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Adjusted Allocation: 0.00

Remaining: -1,365,000.00
**A) APPLICANT INFORMATION - General Information, Experience and Capacity**

1. Project Title: Great Schools Accelerator - SW Ohio Launch

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.

   There are too few "Great Schools" in Ohio (i.e. schools that are free, open-enrollment, serve overwhelmingly low-income students, and consistently move whole cohorts of low-income students to achievement levels that match or exceed the more affluent suburbs). This project would create a new entity, a "Great Schools Accelerator" (GSA), which would catalyze the creation of 10 new, self-sustaining transformational schools over the next 5 years. Capitalizing on lessons learned in other states that have used similar strategies, the GSA would create the conditions necessary for transformational schools to thrive by investing in talent pipelines, supporting the launch and scale-up of high-potential school models, and investing in organizations that organize parents to demand a higher standard for their students.

   3200 3. Total Students Impacted:

4. Lead applicant primary contact - Provide the following information:
   First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Judy Hennessey, Ph. D.
   Organizational name of lead applicant: Dayton Early College Academy, Inc.
   Unique Identifier (RRN/Fed Tax ID): 099283
   Address of lead applicant: 300 College Park Center
   Phone Number of lead applicant: 937-229-5782
   Email Address of lead applicant: jhennessey@daytonearlycollege.org

5. Secondary applicant contact - Provide the following information, if applicable:
   First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Benjamin Lindy
   Organizational name of secondary applicant: Teach For America
   Unique Identifier (RRN/Fed Tax ID): 5782
   Address of secondary applicant: 1110 Main Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202
   Phone number of secondary applicant: 513.331.4884
   Email address of secondary applicant: benjamin.lindy@teachforamerica.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 (IRN/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.

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.

Although the funding requested would help launch a new entity, the GSA, this project’s lead applicant for the purposes of the Straight-A Fund is Dayton Early College Academy (DECA). DECA is the only transformational school in SW Ohio, and as such, it has an unparalleled understanding of what it takes to create and scale such schools. In 2011, 100% of DECA high school students, the vast majority of whom are economically disadvantaged, passed the Ohio Graduation Test on their first try in math, compared to 99.4% of seniors in suburban Oakwood High School, and compared to 54% at Belmont, 49% at Meadowdale, and 61% at Thurgood Marshall (all economically disadvantaged urban schools in Dayton Public Schools). No other open-enrollment public school in SW Ohio comes close to these results. In 2012, DECA grew to include DECA Prep, a low-income elementary school that even in its first year generated excellent literacy results with nearly every primary child reading on or above grade level. With an organization like the GSA making the kind of investments in talent pipelines and launch support that it plans on making, DECA could scale up at a far faster rate, serving a far higher percentage of students in Dayton. For this reason, DECA has taken the lead applicant role in applying for a Straight-A Fund grant to help launch the GSA. DECA is not alone in the effort to launch the GSA. Partnering with DECA is Teach For America (TFA), a national non-profit that serves as an important source of diverse talent for transformational schools across the country. TFA recruits, trains, and supports, highly talented and diverse individuals to teach in low-income schools for at least two years, and alumni from the program remain, in large numbers, in the field of education. Significantly, the founders, school leaders, and teachers at the growing number of transformational schools outside Ohio come overwhelmingly from the TFA pipeline. For example, the YES Prep network of schools in Houston was founded by (and is filled with) TFA alumni, and last year 97% of YES Prep eighth graders passed the state's exam, compared to 80% of students in nearby Spring Branch (more affluent suburb). Similarly, 92% of seventh graders at KIPP Infinity in New York City (another low-income, transformational school founded by and staffed by TFA alumni) passed the state’s math exam, compared to 68% in the suburb of New Rochelle. Uncommon Schools in New Jersey, Achievement First in Connecticut and New York, and Rocketship Education in California are all growing networks that tell similar stories. TFA has a 23-year track record of building the pipelines of talented teachers and leaders who fuel transformational schools. Founding Board Members: The GSA would launch with an initial slate of board members who would hire an executive director (who would then hire a small team). Founding board members would include Judy Hennessey (superintendent of DECA), Ben Lindy (executive director of TFA in SW Ohio), Mary Lindgren (executive director of the Cincinnati Business Committee), and Kathryn Upton (Thomas B. Fordham Institute). This group brings extensive experience in operating transformational schools, building talent pipelines, galvanizing the business community around education reform, and understanding the history, challenges, and opportunities of education policy in Ohio. Additional Partners: Once funded, the GSA (with DECA and TFA) would engage additional partners who have national track records of strength in recruiting founding school leaders, supporting the launch and growth of new school models, and organizing parents to advocate for excellence. Possible examples include Building Excellent Schools (Boston-based non-profit that specializes in highly-selective recruitment of founding school leaders), Rockseatl Education (San Jose-based charter management organization with a growing network of transformational schools), Stand for Children (parent advocacy).

**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 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.

   Problem to be solved: Educational inequity limits the long-term prospects of too many low-income children in Southwest Ohio. Of the 55,000 children growing up in poverty in Cincinnati and Dayton, less than 60% will graduate from high school in four years, compared to over 94% of their higher-income peers. Of those who do graduate, less than 30% enter college academically prepared, compared to over
C) SUSTAINABILITY

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.

The GSA will operate for five years and then shut its doors, at which time it will have created 3,200 self-sustaining, high-performing, permanent seats across 10 different schools. Its small staff will help assemble and administer a $15 million fund that will create the necessary transformational schools for three schools in Ohio: (1) they have an incredibly talented school leader who manages adults well and who has been a transformational teacher herself; (2) they are supported by robust talent pipelines at the teacher and school leader level, (3) they receive local support in their early stages (e.g., support finding facilities, recruiting staff, building a board, enrolling students, and building an operational plan), and (4) they have a base of passionate, organized support among parents and families. The GSA would create these conditions in Ohio by offering competitive grants aligned on five different strategies: (1) attract top-performing charter management organizations (including top-performing CMOS), (2) support scale-up of existing high-performing schools (such as deca schools, which can be established to be top-performing CMOS) and 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). * Provide a brief narrative explanation of the overall budget. The narrative should include the source and amount of other funds that may be used to support this concept (e.g., Title I funding, RRT money, local funding, foundation support, etc.), and 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).

The Tennessee State Charter Incubator is leveraging a $30 million fund to create 20 transformational schools by 2020 in Nashville and Memphis using similar strategies (e.g., providing competitive grants for new school ideas, recruiting national CMOs, investing in talent pipelines). Early results are strong: Nashville Prep and Liberty Prep (its first two schools) are outperforming the local districts on state exams and in many cases outperforming the local suburbs. Similarly, the Mind Trust in Indianapolis and Schools That Can Milwaukee are using the same strategies to build competitive ecosystems in their states. The GSA will focus its efforts in the following areas: (a) recruiting and training board members, (b) facilities technical assistance (e.g. credit enhancements and real estate financing), and ongoing coaching and support. Example potential grant recipients: Building Excellent Schools (BES), High Bar.

The GSA will fund (through a competitive application process) organizations that specialize in the recruitment and selection of new school leaders. It will also provide launch support in the following areas: (a) recruiting and training board members, (b) facilities technical assistance (e.g. credit enhancements and real estate financing), and ongoing coaching and support. Example potential grant recipients: Building Excellent Schools (BES), High Bar. Strategy 2 - Scale-Up Local Top-Performers: The GSA will fund the scale-up of schools that meet a set of competitive inclusion criteria: (a) focusing on providing a rigorous, college-prep curriculum that produces results on par with other urban schools, (b) growth model that includes long-term financial sustainability on Ohio's current funding formula, (c) dedicated staff capacity and expertise for expansion. Example potential grant recipients: Rocketship, KIPP. Strategy 4 - Invest in Talent Pipelines: The GSA will provide competitive grants to attract top-performing charter management organizations to Ohio. Criteria for selection: (a) record of outstanding and sustainable performance in other urban settings, (b) growth model that includes long-term financial sustainability on Ohio's current funding formula, (c) dedicated staff capacity and expertise for expansion. Example potential grant recipients: Teach For America, TNTP, Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, New Leaders for New Schools, Building Excellent Schools Foundation.

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Strategy 5 - Invest in Parent and Community Advocacy Organizations: The GSA will provide competitive grants to organizations (either new ones or expansion sites from other cities) that organize parents/students and other stakeholders to support the schools and promote their growth. Example potential grant recipients: Stand For Children, New Parents New Organizations, 50CAN. How various entities will work together: DECA's superintendent and Teach For America's executive director would serve as the two lead members of the GSA, together with Gary Lindgren of the Cincinnati Business Committee and Roncis of Ginn's John B. Fordham Institute. They will hire an executive director, who will in turn hire a small team and submit a draft strategic plan to the board for their approval.

The Executive director will make recommendations to the board for which organizations should receive funding. The GSA will make recommendations to the board for which organizations should receive funding. The GSA will fund the scale-up of schools that meet a set of competitive inclusion criteria: (a) focusing on providing a rigorous, college-prep curriculum that produces results on par with other urban schools, (b) growth model that includes long-term financial sustainability on Ohio's current funding formula, (c) dedicated staff capacity and expertise for expansion. Example potential grant recipients: Rocketship, KIPP. Strategy 4 - Invest in Talent Pipelines: The GSA will provide competitive grants to attract top-performing charter management organizations to Ohio. Criteria for selection: (a) record of outstanding and sustainable performance in other urban settings, (b) growth model that includes long-term financial sustainability on Ohio's current funding formula, (c) dedicated staff capacity and expertise for expansion. Example potential grant recipients: Teach For America, TNTP, Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, New Leaders for New Schools, Building Excellent Schools Foundation.

13. Financial Documentation - All applicants must enter up 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 school for review.

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

The Financial Impact Template is not applicable for the Accelerator application as funding will be used to set up an independent and self-sustaining organization. While DECA will manage Straight A funding in initial phases to ensure proper allocation of funds/potent financial management, they will not be used for school operating costs and will not impact DECA's five-year forecast.

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

15,700,000.00 * Total project cost

* Provide a brief narrative explanation of the overall budget. The narrative should include the source and amount of other funds that may be used to support this concept (e.g., Title I funding, RRT money, local funding, foundation support, etc.), and 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). Budget overview: The total GSA budget is $15.7 million (total over a five year period). That figure breaks down as follows: $4 million for infrastructure - Examples: salary and benefits for a staff of five, contracted services (e.g. legal, IT, marketing), and administrative support - Examples: services by a small team of expert employees to execute the GSA strategy, and it needs to be able to attract competitive talent. $3.7 million for incubation and scale-up grants - Examples: school leaders fellowships through Building Excellent Schools, launch support (e.g. board training, facilities assistance, coaching). Rationale: these figures are comparable to the investments that the TN State Charter Incubator is making (which is seeing strong results, see #11 above). $2.3 million for CMO recruitment grants - Examples: growth investment for Rocketship Education, Democracy Prep, KIPP, or other top-performing national CMO. Rationale: these figures are comparable to the investments that the Mind Trust in Indianapolis, the TN State Charter Incubator, and Schools That Can Milwaukee have made to recruit top-performing CMOS. Its small staff will help assemble and administer a $15 million fund that will create the necessary transformational schools for three schools in Ohio: (1) they have an incredibly talented school leader who manages adults well and who has been a transformational teacher herself; (2) they are supported by robust talent pipelines at the teacher and school leader level, (3) they receive local support in their early stages (e.g., support finding facilities, recruiting staff, building a board, enrolling students, and building an operational plan), and (4) they have a base of passionate, organized support among parents and families. The GSA would create these conditions in Ohio by offering competitive grants aligned on five different strategies: (1) attract top-performing charter management organizations (including top-performing CMOS), (2) support scale-up of existing high-performing schools (such as deca schools, which can be established to be top-performing CMOS) and 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). * Provide a brief narrative explanation of the overall budget. The narrative should include the source and amount of other funds that may be used to support this concept (e.g., Title I funding, RRT money, local funding, foundation support, etc.), and 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).

The GSA is a project with a finite life-span. After five years, it will cease operating, having created 3,200 self-sustaining, high-performing new schools. The total project cost is $15 million, of which the Straight-A Fund would contribute $1.5 million in FY15 and (pending next year's application process) $3.5m in FY15. Infrastructure: The GSA budget is based on the original strategic plan for the Tennessee State Charter Incubator, which, as mentioned above, is working to create 20 new high-performing schools in TN over the next four years. It assumes an executive director making $90,000 a year, a development director making $70,000, a communications director making $50,000, an operations director making $50,000, a systems manager making $50,000, and a finance manager making $50,000. The budget also includes $56,000 a year for contracted services (e.g., technology, accounting, payroll services), which are taken directly from the TN Charter Incubator budget. Similarly, it assumes $197,000 per year in general and administrative expenses (e.g., supplies, rent, travel, marketing), which is again taken directly from the TN Charter Incubator budget. Competitive Grants for Strategies 1 - 5. See discussion under #14 above. At the conclusion of its five-year lifespan, the GSA will have created 3,200 self-sustaining, high-performing new schools. If school/district receives school improvement funds/support, include a brief explanation of how this project will advance the improvement plan.

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:

14,200,000.00 * Specific amount of new/recurring cost (annual cost after project is implemented)

* Provide a narrative explanation of the anticipated costs (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.). * Provide a narrative explanation of the anticipated costs (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.).
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.

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 associated with this application.

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

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.

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

22. If yes, how?

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.

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

22. If yes, how?

GSA. In fact, the GSA itself is a replication of the outstanding work of organizations like those described in #20. Required elements for expansion: (a) significant philanthropic investment in a fund for competitive grant making in the areas of talent pipeline creation, scale-up of local success stories, new school incubation, and the recruitment of national top-performing CMOs and parent advocacy organizations, (b) local examples of excellence that can model for the community what is possible, and (c) community will around the idea that transformational schools are possible to create at scale (and that we should settle for nothing less). Time and effort would it would take to implement the project in another district: This project is not small. It takes at least five years and a significant philanthropic investment from the community. However, there have yet to emerge communities that are creating transformational schools at scale without this kind of coordinated strategy. How this project can become part of a
23. Describe the substantial value and lasting impact that the project hopes to achieve.

Quantifiable measures: This project will create 3,200 permanent, self-sustaining, high-performing seats across 10 new schools in five years. Our top-line measure of success for these schools is that 80% of the 10 schools perform in the top-quartile of schools in the host school district on Ohio's performance index by the end of the second year of operation. Ohio's "performance index" creates a single number score for each school and district based on the achievement levels of students in the district; it creates a useful way of quickly comparing schools within Ohio.) Put differently, this project would create 10 new schools that demonstrate that all students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds can succeed in a rigorous, college-preparatory environment that prepares them to compete in the twenty-first century workplace. Successful attainment of project goals: The GSA will create a model for how a community in Ohio can invest public and private resources in targeted ways that grow a high-performing cadre of urban, public, open-enrollment schools serving low-income students. By investing in talent pipelines, scaling up local top-performers, and recruiting national top-performers, the GSA will enable the launch of 10 high-performing schools that will continue on independently once the GSA winds down its operations at the end of five years. Continuation beyond grant period: The work of the GSA will last for five years (i.e., beyond the FY14 grant period), at which point it will cease operations, leaving 10 self-sustaining, high-performing schools behind to operate in perpetuity. In order to execute its 5-year strategy, the GSA is raising a 2-1 private-public match, which will result in a $15 million fund. This fund will allow the GSA to execute its five-year plan (FY14-FY18).

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.

Top-line goals related to improving student achievement (quantifiable measures and measurement periods): (a) 10 new schools launched in five years, (b) 80% of the 10 schools perform in the top-quartile of host district schools on Ohio's Academic Performance Index by the end of a school's second year. Ohio's performance index runs between 0 and 120, and it is a weighted average of individual student performance levels on all state achievement tests and graduation tests (grades 3-8 and 10). A school's performance index gets higher as more students perform at higher levels (e.g., "accelerated" or "advanced") and lower as more students perform at lower levels (e.g., "basic" or "limited") or as students do not take exams. Ohio currently uses the performance index as a key part of school and district report cards. The GSA will release an annual report of how its schools are performing, and the goal is for 80% of 10 schools to be in the top-quartile of schools in the host district on the performance index by the end of each school's second year of operation. Preliminary success points: In addition to the two top-line goals, the GSA has nearer-term benchmarks by strategy: Strategy 1 (Incubate New School Models): highly selective founding school leader fellowships offered (1 in FY15, 2 in FY16), board members recruited through accelerator support (2 per school launched), relationships established providing favorable credit or capital enhancements for facilities (3, from which school leader can pick), school reviews conducted by GSA (1 per year) Strategy 2 (Scale-Up Local Top-Performers): founding school leader fellowships offered (1 in FY15, 1 in FY16, 1 in FY17, 1 in FY18), board members recruited through accelerator support (2 per school launched), school reviews conducted by GSA (1 per year) Strategy 3 (Recruit National Top-Performers): schools opening (1 in FY16, 1 in FY17, 1 in FY18), school reviews conducted by GSA (1 per year) Strategy 4 (Invest in Talent Pipelines): % of new hires at GSA- launched schools from GSA-supported talent pipelines (20% in FY15, 30% in FY16) Special note on school reviews: Perhaps the most important near-term assessment strategy is an annual school review process that assesses the academic, human capital, financial, and operational health of each GSA-sponsored. The GSA will conduct and distribute these results each year. These reviews, which successful networks like KIPP and others have implemented successfully, create a culture of purposeful self-evaluation and benchmarking. They will focus on school culture, leadership, teaching and learning, assessments, finance, operations, and governance. An outside team will spend multiple days at the school gathering evidence against established criteria and generate a report with recommendations. (We are drawing heavily here from the successful work of the TN State Charter Incubator, which has implemented similar school reviews across its network.) Results in comparable districts or schools: As mentioned above (see #20), Indianapolis, Memphis, Nashville, and Milwaukee have pursued similar strategies and driven tremendous results. For example, the TN Charter Incubator's first two schools (Nashville Prep and Liberty Prep) serve high-poverty student populations and are open enrollment schools, and yet they are outperforming their district and state peers across all subjects (2012). Indianapolis examples include KIPP Indianapolis, Challenge Foundation Academy, and Lighthouse Academy, each of which has a similar profile and each of which is outperforming their district and state peers (2012).

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).

Methodology for measuring outcomes: For its top-line measures of success, the GSA will rely on publicly available data from the Ohio Department of Education on performance index scores for GSA-sponsored schools and schools in the host districts. (There are strong, established systems in place at the state level, and we should leverage them rather than creating new measures.) For interim measures of success, the GSA will collect data on the outcomes described in #24 (e.g., % of board members in new schools recruited through GSA support), and the school review teams (also described in #24) will collect data on school culture, leadership, teaching and learning, operations, and finance through surveys of key members, interviewing key members, surveying and testing students, and interviewing students and family members. Methods / process / time lines / data requirements: The GSA will release an annual report that shares interim performance data as well as the performance of schools that have opened on the state's performance index relative to schools in the host district. School reviews will be released annually, though these will primarily serve as tools for schools improvement. How lessons will be shared: The GSA annual report will share lessons it is learning. It will also join a network of organizations like those mentioned in #20 that share lessons across their networks nationally.

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.