



**Partnering with Grand Rapids Public Schools
A Proposal to the De Vos Family Foundation
October 15, 2012**

Proposal Summary

Partners in School Innovation (Partners) respectfully requests a multi-year investment from the De Vos Family Foundation over three years: \$150,000 for 2012–2013; and \$300,000 for each of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015,) for a total of \$750,000 for PSI plus an additional \$215,625 for contracted services via the National Equity Project (NEP), for a grand total of \$965,842. This investment will be targeted at transforming two (2) middle schools through implementation of district reform efforts in the Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) during the period of January 1, 2013 to July 31, 2015. The primary purpose of the partnership is to increase the quality of instruction in deeply challenged low performing schools by building the capacity of district and school leaders to lead and sustain their own transformation efforts for closing the achievement gap. PSI does this by collaboratively establishing systems for supporting curriculum, instruction and assessment at the district, school and grade levels.

We will also gain knowledge and learn about GRPS district’s assets and needs over the course of our partnership, and in particular in the first year, we will establish supportive relationships with district and school leaders in order to begin building the capacity of school leaders and their leadership teams to implement best practices and instructional improvement methodologies. Finally, we will conduct School Transformation Reviews (STRs) during each of the years of our engagement beginning in spring 2013 and compile reports to summarize findings for principals about current practices and capacity in their schools. The data in these STRs will be used to chart progress on changes in adult behavior in each school, bringing them into alignment with the nationally recognized best practices.

Fundamentally, the work Partners does is relationship building with teachers and leaders at both school and district levels in order to ensure that our goal of creating academic success for all students is achieved. Using data, we partner and work alongside these educators to refine the instructional program, develop teacher professional learning, and facilitate evaluation of the work continuously, both in the classroom and outside of it. This creates a learning community mindset, underscores collaboration as a core value, and in the end supports a culture that believes every student, no matter what their background, can succeed.

A Three-Year Partnership

This partnership, focused on the two middle schools receiving students from the elementary schools contained within a multi-year collaboration with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (to be initiated concurrently), follows a similar structure and scope as the Kellogg engagement. The present effort, however, is designed specifically to extend the strategies and processes learned in the elementary schools with which Partners works under the Kellogg grant into the middle schools that the same population of students will be attending in future years. We believe this is a critical overall investment

in GRPS not only because middle schools are themselves a significant challenge and area of focus for the district, but also because without a concentrated investment in these schools, the larger collaboration effectuated by Kellogg would not have the data and processes needed to engage the district in developing the capacity to better serve middle schools on an on-going basis.

Specifically, our partnership with the De Vos Family Foundation seeks to help make GRPS a national model of district and school transformation. We intend to eliminate the presence of chronic low performance, leaving the district with the capabilities and processes needed to sustain a trajectory toward excellence long after our engagement is concluded.

School Transformation Reviews

After initial engagement in GRPS through establishing relationships with the middle school principals, our work will deepen with STRs in the spring of 2013. The STR is a collaborative process by which PSI staff and school leaders take inventory of the strengths, challenges and opportunities within their schools in order to inform the process of continuous improvement and create plans to build into schools’ ways of working the essential practices that support transformation.

Through the review, Partners’ staff assesses the capacity of our partner schools to engage in transformative practice. The STR specifically targets the behavior of adults in the schools and gauges the degree of improvement on each essential transformational practice proven to move the needle for students of color who live in poverty. After each STR we will conduct follow-up meetings with principals to reflect on results and identify focus areas for the following year. We will also monitor and support principals in the implementation of their plans (either through support in schools or via networks). By the third year of implementation, the expectation is that district staff will begin to frame a process for continuing the STR-style reviews as a part of their own process of understanding schools strengths and needs as a part of the process for aligning resources accordingly.

Strategies and Timeline

Partners’ Driving Strategies		
Year 1 2012-13	<p>Leadership Coaching Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burton Middle School • Alger Middle School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners will work alongside the GRPS principals in two middle schools to provide support of their efforts to lead whole school improvement and create a school environment where high-quality teaching and learning can take place. • School leaders will learn to use the Results-Oriented Cycle of Inquiry (ROCI) process and key tools to analyze data and develop an action plan for using that data to drive essential instructional practices at school sites. • Leveraging student voice and enhancing school culture will also be a critical component of this work.

<p>Year 1 <i>(cont'd.)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional School Transformation Reviews will be conducted in target schools. • Ramp up support will be provided to target schools in preparation for deeper work in later years.
<p>Year 2 2013-14</p>	<p>Network Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) • PLCs in all GRPS middle schools • Follow-up implementation support at Burton and Alger Middle Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCs will be aimed at developing the capacity of principals and Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) from all middle schools in GRPS to make focused and strategic changes in their classrooms, schools, and district support services in order to systematically support the accelerated achievement of all students and specifically those students who have been traditionally poorly served and hence are of greatest need. • Participants will learn how to become high-performing teams, improve their individual and team knowledge and skill, share best practices, learn from each other and hold each other accountable for transforming their schools. • Each network session will require objectives and an agenda that align with the annual scope and sequence for the year, as well as a variety of supporting materials (e.g., graphic organizers, professional readings, protocols, visual presentations of key content and assessment data, etc.) selected to address the needs of adult learners. Following the session, we will collect and analyze data to inform the design, implementation, and content of future network sessions. • These initial networks develop the prior knowledge and implementation expectations needed for later deeper engagement through intensive partnerships to be most effective.
<p>Year 3 2014-15</p>	<p>Intensive Partnership Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burton Middle School • Alger Middle School • District-wide PLCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network development support to all middle schools in the district will continue. • Work will focus on building district capacity by adapting and applying tools, best practices, and strategies from Partners' research-based school and district transformation approach district-wide for the benefit of the most underserved students.

Applicant Organization

Partners has an almost 20-year history of supporting underserved public schools and districts in urban areas. Our staff members are trained, fully-equipped and supported change agents, not simply short-term consultants, coaches or trainers. Our systematic approach helps chronically low-performing

districts and schools set goals strategically at the same time that it facilitates best practice implementation, including progress assessment and classroom monitoring.

We work alongside teachers and leaders with a proven track record of accelerating literacy achievement for students of color and English Language Learners. Further, we help build the organizational capacity in schools and in district offices as necessary to sustain strong results. Four key mindsets underlie our work in schools and districts: a focus on social justice and equity, a commitment to continuous improvement and an emphasis on excellent results. We work across the system with teachers and leaders at schools and in central offices to:

- 1) Build a strong core instructional program in literacy and English language development that ensures that all students learn at high levels;
- 2) Create and establish systems for professional learning so that all teachers are able to deliver excellent instruction;
- 3) Align district systems to support school transformation; and
- 4) Strengthen results-oriented leadership so that leaders can carry out the daily actions necessary to successfully lead whole school improvement efforts.

Results

Our Theory of Impact is based on the hypothesis that if we work side-by-side with districts and schools to deliver our school transformation approach with consistency and to a high degree of quality, we will build the adult capacity needed to transform low-performing schools to attain and sustain breakthrough student achievement results.

In 2011-12 overall, our partner schools in the San Francisco Bay Area achieved an average gain of 5.7 percentage points in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the California Standards Test in English Language Arts (CST-ELA). This was almost double the California statewide gain of 2.9 percentage points. Latino and English Language Learner students in our partner schools also outperformed the state.

Over the past five years, Partners has also seen steady growth in the percentage of our students who score Proficient and Advanced on the CST-ELA. Compared to the rest of California, our students are progressing at a faster rate over time. Growth in partner schools has outpaced growth in both our partner districts and the state in each of the past three years.

Evaluation

We will track the impact of this grant through:

- 1) **Standards Mastery:** Student achievement throughout each school year will be monitored using the benchmark assessment system currently being administered in GRPS and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).
- 2) **Increased School Transformation Capacity:** School capacity-building as measured by the School Transformation Rubric (STR). The targeted schools implementing the Partners School

Transformation Framework will make demonstrable improvements in their transformational capacity within the areas of results-oriented leadership, systems for teacher professional learning and a strong core instructional program.

- 3) Program Implementation:** Our School Innovation Partners (SIPs) use a six phase roadmap (Partner, Set Goals, Plan, Act, Assess/Reflect/Adjust and Renew/Close) to guide their actions in schools with leaders, coaches and teachers. Successful implementations of the elements on that roadmap will be monitored with a monthly Program Implementation Checklist (PIC) review.
- 4) Client Satisfaction:** An annual Client Satisfaction Survey will be administered to district and school leaders and teachers to assess the satisfaction with and experienced impact of Partners work and staff.

Budget & Finances

The three-year budget below identifies the allocation of support anticipated via De Vos Family Foundation commitment:

De Vos Budget by Category	<u>2012 - 13</u>	<u>2013 - 14</u>	<u>2014 - 15</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Personnel	\$98,521	\$200,951	\$213,380	\$512,852
Supply	\$2,800	\$2,768	\$2,851	\$8,419
Capital Expenses	\$2,500	-	-	\$2,500
Evaluation	\$9,489	\$48,083	\$41,709	\$99,281
Occupancy	\$675	\$1,845	\$1,900	\$4,420
Travel	\$16,200	\$10,320	\$10,320	\$36,840
Indirect	\$16,599	\$29,332	\$31,004	\$76,935
Totals	\$146,784	\$293,299	\$301,164	\$741,247
NEP Contractual Pass-through	\$43,125	\$86,250	\$86,250	\$215,625
Grand Total	\$189,909	\$379,549	\$387,414	\$956,872

The expansion into Michigan with support from the W .K. Kellogg Foundation has enabled Partners in School Innovation to continue to grow, and in 2012-13 we will see a 51% increase in budget to

accommodate expansion beyond California. This project in part leverages capacities being built in that partnership. With this growth, our revenue model of fee for service and district contracts plus contributed income from corporate, foundation and individual funders will remain unchanged, but the organization will seek strategic fund development opportunities to accommodate a shift toward increased philanthropic support for all operations outside of the San Francisco area.

Sustainability of our work will be ensured through increased fee for service engagements, district contributions, and a list of legacy organizational funders, including Applied Materials, Wells Fargo, Juniper Networks, the Scully Family Foundation and the Barulich Family Foundation.

Please see the appended scope of work for the subcontracted services provided by the National Equity Project (NEP).