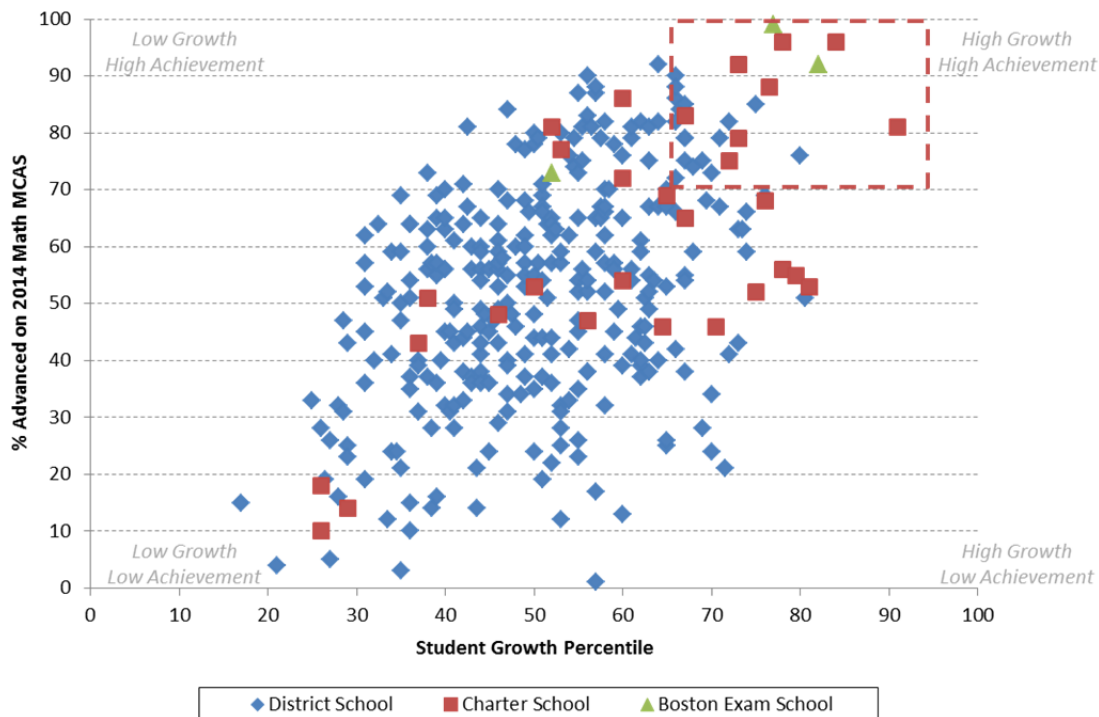


2015-16 Entrepreneur in Residence: 6-12 STEM School Jacobson Family Foundation, December 2014

Context

In recent years, articles touting the outstanding performance of Massachusetts' students on national and international tests have made front-page news in the education community. They highlight the fact that as a state, Massachusetts has led the nation and ranked among some of the top global competitors, such as Finland, Estonia, Canada, and Poland. While the headlines paint a rosy picture of the quality of education in Massachusetts, a more granular look into the data reveals that in reality, Massachusetts students have a long way to go to match the top international performers; for example, there remains a large gap between the state's performance and that of #1 ranked Shanghai. Moreover, a truly outstanding educational experience where students not only achieve at advanced levels but also grow and deepen their knowledge each year is only available to students at select schools (see figure 1).

Figure 1: 2014 10th Grade Math MCAS Achievement and Growth



Predictably, Boston Latin and Boston Latin Academy, two of the state's exam schools with restricted enrollment based on test scores, fall into the category of "high growth, high achievement" high schools. Of the excellent open-enrollment high schools, most are located in wealthy districts where median household income is anywhere from 20-135% higher than the median household income for the state.

These districts are unaffordable for many middle and low-income families, thus excluding swaths of students for whom a rigorous education could be life changing.

A small number of public charter secondary schools that serve middle- and low-income communities also achieve at exceptional levels. Schools like the Advanced Math and Science Academy (AMSA) Charter School in Marlborough serving students in grades 6-12 are proving that students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest levels. The school has developed an ambitious curriculum that stands in stark contrast to the common scope and sequence followed by most Massachusetts schools, and pairs it with the genuine belief among staff that all kids are capable of mastering rigorous academic content. Various measures of academic ability validate AMSA's model: by 10th grade, AMSA students are some of the highest, if not *the* highest achieving students in the state on assessments such as MCAS, SAT and Advanced Placement. AMSA is also aware of the demand for a workforce with advanced computer programming, coding and engineering skills and as such, all students take computer science courses from 6th to 11th or 12th grade. With such remarkable results, it is unsurprising that AMSA, like other high performing charter schools, has an extensive waitlist and each year, only a handful of lucky families gain access to this outstanding education.

Opportunity

Within Massachusetts, there is an immediate need for new STEM-focused schools with the highest levels of rigor and innovative approaches to fostering a love of STEM topics among students. The need is particularly profound in low- and middle-income communities. Examples such as AMSA highlight what is possible when content stretches all students to performance levels beyond those typically regarded as "college-ready." New school designs are also reimagining what is possible when advanced content is combined with new models of delivering STEM education in ways that maximize student outcomes and engagement levels. Such schools not only motivate students to master advanced concepts, but stimulate deep levels of curiosity and engagement among students, while allowing them to acquire skills that will make them attractive to future employers. The impact of these schools results not only from increasing the number of children who succeed at high levels but also from demonstrating what is possible.

Coupling a high achievement mindset with a focus on STEM is critical to meeting the needs of the Massachusetts economy. Over 20% of the state's job growth between 2012 and 2022 is expected to come from STEM occupations. To fuel continued competitiveness and innovation, the state will require top quality talent to fill these new roles. Increasing the number of schools capable of graduating students with the requisite skills to pursue STEM majors in college as well as deep passion for STEM topics is the first step to ensuring a robust talent pipeline.

Entrepreneur in Residence

The Jacobson Family Foundation (JFF) is seeking an **entrepreneurial leader interested in designing and leading a rigorous, high-standards, STEM-focused**

6-12 charter school in Massachusetts and with a longer-term vision to grow a network of similar schools or work closely with traditional public schools to facilitate practice transfer. In order to help the Entrepreneur in Residence plan and launch the first school, JFF will offer substantial support, including:

- *Resources:*
 - Salary and benefits for the Entrepreneur during the residency
 - Support for key programmatic expenses occurring during the residency
 - Office space to work and hold meetings
- *Planning Support:*
 - Robust strategic planning support to develop a business plan, organizational structure, budget, and growth plan
 - Guidance on board development and fundraising
 - Additional consulting support, as desired/needed
- *Access to a Network:*
 - Connections to the Foundation's grantees and other partners in education
 - Access to a range of outstanding school leaders to allow for learning from high quality school operators across the country
 - Assistance navigating and developing district and state partnerships to launch the first school and negotiate contracts
- *Formal Training:*
 - Access to training on select topics (e.g., charter school finance, facilities, etc.) to supplement the Entrepreneur's background as needed

During the residency year, the Entrepreneur, with the support of JFF, will plan for the launch of a new school to open in the fall of 2017. The Entrepreneur will need to start by selecting a community in which the charter school will operate and where there remains adequate seat capacity under the current charter school cap. The Entrepreneur will be expected to develop a detailed business plan and financial model, design a comprehensive school model, and prepare a robust charter application for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Entrepreneur will also spend considerable time building relationships with the education community in the state and specifically in the geographic area where the charter school will be located. JFF and the Entrepreneur will work together to develop a detailed action plan for the year, including key milestones, deliverables, and interim outcomes.

At the end of the residency year if the Entrepreneur is successful in developing a sustainable school plan and is on track to secure a charter for a school in Massachusetts, the Entrepreneur will be eligible to apply for additional school start-up support.

Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be an entrepreneurial and visionary self-starter. Candidates must have at least five years of experience in leadership roles (i.e., improving

student performance, managing adults, designing and driving operational improvements, etc.) at schools or similar programs. Candidates must demonstrate that they can thrive in settings that require adaptability and the ability to take on multiple roles. Candidates should be strong communicators and able to think both strategically and creatively to address complex challenges. While not required, consulting and/or operations experience in the for- or non-profit sector is preferred. Experience in the STEM industries or with STEM education is also strongly preferred. Applicants do not need to have a fully developed school model in order to apply, but must be deeply passionate about JFF's core belief that all kids can achieve at high levels. Candidates should also have interest in growing a larger network of STEM-focused schools in Massachusetts in the long term through replication or partnerships.

Application Process

In order to express your interest in this opportunity please submit your **resume** and a **cover letter** describing relevant results produced in previous roles to JFF.EIR@jacobsonfamilyfoundation.org.

About the Jacobson Family Foundation

The Jacobson Family Foundation (JFF) is a private family foundation in Boston whose mission is to increase the success of nonprofit organizations with the highest potential to achieve breakthrough results on pressing problems facing the United States and the Jewish people. The Foundation does this by pursuing a venture philanthropy approach – identifying a highly selective set of grantees to support with meaningful funding and deep strategic engagement. The organizations JFF funds have game-changing ideas, excellent leaders, measurable results, and sustainable approaches.