



Innovation Center

Application for Middle School Students

Middle School Innovation Pursuit Guidelines

Vision Statement

The Berwick Academy Innovation Pursuit Program is a supplemental, after-school program designed to help meet the creative and intellectual needs of our students in grades 5-12. This program offers an opportunity for these students to pursue a mentor-supported area of study about which the student holds a strong interest or curiosity. We seek student proposals that reflect a clear passion for the subject matter, a realistic framework for pursuit, a reasonable support system proposal and a defensible opportunity for demonstration of the project or area of study.

Application Process

Applications to this program are competitive and are limited in number. Middle School students submit an application in the fall for a project to be completed over the winter and spring trimesters.

Applications may be obtained in the Jackson Library, or downloaded from the Berwick Academy portal. Middle School students will complete the application, obtain parent and mentor signatures, and submit the application to Darcy Coffta in the Jackson Library.

Middle School IP Applications are due on October 23rd, 2015. Students will hear back by October 30th, 2015 regarding the status of their applications. **The Mentor & Student Progress Plans are due on Friday, November 20th, 2015.** The Progress Plan is included in this packet.

Contracts

Upon acceptance, each student will be given a contract that lays out all of the stipulations of the project. You must meet these stipulations, or explain why you did not, in the end of the year evaluation.

Mentors

In order to insure the highest level of support, Middle School students should endeavor to have an on-campus mentor. Berwick community members understand the nature of the Innovation Center and are always easily reachable to help students. The Jackson Library has a list of possible members and their professional interests in supporting Innovative projects. Off-campus mentors will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students are also required to make contact with a professional in their area of exploration. Coordinators will solicit these contacts from the greater community, which may include local universities, industries, or professional groups. Students and families are also encouraged to seek outside experts. Mentors and coordinator will help students to craft useful, relevant questions to ask the expert(s).



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Expectations:

Activity Period:

In addition to out of school time, students completing a BIC project are expected to choose BIC as their activity for the winter and spring trimesters. In this time, students will workshop with one another, work on developing a web presence, have time to contact mentor(s) and expert(s), and access to the library and other resources. If this causes a conflict for you, please see Ms. Coffta.

Web Presence:

Each student will create and maintain a Google Site related to their project. The site should include visual elements as well as text. You may organize the site in a way that best suits your project, but we expect it will have sections related to the criteria for Innovation as defined by the BIC:

- ❖ Original Research
- ❖ Critical Thinking / Problem Solving.
- ❖ Creativity / Originality
- ❖ Collaboration and Connections with Experts
- ❖ Communication Skills
- ❖ Community Outreach & Sharing of Knowledge

Project Planning Sheet:

One of the first things you will do with your mentor is to create a Project Planning Sheet (see form below). Completion of this sheet will allow you to stay on track with your project.

Self-Evaluation:

In May, each student should complete a self-evaluation. The evaluation form is available on the BIC Page on the Portal or from the Middle School Coordinator. It addresses the criteria for Innovation as set out by the BIC, stipulations of the contract, and the measures of success that you identified in the application. You should explain whether or not you met these criteria. It's okay if not all criteria are met – sometimes project evolve or there are unexpected roadblocks – but any discrepancies from the original criteria should be fully explained.

Innovation Celebration:

Upon acceptance of the Innovation plan, a date will be set for a public demonstration and presentation. A panel of reviewers will be assembled to review the project and to approve the presentation. The presentation will be open to the Berwick Academy community.



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Name: _____

Title of Project: _____

Mentor: _____

On separate paper, please respond to the following. Responses should be typed, and should reflect your highest quality of work. Attach this cover sheet to your responses and turn in the application packet to Ms. Coffta. This application may ask you to think in unfamiliar ways about your own learning and education. Please work with your mentor on this application. If you have an idea for a project, but not a mentor, please see Ms. Coffta.

- Description of project:** Describe the purpose of your investigation and the outcomes or goals you hope to achieve.

- What makes your project innovative?** Please consider the following criteria for Innovation as set out by the BIC:
 - ❖ Original Research
 - ❖ Critical Thinking / Problem Solving.
 - ❖ Creativity / Originality
 - ❖ Collaboration and Connections with Experts
 - ❖ Communication Skills
 - ❖ Community Outreach & Sharing of Knowledge

- Describe the criteria for measuring the success of your project.**

- The relationship with your mentor is vital to the success of the project. Before a mentor and student agree to work with one another, they should make sure that, logistically, they will be able to do so. Please discuss a meeting schedule with your mentor. **When and where do you plan to meet with your mentor?**

- Logistics:** When and where do you plan to work on your project? How much time do you anticipate spending on your project each week?

By signing below you certify that you have read the BIC Middle School Guidelines.	
Student Signature:	Date:
Parent Signature:	Date:
Mentor Signature:	Date:



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Mentor & Student IP Planning Sheet

For the most part, it will be between the mentor and the student to arrange regular meetings together and to decide the dates and times of those meetings according to what works best for each other's schedules.

There will be, however, four, specified, weeklong time frames throughout the year, when all mentors and students must check in with each other to discuss the progress of the projects. At these times, students will be required to give evidence of being at certain stages of accomplishment. You may choose any time during the specified weeks to meet, but you must meet together sometime during that week.

Please use the planning section below to pre-determine what should be completed by each date. The student is responsible to be ready on the date, prepared to show his or her mentor the progress that has been made. If after two of these dates, the mentor feels that not enough effort/advancement has been made, it will be necessary to arrange a meeting between the Middle School BIC Coordinator, the student, mentor, and also perhaps the Director of BIC. At that time, a resolution will be reached about how to proceed and/or whether the project will need to be terminated or perhaps saved for completion another year.

Please return a copy of this form to the MS Coordinator dated and with both signatures by Friday, November 20th, 2015.

1. Week of: December 14-18 2015 Progress Benchmark to Meet:

2. Week of: January 25- 29 2016 Progress Benchmark to Meet:

3. Week of: March 1-4 2016 Progress Benchmark to Meet:

4. Week of: April 18-22 2016 Progress Benchmark to Meet:

_____/_____
Signature of Student / Date

_____/_____
Signature of Mentor / Date



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Mentor & Student IP Planning Sheet

These guidelines are meant to ensure consistent effort across the year and consistent respect shown for each other's contributions to the project.

In general, if either a mentor or a student are “no-shows” at planned meetings twice in a row or more, it will be necessary to convene with the MS Coordinator and possibly with the BIC Director as well to decide upon the best course of action. The same is true if either the mentor or the student cancels meetings with less than 24 hours notice twice in a row or more. Collaboration is a vital part of the BIC experience. The expectation is to take meeting seriously and to make every effort not to postpone or cancel meetings out of respect for both parties and to provide a joyful, inspiring collaborative process.

The first three weeks after the signing of a contract will be considered a “trial period.” During that time, both the student and the mentor can assess the feasibility of the project, the motivation level of the student to carry the project through to completion, and the worthiness of the project as befitting the six criteria for Innovation Projects. The students will have those first three weeks to make certain that they are passionate about their topic and able to follow through with it throughout the year. The mentors will have three weeks to determine whether this project should be a true “go-ahead” BIC project for that year. **At the end of the three weeks, all students and mentors must inform the MS Coordinator of their decisions to either continue as planned with their projects or to postpone or revise the projects.**



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Berwick Innovation Center End of Year Self-Evaluation

Name: _____

Title of Project:

Mentor: _____

On separate paper, please respond to the prompts below. For each category, please answer whether or not you met the criteria. Explain why or why not, and provide evidence to support your claims.

Answers may be written in paragraph form or as bulleted lists. Responses should be typed and should reflect your highest quality of work. Attach this cover sheet to your responses, and turn it in to Ms. Coffta.

Contract stipulations: Your contract included both general and specific stipulations. General requirements included: web presence, Progress Plan, interview with a field expert. Did you meet them?

Your criteria for success. Return to your application and consider the criteria for success you gave at that time. Did you meet them?

Was your project innovative? Please consider and address the following criteria for Innovation as set out by the BIC in relation to your project:

- ❖ Original Research
- ❖ Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
- ❖ Creativity / Originality
- ❖ Collaboration and Connections with Experts
- ❖ Communication Skills
- ❖ Community Outreach & Sharing of Knowledge

Mentor relationship: Please describe your relationship with your mentor. In what ways was it successful? What might you have done to improve it?