

# Fellowship For Collaborative Innovation: Futurist Fellows 2017 Application

[See Fellowship Webpage For More Information](#)

## We Are Seeking Our Best Thinkers, Tinkerers and Troublemakers!

NWAIS invites community members to apply to be recognized as the 2017-18 Futurist Fellows, the newest round and re-imagining of the Fellowship For Collaborative Innovation. In previous years, one team was selected to explore a topic of their choosing over the course of a year, and then disseminate their learning to the rest of the NWAIS community. This year the process will be a little different.

## NWAIS invites you to imagine the future of Independent Schools through a design experience with an interdisciplinary group of colleagues.

**Guiding Question:** How might we reimagine our current schools so that we sustain, flourish and thrive into the future? Using this guiding question, the team will develop a design question to explore over the course of the year.

Eligible Applications Must Include:

- 1) Completed Application (below)
- 2) Recommendation from a colleague (who could also be your Head of School)
  - a. [Recommendation / endorsement form](#) (Send to All Recommenders)
  - b. Or cut and paste the following URL:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FFRecAndEndorse17>
- 3) Endorsement from your Head of School
  - a. [Endorsement form](#) (send to Heads of School, if someone else completed your recommendation)
  - b. Or cut and paste the following URL:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FFEndorsement17>

Submit Your Application when completed via email to [emcgrath@nwais.org](mailto:emcgrath@nwais.org) in a single word document (this document may contain links to images or video answers). If you need help, have questions direct them to [Emily McGrath](#), Director of Professional Development, NWAIS.

**“Design Thinking is a mindset. It’s Human-Centered. It’s Collaborative. It’s Optimistic. It’s Experimental.” – IDEO**

**Please limit the length of each answer to 250 words, a one-minute video or up to 10 still photos.** Include all the content or links to the content in the document below and email it directly to [emcgrath@nwais.org](mailto:emcgrath@nwais.org).

### **1. Demographic Information**

Name: Jonathan Briggs

School: Eastside Preparatory School

Title: Chief Technology & Innovation Officer

Email Address: [jbriggs@eastsideprep.org](mailto:jbriggs@eastsideprep.org)

### **2. Biography / Professional History**

Jonathan joined Eastside Prep in 2005 as the school's first Director of Technology. Jonathan spends a great deal of time keeping the school up to date with the latest technological changes, which has been no small endeavor over the past twelve years. In addition to his teaching duties and independent study programs, Jonathan has implemented a laptop program in the Middle and Upper School, brought admissions and development databases online and written programs for the school that manage data around students and teaching. He has overseen the technological needs of transitioning from ninety users to over 450 and from one building to ten. Jonathan may be proudest of starting TEDxEastsidePrep, an annual conference that seeks to explore new ideas in education by bringing in speakers from outside the field of instruction. Prior to joining EPS, Jonathan spent four years teaching math and physics, chairing the upper school science department, and coaching volleyball and golf at the Bentley School in California.

Additionally, Jonathan has served on the founding team of a successful startup (Aditive) and worked for the Red Herring Magazine.

### **3. What is your experience with design, research and collaboration?**

The technology team, and Eastside Prep as a whole, are continually in a state of design, redesign and implementation. In the past twelve years we have had to design an Upper School program, a network infrastructure, a laptop program, business processes, different modes of instruction, experiential trip weeks, software to support education, makerspaces, buildings, professional development days, TEDx events and hundreds if not thousands of solutions to small problems. In all of those cases, we take a collaborative approach. It is both the right way to take on a problem and it builds buy-in which is essential in implementing any solution.

I have also served as a consultant to software companies and some start-ups in addition to designing software to meet the needs of Eastside Prep. In all of these endeavors, focusing on the success of your team members always improves the overall product.

### **4. How do you think your colleagues would describe your interpersonal style on a team?**

My colleagues would describe my collaborative style as one that seeks to get the best ideas promoted regardless of source. They would also cite efforts to collect and categorize thinking into fewer, perhaps more abstract, ideas to improve the ability to convey them. They might also mention an active sense of humor that provides levity to intense discussions with minimal derailment. While flexibility and inclusion are primary, it is also very important that ideas and recommendations fit well together with an overarching philosophy and that any system we propose is resistant to being gamed or able to be implemented without buying into the underlying philosophy. As a final note, I wouldn't consider any product that came out of a group a success unless everyone in the group was happy with the outcome.

**5a) Please check up to three (3) skills and strengths that you could contribute to the group.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Equity, Diversity and Social Justice  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce and Faculty Development     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers and Coaches                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Data Analysis</b>       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Program and Instruction</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IT &amp; Technology</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-Organizational Partnerships         |  |

**5b) Please tell us how those skills that you checked will support the work of the team.**

The biggest skill that I can offer is an integrated understanding of how a school functions. In my role, I am involved in, and directly supporting, nearly every aspect of our school. The tech role supports a continual effort to imagine the future (it is the only way that we can do strategic plans in that field). It also forces us to look for connections and ways of modeling information in a succinct manner. As a former full-time teacher, I know what it is like to create an environment in which students thrive. What sometimes feels effective to you as a teacher (lectures and demos) isn't always the most effective way for students to learn. A failed student project can pay huge dividends over time as much as you want to protect students from failure. The layers of understanding required to be a masterful teacher are deep and nuanced.

As a result of being a former k-12 scheduler, designer of a student information system and a Physics major, I also have a firm grasp on collecting and analyzing data.

I work in education is because of the impact it has on students, the Program and Instruction is the conduit for that and I am fascinated both by the challenge of preparing students in today's world in such a way that they can succeed in tomorrow's. I believe that this question gets more important every year as the pace of innovation and the shifts in society increase in speed.

**6. Share some of your hopes for independent schools and the field of education.**

There is an opportunity for independent schools to be the R&D arm of the US education system. As smaller schools with fewer constraints, we are able to innovate and experiment with program and modalities in a way that is impossible for the public sector. However, we are not very good at scaling. Imagine if we could develop and promote successes and let the public education system imagine scaling it? That would be a healthy system and would counter the imagined animosity between the two worlds of US education. If my experience is any indication, there is nothing but curiosity and respect between the independent school world and the public school world.

At a ground level, I believe that there is room to reimagine both the time and space that we operate in during the school day and school year. Is a sequence of 45-90 minute the only way to deliver ideas and skills to students? Should there be multiple modes? Should the types of times shift based on the content? There is much to be discussed in this area and a host of cascading consequences involved with investigating them.

Finally, are the current subjects the proper set for the modern world? We, arguably, have to interface with the college system (at least with the US curriculum) however there is room to innovate the ways we teach the traditional subjects in order to move the educational experience into one that aligns more closely with the challenges likely to face our graduates.

**7. What are some initial ideas of design questions that the team could explore that would help us to reimagine our current schools so that we sustain, flourish and thrive into the future? You**

are not committed to any of these and they do not have to be 100% fleshed out. We would like to see examples of some the areas of education you are interested in exploring.

How might we position Independent Schools to be the R&D arm of the U.S. education system?

How might we integrate modern themes and ideas into the traditional curricula?

How might we teach students abstract thinking skills?

How might we reestablish the importance of a balance between Liberal Arts and STEM?

How might we better share thinking between schools?

How might we reimagine the use of time and space to better serve students?

How might we take advantage of current and future technology to enhance teaching and learning?

How might we foster a culture of innovation among NWAIS schools?

How might we make independent school education more affordable?

How might we encourage thoroughness and care in a fast paced world?

How might we promote confident rebounding from failure among students and faculty?

How might we identify which of the traditional education constraints no longer apply (or will no longer apply) due to technological progress?

How might we teach in an asynchronous manner? Identifying the moments that require everyone in a room and the moments where different structures could be explored?