

## **Innovative Education Program Planning Proposal**

The search and implementation of an Innovative Education Program is an individual journey for each school/district; each must go on their own journey down the path. There is no one way to implement an Innovative Education Program. The North Dakota Legislature and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) recognizes innovative programs may look different in individual districts. Many factors contribute to the decision regarding the direction of a school's individual Innovative Education Program journey.

The state's purpose for creating an Innovative Education Program is to allow individual schools to have individualized missions, goals, and objectives through a comprehensive plan that helps meet the needs of their students.

Through [North Dakota Century Code \(NDCC\) 15.1-06-08.2](#), the NDDPI is authorized to approve schools in implementing innovative education for the purposes of improving students' educational performance. The initial approval of a school's Innovative Education Program is for one year during which time the school will develop a comprehensive implementation plan and work with NDDPI to ensure the long-term viability of the proposal.

The NDDPI may approve the planning proposal, reject the planning proposal, or work with the submitting school to modify the planning proposal. After the initial year of planning, the school may submit a comprehensive Innovative Education Implementation Application, which may be approved for a period of up to five years.

Key Elements for the Planning Application:

1. **Rationale and Vision**: Schools should undertake a comprehensive visioning and planning process to articulate how they will implement high-quality innovative learning across the school. In this section, justify the school's reasoning for wanting to implement an innovative education plan.

Rationale could include having the school or district create a "profile of a graduate". This provides a vision and "the why" for embarking on implementing new, innovative approaches to learning. Cite research, evidence-based, or best practice information aligning the innovative practice to the program. See Appendix A for guiding questions related to each section and each of the following sections.

Provide information on how this is expected to:

- A. Improve the delivery of education;
  - B. Improve the administration of education;
  - C. Provide increased educational opportunities for students; or
  - D. Improve the academic success of students.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement**: Describe the process of planning the Innovative Education Program, including details on the planning committee and stakeholders involved. Stakeholders should include, but are not limited to, district and building leaders, teachers and teacher leaders, students and parents, school board members, community and business leaders, and institutions of higher education where appropriate. See Appendix A for guiding questions related to this section and each of the following sections.

3. Public School District Board Approval and Non-Public School Governing Board: For planning purposes, assure district board or governing board members were involved. The school board or governing board must approve the plan. Minutes from the school board or governing board meetings must indicate a review of the plan and approval to implement the plan. Include documentation of commitment from stakeholders (i.e., letters of support, survey results, meeting minutes).
4. Professional Development: Establish a professional development plan aligned to the Innovative Education Program.

Over the course of the next year, districts in the planning stage will need to research, explore, and plan their Innovative Education Program. In the Implementation Application, more details on continuous improvement, evaluation criteria, and sustainability will be topics to cover. Schools are encouraged to begin conversations on these topics.

Planning and implementing a continuous improvement process can prevent repeat failures, capitalize on accomplishments, and make sure that the schools are moving towards realizing the vision outlined in the Rationale section. The design of this system should allow use of data to guide implementation.

For evaluation criteria, schools are encouraged to start a list of measures that will be used to monitor progress of both the programs implementation and how the program has:

- A. Improved the delivery of education;
- B. Improved the administration of education;
- C. Provided increased educational opportunities for students; or
- D. Improved the academic success of students.

Sustainability plans can ensure the work continues into the future and beyond the tenure of a school leader and/or district superintendent.

Due Date: School districts are encouraged to submit an Innovative Education Program Planning Proposal by November 1 each year to assure sufficient time to plan and be prepared for implementation the following year. Schools may submit proposals throughout the school year with the expectation that the district will take a year to plan.

Application Process: There is no official specific state form to utilize for the proposal. Schools may submit a detailed proposal outlining the Key Elements above. Proposals may be submitted to:

Stanley Schauer, Assistant Director  
Office of School Approval & Opportunity  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
Phone: (701) 328-2271  
Email: [seschauer@nd.gov](mailto:seschauer@nd.gov)

## Appendix A: Guiding Questions

These questions are designed to help schools and districts in the application process. Schools are not required to answer each question in this list, but could use them as a guide in developing their proposal and plan.

### Rationale/Vision

- a. With what type of knowledge do we want our students to graduate? What do we want them to know?
- b. With what type of skills do we want our students to graduate? What do we want them to be able to do?
- c. What characteristics do we want our graduates to reflect? How do we want them to interact with the world?
- d. How has the district or school changed over the last 5 to 10 years? How do we expect it to change over the next 5-10 years?
- e. How will this innovative program help us meet the vision and goals set forth for our school?
- f. What research exists that provides an evidence-base for the particular innovation we are pursuing?
- g. What barriers to innovation exist in research? How will we plan to address those barriers?
- h. If our school has begun to implement innovative practices: what evidence to success can we present in a proposal?

### Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Who are the stakeholder groups in our community? (In the school community and the broader community)
- b. How will we engage stakeholders in the planning process for innovation?
- c. How will we receive feedback from stakeholders about our innovation proposal?
- d. How will we address any barriers to the planning process based on stakeholders in your community?
- e. How will we engage members of the school community, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff, and the broader community in understanding our vision and goals for this innovative program?

### Implementation Plan

- a. What are the highest priorities in implementing this plan?

### Professional Development

- a. How will we engage teachers in the planning process to create innovative, relevant professional development opportunities?
- b. How will we personalize professional development opportunities for teachers?

### Continuous Improvement

- a. Is continuous improvement a part of our vision for teaching and learning?
- b. What strategies need to be in place to ensure we develop a culture of continuous improvement?

### Evaluation Criteria

- a. What types of data will we need to evaluate our work?
- b. How will we prioritize real-time evaluation data?
- c. How will we measure success in different areas of innovation? (e.g., professional development, student engagement, student academic success, teacher engagement, etc.)

### Sustainability

- a. With whom will we need to engage over time to ensure sustainability of this plan?