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Adjusted Allocation: 0.00

Remaining: -588,000.00
**Application**

Rocky River City (44071) - Cuyahoga County - 2014 - Straight A Fund - Rev 0 - Straight A Fund - Application Number (330)

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:** Rr Learning Center

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.

The grant will support the creation of a learning center, the Beach Learning Center, in the gymnasium at Beach School, a building built in 1930 and no longer used as a school building. This will provide the Rocky River City School District with a renovated, technologically well-equipped, multi-purpose venue that can be used by large numbers of students, staff and parents (spending reduction in the 5-year forecast).

Similarly, this grant will support both new and continuing professional development opportunities for district staff so that they continue to provide our students with excellent educational opportunities (student achievement).

**2600 3. Total Students Impacted:**

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

First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Elizabeth Anderson

Organizational name of secondary applicant: Rocky River City School District

Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 044701

Address of lead applicant: 1101 Morewood Parkway, Rocky River, OH 44116

Phone Number of lead applicant: (440) 356-6001

Email Address of lead applicant: anderson.elizabeth@rrcs.org

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

First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Michael G. Shoaf, Ed. D.

Organizational name of secondary applicant: Rocky River City School District

Unique Identifier (IRN/Fed Tax ID): 044701

Address of secondary applicant: 1101 Morewood Parkway, Rocky River, OH 44116

Phone number of secondary applicant: (440) 356-6000

Email address of secondary applicant: shoaf.michael@rrcs.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.**

Elizabeth Anderson (District Assistant Superintendent): Liz has spent the last nine years leading change, curriculum and professional development as the assistant superintendent of two different districts, most recently, the Rocky River City School District. She has served as an internal facilitator for strategic planning initiatives in both districts. Of particular interest was her successful effort to organize, raise funding/sponsorships, and execute an educational symposium which offered 100 PD sessions for over 1,000 educators from 8 districts and organizations. During her 6 years leading curriculum in Rocky River, the district's performance index has risen from 105.2 (18th in the state) to 111.5 (3rd in the state). Notably, in September 2013, according to data released by ODE, Rocky River earned the highest score in the state for the performance of its gifted students. Liz has been the federal grant coordinator for 9 years, and is very familiar with accounting and grant management. Dianna Foley (District Executive Director of Communications and Technology, Ph.D., Google Certified Trainer): In her six years with the district, Dianna has transformed district technology. Notably, her close work with Google resulted in all schools district in the state of Ohio receiving free access to Google SketchUp Pro. Rocky River City School District is a Google case study district and, with, Dianna’s leadership, is currently beta testing android devices for them. As an adjunct professor for Ashland University, Dianna teaches graduate class in technology to our staff. Adam Sywanyk (District Director of Facilities): Formerly a senior project manager for Paul Davis Restoration, Adam has 9 years of experience leading large property loss and restoration projects ranging from $20,000 to $1.2 million. Adam most recently oversaw the final phase of a $33 million renovation and construction project for Rocky River High School. Tina Wasserbauer (District Director of Nutrition Services, Registered Licensed Dietician, MS Nutrition and Public Health): As a director of school nutrition services, Tina has led her teams through implementing and using cutting edge technology in food service, as well as successfully implemented nutrition standards from the National School Lunch Program. As a Food Service Consultant for Ohio Schools Council, Tina worked with districts across Ohio to improve their food service department operations.

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

9. **Which of the stated Straight A Fund goals does the project 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
- 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.**

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, Rocky River City School District's Beach School became the new home of the Board of Education offices. Occupying a former elementary school cannot be more a prop for a board of education. Every school, new or old, has a gymnasium, and Beach School is no exception. Built in 1930, the gym is of, course, old. Very old. We see it, however, as our diamond in the rough. We have great plans for the Beach School gym, or should I say Rr (pronounced "our") Learning Center. We would like to renovate the Beach School gym into a multi-purpose learning center that can be used by many district and community stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community members) for collaboration, professional development and learning activities. The problem we were trying to solve at first was simple; we need a place where we can gather large groups of staff members during the school day without displacing students. Currently, when we need to get district departments or large groups of staff members together, we pay to rent space from St. Christopher School (a catholic school within the district), the Rocky River Community Center, or the Cuyahoga County Educational Service Center. During the school day, our district does not have a cost-free venue that can hold a large group without moving students out of a room. Hence, we rent space from others. What better place to hold a large group of people than a gym? As we envisioned the Beach School gym becoming a large-group meeting place, it quickly became apparent that the space could be so much more. The space could be used for professional development, guest speakers (in person or webcast), curriculum writing, faculty collaboration, student trainings, presentations and meetings, a large computer lab, parent information meetings, community meetings, a venue that other schools and organizations could rent, the list goes on. As Beach School also serves as the home to the Rocky River Historical Society, the presentation center could even be used by them as well. If the Beach gym were renovated, we wouldn't have to pay to rent space for our 7th grade Challenge Days, or for junior/senior mentor training. Beach
gym could hold it all afford to renovate the Beach gym, the following upgrades must take place: electric, HVAC, lighting, doors, flooring, and paint. There is a small kitchen off the Beach gym, as well as a corner, that would need to be upgraded as well. In addition to the items just listed, we would like to outfit the room with furniture that can be flexibly arranged according to the type of event taking place: a classroom-style setting with tables facing the stage, a cabaret-style setting with tables arranged in a U-shape, a hands-on station, and a small group training setting with rows of chairs arranged facing the stage, the list goes on. Further, it is our desire to also equip the Rr Learning Center with state of the art technology so that this location becomes our headquarters for staff professional development as it relates to current and future technologies available for classroom use. Transportation, maintenance or cafeteria use. In this regard, when finished, our goal is for the presentation center to have uninterrupted wireless connectivity, a collaborative work environment, a professional development system, a presenter’s podium, and SMART technologies, tablets, and laptops. Initially, in keeping with our application theme of professional learning, as our program moves through the transition to Ohio’s New Learning Standards and the new assessments, and navigates the new teacher evaluation system and the third grade reading guarantee, the district would use Straight A funds to support professional development opportunities, some of which we have done before and wish to continue, and some of which would be new to us.

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. This project aims to affect student achievement, redirect funds into the classroom and reduce spending in the 5-year forecast. Effectively delivered, research-based professional development (such as that taught by these grant funds) when coupled with a staff, like Rocky River's, focused on doing whatever it takes to be a better teacher, will successfully result in improved student learning. Obtaining grant funds to subsidize the renovations for Rr Learning Center will result in spending reductions in the 5-year forecast.

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.

14. What is the total cost for implementing the innovative project?
   $88,000.00 * Total project cost

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)

16. Are there expected savings that may result from the implementation of the innovative project?
   $58,000.00 * Specific amount of expected savings (annual)

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.

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 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 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.)

* Proposal Timeline Dates
   Plan (MM/DD/YYYY): 12/1/2013
   * Narrative explanation

With regard to Rr Learning Center, because we have been discussing renovations for the Beach gym for some time now, we have already done much of the research securing cost estimates for each part of the project. We have listed December 1 as the beginning of our planning stage only because this is the official month in which we will be notified if our grant application was approved.
Adam Sywanyk, our director of maintenance, and Tina Wasserbauer, our director of nutrition services, have already been involved in discussions that involve both the desires and needs for Rr Learning Center, and have prepared the logistics for the order in which the contracted services for renovation must take place. Similarly, Dr. Dianna Foisy, our executive director of communications and technology, has already worked with the team to make sure the contracted services and renovations accommodate both the technology of today, as well as provide for growth for technologies to come. While Liz Anderson will be the Straitag A grant coordinator, for the portion of the grant dedicated to the renovation of the Beach gym, Adam Sywanyk will serve as the project coordinator. His 9 years of excellence leading project renovations prior to his arrival in Rocky River, in addition to his successful management of our district facilities, make him the perfect point person for this. With regard to the renovation opportunities that will come as we receive approval, registering staff members for conferences and making lodging and transportation arrangements will begin. With regard to communicating the opportunities that will be afforded our school district as a result of a successful application, we will begin communication to stakeholders immediately. We have several outlets for communication, our website and board meetings chief among them. However, we also have a Family and Civic Curriculum Advisory Committee (C&C), and a 501(c)3 organization, Rocky River Education Foundation (RREF), both comprised of internal and external stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, chamber of commerce members, board members, administrators, civic leaders, health and human service representatives) who meet regularly throughout the school year, and with whom we will also communicate throughout the grant period.

Finally, we maintain ongoing communications with local media, and certainly anticipate sharing exciting news about the Straitag A grant with them.

Implement (MM/DD/YYYY): 1/1/2014

* Narrative explanation

We would like to begin renovations to Rr Learning Center as soon as possible once a successful grant application has been announced. We are all well familiar with the old adage, "The best laid plans...", and despite our best plans to create the perfect timeline and order of events for the renovations, we anticipate something falling out of line. We are comfortable that January through September 2014 will give us plenty of time to complete the desired renovations of Rr Learning Center. Similarly, we are comfortable that the experience and expertise of Dianna, Adam, Tina and Liz will keep us on course. Milestones for this component of the project differ depending on the lens through which one is looking. For example, for Tina, completing the kitchenette renovation will be an exciting milestone. For Dianna, her milestone comes toward the end of the project once the physical plant renovations have been completed and the space prepared for her to install technology. For Adam, the first major renovation will be before those for Tina, and for Liz, and the renovation will span from the top down. The completion of the renovations for HVAC, lighting, electrical, bathrooms, painting, doors and flooring will all be significant for Adam, Tina and Liz, and all of us, honestly. For Liz, the most significant milestone will be sliding the last chair into place right before what we envision to be a fantastic community grand opening. With regard to the PD opportunities that would be afforded to us as the result of a successful application, those would be the different PD opportunities throughout the second semester of the school year, the last one occurring at the end of June 2014. The conclusion of each PD activity, and its evaluation, would be a milestone for this component of the grant period.

Summative evaluation (MM/DD/YYYY): 8/30/2014

* Narrative explanation

The summative evaluation of the project would begin at the completion of the project, and no later than September 30, 2014. Photos, financial data, PD evaluations, and baseline student performance data will be used for the summative evaluation. While milestones throughout the project will have been communicated throughout the grant period, summative evaluations of the project's success will also be communicated at Board meetings, in regular parent communications, as well as at C&C and RREF meetings, and with the local media. Similarly, the project's success will be tracked and communicated via these outlets for the five years of the attached financial forecast.

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

Imagine it is October 2014, and the grant period is over. The renovated Rr Learning Center is filled with 7th graders engaged in Challenge Days activities that teach them about difference, tolerance and compassion, or filled with juniors and seniors preparing to mentor next year's freshman, or filled with staff members sharing ideas borne out of the national conferences they attended at the end of the previous school year. Now imagine Rr Learning Center filled with a room of educators from several districts engaged in no-cost, collaborative analyses of effective practice, of successes and failures, about literacy instruction, mathematics instruction, curriculum, text complexity, teaching the gifted learner, next generation assessments, restraint and seclusion... the list goes on. Imagine this same learning center, playing host to a well-known presenter, like Bill Daggett, Tony Wagner, Alan November, Anthony Muhammad, Carol Tomlinson, or Charlotte Danielson, with an audience of educators from across northeast Ohio, sharing not only in the presenter's wisdom, but also sharing only in the cost to bring the presenter to town, and not the cost to rent the local civic center or hotel conference room in order to host the event. Imagine Rr Learning Center welcoming parents and community members for presentations by social workers and physicians about signs of suicide or drug and alcohol abuse, to law enforcement officials presenting about Internet safety, to visiting authors. Imagine all of this taking place, year after year, without having to displace students, or worry about bell schedules, concert schedules and drama schedules. Finally, imagine the improvement in student performance as a result of this learning, and Ohio having invested in it. Awesome, isn't it?

19. 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.

The short-term objectives of this project are two-fold: send teachers to research-based and national professional development opportunities and complete renovations of the Beach gym into Rr Learning Center. Both are quantifiably measured and sourced by items 1-3 listed in the answer to question 23 above.

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

The outcomes of this grant can be quantifiably measured in several ways with the following source data: 1. financial and photo records of the Beach gym being renovated into Rr Learning Center; 2. financial data and professional meeting logs and evaluations of the attended professional development activities; 3. financial records indicating that district monies were not spent on either 1 or 2; 4. facilities use reports (including hours credited to the Rr Learning Center; and 5. tracking student performance data from the 13-14 school year compared to future, similar data (see the answer to question #25 for specifics). Once renovated, Rr Learning Center won't go away. It will be available to host a multitude of learning activities for people of all ages for years to come. Similarly, information gleaned from professional development opportunities and conferences won't be forgotten, and again, will be implemented in the classroom well beyond the grant period.

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.

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.

This project aims to affect student achievement, redirect funds into the classroom and reduce spending in the 5-year forecast. Effectively delivered, research-based professional development (such as that sought with these grant funds) when coupled with a staff, like Rocky River's, focused on doing whatever it takes to be a better teacher, will successfully result in improved student learning. Completing planned renovations to the Beach gym using Straitag A funds not only frees up district funds in an amount equal to the cost of renovations to be spent in the classroom, but it also allows us to witness a reduction in the cost of the renovation by completing it in a compressed time from January to August 2014, and, thus, reap savings benefits by avoiding costs affected by inflation trends were we to spend several years completing the project.

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

Yes

22. If so, how?

Yes, professional development and collaboration about best practices is always replicable to the degree that funds, creativity and willingness avail. The replication of Rr Learning Center in other districts, however, may be limited, or is at least as feasible as space (and grant) funds avail.

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

The short-term objectives of this project have been met: 17 teachers have participated in professional development activities; the Beach gym was renovated and is now being used by educators. However, the intermediate objectives have not yet been met: we will discontinue using the former Beach gym for PD activities until the renovation is complete. The long-term objectives of this project is to invest in our Rocky River learning community by providing a physical place, in addition to our four school buildings, that supports exceptional opportunities, innovation, trying new things, and learning from and about others. This is quantifiable by items 4 and 5 listed in the answer to question 23 above. The measurement period for this will be 5 years, through the end of the five-year forecast used for this application. We will use June 30 (measure 4) and September 30 (measure 5) of each year as the point at which to measure success.

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).

28. 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.

By virtue of applying for the Straitag A Fund, all applicants agree to participate in the overall evaluation of the Straitag A Fund for the duration of the evaluation timeframe. The Governing Board of the Straitag 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 Straitag 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.

Name: Elizabeth Anderson
Title: Assistant Superintendent
Agency/Organization: Rocky River City School District
Date: October 25, 2013