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Adjusted Allocation: 0.00
Remaining: -682,600.00
A) APPLICANT INFORMATION - General Information, Experience and Capacity

1. Project Title: Monopolizing Blended Learning: Implementing an Entertainment Technology Program

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

To engage our students and increase academic achievement, this consortium desires to build a curriculum that is of high interest to students and relevant to today's job market. We intend to implement Ohio's project-based program that was developed with faculty at Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center to teach critical programming, art, and design skills. The program combines Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) with the Arts (STEAM) to give students not only the skills but also the creativity they need to thrive in the new global digital workplace.

3. Total Students Impacted: 860

4. Lead applicant primary contact: Provide the following information:

First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Kristina Chesson
Organizational name of lead applicant: Norwood City School District
Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 044578
Address of lead applicant: 2132 Williams Avenue, Norwood, OH 45212
Phone Number of lead applicant: 513-924-2500
Email Address of lead applicant: chesson.k@norwoodschools.org

5. Secondary applicant contact: Provide the following information, if applicable:

First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Todd Wesley
Organizational name of secondary applicant: Lakota Local School District
Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 044110
Address of secondary applicant: 5572 Princeton Road Liberty Township, Ohio 45011-9726
Phone number of secondary applicant: (513) 874-5505
Email address of secondary applicant: todd@lakotaonline.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.

Reni Heideman, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, IRN 047324, 11083 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-674-4312, renita.heideman@norwoodschools.org Rob Kovacs, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, IRN 047324, 11083 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-674-4256 rob.kovacs@norwoodschools.org Jennifer Hailer, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, IRN 047324, 11083 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-674-4225 amy.hensley@norwoodschools.org David Valentine, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, IRN 047324, 11083 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-222-8547, david.valentine@norwoodschools.org Laura Koehne, Hamilton County Educational Service Center, IRN 047324, 11083 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45233, 513-674-4244 laura.koehne@norwoodschools.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.

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.

Norwood City School District, Lakota Local Schools and Hamilton County ESC intend to partner on this blended learning initiative. Hamilton County ESC provides staff development for both districts in the areas of Common Core support, technology, and coaching. All three districts participate in monthly curriculum meetings. Norwood City School District, under the guidance of Kristina Chesson, Director of Curriculum, will serve as the lead on the grant. Lakota Local Schools will serve as an equal participant and will be represented by Todd Wesley, Director of Technology, and Marlon Styles, Executive Director of Curriculum. Each district will share equal responsibility for the implementation of the grant and will serve as support and collaboration for one another. Each district will report on the progress made and the actions that need to be taken to fulfill the grant. The district and building level administrators will provide support to make the program successful. Hamilton County Educational Service Center is committed to supporting Norwood City School District and Lakota Local School District in the implementation of the blended learning courses. Experts in the field of educational technology will provide professional development and ongoing coaching to assist with a successful implementation in each of the participating sites. Hamilton County ESC is also committed to providing web space for public communication and with all stakeholders regarding the program and success of the program. Hamilton County ESC will provide the resources to post this information. Hamilton County is viewed as a support mechanism for the two districts who have chosen to propose these offerings. They will be the lead on all professional development. They will support the registration, syllabus and outcomes for the initial training. Building on the sense of community and collaboration, we will have group meeting and training sessions to pool the resources and brainpower of all three entities in a synergistic fashion. While some training and coaching will occur at the building level, Hamilton County ESC will also work as a conduit to transfer materials and learning across the consortium. Each entity has operated many grants individually and with partners. Lakota, Norwood and HCESC currently are partnering in another grant opportunity and that has been met with strong success in the Third Grade Reading Guarantee Grant. We have HUD with each other in the past and present tense. Each agency knows how to set aside time and personnel to fulfill all obligations from their respective grants. Some of the current grant work that districts are involved in are that both small and large in scale: All Federal Grants, High Schools that Work and Making Middle Grades Work, Graduation Nation Grants, Partnerships with Children's Hospital for Reducing Injury Prevention, 21st Century After school Learning Grants to name a few. We believe in this work and also know the strength in tackling something new and innovative as a team. Our team has shown that they are strong in their individual grant work and we know we will create an even stronger implementation as we work together.

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 implemented before

[ ] 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.
online facilitation, blended learning, engaging content creation, and workflow to provide a foundation. Work sessions will provide opportunities for teachers to create their content, edit, and practice with the delivery platform. Training will be provided by outside experts as well as local experts at HCESC. HCESC will provide additional training and support for teachers and students promoting a Face-to-Face model of Blended Learning. While a good deal of the instruction will occur in the online environment, there will be facilitation by teachers through in-person tutoring or small group sessions in the classroom. Districts will support this grant by selecting appropriate faculty to participate (1-2 teachers), and providing internal supports such as scheduling students and providing access to technology to allow for the online instruction. In the second year, teachers will be encouraged to expand on their work from this first year’s experiences to create more online blended curriculum. HCESC will support this work and will provide the necessary tools to make the courses accessible to this cohort and others who choose to participate. The courses being piloted in the initial implementation of the program will include Games Through the Ages, Games Programming, Game Design, Mobile App & Game Design, 3D Modeling (Digital Art), Modern Storytelling, Game Production Studio and Real World Projects. This content will be purchased through Zulama, http://zulama.com/. The administration of these courses will provide the groundwork for the development of an Entertainment Technology Academy. Students will become engaged in a blended environment with the final-goals to include studio courses for creating and building new tools and games. The price for this content is permanent and will be purchased immediately. There will be no additional costs. This cost has been negotiated with Zulama. In this first year, teachers will be facilitated to make a course which they can integrate into their schedule. If the teacher’s class load allows, he/she may choose to select a second course for instruction. Teachers certified in a range of content areas (including language arts, social studies, art, and math) have all successfully taught Zulama courses. HCESC will continue to provide ongoing support for the selected teachers and will lead monthly meetings with the teachers from the participating schools. These meetings will be held in a face-to-face environment or virtually, in which case Hamilton County ESC will provide the technical tools necessary to convene online. A separate course will be provided by HCESC. This course is entitled Virtual Applications of Learning (VAL) and is currently offered in conjunction with The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) is located in Dayton, Ohio, and is under the guidance of Dr. Ryan. HCESC’s consultant will help create this blended class on behalf of the consortium. The desired outcome is to retain students who might otherwise drop out or become disenfranchised with the current courses and offer these engaging courses for all.

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. Planning for ongoing funding of the project, cost breakdown

13. Financial Documentation - All applicants must enter and 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 consortium 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.

This is N/A. Straight A Financial Impact Template has been uploaded for the two school districts.

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

   682,600.00  *  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, RTT 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).

We will be purchasing our instructional programming to use with students. All courses will be purchased with a cost of $98,660. The cost of the teachers’ salaries and benefits is a cost covered by each district. The first year there will be between 8-10 teachers using part of their day for teaching this course. There will be up to 30 teachers participating in the training in the summer to prepare for future interest. Professional Development will be a purchased service through this grant at the amount of $36,800. The teachers will be paid a stipend for their summer work at a cost of $3,000. If throughout the year there are costs of substitute teachers to allow for PO that cost will be covered by the district or through the use of other grant funds which may become available. There is a start up cost to provide for one lab setting (30 devices) as a capital outlay in instruction, but all other labs (up to 120 devices) in the remaining four schools will be or have been created using local funds by the district. All upkeep and ongoing maintenance of the labs will be a cost covered by the district moving forward. As hardware needs replaced, the district will cover that cost as well. Instructional materials cost will be $5,000 for the grant. Any additional materials cost will be covered by the district after the first year as well as any replacement materials.

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.

   0.00  *  Specific amount of new/recurring cost (annual cost after project is implemented)

* Narrative explanation/rationale: Provide details on the cost 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.

We will have a recurring cost of the teachers’ salaries and benefits for the courses they will continue to teach as it relates to this grant. There will be some maintenance and hardware needs after the grant expires. Both of those areas are covered and will continued to be covered by the regular maintenance and operation of each district. We will not have any new costs with this project.

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

   215,024.00  *  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.)

There is anticipated savings in our grant because we anticipate more students who will choose to stay with our districts and complete their graduation program rather than select another service provider to complete coursework. We feel that we will maintain the enrollment of students because of the high interest elective offerings in a unique presentation. For Lakota we believe that ongoing annual savings will be $159,431 and for Norwood we believe it will be $55,583 with a total of $215,024.00.

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.

The participating districts will have unlimited access to the Zulama electives through this grant and beyond based on the licensing agreement. They will own the permanent site license for the Zulama learning management system. This will allow districts to continue to offer highly engaging blended learning opportunities for students without additional costs for licensing. Participating districts will also be able to use the site license funds to provide ongoing professional developement to all teachers. Additional professional development will be available through the grant, and a diagnostic tool will be provided through the grant that will be used to be in a pain-the-trainer model. Early adopters will assist the administrative teams and will also be involved to share their best practices and skills with other teachers within their schools, purposely designing for scalability and internal capacity within the district. The goal is to remove HCESC’s role as the district personnel become more sophisticated in the blended learning model. Staff numbers will not increase because teachers are either adjusting schedules or teaching different content to make sure that this content can be offered.

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 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 that occurred as the application was developed.

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

* Proposal Timeline Dates

   Plan (MM/DD/YYYY): 01/08/14

* Narrative explanation

   Once awarded the grant we will get our core planning team together, members listed on the partnership forms to outline any logistics for the work, any purchases and professional development time.
Frames will be solidified. We will list our teacher focus and finalize our staff for the 2014-15 school year. We will take to our respective Boards of Education any new course listing for approval between January - February. We will begin our course registration for students on March 3, 2014 through April 2014. The only barrier to our concept is preparing a strong enough presentation to capture the interest of the students initially. We know that after the program begins and students see it in action there will be strong interest. We will have to recruit potentially for the initial enrollment because it is different than other courses offered. Our plan to proactively mitigate this barrier is to create interest by offering presentations to students and parents on the courses and also to recruit individually to students as they complete their scheduling. We have outstanding guidance departments that we believe can support this in a strong manner in addition to the teachers creating a "buzz" around these courses. Teacher training will occur in June, 2014 (reptend expenditure). We will also have professional development and support for teachers: duration of the courses in the school year (August - May) with a course change mid-year (semester courses). We believe in the strength of the professional development program and the only barrier we could be presented with is a summer schedule conflict with an individual teacher who we would like to be a part of this work. Our manner to mitigate this would simply be to share dates as soon as possible about the training and if someone had to miss a professional development day to use the expertise of our HCESC to provide for some additional support for that teacher.

Implementation (MM/DD/YYYY): 08/01/2013

* Narrative explanation

Courses will begin in August at each district's first day of school. Courses will run as a semester course and each district will follow their calendars for instructional days. We know that introduction of a new program brings new learning but some new challenges. With any new course which relies on web based work there could be a moment or moments of technology challenges. Both districts have strong technology infrastructure capabilities (and those continue to improve each year) as well as internal support for troubleshooting any brief technology challenge which may occur. Zulama has a solid support system to guide us through any problems. We also have the partnership of the Hamilton County ESC Technology Department to support the work as well. We have no doubt that we have the capacity to handle any technology challenge which would come our way. All course grades, conferences with parents will be handled within each building as normal.

Summative evaluation (MM/DD/YYYY): 09/30/2014

* Narrative explanation

At the close of both the 1st semester and 2nd semester we will look at our progress with the work and students and make any changes along the way. At the end of the year we will gather together to look at our results of surveys we have given to staff, students and parents as they relate to this course work. We will chart our results for attendance data for our participating students, and progress of students through evaluation. Use, email, social media, traditional media (press releases in the community papers) to communicate details, goal progress, and success. HCESC will provide web space and technical support to publicize from the ESC web page.

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

This grant would provide the capacity to explore a whole new world of learning, both in style and content. The initiation of blended learning with a rigorous online component and contemporary topics in will serve as the model for the rest of the community. Each of the respective high schools currently offer many electives, it is the high interest content and the any time, any place facets of this mode of learning that will energize students. This course work will provide college and career paths that students might not otherwise consider. As our world becomes more and more technology driven, skills to create and design software, hardware, and other multimedia products are in high demand. Without exposure to these topics, students might not even consider this as a possible academic path. The blended opportunity will allow for individualized pacing and create an opportunity for students to explore more complex tasks that students will be working on throughout the duration of the course. We look forward to the interactive class discussions, online and offline activities, hands-on project based learning, webQuests and assessments created to be both formative and authentic. We see this as a way to show both students and teacher how 21st Century Skills can come together in one course. We know creativity and innovation, media literacy and technology, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility and collaboration and communication will all be a part of this course.

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.

How does blended learning and gamification impact student achievement? The U.S. Department of Education's 2010 "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Scientific Review" study notes that "Instructional environments that combine face-to-face elements had a larger advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction than did purely online instruction," additionally, the report concludes that "online learning is much more conducive to the expansion of learning time than face-to-face instruction." The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation has a series of case studies of blended learning in schools in their website. Research and rationales for games, simulations and gaming design in the classroom: Article from Forbes on the benefits of students learning how to write games. Additional information on games and Simulations in the Classroom (PDF) from Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA.net). New York University rationale for the pedagogical changes due to "game education". The Gates Foundation mentions that "Students deserve learning experiences tailored to their needs and that make the most of teachers' time with students".

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

Yes.

22. If so, how?

The elective program could be replicated by a district purchasing the online content and obtaining teacher support for blended learning. By replicating the program, new schools could combine with previous participants to create a collaborative effort across the state. Hamilton County ESC consultants have the capacity to continue to provide professional development training. We believe there would be a great deal of interest to continue to support schools to grow their capacity for blended learning. It could become a strong model to work with another district on a system of electives with professional development through an educational service center. Electives in a certain area are often taught by a few number of teachers and collaborating with other districts can strengthen that work.

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

Because of the delivery of the content in a blended environment, this program will serve as model and a launching point for a new way for students to learn. Successful implementation of the curriculum will have a substantial positive impact on student achievement. The meaningful, meaningful way to involving a more traditional environment and the unique opportunity will allow for individualized pacing and create an opportunity for students to explore more complex tasks that students will be working on throughout the duration of the course. We look forward to the interactive class discussions, online and offline activities, hands-on project based learning, webQuests and assessments created to be both formative and authentic. We see this as a way to show both students and teacher how 21st Century Skills can come together in one course. We know creativity and innovation, media literacy and technology, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility and collaboration and communication will all be a part of this course.

24. What are the specific benchmarks related to the fund goals identified in question 9 that the project aims to achieve in 5 years? Include any other anticipated outcomes of the project that you hope to achieve that may not be easily benchmarked.

We’re aiming to impact all three of the Straight A Goals listed above. We believe that high interest, high engagement courses support overall student achievement. We believe that students will look forward to these courses and it would serve as a motivator to attend school days that they might not otherwise consider. We know with increased attendance students have more opportunities to learn in all their courses and therefore with more opportunities to learn will support stronger student achievement. We also believe that will continue to see a reduction in cost in future years because we will retain student who may have had the potential to choose other service providers for their courses. We will continue to seek student opinions about the courses as they move through. Their continued interest and survey results will tell us if we are meeting the mark on retaining their interest in this new programming.

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.

The teacher of the course will track student success as evidenced by the scores on the formative assessments included in the online materials and will hold individual conferences with each student to record overall satisfaction with the content and the blended method of delivery. The teacher will use a Likert scale to score this level of satisfaction. These indications will be compiled by course, district and total for all courses. Courses, which are offered on a semester basis, will be deemed successful by virtue of continued enrollment in the next class or classes in the series. At the end of the school year, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate and display the artifacts that are created. This may be done by means of an event such as a gallery display at school or another local community building where parents may view the work completed. The presentation in real time will also allow community members and businesses to observe student work and evaluate potential relationships with the field for students and the business for the community. This event will be recorded and posted on the web for review by a larger audience. HCESC will be responsible for the video portion of this item and its distribution. Students will also be surveyed on their thoughts about the courses and ways to improve. HCESC will work with teachers to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and to modify the program as needed. Individual and group meetings with the cadre of teachers will allow for discussion, reflection and modification of the content. Each teacher will be able to add, modify, or rework materials that do not meet the needs of their students. Evaluation of the content and reflective alignment to Ohio's New Learning Standards will create a platform to meet the needs of our students and promote success in a place where students thrive. Our success will be fueled by a number of factors, students voices on surveys, attendance and report card information and continued interest moving forward.

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 overall evaluation of the plan, 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 Assurance: I agree, on behalf of this applicant agency and all identified partners to abide by all assurances outlined in the Assurance section of the CCP. In the box below, enter "I Accept" and indicate your name, title, agency/organization and today's date.
