measurable Annual Goals\*

In order to assess the proposed school across multiple measures of school performance and student success, **the innovation plan must include measurable annual goals** in at least the following areas: (i) student attendance; (ii) student safety and discipline; (iii) student promotion and graduation and dropout rates; (iv) student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System MCAS; (v) progress in areas of academic underperformance; and (vi) progress among subgroups of students, including low-income students as defined by chapter 70, limited English-proficient students and students receiving special education;

(vii) reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students.

Goals that are particular to a school’s Innovation Plan should also be included. Parent involvement or school climate goals are some possible examples.

These measurable annual goals will provide the basis for renewing or modifying the innovation plan at the end of the period of authorization.

Please see the Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) guidance document which contains recommendations for how to determine useful measures. Baseline data should also be included, as well as a timeline for when goals will be achieved.

**\*Use the Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) template and submit it with your Plan. The template can be downloaded here: http://www.mass.gov/edu/innovation-schools-guidance-documents.html.**

## IX. Required Attachments

The following attachments are required and should be sequentially numbered and clearly referred to in the text. They do not count toward the page limit.

* + Statements of commitment and resumes from each Innovation Plan Committee member.
  + *For conversions:* CurrentSchool Improvement Plan.