NewSchools

2026 Funding Opportunity

Leading at the Edge

NewSchools

We're excited to launch our $10M funding opportunity for our Innovative Schools, Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, and Learning Differences investment areas.

We're seeking bold, visionary leaders—whether you're an educator, entrepreneur, or school founder—with fresh ideas to transform education. This is your chance to bring your vision to life with a one-year, unrestricted grant of $150,000 to $250,000.

Share your powerful idea with us!

Frances Messano

CEO

Natalie Wilson

Senior Partner

Ana Léon

Associate Partner

Michelle Sanches

Coordinator

Cameron White

Learning Solutions

Pete Fishman

Teaching Reimagined

Erin Stark

Learning Differences

Ariana Valenzuela

Innovative Schools

Kody Melancon

Innovative Schools

Mia Howard

Charter School Design

NewSchools Twitter: @nsvf | Instagram: newschoolsvf | LinkedIn: newschools Facebook: newschools

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Webinar Overview

WEBINAR NEXT STEPS

Part 1:
About the Funding Opportunity

1 Our Vision & Strategy

2 Our Investment Areas

3 Eligibility at a Glance

4 What We Offer

5 Applicant Supports

6 How to Apply

7 Timeline & Next steps

Part 2:
What We Fund & Navigating the Application

While there is one shared timeline, process, and portal to apply, the application questions are different depending on the focus of your idea. **We recommend you watch the Webinar Part II specific to the application that applies to you to learn more about:**

Schools

Application for Innovative Schools

OR

General

Application for Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, or Learning Differences

1 What We Fund

2 What We Ask About

NewSchools

Our Vision & Strategy

NewSchools

NewSchools

NewSchools is a venture philanthropy that builds a better education system by connecting people, resources, and ideas.

NewSchools

We believe philanthropy can power a better future for all students, not just a chosen few.

NewSchools

We're investing in a future where all students can grow into the leaders and problem solvers that our world needs.

NewSchools

We bridge the gap between those with capital and those with the courage to put that capital to work on the frontlines of education.

NewSchools

We're rewriting the rules of education and philanthropy– who gets to lead, who's invited to collaborate, and whose dreams have a shot at coming true.

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What We're Looking For

OUR INVESTMENT AREAS

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

New innovative public schools that support students to develop a strong academic foundation and skills needed for success in life

LEARNING SOLUTIONS

K-8 reading and math solutions that build foundational skills and personalize learning to support student success

TEACHING REIMAGINED

Solutions that redesign educator roles, bridge school and community, and leverage AI to make teaching more sustainable, effective, and joyful

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Solutions that enhance teaching and learning for students with diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities

NewSchools

OUR INVESTMENT AREAS

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

Public schools opening in Fall 2026, 2027, or 2028 that are enrolling students within the K-12 grade span on a full-time basis

TEACHING REIMAGINED

- Providers that help schools adopt new collaborative staffing models to improve educator effectiveness and well-being

- Organizations that support schools to integrate caregivers, community experts, or industry professionals onto instructional teams

- Solutions co-designed with educators to strengthen their instructional practice and prepare them to use AI safely and effectively

LEARNING SOLUTIONS

- K-8 reading solutions
- K-8 math solutions
- K-8 reading and math solutions

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

- Educator professional development and instructional tools designed to increase equitable outcomes for students with a diagnosed or undiagnosed disability

- Special education teacher recruitment and retention initiatives

- Postsecondary readiness solutions designed to meet the needs of students with a diagnosed or undiagnosed disability

NewSchools

We invest in early-stage organizations, new initiatives within existing organizations, and new, innovative public schools.

To be eligible for funding ideas must:

1 advance NewSchools' mission

2 align with one of our investment areas

3 impact US K-12 public education

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Click here to preview the eligibility form questions.

OUR INVESTMENT CRITERIA

Alignment

Ideas must align with NewSchools' mission and one of our investment areas: Innovative Schools, Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, or Learning Differences

Idea

We seek bold ideas that combine new approaches with proven practices to improve student learning and advance equitable outcomes for all.

Community Engagement

We expect innovators to engage students, families, and community members early and often to inform solution design and implementation.

Team

We seek mission-driven, diverse innovators who demonstrate passion, personal integrity, and the ability to execute and deliver impact.

Inclusion

We support teams dedicated to disrupting the predictability of who succeeds in this nation by building organizations and solutions designed for students furthest from opportunity.

Financial Sustainability

We look for organizations with plans for achieving financial sustainability through a mix of revenue sources.

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What We Offer

In addition to unrestricted funding, our ventures receive supports and participate in communities of practice to strengthen their organizations and grow their impact.

Financial Support	Management Assistance		
	Coaching / 1:1 Supports	**Communities of Practice**	**National Experts**
Ventures typically receive a **one-year unrestricted grant of $150,000 to $250,000,** depending on the stage of the idea	Access to **relevant, timely, and customized coaching and support** from our team and external experts	**Opportunities to build relationships and learn** with and from other founders	Additional capital allocated for **customized partnerships to support your leadership and organizational development**

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Learn more about our comprehensive support through this video.

I would recommend NewSchools because it truly has provided necessary resources, community, and confidence as a founder. I truly feel like NewSchools has been in partnership with me to fill gaps around program design, evaluation, board development, and many other areas that helped our non-profit and also my personal leadership. - **Venture Leader**

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Applicant Supports

In order to best support leaders throughout the application process, **we offer the following resources:**
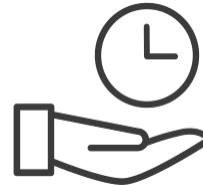
Application Guide: A preview of all application questions as well as a summary of key dates and helpful info

Webinar: A recorded walkthrough of what we invest in, what we offer, our application process, and the application

Office Hours: open, informal time to ask questions in small groups

An **Inquiry Form** to submit questions and receive responses within 3 business days*

FAQs on our website that are updated as new questions surface

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During the application window, there will be **three 90-minute office hours**. These are open, informal opportunities for applicants to drop-in and ask questions in small groups.

General Office Hours:

[Register] Office Hours: Wednesday, November 19 - 3:00 PM ET | 12:00 PM PT

[Register] Office Hours: Friday, December 5 - 1:00 PM ET | 10:00 AM PT

First-Time Applicant Office Hours:

This office hours session will be specifically tailored to first time applicants.

[Register] Wednesday, December 3 - 3:00 PM ET | 12:00 PM PT

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How to Apply

HOW TO APPLY

Step One

- **Create an account in our [funding portal](#)** as soon as possible to access the eligibility form and submit your application.

Step Two

- **Complete the eligibility form** to determine if your idea aligns with our strategy, and which application is the best fit for your idea. You can resubmit an eligibility form to update your responses.

Step Three

- Decide whether to **apply** based on the eligibility results and **submit your application in the [funding portal](#) by January 8, 2026 at 11:59PM PT**.
- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants who submit by **December 1, 2025** will receive an update on their application by the end of January. All applicants will receive an update by March.

? If you have any questions throughout the process, please leverage **[applicant supports](#)**. We're here to help and excited to learn more about your idea!

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While there is one shared timeline, process, and portal to apply, the application questions are different depending on the focus of your idea. **Completing the eligibility form will help you understand if you're eligible to apply AND which application is the best fit for your idea.**

The eligibility form asks: Is your application focused on opening a new charter, tribal, or district school?

Yes ➡️ **Schools Application**

Application for our <u>Innovative Schools</u> investment area

No ➡️ **General Application**

Application for our <u>Learning Solutions</u>, <u>Teaching Reimagined</u>, and <u>Learning Differences</u> investment areas

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Timeline & Next Steps

Submit your idea by January 8, 2026 at 11:59PM PT

Applicants will receive an initial update on the status of their application by **March 2025** and a funding decision by **June 2025**.

Early Submission Deadline
Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants who submit by **December 1, 2025** will receive an update on their application by the end of January. All applicants will receive an update by March.

October 29: Application open

December 1: Early Submission Deadline

January 8: Application closes

March: Status update (All Applicants)

June: Funding decisions

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REVIEW PROCESS

Sorting (Dec - Feb) → **Review (Feb - Mar)** → **Interviews (Mar - Apr)** → **Decisions (May -Jun)**

As applications are submitted, investment teams collaborate to ensure **each application is reviewed by all relevant teams**. This helps ensure all ideas are considered where they fit best.

Teams will thoroughly review applications against our investment criteria. At this stage, **teams may gather additional information from applicants.**

After the review stage, some applicants will be invited to interview. We see this as an opportunity to learn more about leaders, their teams, and their ideas. **You will be notified about your application status by March.**

Finally, we will make funding decisions based on what we learn throughout the review and interview process. While timing varies by investment area, **all applicants can expect to hear from us by the end of June**. Funding will be disbursed in the summer.

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Part 1:
About the Funding Opportunity

1 Our Vision & Strategy

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Part 2:
What We Fund & Navigating the Application

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Schools

Application for Innovative Schools

OR

General

Application for Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, or Learning Differences

1 What We Fund

2 What We Ask About

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NewSchools

Part II: What We Fund & Navigating the Application

General Application

Part 1:
About the Funding Opportunity

1 Our Vision & Strategy

2 Our Investment Areas

3 Eligibility at a Glance

4 What We Offer

5 Applicant Supports

6 How to Apply

7 Timeline & Next steps

Part 2:
What We Fund & Navigating the Application

While there is one shared timeline, process, and portal to apply, the application questions are different depending on the focus of your idea. **In this section we will cover what we fund and what we ask about for the General Application.**

General

Application for Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, or Learning Differences

1 What We Fund

2 What We Ask About

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OUR INVESTMENT AREAS

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

New innovative public schools that support students to develop a strong academic foundation and skills needed for success in life

LEARNING SOLUTIONS

K-8 reading and math solutions that build foundational skills and personalize learning to support student success

TEACHING REIMAGINED

Solutions that redesign educator roles, bridge school and community, and leverage AI to make teaching more sustainable, effective, and joyful

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Solutions that enhance teaching and learning for students with diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities

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What We Fund

INVESTMENT AREAS

LEARNING SOLUTIONS

We will invest in learning solutions that accelerate K-8 reading and math growth. There is a critical need for innovation to increase access to **K-8 reading and math solutions that build foundational literacy and numeracy**, especially for students furthest from opportunity.

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We're looking for tools, content, and models focused on:

K-8 Reading
Learning solutions that empower students to read and write, which is fundamental to their ability to learn across subject areas and communicate with others.

K-8 Math
Solutions aimed at building students' math abilities, from early math skills through algebraic thinking, enabling them to make sense of the world around them, analyze complex topics, and solve problems.

Within these areas, we're looking to address the following opportunities:

➤ Engaging and empowering students to build critical skills that set a foundation for learning and success.

➤ Supporting teachers and families to deliver grade-level and differentiated instruction that meet a range of student needs.

➤ Leveraging generative AI to increase access to research-based instruction and personalized learning.

| **Focus Areas** | ● K-8 reading solutions |
| | ● K-8 math solutions |

✓ In Scope

- High tech, low tech, or no tech solutions
- Solutions focused on student learning, teacher support, or family engagement
- Solutions grounded in the science of reading, explicit instruction, or other research-based practices
- Solutions focused on students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, or other learning differences
- Dual language solutions targeting K-8 reading or math growth
- STEM solutions with explicit focus on K-8 math

✗ Out of Scope

- Focus exclusively on early childhood (birth through 3-years old)
- Focus exclusively on high school or postsecondary pathways
- Focus exclusively on Algebra 2 or more advanced math

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TEACHING REIMAGINED

We champion innovative approaches that make **teaching a more sustainable, effective, and joyful profession that attracts educators of all backgrounds.** We build on existing efforts and catalyze new approaches.

We are especially excited **to support ideas from those who understand the problem best: our educators.**

We're specifically looking for ideas that:

Redesign educator roles
Providers that help schools adopt new collaborative staffing models to improve educator effectiveness and well-being

Bridge school and community
Organizations that support schools to integrate caregivers, community experts, or industry professionals onto instructional teams

Leverage AI
Solutions co-designed with educators to strengthen their instructional practice and prepare them to use AI safely and effectively

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Focus Areas

- Redesign educator roles
- Bridge school and community
- Leverage AI

✓ In Scope

- Organizations that support schools in implementing innovative co-teaching, team teaching, distributed leadership, or fractional staffing models
- Providers that help schools recruit, train, and integrate new sources of talent onto community-connected instructional teams
- Teacher-facing AI tools designed to strengthen instructional practice
- AI literacy/readiness for educators grounded in principles of evidence-based professional learning

✗ Out of Scope

- Exclusively student-facing solutions, such as a curriculum, program or student-facing tool or platform
- Ideas focused on a single school, network or district
- Ideas focused on a single academic subject (e.g. reading, data science)
- Ideas focused on out-of-school time
- Ideas focused exclusively on pre-service teachers
- Technology focused only on saving teacher time

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LEARNING DIFFERENCES

We will invest in innovations that **increase equitable outcomes for the 1 in 5 students with learning differences (diagnosed and undiagnosed),** especially those experiencing the impacts of poverty and racism. Students with learning differences are entitled to a great education that allows them to thrive and excel — in and out of the classroom.

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We will **integrate** a focus on learning differences into all investment areas, while making a small set of **direct investments in the following high-need areas:**

Professional development and instructional tools
Professional learning and related tools designed to accelerate an educator's ability to translate research into practice, create communities of belonging and improve outcomes for students with learning differences

Special education teacher recruitment and retention
Ideas that increase the number of highly qualified special education teachers in schools and improve retention rates by providing support throughout their careers

Postsecondary readiness solutions
Experiential learning opportunities and transition support services designed uniquely for students with learning differences as they move through high school and prepare for college and career

Focus Areas

- Professional development and instructional tools
- Special education teacher recruitment and retention
- Postsecondary readiness solutions

✓ In Scope

- Primary focus is building the skills of educators (e.g. school leaders, general educators, special educators) to understand the needs of students with diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities

- Ideas are grounded in evidence-based practices that are best for students with diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities

- Postsecondary solutions that are either during the school day, engage community partnerships, or lead to certificates

✗ Out of Scope

- Secondary focus is supporting students with learning differences (e.g., may also support students with learning differences)

- Ideas focused on improving support for students with learning differences within a single school

- Ideas focused on pre-service teachers only

- Solutions focused on students in higher education

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What We Fund & Navigating the Application

In this section, we will dive deeper into the **general** application.

NewSchools

1 What We're Looking For

2 What We Ask About

3 Next Steps Recap

NewSchools

What We're Looking For
General Eligibility

In our interactive eligibility form, we ask questions to better understand:

1 If your work **advances our mission and investment focus**

2 The stage of your idea and its alignment with our focus on supporting innovators **in the early stages** of developing new ideas

3 If there is a **dedicated leader to advance the work**

4 If your **new initiative is distinct from existing work** *(for those applying with new initiatives in existing organizations)*

5 If your idea will reach students beyond your school or network.

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Click here to preview the general eligibility form questions.

1 NewSchools invests in the ideas and energy of education leaders and entrepreneurs who are advancing innovative solutions and creating new possibilities for all students. Our investments are focused on reimagining U.S. K-12 public education. **We are seeking to fund ideas that align with our mission and investment focus.**

✔ Eligible

- Ideas aligned with NewSchools mission

- Ideas focused on U.S. K-12 public education

- Non-profits, fiscally sponsored non-profits, for-profits, government entities, individuals

✖ Ineligible

- Ideas focused solely on international education

- Ideas that will not impact public school students

- 501c4s or policy-focused efforts

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2 In the eligibility form, please select the focus area that best describes the primary focus of your idea. If none of the focus areas resonate, it's likely that your idea is not eligible. **This application is focused on our Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, and Learning Differences investment areas.**

✓ Eligible	✗ Ineligible
• Ideas aligned with the focus areas of our Learning Solutions, Teaching Reimagined, and Learning Differences strategies	• Ideas focused on designing and/or opening a new school *(complete the Schools application)* • Schools with a program or project to be implemented only at their school • Other ideas that do not align with named focus areas

NewSchools

3 **We invest in early-stage organizations and new initiatives within existing organizations.** If the stage of your idea is aligned with one of the statements on the left below, you are a fit for this funding opportunity.

✓ **Eligible**

- I have a fully developed idea that I plan to pilot in the next year.

- I piloted my product or program for less than 2 years and I am ready to refine it.

- I have implemented my product or program for less than 2 years, and I am ready to grow my impact.

✗ **Ineligible**

- I have an initial idea that I want to develop further, but I do not plan to run a pilot in the next year.

- I have implemented my product or program for 2+ years and I am ready to focus on growth and scale.

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4 For both new organizations and new initiatives within existing organizations, **we expect that there will be a leader dedicated to advancing the work**.

✓ Eligible

- For new organizations, we expect there to be a leader dedicated to advancing the work full-time within 3 months of receiving grant funds.

- For new initiatives, we look for an identified leader dedicating at least 50% of their time to advance the work.

✗ Ineligible

- New organizations where there will not be a leader dedicated to advancing the work full time

- New initiatives with an identified leader or group of leaders who will each dedicate less than 50% of their time to advance this work (initiative)

- New initiatives without an identified initiative leader

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5 **While we prioritize investing in new, early-stage organizations, we also invest in new initiatives at existing organizations.**

✓ Eligible

- An initiative that is aligned to the organization's mission and represents a new body of work for the organization

✗ Ineligible

- An initiative that represents an improvement, new feature, or expansion of existing work led by the organization

- Ideas that have been implemented for 2+ years

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What We Ask About
General

Application Sections

When we review your application, we are looking to understand the following about your team and proposed idea. The next slides walk through each of the application sections.

💡 Idea

🏆 Impact

👤 Themes

💲 Revenue

👥 Leadership & Team

➕ Additional Information

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IDEA

This section provides an opportunity for you to share **more details about your idea, mission, and vision.** This is the most important section of the application.

IMPACT

In this section, you'll describe **the anticipated impact of your work**. This helps us understand who you intend to serve, and how your idea has the potential to drive meaningful change for students and educators.

THEMES

This section helps us understand **how your idea aligns with our cross-cutting priorities.**

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REVENUE

We would like to understand **how much money you have raised and/or earned in your previous and current fiscal year**. This includes fundraising, raised capital, and earned revenue, if applicable.

LEADERSHIP & TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**. We expect leaders to build diverse and capable teams with the right mix of skills and backgrounds to drive impact.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section **helps us gather useful information about our applicant pool. Many of these questions are optional** and will help us improve our recruitment efforts in the future. It will not impact our funding decision.

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IDEA

This is the most important section of the application. It provides an opportunity for you to **share more about your idea, mission, and vision**. You'll articulate the long-term change your organization seeks to create, the problem you're addressing, and how your idea offers a solution.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Tell us about your idea: How does your solution address a key issue in U.S. K-12 education?

- Describe your approach to engaging community members - particularly students, educators and caregivers - to contribute to the development and design of your idea.

- [Optional] Please share a link to a product demo of your idea.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Strong applications make a clear connection between the idea (what), the problem you seek to address (why), and the implementation plan (how).

- Clearly share the "how" behind your idea by going into as much depth about your program or product as you can.

- Ask someone who's less connected to your work to read your application for clarity.

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IMPACT

In this section, you'll describe the expected impact of your work. This helps us understand who you intend to serve, and how your idea has the potential to drive meaningful change for students and educators.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How will you know if you are successful?
- How do you plan to expand your impact over time?
- Who do you primarily aim to serve?

HELPFUL TIPS

- Your story of impact will look differently depending on the stage of your idea, and that is OK.
- Speak to what you hope will be true for students, educators, and/or caregivers engaging in your program in the next 12 months, if you receive funding.
- Share 3 to 5 specific qualitative or quantitative indicators that will help you assess your short-term impact on students, educators, and/or caregivers.
- Describe who you are currently reaching and where you are currently operating.

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REVENUE

We would like to understand **how much money you have raised and/or earned in the previous and current fiscal year**. This includes fundraising, raised capital, and earned revenue, if applicable.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Revenue Table: How much revenue did you generate in the last fiscal year and in your current fiscal year?
- What is your plan for achieving financial sustainability?

HELPFUL TIPS

- As a funder of early-stage ideas, we understand and expect that many applicants have not yet raised or earned revenue. Responses of $0 are okay!

- Review the Revenue FAQs in the application guide.

- Your long-term plans for achieving financial sustainability may evolve as your idea grows. Describe your latest thinking on how you plan to secure the revenue needed to grow your impact over time.

- If your application moves forward, you will have the opportunity to share additional detail and/or materials in the next stage of the process.

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LEADERSHIP & TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**. We expect leaders to build diverse and capable teams with the right mix of skills and backgrounds to drive impact.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Who is/are the leader(s) behind the idea? How did their professional background and life experiences inform this idea?
- Who are the other team members, if any, working on this idea?
- Number of full-time/part-time leadership team, employees, board members.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Explicitly name the connection between your personal and professional experiences and the work you are leading.
- Share why you (and your team) are uniquely positioned to lead this work.
- Solopreneurs are welcome! Feel free to share about advisors and future roles.
- You'll have the option to share a resume or LinkedIn profile. Please select the resource that best captures your key achievements.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section **helps us gather useful information about our applicant pool. Many of these questions are optional** and will help us improve our recruitment efforts in the future, assisting us in reaching more innovators like you and expanding access to our funding opportunities. Your responses here will not impact our funding decision.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Have you applied to any NewSchools funding opportunities before?
- What is your relationship with NewSchools?
- How and when did you learn about this funding opportunity?
- Which, if any, of the following organizations are you affiliated with?
- What supports (if any) did you receive that helped you complete your application?

HELPFUL TIPS

- Please share candidly.
- Your responses will not impact our funding decision!

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Next Steps Recap

HOW TO APPLY

| Step One | • **Create an account in our [funding portal](#)** as soon as possible to access the eligibility form and submit your application. |

| Step Two | • **Complete the eligibility form** to determine if your idea aligns with our strategy, and which application is the best fit for your idea. |

| Step Three | • Decide whether to **apply** based on the eligibility results and **submit your application in the [funding portal](#) by January 8, 2026 at 11:59PM PT**.
• Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants who submit by **December 1, 2025** will receive an earlier update on their status by the end of January. |

? If you have any questions throughout the process, please leverage **[applicant supports](#)**. We're here to help and excited to learn more about your idea!

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Thank you!

We look forward to hearing your idea!

Twitter: @nsvf | Instagram: newschoolsvf | LinkedIn: newschools
Facebook: newschools | Vimeo: newschools/videos

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2026 Funding Opportunity

Innovative Schools

Innovative Schools

In this section, we will dive deeper into **eligibility** and the **schools application**.

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1 **What We're Looking For**

2 **What We Ask About**

2027	Planning Grant Application

2028	Charter School Design Application

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What We're Looking For
Schools

INVESTMENT AREA

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

Excellent, innovative schools can transform the lives of students, their families, and communities. We support the creation of **new public schools** that provide students with a solid academic foundation and the mindsets, habits, and skills needed for success in life, which we call the [expanded definition of student success (EDSS)](#).

We're looking for **public schools opening in Fall 2026, 2027, or 2028 that are enrolling students within the K-12 grade span on a full-time basis**.

We support teams that are creating:

A new district school
A new district school with autonomies in hiring, instructional design, and school management

A new charter school
The first or second charter school in an emerging charter school network

A new tribal or Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school
Schools that support Indigenous communities that may fall outside of district or charter governance structures

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INVESTMENT AREA

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

We fund leaders that are opening schools in the fall of 2026, 2027, and 2028.

Your application will depend on when you plan to open the school and the type of school you plan to open.

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2026

Launch Grants
If you are opening a public charter or district school in 2026, please complete a brief interest form and we will invite you to complete a full application this summer.

2027

Planning Grants
If you plan to open a public charter or district school in 2027, you can submit an application after completing the eligibility form.

2028

Charter School Design Grants
If you plan to open a charter school in 2028, you can submit an application after completing the eligibility form. We are open to all applicants, and have an interest in supporting leaders who want to open a new charter school in partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) through our HBCU Charter School Design Fellowship.

WHO

We're looking for **diverse school founders who have a deep connection to the communities they serve**. Collectively, the mission-driven, innovative team brings skills in instruction, school management and school operations, demonstrating they are **capable of designing and launching an innovative PK-12 public school**.

HOW

We expect teams to **engage students, families and community members early and often to inform all aspects of design and planning**. Furthermore, teams must be able to turn their vision into reality. We look for **teams with a plan to achieve a successful school launch**, and evidence that a team is on track to realize a wide range of student outcome goals.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

While approaches may vary, all schools in our portfolio are **student-centered**, embrace an **expanded definition of student success**, and prioritize **inclusive school models** by holding high expectations for all, ensuring learning outcomes are not predictable by identity.

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Expanded Definition of Student Success

Strong Academic Foundation

- Extraordinary patterns of growth year-over-year
- Superior rates of proficiency
- On-time high school graduation
- College and workforce readiness

Essential Mindsets, Habits, and Skills

- Growth mindset
- Curiosity
- Perseverance
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy
- Self-management
- Social awareness

Positive Learning Environment

- Fairness
- Learning strategies
- Rigorous expectations
- School safety
- Sense of belonging
- Student engagement
- Teacher and student relationships
- Diversity and inclusion
- Cultural awareness and action

Success in Life

- Pursuit of self-determined goals
- Financial stability and upward mobility
- Long and healthy life
- Engaged citizenship
- Meaningful contribution to community

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Expanded Definition of Student Success Insight Brief

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR: SCHOOLS

EDSS

We believe every young person should finish high school prepared and inspired to pursue a life full of opportunity, choices, connection and meaning. To realize this aspiration, students need a **strong academic foundation, as well as other mindsets, habits and skills that are correlated with [success](#) in life**.

INCLUSION

We look for schools to **hold high expectations and ensure learning outcomes are not predictable by race/ethnicity, income, gender, or geography**. We believe educators should work closely with families to create schools that embody their aspirations for their children and implement instructional approaches to meet the needs of every student.

INNOVATION

We know many existing schools were designed for a different time and purpose. We need to design schools, so they work better for today's students. **Innovation can and should take many forms, including combining new ideas with proven practice.** We are also interested in learning more about how school founders are supporting post-secondary success, students with learning differences, leveraging generative AI, and/or adopting new approaches to educator roles.

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Application Paths

While there is one shared timeline, process, and portal to apply, the application questions are different depending on when you plan to open your school. Completing the eligibility form will help you understand if you're eligible to apply AND which application is the best fit for your idea.

The next slides walk through each of the application sections. If you are opening a charter school in 2028, please skip ahead to charter school design grants chapter.

When are you planning to open the school?

| 2026 | ➡️ | **Launch Grant** *(Interest Form)* |

| 2027 | ➡️ | **Planning Grant** |

| 2028 | ➡️ | **Charter School Design Grant** |

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If you have questions about when you plan to open your school, please submit an **inquiry form**. Our team is ready to support you in understanding your eligibility.

1 **Do charter schools have to be authorized by the application deadline?**

Charter schools do not need to be authorized by the application deadline in order to move forward in the application process. However, we do take into account where in the authorization process teams are in relation to their launch year and any significant barriers to authorization before disbursing funding. We expect teams to have a clear plan for achieving this milestone and a strong understanding of their local context.

If you have not received authorization, it is highly unlikely that you will be on track to open in the 2026-27 school year. If that's the case for your school, a planning or design grant is likely a better fit for you. If you have not started the charter petition or authorization process at all, you are likely on the design track.

2 **What autonomies do district schools need to be eligible for funding?**

District schools must have autonomies in hiring, instructional design, and school management. These do not need to be formalized by the application timeline but should be secured before the school opens to receive additional funding. We do, however, require a letter of support from the district's superintendent or designee at the time of application to consider your school proposal for funding.

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Eligibility
Planning Grants

Focus | We fund leaders that are opening schools in the fall of 2026 and 2027.

✓ Eligible

- Enrolling students within the K-12 grade span on a full-time basis

- A fully publicly-funded school that does not charge for students to attend

✗ Ineligible

- Expansions or replications within established CMOs (school 3 or beyond)

- A restart or consolidation of existing schools that were previously open

- Turnaround or redesigns of existing schools

- Schools within schools

- Centers that serve *only* Pre-K students

- Schools launching in Fall 2029 or later

- Charter school 2s that are not yet outperforming their local school district

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Eligibility | Your eligibility will depend on **when** you plan to open the school and the **type of school** you plan to open.

**Planning and Launch Grants
Fall 2026 or 2027**

- A first or second charter school in an emerging charter management organization (CMO)
- A new district school with a path to secure autonomies and superintendent/board approval
- A new tribal or BIE school

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What We Ask About
Planning Grants

Application Sections

When we review your application, we are looking to understand the following about your team and proposed school. The next slides walk through each of the application sections.

School Overview

Existing School Info *(if applicable)*

Student Experience

Team

Community

Plan

Revenue

Impact

Additional Information

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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

In the section you will provide us with some additional **information about the school you are proposing** to help us better understand your work.

EXISTING SCHOOL INFO *(if applicable)*

If applicable, in this section, **we are looking to better understand the current school(s) you are operating**, inclusive of performance measures.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This is the most important section of the application. We're looking for what you're identifying as **the core components of your school** and how they integrate into a cohesive model.

TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**.

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WHAT WE ASK ABOUT: SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY

We expect teams to **engage students, families and community members early and often** to inform all aspects of design and planning.

PLAN

We look for teams with a **comprehensive plan to achieve a successful school launch**, and evidence that a team is on track to realize those goals.

REVENUE

We would like to understand **how much money you have raised** since you began operating. $0 is okay!

IMPACT

Our long-term goal is to have a catalytic impact on student success nationally, so **we fund teams that seek to expand their impact significantly over time**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section **helps us gather useful information about our applicant pool. Many of these questions are optional** and will help us improve our recruitment efforts in the future. It will not impact our funding decision.

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STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This is the **most important section** of the application. We're looking for what you're identifying as the **core components of your school and how they integrate into a cohesive model**. We seek teams that develop school models that bring to life an expanded definition of student success, equity, and innovation to create a seamless student experience that achieves a broad set of outcomes.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Speak to the core components of your model and how it will show up in subject matter content, teaching and learning, and how students spend their time/day

- If you are proposing a specific model type, we want to make sure you understand research and best practices aligned to that type of model

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TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**. We expect leaders to build high-functioning teams to ensure they are surrounded by individuals with the skills and backgrounds necessary to deliver on their vision.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share your personal why for this work

- Be transparent; we value school founders who are self-aware of team strengths AND gaps. Be confident about your previous achievement, we want to hear them!

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COMMUNITY

The teams we support focus their efforts on serving student populations that have been traditionally underserved or overlooked. **We expect teams to engage students, families and community members early and often to inform all aspects of design and planning.** By seeking to understand the needs, interests and aspirations of the people they aim to serve, teams can not only design a better school, but also create the necessary relationship to sustain it over time.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share how you've engaged and will continue to engage the particular neighborhood or community you're intending to serve

- Speak to buy in and demand from the community

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PLAN

Teams must be able to turn their vision into reality. We look for teams with a **comprehensive plan to achieve a successful school launch**, and evidence that a team is on track to realize those goals.

HELPFUL TIPS

- For example, tell us what steps you're taking to develop your instructional model, when you plan to make key hires, etc. These milestones should not just be operational

- We know opening a school is a difficult undertaking; share how you're aware of key blockers that exist generally and for your specific context as well as your plan for mitigating those risks

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REVENUE

We would like to understand how much money you have raised since you began operating. As a funder of early-stage ideas, we understand and expect that many applicants have not yet raised funding.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Be transparent. Responses of "$0" are acceptable and will not negatively impact your application.

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IMPACT

We partner with leaders in the early stages of developing a new school model with the potential to dramatically improve student learning and advance equitable opportunity. **Our long-term goal is to have a catalytic impact on student success nationally**, so we fund teams that seek to expand their impact significantly over time.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share more about your longer-term vision for impacting students beyond your school building; we know that you might not have all of the details figured out just yet

- This might be in the early stages of development and can happen in a range of ways such as school replication, codifying and sharing innovative school practices, developing new talent solutions and/or influencing the work of others

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EXISTING SCHOOL INFO
(if applicable)

If applicable, in this section, we are looking to **better understand the current school(s) you are operating**, inclusive of performance measures. In order to be considered for funding, **it is important that your first school(s) are performing across multiple measures.**

HELPFUL TIPS

- All answers provided should reference schools currently in operation

- In the next section, we encourage you to provide comprehensive data and leverage the open text boxes in the supplemental files to narrate over the data we are reviewing

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Eligibility
Charter School Design Grant

Focus	We fund leaders that are opening schools in the fall of 2028.

✓ Eligible

- Enrolling students within the K-12 grade span on a full-time basis

- A new fully publicly-funded charter school that does not charge for students to attend

- Expansions or replications within established CMOs (<u>only</u> for partnership with HBCUs)

✗ Ineligible

- District schools

- A restart or consolidation of existing schools that were previously open

- Turnaround or redesigns of existing schools

- Schools within schools

- Centers that serve *only* Pre-K students

- Schools launching in Fall 2026, Fall 2027, or Fall 2029 or later

- Charter school 2s that are not yet outperforming their local school district

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Charter school design grants are open to aspiring charter school leaders who plan to open a new school in 2028.

1 **Do I need an HBCU partner to be eligible for a charter school design grant?**

No, a partnership with a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) is not required to be considered for a charter school design grant.

Our 2026 design grants are open to aspiring charter school leaders who plan to open a new school in 2028. While we are especially interested in supporting leaders who are developing schools in partnership with HBCUs, we also welcome applicants who are not pursuing this type of partnership.

2 **Do I need to be a single-site founder (School 1) to be eligible for a charter school design grant??**

No. Our charter school design grants are open to aspiring leaders planning to open a new single-site school in 2028, as well as to existing charter school leaders interested in developing new schools within their network in partnership with HBCUs. If you're an existing charter school or part of a network pursuing an HBCU partnership, you should complete the charter school design grant application.

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Eligibility	Your eligibility will depend on **when** you plan to open the school and the **type of school** you plan to open.

Charter School Design Grants
Fall 2028

- A new single-site charter school (School 1)

- A new charter school in partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

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What We Ask About
Charter School Design Grants

Application Sections

When we review your application, we are looking to understand the following about your team and proposed school. The next slides walk through each of the application sections.

School Overview

Existing School Info *(if applicable)*

Student Experience

Team

Community

Revenue

HBCU Charter Design

Additional Information

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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

In the section you will provide us with some additional **information about the school you are proposing** to help us better understand your work.

EXISTING SCHOOL INFO
(if applicable)

If applicable, in this section, **we are looking to better understand the current school(s) you are operating**, inclusive of performance measures.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This is the most important section of the application. We're looking for what you're identifying as **the core components of your school** and how they integrate into a cohesive model.

TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**.

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WHAT WE ASK ABOUT: SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY

We expect teams to **engage students, families and community members early and often** to inform all aspects of design and planning.

REVENUE

We would like to understand **how much money you have raised** since you began operating. $0 is okay!

HBCU CHARTER DESIGN

Though partnership with an HBCU is not required, if you have **an interest in HBCU partnership,** we want to learn more about your idea and plans for partnership and impact.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section **helps us gather useful information about our applicant pool. Many of these questions are optional** and will help us improve our recruitment efforts in the future. It will not impact our funding decision.

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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

In the section you will provide us with some additional **information about the school you are proposing** to help us better understand your work.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share the grade span at full enrollment for the school that is the basis for this application.

- If you have previously applied for charter school approval and been denied, please share your understanding of the rationale for denial.

EXISTING SCHOOL INFO *(if applicable)*

If applicable, in this section, we are looking to **better understand the current school(s) you are operating**, inclusive of performance measures. In order to be considered for funding, **it is important that your first school(s) are performing across multiple measures.**

HELPFUL TIPS

- All answers provided should reference schools currently in operation

- In the next section, we encourage you to provide comprehensive data and leverage the open text boxes in the supplemental files to narrate over the data we are reviewing

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STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This is the **most important section** of the application. We're looking for what you're identifying as the **core components of your school and how they integrate into a cohesive model**. We seek teams that develop school models that bring to life an expanded definition of student success, innovation, and inclusion to create a seamless student experience that achieves a broad set of outcomes.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Speak to the core components of your model and how it will show up in subject matter content, teaching and learning, and how students spend their time/day

- If you are proposing a specific model type, we want to make sure you understand and can explain research and best practices aligned to that type of model

- The model can combine evidence-based elements (e.g. Career Connected Learning (CCL) + Whole Child Focus or Mastery-Based Learning + Project-Based Learning); however, care should be taken to ensure coherence and manageable complexity.

- Explain how the model and student experience break the predictability of who gets to succeed in our country.

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TEAM

We hope to learn about you, including **what drives and inspires you and the skills and strengths you bring to the work**. We expect leaders to build high-functioning teams to ensure they are surrounded by individuals with the skills and backgrounds necessary to deliver on their vision.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share your personal why for this work

- Be transparent; we value school founders who are self-aware of team (and individual) strengths AND gaps.

- Be confident, clear, and measurable about your previous achievement, we want to hear about them!

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COMMUNITY

The teams we support focus their efforts on serving student populations that have been traditionally underserved or overlooked. **We expect teams to engage students, families and community members early and often to inform all aspects of design and planning.** By seeking to understand the needs, interests and aspirations of the people they aim to serve, teams can not only design a better school, but also create the necessary relationship to sustain it over time.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Share how you plan to engage and/or will continue to engage the particular neighborhood or community you're intending to serve

- Speak to community input and demand from the community

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REVENUE

We would like to understand how much money you have raised since you began operating. As a funder of early-stage ideas, we understand and expect that many applicants have not yet raised funding.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Be transparent. Responses of "$0" are acceptable and will not negatively impact your application.

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HBCU PARTNERSHIP

If you are interested in partnering with an HBCU, you'll be asked a few additional questions to understand your plans. Interest in this partnership is not a requirement to be considered for funding.

HELPFUL TIPS

- A partnership can take many forms - from a space-sharing or facilities agreement to deeper collaboration and a co-design partnership.
- Share more about your initial vision for impacting students and community via HBCU partnership; we know that you might not have all of the details figured out just yet.

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Next Steps Recap

HOW TO APPLY

Step One

- **Create an account in our [funding portal](#)** as soon as possible to access the eligibility form and submit your application.

Step Two

- **Complete the eligibility form** to determine if your idea aligns with our strategy, and which application is the best fit for your idea.

Step Three

- Decide whether to **apply** based on the eligibility results and **submit your application in the [funding portal](#) by January 8, 2026 at 11:59PM PT**.
- We strongly encourage you to submit the application by the **priority deadline of December 1, 2025**. Applications submitted by this deadline will receive a status update by the end of January.

? If you have any questions throughout the process, please leverage **[applicant supports](#)**. We're here to help and excited to learn more about your idea!

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