

**Michigan Future, Inc.  
Michigan Future Schools Initiative  
Selection Process for High Schools Opening in the Fall of 2011**

February 1, 2010

Michigan Future, Inc. (MFI) – through its Michigan Future Schools initiative – intends to make grants to help start two new small high schools in the fall of 2011.

The focus of this initiative is on providing a high quality education to primarily low-income and minority students in Detroit and its inner ring suburbs. Our focus is on quality, not governance or location.

The Michigan Future Schools initiative is designed to work with traditional public school districts, charter schools and private schools. We will work with schools 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 local operators 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
- 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.

MFI does not believe that there is one right model of teaching and learning to get to those goals. It is willing to work with schools with a variety of approaches to

teaching and learning. But we do believe there are some core characteristics of schools that are most likely to achieve college success. These include:

1. A school culture committed to all students enrolling and succeeding in college and being career ready
2. Smaller numbers of students
3. Project based learning
4. 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)
5. Responsive to the broad needs of each student. Focused on the whole child rather than exclusively on teaching content
6. Partnerships with higher education and/or employers ideally involving teaching and learning on college campuses and places of employment as well as in school
7. Working to engage families in their children's teaching and learning
8. 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 with need:

- to be a small high school. When fully phased in operating grades 9-12, or in the case of an early college grades 9-13, with no more than 500 students.
- to be an open enrollment school – accepting any student interested in attending the school. (If more apply than available space, choosing students by a lottery)
- to be open to students from the City of Detroit
- to operate a ninth grade in 2011. (If you have a way of fully phasing in a high school over four years that does not involve starting with a ninth grade check

with us before you apply.)

- to help students succeed in college, staff to include both college transition and college success counselors
- if applicable, union agreements that allow 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.
- to participate in the small high school network co-convened by MFI and the Skillman Foundation.
- to agree to MFS's accountability standards (to be developed)
- to make available to MFS all student data that can legally be made available (specifics to be developed)
- to agree to possible branding as a MFS school (to be developed)

## **2011 Selection Process**

We will choose 2011 schools through a three step process. Decisions on who to fund will be made by the Michigan Future Schools Governing Council

### April 2010 – Stage One – Written Proposals

The initial proposals will serve as a pre application. They are designed to quickly 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 2011.

### May 2010 – 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.

### June 2010 – Stage Three – Negotiation of grant amount and terms

After the interviews MFI will identify its finalists to partner with to open new high

schools in the fall of 2011. 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 action and financing plan culminating in opening the school in the fall of 2011. 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.

Some grant funds could be released immediately. 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.

### **Written Proposal**

Interested founders – the person that will lead the school – should submit a written proposal to Michigan Future, Inc. by April 1, 2010. 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 has the passion and expertise to successfully operate a school that will get high student achievement from all students.

We believe very strongly that the founder is the key to ultimate school success. So please tell us about yourself in some detail in addressing the topics as well as describing the envisioned school.

The written proposal should address:

*The first two sections below are the most important. So please take as much space as you need for us to understand your vision of the school and your ability to realize that vision.*

#### 1. School vision

- Students to be served: how many, geography, demographics, grades (must include 9-12) and phase in of grades
- Culture

- Desired outcomes for graduates
- Approach to teaching and learning
- Length of school year and school day
- Theme, if any
- Partnerships, in any
- Approach to working with the whole child

## 2. Commitment/passion of founder

- Commitment and Mission: Please describe reasons for starting the school and why you and the school will be successful.
- Motivation: Describe why you are interested in doing this
- Describe your leadership style.
- What do you see your role is in bringing this school to fruition?
- How involved will you be in the operations of the school?
- How involved will you be in administrative oversight?
- What will be your time commitment?

## 3. Experience of founder

- Educational and Career Experience (Please attach your curriculum vitae or resume.)
- Professional and Personal Affiliations, especially those within the Detroit community.

## 4. Knowledge of founder

Please describe your approach to:

- School Administration – Please describe management style and process for selecting and hiring staff. (Please attach a curriculum vitae or resume for all key participants, if any, who you know will be involved in opening and operating the proposed school.)
- At risk students. What is your approach to students without the needed foundation skills to do required course work?
- Building a school culture
- Curriculum:
  - Pedagogy – Best Practices
  - Michigan Standards and Benchmarks, AYP, NCLB
- Intention to meet or exceed these requirements? How?
- Collective Bargaining, if applicable
- Selecting, hiring and training educators
- General Administration: all nonacademic aspects of school management (e.g. payroll, security, transportation)
- Finance: operating a school with long-term financial sustainability after initial

start up grants. (Please provide as an attachment a five year budget, financing plan and amount requested from Michigan Future Schools assuming a state foundation grant of \$7,000. The five years starting with a planning year and then the first four years of operations.)

- Student Recruitment
- College Success: exposing students to college, helping them gain admission to college and supporting them to graduate college.

#### 5. Readiness to open in 2010:

- Facilities:
  - Where do you plan to locate the facility?
  - What is your experience with Michigan Department of Education regulations and building codes?
  - How do you plan to finance the facility?
- Availability of charter, if applicable
- Ability to negotiate union agreement/work rule waivers, if applicable
- Board recruitment/support

#### **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 April 1, 2010 to [lou@michiganfuture.org](mailto:lou@michiganfuture.org)**

**The best way to have your questions answered is to attend the bidders conference on February 22, 2010 at 1:00PM at the Skillman Foundation, 100 Talon Centre Drive, Suite 100, Detroit, Mi**

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

#### **Interview Format**

We will winnow the field down to the top contenders and schedule those for an

interview with a selection committee. 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 prepared based on the written proposals for each founder chosen to be interviewed.

### **Timeline**

February 1: Call for proposals

February 15: Bidders conference to answer questions of those interested in applying

April 1: Written proposals due

May 1: Decision on who to interview

May: Interviews conducted

June 1: Decision on who to negotiate with

August 1: Recommendation to Governing Council for grants

September: Planning year grants made