

Innovative Quality Schools

An authorizer of chartered schools in Minnesota

6616 Brittany Road - Minneapolis, MN 55435

December 2011

Request for Proposals for Chartered Schools to be operated in Minnesota

Innovative Quality Schools (IQS), an approved authorizer of chartered schools, is requesting proposals from organizations and individuals interested in developing one or more public schools in Minnesota using the chartering process. IQS is interested in quality proposals of all types where Minnesota children and youth will learn and grow. We will however give priority to proposals which provide for new and innovative models of school and schooling that include a competent research design of the innovation.

Who is eligible to submit an application?

IQS is soliciting applications from organizations and individuals anywhere in the world who are interested in providing outstanding learning opportunities for Minnesota's children and youth. One or more persons involved with the development of the proposal must have a valid Minnesota teacher license and this person(s) must be on the founding board of the school.

IQS is specifically interested in applications in the following two categories:

1. Models that are new/different and innovative

The applications to be given highest priority are those that propose new and different models of school and schooling. IQS supports the notion that chartering is an important part of the research and development arm of public education. IQS defines innovation as processes that do not yet have a scientific research base but rather are designed around a set of compelling hypothesis as to the models' probability for success. An important part of a successful proposal will include a longitudinal process for researching and validating the model.

It is important to note that IQS understands that innovation need not be restricted to instructional designs only. Applications may be innovative in various ways such as: the instructional program model of the school; the professional staffing and leadership design of the school; the evaluation methodology; the finance model; or, other innovative aspect of the school design to be defined by the applicant. Applicants are encouraged to give consideration to expanding the definition of achievement and ways to measure attainment of 21st century competencies beyond what is measured by test scores.

A growth model or preferably a value-added growth model of data analysis will be used to draw conclusions regarding success of the school where use of that model is feasible.

2. Models that have a demonstrated scientific research base

IQS recognizes the need to replicate successful models which have a scientific research base and we welcome such applications. Proposals having a scientific research base will also be required to be researching an improvement in the model in some way.

IQS has interest in schooling models such as the following.

(Note that these are intended as examples and are not intended to restrict the innovative thinking of the applicants.)

- Schools that are organized from pre-k through primary grades, target children who are at risk of not meeting reading (in English) and math targets by the end of 3rd grade and result in all children meeting literacy targets thereby addressing the achievement gap. These schools will likely be developed around the Five Big Ideas of Literacy and will use a whole school “Response to Intervention (RtI)” model which includes a core curriculum (Tier 1) which is/are specifically designed for the demographics of the students likely to attend the school. Such schools might include partnering with Head Start, child care or other pre-k programs and services as its prek partner or may directly operate the prek program.
- Models of high schools that are organized to assure that students complete a minimum of one year of post-secondary education while in high school. These high schools will be designed in cooperation with a two or four year college/university or accredited trade school. Advanced classes in this school will generate post-secondary credit to avoid duplication of requirements. A strong business partnership is also an encouraged part of the design where students are provided learning opportunities, mentoring and possible employment options.
- High schools which target small communities in Minnesota and use a “Project-based Learning” model that demonstrates how a small high school can effectively meet the needs of students.
- Schools designed so that the learning model will be truly individualized for each student enabling them to move at their own pace and where learning is facilitated both “inside” and “outside” of the school.
- World language immersion schools to be located in rural Minnesota are preferred although immersion schools in urban areas are also welcomed. Where possible, the school should also include a pre-k immersion program partner. A multiple world languages school is of special interest.
- Schools that rely extensively on the use of digital technology using “smart learning programs” and are based on the “Ten Elements of High Quality Digital Learning.”
- Schools that serve students with disabilities in Setting 3 in the regular classrooms using a Response to Intervention (RtI) model.
- Models that demonstrate how schools can provide an outstanding education while at the same time demonstrate financial efficient operations.
- Schools which make maximum use of the world and local communities for learning and where that learning is validated for credit by the chartered school.

Regardless of the model of school, applicants are encouraged to:

- Consider using the “Teacher Professional Practices (TPP)” model of leadership and organization to better assure autonomy for the school professionals and to demonstrate that the professional teachers are those best able to lead the school. For information about the TPP model, go to www.educationevolving.org
- Make significant use of the digital platform.
- Demonstrate how the schooling is individualized for each learner.

Process for application

IQS accepts applications at any time during the year. It is the responsibility of the applicant to be certain that ample time is available for planning and preparation following approval including accessing start-up funding. IQS does not provide any revenue.

- IQS will be conducting meetings regarding this Request for Proposals. If you wish an electronic meeting, that can be arranged. See the IQS website for details.
- Letters of Intent are encouraged but not required to be submitted. It is clearly in the best interests of the applicant to submit a letter of intent. See the IQS website for a template.
- Applications for new schools may be submitted at any time but for fall 2013 school start-up, applicants are encouraged to submit to IQS by June 1, 2012 but again, this is to be determined by the applicant. The full application is available on the IQS website.

Information regarding IQS as an organization and the application process can be found at the IQS website: www.iqsmn.org

Explanation of chartering in Minnesota

Some applicants may not be familiar with chartering public schools in the United States or specifically in Minnesota. We take pride that in 1991, the Minnesota Legislature was the first state in the United States to enact the chartering model. As a result, in addition to public schools operated by local district boards of education, public education in Minnesota now also includes schools that are established through the process called “chartering.” By law, chartered schools are a part of Minnesota’s public education system. Refer to Minnesota Statutes section 124D.10 for the law regarding chartering in Minnesota.

Chartered schools must be authorized by an organization approved as an authorizer by the Minnesota state commissioner of education. Innovative Quality Schools was approved on December 1, 2010 and is a non-profit organization in Minnesota which has been granted tax exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) by the United States Internal Revenue Service.

For more information about Innovative Quality Schools and its authorizing model, contact...

Robert Wedl, Executive Director
 Innovative Quality Schools
 6616 Brittany Road
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55435
 612-501-9606
bob@iqsmn.org

For information regarding the process for responding to this “Request for Proposals” please refer to: www.iqsmn.org