

# Gem Prep: Meridian North



## Charter Petition

Grades K-12

Proposed Opening: August 2021

Primary Attendance Area:

West Ada School District

*Approved October 10, 2019*

Board Chair: Dennis Turner

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### **Non-Discrimination Statement:**

Gem Prep: Meridian North 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

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

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

**Summary:** Gem Prep is a college preparatory school. Every program, K-12, at Gem Prep is designed and aligned to prepare students for success in college and beyond. The philosophical premise is that students need a tailored and rigorous instructional environment to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will assist them in their success in college and beyond.

Gem Prep's instructional methodology is to provide instructional access to content designed to prepare students for the rigors of college-level instruction. Because the elementary grade levels include foundational content, Gem Prep utilizes a personalized approach, which leverages technology to adapt instruction to student needs, while simultaneously providing them with real-time feedback and remediation. As students progress to secondary grade levels, the focus of student competency development shifts toward independence, ownership of learning, and exposure to new skills. Students engage in courses in person, online, and through video teleconference to gain skills of professional communication and collaboration with colleagues (other students and teachers) in remote geographic locations. Secondary students also participate in college preparatory courses, which are dedicated to the development of competencies such as mindsets, communication skills, and habits of success.

**Community Need and Interest:** 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. Idaho's population has one of the lowest percentages of college degrees. According to the [Lumina Foundation](#), only three other states have a lower college attainment rate than Idaho.

In just its second year of operation, the existing Gem Prep: Meridian is fully enrolled for the 19-20 school year and another 500 students are on the waiting list. This demonstrates evidence of community interest in a Gem Prep education.

**Student Outcome Expectations:** Gem Prep expects students to graduate ready for the rigors of college with both the content knowledge and competencies necessary for success. Graduates will be effective problem solvers, life-long learners, self-motivated, and responsible citizens.

# Section I: Educational Programs

## Educational Philosophy

The world is changing rapidly, and education needs to keep pace with the challenges and advancements students will meet in the real world. Most Idaho students simply are not prepared for success in college, but Gem Prep seeks to make a change in Idaho. Through the use of adaptive technology coupled with highly qualified teachers who use data to personalize instruction, Gem Prep is developing students who have the knowledge, characteristics, competencies, and mindsets that they will need in order to be successful in college and the next generation workplace.

Gem Prep's education model encompasses a graduate profile developed around the competencies, the skills, and characteristics necessary for tomorrow's leaders. Gem Prep students will graduate with early college success in high school and with the experiences and accomplishments in the areas of real-world communication, rigorous academics, and superior independence and motivation.

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.

The [IBE Workforce Needs Survey](#) indicates that students need to be prepared to use technology appropriately and strategically to solve problems, find information, evaluate sources, make connections, forge deeper understandings, and effectively communicate with others. They further indicate that students need to be able to ask and answer challenging questions, solves problems, and reflects critically on their work and performance to inform future progress. Students also need to demonstrate resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges, and collaborate productively with others from different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

## Student Academic Achievement Standards

In addition to the outcomes and targets included in the Performance Certificate, Gem Prep will track the following outcomes to ensure student's progress:

- **Sixty percent of Gem Prep's 7th-12th grade students will take one or more advanced opportunities course each school year**, setting their trajectory for early college success in high school. Completion of this goal will be tracked through the SIS, which tracks enrollment data, student schedules and grades. Students receiving coursework in above-grade-level content is part of how Gem Prep fulfills its mission of providing students a rigorous education.

- **Seventy-five percent of 7th & 8th grade students will take courses from a teacher who is physically located in a different building than the student.** Completion of this goal will be tracked through the SIS, which tracks enrollment data, student schedules and teacher assignments. As stated in the mission statement, these send/receive courses provide an “innovative use of technology” to ensure students have access to the “exceptional teaching” regardless of their geographic location.
- **Students in grades 4th-8th will meet or exceed the state proficiency and growth average in English Language Arts and math** on state standardized assessments. Student academic outcomes in the 4th-8th grades are a key indicator of their readiness to complete rigorous coursework in subsequent years. Gem Prep will use the Idaho State Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT) to measure both growth and achievement for students in grades 4th - 8th. The Gem Prep mission statement emphasizes high-quality instruction, which is synonymous with academic growth and proficiency.
- **Gem Prep will serve students in grades K-12th, mirroring (within a 5% margin) the student population of local district demographics.** Gem Prep believes that a diverse student body enriches the education of all students and is essential to preparing students for a pluralistic world. It is also important to mirror the demographics of the surrounding district to demonstrate that Gem Prep successfully serves all students. Our mission to prepare students for success includes all students regardless of race, income, and special education status.

The following are Gem Prep: Meridian North’s educational goals.

**SCHOOL GOALS, MEASUREMENTS, AND FOCUS ON MISSION**

**GOAL #1**  
**Sixty percent** of Gem Prep’s 7th-12th grade students **will take one or more advanced opportunities course** each school year, setting their trajectory for early college success in high school.

**MEASUREMENT**  
 Completion of this goal will be tracked through the SIS, which tracks enrollment data, student schedules and grades.

**SUPPORTS MISSION**  
 Students receiving coursework in above-grade-level content is part of how Gem Prep fulfills its mission of providing students a rigorous education.

**GOAL #2**  
**Seventy-five percent** of 7th & 8th grade students **will take courses from a teacher who is physically located in a different building than the student.**

**MEASUREMENT**  
 Completion of this goal will be tracked through the SIS, which tracks enrollment data, student schedules and teacher assignments.

**SUPPORTS MISSION**  
 As stated in the mission statement, these send/receive courses provide an “innovative use of technology” to ensure students have access to the “exceptional teaching” regardless of their geographic location.

**GOAL #3**

Students in grades 4th-8th will **meet or exceed the state proficiency and growth average in English Language Arts and math** on state standardized assessments. Student academic outcomes in the 4th-8th grades are a key indicator of their readiness to complete rigorous coursework in subsequent years.

**MEASUREMENT**

Gem Prep will use the Idaho State Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT) to measure both growth and achievement for students in grades 4th - 8th.

**SUPPORTS MISSION**

The Gem Prep mission statement emphasizes high-quality instruction, which is synonymous with academic growth and proficiency.

**GOAL #4**

Gem Prep will **serve students in grades K-12th, mirroring (within a 5% margin) the student population of local district demographics**. Gem Prep believes that a diverse student body enriches the education of all students and is essential to preparing students for a pluralistic world. It is also important to mirror the demographics of the surrounding district to demonstrate that Gem Prep successfully serves all students.

**MEASUREMENT**

Completion of this goal will be tracked through the SIS, which tracks enrollment data, student schedules and teacher assignments.

**SUPPORTS MISSION**

Our mission to prepare students for success includes all students regardless of race, income, and special education status.

## Key Educational Design Elements, Curricular, Tools & Instructional Methods

The key design elements of the Gem Prep 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. 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. 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.
- **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. 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 college prep 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 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. The organization will constantly review performance data and make adjustments to the school model as necessary.

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

## Elementary School Model: Building on Best Practices

The elementary school model (Grades K-6) at Gem Prep (GP) is built around the following practices:

- **Rigorous, deeply supported learning.** Students are engaged in highly interactive learning environments designed to challenge each student at their comprehension level. This rigorous learning environment necessitates a support structure to help students reach the high bar.
- **Data driven instruction.** Teachers provide frequent formative assessments and are continually refining their instruction based on a careful review of student progress data.
- **Socio-emotional learning and support.** Gem Prep weaves socio-emotional learning into all the student daily academic schedule. The school will participate in the Panorama Ed assessment, which measures socio-emotional health of students and staff. Gem Prep schools have been identified as an outlier on this survey, as they perform significantly above their peers. Panorama sent a team to Gem Prep schools to study what makes the schools stand out so substantially.
- **Scaffolded independence and leadership.** In the upper elementary grades, students have increased opportunities for student-centered learning, teamwork, and collaboration. Students grow in self-awareness and self-discipline as they prepare for their transition to the 7th grade.

## Secondary Model: Cutting Edge Innovation

Gem Prep has spent a substantial amount of time and energy on the secondary model (grades 7-12) design. While the elementary school model at GIS leverages best practices found in other high quality schools, the secondary model is uniquely innovative both with regard to use of human capital and also redefining what students can achieve during their high school years. Key components of the Gem Prep secondary model include:

- **Access to high quality teachers across the state.** Through the use of technology, students are paired with excellent teachers in every classroom, without regard to location. Wherever they happen to live, Gem Prep students have equal access to great teachers through the creative use of shared virtual learning opportunities.
- **Exposure to diverse learning environments.** Secondary students at Gem Prep engage in three types of learning opportunities: In person, online, and “send/receive” where they engage

virtually with a Gem Prep teacher on another campus. By learning in these varied ways, students develop the skills to communicate and work in a variety of environments.

- **Free early college.** All Gem Prep students pursue either a full two-year associates degree or an 18 college credit pathway during their high school experience at Gem Prep. The Gem Prep model is strategically structured to cover college costs so that students never need to pay for their college tuition costs while in high school.
- **Group and 1:1 Advisory.** Students participate in an advisory program throughout their time with Gem Prep. For grades 7-10 the content of advisory is structured around Mindsets, Essential Skills and Habits (MESH). In 11th and 12th grade the advising programs shifts its focus to college applications, FAFSA, scholarship applications, college visits, program research, resume development and improvement.

Sixth grade (brick & mortar students) participated in multiple pilot courses during the 2018-19 SY, in preparation for broadcasting the send/receive courses the following year. Social Studies is the initial course being broadcast in the send/receive method during the 2019-2020 SY

This delivery method has also been used in Gem Prep: Online (formally I-DEA) for selected courses for several years. Below are some of the academic results of GPO:

- 2018-2019 English SAT scores were 3rd in the state.
- 2018-2019 SAT scores were in the top 10% of all schools in the state.
- 2018-2019 school year English SAT scores are 23% above state average
- 18% of graduates have graduated with enough credits eligible AA degree.

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.

The three Gem Prep brick and mortar schools that are currently operating have demonstrated a track record of success. In every Gem Prep school Math & Science, proficiency levels on the ISAT are significantly higher than the local districts. Collectively, the percent of Gem Prep students who are proficient or above on the ISAT is above the state average in every subject. According to the MAP assessment, Gem Prep students are in the 70th and 74th %ile in the nation for proficiency. In addition to their high ranking for proficiency, Gem Prep students are also in the top quartile for math growth, in the nation. (See assessment results in Appendix F6: Gem Prep Results.)

## Curriculum

Gem Prep believes that access to high-quality learning materials is central to the effective instruction of students. Accordingly, the school seeks to adopt a rigorous, sustainable, evidence-based curriculum that provides students with optimal access to information and learning opportunities. Gem Prep curriculum aligns to national and/or Idaho Content standards, which define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education. Gem Prep has established rigorous performance objectives, and additionally ensures each curricula meets the



following qualifications: (a) rigor meets or exceeds common core state standards; (b) curriculum is research and evidence based.

All Gem Prep core academic curriculum undergoes an extensive review process by the curriculum adoption committee. This committee reviews curriculum on an annual basis to ensure core academic content meets or exceeds content standards and maintains research-based efficacy for their specific student demographic (Idaho Administrative Rules IDAPA 08.02.03.102).

Gem Prep's proposed ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum is All About Reading for Kindergarten, Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts for grades 1 and 2, ReadyGEN for grades 3-6, and Pearson MyPerspectives for grades 7-11. Gem Prep will also provide all K-6 students with individualized ELA intervention and enrichment through the computer-adaptive reading program, Istation. Each curriculum has been strategically selected for each grade or grade band to provides many opportunities for rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about texts to build strong literacy skills. Students build skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and they integrate language work throughout. These researched and reviewed curriculum meets rigorous expectations in both alignment and usability ratings ([EdReports, 2019](#)).

Gem Prep's proposed Math curriculum is Zearn Math for grades K-5, Illustrative Mathematics for grades 6-8, and Pearson Envision Math for high school students. Each curriculum allows students to learn across multiple instructional formats, rotating between learning independently with self-paced digital lessons and working with their teacher and classmates in a small group. Research indicates each curriculum successfully increases student understanding and proficiency in mathematics. These mathematics curricula meet rigorous expectations in both alignment and usability ratings ([EdReports, 2019](#); [Sharma & Hasim, 2019](#); [Tabrah, 2018](#)).

Gem Prep's proposed science curriculum, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Science Fusion, is designed to use technology to best meet learners' needs—to be flexible, to allow for interaction, to be engaging and motivating, and to reach a wide range of learning styles, employing visual, kinesthetic, auditory, and verbal modes and abilities ([Beck, Conner, & Cruse, 2012](#); [Dani & Koenig, 2008](#); [Resendez & Azin, 2013](#)).

Gem Prep's proposed Social Studies Curriculum is MyWorld Social Studies curriculum. In preparing scholars to be college and career ready, MyWorld aligns with the new framework for social studies instruction, known as the C3 Framework, to help educators expand social studies and civic education in the classroom. MyWorld aligns with Idaho Content Standards ([Pearson, 2013](#); [Smith, 2018](#)).

To meet Gem Prep's performance objectives and gain experience communicating and learning in a variety of 3-course formats: (a) in-person classes, (b) online classes, and (c) virtual classes through live video teleconference systems in a send-receive model. Select classrooms are equipped with video teleconference equipment to facilitate send/receive courses. All students interact with digital content using Chromebooks. Gem Prep utilizes the learning management system, [Canvas](#), to design content for all core classes in grades K-12. Canvas provides a consistent framework for instructional delivery, assessment, and access to academic progress for all students in grades K-12.

In addition to Gem Prep's use of a learning management system, the school will also use computer adaptive technology to provide individualized learning. Computer adaptive programs, such as Zearn and Istation, assess each individual student and adapt the activities and assessment

questions based on the student’s response. Based on their assessment results and individual abilities, students are able to individually engage with digital activities daily.

Gem Prep will also utilize technology to support safe, equitable, and positive classroom environments such as [Class Dojo](#) and [GoGuardian](#). Class Dojo is a digital management program teachers use to communicate with elementary students and their parents. Student behavior is tracked and celebrated, student portfolios and grades are shared with parents, and staff members are able to share daily messages, videos, tutorials, updates, and pictures with students and families in a secured digital application. GoGuardian provides teachers and administrators access to observe student technology use, which facilitates students staying on task to maximize learning time. The program is also a security system to ensure students are only accessing safe and appropriate academic content when they engage with digital learning.

The school chose to utilize autonomies in three central categories: (a) acquisition and retention of high-quality teachers, (b) innovative, individualized instructional models, and (c) development and implementation of college-ready competencies. Gem Prep students deserve the best teachers and staff. Accordingly, Gem Prep developed a thorough hiring process and offers all teachers a 1-year contract. This ensures that students have consistent access to teachers who thoroughly support the development of all students in Gem Prep’s college preparatory model.

To meet Gem Prep’s rigorous performance objectives, the school uses an instructional model with a variety of course formats to meet the individual needs of their unique population. Student learning is additionally enhanced through differentiation via blended learning, adaptive technology, and grade and subject acceleration.

Per ESEA 4310, Gem Prep has identified a specific set of educational objectives, which include the development of the Gem Prep Graduate Profile and implementation of college-ready competencies. All students should have access to a high-quality education built upon a strong academic, social, and emotional foundation. Gem Prep provides all kindergarten students with tuition-free, full-day kindergarten (only half-time K is state funded), to begin laying this critical foundation. All students begin building their college competencies in kindergarten with their K-12 graduate profile focused on the following areas: (a) college planning and saving, (b) evidence of college-ready competencies, (c) college and career coaching, (d) academic growth, (e) social/emotional development, and (f) self-advocacy.

## Estimate of student time spent in each of the learning modalities

The charts below are sample weekly schedules for Grade 1, Grade 5, and Grade 8. The schedules illustrate approximately how much time students will spend in each of the learning modalities during a given week.

In addition to core instructional time, students will participate in weekly learning activities such as:

- **CSC**—Caring Schools Curriculum for social and emotional education. This time is dedicated to students developing skills such as developing empathy, taking responsibility for their actions, and showing respect for others.
- **GEM CIRCLE**—This student led time is dedicated to addressing any concerns that may exist between classmates in constructive ways. Students also commend one another for any actions that exemplify the Gem Prep culture.

- W.I.N. TIME—“What I Need” Time is an opportunity for teachers and paraprofessionals to work with students in small groups to address specific standards students are struggling to meet. This is also a time for advanced students to receive enrichment.

During the Wednesday early release, students have a menu of opportunities to further their learning. Students can participate in on-campus extracurricular activities (like student council, math club, STEM club, etc.), attend College Prep Academy to take advantage of tutoring services, or they may be released to go home.

**SAMPLE GRADE SCHEDULE: GRADE 1**

<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 1 MORNING SCHEDULE</b>	
	<b>M T W TH F</b>
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	Teacher Prep
<b>8:00-8:05</b>	Attendance
<b>8:05-9:05</b>	ELA: Skills Lesson (Foundational & Reading)
<b>9:05-9:35</b>	ELA: Intervention Groups
<b>9:35-9:55</b>	Recess
<b>9:55-10:55</b>	ELA: Knowledge Lesson (Read Aloud & Writing)
<b>10:55-11:15</b>	Math: Launch
<b>11:15-11:35</b>	Lunch Recess
<b>11:35-11:55</b>	Lunch Recess
<b>11:55-12:30</b>	Math: Station Rotations
<b>12:30-1:00</b>	Math: Station Rotations

<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 1 AFTERNOON SCHEDULE</b>				
	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH F</b>
<b>1:00-1:30</b>	Math: Station Rotations		Pack-Up. Excused at 1:15	Math: Station Rotations
<b>1:30-2:00</b>	Science	Science	<b>EARLY RELEASE</b>	Social Studies    Social Studies
<b>2:00-2:30</b>	Electives	Electives (Comm. Prep.)		Electives (Comm. Prep.)    Electives
<b>2:30-2:50</b>	CSC Lesson	Student Choice Reading/ Data Conferences		Student Choice Reading/ Data Conferences    Gem Circle
<b>2:50-3:10</b>	Student Choice Reading/ Data Conferences	CSC Lesson		Student Choice Reading/ Data Conferences
<b>3:10-3:15</b>	Pack-up			Pack-up

**SAMPLE GRADE SCHEDULE: GRADE 5**

<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 5 MORNING SCHEDULE</b>	
	<b>M T W TH F</b>
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	Teacher Prep
<b>8:00-8:05</b>	Attendance
<b>8:05-8:35</b>	ELA: Small Group Intervention
<b>8:35-9:05</b>	ELA: Read Aloud/Reading
<b>9:05-9:35</b>	ELA: Writing
<b>9:35-9:55</b>	ELA: CRQ Intervention
<b>9:55-10:15</b>	Math: Launch
<b>10:15-10:35</b>	Recess
<b>10:35-11:05</b>	Math: Station Rotations
<b>11:05-11:35</b>	Math: Station Rotations
<b>11:35-1:55</b>	Lunch Recess
<b>11:55-12:15</b>	Lunch

<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 5 AFTERNOON SCHEDULE</b>					
	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>12:15-12:45</b>	Math: Station Rotations				
<b>12:45 - 12:55</b>	W.I.N.				
<b>12:55 - 1:30</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	Pack-up. Early Release at 1:15	Social Studies	Social Studies
<b>1:30 - 2:00</b>	CSC Lesson	Electives (Comm. Prep.)	<b>EARLY RELEASE</b>	Electives (Comm. Prep.)	Gem Circle
<b>2:00 - 3:00</b>	Science	Science		Science	Science
<b>3:10-3:15</b>	Pack-up	Pack-up		Pack-up	Pack-up

**SAMPLE GRADE SCHEDULE: GRADE 8**

<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 8 MORNING SCHEDULE</b>	
	<b>M T W TH F</b>
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	Teacher Prep
<b>8:00-8:05</b>	Leadership Opportunity
<b>8:05-8:55</b>	1st Period: Math 8
<b>9:00-9:50</b>	2nd Period: ELA 8
<b>9:55-10:45</b>	3rd Period: SS 8
<b>10:50-11:40</b>	4th Period: Science 8
<b>11:45-12:35</b>	5th Period: Advisory 8
<b>12:40-1:10</b>	Lunch
<b>MERIDIAN GRADE 8 AFTERNOON SCHEDULE</b>	
	<b>M T W TH F</b>
<b>1:15-2:15</b>	6th Period: HS Health
<b>2:20-3:10</b>	7th Period: IDLA
<b>3:10-3:15</b>	Leadership Opportunity
<b>3:15</b>	Release

*\*Some students may be assigned math intervention during IDLA periods*

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.

## Strategies for Serving Special Populations

Gem Prep believes that all students deserve and can succeed in an atmosphere of high expectations. However, many students need additional support to succeed in such an environment. A Response to Intervention (RTI) system will be implemented at Gem Prep to identify and intervene with students who struggle academically or behaviorally while the challenges are still relatively small. Teachers are trained in and expected to utilize interventions for students who need additional support. Further, secondary students meet with their college preparatory advisory class in a small group (15 students or less) to learn non-academic competencies such as goal setting, mindsets, and habits of success. The teacher for the class also meets individually with students to review their future goals, their progress toward previous goals, and to reflect on progress since the last meeting. During this time, the teacher checks key indicators with the students (such as grades, behavior data, and attendance) and provides assistance or direction for the student. This is another place where students who face unique contextual challenges can get help or can be referred for additional help. The teacher’s role is to intervene and assist before problems have snowballed, but also to provide a place for the student to reflect and improve.

Teachers norm around a definition of rigor and what it looks like in the classroom. Teachers are trained in equitable instruction to ensure that students from educationally disadvantaged circumstances are provided the same intellectual rigor as every other student, even if they need additional support. If an assignment, question, or activity would be given to a classroom of gifted and talented students at a high-priced private school, then it might be worthy of Gem Prep students as well. With this visualization, Gem Prep teachers are asked to hold the bar high for all students, but provide robust support for students who struggle. Some students may even need behavioral or academic intervention plans, and teachers, parents, and administrators are expected to fully integrate these plans.

The school provides a full continuum of services for students who require special education services. Students in need of intervention services are identified as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Once identified, the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team establishes the necessary intervention strategy. The IEP team consists of the classroom teacher, special education teacher, parents, and administrator. The team first considers support options, which allow students to spend as much time as possible with peers who do not receive special education services (LRE: Least Restrictive Environment).

After determining what appropriate services and supports can be provided within the regular classroom, supplementary aids and interventions may be provided within the special education classroom, based on each student's unique needs. Gem Prep's special education focus is always on the student's abilities and not their disabilities. Gem Prep provides services for students as determined by the IEP, such as speech and language services, counseling, behavioral intervention, school-based occupational therapy, psychological services, etc. Gem Prep's special education staff meet, or exceed, the requirements as outlined by the Idaho State Department of Education. They undergo continuous professional development to persist in meeting the needs of students with disabilities at a high level.

Gem Prep 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 students with disabilities will receive special education and services as required in IDEA and outlined on the students' IEPs.

Gem Prep 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).

## Professional Development Plan

Gem has developed a strategic model to support staff development, evaluation, and retention. This framework places emphasis in the following areas: (a) New staff onboarding, (b) intentional culture building, (c) ongoing, differentiated, relevant professional development, (d) aligned observation and coaching practices, and (e) Gem Prep leadership pipeline. Gem Prep believes in the importance of high-quality professional development for all team members, especially new practitioners. Because of this belief, the network schedules two-full weeks of professional development for all new and returning staff prior to the beginning of each school year. This professional development time is dedicated to onboarding and unifying all staff by: (a) Introducing and updating staff on curriculum, (b) aligning individual, school, and network goals, (c) clarifying staff and scholar expectations, (d) providing work time for grade, school, network, and vertical alignment, (e) training and practice of Common Pictures of Excellence, (f) developing collective lesson plans and practicing instruction and, (g) building positive school and network cultures of trust and support.

Gem Prep recognizes the importance of cultivating positive student, staff, classroom, school, and community culture. The school has implemented three specific strategies to build and support positive culture: (a) Aligned network culture guide, (b) Gem Staff and Student Circle, and (c) scheduled time for social-emotional learning curriculum. The Gem Prep Culture Guide outlines school values, expectations, and steps of celebration and restorative justice. The principal holds Gem Circle at least once per month with all staff during building-level professional development time. The purpose of Gem Circle is to practice mindfulness, encourage a culture of unity and celebration, and support positive lines of communication through conflict resolution. Gem Prep teachers hold

Gem Circle with their class at least once per week as well, focusing on the same purpose. Gem Prep also schedules allotted weekly time to teach the evidence-based social-emotional curriculum. The purpose of this time is to encourage practices of mindfulness, develop growth mindsets, and cultivate social/emotional personal competencies.

Gem Prep utilizes ongoing, differentiated, relevant professional development to meet their rigorous performance objectives. In addition to the two weeks Gem Prep dedicates to professional development at the beginning of the year, the network also dedicates two-hours of teacher contracted time per week for professional development, four-hours of after-school professional development per week, four full days of student-free professional development during the school year, and one week of student-free professional development (PD) at the end of the school year. Weekly PD focuses on reviewing scholar work, evaluating data, intellectual preparation of lesson plans, and culture building through Gem Circle and building-level meetings. Full PD days throughout the school year provide multiple learning pathways for individual needs based on observation results, student achievement data, administrative input, and staff and student feedback. Practitioners are provided the opportunity to self-select relevant PD aligned with their strengths, areas of opportunity, and educational trends.

Gem Prep believes Common Pictures of Excellence (CPE), aligned observation practices, and strategic coaching strategies lead to instructional fidelity, excellence, and student achievement. CPE provide clear and aligned expectations of what excellent instruction and, more importantly, excellent learning looks like. The CPE define and detail instructional strategies and procedures such as: (a) Hallway behavior, (b) learning posture, (c) response strategies, (d) habits of discussion, (e) annotating text, (f) classroom and school transitions, (g) read aloud routines, and (h) partner work. CPE provide aligned management and instructional strategies to create safe, academically focused learning spaces. Because Gem Prep utilizes CPE, administrators are able to align observation rubrics, expectations, practices, and coaching strategies. Gem Prep administrations, including network leadership and building leadership, meet for two hours each week to review videos of Gem Prep teaching instruction, calibrate evaluation criteria, develop collective active steps, and practice coaching scripts and strategies. This alignment of expectations, observations, and coaching ensures implementation fidelity of the educational model.

## Section II: Financial and Facilities Plans

### Fiscal Philosophy and Spending Priorities

The Gem Prep board and staff believe that thorough financial training, expertise, and accountability are all essential elements of a successful school. For that reason, Gem Prep employs staff experienced in successful financial management. The current CFO has 25 years of successful school finance experience. Financial reports are reviewed each month as part of the board data dashboard. Gem Prep seeks to always have at least two board members with financial expertise, who serve on our Board Finance Committee. The finance staff attend regular training to keep their knowledge current and to stay abreast of any changes in the law or financial practice.

The Board is confident in the financial projections due to their grounding in current Gem Prep schools. While the approach is always to budget conservatively, Gem Prep also bases the financial projections on historical data and experience with existing Gem Prep schools. Gem Prep's spending priorities are focused on student investments, particularly on staff and instructional programming. Every expenditure is evaluated on how it impacts student outcomes.

One indicator that is of particular importance is the fund balance. The Gem Prep board of directors believes maintaining a healthy fund balance is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school. A healthy fund balance provides stability to students and staff through unanticipated interruptions in cash flow, changes in funding formulas or other regulations, emergencies, the ability to invest in opportunities, and meet the long-term goals of the school and organization. As a demonstration of our commitment to this philosophy, the organization's brick and mortar Gem Prep Schools have an average of 3.8 months of operating reserves. The fund balance is one of the standards against which the school's fiscal performance can be judged.

### Transportation and Food Service Plans

#### Transportation

Gem Prep understands the importance of providing student transportation, therefore Gem Prep: Meridian North plans to offer student transportation in their first year. Gem Prep plans to contract with a bus service for transportation. The school will follow all state reporting requirements for transportation. A formal bid process as outlined by the Idaho State Department of Education and Idaho Code will be followed. Transportation will be provided to the student population as outlined in Idaho Code.

Students with special needs will be provided transportation in accordance with the 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 donations from families, as well as philanthropic avenues.

#### Food Services

Gem Prep believes that no child should go without food and intends to provide a lunch program to students. Gem Prep is currently investigating two options for implementing the lunch program.



**Option 1:**

Similar to Gem Prep: Meridian and Gem Prep: Nampa, the school may contract with the Nampa School District to provide meal planning and meals to the school. Under this option Gem Prep: Meridian North would submit an application to be part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The operations team will manage all reporting requirements, FRL forms, direct certifications, and lunch room and serving staffing.

**Option 2:**

NNU/Sodexo has shown interest in providing meals to the school. Though this option may not include participation in the NSLP, the school intends to offer free and reduced lunches to those who qualify. Similar to Option 1 NNU/Sodexo would provide the meal planning and meals. The operations team will manage all reporting requirements, FRL forms, direct certifications, and lunch room and serving staffing.

If Gem Prep participates in the National Lunch Program, 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 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. GPMN will only choose the option of providing a lunch program without NSLP reimbursement if it is sustainable within the constraints of the budget.

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, Class Dojo, etc.

## Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

Gem Prep has developed a sustainable and comprehensive operational and financial plan including curriculum, technology, staffing, facilities, and support services. Gem Prep: Meridian North is part of a network of Gem Prep schools who share administrative and business services in order to direct financial resources towards supporting the Gem Prep college preparatory model.

The Board of Directors is comprised of a seasoned group of professionals with expertise and in areas such as finance, law, real estate, and governance. Further strengthening the board, the current board chair has five years of governance experience with Gem Prep schools, and the vice-chair has 10 years. In addition, the CEO has 12 years of experience operating Idaho charter schools and the CFO has 25 years' school finance experience. *(See Appendix F4: Management Team Resumes.)*

Gem Prep 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 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 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 and the charter authorizer 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 will file with the State Department of Education such financial and statistical reports as may require pursuant to Idaho Code Section 33-701(7). Gem Prep 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 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 will invest any money coming into the hands of the school in investments permitted by section 67-120 of the Idaho Code.

The CEO and CFO compile a proposed budget based on the state funding formula with input from principals and department administrators. The CFO will present the proposed budget to the Board Finance committee. After the budget is developed, Gem Prep will publish a budget hearing notice per Idaho Code. The finance committee then recommends the final budget for adoption to the Board of Directors. Gem Prep posts the approved budget on the School's website and submits a copy to SDE.

The board of directors will be responsible for the financial management of Gem Prep. The board of directors' role in financial management will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Establishment of operating and capital budgets
- Long-term financial planning and preparations
- Monthly review of budget-to-actual financial performance providing for adequate oversight of financial performance and the opportunity to adjust expenditures as necessary to ensure operation within budget
- Monthly review of cash flow projections
- Establishment of internal financial policies consistent with the requirements of state law and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to provide for adequate financial controls.

*(Appendix A1: Financial Summary, Appendix A2: Pre-Opening Budget, Appendix A3: Three-Year Operating Budget and Break-Even Year 1 Scenario, Appendix A4: Cash Flow Projection for Initial Operating Year, Appendix F3: JAKAFF Grant.)*

## Facilities Plan

At full scale, Gem Prep: Meridian North will require approximately 50,000 square feet of space. The space breakdown is as follows:

Area	Size (sf)	Quantity	Total Size
Classrooms (K-6, Sped)	850	15	12750
Classrooms (7 - 12)	1000	6	6000
Gym	5000	1	5000
Cafeteria	2000	1	2000
Fab Lab	1500	1	1500
High School Commons	2000	1	2000
High School Collab Rooms	150	10	1500
Admin, Reception, Conf.	1750	1	1750
Circulation, Kitchen, Bathroom, Storage, Tech (35% of total)	17500	1	17500
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>50000</b>

At the K-6 grade levels Gem Prep: Meridian North will require classrooms that will allow teachers and students the ability to move around and re-organize their room to accommodate our 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 our 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 North will assure that all facilities meet state and federal health and safety laws and meet ADA requirements. The school leadership will comply with state laws to have annual safety inspections of their facilities and address any issues that are found during those inspections.

Gem Prep: Meridian North will remain in compliance with applicable state and federal guidelines as provided in Section 39-4130, Idaho Code, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The School will provide certification that the facilities meet all requirements for health, safety, fire and accessibility for those with disabilities. Gem Prep: Meridian North will continue to provide regular inspections of the facilities for health, safety and fire compliance and will provide copies of these reports upon request.

Gem Prep: Meridian North's school leadership has successfully secured facilities for three other school startups and is aware that finding affordable facilities that can meet the programmatic needs of schools is an essential criterion for success. The school anticipates that securing affordable

facilities may be one of the more challenging components of this plan. *(See Building Hope Letter of Support in Appendix F7.)*

**Option 1**

In the proposed budget, Gem Prep: Meridian North plans to purchase property and phase the facility construction over the course of 3 years. Phase I (yr.1) construction is approximately 34,600 sq. feet, which includes classroom space for K-8th grades, a gym, cafeteria, fab lab, and admin space. Phase II’s estimated construction start is October of 2022 (yr. 3) and is approximately 13,600 sq. ft. This phase will add classroom space for 9th - 12th grades as well as the high school commons space, and a teacher workroom. The estimated cost the total project to \$9,000,000.

**Option 2**

In the event the school is able to secure a CSP grant or other philanthropic support, Gem Prep: Meridian North plans to purchase property and enter into a predevelopment agreement to construct an approximately 50,000 sq. ft. K-12 facility. Construction will start in October of 2020 and will complete in July of 2021. Based on other recent school construction projects, GPMN estimates a total project cost of \$9,000,000.

*(Appendix A5: Facility Options Template)*

## Section III: Board Capacity and Governance Structure

### Governance Structure

Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho, Inc. (GIS) will be the charter holder (the board of directors) and will govern Gem Prep: Meridian North, LLC, pursuant to GIS's existing Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Board Policies. 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 North, LLC (GPMN).

*(Appendix B: GIS Articles of Incorporation, GIS Bylaws, GPMN Certificate of Organization, LLC, and GPMN Operating Agreement)*

### Board of Directors Responsibilities

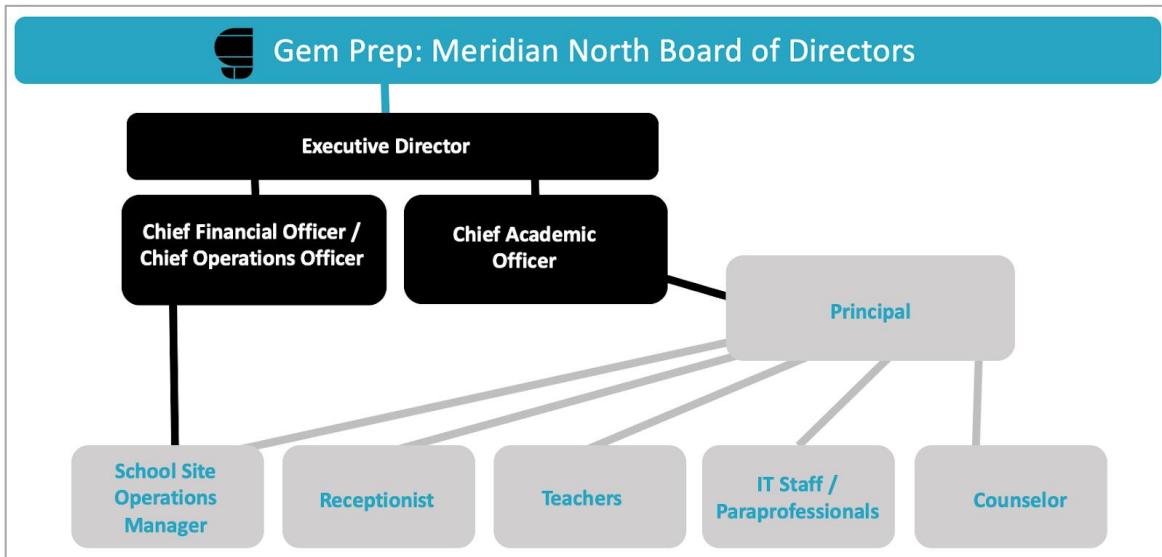
The Board will be responsible for the financial health of the school, managing the school's funds responsibly and prudently while prioritizing spending with consideration given to the school's mission, vision and educational program goals. The Board will make an effort to establish financial practices 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 B*). Board members will commit to the ethical standards set forth in the Ethical Standards Agreement. The Board is to serve as liaison between the school and the authorizing entity. (*See Appendix F5 Board Ethics Statements.*)

### Relationship between the Board of Directors and School Administration

Gem Innovation Schools of Idaho Board of Directors is the governing board of the Gem Prep: Meridian North 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 Chief Academic Officer and then the Executive 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 North.



**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
- The adoption, advocate for and oversee a school budget, which is responsive to school goals and meets the needs of all students
- Conducting an annual self-evaluation of its own leadership, governance and teamwork.
- Communicating and interpreting the school's mission and other policy related matters to the public and stakeholders.
- Ensuring there is a supportive, smoothly operating leadership team, which advocates for both children and the community.
- Selecting and evaluating the Executive Director

**Executive 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 Gem Prep meets the performance requirements outlined in the performance certificate
- Execute the policies of the Board
- Act as the intermediary between the Board and stakeholders
- Make recommendations to the Board on issues facing the school

**Chief Financial Officer works under the direction of the Executive 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

**Chief Academic Officer works under the direction of the Executive 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

**Chief Operating Officer works under the direction of the Executive 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 Chief Academic Officer.**

*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

## Board Member Qualifications

The appointed Board of Directors will be legally accountable for the operation of Gem Prep: Meridian North. The school is committed 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 not only seeks potential board members who support Gem Prep students but also who have the specific skill set needed on the board.

The Board of Directors is comprised of a talented and seasoned group of professionals and civic leaders. Board expertise and strength covers all necessary governance areas such as education, law, real estate, strategy, finance, management and community relations, etc. Further strengthening the board, the current board chair has five years of governance experience with Gem Prep schools, and the vice-chair has 10.

*(Appendix C: Board of Directors and Petitioning Group)*

Board Composition Profile & Terms of Service									
Board Member Name	Education	Law / Compliance / Operation	Real Estate / Facilities	Strategy	Accounting / Finance	Business / Management	Politics / External Relationships	Years of Service	Current Term Expires
Dennis Turner, Chair			X	X		X	X	From 03/2014	6/30/21
Murray Stanton, V. Chair		X		X			X	From 05/2009	6/30/21
Jill Call	X				X	X		From 08/2012	6/30/22
Renee Ellsworth			X		X	X		From 05/2018	6/30/22
Duncan Robb	X	X		X		X	X	From 09/2018	6/30/20
Roger Stewart	X			X			X	From 02/2016	6/30/20
Brian Trammell		X	X					From 12/2016	6/30/20
*Legal Counsel		X	X	X	X	X			

\*Services as needed (Contract law, policy review, etc.)

## Transition Plan

A vital element in the plans for the Gem Prep: Meridian North school has been the governance of the GIS Board of Directors. The GIS Board has been governing four Gem Prep Schools for a considerable time and integral in the growth and development plans of Gem Prep: Meridian North. Therefore, a transition plan from a founding board to a governing board is not necessary.

## Board Member Recruitment and Training

Recruitment and nomination of potential new board members is the responsibility of the board’s Governance Committee. When recruiting, the committee leverages professional networks, as well as the connections of staff, teachers, parents, and community members. When less than two board members possess any categorized skills set, the committee identifies that skill as the recruitment priority. Further, if board members cannot be identified who possesses the necessary skills set, the Committee recommends board training in order to develop expertise in that skill within existing board members. Board members must share a commitment to the mission of the school, and be willing to volunteer their expertise to ensure the school’s success in fulfilling its mission.



GIS school board members are committed to continued development. The board believes strongly in seeking out relevant board training opportunities to assist in making Gem Prep a high performing college preparatory school, which prepares students for college, career, and citizenship.

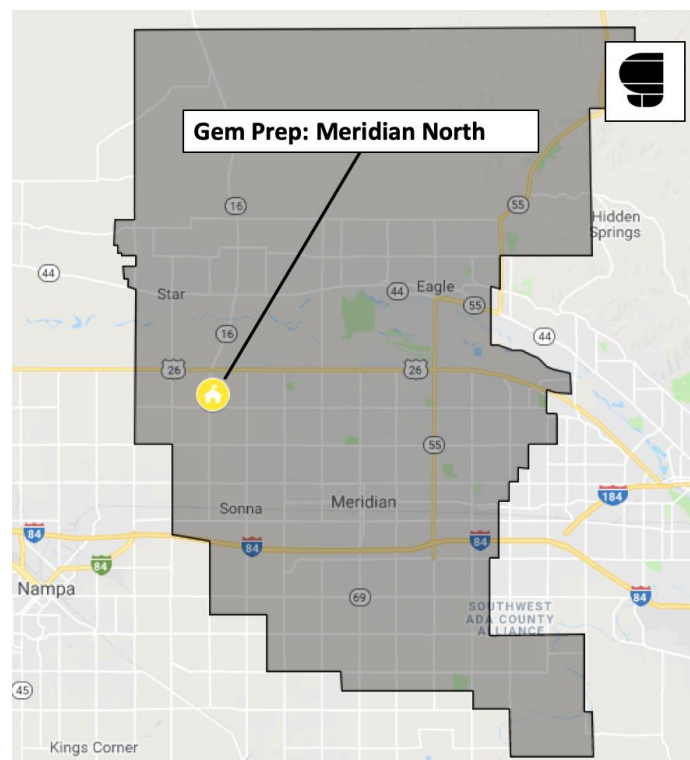
Board members identify the greatest needs for professional learning. Once needs are identified, the board develops a professional development plan which provides opportunities for board members to advance their expertise, and to strengthen and deepen the board as a whole. The annual school budget includes funding for board training and development opportunities, which is fully reimbursable by the state. Board members attend regular training such as the Idaho School Board Association's annual convention. They also attend the State Department of Education charter school workshops, which provide information about best practices and common challenges of charter boards. These workshops and training opportunities also provide critical networking connections for board members.

A New Board Members packet is provided to new board members. This packet contains information to help them understand what is involved in being a board member. Packets include, but are not limited to, the GIS Board Handbook, GPMN Charter, roles and responsibilities, open meeting and record laws, state statute for charter schools, ethical standards, conflict of interest information, board policies, financial reports, and budgets. New members are also provided with educational materials relative to Gem Prep's educational model, such as webinars, books, and conferences, prior to appointment, and during their service on the board.

## Section IV: Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

### Primary Attendance Area

The school will be physically located within the West Ada School District. Gem Prep: Meridian North's attendance area will include all of WASD as detailed in the map below. A more detailed view can be found at the following link: [GPMN Attendance Area Map](#).



The school anticipates drawing students from Nampa School District, Boise School District, Middleton 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 provides a college preparatory school in the area.

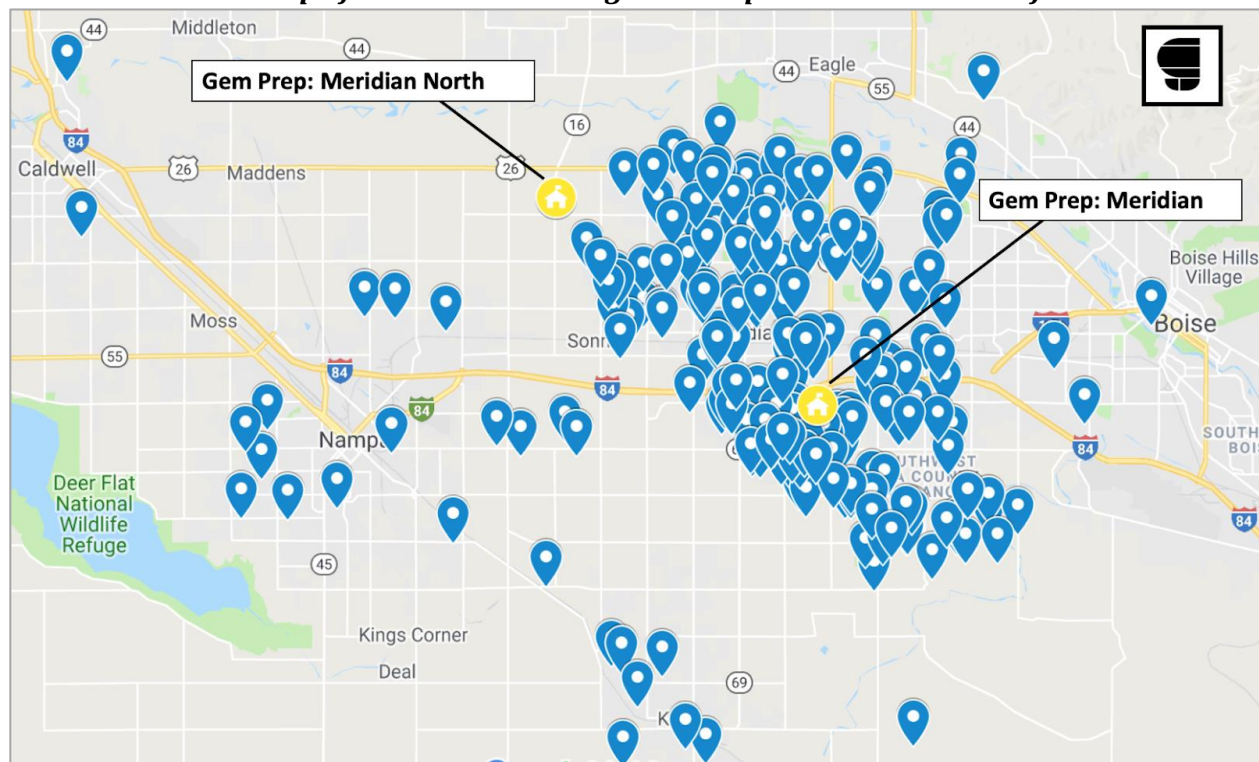
### Student Demand

#### Sustained Interest in the existing Gem Prep: Meridian school

There is considerable demand for student enrollment in the existing Gem Prep: Meridian (GPM) school. Its second year of operation, for the 2019-2020 school year, GPM is 100% enrolled and there are more students who remain on the waiting list for enrollment than the total enrollment

capacity for the school. GPM's waitlist currently stands at approximately 500 students as of June 2019 for the 2019-20 school year.

### **Locations map of 2019-2020 existing Gem Prep: Meridian enrolled families**



Twenty-one percent of current GPM families live closer to the proposed location of GPMN than the existing GPM school location. It is anticipated that some current GPM students who live closer to GPMN will transfer to the new school, or that students on the GPM waitlist will enroll in GPMN even if it is not the closest GP campus. GPMN anticipates interest in enrollment from some GPM and GPN students. GPMN's current interested student list is approximately 200 with nearly two full years to continue student recruitment before opening. Due to these factors, along with the population growth in Meridian, GPMN is confident that every seat will be filled on day one, with a significant waitlist as well. (See Appendix F8 for GPM's and GPN's grade by grade waitlist.)

## **Community Growth**

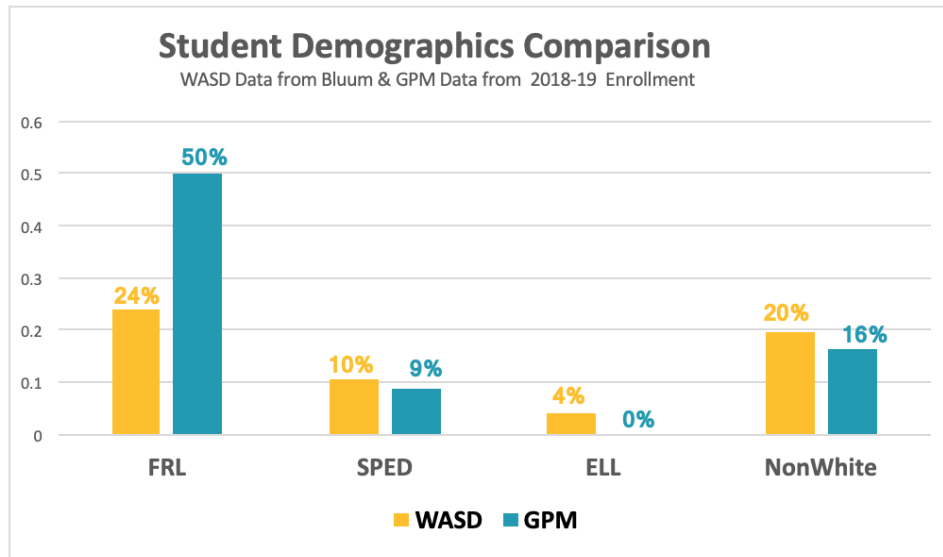
According to Compass Idaho, a community planning organization for southwest Idaho, by the year 2021, approximately 1,041 new residential units are projected to be built within a one-mile radius of the proposed GPMN location. Expanding that radius out to two miles, an additional 1,837 new units are projected.

Further, West Ada School District's facilities plan indicates that the North Meridian area is projected to be one of the highest growth areas for school age children. Within two miles of the proposed GPMN location, WASD estimates there will be approximately 3,077 elementary students, 1,743 middle school students, and 1,966 high school students. The district predicts their mid-west region (between Chinden and I-84 and west of Eagle Road) to be their fastest growing region for elementary students. Additionally, middle schools and high schools in the area are predicted to be

1,000 - 2,000 students over-enrolled. *(West Ada Future School Sites Map, West Ada School District School Facility Plan)*

## Student Population

It is anticipated Gem Prep: Meridian North will mirror the student demographic population of the West Ada School District and the existing Gem Prep: Meridian. Focused recruitment strategies have enabled GPM’s student demographic population to roughly reflect the West Ada school district’s percentage of non-white, English Language Learner, economically disadvantaged (low income), and special education. GPM serves a higher percentage of low-income students compared to the district *(see below data)*.



## Enrollment Capacity

Gem Prep’s instructional model includes challenging each student at their comprehension level. One way Gem Prep 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, which is the reason a schoolwide cap is necessary as opposed to a grade-level cap.

Gem Prep enrollment is capped at 676 students in grades K-12. The table below contains the grade-by-grade *plan* to grow to 574 students over five years. While the Board has a grade-by-grade plan that targets 574 students, the Board requests a single K-12 enrollment capacity of approximately 676. This approach allows the Board to adjust grade-level student numbers, within the 676 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 GPMN’s application deadline, the Board of Directors will establish the annual school-wide enrollment capacity not to exceed 676 students and an annual enrollment capacity for each grade level.

Grades	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
K	52	52	52	52	52
1st	52	52	52	52	52
2nd	52	52	52	52	52
3rd	52	52	52	52	52
4th	52	52	52	52	52
5th	52	52	52	52	52
6th		52	52	52	52
7th		45	45	45	45
8th		45	45	45	45
9th			30	30	30
10th			30	30	30
11th				30	30
12th					30
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>574</b>

GPMN recognizes the demand in the secondary level drops, which is why the growth plan above (which the financial plan is built upon) reduces down from 52 seats in 6th grade to 45 seats in grades 7-8 and then again to 30 seats in grades 9-12. In the first year offering grades 7 & 8 in Gem Prep: Meridian, the demand is higher than we anticipated. GPM's 7th & 8th grade enrollment is currently full with another 44 students on the waitlist in just the first year offering secondary grades. GPMN sees the same trend with 7 & 8 grades full with 34 students on waitlist.

## Community Partnerships and Local Support

The school continues to develop mutually beneficial relationships with local vendors, businesses, and community leaders. Below are examples of early or existing partnerships that will be leveraged for GPMN.

- **Dragon Fly Performing Arts:** Provides after school program for students and other children in the local community.
- **Young Rembrandts:** Offers arts classes on campus each week.
- **Idaho Dance:** Teaches ballet and hip hop classes on campus.
- **Fowler Orthodontics:** Presents oral hygiene information to students.
- **Meridian Fire Department:** Provides fire safety and emergency training for students.
- **Independence Indoor Shooting Range:** provide firearms safety courses to students.

GPMN expects to continue to develop partnerships with community based organizations. Future organizations which may be the focus of partnerships include colleges, student support organizations, philanthropic supporters, and businesses whose interests align in supporting GPMN students. *(See Appendix F1: Letter to Local Superintendent.)*

## Enrolling Underserved Families

Gem Prep has developed a student recruitment plan that intentionally enrolls a diverse student population. Branding was created by a professional designer, and messaging was created with the help of an experienced consultant to balance high expectations with robust support.

Gem Prep uses a variety of recruitment tools including social media, mailers, door-to-door campaigns, public forums, local preschools, and community events and groups. Student recruitment materials (also available in Spanish) feature students who represent racial diversity and a range of age levels. These materials make it abundantly clear that Gem Prep serves students at all academic levels, including special education students. Door-to-door efforts and mailers include a variety of neighborhoods, including those most likely to yield enrollment from students of color and of low-income. Social media parameters are narrowed to target these same neighborhoods and demographics. During the summer, Gem Prep staff attend free lunch at the parks (which are intended for low-income families) to inform families about school choice options. Strong demand currently exists for enrollment at Gem Prep from a regionally diverse student population.

Additionally, beneficial to underserved families, is the opportunity to take advantage of the tuition-free full-day kindergarten offered through GPMN.

# Section V: School Leadership and Management

## Leadership Team

The Administrative services will be provided by the school Administrators (state certification required), with support from the Board of Directors. Gem Prep: Meridian North will contract with another Idaho charter school, Gem Prep: Online (formally I-DEA), for professional services (*See Appendix F2: Professional Services Agreement Draft*). GPO will provide a seasoned charter school leadership team with over 15 years of experience who manage several Idaho charter schools including Gem Prep: Online (GPO), Gem Prep: Pocatello, Gem Prep: Nampa and Gem Prep: Meridian. 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 contract with GPO provides a Chief Executive Officer who reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the overall success of the school. The contract also provides for service of positions such as a Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer, who all report directly to the CEO (*See Appendix F2: Professional Services Agreement Draft*). The instructional leader of the school is the principal who reports to and is evaluated by a certified academic officer. All other certified staff are evaluated by the principal. (*See Appendix D: School Administration and Organization Chart.*)

The school's management plan provides the school support from an executive team with a demonstrated track record of preparing students for success in college and beyond. The executive team is currently comprised of a CEO, CFO, CAO, COO. The executive team manages curriculum development, instructional oversight, obtaining a facility and facility financing, fundraising, professional development, preparing budgets and financial reports, back office support, human resources, overseeing special education, and marketing. This allows the principal to focus on the instructional leadership of the school. The principal's responsibilities include student academic success, building school community and culture, providing teacher mentoring and coaching, conducting staff evaluations, student discipline, and facilitating parent and community relations.

The board reviews key indicators on the school's data dashboard each month. Key indicators include enrollment, academic growth and achievement, financial stability, student demographic diversity, stakeholder satisfaction, and teacher turnover. Monthly reviews allow the board to proactively address concerns as they arise. If concerns arise, administrators may provide context or additional information to address those concerns. If the concern warrants additional action, the board may either send the concern to one of the committees or ask the administration to make a recommendation at the next meeting concerning a resolution. In addition, the CEO is evaluated annually on the performance of the school, which is informed by indicators outlined in the data dashboard. The Board of Directors will evaluate the CEO using an evaluation framework permissible by Idaho law. At the present, this is a Danielson Evaluation Framework. The Board will complete the evaluation of the administrator once per year, as required by Idaho Code. The timeline of evaluation will follow Idaho Code and be written in policy adopted by the Board of Directors after the charter petition is approved.

The CEO, CAO, and CFO, all of whom have over 12 years of charter sector experience, manage charter specific requirements. Operations are managed collaboratively by the COO (with 15 years charter sector experience) and the school site operations manager. The CFO (who has 25 years of school experience) manages finances. The CEO in collaboration with the school attorney handles legal matters.

The chart below outlines the experience and areas of expertise of the school’s board and leadership team. *(See board resumes in Appendix C: Board of Directors and Petitioning Group. See leadership team resumes in Appendix F: Management Team.)*

**Gem Prep: Meridian North School Leadership Profile**

<b>School Leadership</b>	Finance	Educational Program	Education Innovation	New School Start-Up	School Facilities	Governance & Law	Operations	Community Outreach	Development / Fundraising	School Administration	Distance Learning	Special Populations	Technology & Data	Board Member
Jason Bransford, CEO	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		
Laurie Wolfe, CAO		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	
Lisa Pearce, CFO	X				X	X	X		X		X			
Josh Femreite, COO			X	X	X		X				X		X	
Jill Call		X	X											X
Renee Ellsworth	X							X						X
Duncan Robb		X				X		X						X
Murray Stanton						X	X							X
Roger Stewart		X	X											X
Brian Trammel						X		X						X
Dennis Turner				X	X	X	X	X						X