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**Adjusted Allocation**

**Remaining**

-485,000.00
A) APPLICANT INFORMATION - General Information, Experience and Capacity

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 Solon City Schools will develop both an electronic system to calculate and monitor student value-added growth in real time and an instructional rigor framework to support teachers as they increase the level of rigor in their instruction. These systems will be integrated into our existing job-embedded professional development programs to provide a concrete method to assist teachers in differentiating and increasing instructional rigor for all students.

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

First Name, last Name of contact for lead applicant: Debbie Siegel
Organizational name of lead applicant: Solon City Schools
Unique Identifier (RN/Fed Tax ID): 046607
Address of lead applicant: 33800 Inwood Road, Solon, OH 44139
Phone Number of lead applicant: 440-349-6205
Email Address of lead applicant: debbiesiegel@solonboe.org

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

First Name, last Name of contact for secondary applicant: Fred Bolden
Organizational name of secondary applicant: Solon City Schools
Unique Identifier (RN/Fed Tax ID): 046607
Address of secondary applicant: 33800 Inwood Road, Solon, OH 44139
Phone number of secondary applicant: 440-349-6206
Email address of secondary applicant: fbolden@solonboe.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 (RN/Fed Tax ID), Address, Phone Number, Email Address of Contact for All Secondary Applicants in the box below:

Joe Regano, Superintendent, Solon City Schools; 33800 Inwood Road, Solon, OH 44139, 440-349-6204, jregano@solonboe.org IRN: 046607 Brynt Simes, Curriculum Technology Resource Teacher, Solon City Schools; 33800 Inwood Road, Solon, OH 44139, 440-349-7711, bsimes@solonboe.org IRN: 034835 Doug Clay, Psychometric Consultant, Candor Consulting; 12170 Lyndway Drive, Valley View, OH 44125, 216-632-9700, candlerclay@gmail.com Tax ID: 5863

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 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. 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.

The Solon grant team members include central office and building administrators, teacher leaders, and two university consultants. This team has received and previously implemented a State of Ohio Early Education Grant in 2008 and 2011, a PED Grant in 2008, and several Ohio Department of Education initiatives. This team has also engaged in several professional development sessions and has worked closely with the school's building leaders to ensure alignment with district goals.

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.

Part I: Add Growth Analysis to the Current Student Instructional Information System Background: The academic success of the Solon City Schools stems from a relentless commitment to data-based decision making. Ten years ago, the district recognized the need for an electronic system to calculate and monitor student value-added growth data. The district's data governance team has developed a robust system that supports instructional decision making and provides valuable insights for improving student outcomes. The system integrates data from various sources, including assessments, attendance records, and demographic information. This comprehensive approach ensures that teachers have access to accurate and timely data to inform their instructional practices.

The Solon City Schools have utilized this data to track student progress and identify areas for intervention. By leveraging the data-driven approach, the district has been able to make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction, leading to improvements in student achievement. The success of this initiative has been evident through various indicators, including increased student engagement, improved attendance rates, and positive changes in student behavior. The data has also facilitated the identification of best practices and successful strategies that can be replicated across the district.

Part II: Create a Rigor Framework Background: The need for a rigorous and relevant curriculum has become increasingly evident in recent years. The Solon City Schools have recognized the importance of providing students with a challenging and meaningful educational experience that prepares them for success in the 21st century. The district has embarked on a comprehensive initiative to develop a rigorous framework that aligns with the Common Core State Standards and other high standards, while ensuring that all students are engaged and successful.

The Solon City Schools have developed a framework that includes the integration of existing and new systems, assessment tools, and professional development programs. This framework is designed to support teachers in differentiating instruction and increasing student engagement. The framework emphasizes the use of formative assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. The district has also implemented targeted professional development sessions for teachers to enhance their content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

In addition to the rigorous framework, the Solon City Schools have focused on improving instructional practices and creating a positive learning environment. This has involved the development of instructional materials, the use of technology in the classroom, and the creation of a supportive culture that values student achievement. The district has also established partnerships with local universities and other educational institutions to ensure the latest research and best practices are incorporated into the curriculum.

The Solon City Schools have demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and have shown progress in various areas, such as increased graduation rates, improved standardized test scores, and enhanced student engagement. The district's efforts have been recognized at both the local and state levels, and there is a strong belief that the rigorous framework and data-driven approach will continue to drive positive outcomes for students.
accomplished by having teachers collaborate in job-embedded teams that concentrate on analyzing student data, evaluating the effectiveness of instructional strategies in light of that data, and developing and testing new hypotheses about strategies to improve student learning. Solon's excellent student data clearly shows the direct impact of this process, but the need exists for improvement in the area of student growth. The Solon City Schools have already created a professional culture of analyzing student data and making instructional decisions based on that data. Through the administration of district-wide common assessments, subsequent data analysis and instructional planning meetings, Solon educators can quickly and efficiently adapt instructional practices to meet the achievement needs of all students. With the addition of student growth data in the system and tools to adjust instruction to meet growth needs, Solon will be able to demonstrate the same excellence in student growth as it has done with student achievement.

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 Solon City Schools have already created a professional culture of analyzing student data and making instructional decisions based on that data. Through the administration of district-wide common assessments, subsequent data analysis and instructional planning meetings, Solon educators can quickly and efficiently adapt instructional practices to meet the achievement needs of all students. With the addition of student growth data in the system and tools to adjust instruction to meet growth needs, Solon will be able to demonstrate the same excellence in student growth as it has done with student achievement.

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

13. Financial document - 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

Data: 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.

- 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.

- If there will be no new or recurring costs for this project once the grant has expired.

The Solon City Schools will use this funding to expand and enhance currently successful systems, procedures, and instructional practices already in place. The grant will provide for the development of two additional tools (growth analysis component for the student data system and Instructional rigor framework) for teachers to use. The PLC structure is already in place to enable teachers to analyze student data and plan instruction accordingly. Therefore, no additional expenditures will be required.

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

- 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.)

- If there will be no additional savings as a result of this initiative. Due to the fact that, once the tools are developed, district resources are already in place for utilization. The expected savings as a result of this project are the intangibles of teacher time and efficiency.

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 through modified line item or the equivalent 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.

- Barrier Mitigation: If the project builds on existing initiatives, the project is self-sustaining. The Solon City Schools have already implemented: 1. Job-embedded professional development (by contract, teachers meet weekly, monthly and quarterly in teams). 2. A proven system to analyze student performance data (teachers use the current Student Data System after each assessment to analyze student data). 3. Supportive tools to aid in the implementation of district initiatives (teacher leaders and administrators facilitate each data analysis and professional development meeting). Because of these existing systems, the addition of growth analysis and instructional rigor professional development training will be self-sustaining and will not require new funding beyond initial development costs.

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 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): 06/01/14

Narrative explanation

Please see attached timeline for a sequence of tasks to be accomplished. Plan 1/1/14 - 6/1/14 Algorithm Development 1/1/14 - 2/1/14 Develop an algorithm to analyze student growth data over time from district common assessments. The psychometric consultant will analyze all common assessment data to develop a valid and reliable growth analysis model. Barriers: Aggregate abundant and disparate data sets in a format usable for statistical analysis. Ensure that the statistical model is a reliable and valid measure of student growth. Correlate the internal growth model data to selected state value-added growth measures. Barrier Mitigation: - The project team includes an established expert in psychometric theory and application. Through ongoing discussions and statistical analysis, the team will develop a reliable and valid data analysis model that will correlate with state of Ohio accountability data and other assessments. The psychometric consultant will perform correlational analyses of internal and state growth data. Framework Creation, Field Testing and Refinement 1/1/14 - 6/1/14 A team of teachers representing all grade levels, teams, and departments will serve as an instructional rigor focus group. The focus group will be assisted by one or more experts in the field of instructional rigor. The focus group will be convened by the Assistant Superintendent with the purpose of researching and developing a tool for teachers to assess and enhance the level of rigor of their current instruction. The team will develop an initial framework based on research and then further refine the framework through field testing. Barriers: - Translate research on instructional rigor to create a framework that will guide the development of targeted strategies for teachers to use in their daily practice. - Develop a format for the framework that applies across all grade levels and disciplines. Barrier Mitigation: - The instructional rigor focus group will solicit feedback from their grade level teams and departmental colleagues. With feedback from the rigor expert(s), the focus group will revise the framework based on teacher feedback. This cycle will be repeated as necessary until the focus group members are satisfied that they have developed a clear and usable model. Planning Stakeholders: -Board members, assistant superintendent, central office staff, elementary and secondary representatives, psychometric consultant, and web application developer. Planning Communication Plan: -Weekly status meetings will be held with the developer to communicate updates and progress to the grant team. -Monthly status meetings will be held with the elementary and secondary focus group representatives who will communicate progress to their buildings. The assistant superintendent will provide monthly progress reports to the superintendent and Board of Education.

Implement (MM/DD/YYYY): 05/31/2015

Narrative explanation

Implement 2/1/14 - 5/31/15 Please see attached timeline for a sequence of tasks to be accomplished. Algorithm Integration Student Data System 2/1/14 - 6/30/14 Incorporating the new longitudinal
value-added data growth model and algorithm into the existing student Data System will be accomplished by a Solon City Schools’ district teacher leader, who serves as the lead application developer for all district student performance analysis tools. The developer will work closely with the psychometric consultant to build the statistical algorithm into the existing Solon System. Since the project teacher lead is a career Solon City Schools’ teacher leader, the psychometric consultants will maintain the user friendliness and utility of existing systems and thereby ensure routine integration and system acceptance. The system will be completed by June 2014. To field test the algorithm, a manual process will be used. Professional development and refinement of the system will continue during the 2014-2015 school year and beyond. Barriers/challenges include: -Managing placement of critical personnel (technology teacher leader/web application developer) during the development phase. Barrier Mitigation: -To ensure that teachers are able to use the new rigor framework to analyze their instruction and subsequently select and implement more rigorous strategies, the Solon City Schools will implement a series of hands-on sessions during their required PLC sessions. These sessions will be held on the following framework: -New strategies/evaluation and development of an environment that is safe and rich with professional feedback. According to Hattie (2012), what truly makes a difference is learning is the “process” of the attributes that make learning visible. The addition of embedded common assessment value added/growth data will enable teams of teacher to instruction to better tailor learning for individuals or groups of students. By using the new longitudinal data analysis functions of the Student Data System and strategies available in the new rigor framework, teachers will be able to analyze factors affecting student growth and relate those results to their own instruction. This approach allows teachers to enhance instruction by using a district-wide common framework and the selection of ongoing instructional data and the selection of research-based basic instructional strategies. Change 1 - Student Growth Component added to the Student Data System Teachers will have new tools to help measure student growth, monitor value-added progress and track longitudinal data. While PLCs currently attempt to analyze longitudinal growth data, extracting this data from Solon’s current data system is cumbersome and excessively time consuming. The new data analysis tools made possible by this funding will enhance PLC data analysis and development of differentiated, rigorous instructional strategies. Change 2 - Instructional Rigor Framework The strategies developed through the instructional rigor framework will help teachers enhance the rigor of their instruction, and help all students meet Common Core expectations and achieve more than expected growth. PLCs will collect evidence of student learning using the new growth component of the Student Data System and seek best practices to identified problems. Change 3 - Enhanced PLC Data Analysis The addtion of longitudinal valued-added/growth data, along with a tool to help teachers assess instructional rigor, will enhance Solon PLC data analysis and planning. Since the onset of state-issued accountability ratings for Ohio schools district, the Solon City Schools have ranked in the top five of Ohio schools in student achievement based on the performance index score. A significant portion of the district success is the direct result of the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. Teachers are required to meet during their instructional day as grade levels, departments, and teams to focus on student achievement and progress. Common formative and summative assessments have been developed and administered. The Solon City School District utilizes the rigorous framework to support these assessments.

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 five-year fiscal forecast.

The Solon City Schools have used data to inform instructional decision making for more than a decade. In collaborative teams, the district has used data to develop assessments, tools, processes and practices to make effective instructional choices. As part of that collaborative culture, the Solon City Schools have developed a Professional Learning Community model that includes: 1. a common vision of student success that is developed and continuously refined by teams and a collective inquiry into best practices through research and professional development; 2. a commitment to continuous improvement; and 6. a focus on results by making data-driven decisions. The culture created and fostered by the Solon PLCs yields consistently high student performance. Past successes demonstrate that when teachers are provided with data, they will use that information to achieve greater student success. The addition of growth data and a rigor framework to current practices will help Solon City Schools increase student engagement for all Solon students to even greater levels of growth. Research shows that educators in schools who have embraced PLCs are more likely to: -Take collective responsibility for student learning, help students achieve at higher levels and express higher levels of professional satisfaction (Louis & Washington, 2011). -Share teaching practices, make results transparent, engage in reflective conversations about improving instruction, and institutionalize continual improvement (Bryk, Sebring, Allworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010). -Improve student achievement over time in ways that are more powerful and scalable than those that have traditionally been observed in the professional learning communities. (Johnson & Kantos, 2007). -Improve student learning and their teachers' performance (Johnson & Kantos, 2007). -Enhance teacher leadership and professional development teams (Johnson & Kantos, 2007). -Improve the quality and effectiveness of educational programs (Johnson & Kantos, 2007). -Improve the quality and effectiveness of educational programs (Johnson & Kantos, 2007). -Enhance the quality of educational programs (Johnson & Kantos, 2007).

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

Yes

22. If so, how?

Part I: Growth Measure for the Student Data System The Solon City Schools’ current Student Data System is based on readily available web application standards (.NET, HTML5, MSSQL). The Solon system was developed in house by teachers without the assistance of professional programmers. The models proposed for development of the growth measurement will be based on recognized statistical principles, and the model will be made available for others to use. All districts will be able to benefit from this data analysis methodology. As long as other districts have the willingness to act on the data, they may be able to achieve district-specific goals. Part II: Instructional Rigor Framework The rigor framework will help educators move from aspirations to action. The framework will serve as a guide for districts, buildings, teams, and teachers to enhance instructional rigour and increase student growth. It will provide a concrete model for teachers to evaluate their current instruction and develop instructional practices and procedures that increase rigor targeted at student needs.

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

The lasting impact of this project will be a culture where all elementary and as committed to student growth as they are to student achievement. While the Solon City Schools’ results on Ohio’s accountability measures support this strategy, the district team knows Solon teachers can, and must, do more to help students not only achieve at even higher levels, but also make more than expected growth. As the result of this grant and continued district efforts, the Solon City Schools will use longitudinal growth data and the new rigor framework to find opportunities to make instruction more challenging, cognitively complex and richer for all Solon students. Achievement can best be improved by focusing on data-driven decision making and the application of proven, rigorous instructional strategies and assessments. The district’s experience with helping teachers work through the systematic and sustained use of Professional Learning Communities suggests that PLCs are the best vehicle to ensure that teachers act on data and implement effective classroom practice.

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 measured.

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.

Over the past decade, the Solon City Schools has developed a teacher feedback system that incorporates an internally developed Student Data System. The system was built gradually and methodically, responding to teacher feedback about their data needs. This same methodology will be used to implement the longitudinal growth analysis component within the system. Its implementation will be reviewed by a focus group, implemented district wide, and continually refined based on feedback from teacher teams. Its effectiveness as a tool will be evaluated through this process. In addition to teacher team meetings each week, curricular leaders meet on a bi-weekly basis to review, adjust and plan professional development and instruction. As a result of this grant, these meetings will include teacher feedback on the rigor framework and its effectiveness in instruction. This evaluation will be accomplished through several methods: 1. Longitudinal Growth Data will be compared across teams of teachers based on principal and teacher leader feedback on the framework implementation. There should be a significant relationship between teacher framework implementation and student growth. 2. The district will conduct teacher surveys on the framework. These surveys will focus on usability and effectiveness. 3. The content and pedagogy consultants on the project team will conduct an external evaluation of the rigor framework and provide feedback for its refinement and effectiveness. 4. As more state and local growth data are collected, the district will see an upward trend in value-added results that signifies increased student growth. Improved instructional practices: To determine if teachers have increased instructional rigor, the Solon City Schools will use the rigor framework to assess instruction. The district will devote meeting time to reviewing instructional practices to ensure that each PLC continually focuses on enhancing rigor. In addition, every participating teacher will be required to assess his or her instructional practice and record their reflections in a learning log. These logs will be shared with their PLCs and during individual discussions with their principals. Principals will share their building results with the district administrative team. Teacher leaders will monitor progress and, where needed, coach teachers in implementing strategies to enhance rigor. Improved student growth: After the release of state report card data, the Solon City Schools currently conducts a comprehensive analysis of our student achievement and growth data at district, building, team and individual teacher levels. This analysis will expand to include student level value-added analysis. These enhanced analyses will allow the Solon City Schools to shift resources more effectively to address gaps and needs. The grant team will be transformed into a district data committee that will work closely with the district administrative team to review internal and external achievement data and develop action plans to respond to patterns and trends in the data. While the assessment landscape is dynamic and unsettled, the Solon City Schools will use the new data system to focus on ensuring that district assessments are reliable and highly correlated to external data sources so that all students will receive more effective and engaging instruction.

By virtue of applying for the Straight A Fund, all applicants agree to participate in the overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund for the duration of the evaluation timeframe. The Governing Board of the Straight A Fund reserves the right to conduct evaluation of the plan and request additional information in the form of data, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and any other related data to the legislature, governor, and other interested parties for an overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund.

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

I Accept
Debbie Siegel
Assistant Superintendent
Solon City Schools
10/25/2013