

Gem Prep: Meridian



Charter Petition

Grades K-12

Primary Attendance Area:

West Ada School District

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Charter Submitted by:

Jason Bransford, Gem Prep: Meridian Director

jasonbransford@geminnovation.org

600 South Ave

PO Box 86

Deary, Idaho 83823

Non-Discrimination Statement:

Gem Prep: Meridian does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Any variance should be brought to the attention of the administration through personal contact, letter, phone, or email.

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Executive Summary

Bill Daggett, CEO for the International Center for Leadership in Education, has said that “if Rip Van Winkle woke up today, the only thing he’d recognize is a public school classroom.” Lives have changed. Technology is woven into the very fabric of society in nearly every way. Communication, work, entertainment, etc., have all evolved to include technology. However, Idaho schools have yet to unlock the full power of technology to transform the learning experience for students. The Idaho education landscape lacks examples of schools using innovation to significantly improve the teaching and learning experience for students and teachers. While some schools have introduced technology into the classroom, few are using it to enable relevant, personalized and data driven instruction. The stark reality is that personalized learning, which is adaptive and capable of challenging students at their comprehension level, is in high demand but in short supply in Idaho. Without models demonstrating what is possible, we risk a continuing gap between the education our children receive and the world they will be expected to inherit.

Proficiency in reading, writing, and math has traditionally been the entry-level threshold to the job market, but the 21st century’s global economy will require a workforce with a different set of skills in order to be competitive. Future employees will need a more diverse skillset combining learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills. Students will need to be exceptional critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, communicators and collaborators in order to be competitive in tomorrow’s marketplace.

Across the state of Idaho there is an urgent need for more high quality educational options that prepare students for post-secondary success. Although there are some high performing charter and traditional schools, most of these schools are concentrated in a few areas, are overenrolled, and/or have long wait lists. This lack of high quality schooling options is limiting the potential of Idaho’s youth as well as having a detrimental impact on the state’s economy. Encompassed by the states with the lowest percentage of minimum wage earners in the nation, Idaho is currently ranked within the top ten states having the highest percentage of minimum wage earners.¹ Idaho’s population has one of the lowest percentages of college degrees²; ranking 46th across the nation in number of high school students matriculating to college³, with only 23% of Idahoans completing a bachelor’s degree or higher.⁴ These educational attainment rates do not match the needs of the workforce or those of employers. The Idaho Business Exchange Workforce Needs survey has reported that 43% of workers will need a Bachelor’s degree or more to fill the jobs employers anticipate, predicting a shortage of qualified workers in the years to come. According to the Rethink Series Report by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, Idaho needs to increase its share of young workers with a post-secondary degree by 33%. Increasing the supply of high quality educational options is essential, not only for the expanding options for young people but for

¹ http://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/minimumwageworkers_idaho.htm

² <http://media.spokesman.com/documents/2014/03/minwage-pc-3-25-14.pdf>

³ National Center for Education Statistics, 2014

⁴ *Field Guide to Idaho Education*, Idaho State Board of Education, 2014.

the vitality of Idaho's economy. Gem Prep: Meridian will strive to enable students to set and excel to high standards, to become well-rounded, life-long learners, and to be able to compete successfully in the 21st century global economy.

In a rapidly changing world, data-driven personalized learning is an educational apex; preparing students for an exciting tomorrow, by providing a transformative education which allows students to reach their individual potentials while producing critical thinkers, achievers and life-long learners. Gem Prep: Meridian will help fill Idaho's need for effective, dynamic and powerful schools, which prepare students for post-secondary success.

After a great deal of research on best-practices and results-driven educational innovation, the Leadership Team from Gem Innovation Schools (GIS) began networking with some of the most highly successful blended learning schools in our nation such as KIPP, Rocketship, Alpha Public Schools, Summit Public Schools, and Rocky Mountain Prep. Having garnered the best practices from these schools, the Leadership Team developed a blended learning model which focuses on the personalized nature of learning and the ability to deliver individualized instruction to students.

The Gem Prep blended learning model places high performing teachers in the classroom with powerful online learning programs. The model is focused on individualized instruction and encouraging advancement at the student's own pace. When students master an educational concept, they are quickly introduced to the next step; advancing at their own level. Additionally, the use of adaptive technology offers the ability for students to encounter material presented in a way that is engaging and meaningful to them, while also providing formative data assessments that provide feedback on the growth and development of each student to the educator. These formative assessments give the educator a fast track to what concepts are being mastered and easily identify areas where additional support may be needed in order to allow the student to truly understand and become skilled in the subject matter.

The situation in the State of Idaho in terms of educational attainment is increasingly worrisome and there is a clear lack of K-12 schools preparing students for the jobs that will be available in the future. As the gap between necessary global workplace skills and current statewide educational outcomes widen, Gem Prep: Meridian was created to prepare Idaho's students for the world they will inherit.

Success of Gem Prep: Meridian will be defined by the accomplishment of the goals and metrics outlined in Education Programs section, which will academically prepare Gem Prep: Meridian students who are the heirs to tomorrow's economy.

Mission, Vision, and Key Elements

Mission

To prepare students for success in college and professional technical careers by providing a high quality, personalized, relevant and rigorous education through exceptional teaching, innovative uses of technology and partnerships with families.

Vision

Gem Prep: Meridian will be a K-12, personalized, college and career preparatory school. Through personalization, and by leveraging best practices in technology, blended learning and online learning the school will engage students in 21st century work, using competencies necessary for productive lives as citizens in a dynamic, increasingly competitive global world.

The school will graduate students who are:

- College and career ready
- Problem solvers
- Life-long learners
- Self-motivated
- Responsible citizens

Key Elements

Gem Prep: Meridian will be grounded in 21st century learning and innovative school practices.

- **High Expectations and Rigor.** The school's focus will be on 21st century learning and critical thinking skills, as well as Common Core-alignment. Personalized learning does not effectively benefit students if students are working with content that is below their capacity. The quality and rigor of student work is framed by competency-based standards planning and challenging learning objectives and assessments. Additionally, students will be prepared for a post-secondary education through dual credit courses taken during high school and the alignment of curriculum with Common Core standards.
- **Personalization.** The blended learning, personalized instructional model is built on the belief that each student brings unique strengths and challenges to their learning experience and must be supported accordingly. Personalized learning includes working in adaptive online learning programs, working toward informed post-secondary goals, and utilizing flexible time at the secondary level for self-directed learning.
- **Data.** The school will be grounded in the importance of using data to drive instruction, and will use formative assessment and other data to continually adjust instruction and necessary interventions.

- **Innovation.** Continual improvement and innovation are of considerable importance. The organization will constantly review performance data and make adjustments to the school model as necessary.

Community Need and Interest

West Ada School District (WADA) is the largest school district in Idaho. With Idaho schools ranking as one of the lowest nationally in dollars spent per student on education, school districts statewide are taxed, endeavoring to make the most of each dollar to meet the ever-increasing demand to improve, innovate and prepare students for the developing global marketplace in which they will be asked to compete.

The Meridian community has a significant interest in charter schools. Charter schools in Meridian enrolled over 2070 students in 2016, leaving an additional 1145 students on local charter schools' waiting lists. An additional high quality educational choice for students in the Meridian area is greatly needed; one which serves students on an individualized basis utilizing innovative technology.

The Gem Prep: Meridian high school blended, flex model is unique to the Meridian attendance area, as well as to the state; incorporating a blend of face-to-face classes, online classes, dual credit classes and virtual classes all facilitated from the school campus. Gem Prep: Meridian is not considered a virtual school, as virtual options are only one component of the program as a whole. Inherent in the Gem Prep: Meridian model is the ability for students to access high quality teachers in any given subject without regard to the campus location through real-time virtual classrooms. The program will enable students in Gem Prep: Meridian greater access to quality teachers from multiple regions around the state, because the hiring candidate pool is not limited to a 30+ mile radius around one particular enrollment area.

Founding Team Leveraging Experience & Success

Gem Prep: Meridian will be operated by a seasoned charter school leadership team with over 12 years of experience managing several Idaho schools: Idaho Distance Education Academy (I-DEA), Gem Prep: Pocatello and Gem Prep: Nampa. The team is augmented by a governance board which provides expertise in all of the functions and areas needed to run a successful school. The chart below outlines the experience and areas of expertise of the school's board and founding team.

Areas of Experience and Expertise		Founding Team & Board of Directors												
Team Member	Position	Finance	Edu Programs	Edu Innovation	New School Start-up	School Facilities	Governance & Law	Operations	Community Outreach	Develop./Fundraising	School Administration	Distance Learning	Special Populations	Technology & Data
Jason Bransford	Director	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
Barb Femreite	Business Manager	X			X	X	X	X		X		X		
Josh Femreite	Operations Administrator			X	X	X		X				X		X
Laurie Wolfe	Academic Administrator		X	X	X						X	X	X	X
Derek Bub	Principal		X	X				X			X			X
Allison Akhnoukh	Board Member			X	X			X		X	X			
Jill Call	Board Member		X	X										
Bonnie Freytag	Board Member								X					
Murray Stanton	Board Member						X	X						
Roger Stewart	Board Member		X	X			X		X		X		X	
Brian Trammell	Board Member						X							
Dennis Turner	Board Member				X		X	X	X					

Gem Prep: Meridian will leverage the experience and expertise of a proven administrative team with a demonstrated track record of preparing students for success in college and professional technical careers.

The team has a contagious passion for education, a passion that ignites educators and students alike, and has a keen ability to transform their passion into consistent, measurable results. The team realizes that the ultimate success as educators is not only measured by immediate student outcomes, but also by the essential preparation of students for the purpose of inheriting and succeeding in the future global economy.

I-DEA began operating as a statewide virtual charter school in 2004. During the period from 2007 to 2013, the school began receiving accolades from state and national education leaders for the high performance and the successes students were achieving. In 2013 the leadership team realized that access to the home-based virtual school was limited to students who had an adult present in their household during their academic day; therefore, most students were unable to take advantage of the individualized programs available through the distance learning model. In September 2014, the leadership team launched Gem Prep: Pocatello, a blended learning campus, to inform the expansion from a single school virtual model to managing multiple blended learning schools across the state.

Utilizing the knowledge and practices learned through I-DEA and the blended program, the leadership team and board purposed to transition in a way to meet the needs of families who desire a more individualized, adaptive, face-to-face educational program for their students.

Since 2014, the leadership team has developed and implemented a face-to-face campus program in two separate locations: Pocatello and Nampa. Gem Prep: Nampa's school charter was awarded in October 2015 followed by Gem Prep: Pocatello's school charter awarded in September 2016.

The successes of the schools managed by the leadership team are highlighted in Appendix R-4 School Highlights and Academic Data.

Gem Prep: Meridian will be operated by a seasoned charter school administrative team which has 12 + years of experience managing I-DEA and two Gem Prep schools with governance from a Board which provides expertise in all of the functions needed to run a successful school.

Please see Appendix D-1 Board of Director Resumes and D-4 for Administrative Team Resume

Educational Programs and School Goals

An Educated Person in the 21st Century

An educated person in the 21st Century is prepared to use technology appropriately and strategically to solve problems, find information, evaluate sources, make connections, forge deeper understandings, and effectively communicate with others.

An educated person in the 21st Century asks and answers challenging questions, solves problems, and reflects critically on their work and performance to inform future progress.

An educated person in the 21st Century demonstrates self-management and self-awareness. They demonstrate resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges. They acknowledge when they need assistance and when they can be of assistance to others.

An educated person in the 21st Century understands and acts upon their responsibility to the larger community. They are able to listen respectfully, work through challenges, and collaborate productively with others from different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

How Learning Best Occurs

Gem Prep: Meridian's objective is to build and foster a community of learners which view education as not confined to the traditional four walls of a classroom; but rather, as an exchange of knowledge and ideas through technology, effective curriculum, effective instruction and personal relationships.

Gem Prep: Meridian's core educational philosophy is that learning occurs when:

- learners construct meaning;
- learners are actively engaged in purposeful tasks;
- learners are expected and encouraged to learn;
- activities are integrated and meaningful;
- learners see themselves as part of the community and find ways to serve the community;
- learners see the connection between what they learn and the real world;
- learners are provided with support as an intrinsic part of the educational program;
- learners have challenging learning opportunities.

Gem Prep: Meridian will graduate students who are:

- College and career ready
- Problem solvers
- Life-long learners
- Self-motivated
- Responsible citizens

Educational Program and Goals

In developing an initial school model, the leadership team sought to incorporate successful best practices from its virtual school (I-DEA) as well as high performing charter schools across the nation. The founding team has been influenced by the success of high performing blended learning schools such as Rocketship, KIPP LA, Summit Public Schools, Alpha Public Schools, Rocky Mountain Prep and others. At the same time the school model created is unique to Gem Prep: Meridian, as it strives to meet the needs of the target student population and work within the Idaho operating environment.

Differentiated from what has traditionally been referred to in the current educational landscape as blended learning, the Gem Prep: Meridian model pivots strongly on rigor and personalization. Students will be enabled to progress through curriculum at their own pace while still enjoying meaningful community with their peers, who may be at a completely different academic level on any given subject.

The table below summarizes the origins of each component of the models described below:

<p>Component of current I-DEA model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offline curriculum (K-12) • Some online curriculum selections • Assessment cycles and data driven instruction • Dual enrollment • Learning Management System • Single subject acceleration model (students working ahead of grade level when ready) • 7-12 asynchronous statewide instruction model
<p>Practice drawn from other high performing school models</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-6 in classroom rotational model (including multi-age grouping for core Math/ELA content) • 7-12 Flex Model • Some online curriculum selections • Staffing model • Principal residency model • Actionable data reporting for teachers to inform instruction

The key components of our model are as follows:

- **High Expectations and Rigor.** The school will be focused on 21st century learning and critical thinking skills, as well as Common Core-alignment. Personalized learning does not effectively benefit students if students are working with content that is below their capacity. The quality and rigor of student work is framed by competency-

based standards planning and challenging learning objectives and assessments. Additionally, students will be prepared for a post-secondary education through dual credit courses taken during high school and the alignment of curriculum with Common Core standards.

- **Personalization.** The school's instructional model is built on the belief that each student brings unique strengths and challenges to their learning experience and must be supported accordingly. Personalized learning includes working in adaptive online learning programs, working toward informed post-secondary goals and utilizing flexible time at the secondary level for self-directed learning. Pathways will be available for students to pursue professional technical careers, careers for which traditional college is necessary, or a combination whereby students obtain technical certificates, which allow a student to self-fund their college education. The path of learning will look different for each student, as it will be tailored to his or her needs. In the K-6 model, students will be using a blended learning rotation model, and the 7-12 model will use a flexible blended learning model. Differentiated instruction will occur at these pathways—online adaptive instruction, as well as elective courses. Teachers will also do targeted small group instruction as a form of intervention and acceleration.
- **Data.** Gem Prep: Meridian will be grounded in the importance of using data to drive instruction. The school will use formative assessment and other data to continually adjust instruction and necessary interventions.
- **Innovation.** Very much related to the above, the importance of continual improvement and innovation will be a focus for Gem Prep: Meridian. The organization will constantly review performance data and make adjustments to the school model as necessary.

The program at Gem Prep: Meridian is a hybrid model, with blended learning at all levels. The Christensen Institute defines blended learning as: “a formal education program in which a student learns: 1) at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, path and/or pace 2) at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home 3) and the modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.”⁵

Gem Prep: Meridian identifies that while there are no large-scale, rigorous peer reviewed research studies currently available due to the fact that blended learning is considered somewhat new to the education landscape, the school has patterned the specific educational model after high performing blended learning schools in other states. These schools have demonstrated strong academic results and have considerable experience in implementing blended learning.

As with most innovation, Gem Prep: Meridian realizes that adjustments and improvements are often necessary as these ideas are tested and put into practice in real-world settings. Gem Prep: Meridian is committed to evaluating the academic impact of the blended

⁵ <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/key-concepts/blended-learning-2/>

learning instructional model and making any necessary adjustments in order to meet all academic goals. The School is committed to vigilance in ongoing assessments, evaluations and adjustments to facilitate successful student outcomes. We understand that newness, in and of itself, does not make something valuable, just as status quo does not always make something successful.

Please see Appendix R-1 for information on adaptive blended and online learning.

School Goals

Gem Prep: Meridian will have the following educational goals.

School Goals	As Measured By
1. Students will be prepared for success in college and/or career upon graduation from high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ISAT Scores ○ SAT, ACT or Compass Scores ○ The number of students who pass their dual credit courses with a grade of “C” or better ○ Graduation Rates ○ College graduation rates
2. Students will participate in personalized learning experiences that are tailored to their individual needs and that give them significant choice in their learning, which will result in technologically capable young people who are self-motivated, life-long learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmark Assessments ○ Adaptive online assessments
3. Teachers, students, and school leaders will use data to drive instruction and to improve learning outcomes, including implementing innovative new strategies and making adjustments to the school model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Surveys ○ Narratives from Teachers and School Leaders
4. Gem Prep: Meridian will be a welcoming, safe, and inclusive school community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average Daily Attendance rates ○ School culture survey ○ Parent Volunteering rates

K-6 Instruction

Gem Prep: Meridian’s K-6 blended learning model will utilize a classroom rotational model that enables students to gain exposure to whole group, small group and independent (both

online and offline) instruction. Gem Prep: Meridian will use multiple instructional delivery pathways to optimize student acquisition and mastery of clearly defined standards and goals. Methodology used will contain a combination of teacher created and curated content; which includes both small group instruction and adaptive online learning programs.

A daily instructional experience will likely include:

- **Whole group instruction.** Each block will begin with teacher led whole group instructions introducing the focus for today's lesson and providing an opportunity for students to work in heterogeneous groups.
- **Teacher led small group instruction.** The classroom teacher will work with a small group of students. The focus will be on skill building with targeted support based on each individual student's needs. The teacher will have instant access to each student's data and be able to tailor the small group instruction based on the real-time data from each student. The teacher will utilize the data from the adaptable online programs and assessments to meet each student where they are, to determine where they need to be, and to develop and implement guided learning plans which promote student achievement and success.
- **Independent reading.** Gem Prep: Meridian believes strongly in the importance of frequent independent reading as a way to promote fluency and foster a love of learning. During this station, students will select appropriately leveled texts from the classroom library or online library.
- **Adaptive online curriculum.** Students will work independently with online curriculum. The online curriculum is personalized to each student and "adapts" based on historical performance. In addition, teachers will be provided with data from the programs that they can use to inform whole and small group instruction. Examples of the types of online curriculum that may be used are DreamBox math, TenMarks math, ThinkCerca for argumentative writing and RazKids for reading fluency. The adaptive curriculum enables students to be challenged every day in a dynamic learning environment. In any given class there may be students working in subject content below grade-level, on grade-level or two to three levels above their own grade level; while still being involved with their peers developing a strong sense of community within the class as a whole.
- **Small groups.** Students will work independently on projects and activities that reinforce the core skills being taught during the teacher led small and whole group instruction. Initially this work may be more independent. During independent learning time students work on adaptive learning software, online assignments and/or playlists. Online assignments may be assigned by the teacher or by the adaptive software program to personalize each student's learning. Initially this work may be more independent. However, over time, and with support from the Paraprofessional and/or volunteers, students will begin to work more collaboratively on projects.

Please see Appendix R-2 for a diagram of the different learning modalities in K-6.

7-12 Instruction

The 7-12 model is not a virtual school model. It is a blended learning flex model with one of the components being virtual classrooms accessed from the Gem Prep: Meridian school campus. The 7-12 model will be driven by the following:

- **Sharing of highly qualified teachers across the state.** A cornerstone of the Gem Prep: Meridian secondary school model is the sharing of teachers across all Gem Prep schools. Core subjects will be taught synchronously across the state with some students in person with the teachers while others access the lesson via telecast with a paraprofessional providing supervision. All paraprofessionals* will be highly qualified and possess the academic knowledge and skills to support students in each subject in which they supervise far end students (students on the receiving end of the telecast). Far end students will have the ability to interact with the certified teacher during the live telecast. They will also be able to ask questions and send messages via a chat feature to the certified teacher before, during and after class, write on a virtual whiteboard, participate in class discussions, and ask and answer questions from peers around the state. Certified teachers will also have online office hours during the week so that students can receive additional help, ask questions or clarify their understanding of course material with the teacher. In addition to ensuring students across the state have access to highly qualified teachers in each subject area, this model ensure financial sustainability by enabling teacher staffing to be spread across three smaller schools.
- **Early access to college courses and interest driven electives.** Students will be encouraged to enroll in dual college credit courses both online and in person at local universities. Students across the entire 7-12 continuum will have access to over 200 courses through partnerships with Idaho Digital Learning (IDLA). In addition, high school students will have the opportunity to enroll in a vast array of courses at local universities. This program component also supports financial sustainability by reducing the number of students (particularly in grades 11 and 12) who require direct instruction and supervision on a daily basis.
- **Blended Learning: Flex Model:** The Flex Model will be used at the 7-12 level. The Christensen Institute defines a Flex model as:
“a course or subject in which online learning is the backbone of the student learning, even if it directs students to offline activities at times. Students move on as individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities. The teacher of record is on site, and students learn mostly on the brick- and-mortar campus, except for any homework assignments. The teacher of record or other adults provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects and individual tutoring.”

Gem Prep: Meridian’s flex model is designed to mentor and encourage students to develop clear educational goals and expectations for achievement; and to simultaneously support students in their learning processes.

By individual design encompassing a variety of education tools (virtual classrooms, dual credit courses, on campus face-to-face instruction, fluid schedules, study blocks, etc.) students are able to create an education framework that meets their personal skills, abilities and interests, and which facilitates their progression toward their own goals. Gem Prep: Meridian will use a broadcasting system to telecast live classes to other regions across the state. A natural byproduct of the Gem Prep: Meridian's personalized flex model is that students become adept in self-management, time-management, goal setting, and distance communication; all skills they will need for their future post-secondary academic and career pursuits.

*Paraprofessional's Role within the Flex Model

The paraprofessional's role during synchronous instruction is to ensure that the technology is working for the far end students so that they may actively participate in class with their peers around the state. Paras may also assist individual students who need additional support during in class instruction. Paraprofessionals will proctor quizzes and tests under the certified teacher's supervision during synchronous classes, ensure that students are on task, and communicate any student needs or concerns to the certified teacher.

7-12 Learning Modalities

In Gem Prep: Meridian's flex model of instruction, students in grades 7-12 will experience a wide variety of rich and unique learning modalities, most of which are accessed directly from the school campus.

- **Synchronous Instruction - "Send".** Students will receive core instruction (Math, English, Science and Social Studies) from a credentialed teacher. For a portion of these classes, the teacher will be based locally and students will interface with the teacher on site. While this teacher is working with students locally she will also be "sending" her lesson to another Gem Innovation Schools' location via telecast. During this time with the teacher, teaching strategies may include direct instruction, small group/cooperative learning, and project based learning. Please see detailed description of synchronous instruction below.
- **Synchronous Instruction - "Receive".** For a portion of core classes, students will "receive" instruction from a teacher located in another Gem Prep School location. This instruction will be broadcast live via teleconference into the student's local campus classroom. During this period, students will be supervised and supported by a paraprofessional locally while engaging in learning with their peer students across the state. (See 'paraprofessional's role' in 7-12 instruction, above.)
- **Online.** Teacher led core instruction will be supplemented by online instruction. Students will work through content housed in the Learning Management System as well as adaptive online curriculum. Students can move at their own pace to enable reinforcement and remediation of the core concepts taught during synchronous class time. Online learning takes place in a larger space with monitoring and support provided by a paraprofessional.

- **Asynchronous.** Students will have the opportunity to enroll in electives provided by approved vendors such as Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA). These courses will be taken asynchronously with students moving at their own pace through the material.
- **Off campus.** Students in grades 11 - 12 will have the opportunity to leave campus to take courses at local universities. Participation in these courses will enable students to receive college credit while they are still enrolled at Gem Prep: Meridian. While it is anticipated that most students will be able to provide their own transportation or utilize public transportation to access college campuses, the school will evaluate the need to support students with transportation on an as needed basis.

Please see Appendix R-3 for the diagram on the 7-12 learning model, and Appendix R-1 for information on adaptive blended learning.

Curriculum

K-6 Curriculum

Gem Prep: Meridian will have a robust process for selecting curriculum. A curriculum committee will meet annually to evaluate new and existing curriculum. In line with the organization’s commitment to data as described previously, each curriculum will be evaluated against demonstrated capacity to increase student achievement. Curriculum will also be closely evaluated to ensure that it aligns with Idaho Core standards in math and English Language Arts and Idaho Standards in all other subjects.

Gem Prep: Meridian’s new and existing curriculum will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis. As well, student achievement data will be reviewed against Common Core standards to assess program effectiveness.

Proposed Curricula for K-6:

	Offline	Online
ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explode the Code • Handwriting Without Tears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iReady • ReadyGen • Headsprout • RazKids
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singapore Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreambox • iReady • Zern Math
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Fusion student textbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Fusion
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idaho Adventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My World Social Studies

Curriculum 7-12

Gem Prep: Meridian's Curriculum can be accessed by students through the Learning Management System. The delivery of the curriculum will be a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous learning. The direct instruction component for Gem Prep: Meridian students will be further developed by the certified teachers, with supplemental resources augmenting the core curriculum and allowing for adaptivity to fit the blended learning model. Having this content housed within the organization's LMS also enables seamless integration between the days when students are receiving synchronous teacher led instruction and days when they are working independently online. This internal curriculum will be supplemented with online programs.

Similar to the elementary school model, Gem Prep: Meridian plans to utilize a curriculum committee that will meet annually to evaluate new and existing curriculum. The committee will review student achievement data against Common Core standards to assess program effectiveness. The first Gem Prep: Meridian students will matriculate to 7th grade in 2019-2020. As such, we look forward to using the next several years to research the impact of various curricula in other school models during the early years of Common Core implementation.

Gem Prep: Meridian will leverage the curriculum that has been successfully used at I-DEA. Gem Prep: Meridian's core and supplemental curriculum, as well as the learning management system, is adapted from those utilized through I-DEA, however the delivery of curriculum follows the blended learning model. Essentially all curriculum delivery in I-DEA is asynchronous with students taking courses established by certified teachers, but with very little live instruction from the teachers. Whereas, in Gem Prep: Meridian the delivery is a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The direct instruction component for Gem Prep: Meridian students is further developed by the certified teachers, with supplemental resources augmenting the core curriculum and allowing for adaptivity to fit the blended learning model.

Curriculum can be accessed by students through the Learning Management System. Having this content housed within the organization's LMS also enables seamless integration between the days when students are receiving synchronous teacher led instruction and days when they are working independently online.

In addition to the core curriculum used for each course, many courses contain supplemental curriculum to enhance student knowledge and skills in key content areas. The proposed curricular chart below illustrates specific core and supplemental curriculum.

Proposed Curricula for 7-12

	Core Curriculum	Supplemental Curriculum
ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pearson’s Common Core English interactive online textbook (7-12) • EngageNY ELA (7-12) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ThinkCerca (7-12) • Newsela (7-12)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EngageNY math (7-12) • Pearson’s Digits interactive math (7-8) • Pearson’s High School Mathematics Common Core (Algebra I and beyond) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TenMarks (7-Algebra II)
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CK 12 Life Science, Earth Science, Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics (7-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery • Hippocampus
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Mifflin Harcourt online social studies textbooks (7-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery • Hippocampus

Estimate of student time spent in each of the learning modalities

The chart below is a sample weekly schedule for an 8th grade student at Gem Prep: Meridian, which illustrates approximately how much time students will spend in each of the learning modalities during a given week. During the times when students are not participating in synchronous courses, they will be logged into their learning management system and completing assigned projects, independent coursework, designated readings, group projects, etc. The curriculum and content students complete during their asynchronous time may vary widely depending upon the requirements of each given course.

Sample 8th Grade Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 - 9:00	Synchronous Math Class	Asynchronous Math Block	Synchronous Math Class	Asynchronous Math Block	Synchronous Math Class
9:05 - 10:05	Asynchronous IDLA Digital Photography	Asynchronous IDLA Digital Photography	Asynchronous IDLA Digital Photography	Asynchronous IDLA Digital Photography	Asynchronous IDLA Digital Photography
10:10 - 11:10	Asynchronous Science Class	Synchronous Science Class	Asynchronous Science Class	Synchronous Science Class	Asynchronous Science Class
11:15 - 12:15	Synchronous English Class	Asynchronous English Block	Synchronous English Class	Asynchronous English Block	Synchronous English Class
12:15 - 12:50	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:55 - 1:55	Synchronous PE / Health	Synchronous PE / Health	Synchronous PE / Health	Synchronous PE / Health	Synchronous PE / Health
2:00 - 3:00	Asynchronous Social Studies	Synchronous Social Studies	Asynchronous Social Studies	Synchronous Social Studies	Asynchronous Social Studies

When students are working in asynchronous blocks, they will be supported by certified teachers and/or paraprofessionals providing tutoring, course assistance monitoring, etc. This additional structure assists students with necessary tools, time management and support, and also provides a level of expertise and encouragement toward student success.

General Support Structures

Gem Prep: Meridian recognizes the unique needs of all children and their potential for significant educational development, and will provide opportunities designed to meet each child's needs. Gem Prep: Meridian will serve all children including special education, Gifted and Talented, students requiring Section 504 Accommodations and EL (English Learner) students.

Each person has the right to learn at the most appropriate level where growth will take place. Because gifted and talented, EL, Title I and Section 504 students have special needs, they will be provided educational experiences that will strive to meet those needs. The Gem Prep: Meridian model is centered on personalized instruction, and as such will allow teachers to tailor instruction to the specific needs of each individualized student, using online adaptive technology as well as personalized, online ("asynchronous") courses. In addition, after school office hours in 7-12th grade will be provided as well as tutoring services in K-6th grades. Through data driven instruction, the school will provide progress monitoring and a robust intervention program, specifically, targeted differentiated instruction in small groups. If Gem Prep: Meridian qualifies for Title I funding, the school will create a Title I program, based on the school model of personalization and targeted instruction.

Gem Prep: Meridian will plan and budget to provide certified special education teacher(s) and other personnel, physical facilities that are appropriately accessible to permit access by students with disabilities, funding and contractual arrangements to ensure that Gem Prep: Meridian students with disabilities will receive special education and services as required in IDEA 2004 and outlined on the students' IEPs.

Gem Prep: Meridian will provide transportation for special needs students if it is determined that this is necessary to provide for a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Gem Prep: Meridian will follow state and federal laws regarding assessment of Special Education students.

Proposed Operations and Potential Effects of the Charter School

The Charter School's Potential Effects

By locating in the Treasure Valley area, the school will provide an additional choice of a personalized, college and career preparatory school. There is a tangible need for schools that are using technology to enhance the learning experience for students, particularly adaptive technology that allows students to be challenged at their capability level on a daily basis. Additionally, the West Ada School District is the largest school district in Idaho with a significant number of students currently on waiting lists for the existing charter schools, demonstrating the demand for more charter schools. Finally, Gem Prep: Meridian's leadership team has a significant presence in the Treasure Valley and can be leveraged in terms of talent recruitment, student recruitment and local support.

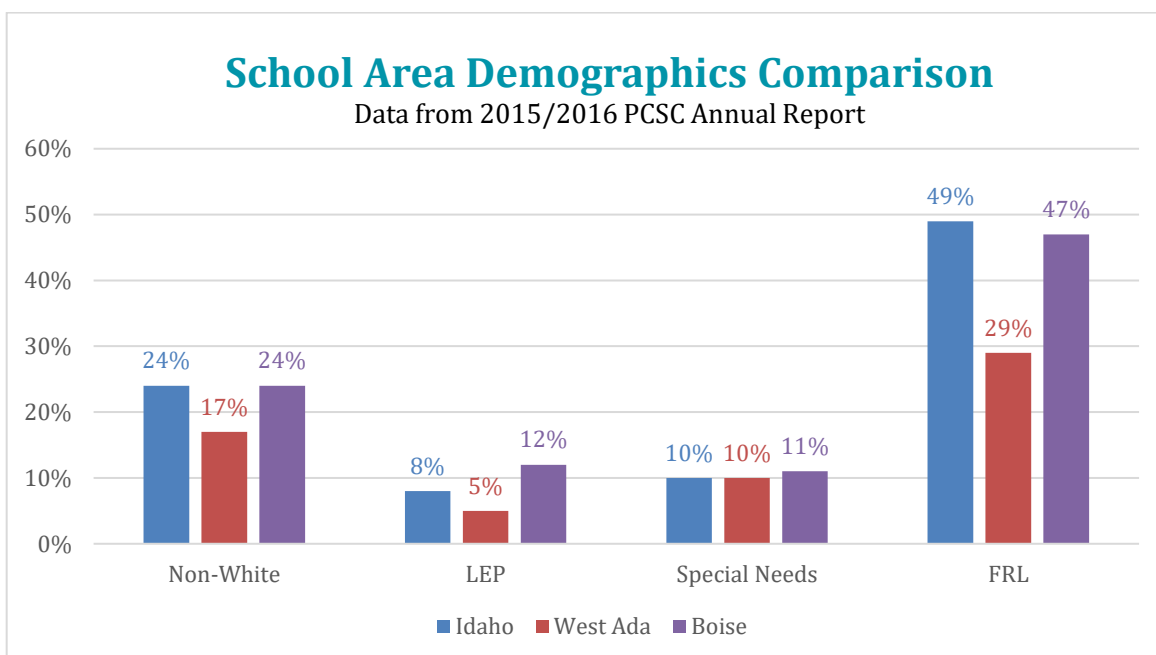
Enrollment Trends

The Treasure Valley has one of the youngest urban populations in the United States, which is becoming increasingly diverse. Between 2010 and 2015, Treasure Valley public schools saw 2% growth, or an increase of nearly 12,000 students, with charter schools growing by over 11% during the same period. Nielsen projections show an increase of 3,500 school age population by 2019.

West Ada School district enrolled 38,000 students in 2016 and has an anticipated growth of 2% over the next five years. This growth is projected to add approximately 760 school-aged individuals in the WASD. In an area where the education system is at maximum capacity, Gem Prep: Meridian can help relieve the burden, while at the same time creating a transformative educational footprint that will create opportunities for 21st century learning and for teachers.

Student Demographics

It is anticipated Gem Prep: Meridian will mirror the student demographic population of the West Ada and Boise area school districts. See comparison chart below.



Demand

As of the 2016-2017 school year there were 2070 students enrolled in charter schools in Meridian, with 1145 students on the waiting list of charter schools located within the attendance area. The demand for these schools is considerable in regard to available capacity. (Acknowledging that there is likely duplication of students across a number of the waitlists).

Gem Prep: Meridian will serve all children including special education, Gifted and Talented, students requiring Section 504 Accommodations and EL (English Learner) students, etc. (See Tab 3 for more information and how Gem Prep: Meridian will serve these students.)

One full year prior to opening and active recruiting, the school is generating a significant interest among local families. As of July 18, 2017, over 250 students have expressed an interest in enrollment. (83% are located in the West Ada area with 10% currently living in Boise.)

Potential Impact on Local School Districts

At its target enrollment of approximately 582 students, and because of Gem Prep: Meridian's mentor teacher counseling system, it is anticipated a high percent of students will have an advanced degree by the time they graduate from high school. Further, because most of Gem Prep: Meridian's graduates will successfully complete at least 1 college level course in high school, matriculation and completion of college will be much higher than the state averages. This will increase the number of students who are going on to college or highly employable careers, thereby having a significantly positive impact on the economic landscape of Idaho.

Gem Prep: Meridian is expected to have 288 students enrolled in year one of the charter. It is expected these students will come from various schools within the Treasure Valley area

with West Ada School District being the primary source of the student transfer. Assuming all 288 new students transfer from WASD, there will be a reduction of 11.80 support units (assuming an ADA of 95%) with an estimated reduction of State foundation support to WASD of \$1,270,270, which is approximately 0.65% of their projected foundation funding for FY2018-2019.

Please see Appendix I-2 for Detailed Fiscal Impact.

Proposed Location: Primary Attendance Area

The school will be physically located within the West Ada School District. Gem Prep: Meridian's attendance area will include all of WASD.

The school anticipates drawing students from Nampa School District, Boise School District, Caldwell School District, and Vallivue School District. The City of Meridian and the WASD will be the most impacted. As mentioned, the WASD is growing quickly, and many of the schools are overcrowded. Most importantly, the school hopes to provide an additional choice of a personalized, college and career preparatory school in the area.

Please see Appendix K for a Map of the Primary Attendance Area

Facilities

At full scale, Gem Prep: Meridian will require approximately 45,000 square feet. The assumption of classroom square feet per child is broken down to 48 square feet per child in kindergarten, 35 square feet per child in grades 1-6 and 30 square feet per child in grades 7-12. There will be 7,000 square feet needed for multi-purpose areas (cafeteria, library, rec room), an additional 5,500 square feet needed for administration and faculty, and an additional 10% of total need for circulation and restrooms. Gem Prep: Meridian does not currently have any organized sports planned, so as such there will not be any planned space for these activities.

At the K-6 grade levels Gem Prep: Meridian will require classrooms that will allow teachers and students the ability to move around and re-organize their room to accommodate the station rotation model. Each classroom will have access to high capacity wireless internet and Chromebooks for students. In high school, the facility will need to accommodate an open concept capable of adapting to the needs of the students and teachers. Common areas will be created with various learning pods to allow for student collaboration, project work, and students taking online classes. Each classroom will contain virtual teleconferencing equipment to accommodate the shared course model. Structurally, the school requires a facility that will allow for adaptation of the learning environment to suit its needs.

Gem Prep: Meridian's school leadership has successfully secured facilities for two other school startups and is aware that finding affordable facilities that can meet the programmatic needs of schools is an essential criterion for success. Given the lack of access to school district

facilities or other public subsidies, the school anticipates that securing affordable facilities may be one of the most challenging components of this plan, particularly in Meridian.

Gem Prep: Meridian is working with the Building Hope Foundation to secure a facility. Once the facility has been secured, Gem Prep: Meridian will enter into a lease to purchase contract with Building Hope. At the end of five years, GPM has the option to purchase the facility from Building Hope at a purchase price equal to the remaining principal (senior and sub-debt). With this option, GPM's lease payments will build equity each year. Building Hope is currently under a purchase and sales contract for a facility located at 2750 E. Gala Court in Meridian and has a bank term sheet for purchase, pending charter approval. The building is a two story 31,200 SF facility on 4 acres that was previously used as a for-profit university. Pending charter approval, Building Hope is scheduled to close on the facility in late September to early October of 2017. The contracted price is \$4.4 million with an additional estimate of \$388,183 for renovation costs for the current facility.

The facility purchase price includes furniture, fixtures and equipment, which will decrease the first year expenses for these items.

Building Hope will construct an additional facility on the 4 acres for GPM year three expansion providing approximately 18,000 SF of additional classroom and gym space. Initial site plans for year three expansion were submitted to the City of Meridian on June 13, 2017. The expansion cost is estimated at approximately \$2.8 million.

See Appendix J-1 for Option 1 Facilities Template and Site Plans

Administrative Services

The Administrative services will be provided by the school Administrators (state certification required), with support from the Board of Directors. Gem Prep: Meridian will contract with Gem Prep: Online (formally I-DEA) for administrative services such as comprehensive program design, curriculum development, instructional oversight, obtaining a facility and facility financing, fundraising, a school director, an academic administrator, a business manager, an operations administrator, professional development, preparing budgets and financial reports, back office support, human resources, overseeing special education, and marketing. Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho, Inc. Board holds the charter for GPO. The certified Principal and staff provides school leadership and day-to-day operations. GPM will pay GPO 10% of the school's annual state foundation payment. The purpose of a percentage rather than a flat fee based on the cost of an FTE is to protect the school in case of a reduction in state funding. When using a flat fee, the cost of services will remain the same even if the school's revenue decreases unless the contractor reduces the staff's wages that the expense is based on. The 10% of revenue is within normal national range. The actual dollars are much lower than the national average due to lower state funding.

The performance certificate agreement will be made between the authorizer and the Gem Prep: Meridian.

Recruitment

The most important lesson learned from the opening of Gem Prep: Nampa (GPN) is that identifying a physical location impacts *every* element of student recruitment. Gem Prep: Meridian has already identified a school facility over a year prior to the scheduled school opening. The ability to focus on a more narrowly defined region of West Ada surrounding the facility will greatly benefit student recruitment efforts. The facility, located close to the freeway and in a particularly populated area of West Ada, is highly visible and convenient for parents. When parents know the physical location of the school, the interested family numbers are a stronger indication of how many students will actually enroll in the school. Without a physical location, the interested family list is a much weaker predictor of actual enrollment.

GPN's location was not identified until just four months prior to school opening, and proved a detriment to filling the available seats in the first year of operation. This was the primary reason all seats were not filled. Targeted regional student recruitment was difficult and resulted in a lower than expected first year enrollment of 197 students. Further, when a location was finally identified and secured, it was situated far from the main population centers of Nampa. Adding to the recruitment difficulties, was the fact that the GPN facility was a two-year temporary location. Convenience and visibility of a location makes a significant impact on student recruitment. Understandably, parents have a limit on how far they are willing to send their children to school each day. Even with these challenges, GPN is on track to fill every seat for the 2017-2018 school year, plus have a waiting list.

Gem Prep staff take an aggressive and focused approach to student recruitment. Prior to any active recruitment for GPM, the school has already collected a list of over 250 students interested in enrolling. In comparison, GPN's list of interested students was half the size of GPM's list one year prior to its opening. While West Ada School District, being the largest and one of the fastest growing districts in the state will help GPM recruitment, the school does not rely on this as its sole means of enrollment. Additionally, the leadership team has gained valuable insights in student recruitment strategies from opening two other Gem Prep schools, including GPN in the Treasure Valley. The lessons learned from these experiences will drive the marketing efforts for Gem Prep: Meridian. As a result, Gem Prep: Meridian recruiting will be hyper-focused in proven recruitment techniques and tools, work smarter, and draw from extensive recruitment experience. The following are factors that will help the school meet the enrollment targets.

Treasure Valley Presence. Gem Prep: Nampa opened in 2016 and has since established a positive footprint in the Treasure Valley community. Gem Prep's unique learning model has encouraged visits by prospective students and parents, state and local lawmakers, education advocates, state and national philanthropists and various local community leaders. In year zero, Gem Prep: Meridian will use Gem Prep: Nampa as a showcase to interested families and educators by providing tours of the school. Prospective students and parents will be able to experience the education model as it functions. This will greatly benefit meeting the enrollment goal, as parents can experience the Gem Prep blended learning model in practice

and see how it can work for their student(s). Parents can be confident knowing the leadership team has created and successfully operates two Gem Prep schools; one located in the Treasure Valley.

Recruitment Strategies. Through the experience of opening and operating three charter schools, the leadership team has developed proven recruiting strategies such as:

- Internet and Social Media presence such as Facebook, Google ads, and the Next Door App
- Hold academic and social activities at the school facility to build relationships with prospective families
- Partner with local pre-schools to distribute information about Gem Prep
- Present the Gem Prep model to community organizations and leaders, e.g. rotary groups, church organizations, etc., building a network of supporters throughout the community.
- Face to face information sessions with parents and students
- Recruit at local family friendly events, local library summer reading programs and lunches in the parks
- Advertising through mailers and billboards

Measurable Standards, Accreditation and Accountability

Methods for Measuring Student Progress

In evaluating the school's success in meeting mission-based goals and objectives, the school will utilize both standards-based and performance-based assessments.

Standards and standardization are the basis of assessment. Performance will be assessed on at least five levels:

1. Student progress relative to previous performance will be assessed through standardized assessments. The school will create student baselines using mandated testing results.
2. Performance will be assessed relative to district and state developed standards. The school will do a comparison of annual results with baseline scores to assess progress.
3. Online adaptive assessments.
4. Student's progress towards meeting the Idaho Core will be assessed by Gem Prep: Meridian certified teachers through statewide standardized assessment results and internal assessments such as end of course exam, benchmark assessments, and individual student work.
5. College Readiness will be assessed through nationally normed assessments such as the SAT as well as progress in dual credit and dual enrollment programs.

Interventions and Corrections

Gem Prep: Meridian's data driven instruction model allows ample time for interventions and corrections. After teachers give benchmark assessments, online adaptive assessments or other teacher created assessments, teachers will have time to analyze the data during professional development time. After the school gives these benchmark/diagnostic assessments, administration will facilitate a full day of data analysis with teachers. During this time, teachers will analyze results and prepare re-teaching and intervention plans with students who are struggling. Teachers may also prepare extension activities or course changes to Gifted and Talented students. For students who need interventions, teachers will plan targeted, differentiated small group lessons during synchronous instruction. Students' online and/or blended learning plans may also be altered to reflect the results of assessments and to provide additional remediation.

Testing

Gem Prep: Meridian will participate in all state and federally mandated testing. The school will have a test coordinator who will oversee the testing program and insure the testing process is followed with fidelity for all tests. The leadership team is currently investigating new Student Information Systems (SIS) that better align with the school model.

Gem Prep: Meridian is considering using Illuminate or PowerSchool. In addition to the SIS the leadership team is currently investigating the addition of Illuminate's Data and Assessment Management System, which would work with either of the student information systems. The Illuminate DNA system would give teachers and administrators access to reports, built in assessments, the ability to capture assessment data, data analysis tools and support, as well as data forecasting tools.

The organization ensures that student progress is closely tracked with two annual administrations of a criterion-referenced assessment across all grade levels. This data provides the school with important growth data over the course of a school year. Gem Prep: Meridian will consider the use of the NWEA MAP assessment for these bi-annual administrations.

Benchmark Assessments and Progress Monitoring

As part of the school's data driven instruction model, regular diagnostic and benchmark assessments will be administered. Many of the online programs which the school is considering such as Dreambox Math, iReady and Headsprouts have progress monitoring built in. The school will administer school-wide screening for reading and math at the K-3 grade levels in the fall, winter and spring, and follow up with a diagnostic assessment if a student scores in the "intensive" level on the screener.

Accreditation

Gem Prep: Meridian will apply to Northwest Accreditation Commission, a Division of AdvancED for accreditation in high school grades, as required in IDAPA 08.02.02.140.

Gem Prep: Meridian will apply for and renew accreditation every 5 years as required by the Northwest Accreditation Commission. The requirements used by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission are research-based standards to not only evaluate Gem Prep: Meridian's organizational effectiveness, but also its 9-12 programs, school wide culture, and satisfaction of our stakeholders. The five standards- Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement, provide the framework for Gem Prep: Meridian to continually monitor effectiveness. It is the school's belief that using this set of research-based standards can provide focus and help Gem Prep: Meridian leadership and stakeholders continue to provide a quality education for Gem Prep: Meridian students.

To ensure continuing accreditation of Gem Prep: Meridian, the school will maintain accreditation for its 9-12 program in accordance with Idaho Code 33-5205(3) (e) and IDAPA 08.02.02.140. An accreditation committee appointed by the school administration will choose the appropriate accreditation standard and oversee the accreditation process. After accreditation, the school administration will submit annual accreditation reports to the Idaho State Department of Education and the authorizing entity. The accreditation will be completed through NWAC/AdvancED.

Governance Structure, Parental Involvement, Audits

Governance Structure

Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho, Inc (GIS) will be the charter holder and will govern Gem Prep: Meridian pursuant to GIS's existing Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Board Policies. Gem Prep: Meridian will be its own LEA. Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho, Inc. is a non-profit organization organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. The Corporation is organized exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 ("IRS Code"), or the corresponding provisions of any future federal income tax code. GIS will be the sole member of Gem Prep: Meridian, LLC (GPM).

Please see Appendix A-4 for IRS determination letter,

Public Records

Gem Prep: Meridian will comply with all aspects of the Idaho Public Records Law. All students will receive written notification of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school. Upon request, all records of students residing in the District will be immediately transferred to the District.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be legally accountable for the operation of Gem Prep: Meridian. The school commits to compliance with all federal and state laws and rules and acknowledges its responsibility for identifying essential laws and regulations, and complying with them. The Board of Directors' meetings will generally follow Robert's Rules of Order, and will follow the Open Meetings laws, keep accurate minutes, and make the minutes available to the public according to the Public Records laws.

Please see the Bylaws for number of voting and non-voting board members, election and term of office of voting and non-voting directors and officers.

Please see Appendix A-3 for the Bylaws.

Selection and Replacement

Recommendations of new board candidates and elections of the Board of Directors will be held according to the Gem Prep: Meridian Bylaws.

See Appendix A-3 Bylaws regarding election process

The Board of Directors Seats

Current board members and their resumes are in Appendix D-1.

Board of Directors Responsibilities

The Board will be responsible for the financial health of the school, managing the school's funds responsibly and prudently while prioritizing spending with consideration given to the

school's mission, vision and educational program goals. The Board will make an effort to establish financial practices and reporting that result in accuracy and transparency. Board members will participate in fundraising activities as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Board. Board members will put the interests of the school first and will refrain from using the position for personal or partisan gain.

Board business conducted at Board meetings will be done per the bylaws and applicable laws (see Bylaws in Appendix A-3). Board members will commit to the ethical standards set forth in the Ethical Standards Agreement (see Board Ethics Statements in Appendix D-3).

The Board is to serve as the liaison between the school and the authorizing entity.

Recruiting Board Members

The Board and Administration will seek prospective members who have training or experience in accounting/finance, law, education, publicity, marketing, and/or business.

The Board understands that effective boards are a result of intentional and strategic planning. When planning for recruitment of new members, the board considers what the anticipated future board profile should reflect, and moves forward in a deliberate fashion to determine what expertise and necessary qualities they will seek in new members. Gem Prep: Meridian administrators and the school's current board members continually seek out exceptional individuals to serve on the schools' Board through ongoing professional and personal networking opportunities. Ideal prospective members will have training or experience in accounting/finance, law, education, publicity, marketing, and/or business. The Board will leverage networking opportunities of staff, teachers, parents and community relationships such as the local Rotary Club, when seeking prospective members. When seeking hard-to-fill skills, the board may determine to seek possible candidates by posting an opening on local community boards and profession-specific communications and forums. Once a potential board candidate has been identified, their profile will be presented to the board for review and discussion, and if the members are in agreement the recruitment process may begin.

The recruitment process may involve both vetting and cultivating the interest of potential future board members, prior to appointment. Future appointees will be provided with educational materials relative to online and blended learning, such as webinars, books and conferences, prior to appointment and during their service on the board. The membership of the school board has a direct impact on the ability of the school to fulfill its vision. Should the board find that certain skills are not being filled by potential board members and finds the need to recruit more broadly, the board may establish a committee to oversee the recruitment and vetting of new members, to facilitate the process of renewing the school with energetic, enthusiastic, committed and skilled leadership.

Relationship between the Board of Directors and School Administration

The Board of Directors is the governing board of the Gem Prep: Meridian school and has ultimate control over the school and all employee and parent concerns. If a parent or employee has a concern, they will first attempt to resolve the issue with the principal. If the

issue cannot be resolved with the principal, the parent or employee may attempt a resolution with the School Academic Administrator and then the School Director. If their concern is still not resolved, it will be brought before the Board of Directors.

The organization chart below demonstrates the reporting and interaction structure for Gem Prep: Meridian.

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Policy development and review
- The financial health of the school
- Administrative and operational oversight (not day-to-day operations)
- The legal affairs of Gem Prep: Meridian
- To adopt, advocate for and oversee a school budget, which is responsive to school goals and meets the needs of all students
- To conduct an annual self-evaluation of its own leadership, governance and teamwork.
- To communicate and interpret the school's mission and other policy related matters to the public and stakeholders.
- To ensure there is a supportive, smoothly operating leadership team which advocates for both children and the community.

School Director works under the direction of the Board. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Implement the vision and mission of the school
- Recommend to the Board the hiring of personnel
- Fulfill state charter school requirements
- Insure GPM meets the performance requirements outlined in the performance cert
- Execute the policies of the Board
- Act as the intermediary between the Board and stakeholders
- Make recommendation to the Board on issues facing the school

Business Manager works under the direction of the School Director. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Monthly and annual financial reporting to the board and outside entities
- Budgeting
- Day to day financial operations and accounting
- Financial records
- Purchasing and contracts
- State reporting requirements
- Payroll
- Insurance
- Benefits
- Accounts Payable

Academic Administrator works under the direction of the School Director. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Develop curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Recommend special services
- Implement professional development
- Supply annual educational reports
- Supervise and evaluate school principal
- State assessment planning
- Oversee hiring educational staff and provide recommendations

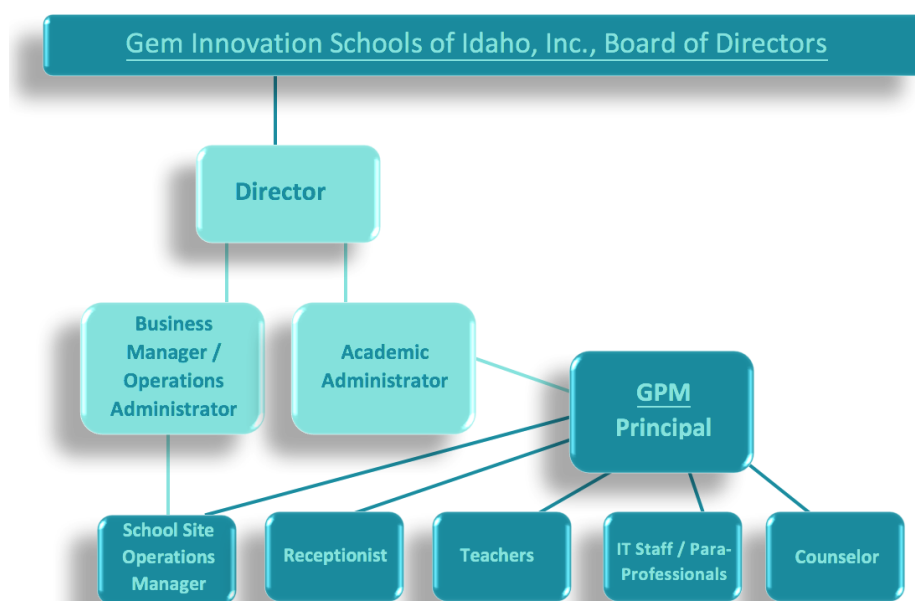
Operations Administrator works under the direction of the School Director. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Facilities management
- Supervise school operations employee
- Transportation
- Nutrition
- Building security and student safety
- Technology

Principal works under the direction of the Academic Administrator. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Parent and public relations
- Building school wide community and culture
- Student and staff discipline.
- Participate in curriculum development
- Supervise student scheduling
- Conduct all staff evaluations
- Provide teacher mentoring and coaching
- Resolve personnel issues
- Oversee substitute teacher roster, training and evaluation
- Student enrollment and records
- Attendance

The following organizational chart is the initial proposed plan. The school anticipates minor changes over the course of school growth.



Board Development

When new Board Members are added, they will be provided with a New Board Member Packet. This packet contains information to help them understand what is involved in being a Board Member, such as, but not limited to, the Gem Prep: Meridian Charter, roles and responsibilities, meeting laws, state statute for charter schools, ethical standards, policies and financial reports and budgets.

Annually or throughout the year, at the discretion of the Chairman, there may be a training schedule to include, but not limited to, the roles/responsibilities of a Board, review of the school's charter, the Board's Ethical Standards, and state statutes. As appropriate, the Board may include other training, including external training, as appropriate based on costs and time. The Chairman will make sure the Board is aware of these opportunities.

Board members will be encouraged to attend staff and parent education meetings.

The administrative team continues to disseminate research and information on blended learning to the Board, keeping them current and allowing for informed and knowledgeable decisions to be made by the governing body. The Gem Prep: Meridian School Board members are committed to continued development. In May 2015, a board representative attended a blended learning consortium held at Boise State University, and upon return, shared the insights received with the other board members. Also, each board member has read the book entitled "Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools" by Heather Staker and Michael Horn. Board members also participated in an in-service specifically about blended learning. In the 2015-2016 school year, the Board received training regarding academic assessments and also participated in training and discussion about board development and the best practices of transitioning from founding boards to long-term mature governing school boards. In April 2016, representative members of the Board attended the SDE Charter School Boot Camp. The Board believes strongly in seeking out relevant and solid guides on

blended learning, and in sharing that knowledge with each other and with their constituents in an effort to make Gem Prep: Meridian a high performing, personalized learning school which prepares students for college, career and citizenship.

In an effort to continue the development and excellence of each Board member, an annual self-assessment will be conducted, similar to the Idaho School Board Association (ISBA)'s self-assessment tool. The data will be used to improve the Board and its individual members' functionality. An example may be the discovery that the Board is weak in financial knowledge, leading to additional training specific to educational finances. In addition to the needs addressed in the self-assessment surveys, Board members will participate annually in development opportunities specific to leadership of online and blended learning schools.

Ethical Standards

The Board adheres to ethical standards established to ensure members conduct themselves in a trustworthy and ethical manner at all times in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Each Board Member is required to read, understand, sign and adhere to the ethical standards of the Board. The school also includes training for Board Members on the ethics policy.

Please see Appendix D-3 for signed Board ethics statements.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a cornerstone of the school, and it is recognized that parental involvement is key to student success.⁶ Upon enrollment, parents will agree to comply with all school policy and procedures as outlined in the Student & Parent Handbook.

Gem Prep: Meridian will strongly encourage, but not require, parents to complete 20 hours of participation/volunteerism each school year, with the intention that the more parents are involved, the more they will understand and be able to positively benefit the education of their students. The School's enthusiasm toward the participation program is to impart education ownership to the parents and to truly partner with them for their students' successes. All activities that parents/guardians voluntarily participate in on behalf of the school, whether at the campus or off-campus, are counted towards their volunteer hours. Parents are also encouraged to participate in school-related activities, including those pertaining to curriculum and instruction, such as tutoring and storytelling. Volunteers may also be involved in monitoring the playground, student drop-off and pick-up, and assisting with school events, PTO, school socials, etc. The school will maintain a differentiated list of parent volunteer activities and a log of volunteer hours is kept in the

⁶ Numerous studies have found links between parental involvement and engagement and student academic success are strong, in fact, this link has now been deemed "undisputed". An example of these critical links includes the U.S. Dept. of Ed's 1995 report, *Strong Families, Strong Schools*. Additional researchers, including Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, and Bloom (2003), and Beth Simon (1999), Topor, D, Keane, S., Shelton, T. and Calkins, S. "*The Interface of Family, School, and Community Factors for the Positive Development of Children and Youth*" (2010) have also well- documented and synthesized research on this topic.

school office. As the school grows from kindergarten through high school, the parental involvement opportunities will be updated, as appropriate.

In an effort to encourage enrollment of students from families of diverse family dynamics, parents are provided a lengthy list of opportunities in which to be involved. This allows parent volunteerism and involvement even in families with two working parents, single parent households, low income families, etc.

All volunteers will complete a Volunteer Agreement form. Volunteers will receive structured training (as needed), and must follow all policies and procedures defined by the school. If activity occurs that is not in keeping with the school policies, the school leader reserves the right to relieve the volunteer of his or her responsibilities.

A parent organization will provide consultation and support to the Board and the Administration regarding ongoing plans for the school.

Parental participation may also include, but is not limited, to the following:

- Ongoing contact with certified teaching staff
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Volunteering for school projects, programs and committees
- Attending Orientation Sessions
- Creation and participation in a Parent Teacher Organization
- Attending board meetings
- Creating committees to participate in the leadership and operation of the school
- Attending ongoing educational workshops
- Attending ongoing field trips and activities
- Receiving key information regarding school events on the Gem Prep: Meridian website
- Reviewing online Student & Parent Handbook which is updated annually. School leadership will also solicit input on the Student & Parent handbook.

In order to create awareness of volunteer opportunities and other parental involvement opportunities, the information may be communicated via email and the school website

Audits

Every year Gem Prep: Meridian will hire an independent certified public accountant to conduct an independent audit that complies with all generally accepted auditing standards. At the completion of the audit, the Board will review the results of the audit, approve and accept the audit report and findings. A copy of the audit report will be submitted to the Authorizing entity and the State Department of Education. The school will address any concerns brought up by the audit in a timely manner.

Financial Reporting

Gem Prep: Meridian will comply with the financial reporting requirements of Idaho Code Section 33-701 (5-10). The Board will have prepared and published, within one hundred twenty (120) days from the last day of each fiscal year, an annual statement of financial condition and report of the school as of the end of such fiscal year in a form prescribed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction pursuant to Idaho Code Section 33-701(5)(6).

The Board will present and discuss all financial matters at public sessions and will post all financial results, budgets, audits, contracts and disbursements electronically on the Gem Prep: Meridian website. The Board will hold an annual public hearing where the budget is discussed in detail. The Board will post notices of all meetings, including financial meetings, at the Gem Prep: Meridian school site as well as two other public sites within the attendance area, such as at a public library.

Such annual statement shall include, but not be limited to, the amounts of money budgeted and received, and from what sources, and the amounts budgeted and expended for salaries and other expenses by category. The annual statement will be submitted to the State Department of Education as required by law.

The school will place copies of all teacher contracts and vendor contracts on the school website. In addition, the school will place a listing of all disbursements on the website and makes available all such information upon request.

Annually, Gem Prep: Meridian will file with the State Department of Education such financial and statistical reports as the SOPI may require pursuant to Idaho Code Section 33-701(7). Gem Prep: Meridian will destroy all claims or vouchers paid five years from the date the same was canceled and paid pursuant to Idaho Code Section 33-701(8).

Gem Prep: Meridian will review the school budget periodically and make appropriate budget adjustments. Amended budgets shall be submitted to the State Department of Education pursuant to Idaho Code Section 33-701(9).

Gem Prep: Meridian will invest any money coming into the hands of the school in investments permitted by section 67-120 of the Idaho Code

Enrollment, Admissions, Attendance Policies

Enrollment

GPM’s instructional model includes challenging each student at their comprehension level. One way GPM does this is by placing students in the grade level of their comprehension, not necessarily in the grade level of their birth year. While this practice keeps students academically challenged, changing a student’s grade level placement also creates challenges to keep within the grade level cap.

Gem Prep: Meridian enrollment is capped at 732 students in grades K-12. The table below contains the grade-by-grade plan to grow to 582 students over six years. While the Board has a grade-by-grade plan that targets 582 students, the Board requests a single K-12 enrollment capacity of approximately 732. This approach allows the Board to adjust grade-level student numbers, within the 732-student cap, in order to assure availability for all current students who wish to re-enroll, in order to place students in the grade level of their comprehension, and in response to market needs. For the purpose of the lottery, no less than three months prior to GPM’s application deadline, the Board of Directors will establish the annual school-wide enrollment capacity not to exceed 732 students and an annual enrollment capacity for each grade level.

Grade	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
K	48	48	48	48	48	48
1st	48	48	48	48	48	48
2nd	48	48	48	48	48	48
3rd	24	48	48	48	48	48
4th	30	30	60	60	60	60
5th	30	30	30	60	60	60
6th	60	60	60	60	60	60
7th		45	45	45	45	45
8th		45	45	45	45	45
9th			30	30	30	30
10th			30	30	30	30
11th				30	30	30
12th					30	30
	288	402	492	552	582	582

Student Recruitment

Student Recruitment will be owned locally. The principal will be held accountable for meeting their enrollment projections. Equally, if not more important, it will be critical that the school leaders and staff make connections with prospective parents early and feel a sense of ownership for ensuring that they are providing a high quality education that attracts students. Recruitment strategies will include developing partnerships with local preschools, religious and other community organizations, as well as holding information sessions and advertising through local channels and on external communications.

(See Tab 2 for detailed recruitment plan and actual anticipated enrollment numbers.)

Admissions Procedures

Gem Prep: Meridian will be open to all children, on a space-available basis within each grade. No student will be denied admission based on ethnicity, creed, gender, disability, or place of residence. No out of state residents will be enrolled.

Gem Prep: Meridian will follow the equitable selection process that is outlined in IDAPA 08.02.04.203.07 or another method that is approved by the authorizer.

As a public charter school, Gem Prep: Meridian must, as a condition of its charter, have an open enrollment policy. Charter schools have a cap or limit as to the number of students they can accept. If the number of applications to a charter school exceeds the capacity of the school, all applicants will have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process or lottery.

Gem Prep: Meridian will follow the model admission procedure identified by the Idaho State Board of Education.

1. Prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, social or economic status, or special needs.
2. Prior to enrollment each year, Gem Prep: Meridian will advertise in local media and online and make application forms available online. The application will include information pertinent to filling available slots.
3. Gem Prep: Meridian's full-time employee's children will have first preference for admission to the school, with a maximum of 10% of the student population consisting of full-time employee's children.
4. Siblings of students already selected by lottery will be given next priority.
5. Prospective students residing in the primary attendance area of the school will be the next priority.

6. All other students residing outside of the attendance area will be the final priority.

Gem Prep: Meridian will substantially follow the model admission procedure identified by the Idaho State Board of Education.

Requests for Admission

Gem Prep: Meridian will comply with Section 33-5205 (3)(j) Idaho Code. A parent, guardian, or other person with legal authority to make decisions regarding school attendance on behalf of a child in this state, may make a request in writing for such child to attend Gem Prep: Meridian. In the case of a family with more than one (1) child seeking to attend Gem Prep: Meridian, one written request for admission must be submitted on behalf of all siblings. The written request for admission must be submitted to, and received by, Gem Prep: Meridian on or before the enrollment deadline established by Gem Prep: Meridian. The written request for admission shall contain the name, grade level, address, and telephone number of each prospective student. If the initial capacity of Gem Prep: Meridian is insufficient to enroll all prospective students, a lottery (as outlined above) shall be utilized to determine which prospective students will be admitted to Gem Prep: Meridian. Only those written requests for admission submitted on behalf of prospective students that are received prior to the enrollment deadline established by Gem Prep: Meridian shall be permitted in the lottery. Written requests for admission received after the established enrollment deadline will be added to the bottom of the final selection list for the appropriate grade.

Lottery Process

Gem Prep: Meridian will hold a lottery each year unless the initial capacity of Gem Prep: Meridian is sufficient to enroll all prospective students. The lottery will be held in a public forum and a neutral 3rd party will conduct the lottery selection. Gem Prep: Meridian will determine the students who will be offered admission by conducting a fair and equitable lottery conducted according to IDAPA 08.02.04.203 and Idaho Code 33-5205.

Waiting Lists

Once the equitable selection process is conducted each year, waiting lists for each grade will be developed. Students will be placed on the list according to the order they were drawn for each priority group. Those lists will be used to fill available spots until the next equitable selection process is conducted. If a student does not accept an offer for enrollment or the parent does not respond to the offer by the date designated in the offer, the student's name will be removed from the list and the next eligible student will be offered the seat.

Any written requests for admission received after the lottery has been conducted will be added to the bottom of the wait list for the appropriate grade and preference group.

Wait lists will not carry over from one year to the next.

All openings during the school year will be filled according to the order of the wait list. If a parent, guardian, or other person receives an offer on behalf of a student and declines

admission, or fails to respond to such an offer in a timely manner by the date designated in such offer by Gem Prep: Meridian, then the name of such student will be stricken from the wait list, and the seat that opens in that grade will be made available to the next eligible student on the wait list.

Written requests for admission received after the lottery has been conducted will be added to the bottom of the wait list for the appropriate grade. If a student is enrolled in Gem Prep: Meridian, and their sibling is on the waitlist, the sibling student will advance to the bottom of the sibling waitlist for their respective grade level, in accordance with (Rules Governing Public Charter Schools) IDAPA 08.02.04.203.04.

The names of the persons in highest order on the final selection list shall have the highest priority for admission to Gem Prep: Meridian in that grade, and shall be offered admission to Gem Prep: Meridian in such grade until all seats for that grade are filled.

Attendance Requirements and Records

Consistent attendance is essential to remaining in the Gem Prep: Meridian program. Gem Prep: Meridian students will meet or exceed the instructional hours as outlined in Idaho Code: 450 hours for kindergarten; 810 hours for grades 1-3; 900 hours for grades 4-6; and 990 hours for grades 7-12.

Notification of Enrollment Opportunities

In accordance with IDAPA08.02.02.203.02, Gem Prep: Meridian will ensure that the public notification process of enrollment opportunities will include the dissemination of enrollment information, at least three months in advance of the enrollment deadline established by Gem Prep: Meridian each year. The information will be posted in highly visible and prominent locations within the attendance area of the school, as well as on the school's website. In addition, Gem Prep: Meridian will ensure that such process includes the dissemination of press release or public service announcements to media outlets such as television, radio, and newspapers that broadcast within, or disseminate printed publications within, the area of attendance of the school. Gem Prep: Meridian will ensure that such announcements are broadcast or published by such media outlets on at least three occasions, beginning no later than fourteen days prior to the enrollment deadline each year. Enrollment information shall advise that all prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll in the public charter school regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, social or economic status, or special needs.

Denial of Attendance

In accordance with Idaho Code 33-205, the school's Board of Directors may deny enrollment or may expel or deny attendance to Gem Prep: Meridian to any pupil who is a habitual truant (I.C. 33-201), or who is incorrigible, or whose conduct, in the judgment of the Board, is such as to be continuously disruptive of school discipline or the instructional effectiveness of the school, or whose presence in a public school is detrimental to the health and safety of other pupils, or who has been expelled from another school district in this state or any other state.

Any pupil having been denied enrollment or expelled may be enrolled or readmitted to the school by the Board of Directors upon such reasonable conditions as may be prescribed by the Board, but such enrollment or readmission shall not prevent the Board from again expelling such pupil for cause.

The process for expulsion and denial of attendance is in Tab 6 under Student Discipline. For Special Education cases, refer to Tab 3 under Special Education Services.

Student & Parent Handbook

Gem Prep: Meridian has developed a draft K-6 Student & Parent Handbook, which outlines school policies, Internet Use, and disciplinary procedures. As the school grows, a secondary handbook will be developed to reflect the laws applicable at that time.

In order to ensure that both parents and students understand the expectation for students at Gem Prep: Meridian, handbook policies will be reviewed at orientation, and will be available on the school's Web site.

Please see Appendix Q for the Student & Parent Handbook.

Internet Use

Gem Prep: Meridian will have a comprehensive, realistic and enforceable Internet Use Policy, which will include parent permission.

Business Plan, Transportation and School Lunch

Business Plan

Marketing Plan

Gem Prep: Meridian leadership believes that the best marketing strategy is to deliver an excellent education for students which produces strong results. The school can tell this story to a broad range of external stakeholders. In addition to the most critical audiences of prospective families and teachers, the organization will seek opportunities to proactively build a brand around innovation that establishes Gem Prep: Meridian as a national leader in the realm of next generation learning. The school will engage in a variety of marketing and relationship building activities in an effort to bolster enrollment and solidify the brand within the community. This may be accomplished through a variety of tools capable of reaching a wide cross section of the local community, which continues to include underserved and at-risk families. The school intends to participate in successful outreach opportunities such as:

- Participation in community and other **networking events**, e.g. fairs, family days, parades, special zoo events, holiday activities, etc. The current bilingual principal attends most of these community functions.
- **Social Media**: Facebook, Community Calendars
- Gem Prep: Meridian **Web site**
- **Brochures and Posters** handed out and placed on community bulletin boards, the local swimming pool, rec center, local public libraries, and other family gathering places, as well as shared with local community leadership groups such as rotary, etc. Principal participates in outreach activities where he can meet face-to-face with constituents.
- **Local media coverage**, news releases and articles - specifically identifying that the school is open to all students within the enrollment area and serves-equally-all demographics.
- **Invitations to campus** given to legislators, community leaders, philanthropists, local businesses, etc.
- **Signage on campus** and at public events; in languages appropriate to demographics of the enrollment area.
- Participation in **community support drives** with other schools and local businesses.
- **Events** (open houses, summer socials on campus, gatherings at local community activities, and summer lunches in the park, etc.)
- Participation in **PTO activities**, fund raisers and community projects on and off campus
- **Relationship building** with local libraries; partnering with them in various venues for student story-time and outreach opportunities to reach a wide-range of constituents.

The School's marketing plan intends to reach a diverse cross section of families. The School intends to have a diverse student body that represents many different populations including underserved populations, minorities, as well as to all within the enrollment area.

Management Plan

The Gem Innovation Schools, of Idaho Inc., Board of Directors is the governing board of the Gem Prep: Meridian school and has ultimate control over the school and all employee and parent concerns. If a parent or employee has a concern, they will first attempt to resolve the issue with the school principal. If the issue cannot be resolved with the principal, the parent or employee may attempt a resolution with the School Academic Administrator and then the School Director. If their concern is still not resolved, it will be brought before the Board of Directors.

School's Financial Plan

Budget

The budget for Gem Prep: Meridian is prepared in compliance with Idaho Code Section 33-801 and rules of the State Board of Education; is presented at a public hearing in June of each school year; and will be delivered to the State Department of Education as required on or before July 15th for the subsequent school year. Copies of the budget will be provided to any interested parties via the Gem Prep: Meridian website. Further, the budget will be prepared, approved, and filed using the required accounts associated with the Idaho Financial Accounting Reporting Management System (IFARMS).

*See Appendix F for Three Year Operating Budget with Assumptions.
See Appendix I-2 for Detailed Fiscal Impact Three Year.*

Income sources

Funding sources will include SDE foundation payments based on support units by grade, staff apportionment and benefits based on support units, transportation reimbursement based on current year expenditures and directed program payments in support of specific SDE initiatives.

Any federal funds for Title I, Title II and Title VI-B will be calculated through the prescribed formulae and submitted within required deadlines.

The leadership team has raised over 5 million dollars in grant funding to assist Gem Prep: Meridian, as well as other Gem Prep Schools, with start-up costs.

Fundraising Plan

The Board of Directors, Administrator, and/or parent organizations will be responsible for fundraising efforts, if implemented, to generate capital or to supplement per-pupil allocations.

In addition, the school, will either employ or contract services for a Development Director. The Development Director will continually strive to identify, educate and cultivate key donors who are capable of making major gifts.

Please see Appendix E-1 for the grant letter from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation (JAKAF) and Appendix E-2 for the JAKAF Grant Distribution Letter.

Operating Expenditures

Gem Prep: Meridian will operate under a purchase order system in compliance with Idaho Code Section 33-601. All expenditure requests are signed off by the appropriate operating personnel and approved by the Finance Department. Pursuant to Idaho Code Section - 67-2302 the school will pay all of its operating obligations no later than 60 days after receipt of invoice. All operating expenditures will be approved monthly at regularly scheduled Board meetings.

Non-operating expenditures

Non-operating expenditures are based on the specific terms set out in the agreement. Non-operating expenditures are generally limited non-recurring expenditures and debt service obligations.

Cash Flow

The Business Manager will reconcile cash flow monthly to the bank statements and compare the current monthly expenditures to the monthly cash plan approved by the Board, and perform a variance analysis and reports to the Board on a monthly basis.

Financial Management

The accounting records will be kept and maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Gem Prep: Meridian, will follow the reporting requirements set forth by the Idaho State Department of Education IFARMS.

The Board of Directors will be ultimately responsible for financial management. The Board delegates the day-to-day financial management and day-to-day accounting of the school to the Business Manager. The Business Manager, in conjunction with his/her team (including the school operations manager at the school site), will complete a monthly review of operating results and present such results to the Board.

In addition to the annual audit (see Tab 5), a report to the Board will be given which includes any material weaknesses in internal controls and/or operating inefficiencies that should be addressed in the coming year.

The school will institute various segregation of duties to assist in the assurance that there is propriety required to protect the school's books and records, including receipt and deposit of cash, payment of expenditures and reconciliation of accounts and records.

Pre-Opening Plan and Timeline

The pre-opening timeline can be found in Appendix M.

Transportation Plan

Gem Prep: Meridian plans to offer student transportation in their first year. School leadership is currently investigating two options for transportation. Based on a successful implementation of a similar plan at Gem Prep: Pocatello, the first option will take advantage of public transportation allowing students to ride the public bus system to and from school. The school plans to negotiate with Valley Ride on the use of current and future public bus routes for their students. The second option will be contracted services. Gem Prep: Meridian will follow all state reporting requirements for transportation per Idaho Code 33-5208(4). A formal bid process as outlined by the Idaho State Department of Education and Idaho Code 33-402(2) will be followed. Transportation will be provided to the student population as outlined in Idaho Code 33-5208(4)(a)(b).

Students with special needs will be provided transportation in accordance with requirements of state and federal law. A student's IEP will determine if transportation is required and the best method of transportation. All transportation will adhere to the IDEA. Transportation of field trips, excursions, and extracurricular activities will be provided by the school through contracted services, and supported through appreciated donations from families, as well as philanthropic avenues.

School Lunch Program

The Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho Board will adopt policies relating to school lunch in accordance with federal and state laws. Gem Prep: Meridian believes that no child should go without food and intends to provide a lunch program to students.

Gem Prep: Meridian is currently investigating two options for implementing the lunch program.

Option 1:

Gem Prep: Meridian will seek a partnership with the West Ada School District. Following the model used at Gem Prep: Nampa, the district manages the full nutrition program including state and federal reporting, collection of FRL forms from families, and food preparation and delivery. Lunches will be delivered daily to the school. Gem Prep: Meridian expects there to be a contracted fee for delivery of the lunches, however, payments for food and federal reimbursement will flow directly through West Ada SD. The School Operations Manager will manage the serving of lunch using a combination of school staff and parent volunteers.

Option 2:

Gem Prep: Meridian will contract with a local catering company to provide daily lunches. Families will fill out orders and make payments online through a web portal. Though this option may not include participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the school intends to offer free and reduced lunches to those who qualify. The catering company will deliver lunches daily to the school. The School Operations Manager will manage the serving of lunch using a combination of school staff and parent volunteers.

Gem Prep: Meridian may not initially participate in the National Lunch Program, however, free and reduced data will be collected annually by individual FRL forms and/or through Direct Certification. The forms will be collected at the beginning of each school year. Gem Prep: Meridian will pursue receiving a high percentage of respondents to the FRL survey. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunches will be offered a lunch for free or at a reduced price, whether or not the school participates in the NSLP program.

Families will be notified about the nutrition options through various communication avenues such as on-campus events like 'back to school night', as well as in-house announcement TV screen, Facebook, flyers, teacher newsletters, principal newsletter, emails, etc.

Purchased Services

See Tab 10 for a list of possible vendors.

Virtual Charter School

This section is not applicable to Gem Prep: Meridian.

Business Arrangements, Community Involvement, School Closure

Gem Prep: Meridian will purchase curriculum from several curriculum providers such as:

Pearson for ReadyGen digital courseware, Prentice Hall Common Core Literature digital courseware, Life Science and Physical Science digital courseware, Integrate High School Math digital courseware, Digits Math grades 6-8 digital courseware. Scott Foresman Social Studies textbooks.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for Science Fusion, World History, The Americans and World Geography interactive online subscriptions.

Singapore Math grade K-5 textbooks

Handwriting Without Tears workbooks

iReady for Diagnostic and Instruction Math and Reading site licenses

Kindergarten through sixth grade does not share teachers with other schools. However, beginning in fall 2019, Gem Prep: Meridian plans to share educators for the secondary model. For this arrangement, there are two possible strategies being considered: 1) one to one sharing with no monetary exchange: i.e. a biology teacher in Gem Prep: Pocatello will telecast to classes in Gem Prep: Nampa and Gem Prep: Meridian and vice versa an English teacher in Meridian will telecast to classes in Pocatello and Nampa. 2) a split FTE: i.e. a teacher will be contracted on three school payrolls—possibly a .4 FTE for Gem Prep: Nampa, a .4 FTE for Gem Prep: Meridian and a .2 FTE for Gem Prep: Pocatello. All options will be discussed with the Idaho State Department of Education prior to implementation.

Business Arrangements

Gem Prep: Meridian does not currently have contracts with other schools, businesses or individuals. When Gem Prep: Meridian, is authorized to operate the program as a charter school and becomes an LEA, possible key business arrangements will be:

Regence: Used to service employee health insurance plans.

Delta Dental: Used to service employee dental insurance plans.

MSBT Law: A full service law firm, used in representing and advising in the areas of general and municipal law, education law, administrative law, employment law, etc.

Excent Corporation: Gem Prep: Meridian will utilize Enrich Special Education Software to facilitate file management of IEPs and student special education records.

Hayden, Ross, PLLC: An independent, full-service CPA firm will be used for independent audits of school finances.

Illuminate Education, Inc.: Gem Prep: Meridian will use the Illuminate Data and Assessment program which provides tools to access real-time data; allowing teachers to flexibly group students, align tests with state content standards, efficiently analyze data for RTI protocol, etc.

ICRMP: Used for loss protection for property and casualty insurance coverage, exclusive to Idaho local governments.

Instructure, Inc.: Gem Prep: Meridian will utilize the Canvas software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and data delivery for the School's learning management system.

Power School: Used to manage the student information system for online enrollment and registration, as well as managing school processes and data.

Tyler Technologies: Used for public sector accounting software and technology services.

Possible Community Partners:

- **Gem Prep: Meridian PTO:** Administration will attend PTO meetings. The School and PTO will work well together, boosting parent involvement, communication, community awareness, project funding, etc.
- **Idaho Charter School Network:** Partner with Gem Prep: Meridian to advocate for policy conducive to positive charter school outcomes.
- **J.A & Kathryn Albertson Foundation:** Has provided generous philanthropic support for the growth of Gem Prep: Meridian.
- **Idaho School Board Association:** Utilized to provide board training, staff training and legal advice.
- **Idaho Association of School Business Officials:** Utilized as a partner for school finance training, networking, finance laws and budgeting expertise.

Please see Appendix E-1 for JAKAF Grant Award Letter and Appendix E-2 for JAKAF Grant Distribution Letter.

Termination of the Charter/School Closure

In case of termination, the Chairman of the Board of Directors will be responsible for the dissolution of the School.

Prior to any school closure decision, a closure protocol will be developed to ensure timely notification to parents, orderly transition of students and student records to new schools, and proper disposition of school funds, property and assets, in accordance with Idaho law.

Pursuant to Idaho Code 33-5212, the assets for the school shall be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the school, including any tax, public employee retirement system and other employee benefit obligations, then to creditors of the school, and then to the authorized chartering entity in the case of a public charter school authorized by the board of a local school district. In the case of a public charter school authorized by any other authorized chartering entity, any remaining assets shall be distributed to the public school income fund. Assets purchased using federal funds shall be returned to the authorized chartering entity for redistribution among other public charter schools. If the assets of the school are insufficient to pay all parties to whom the school owes compensation, the prioritization of the distribution of assets may be determined by decree of a court of law.

Within a month after the determination to dissolve the school, the Chairman will contact the parents of past and present students informing them of the process to obtain student school records and/or to which school the records should be forwarded. The School will send written notification to parents of students at their last known address and will email the parents at their last known email. The notification will explain how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school, where to obtain records before dissolution, and where the records will be stored after dissolution. The School will send the records to the school requested by the parents. Parents can either email or send written instructions.

Within two months after the final school year, the Chairman will direct the remaining student records to parents for whom the school has mailing addresses. Any remaining student records will be stored in a secure location for the legal limit. The school will maintain a Facebook page or similar page stating who to contact for student records.

The Chairman will direct all personnel records to all former employees of the school. All former employees shall receive their personnel records within one month after the final school year.

Gem Prep: Meridian will fund and complete a final fiscal audit. The audit will be submitted to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission and the State Department of Education.