

BUILDING HOPE

# IMPACT

SUMMIT & AWARDS

## EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION CRITERIA

Game-changing Educational Innovation looks like a charter school that is pushing the boundaries, taking risks, and creating new pathways to serve students. It is a school that takes its goal of educating the whole child by meeting them where they are and giving them tools they need to succeed in fresh, new and engaging ways.

The unique and innovative school takes the foundation of what works and riffs into new directions. Leap of faith into new territory in the service of the the students are hallmarks of innovation. Innovation is creativity plus action. It is imaginative ideas paired with effective execution. It would be difficulty for this type of innovation to thrive in a traditional public school, but it is possible in the charter school world.

The IMPACT Educational Innovation makes is that students from these models will have seen the world from a different perspective. They will have lived and breathed an alternative form of education, so they will know that the status quo isn't always the only option. These students will be distinguished as free thinkers and creative problem-solvers.

### **IMPACT**

Students are self-motivated, engaged, and respect one another's differences. They are critical and creative thinkers, and they demonstrate a motivation to bring positive change to the world. Graduates of these programs cite this school model/program as an integral part of their success, and current students report a high-level satisfaction and happiness.

Educational Innovation grant applicants have cracked the code on providing something truly unique, while also ensuring their students are experiencing academic and personal success. The model/program should be through its initial ideation phase and is in its fully realized form. There is always room for future growth, as adaptation is a critical part of creativity, but this model/program needs to currently shine.

Direct testimonials from students, key educators in the program, and detailed examples of the unique elements of the program are important to support the IMPACT of the Student Empowerment Grant applicant

BUILDING HOPE

# IMPACT

SUMMIT & AWARDS

## **PROGRAM**

The charter school curriculum is fresh, engaging and effective. Clear creativity, vision and effective execution need to be demonstrated.

Educational Innovation schools must offer a unique path to obtaining a great education. There should be an unwavering belief by leadership in the model's ability to impact change, along with an adaptive, growth mindset apparent in the students and faculty.

Support needed for the program includes a deep-dive into what makes it unique, why it works, specific student success stories, and clear examples of "how" the program works.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The leader must be head cheerleader and lead scientist for this particular innovative model. This creative educator will be able to articulate the impact of their innovation and inspire others to take risks.

Commitment to educational innovation means taking a critical look at what works and what doesn't. Sharing some of the "test-and-adjust" experiences in developing or executing the model are not only helpful in supporting the idea that the leader understands the creative process, but to also underscore the reality that to get to great execution of innovative ideas, there is a process.

"Walking the walk" is a critical piece of being a leader with integrity. Putting the student needs first, operating one's school with impeccable financial responsibility, and always striving for improvement are qualities of a leader with integrity. Modeling the behavior a leader most wants to see in the students and pushing forward on one's goals with the golden rule at heart are valuable leadership qualities.

BUILDING HOPE

# IMPACT

SUMMIT & AWARDS

## **GROWTH**

A clear plan for how a school will increase the reach or depth of their innovative model is needed. A critical look at efforts that were not as effective, an expressed understanding of what was learned, and how a program was refined also demonstrates growth. Is the growth going to be in expanding the model to other students, other places? Is the growth going to be in evolving the program to an even more innovative state? Is the growth going to be providing richer experiences for the students who are currently in the program?

How future initiatives will be funded, staffed, and executed needs to be clearly delineated and supported by research, data, and/or other outside support to ensure best practices and the highest potential for success.

The future plans should not only be practical, but also inspirational. Long-term visioning provides a guiding star for a school to look to when making decisions about the future. The ideal should be a known quantity, and a path to get there needs to be developed, with the understanding that testing-and-adjusting is an integral part of growth.

## **SUPPORT**

For Educational Innovation, a clear understanding of how this is new, different, creative, forward-thinking, adaptive, and/or special is critical to communicate. Showing the model at work is often the best way to demonstrate its effectiveness, but testimonials from students, parents, and educators are helpful.

Academic research, comparative studies, photos, videos and anecdotal evidence all serve to support the validity of the school's community engagement program and are welcome to demonstrate the program is, and will continue to be, effective.