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Adjusted Allocation 0.00

Remaining -8,060,528.00
Application City (403752) - Hamilton County - 2014 - Straight A Fund - Rev 0 - Straight A Fund - Application Number (349)

Applicants shall respond to the prompts or questions in the areas listed below in a narrative form.

A) APPLICANT INFORMATION - General Information, Experience and Capacity

1. Project Title: Great Readers Great Leaders

2. Executive summary: Provide an executive summary of your project proposal and which goal(s) in question 9 you seek to achieve. Please limit your responses to no more than three sentences.

3. Total Students Impacted:

4. Lead applicant primary contact: - Provide the following information:
   First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Kara Shibiy
   Organizational name of lead applicant: Cincinnati City School District
   Unique Identifier (RIN/Fed Tax ID): 043752
   Address of lead applicant: 2651 Burnet ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45219
   Phone Number of lead applicant: 513-363-0338
   Email Address of lead applicant: shibiy@cps-k12.org

5. Secondary applicant contact: - Provide the following information, if applicable:
   First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Mimi Webb
   Organizational name of secondary applicant: St. Bernard-Elmwood Place School District
   Unique Identifier (RIN/Fed Tax ID): 044719
   Address of secondary applicant: 105 Washington Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45217
   Phone number of secondary applicant: 513-482-7121
   Email address of secondary applicant: mwebb@stepschool.org

6. List all other participating entities by name: Provide the following information for each additional participating entity, if applicable: Mention First Name, Last Name, Organizational Name, Unique Identifier (RIN/Fed Tax ID), Address, Phone Number, Email Address of contact for all secondary applicants in the box below.

7. Partnership and consortia agreements and letters of support: - Click on the link below to upload necessary documents.

   * Letters of support are for districts in academic or fiscal distress only. If school or district is in academic or fiscal distress and has a commission assigned, please include a resolution from the commission in support of the project.

   * If a partnership or consortium will be established, please include the signed Straight A Description of Nature of Partnership or Description of Nature of Consortium Agreement.

   UploadGrantApplicationAttachment.aspx

8. Please provide a brief description of the team or individuals responsible for the implementation of this project including relevant experience in other innovative projects. You should also include descriptions and experiences of partnering entities.

   Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) and St. Bernard-Elmwood Place School District (SBEP) propose to implement the “Great Readers, Great Leaders” project, a collaborative effort between two urban school districts to support equitable personalized and blended learning for elementary students in an effort to increase reading proficiency. The consortium seeks to upgrade the technology infrastructure in both districts for increased student access to state-of-the-art learning programs, as well as provide support for a cross-district, collaborative professional development plan among primary classroom teachers. These implementations will provide considerable cost savings in the five year forecasts for both districts, and will allow for partnership opportunities that supported increased reading achievement and shared resources in our primary classrooms.

9. Which of the stated Straight A Fund goals does the proposal aim to achieve? - (Check all that apply)
   - Student achievement
   - Spending reductions in the five-year fiscal forecast
   - Utilization of a greater share of resources in the classroom

10. Which of the following best describes the proposed project? - (Select one)
   - New - never before implemented
   - Existing and researched-based - never implemented in your district or community school but proven successful in other educational environments
   - Mixed Concept - incorporates new and existing elements
   - Enhancing/Scale Up - elevating or expanding an effective program that is already implemented in your district, school, or consortia partnership

11. Describe the innovative project.
   Imagine a world where students learn and excel without the disadvantages of mind-numbing walls, a world where reading is fun, accessible, and personalized. What would that world look like? The collective vision for the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) and St. Bernard-Elmwood Place School District (SBEP) is to create an environment where all students are engaged and successful in learning. The district employs a nine person Grants Administration team to provide detailed oversight of all financial requirements and expenditures associated with a wide variety of grant awards, including large-scale federal and state grants, national and local private foundations and corporate grants. For example, the Grants Administration Office oversees the financial administration of multiple federal grant programs including Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title II Part D, Title III, Title IV and Title X. The team also provides oversight with required quarterly and final evaluations and financial reporting throughout each grant award. As the lead applicant, CPS will closely follow all program requirements as listed in the Straight A Fund notice, taking great care to ensure proper oversight of financial obligations to the St. Bernard-Elmwood Place School District and provide meaningful and impactful opportunities for collaborative success between the two districts. CPS ELA Curriculum Manager Andrea Faulkner will work closely with the Grants Administration Director to ensure strict compliance within each identified school as it pertains to grant guidelines. Ms. Faulkner also will communicate regularly with consortium leadership and school administrators to ensure project operations are in alignment with the grant requirements, as well as communicate and facilitate trainings for teachers throughout the year. St. Bernard-Elmwood Place School District (SBEP) serves approximately 994 students at three schools throughout the communities of St. Bernard and Elmwood Place, two urban neighborhoods north of Cincinnati. The district is uniquely located on the border of the CPS and serves a high population of students that frequently travel between the two districts, nearly 19% of enrollment. Aided from mobility, the district faces high levels of poverty (82%), increasing numbers of struggling readers (45% of readers K-3), and an influx of kindergarteners beginning school with little or no pre-K experience. Managing multiple 21st Century grants, SBEP holds valuable experience in managing and implementing multiple grants of considerable size and scope, making it a district a well-suited partner with CPS in this consortium. Imagine Learning is an award-winning English language and literacy software program designed for English learners, struggling readers, students with disabilities, and students in early childhood education. The program is currently being used by students around the world and has shown to be effective in improving student’s literacy development. Instruction is individualized based on students’ unique needs assessed by an adaptive placement test. As students progress through the curriculum, the program continually monitors progress and adjusts instruction. Incorporated in 2004, Imagine Learning has served hundreds of thousands of students. To date, the software is in use in more than 5,500 schools and more than 600 school districts. In fact, all of the top ten largest school districts in the U.S. currently use Imagine Learning.
12. Describe how it will meet the goal(s) selected above. If school/district receives school improvement funds/support, include a brief explanation of how this project will advance the implementation plan.

The "Great Readers, Great Leaders" project efforts will increase both the technology infrastructure and the academic portfolio in both districts, while developing our human capital to collectively address the district's reading proficiency needs. We anticipate advancing our improvement plans within each district by the development of a Student Literacy Plan. The consortium will purchase the Imagine Learning software program to increase student reading proficiency and language and literacy. The software program aligns with the Imagine Learning program, providing each child with individualized instruction through multiple computer-based activities, including games, modeling activities, direct instruction, student recording, decodable books, leveled texts, printouts, reviews, music, and more. Based on collective reading and literacy goals in our Improvement Plan, the consortium anticipates the Imagine Learning program helping to achieve at least 5% increases in K–3 student growth on the SAES reading assessment each year. Additionally, targeted professional development for primary teachers will create a cornerstone to improve our students' reading performance, while the innovative, personalized learning modalities found in the Imagine Learning software program will support our struggling K-3 readers to read on grade level, meeting and exceeding expectations of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

The consortium’s project was designed to create a symbiotic partnership between our districts, tackling education inequities through a two tiered approach: 1) creating equitable learning resources for the primary student population, allowing our districts to fully support our student’s education and remain competitive in our technology infrastructure. We aim to make significant investments into our capital infrastructure through state-of-the-art technology, while at the same time, purchase perpetual licenses for struggling readers to use the Imagine Learning software program, a high-quality, scientifically-based reading program to increase language and literacy proficiency through software programs. Additionally, targeted professional development for primary teachers will create a cornerstone to improve our students’ reading performance, while the innovative, personalized learning modalities found in the Imagine Learning software program will support our struggling K-3 readers to read on grade level, meeting and exceeding expectations of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

13. Financial Documentation - All applicants must enter or upload the following supporting information. Responses should refer to specific information in the financial documents when applicable:

a. Enter a project budget

The consortium requests Straight A Funds to purchase 4,100 perpetual licenses for the interactive reading program, Imagine Learning. The software program provides each child with individualized instruction through multiple computer-based activities, including games, modeling activities, direct instruction, student recording, decodable books, leveled texts, printouts, reviews, music, and more. Based on collective reading and literacy goals in our Improvement Plan, the consortium anticipates the Imagine Learning program helping to achieve at least 5% increases in K–3 student growth on the SAES reading assessment each year. Additionally, targeted professional development for primary teachers will create a cornerstone to improve our students’ reading performance, while the innovative, personalized learning modalities found in the Imagine Learning software program will support our struggling K-3 readers to read on grade level, meeting and exceeding expectations of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

b. Upload the Straight A Financial Impact Template forecasting the expected changes to the five-year forecast resulting from implementation of this project. If applying as a consortia or partnership, please include the five-year forecasts for each district, community school or STEM school member or review.

14. What is the total cost for implementing the innovative project? $8,060,528.00

* Specific amount of expected savings (annual)

* Narrative/explanation of savings: Provide details on the anticipated savings (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.) if there are no new/recurring costs, please explain why. 

15. What new/recurrenting costs of your innovative project will continue once the grant has expired? If there are no new/recurring costs, please explain why.

16. Are there expected savings that may result from the implementation of the innovative project?

209,000.00 * Specific amount of expected savings (annual)

* Narrative/explanation of savings: Provide details on the anticipated savings (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.) if there are no new/recurrent costs, please explain why.
17. Provide a brief explanation of how the project is self-sustaining. If there are ongoing costs associated with the project after the term of the grant, this explanation should provide details on the cost reductions that will be made at that are at least equal to the amount of new/recurring costs detailed above. If there are no new/recurring costs, explain in detail how this project will sustain itself beyond the life of the grant. One front-end technical infrastructure development cost and project implementation expenses to train personnel in the technology will require additional costs; however, these will be offset because the technology will be in place for long-term use. The consortium will use existing district IT staff and annually budgeted resources to maintain this equipment. Any additional expenses for maintenance or upgrades will come out of each district’s technology budget; however, the cost savings from the initial investment into the infrastructure will create reductions in anticipated technology repair and replacement costs. Additionally, the consortium will have a continuous focus on continual professional development. Expenses for professional development will be one-time, perpetual license fees and will require no additional costs to sustain the project. The consortium will see significant cost savings by investing in lifetime licenses, rather than paying an annual subscription fee per school. Any additional modules or vendor-led training will be purchased at the discretion of the districts within the consortium and are not required to sustain the program or its operations in the long-term. The consortium will need no further funding to sustain and maintain the software program, as the licenses are perpetual and both districts will be able to maintain the technology needed to run the program through annually budgeted general operating funds, adding no additional expenses to the operating budget, as reflected in the financial impact table. Teacher professional development expenses will be front-loaded in advance as well, as the consortium will implement a “Train the Trainer” method for the years following the initial implementation. Ongoing professional development and training associated with the Imagine Learning program will be minimal after the first-year of vendor-led training at each school site. Reading Intervention Specialists and Lead Teachers will be given training by Imagine Learning as “Champions” to help lead and train new teachers, provide refresh training to existing staff, and encourage shared use of best practices of the software program used within the classroom over the next five years, eliminating the annual cost of vendor-led training and lessening the need for large scale training sessions that require substitute teacher costs, trainer costs, and mileage costs. We anticipate seeing increased savings in remediaiation and intervention specialists as well, as students begin to improve academically through a variety of personalized support services.

18. Fill in the appropriate dates and an explanation of the timeline for the successful implementation of this project. In each explanation, be sure to briefly describe the largest barriers that could derail your concept or timeline for implementation and measures taken to proactively minimize each of such barriers. In addition, the narrative should list the stakeholders that will be engaged during that stage of the project and describe the communication that occurred as the application was developed.

Describe the ongoing communication plan with the stakeholders as the project is implemented. (Stakeholders can include parents, community leaders, foundation support and businesses, as well as educational personnel in the affected entities.)

19. Describe the expected changes to the instructional and/or organizational practices in your institution.

E) SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT AND LASTING VALUE: Impact, evaluation and replication

20. Describe the rationale, research or past success that supports the innovative project and its impact on student achievement, spending reduction in the five-year fiscal forecast or utilization of a greater share of resources in the classroom.

The growing use of personalized learning has proven to be a positive “disruptive innovation,” with the potential to not only improve current models of educational delivery, but transform them (Staker, 2011). According to educational research on student-centered learning environments from Students at the Center, blending traditional face-to-face classroom methods and modern technology-based activities challenges shifts the educational paradigm in multiple ways, including embracing student experiences as a starting point for education; harnessing a student’s full range of experiences at any time of the day, week or year; expanding and reshaping the role of the educator; and determining progression towards mastery. The consortium recognizes an opportunity to improve its technology infrastructure while serving its struggling readers at the same time. The Imagine Learning program directly supports Response to Intervention and offers the consortium a research-based, proven-effective program to differentiate learning in our classrooms. For example, an independent student conducted by SEG Measurement compared the growth of reading skills in grades 2-5 students who used Imagine Learning and
21. Is this project able to be replicated in other Ohio districts?

**Yes**

22. If so, how?

We are confident our approach holds promise for creating a model partnership between districts that delivers measurable results and is applicable to scale across the region, the state, and nationwide. While the Imagine Learning software is implementable in any school district, we are excited to share the results of our joint partnership in digital professional development and best practice sharing and collaboration with others in the state of Ohio.

23. Describe the substantial and lasting impact that the project hopes to achieve.

Ensuring that our consortia provides equitable access for our students to thrive in a digital learning environment is a substantial and proactive strategic decision to move our districts forward. Regardless of the high level of student reading proficiency in grades 3-5, this priority supports our students learning to read with increased ability to learn, supported by our school’s blended literacy teaching methods that engage and motivate struggling readers, increased technology fluency for primary students, and increased student academic achievement in formative and short professional development for primary teachers, implementation of Imagine Learning for struggling readers, and ongoing formative assessments; 3) SHORT TERM OUTCOMES: Students with high mobility rates between the two districts, looking at increased reading proficiencies. The consortium’s plan to purchase bulk seats allows each district to tailor seat distribution to various years: 1) Provide equitable technology learning resources for all elementary students, particularly the students with alarmingly high mobility rates between the two districts; 2) Personalize our collective schools buildings and across district lines, and uniting our primary teachers in a collective drive to support literacy achievement and personalized learning environments in their classrooms, particularly for teachers who are excited, engaged, and trained to use technology as a “positive disruption” in their classroom. Our students are 21st century learners by nature; it is our responsibility to provide the same from this project. For students with proficient and/or advanced levels of literacy comprehension, Imagine Learning can be used for differentiated enrichment, supporting a third grade student who may read more than four out of every five low-income students miss this critical milestone (GradeLevelReading.com). As a consortium, our reading proficiency levels have increased over the last several years through an intense focus on language and literacy support. CPS’s Elementary Initiative has dramatically turned around low performing elementary schools through intense professional development, academic support programs, and interventions. The Imagine Learning specific advanced and remediation programs have provided at-home reading materials and books to our parents, and worked with local agencies to provide after school tutoring; however we recognize an opportunity to do more. Our consortium has done everything we can do to increase student scores and we are pleased with our progress, but now is the time for an extra boost. We recognize the future our students and struggling readers can have and understand the incredible difference increased technology infrastructure and reading supports can bring to our students, particularly the struggling readers. The time to implement these changes is now.

24. What are the specific benchmarks identified in the project goals identified in five years? Include any other anticipated outcomes of the project that you hope to achieve that may not be easily benchmarked.

Evaluating the impact of our project’s efforts will be addressed through multiple methods, both short and long term, while changes in student behavior and increased student achievement will be considered leading indicators. Successful funding of this proposal allows the CPS-SBEP consortium to implement instructional reform efforts to achieve the following long-term outcomes over the next five years: 1) Provide equitable technology learning resources for all elementary students, particularly the students with alarmingly high mobility rates between the two districts; 2) Personalize our collective student learning environments around core educational assurance areas aligned with the third grade reading guarantee; 3) Accelerate our collective student reading achievement through equitable access to state-of-the-art technology supports found in Imagine Learning software; and 4) Increase the effectiveness of our educators through intense professional development, expanding our students’ access to the most effective educators. We aim to achieve at least 5% increases in K-3 student literacy proficiency each year, decreasing the number of students identified as "Not on Track" and "Needs Further Assistance." We also anticipate our struggling readers to show increased literacy proficiency and greater performance on the state required assessments used to determine on track grade level reading of at least 15% within grade level, as our interventions are focused on students who are not meeting proficiency goals. While these efforts will lead to decreases in achievement gaps across our student subgroups, as well as increases in the rates at which our 9th and 12th grade students excel at meeting grade level reading proficiency and higher percentages of proficient readers in grades 4, 5, and 6 within a five year period. We are particularly interested in tracking the students with high mobility rates between the two districts, looking at increased reading proficiencies. The consortium’s plan to purchase bulk seats allows each district to tailor seat distribution to various subgroups, providing them the opportunity for increased achievement and outcomes. The Cincinnati Public School’s need for Imagine Learning will decrease as our students become more proficient in language and literacy, allowing us to develop a more targeted approach for students used in the program in the coming years and as we adapt to various subgroups (gifted, ELL, students with disabilities, etc.). For example, targeted interventions at the kindergarten level will result in less 1st grade students needing the program in the following grade. Based on proficiency data, students are being reassigned to new grades, beginning in third grade. As our students become more and more proficient, our distribution of the Imagine Learning licenses will become less wide-spread and more targeted at specific subgroups. In summary, the consortium’s project design is based on a logic model with four major categories: 1) INPUTS - ODE Straight A Fund grant, in-kind contributions, and partnerships; 2) ACTIVITIES – district-wide technology upgrades, joint professional development, and innovative academic programs. 3) OUTCOMES – improved student proficiency in reading and writing, increased student academic achievement in formative and short-term summative assessments; 4) LONG TERM OUTCOMES - an equitable learning environment for all students, equitable resources for students across district lines, increased student academic achievement in reading proficiencies, shared resources for both students and teachers, and decreases in district financial liabilities due to changes in everything we can do to increase reading scores and we are pleased with our progress, but now is the time for an extra boost. We recognize the future our students and struggling readers can have and understand the incredible difference increased technology infrastructure and reading supports can bring to our students, particularly the struggling readers. The time to implement these changes is now.

25. Describe the plan to evaluate the impact of the concept, strategy or approaches used.

* Include the method by which progress toward short- and long-term objectives will be measured. (This section should include the types of data to be collected, the formative outcomes and outcomes and the systems in place to track and measure progress toward program objectives.

The consortium will establish an evaluation committee representative of both school districts and outside stakeholders, including Imagine Learning. The committee will meet in June, 2014 to review the project’s implementation progress and determine if the set goals/outcomes are being implemented in the agreed upon timeline and according to the strategic plan. The committee will assess the following performance goals and assessment questions: GOAL 1- Increase the quality of core, targeted, and intensive instruction to struggling readers through a research-based intervention program (Imagine Learning). How are we implementing the program? Have we installed the program? Have we had success with the program? How are we training our teachers to use the program effectively? How are we measuring student progress? How are we monitoring and evaluating our students? We are considering the next step to the program, the program quality, and how we are implementing the program.

* Include the method, process and/or procedure by which the program will modify or change the program plan if measured progress is insufficient to meet program objectives.

By virtue of applying for the Straight A Fund, all applicants agree to participate in the overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund for the duration of the evaluation timeframe. The Governing Board of the Straight A Fund reserves the right to conduct evaluation of the plan and request additional information in the form of data, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and any other related data to the legislature, governor, and other interested parties for an overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund.
PROGRAM ASSURANCES: I agree, on behalf of this applicant agency and/or all identified partners to abide by all assurances outlined in the Assurance section of the CCIP. In the box below, enter "I Accept" and indicate your name, title, agency/organization and today's date.

*I Accept* Mary Ronan, Superintendent Cincinnati City Schools 10/25/2013