
The Innovation Fund

Grant Opportunities for Your Charter School

Georgia Charter Schools Association Conference

March 6, 2018



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.



Warm Up (2 minutes)

- Jot down your thoughts about the following items:
 - Define innovation (in your own words).
 - Write down a major problem you are facing in your school/classroom/organization.
 - If you had a magic wand, how would you address that problem?



Innovation Fund Mission

The Innovation Fund strives to dramatically advance student achievement by:

- **Investing** in schools and districts that are developing, piloting, implementing, and scaling programs that take a radical approach to education, and
- **Evaluating** these programs' effectiveness in order to **strategically scale** programs and practices that advance student achievement.

The grant has . . . enabled us to really individualize education for each student. It set us up like a springboard to be able to meet our students' needs where they are. **The grant provided much more than money; it provided an opportunity.**

- Innovation Fund Grantee



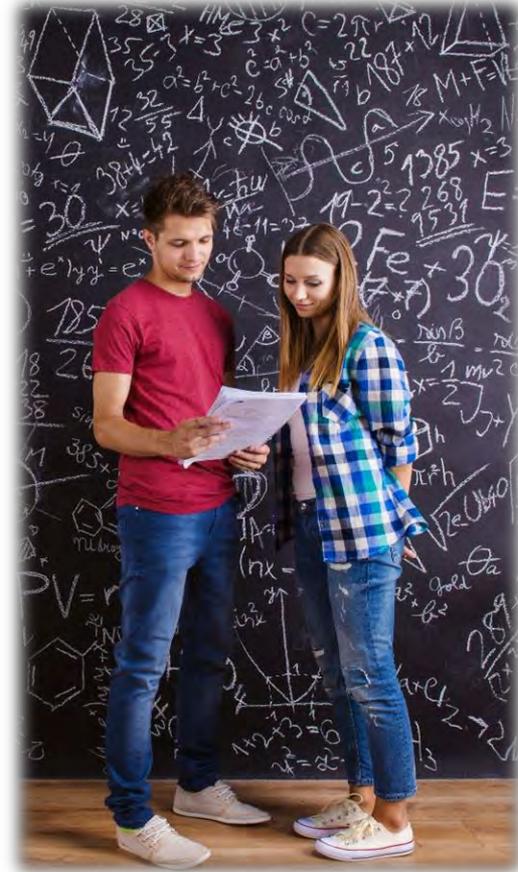
Innovation Fund History & Footprint

- Began as part of Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) plan
- Has received state funding since FY15
- Since 2011, the Innovation Fund has invested over **\$36 million** in grants to school districts, nonprofit organizations, charter schools, and institutions of higher education.



Innovation Fund Priority Areas

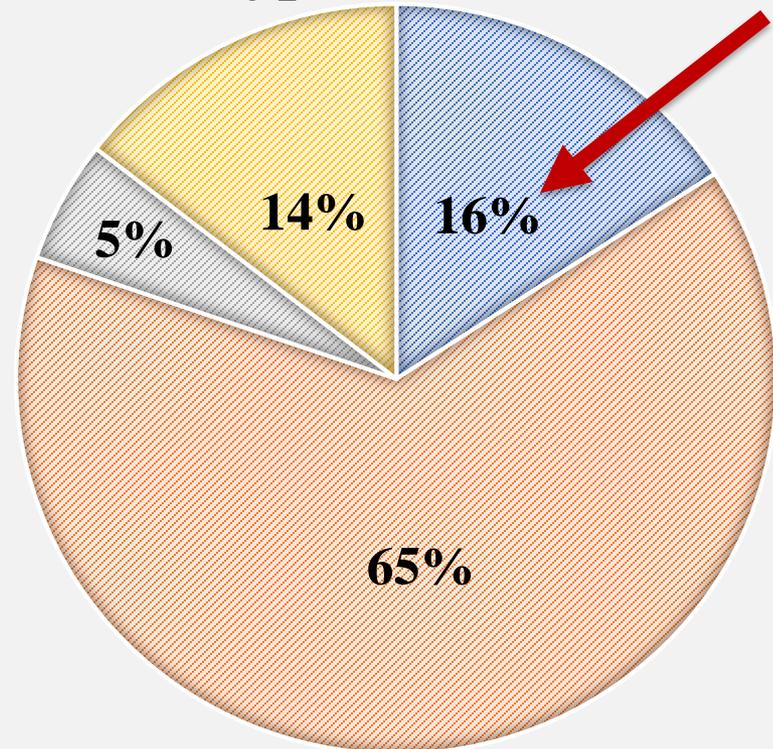
- Applied Learning with a Focus on STEAM Education
- Blended & Personalized Learning
- Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy Development
- Teacher and Leader Development for High-Need Schools



The Innovation Fund & Charter Schools

Innovation Fund Grants Awarded By Organization Type

- Charter Schools
- School Districts/Traditional Public Schools
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Postsecondary Institutions



The Innovation Fund & Charter Schools

- **Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School:** New Teacher Residency Project/CREATE
- **Bishop Hall Charter High School:** Blended Learning Model for At Risk Students
- **Charles R. Drew Charter School:** 21st Century Learning in the Making
- **The Museum School:** Museum in a Box



So, What is *Innovation* Anyway?



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.

Innovation

Innovative Programs:

- Target the **root cause(s)** of **challenging and complex problems**
- Are developed **for and with** students, teachers, and leaders
- Utilize **breakthrough, never-before-seen or rarely-before-seen approaches** to education
- **Disrupt** existing structures and systems
- Have the potential to **transform** school permanently



Problem vs. Root Cause

- **Problem**: the issue or challenge that a group of students, teachers or leaders is facing (*ex: high drop out rate, low reading achievement, high teacher turnover*)
- **Root Cause**: the circumstances or event(s), supported by qualitative and quantitative data, that have created the problem (*ex: students are not engaged in school, poor reading instruction, poor school culture*)



Levels of Innovation

Level of Innovation	Mindset	Outcome	Example
Level 4: Creator of New Future	Visionary, fully engaged, and entrepreneurial – “Where must we be in ten years?”	Breakthrough approaches to teaching and learning, never-before-seen approaches to school.	A school district creates a mobile school to serve transient homeless students.
Level 3: Continuous Improver	Dissatisfied with the status quo – “Good enough is not good enough.”	Incremental changes to teaching, learning, and school models are proposed and implemented.	A school district adds internships to its program to help homeless students improve their life skills and stay in school.
Level 2: Problem Preventer	Mindful and prepared of potential challenges – “Not on my watch.”	Challenges are managed and mitigated.	A district starts an incentive program designed to improve homeless students’ attendance.
Level 1: Problem Solver	Practical, competent – “I can do this.”	Challenges are resolved.	A district makes sure it provides efficient transportation for all homeless students.



Types of Innovation

Incremental Innovation	Radical Innovation
New to your school/district	New to the world
Gradual improvement in teaching, learning, culture, etc.	Dramatic improvement in teaching, learning, culture, etc.
Capitalizes on existing human capital and resources	Requires new human capital and resources
Operates within existing structures and systems	Disrupts existing structures and systems
Lower Risk	High Risk
Does not challenge the status quo and may be adopted with little resistance	Challenges the status quo and may lead to resistance or skepticism



Types of Innovation



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.

Types of Innovation

Volkswagen Beetle vs. Self Driving Car



Example of Level 4 Innovation



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.

So, Are You Ready to *Innovate*?



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.

Which Describes You?

- a) I know of a problem in my school/organization that I want to address, but I don't have any ideas about how to address it.
- b) I have an idea for a program, but I'm not sure if it is a Level 3 or 4 Innovation.
- c) I have a Level 3 or 4 Innovation. Give me the grant money!
- d) None of the above.



Grant Opportunities

Grant	Amount	Level of Innovation	Application Opens
Tiny Grant	\$1K - \$7K	2 or 3	Ongoing
Accelerator	\$10K (planning) \$45K (pilot)	Planning – n/a Pilot – 3/4	Summer
Implementation	\$200K - \$700K	3/4	Summer
Scaling	\$200K - \$700K	3/4	Summer



The Innovation Fund Accelerator

Applications Open in Summer 2018

- Series of workshops designed to help schools and districts on the edge of a breakthrough idea refine and, potentially, pilot their programs
- Seven sessions over six months
- Assignments completed between sessions
- \$10,000 grant to participate
- Strong pilot programs receive \$45,000 to pilot and evaluate their programs



Implementation & Scaling Grants

Applications Open in Summer 2018

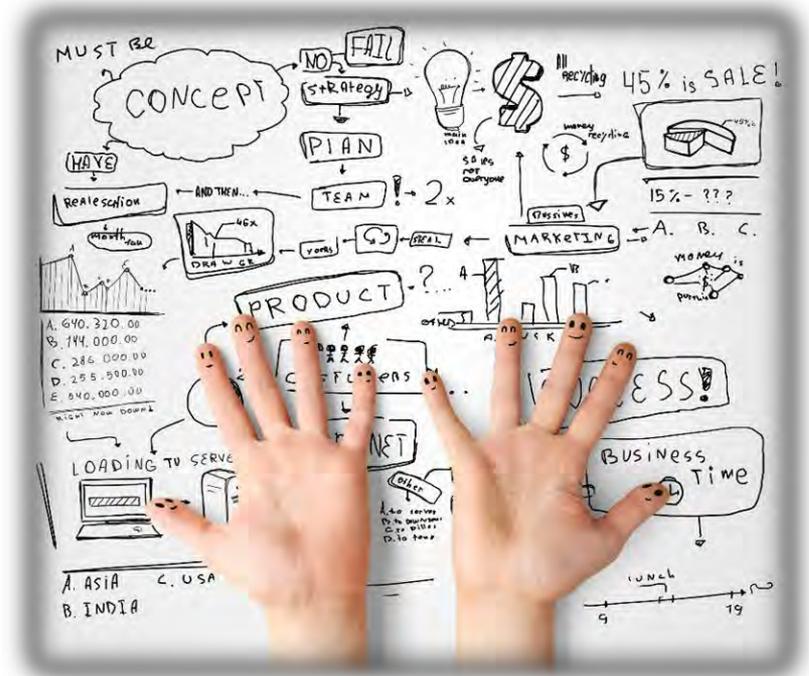
Implementation Grant (\$200,000 - \$700,000) for organizations seeking to implement a new innovative program focused on one of the Innovation Fund priority areas.

Scaling Grant (\$200,000 - \$700,000) for organizations wishing to expand or replicate an existing successful program focused on one of the Innovation Fund priority areas.

Tiny Grants

Applications Open Now

- \$1,000 to \$7,000 grants to support activities that **directly engage** students (*ex: station rotation blended learning*)
- Must be a public school leader or teacher or a school district representative
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis (next review – May)



Tiny Grants: Past Awards Granted

Applied Learning with a Focus on STEAM Education

Hall County Schools, Martin Technology Academy of Math and Science, Digital Storytelling: Teachers use digital storytelling to help students become creators of digital content.

Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy

Heard County Schools, Baby Braves: A childhood outreach program aimed at preparing zero to three-year-old children for pre-kindergarten.

Blended and Personalized Learning

Atlanta Public Schools, Benjamin E. Mays High School, Culturally Relevant Computing: A computer science summer program for students to enroll in the Georgia Virtual Computer Science Principles and participate in career exploration activities and college visits.



Qualified Education Donation Tax Credit

- Individuals and corporations can donate to the Innovation Fund Foundation, Inc. (IFF) and receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit.
- Funds will provide grants to schools and districts, with priority points for schools on the turnaround eligible list and rural schools.
- Details will be announced soon.



Innovation Fund Foundation
Transforming the Educational Experience



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.

Reflection

- Think back to the warm up activity.

Based on this session:

- Has your definition of innovation changed? If so, how?
- How might you go about addressing the problem you listed? Is your idea different now than what you originally wrote down? If so, how?
- Is there a grant opportunity that might be a good fit for your charter school?



Questions?



Contact Information

Rebecca Ellis

Director of Innovation

rellis@gosa.ga.gov

(404) 596-3651

Jaclyn Colona

Innovation Fund Specialist

jaclyn.colona@gosa.ga.gov

(404) 904-5514



facebook.com/TheGovernorsOfficeOfStudentAchievement



Twitter: @GOSA_GA



Georgia's Innovation Fund
invest. inform. inspire.