



The Founders Fellowship

*What if you could found, design and lead a school that had the best of districts (integral supports enabling your team to serve all students) **and** the best of charters (essential autonomies to set forth your vision for advancing student achievement)?*

The Challenge:

You - a promising school leader - have seen the failure of the two major paths to transforming America's lowest-performing schools.

You've seen the best of district reform efforts realize only incremental gains, largely because of cumbersome bureaucratic policies. You've witnessed the best charter schools realize impressive results, but lack the supports to take these isolated gains to scale.

But what if you didn't have to choose one path or the other?

What if there was a third way to improve schools, at the intersection of charter school autonomies and school district supports?

Would you stand at that intersection, to change the life trajectories of students who need you the most?

A Solution:

The **Founders Fellowship** from Empower Schools – in partnership with the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP) - seeks visionary, disciplined and courageous individuals to found, design, and lead new middle schools in Springfield, Massachusetts. Your school would launch in the Fall of 2016 with about 100 students in 6th grade, and then grow into a middle school serving about 300 students.

Your school would receive the most significant advantages of district schools – facilities as well as centralized operational and logistical supports – along with the important freedoms offered by charter schools, including autonomy over calendar, schedule, budget, curriculum, professional development, and staffing configuration.

Through the **Founders Fellowship**:

- You will have access to best-in-class trainings, so that the design of your new middle school centers around one goal: dramatically improving educational opportunities for all of your students.
- You will receive in-depth coaching in the development of the instructional, curricular, cultural, and operational systems that will define your school.
- You will work diligently on a calendar of goals – for the selection of curriculum and assessments, for the hiring of your sixth grade team, for the development of community support, for the construction of a budget, and for planning of strong teacher and student orientations, just to name a few – guided and propelled forward by the Empower Schools and SEZP teams.

Who You Are:

Neither prior school leadership nor licensure in educational administration are prerequisites for the **Founders Fellowship**. However, we are looking for leaders that have:

- A basic knowledge of the type of school that you want to found, design and lead.
 - Fellows receive considerable support and training from the start of the **Founders Fellowship** (January 15, 2016) until the first day of their new school (late August 2016) that builds off of their visions for strong middle schools. Successful candidates to the **Founders Fellowship**, therefore, must possess a rudimentary image of the cultural and curricular core of their proposed schools.
- A hunger to better your professional self, driven by humility and ambition.
 - Leaders of new schools do not kid themselves about what they do and do not know; they challenge themselves to shore up weaknesses until the weaknesses are strengths. Successful candidates to the **Founders Fellowship**, therefore, must be learners first and leaders second.
- A vision aligned to our belief that all students can achieve at high level.
 - High-performing schools draw on a diversity of design models, and yet there is a common element in each of these schools: a team that believes in high expectations for student performance. Successful candidates for the **Founders Fellowship**, therefore, must galvanize teams around a vision that there are no ceilings to student learning.
- An ability to clearly communicate and generate buy-in from a wide array of stakeholders.
 - Fellows put together sophisticated school plans that address both the strategic (mission and vision) and the tactical (scheduling, classroom transitions, etc.). The effectiveness of these school plans, however, will hinge on how well Fellows articulate their plans to respective audiences - staff, students, parents and the broader Springfield community. Successful candidates to the **Founders Fellowship**, therefore, must communicate with ease and purpose.

All Fellows receive a stipend for their planning work. The size of the stipend will be dependent upon whether or not the candidate is able to participate full-time (preferable) or part-time (also considered). A uniquely qualified candidate could complete the **Founders Fellowship**, while maintaining employment elsewhere.

How to Apply:

Please submit a statement of interest (750 words maximum) along with a résumé by December 15th to Matt Brunell at mbrunell@springfieldempowerment.org. The statement of interest should articulate:

1. The mission and key aspects of the school you'd like to found, along with other important information about your vision for the school; and
2. Your capacity to lead such a school.

About Empower Schools:

Empower Schools partners with communities to help them get the schools they want with the results students need. We work with policymakers and education system leaders to adopt Open Systems that enable Powerful Schools of all types, including both traditional district schools and independent schools. Powerful Schools are those whose proven and promising leaders have the flexibility and autonomy to effectively prepare students and improve outcomes. Visit us at www.empowerschools.org.

Empower Schools and the SEZP are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, handicap (disability), gender identity, or sexual orientation; we strongly encourage candidates of color to apply.