

Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround

Overview

The Greater Detroit Venture Fund was created to incentivize school turnaround efforts in high schools with graduation rates of less than 60% for three consecutive years. The Fund will financially support partnerships between high schools and proven educational intermediaries, that will result in them working together to create small, personalized learning environments. These types of environments will be strategically designed to include critical elements identified by Mass Insight Education & Research Institute as essential for creating high-performing schools in high poverty environments.¹

School Eligibility

An annual study by Robert Balfanz at Johns Hopkins University reveals that there are 2,000 high schools in America that have graduated less than 60% of their freshman class for three consecutive years.² More than 30 of those schools are in Southeastern Michigan. Those schools (or the leadership of their school districts), listed below, are invited to submit a School Turnaround Proposal.

Academy for Business and Tech.	East Detroit	Osborn
Cass Technical	Ecorse	Pershing
Central	Finney	Pontiac Central
Chadsey	Hamtramck	Pontiac Northern
Cody	Hazel Park	River Rouge
Communication & Media Arts	Henry Ford	Southeastern
Cooley	Kettering	Southwestern
Davis Aerospace	Lincoln Park	Van Dyke Lincoln
Denby	Melvindale-Northern Allen Park	Western International
Detroit School of Industrial Arts	Northwestern	

¹ Mass Insight Education & Research Institute is a non-profit organization founded in 1997 with a mission of improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap. Its 2007 publication, *The Turnaround Challenge*, provides “research, recommendations, and a partnership framework for states and school districts” interested in turning around their most failing schools. For more information, please visit www.massinsight.org.

² Schools included in the analysis provided freshman enrollment data for 2001, 2002, and 2003, along with senior enrollment data in for 2004, 2005, and 2006. The study compares 9th grade or 10th grade enrollment (in 10-12 schools) to 12th grade enrollment two or three years later using fall enrollment numbers from the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data. Districts and states supply this data to the department. For more information visit www.gradgap.org and search for “Locating the Dropout Crisis.”

**Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround**

Eligible Intermediaries

Annual grants up to \$80,000 per small high school (500 students or fewer) or \$320,000 per large high school (1,500 to 2,000 students) will be made to incentivize comprehensive turnaround efforts. Grants are renewable for up to five years based on each recipient's ability to meet yearly performance objectives. Funds will be paid directly to an intermediary identified by the participating school.

An educational intermediary is a non-profit organization that partners with a school district to help administrators and teachers improve student achievement. In order to be eligible for funding intermediaries must have a proven record of improving student achievement and increasing graduation rates in high poverty high schools -- as measured and reported by an external evaluator. The funding process is open to all qualified intermediaries. Over the last eight years, a number of intermediaries have been funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help transform urban high schools, and some of them have achieved amazing results. Three of those intermediaries--**EdWorks**, **First Things First**, and the **Institute for Student Achievement** -- presented at the One D Dropout Prevention Summit in April 2008. Among many accomplishments, each of these organizations has:

- Demonstrated an ability to improve graduation rates, as evidenced by an external evaluation.
- An established history of working collaboratively with both school district and union leadership.
- Developed a model for school transformation that has been successfully replicated by high schools in diverse cities across the nation.
- A proven ability to effectively support schools in Southeastern Michigan if called upon.

Funding Considerations and Timing

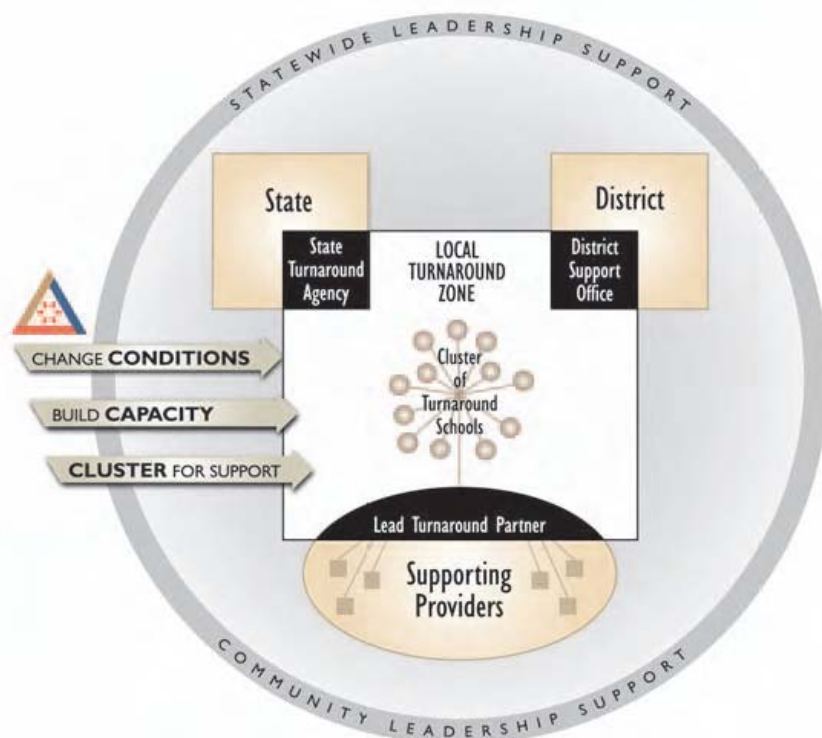
Each proposal submitted must be approved and signed by the superintendent of the school district and a representative of the teachers union.

August 4 and 5	Workshops with Intermediaries for School and Community Leaders at Lawrence Technological University (See attached Schedule)
August 12 (8:30 am)	Optional Technical Assistance Workshops for Completing Proposals United Way for Southeastern Michigan 1212 Griswold, Detroit, Michigan 48226
August 20 (2:00 pm)	Optional Technical Assistance Workshops for Completing Proposals United Way for Southeastern Michigan 1212 Griswold, Detroit, Michigan 48226
September 12	Proposals are Due at United Way's office by 5:00 p.m.
Week of October 6	Grant Applicants Interviewed
October 17	Announcement of Awards

Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround

Theory of Change Overview

Successful collaborative efforts aimed at improving student achievement in other cities have shown that it is possible. In other communities, urban school districts, local union leadership, and residents have come together to transform large, failing high schools into smaller, successful ones. We are confident the same thing can happen in Southeastern Michigan. The purpose of the Venture Fund is to incentivize similar partnerships and best practices here, providing support in a manner consistent with Mass Insight's School Turnaround Framework by (see graphic below).



© 2007 Mass Insight

Changing Conditions

Operating conditions in the lowest-performing schools must be changed so that school leaders have the authority to make decisions in the best interests of the students relative to the staff, budget and programs in their buildings. Changing conditions also means taking accountability for increased achievement rates. Participating Turnaround Schools must be 80-80 operations, which means that 80% of the students must graduate and 80% of those graduates attend college or post-secondary training -- and the school's staff must be accountable for achieving those benchmarks.

Building Capacity

Capacity will increase as a result of the intermediary taking the lead with the school district and each staff to implement proven school turnaround and student engagement strategies, and integrate the work of other providers. This is the inverse of the traditional paradigm in failing schools in which principals have many partners and programs with no underlying strategy. Increasing capacity also means *ensuring* that school leadership teams (including the principal) have the capacity to lead the work effectively.

**Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround**

Creating Cluster for Support

To be successful, school turnaround missions cannot occur in isolation. School leaders and teachers involved in a turnaround need collaboration and competition, as well as the discipline and economies of scale that can occur in effective communities of practice -- clusters of turnaround schools.

In order to succeed, each participating party must clearly understand that this is a comprehensive turnaround effort, not just another school improvement project. As you complete your application, please consider the following factors for effective school turnaround, as identified by Mass Insight:

What makes it “turnaround” instead of “improvement”?

Benchmark Indicator at the School Level	Priority Schools	
	Ability	Reality
Necessary School-Level Operating Conditions		
<i>People</i>		
Can the turnaround leadership team staff the school as needed? (Hiring/removal/placement, roles)		
<i>Money</i>		
Does the school receive sufficient additional resources to achieve the turnaround plan? (Depending on school size and level: \$250K-\$1M per year, sustained for 3 years, new or reallocated funding)		
Is extra compensation provided to pay staff for extra time, responsibilities, and leadership roles?		
Does the turnaround leadership team have flexibility over how resources are spent?		
<i>Time</i>		
Is the day and year significantly extended to allow for more time for learning and collaborating?		
Does the turnaround leadership have the ability to adjust the school schedule as needed?		
<i>Program</i>		
Does the school enhance students’ readiness to learn by providing significant social supports, such as advisories, counselors, after-school programs, targeted remediation, home outreach, etc?		
Does the leadership team have authority to adjust programming to support the turnaround plan, and to make choices and respond to crises with a minimum of compliance-driven oversight?		
Necessary School-Level Capacity		
Do the school’s principal and turnaround leadership team have the skills necessary for success?		
Is a lead partner organization deeply embedded with school/district leadership to plan and execute turnaround design, make best use of the operating conditions, and align other partners? Is that lead partner present in the school on an intensive basis, and is it contractually accountable for student performance?		

*Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround*

Summary of Rules and Expectations

1. The Fund is designed to help transform large high schools with high dropout rates into smaller, personalized learning environments with increased student achievement and graduation rates. Only the schools and school districts identified in this application are eligible to apply.
2. All eligible proposals must be approved and signed by the superintendent of the school district and the president of the teachers union.
3. The Fund will financially support partnerships between high schools and proven educational intermediaries working together to create small, personalized learning environments, consistent with the elements identified by Mass Insight as essential for creating high-performing high schools in high poverty.
4. Grants up to \$80,000 per year for each small high school (500 or fewer students) or \$320,000 for every large school (1,500 to 2,000 students) will be made to incentivize comprehensive turnaround efforts. Funds will be paid directly to the intermediaries identified by the participating school.
5. To be eligible for funding, each intermediary must have a proven record of improving student achievement and graduation rates in high poverty high schools, as measured by an external evaluator. Ed Works, First Things First, and the Institute for Student Achievement meet these requirements and have an expressed desire to form partnerships in the region. However, other intermediaries are eligible for funding as long as they have a proven track record of increasing graduation rates in similar high schools.
6. Funding will be renewable for up to five years, provided that performance objectives are met. First-year performance objectives may include, for example:
 - Contractual waivers or other legal consensus for site-based management in the school
 - Development of a school turnaround plan demonstrating fidelity to the selected intermediary's educational model
 - Facilities improvement plan
 - Formal commitment from the school district and Michigan Department of Education to support the school turnaround plan
7. All proposals must be typed, single-spaced, with a 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Please use the same outline format and headings listed in the attached application, but do not include the questions. **Proposals must not exceed 10 pages.**
8. Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on September 12, 2008 at United Way's office at 1212 Griswold, Detroit, Michigan 48226.
9. *Please direct all questions to Annette Grays at (313) 226-9419 or by email at annette.grays@uwsem.org.*

*Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround*

**Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for Turnaround Schools**

Application for Turnaround Partnerships

1. **Vision: (15 points)** What is your vision for the transformation of your school? What do you think your students and teachers can gain from this initiative?
2. **State Collaboration: (5 points)** All turnaround schools should have an advocate/liason within the Michigan Department of Education to free it from unduly burdensome regulations. Describe your school's relationship with the Michigan Department of Education, Intermediate School District, or authorizing agency and its level of support. Is a letter of support from that office attached?
3. **District Collaboration: (15 points)** A turnaround school must have support at the district superintendent's level that can act on behalf of the superintendent to free the school from district wide-mandates and meetings. Describe your relationship with the person in your district superintendent's office. Is a letter of support from that person attached?
4. **Changing Conditions: (20 points)** Principals in turnaround schools need to have control over the staff, programs, and budget in their buildings. Will the principal in your school have this authority? If so, please describe how this will be accomplished within your school's collective bargaining agreement. The leadership of turnaround schools must be committed to high expectations for their students. Will your school's leadership team be accountable for graduating 80% of their students and having 80% of those graduates enter college or post-secondary training? If so, please describe your plans for achieving this objective.
5. **Increasing Capacity: (25 points)** Turnaround schools benefit from relationships with an educational intermediary. The following intermediaries have a history of successful turnaround efforts:
 - First Things First
 - EdWorks
 - Institute for Student Achievement
 - Talent Development
 - A. Which intermediary would you most like to partner with? Please provide a letter of support from that intermediary. If you are interested in working with an intermediary not listed above, please state why and describe that organization's proven results to date. Please include an independent evaluation of that intermediary as an attachment.
 - B. Please describe that intermediary's approach and why you think it would be a good fit for your school.

**Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround**

- C. What are that intermediary’s non-negotiables?
 - D. What do you think will be the most difficult challenge in working with that intermediary?
 - E. Turnaround efforts in other cities have been successful in part by attracting and maintaining talent in the region. What strategies are you considering to attract, maintain, and develop talent? How will you ensure that the school’s leadership team has the capacity, itself, to lead the turnaround effort successfully?
- 6. Creating Clusters for Support: (5 Points)** Turnaround schools cannot thrive in isolation. They should work in clusters, or networks, of schools to collaborate and produce the best results for their students.
- A. Are there other schools you could learn from? Are there national, state, or other programs you could learn from? What schools or school leaders would you like to be in a formal relationship with locally?
 - B. What topics would you like to focus on? How often would you plan to meet?
 - C. What staff positions do you think should be involved?
- 7. Planning Team: (5 Points)** Successful school transformation efforts include a diverse group of stakeholders. Please list the individuals involved in the planning and preparation of this proposal, and be sure to include their position or affiliation to give the reviewers a clear understanding of who was represented on your planning team.
- 8. Financial Overview: (10 Points)**
- A. **Venture Fund Request:** Successful school turnaround has proven to be a five-year process: one year of planning and four years of executing to graduate the first freshman class. The purpose of this grant is to fund a five-year partnership between intermediaries and school leaders to make this turnaround successful.

Please list your intermediary partner’s projected expenses for each school year:

\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
\$ _____				
Total				



*Greater Detroit Education Venture Fund
Funding Partnerships for School Turnaround*

- B. School and District Commitment:** Most intermediaries require schools and school districts to commit staff to the success of this effort. Support may come from additional resources or from the reallocation of staff time or other resources. In Miami-Dade, for example, school leaders were able to reallocate \$1 million per high school on average in support of school turnaround work.

Please briefly describe the staff time and resources requested by your intermediary partner and any additional resources your school or district is committing to this work? What is the projected amount of this commitment?

- C. Capital Improvements:** School turnaround efforts can be enhanced with capital improvements to visibly demonstrate cultural changes taking place at the school. In Atlanta, for example, the district budgets \$1.2 million for each large school transformation. Roughly \$900,000 is used for paint, carpeting, furniture and landscaping, and about \$300,000 is used for technology upgrades.

What capital improvements do you hope to make at your school. What is the estimated cost? How do you plan to reallocate or raise this money?