

Michigan Future Schools Selection Process for High School(s) Opening in the Fall of 2013

Michigan Future, Inc. (MFI) – through its Michigan Future Schools initiative – intends to make grant(s) to help start at least one new small high schools in the fall of 2013.

Our focus is on quality, not governance or location. We will work with traditional public school districts, public charter schools and private schools. We will work with schools located in the City of Detroit as well as those outside the city located south of Twelve Mile Road and east of Telegraph.

Schools must be open to students from the City of Detroit. We will only work with new high schools. And only with schools that we believe have a high likelihood of meeting our student achievement expectations.

We will cast a wide net in our search for founders. We encourage applicants from:

- existing operators (both locally and nationally) of quality high schools that want to replicate
- existing operators (both locally and nationally) of quality k-8 schools who want to add a high school
- innovative public school superintendents interested in starting new model high schools open to students from the City of Detroit
- the next generation of education entrepreneurs

School Characteristics

MFI expects that all students enrolled in the high schools it supports will succeed in college. It has committed to its funders that at least 85% of each school's students will graduate from high school, of those graduates at least 85% will enroll in college and of those who enroll at least 85% will earn a college degree.

To date, we have funded a range of different high school designs, and we plan to continue this: we strongly believe that the three 85s can be achieved through a number of different avenues, and we hope to receive proposals that reflect this belief. At the same time, we expect that all of the designs will include the following core characteristics:

- A school culture committed to all students enrolling and succeeding in college and being career ready
- Smaller numbers of students
- Project based learning
- Teaching and learning built on academic rigor, relevance (career-oriented instruction that is relevant to students' interests) and relationships (individualized attention and support from educators)

- Responsive to the broad needs of each student. Focused on the whole child rather than exclusively on teaching content
- Partnerships with higher education and/or employers ideally involving teaching and learning on college campuses and places of employment as well as in school
- Working to engage families in their children's teaching and learning
- Continuous improvement. Driven by a commitment to all kids succeeding in college, constantly adjusting teaching and learning to improve student achievement.

School Requirements

In addition to the above characteristics, the schools we choose to work must be:

- A new high school: 9-12th grade, 9-13th grade early college or 6-12th grade if the school opens with a 6th and 9th grade simultaneously
- Small: no more than 500 students at full enrollment
- Open Enrollment: Any interested student from the city of Detroit may enroll. Lotteries will determine enrollment if too many students apply
- Operating a fully enrolled 9th grade in 2013
- Staffed with college transition and college success counselors

In addition, if applicable, the school must have a union agreement that allows for open hiring (no guaranteed spots for current union teachers), no bumping into the school, and work rule flexibility that allows for innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

The Michigan Future Schools initiative is a partnership, not just a grant program. Schools we invest in, in addition to the financial grant, will become part of a network of schools that work together with MFS to learn how best to meet the MFS student achievement standards. Grantees are expected to be:

- Active participants in the Michigan Future Schools (MFS) Network
- Active learners, using targeted support, resources, and expertise offered by MFS
- Committed to MFS' accountability standards
- Open, transparent, and organized about sharing student performance data and other salient information that contributes to the knowledge base of schools in the MFS Network
- Branded as an MFI school.

2013 Selection Process

We will choose 2013 school(s) through a three step process. Decisions on who to fund will be made by the Michigan Future Schools Governing Council.

Mandatory Bidders Conference

Attendance at the bidders conference is required. We will not accept an application if you do not attend the bidders conference. The conference is scheduled for December 21, 2011 at 10:00 AM. Place yet to be determined. When scheduled it will be posted at michiganfuture.org/schools.

February 2012 – Stage One – Written Proposals

The written proposal serves as a pre application. It is designed to determine whether schools have (1) a vision aligned with the initiative, (2) a high likelihood of achieving the desired student outcomes and (3) a high likelihood of being ready to open in the fall of 2013.

March 2012 – Stage Two – Finalists Interviews

Based on our assessment of the written proposal, MFI will invite a small number of potential school founders to participate in an interview to determine their interest, qualifications, commitment, and suitability to start and operate a quality high school.

April 2012 – Stage Three – Negotiation of grant amount and terms

After the interviews MFI will identify its finalist(s) to partner with to open new high schools in the fall of 2013. Making it to stage three does not guarantee that a school will be funded.

Michigan Future Schools staff and the founder and staff of the proposed school will jointly develop a detailed implementation plan for the launch and successful operation of the school. If applicable, those selected would need to secure approvals from their governing boards.

Based on those negotiations we will make a determination of whether there is a high likelihood that the proposed school can meet the initiatives requirements and student outcomes. If yes, a grant agreement will be negotiated and recommended to the Governing Council for approval at its August meeting.

The size of the grant will be negotiated on a case by case basis. The average grant will be about \$800,000 over four years. Starting the year before opening and running through the third year of operation. The expectation is that the school will be self supporting with available public funding when the school reaches full enrollment in its fourth year of operation.

The Written Proposal

Interested founders – the person that will lead the school – should submit a written proposal to Michigan Future, Inc. by 5:00 PM on February 1, 2012. The proposal should be no more than ten pages (not counting required attachments).

We are not looking for all the details, but rather for evidence that the founder (1) has the passion, motivation and expertise to successfully operate a school and (2) an implementable vision – how to deliver teaching and learning – of the high school consistent with our school characteristics that is likely to get high student achievement from all students.

Please take as much space as you need for us to understand your vision of the school and your ability to realize that vision. These are the most important components of the written proposal.

In last year's competition what most distinguished those who were invited for interviews from those who weren't was evidence that the founder knew what is involved in successfully designing and operating a high school that prepares students for college success. We believe that high schools are unique. So please provide as much detail as possible on the specifics of the proposed high school.

We have chosen to make the topics you address quite open ended to give you a chance to lay out your proposal in the way you feel makes your case the best. In doing so please make sure you demonstrate your knowledge of all the components of operating a high school and realizing the three 85s. This is your chance to convince us that you know what it takes to design, launch and operate a successful high school serving students from the City of Detroit.

The written proposal should address:

- School Vision
- Key features of your academic program
- Your strategies for moving entering 9th grade students from a 12 (late elementary/early middle school) on the ACT to a 16 (high school ready)
- Your strategies for moving students once they reach 16 on the ACT to a 21 (able to enter college without the need for remediation) by the time they graduate
- How you will create a strong college-going culture
- How you will serve your graduates while they are in college
- Commitment/Motivation of Founder/Founding Group
- Experience and knowledge of Founder/Founding Group
- Readiness to Open in 2013

In an appendix please provide:

- The founders resume and that of all key members of the team

- A five year budget, financing plan and amount requested from Michigan Future Schools assuming a state foundation grant of \$7,000.

In preparing your proposal here are some key questions the Governing Council will consider in determining who to award grants to. Once again there is no set format for how you address these questions in your written proposal.

1. Is your interest in opening a high school somehow reflective of your own educational experience, and if so, how? If not, why do you think your experiences were not a consideration?
2. Is your interest in opening a high school somehow connected to your current or past profession, and if so, how? If not, are there systemic similarities in that profession that have been helpful to you in this project?
3. What do you view as the biggest challenges to closing the “achievement gap” (an ACT score of 12-13 versus 16 for incoming 9th graders)? Why haven’t schools been able to effectively address these challenges?
4. Good schools are a balance of sound pedagogy and sound business practices. If you had to choose, which of the two would be more your strength? As either an educator or entrepreneur in a competitive market, why would a parent choose to enroll their children in your school rather than any of the other new high schools? How will your school be unique?
5. In developing your school plan, what area was most challenging for you and why?
6. What’s the most effective role you can play in the school and why is that role most suitable for your skill set?
7. How does your school address the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of the 21st century adolescent through its physical design, curriculum, and extra-curricular activities ?
8. Is your school an educational institution where you would enroll your own children? Why or why not? (to be answered even if the applicant does not have children)
9. If you were to make a statement that best expressed your reason for opening a high school and you were not allowed to cite student achievement or the existing school district as your motivation, what would it be?

For Those Proposing an Independent Schools

Please submit as an appendix to your written proposal the answers to these questions. It can be above the 10 page limitation on the written proposal.

1. What is your mission statement? Vision statement?
2. Is the existing institution currently a member of any of the following organizations:
 - the Association of Independent Michigan Schools (AIMS)
 - the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS)
 - the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools (MANS)?

If so, which organization? If the institution is not a member of one of these organizations, please explain why not.

3. Since the institution's school board will not operate under the governance of a university authorizer and its academic and fiscal compliances, will the institution go through an accreditation process with MANS or the North Central Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA)? Please explain.
4. Do you currently have a Development office? If so, when was the office created and how long has the current director been in that position? Referring to the director's track record, please give evidence that the director is a good fit for this project. If there is no office or development director at this time, what is the timeline for having them in place?
5. Is there an alternative plan should you fall short of your funding goal? When would notification of an alternative plan being implemented take place?
6. How are the school's board members selected? What is the process? Do you have / will you have written board policies that are in compliance with public school boards or other independent school boards? If you will follow independent school board policy, will Michigan Future receive those policies?
7. What will be the application and enrollment process? Please include procedures for scholarships as well.
8. Will students/parents be interviewed? Why or why not? Student entrance examine are prohibited to be a Michigan Future Schools grantee.
9. What subjects or experiences, if any, will you offer that are not, or rarely, offered in a public school setting (do not include religion, character building, or technology)?
10. What state or national assessments will be administered to the students? Please identify assessments that are not traditionally administered in public schools. Michigan Future Schools will require you as a condition of the grant to administer the MME/ACT.
11. Will you be able to serve students with special needs?

Proposal Submission

Please include a cover sheet with your proposal. It should list the: Name and title of the founder; the organization the founder is with; the founder's contact information: address, phone and e mail and, if relevant, the name and contact information for the person who does scheduling for the founder.

Written proposals will only be accepted electronically in a single PDF file. Please submit your proposal by 5:00 PM February 1, 2012 to lou@michiganfuture.org

After the bidders conference, if you have additional questions please contact Lou Glazer: lou@michiganfuture.org or 734-747-8120.

The Interview Format

We will winnow the field down to the top contenders and schedule those for an interview with the Governing Council. The interview is designed for the school founder to convey to the selection committee their plan for the school when it is fully operational and how the plan will be implemented. Specific questions will be provided to those invited for an interview based on the written proposals.

Timeline

2011

December 1: Call for proposals

December 21: Bidders conference, **mandatory**

2012

February 1: Written proposals due

early March: Decision on who to interview

mid March: interviews

mid April: Decision on who to negotiate with

August : Governing Council awards grants

September: Planning year grants made