

Microschool Development and Launch Checklist

Set your school mission, vision, and structure.

- Research different microschool types and models, assess your strengths and community interest, and identify resources for pre- and post-launch.
- Identify the grades or ages you will work with and what academic and extracurricular option(s) you will provide, including local partnerships with individual experts, colleges or universities, local non-profits, etc.
- Consider whether you want (1) to establish a microschool as part of a national network with accompanying supports, (2) to enter into a significant partnership with a business, municipality, church, or other entity to run the microschool, (3) or to set up an independent school entity.

Gauge community interest.

- Survey local families, formally or informally, to assess interest in enrolling in a microschool and to present your microschool idea.
- Meet with community leaders and potential funders or investors to tell them about your microschool idea.

Find space to operate.

- Explore shared space in churches, homes, libraries, and facilities to rent or buy.
- Assess the costs associated with different options and changing needs as you think about staffing and enrollment for Years 1, 2, and 3.
- Investigate local zoning laws that may apply.

Determine tuition and budget.

- Calculate costs, including insurance and other operational costs, and necessary revenue for Year 1 based on salaries, facilities, curricula, furniture, and equipment.
- Consider how costs and revenue will shift or expand in Years 2 and 3.
- Clarify different payment options and schedules and identify any available scholarships.
- Consider your staffing minimum/maximum and creative solutions to needs such as combining instructional and operational responsibilities, outsourcing or utilizing volunteers for administrative and back office tasks, etc.

□ **Form an official entity.**

- Choose a name and file Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State.
- Consider the pros and cons of non-profit or for-profit status, including the implications for fundraising and governance, and follow instructions by the Secretary of State accordingly.
- Consider obtaining advice from a tax attorney if needed.

□ **Establish a plan for curriculum and instruction.**

- Consider the students you want to serve as you select teaching and learning tools and how student needs will inform your instructional plan from pedagogy to schedules to offerings.
- Consider whether online or in-person instruction (or a combination) will be fundamental to your model.
- Investigate curricula that align with the school mission and vision and opportunities to gain access to curricula through organizations that obtain licenses on behalf of small settings.
- Determine what full-time or part-time staff and volunteer needs opening will require as well as potential partnerships and local expertise available.
- Decide whether students will enroll as private school or homeschool students (or a combination) for purposes of filling out the certificate of enrollment required by the state and investigate any implications such as zoning restrictions or access to scholarships.
- Consider whether accreditation is important to the students and families you will serve, accreditation options, and potential challenges of pursuing accreditation (Accreditation is not required for private schools in Mississippi.).

□ **Recruit students and families.**

- Consider the number of students (part-time and full-time) necessary for your microschool to open its doors successfully in Years 1, 2, and 3 and set goals based on those projections.
- Utilize free or cheap forms of advertising such as social media, flyers, speeches to parent groups, civic clubs, church groups, and more.
- Set up a school website with important information for families and clarify tuition and attendance options there.