

NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS

New School Incubation Program



New Schools for New Orleans
www.n sno.org

April 2007

Grant Objective: Develop Excellent Schools, Rebuild New Orleans, Establish New Model for Urban Education Reform for the Nation

The objective of New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) New School Incubation Grant is to allow a select group charter school founders to spend one year in New Orleans in advance of the opening of their schools.

Our nation's highest performing urban charter schools have demonstrated the importance of investing heavily in pre-opening start-up activities. It is essential that charter school founders fully develop their models for school culture, instruction, financial operations, and governance before opening day. Additionally, it is vital that charter founders conduct extensive community and parent outreach so that every charter school is fully integrated into the community which it intends to serve. When a charter school opens, it must be able to raise achievement levels for every student that walks through its doors – the NSNO Incubation Grant is intended to provide founders with the necessary resources to ensure that this starts happening on day one.

NSNO's long-term vision is to ensure that every child attending a public school in New Orleans excels academically, and NSNO considers the New School Incubation Grant to be the cornerstone of this vision. NSNO expects to incubate 5-7 extremely talented individuals each year. Within 10 years, NSNO will have incubated over half of the public schools in New Orleans. These schools, coupled with those run by KIPP and other excellent operators, will then be educating the vast majority of New Orleans children.

If these schools are successful – and NSNO will work tirelessly to ensure that they are – New Orleans will have proven to the nation that all children, regardless of class or race, can achieve academic excellence.

Grant Overview: A New Model for Charter Development

The NSNO Incubation Grant is modeled after the best practices of the KIPP Fellowship program, the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship program, and the New Leaders for New Schools Residency Year – with an additional and intense focus on the specific New Orleans educational and community needs.

The three pillars of the NSNO Incubation program are *Great School Exposure*, *New School Development Assistance*, and *Community Outreach and Networking*. These pillars, which will be detailed in the remainder of the application, are intended to harness national charter expertise, NSNO's new school development technical expertise, and the passion and courage of New Orleans' communities.

The NSNO Incubation Grant is targeted at three types of educational entrepreneurs:

- Individual founders with exceptional educational track records in raising student achievement who wish to open a charter school in New Orleans.
- CMO's and EMO's that wish to open charter schools in New Orleans and are willing to place school-based leaders on the ground ahead of time to build strong ties to the local community.
- New Orleans charter schools that wish to open additional campuses in New Orleans.

The NSNO Incubation Grant will provide up to \$10,000 a month to the founder and/or founding team of the proposed charter school. The founder will be eligible to begin the incubation on June 1st of the year before opening. The grant period will end on April 1st of the following year. If the founder's charter application has been approved, the charter school will then be eligible for a NSNO Start-up Grant, which would last from April 1st to the beginning of the school year. The vast majority of funds will cover salary and benefits for the founder, but additional needs related to start-up that align with the three pillars of the program will be considered.

Selection Criteria: Independent and Innovative Leaders

NSNO will be highly selective in awarding incubation grants. NSNO expects founders to be dynamic and entrepreneurial individuals who can make strategic use of resources while driving the school founding process.

Application Considerations

NSNO will consider the following when awarding Incubation grants:

1. Core Beliefs – NSNO will only provide grants to founders who have deeply internalized the following core beliefs:
 - A belief that every child can achieve academically at the highest level and that it is the moral duty of adults to ensure that this occurs.
 - A belief that data should drive instruction and that standardized assessments are an essential tool for educators in driving excellent practice and student mastery.
 - A belief that charters schools, when developed correctly and coupled with school choice, empower students, parents, teachers, and school leaders and drive increases in student achievement.
 - A belief that the education reform efforts taking place in New Orleans can forever change the landscape of urban education and prove to the nation that all children, regardless of race or class, can succeed.
2. The level of detail and clarity in the school's mission, curriculum, school culture, and metrics for performance.
3. Realistic planning budget and evidence of ability to operate a financially sound school.
4. The experience and evidence of track record of the founder and of other members of the school's potential founding team, CMO, EMO or other partner organizations.
5. Recommendations, resumes, and references.

Post-application Interview

NSNO will conduct an interview with the school founding team that covers the founding team's priorities, strengths, weaknesses, and goals for the school. NSNO will work with the school to develop a detailed plan for both training and financial support to be utilized prior to opening day.

Grant Program: Exposure, School Development, Community

NSNO understands that each founder will be beginning with different professional experiences, organizational affiliations, and proposed school models. As such, NSNO will tailor each individual incubation program to the needs and vision of the grantee. However, NSNO expects that all grantees will participate in visits to high-performing urban charter schools, make use of NSNO's new school development technical expertise, and conduct extensive outreach into New Orleans communities. To facilitate these activities, NSNO will make the following resources available to all founders:

Great School Exposure

1. Site Visits to High Performing Urban Charter Schools

NSNO believes that it is vital for charter founders to be exposed to the school models and best practices of our nation's greatest urban charter schools. NSNO is in close contact with these great schools and will facilitate site visits for all founders. NSNO will also tailor these visits to the founder's specific needs – for example, if a founder needs additional training on data-driven instruction, NSNO will arrange for the founder to conduct a site visit to a school that is leading the nation in using data to drive instruction.

2. Project Based Residencies at High Performing Urban Charter Schools

NSNO will also assist in facilitating project based residencies at high performing schools. The residencies will be for a longer duration than site visits, and will allow founders to immerse themselves in the operations of a great school. These residencies will be structured to provide both value for the founder and the host school, with the founder agreeing to take on a substantive project for the school during the residency.

New School Development Assistance

1. Leadership Training

All founders will be encouraged to attend a 3-day training in school organizational culture and leadership led by Nancy Euske, of University of Berkeley's Haas School of Business. Nancy originally designed KIPP's school leadership program and is the nation's leading expert in school leadership.

2. Instructional Assistance

NSNO's Director of Instruction will work with all founders to assist in developing their instructional coaching abilities and as well as their capacity to use data to drive instruction. Additionally, all founders will be invited to participate in instructional school reviews, during which the Director will be using a sophisticated instructional matrix to review the instruction in existing New Orleans schools and provide these schools with a development plan to address identified weaknesses.

3. Operations Assistance

NSNO's Director of School Operations will assist all founders in developing a school budget and sound operational plan. Additionally, founders will be able to participate in operational school reviews, during which the Director will be evaluating the operational procedures of existing New Orleans schools.

4. Teacher Recruitment

NSNO has partnered with The New Teacher Project to do targeted teacher recruitment for New Orleans charter schools. Founders will have access to the resumes of all teachers that pass the rigorous selection model.

5. Legal Assistance

Through its charter school pro bono program, NSNO will connect founders with free legal assistance to address legal issues areas such as entity development, employment law, contracts, and charter law.

6. Board Development

NSNO is currently building a "Board Bank" of interested professionals and community members who wish to be involved in charter schools, and NSNO will provide founders with the resumes of these individuals. Additionally, once the Board is formed, NSNO will provide Board development training to ensure that the Board understands its proper role and duties.

7. Charter Application Review

NSNO will review the charter applications of all founders. Louisiana's charter application is extremely lengthy and rigorous, and NSNO will assist founders in navigating the application process.

Community Outreach and Networking

1. *Neighborhood Outreach*

NSNO will assist founders in conducting extensive neighborhood outreach. NSNO is already in contact with numerous community organizations who are interested in having charter schools in their neighborhoods, and NSNO will facilitate meetings between founders and community groups to ensure that neighborhoods and founders have a shared vision of the future school.

2. *Educational Networking*

New Orleans is currently the national epicenter of education reform – in no other city is there such a dense network of educational entrepreneurs. Teach For America, New Leaders for New Schools, The New Teacher Project, and KIPP are currently expanding their New Orleans efforts, and NSNO works closely with each of these organizations. NSNO will assist founders in making contacts with New Orleans' education entrepreneurs, so as to facilitate continual collaboration and innovation in New Orleans schools.

3. *Founder Networking*

While NSNO plans to provide a wealth of resources to founders, ultimately founders will gain equally as much from their fellow founders as they will from NSNO programs. Additionally, NSNO will put founders in contact with previous founders who are still in the early years of their own school development.

Use of Funds

NSNO expects that the Incubation Grant will be used to cover the salary and benefits of the school founder during the grant period. Additionally, funds may be used for:

- Site visits to high-performing schools
- Teacher and staff recruitment
- Convening a design team to develop plans for school culture, curriculum, and standards and assessments
- Assembling a Board of Directors
- Retaining a technical assistance provider or a financial manager to develop a business plan that includes pre-opening costs, a 5 year budget, and a funding development plan
- Community outreach and student recruitment
- Participation in nationally recognized school leader training programs

Application Process

Applicants should electronically submit both the Incubation Grant cover sheet and application form. After initial review by NSNO, qualified applicants will be invited to participate in an interview after which NSNO will make recommendations to its School Investment Committee for approval.

NSNO may also conduct other due diligence, such as reference checks, or ask for additional information. Grant decisions will be made within 30 days of submission.

Please submit an email (Subject: Charter School Incubation Grant) to Melissa Muniz at melissa@nsno.org by May 15, 2007.

NSNO School Incubation Grant Cover Sheet

Date:

Amount requested:

School opening date:

Name of charter school:

Designated Grant Contact:

Mailing Address:

Telephone number:

Facsimile number:

E-mail address:

Charter School Type (1-5):

Name of management company (if any):

Name of partner organization (if any):

Preferred location of charter school:

Number of students in first year:

Grade level(s) served:

501(c)(3) status and, if no, when do you plan to apply?:

Interest in "incubation space" (desk during grant term) at the NSNO (yes or no):

NSNO School Incubation Grant Application

The Incubation Grant Application should contain the following sections and be no more than 15 pages in length (not including attachments).

I. Personal Statement

1. Please prove a 2-3 page personal statement that details why you want to open a charter school, why you believe you can be successful in raising student achievement, and what major challenges you expect to face.

II. Educational Program, School Culture, and Capacity

1. Leadership Capacity: Detail the qualifications of the school's leadership team. Include professional and educational background, especially with regards to past teaching success in raising student achievement. If Board members have been recruited, provide their professional histories.
2. Mission Statement: State the mission of the proposed charter school.
3. Education Concept: Describe the school model and why you selected this particular design, pedagogy, and curriculum.
4. School Culture: Describe the proposed school culture, as well as how this culture will be created and maintained throughout the school year. Additionally, describe why you believe this cultural model will motivate children to learn.
5. Goals: Detail the overarching educational goals to which your school will be held accountable. These goals should reflect your intention to increase student achievement.
6. Instruction and Assessment: Detail how you will assess your students and how you will use these assessments to drive instruction.
7. Target Population and Enrollment Planning: Please include a description of your expected students and families with regards to income levels and special needs; your first year enrollment plan; first year grades to be served; total enrollment after 5 years; grade levels to be served at full enrollment.
8. Community Need: Describe the community need and support identified in the geographic area that you wish to serve.
9. Capacity: Describe the managerial, financial, and operational resources that will support your charter school. Please note any affiliated organizations or management organizations.

III. Objectives and Use of Funds

1. List the most important goals that your founding team must meet before opening the school.
2. List the major objectives you would like to accomplish before submitting your application for authorization.
3. Please describe the planned use of funds for the Incubation Grant. Include a budget and proposed timeline for all activities.

IV. Attachments

1. Please attach a pre-operating budget detailing revenues (including grants and donations) and anticipated expenses that will be incurred prior to opening.
2. If the applicant is affiliated with another charter school, please provide this school's 1-5 year operating budget, most recent auditing statements, and a summary of the current year's total budget (including total expenditures; total revenues; per student costs; percent of revenues from government, foundations, corporations, and individuals; and expenses by major categories).
3. Resume of founding team
4. Resumes of any Board members