



# NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

## Model Policy

ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit - 2019

*This document contains a model policy for the creation of schools of innovation. Schools of innovation have greater control and flexibility to meet the needs of their students and communities, improve student achievement or enhance academic opportunities.*

[Download this model policy as an editable Microsoft Word document.](#)

### SUMMARY

The Schools of Innovation Act encourages innovation and creativity by providing schools greater control and flexibility to meet the needs of their students and communities, improve student achievement or enhance academic opportunities. The Act identifies innovation plan requirements, establishes an application and review process for innovation plans, and outlines a flexibility request process. The act also outlines the creation of a state innovation network to support approved schools of innovation, establishes protections for students in participating schools, and defines duties of the State Department of Education.

### MODEL POLICY - SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION ACT

#### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage innovation and creativity by providing schools greater control and flexibility to meet the needs of their students and communities, improve student achievement or enhance academic opportunities.

#### Section 2. Definitions

- A. "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to the existing instructional and administrative practices that is intended to improve learning or enhance academic opportunities for all students.
- B. "School of innovation" is a public school that has submitted an innovation plan in accordance with Section 4 and has been approved as a school of innovation by the Board.
- C. "Department" shall mean the State Department of Education.
- D. "Board" shall mean the State Board of Education.
- E. "Superintendent" shall mean the State Superintendent of Education.

#### Section 3. Application Process

- A. The Board shall promulgate any necessary rules or regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be used for the submission and approval of an innovation plan.
- B. Within 60 days of receiving an innovation plan, the Superintendent shall submit a recommendation to the Board for approval or resubmission.
- C. If the Board rejects an innovation plan, a written explanation shall be provided, and a school may resubmit an amended plan at any time.
- D. The initial approval shall be for a five (5) year period. The Board may extend for up to an additional five (5) years if the school has complied with procedures determined by the Board for renewal consideration including performance on evaluations.
- E. The Department may recommend, pending approval by the Board, the revocation of innovation status if goals, performance indicators, or implementation milestones are not met.

#### Section 4. Innovation Plan Requirements



- A. The Board shall prescribe an innovation plan that shall include, at a minimum, the following:
1. A statement of the school's mission and why designation as a school of innovation would enhance the school's ability to achieve its mission;
  2. Description of the innovative practices the school would like to implement and a plan for implementation.
  3. The programs, policies, or operations within the school that would need to change to successfully implement the innovative practice and a plan for how those would be addressed.
  4. A detailed implementation timeline not to exceed five (5) years.
  5. A resolution adopted by the local board supporting the innovation plan, anticipated timeline for implementation, and the resources and support the school will be provided including the flexibility given from local policies and procedures to support implementation.
  6. Documentation required to show meaningful parental, educator, and community engagement and capacity for the changes identified in the innovation plan.
  7. The formative, benchmark and summative assessments that will be used to monitor progress and outcomes.
  8. Description of goals, performance indicators, implementation milestones, and expected outcomes
  9. The resources and support the district will provide throughout implementation, including what flexibility will be given from local policies and procedures to support implementation.
  10. Long-term community outreach and stakeholder communication plans.
  11. Other materials as required by the Board in compliance with the Board's administrative regulations and application procedures.

### **Section 5. Flexibility Request**

- A. The innovation plans developed by the Board shall provide an opportunity to request flexibility from state statutes, regulations and policies that may hinder full implementation of the school's innovation plan and propose alternative solutions. The request shall include a rationale of how each exemption will support implementation.
1. Participation in the statewide assessment as well as state and federal accountability systems may not be waived. Applicants may request flexibility for the scheduling of state required assessments.
  2. The board shall determine a process for approved participants to submit amendments to approved applications for further flexibility.
  3. All schools of innovation shall continue to be subject to all statutes and rules not explicitly waived by the Board.
- B. A waiver that is granted pursuant to this section shall continue to apply so long as the school continues to be designated as a school of innovation.
- C. Any exemption granted pursuant to this section includes any subsequent amendment or redesignation of an identified state requirement, unless the subsequent amendment or redesignation specifically applies to a school of innovation.

### **Section 6. Innovation Network**

- A. All approved schools of innovation shall be supported and convened through a state innovation network.
- B. The goals of the network shall include but are not limited to:
1. Increase statewide knowledge and understanding of school innovations.
  2. Provide opportunities for schools of innovation to collaborate and share resources and lessons learned.
  3. Develop information, materials, and other applicable resources for use across the state, districts, and schools.



4. Identification of data and metrics to be used to evaluate success, progress, and growth for recommendation to the Superintendent.
- C. The department shall present a plan to the Board to provide technical assistance and support to the network which may include a contract with a third-party provider.

### **Section 7. Student Protections**

- A. A student attending a school of innovation who transfers to another school within the state shall not be penalized by being required to repeat course work or content that the student has already demonstrated mastery of, or by changing the student's grade, or receive any other penalty related to the student's previous attendance in a school of innovation.
- B. The Board of Regents shall establish policies that ensure fair and equitable access for admission to institutes of higher education as well as scholarships and financial aid for graduates of schools implementing innovative school models or utilizing non-traditional diplomas and transcripts.

### **Section 8. Duties of Department**

- A. The Department shall develop an evaluation plan that informs parents, teachers, the community and policymakers about the status of the innovation network, including successes, challenges and progress made toward established goals. The evaluation plan shall include:
- a. Performance indicators that include but are not limited to measures of:
    - i. Student Engagement
    - ii. Instructional Practices
    - iii. Performance on Assessments (formative, benchmark, and state)
    - iv. High School Success
    - v. Post-Secondary Success
  - b. Timeline of when reports will be produced (including interim reports)
  - c. Persons, organizations or entities that may conduct the evaluations
  - d. Data required from schools
  - e. Communication strategy for parents, teachers and the community
  - f. Annual reports to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House articulating the findings, implementation milestones, and outcomes as outlined above. The report shall also include a list of requested and approved flexibility requests as well as any statutory recommendations.
-