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| **Innovation School Prospectus**  **Guidance Document** |
| **IMPORTANT NOTE:** This document was collaboratively developed 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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# **Prospectus Format and Submission Requirements**

As specified by state law, there are two major stages of the approval of an Innovation School. A **prospectus** must be approved by a three-person screening committee, and then a fully detailed **innovation 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 guidance for the **prospectus**.

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| --- | --- |
| **Format and Submission Requirements** | The prospectus is usually 10-30 pages of text, excluding required attachments.  ***Submit to district Superintendent:***   * One (1) bound or stapled original copy, * One (1) unbound copy suitable for photocopying, and * An electronic copy of the prospectus. |
| **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 school/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

# **Innovation Prospectus**

# **Screening Committee Approval Form**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Typed Name of Superintendent or designee: |  |
| Signature: |  |
| Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one): | ***Approve Reject*** |
| Date: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Typed Name of School Committee Chair or designee: |  |
| Signature: |  |
| Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one): | ***Approve Reject*** |
| Date: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Typed Name of Union President or designee: |  |
| Signature: |  |
| Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one): | ***Approve Reject*** |
| Date: |  |

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this Innovation Prospectus is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and has been approved by at least 2 of the 3 Screening Committee members.

**Signature of Superintendent or designee\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

# **Innovation School Prospectus**

## 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.* |
|  |  |  |

## 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.

## 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 entire prospectus and 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 prospectus.

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. 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 School status to address.

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

* Identify the proposed external partner(s) that will be primarily responsibly 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 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 curricular autonomies to be explored applicant groups should:

* 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 district or school’s current curriculum, instructional methods, or assessments, explain why a change is necessary.
* Describe the proposed 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.

### 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 proposes to 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 proposed school calendar and daily/weekly schedule for students and how the program or calendar is enhanced and/or expanded. Please be aware of 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 district or school’s current calendar and schedule and why changes are being made.

### 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 proposed staffing chart 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 proposed 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.

### 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 proposes to use autonomy related to professional development, applicant groups should:

* 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 proposes to 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 or comparable school’s current structures 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.
* 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

### 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.)

## 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 or convert to 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 briefly how the applicant group or design team developed this prospectus and why the group is united to establish the proposed Innovation School.
* Summarize each member of the applicant group’s experience and qualifications briefly. 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.

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:

* Describe how the plan development process will include **stakeholder input**.
* Provide a **communication plan** that includes a timeline and process for apprising and allowing input from all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and community as appropriate.
* 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.

## VIII. Measurable Annual Goals

Measurable Annual Goals are required for submission in the Plan, not the Prospectus. However, the Prospectus should be developed with an understanding of the accountability requirements for Innovation Schools.

According to the statute, 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 in the final plan. 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.

The Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) template can be reviewed <http://www.mass.gov/edu/innovation-schools-guidance-documents.html> .

## IX. Attachments

Include any relevant attachments in this section. They do not count towards the page limit.