

Meijer Good Schools for Grand Rapids Program Overview

The Meijer Good Schools for Grand Rapids Program is a competitive grant opportunity to recognize and reward successful elementary schools (K-5) in the Grand Rapids Public Schools.



Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Good Schools & Good Classrooms
Meijer Good Schools for Grand Rapids

Grant Selection Process and Timeline:

- September** Schools meeting baseline eligibility are notified and invited to submit a Pre-Application
- October** Pre-Applications are due and reviewed by Meijer Good Schools Review Team
- November** Select schools are invited to submit a full proposal
- February** Full proposals are due and reviewed by Meijer Good Schools Review Team
- March** Select schools are asked to host a Site Visit Team
- April** Recommendations are presented to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation Board of Trustees for approval

Grant funds are intended to support:

- Innovation in instructional practice,
- Innovation in shared leadership and professional development, and/or
- Innovative strategies to engage parents and caregivers.

Grant amount and number of grants awarded:

Each Meijer Good Schools grant can be up to \$20,000, and is renewable for one year. The total amount available over a two-year period is \$40,000. Three schools will be awarded each year.

Selection Criteria:

The Meijer Good Schools Review Team will reference nine qualities that are indicative of a Good School throughout the selection process (see reverse for more detail):

1. Student Achievement (used as baseline eligibility)
2. Student Attendance (used as baseline eligibility)
3. Leadership and Educational Vitality
4. Data-driven Decision Making
5. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
6. Student Focus and Supports
7. School Culture
8. Professional Community
9. School, Family and Community Partnerships

Baseline Eligibility:

1. Elementary school (K-5) within the Grand Rapids Public School.
2. Been in operation for a minimum of three years.
3. Met Adequate Yearly Progress in the previous year.
4. Student attendance rate at 90% or better.
5. Must meet at least one of the following achievement benchmarks:
 - a. MEAP results from 2008, 2009, and 2010 show that an average of 70% or more of the students tested in grades 3, 4, and 5 were proficient in reading and 70% or more were proficient in math.
 - b. MEAP results from 2010 compared to 2008 show at least a 10 percentage point increase in both reading and math in the average percent of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students who were proficient.

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Benchmarks for Student Success: Nine Indicators of a Good School

The Meijer Good Schools for Grand Rapids program and Good Classrooms for Grand Rapids Minigrant program look for nine specific qualities that are indicative of a Good School or Good Classroom.

At a minimum,

1. **Good Schools have students who perform well academically.**
2. **Good Schools have excellent rates of student attendance.**

In addition to these two basic indicators, Good Schools also demonstrate seven other important qualities.

3. **Good Schools have good leaders.**

The **Leadership and Educational Vitality** benchmark indicates that school leaders are effective at managing and leading a community of learners. The school's mission and vision focus on student learning, and all stakeholders share this perspective. Every decision made in this school is designed to advance the mission and vision. School leaders change things that need to be changed. They motivate stakeholders to work together even when there is disagreement. The leaders solicit the opinions of staff, parents and students, and are respectful of diverse ideas. The process of school improvement is inclusive. Staff, students and parents are recognized for good work by school leaders. There is public recognition of how well the school is doing.

4. **Good Schools use data to make decisions.**

The **Data-driven Decision Making** benchmark indicates that school staff use facts from test scores, student records, research studies, state and district standards, and other sources to make decisions. They continually collect new facts to assess and evaluate student learning, as well as teacher practice. Teachers use a variety of tools and assessments to determine if what they are doing is helping students academically and behaviorally. Using data to improve outcomes for students is a clearly defined and highly valued practice. The school's progress is an open book to parents and community.

5. **Good Schools are rigorous.**

The **Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction** benchmark indicates that the school is organized to challenge students to learn and perform. All students understand what is expected of them academically. Students, parents and teachers understand what "success" looks like, and that achieving success requires effort. Minimum standards are high. Curriculum and assessments clearly align with those standards. The school utilizes specific strategies to support students who are falling behind and bring them to grade level, and employs mechanisms to recognize students for success.

6. **Good Schools focus on the whole child.**

The **Student Focus and Supports** benchmark indicates that the school offers health, tutoring, mentoring, and other services needed to help students develop and learn. An extra-curricular program operates before, after, and/or during school. These out-of-school time activities meet the needs and interests of all students. Academic components of these programs are intentionally aligned with in-school curriculum. Students are recognized for authentic accomplishments in meeting academic goals.

7. **Good schools offer a supportive learning environment to all.**

The **School Culture** benchmark indicates that the school is a community of learners. Students and adults share a positive atmosphere. People of all ages are respected for their differences. The staff is culturally competent and address the challenges of racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse population. Staff, parents and community care about every detail that affects the students. The school addresses school safety, health issues, behavior problems, and drug prevention. The school has a visual and/or performing arts program for all students.

8. **Good Schools have great teachers.**

The **Professional Community** benchmark indicates that all staff share a commitment to excellence in teaching and supporting students in their learning. Professional development activities align with the school's mission and vision and are informed by data. New and experienced teachers are supported through the practice of shared leadership and Professional Learning Communities. Together, teachers regularly practice observing and reflecting on one another's teaching for the purpose of improving student learning. This practice is informed by relevant and timely research.

9. **Good Schools are partners with families and their community.**

The **School, Family and Community Partnerships** benchmark indicates that the school has strong ties to families and caregivers, as well as community organizations and businesses. The school and parents communicate well. All parents are welcomed and encouraged to be connected with school and there is evidence that many do. Parents are included in decision-making related to the school. School staff engage parents and caregivers in the process of learning, and in celebrating accomplishments. The school has an active volunteer base.



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