Washington, D.C. is many things.
It’s also the ideal place... to design and launch a brand new school.

D.C. has:

- Population growth (+10,000 student estimate, by 2025)
- Parent demand for innovative models
- Ample funding
- Abundant talent
- Real charter school autonomy
CityBridge works with exceptional educators and entrepreneurs to bring the next generation of public schools to market.

STAGES OF CITYBRIDGE INCUBATION

I. SOURCING

We are looking for educators and leaders with the vision, talent, and drive to found a new school for students and families in Washington, D.C. Sourcing is rigorous and research-based. CityBridge’s portfolio team looks for entrepreneurs with innovative proposals, pressure testing them against gaps and opportunities in our market.

II. EARLY, GENEROUS INVESTMENT

We provide the earliest seed capital to entrepreneurs in our portfolio, so they can devote themselves to developing their model, writing a business plan and charter application, receiving intensive mentoring and coaching, and building a team. Our total investment ranges between $250,000 - $500,000 per school.

III. POLITICAL MAPPING

Successfully launching a school requires a robust and engaged support group—of parents and students, civic leaders, financial supporters, technical advisers, and politicians. For each school in our portfolio, we create a political map of the “Fifty Conversations” the school founder will need to have in order to build his or her network.

IV. EQUITY BY DESIGN

Great schools upend our country’s established narratives around who should lead and who can succeed. Cities like Washington, D.C., with large minority and low-income populations, can be the vanguard of a new narrative, incubating schools that establish what we call “intentional equity.” To reinforce this strand of our work, all our founders and school teams participate in our signature curriculum, Equity by Design, which merges racial equity work with classic design thinking and prototyping.

V. THE CITYBRIDGE NETWORK

Across our first seven school launches, we have honed our own practices. Our founders tell us that, in addition to early funding, being matched with a near peer in our network was crucial to success. Every entrepreneur will be matched with a fellow founder and can access our network in multiple ways, including incubating and iterating with us, in our workspace.
WHAT IS CITYBRIDGE EDUCATION LOOKING FOR IN A SCHOOL?

DIVERSE MODELS, INCLUDING:

• STEM
• Coding
• Tech-Enabled
• Expeditionary Learning
• Personalized/Blended Learning
• Summit Learning
• Culturally/Racially Responsive
• Montessori
• Early College
• Workforce/Professional Linkages
• Foreign Language Immersion
• Chinese Language
• Dual Generation Schools

SCHOOL DESIGN REFLECTING FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF:

Deep, Personal Learning
Schools are structured so that students receive what they need, when they need it, in ways that are personally tailored—slowing down when they need more time, going deeper when curiosity spikes, even encouraging the pursuit of new interests.

Intentional Equity
Schools designed for equity challenge our country’s ongoing narrative of disinheritance for some children, based on their race, class, or story. Intentionally equitable schools write a counter-narrative by constructing a school culture of belonging and worth, where children know they are secure and can take risks and push themselves to accomplishment.

Expanded Measures of Success
State accountability tests matter for uncovering disparities and for tracking progress, but they can distract educators from deeper, more relevant learning goals. Educators in transformative schools embrace an expansive view of success and how to measure it, using quantitative and qualitative measures for mastery of core content as well as social and emotional development.
WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

#1 Bring New Schools to Market
Every year, we hope to identify up to five founders who will begin working with us, in Washington, to design and found a new school. The timeline of this work is long—generally three years, start to finish, from initial ideation to opening day. Our proximal goal is to bring these schools successfully to market, with strong leaders, founding teams, business plans, and equitable design, all in place.

#2 Radically Improve D.C.’s Portfolio of Schools
Longer term, we bring new schools to market in order to radically improve the portfolio of schools serving D.C.’s growing population of students. We are blessed with a rapidly improving school system in both our charter and traditional sectors, and we have pockets of extreme excellence, as demonstrated by multiple standardized measures. Our issue is supply. Too few great schools and tremendous unmet demand—a shortage that could bring an end to the virtuous cycle of rising school quality contributing to the city’s vibrant growth. Our new schools should produce results that lift performance and meet the needs of the city’s families and students.

#3 Promote Justice
We have a third, embedded goal: That innovative school models will usher in a more just city. Particularly in boundary-free charter schools, models that go above and beyond the norm—models such as Expeditionary Learning, language immersion, STEM—attract a diverse group of students and families from every ward of the city. By educating all students well, and together, “diverse by design” schools can begin to reverse the pervasive harm of segregation, racism, and inequality.