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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: Innovation through Differentiation

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.

Under the premise of a migration to fostering innovative thinkers in our school’s learning community based on the work of Tony Wagner, we believe that innovative thinking is a cultural change that can be reached by improving differentiated instruction. We have identified differentiated instructional and assessment practices as a key focal point for professional development, which will better prepare our teachers to reach our students on an individual level and more them forward along the learning continuum in preparation for the 21st century assessments and to be lifelong, autonomous learners. We believe our project will increase student achievement, reduce expenditures as they relate to professional development endeavors, and also increase the shared resources available in our classrooms or student learning.

3. Total Students Impacted: 1181

4. Lead applicant primary contact: - Provide the following information:
   - First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Donnie Phelps
   - Organizational name of lead applicant: Clinton-Massie High School
   - Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 006734
   - Address of lead applicant: 2556 Lebanon Road, Clarksville, Ohio 45113
   - Phone Number of lead applicant: 937-289-1090
   - Email Address of lead applicant: dphelps@clinton-massie.k12.oh.us

5. Secondary applicant contact: - Provide the following information, if applicable:
   - First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Joe Hollon
   - Organizational name of secondary applicant: Clinton-Massie Middle School
   - Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 098853
   - Address of secondary applicant: 2556 Lebanon Road, Clarksville, Ohio
   - Phone number of secondary applicant: 937-289-2932
   - Email address of secondary applicant: jhollon@clinton-massie.k12.oh.us

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 (IRN/Fed Tax ID), Address, Phone Number, Email Address for All Secondary Applicants in the box below.

   Southern Ohio Educational Service Center - IRN # 046375 Katie Abbott, School Improvement Consultant 3321 Airborne Rd, Wilmington, OH 45177 Phone: 937.382.6921 Ext. 1028 Email: kabott@mveca.org

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.

Using the funding garnered from this project, we seek to provide professional development in the area of instructional coaching to create a more effective infrastructure in our teaching staff to provide for shared leadership and an increased focus on best practices teaching strategies, methods and techniques; specifically as they relate to differentiated instruction and assessment. We have identified 10 certified staff members who have emerged as best practices teachers capable of facilitating high quality professional dialogue and helping to manage change in the professional culture. These individuals, along with the administration and other instructional leaders will lead a team of teachers from different grade levels and content areas to focus on best practices in teaching and assessment FOR student learning through differentiated instruction. These teachers are all staff members with multiple years of experience in the profession and our district with a combined total of nearly 100 years of teaching experience! All of the teachers are highly qualified in the areas in which they teach and 80% of these individuals hold a Masters Degree. The Southern Ohio Educational Service Center is our local ESC and we have partnered with them, as well as joined a consortium, to voluntarily participate in the Ohio Improvement Process as part of our continuous improvement initiatives. The ESC provides us with numerous consulting services and professional development opportunities and Katie Abbott plays a pivotal role in forwarding our OIP action plans as well as the mission and vision of the district.

B) PROJECT DESCRIPTION - Overall description of project and alignment with Outcomes

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 research-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.

   The project, as a whole, will effectively evolve our professional culture in our schools to one that promotes and successfully implements teaching strategies that are focused on student achievement, success and lifelong learning and demonstrations of that learning that are tantamount to what will be expected in the assessments of the 21st century. We currently have a very mixed culture in our teaching staff: there are teachers who have 2 or more decades of experience in the classroom and the other extreme of high population of teachers with 5 or less years experience. Along with the diverse educational backgrounds of the staff in terms of pedagogy comes philosophical differences and a lack of understanding of new and innovative approaches to addressing an increasingly changing student population. A chief goal of our revised OIP action plans and our continuous improvement plans is to improve the delivery and implementation of high quality professional development. In terms of the professional development needs, through the OTEP process, differentiated instruction and assessment have emerged as key factors in moving our students’ learning and achievement to the next level with the increased focus on student growth and overall educator accountability in mind. Using the funding garnered from this project, we seek to provide professional development in the area of instructional coaching to create a more effective infrastructure in our teaching staff to provide for shared leadership and an increased focus on best practices teaching strategies, methods and techniques; specifically as they relate to differentiated instruction and assessment. We have identified 10 certified staff members who have emerged as best practices teachers capable of facilitating high quality professional dialogue and helping to manage change in the professional culture. These individuals, along with the administration and other instructional leaders will lead a team of teachers from different grade levels and content areas to focus on best practices in teaching and assessment FOR student learning through differentiated instruction. A primary goal is to increase our resources as they relate to differentiation of instruction and assessment practices. Additionally, it is critical to allow for time for collaboration and calibration amongst the teaching staff to craft lesson materials and assessments in alignment with the learning from the professional development. Using the funding from this grant to get the project off the ground, the project will be sustainable over time as the knowledge, dissemination of professional
knowledge, and application of best practices will continue on well into the future. The foundation built from this project will enable us to lead our staff toward enhanced professional development in a community of educators committed to lifelong learning in their professional capacities and making continuous improvement an institutionalized habit.

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 improvement plan.

Student achievement - by utilizing differentiated instructional practices and differentiated assessment practices FOR learning, students become more independent autonomous learners, equipped with the skills that they need to succeed and become lifelong learners. Lifelong learners are empowered to teach others, thereby raising the educational level of the surrounding school community. In differentiated classrooms, students are motivated by receiving instruction and practice toward mastery of material that meet their interests, learning styles, readiness needs and by also having choice in what they do. They then demonstrate mastery of the learning targets. When students are instructed with differentiation in mind, they are prepared for differentiated assessment FOR learning where they are engaged and challenged to apply what they have learned to solve problems and demonstrate mastery in new, personalizes and meaningful ways as just they would solve real world issues as educated people. Spending reductions in the five-year fiscal forecast - The project will enable us to provide the biggest resource that we are lacking: time to collaborate with other professionals and produce innovative instructional materials and assessments. The funding will allow us to obtain better, more cutting edge, and more diversified instructional materials and resources for professional development, but most importantly it will allow for the release time of all teachers to work collaboratively and receive high quality professional development and the time to implement their learning to improve their practice for the betterment of student learning and achievement. Utilization of a greater share of resources in the classroom - By and large in our school, although a smaller district, teachers, even the most talented among them, spend most of their time on an "island", working independently in their own classroom. As an administrator evaluating teaching practices with the OTES model, I find teachers are doing very innovative things, challenging students and students are learning. However, these best practices are isolated behind a closed door. Likewise, even my best and most talented teachers have shown developmental needs in the area of differentiation. This grant will not prompt us to change what we do, but rather how we do it. The "how factor" is what is missing and this will enable teachers to network, share ideas, coordinate departments or grade level teachers, develop teams and focus on best practices in their instructional coaching teams, thereby disseminating the knowledge, abilities, and resources on a much wider scale than ever before through a fostered change in professional culture in the school.

C) SUSTAINABILITY - Planning for ongoing funding of the project, cost breakdown

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
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 of each school district, community school or STEM school member for review.

c. If subsection (b) is not applicable, please explain why, in addition to how the project will demonstrate sustainability and impact.

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

14. What is the total cost for implementing the innovative project?

250,000.00 * Total project cost

* Narrative explanation/rationale: Provide details on the anticipated savings (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.)

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

80,000.00 * Specific amount of new/recurring cost (annual cost after project is implemented)

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

There is a potential to have 80,000.00 of recurring cost if we should choose to maintain a "lead teacher" position to help the administrative staff provide increased instructional leadership to teachers. However, this could be a cost that would be eliminated as the general fund will result in no recurring or new costs as the knowledge, resources, and materials gained from the project are non-consumable and will continue well into the future. Additionally, it is very likely that in the foreseeable future the district will acquire additional dollars through local funding that could potentially help fund such a position.

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

0.00 * Specific amount of expected savings (annual)

* Narrative explanation/rationale: Provide details on the anticipated savings (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.)

N/A

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 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.

All aspects of the budget for this grant will lead to non-consumable resources in the forms of professional knowledge, instructional materials/equipment, resources and a professional culture change that will far extend the life of the grant. The grant will enable us to add a position for 1 year for a district teacher to be on special assignment as a "lead teacher". After the life of the grant, this position could potentially be not needed as we will have accomplished our goal or the position could be funded as part of our personnel/benefit budget as local funding provides for adding new positions or attrition provides budgetary room for funding the role.

D) IMPLEMENTATION - Timeline, communication and contingency planning

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 your plan to proactively mitigate such barriers. In addition, the narrative should list the stakeholders that will be engaged during that stage of the project and describe the communication plan you developed 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.)

* Proposal Timeline Dates

Plan (MM/DD/YYYY): 01/10/2014

* Narrative explanation

By 1/10/14 the newly appointed instructional coaches (10 teachers) and the building administrators * the lead teacher will have received training on instructional coaching and will have met to establish instructional goals for professional development for the remainder of the school year focusing on differentiated instruction and assessment FOR learning. The professional development will be contracted through a local agency as a purchased service.

Implement (MM/DD/YYYY): 01/17/2014

* Narrative explanation

On 1/17/2014 the 8-12 staff will receive a high quality professional development session in differentiated instructional strategies. They will also be given the opportunity to work collaboratively to produce differentiated instructional resources, lesson materials, assignments and assessments. The PD will be led by the administrative staff, the lead teacher, a school improvement consultant from the ESC, and materials and resources will be purchased through the grant funding. The implementation will be ongoing as we have built in job-embedded professional development time
versus the whole day inservices on 2/21/2014 and 3/28/2014. Data and artifacts will be collected as evidence of progress monitoring. The lead teacher will conduct ongoing progress monitoring along with the administrative team as this individual will also be responsible for assisting in individual classroom implementation.

Summative evaluation (MM/DD/YYYY): 06/06/2014

* Narrative explanation

The instructional coaching team and the building leadership will analyze data collected formatively and summatively over the life of the project and using self-assessment data from the teaching staff, we will determine successful implementation of the project's goals and any residual needs and also determine a course to address those needs for the betterment of student learning and achievement well into the future.

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

We expect a complete professional culture shift, such that the teaching staff will better identify with the learners of the 21st century and completely understand and successfully implement best practices in differentiated instruction and assessment FOR student learning. Individual teachers will collaborate in their departments and teams to develop learner profiles to tailor their lessons, practice of content and assessments to meet the needs of individual learners. Teachers will understand the necessity of preparation of learners for 21st century assessments and the works/findings of Tony Wagner as the relate to the development of innovative thinkers for problem-solving in a pluralistic society. Continuous improvement will emerge as an institutionalized habit and teachers will be more familiar with the strengths of their colleagues who don't necessarily teach the same content or students as they do. This will empower a culture of collaboration and support wherein teachers will work together to share best practices in the classroom and in assessment FOR student learning that will result in an overall increase in professional efficacy and student learning and achievement.

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.

Job-embedded professional development has proven to be the most effective form of learning in professional educators' work. This is because the educator has the opportunity to employ new methods, strategies, techniques, materials and ideas immediately and monitor the progress while concurrently moving his/her assigned students forward through the curriculum and content toward mastery of the learning targets set forth. We seek to add another dimension to this model and develop an infrastructure and support system for teachers to become increasingly aware and empowered to focus on, learn about, model for each other, utilize in their own classrooms, and ultimately embody best practices instruction, especially relating to differentiation. Differentiation increases a student's motivation and likelihood to master content and concepts at a higher level of cognitive demand as they have their needs met in terms of learning styles, readiness, prior experiences, and special needs while also being given choices as to how they practice and demonstrate mastery of material. Moreover, these differentiated classrooms offer students autonomy as learners and an opportunity to take part in some of the teaching responsibility in addition to the learning as they fit into the sociology of today's classrooms. When a student can teach a concept to someone else, it is evident that he/she has mastered the learning target. The culture change through this project will result in a greater sharing of resources and collaboration amongst the instructional staff.

21. Is this project able to be replicated in other districts in Ohio?

Yes

22. If so, how?

Differentiation is a tough aspect of classroom teaching for many teachers. I find that most classrooms employ differentiation on a single dimension: they differentiate content based on learning styles for the whole group, whereas differentiation at its finest includes simultaneous engagement in multiple activities that are designed to meet the readiness, learning styles and cognitive needs of each student in the class. We are confident as instructional leaders at a high-performing school who have identified this practice as our greatest improvement need that there is a myriad of other schools with a similar need.

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

The increased learning and achievement of students and the students having all of their learning needs met through differentiation lends itself to lifelong learning as the individual fully understands how he/she learns best and how to process new information in a way such that it is accessible to them and able to be used to solve problems in the future. The success in public education will lend itself to these students pursuing higher education and will contribute to an overall increase in education in this rural community.

24. What are the specific benchmarks related to the fund goals identified in question 9 that the project aims to achieve in five years? Include any other anticipated outcomes of the project that you hope to achieve that may not be easily benchmarked.

Each year as we improve our instructional practices through professional development and collaboration, we expect to see increased differentiated products in lesson delivery and student assessment. We will be able to monitor this through our lead teacher working in all classrooms and through data that is acquired through the OTES evaluation. Additionally, student achievement gains will be shown through a historical increase based on data garnered through state-required assessments.

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 outputs and outcomes and the systems in place to track the program's progress).

* 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.

Progress will be monitored qualitatively and quantitatively through the collection of data in the form of classroom walkthroughs, OTES evaluations, tangible products for lessons and assessments produced by teachers, and an online collaborative resource space with lesson and materials created by our staff. Additionally, data will be compiled surrounding different types of differentiation strategies by the lead teacher and administrators. The goals will be evaluated on a monthly basis to ensure that implementation is effective and the collective shared decisions are effective means to meet our goals.

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.

Accept Donnie Phelps Middle School/High School Assistant Principal Clinton-Massie Local Schools 10/25/2013