

Disruptive Innovation Investment Program

Start-up investment sponsored by Reynoldsburg City Schools and The Learning Accelerator

The Reynoldsburg City School District has gained national attention for initiatives that are resulting in better student outcomes and improved economic efficiency. These initiatives range from classroom-level strategies (such as augmenting expert teacher-led instruction with personalized digital content to accelerate individual academic growth) to school- or district-level partnerships with community organizations that share our mission to support student learning inside and outside of the classroom. The district embraces a “site-based” organizational structure that empowers principals and staff to make local decisions in the best interests of the students they serve. Increasingly, the district is moving toward a “portfolio” approach that allows schools to differentiate from one another, offering programs that cater to specific student and family interests – so that all students and families have viable school choices to meet their individual needs and interests within Reynoldsburg. To improve the conditions that allow school-level innovations and customizations, the district awarded about \$300,000 to three schools through a competitive, internal grant program in 2013. As those projects are coming to fruition, the district is prepared to launch a second round.

Reynoldsburg City Schools and our partners at The Learning Accelerator are pleased to announce a school-level grant competition to foster new or developing initiatives that further our progress toward financially sustainable academic growth and achievement for all students. These awards should be viewed as investments that kick-start or accelerate innovation resulting in higher performance and increased productivity and/or savings over time. Acceptance of grant awards through this program is a commitment to maintain successful initiatives beyond the initial funding and to support the continued approach within current funding levels as part of a comprehensive school-level business plan that takes into account all resources – district and school level – used to support operations of the school. Successful applications will include moderate evidence that current research or prior experience suggests the proposed initiative will improve student performance, specifically in the areas addressed by the applicant’s goals. Successful applications also will show estimated operational costs over a three-year period, identifying cost-neutrality or cost savings as a result of the initiative or in order to fund the initiative in the long term.

General Instructions

Submission Information: Completed applications must be received by Tricia Moore, Director of Partnerships & Shared Services, before 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2014. Applications must be submitted by email to tmoore@reyn.org. **Late applications will not be reviewed.**

Technical Assistance: Applicants will be provided technical support from The Learning Accelerator in preparing their proposals. Applicants are encouraged to read all parts of this application package and to attend a drop-in **work session at Central Office from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 2**, when general grant-writing guidance and clarification on instructions for preparing their applications will be provided. Additionally, at the work session, applicants will learn how to access technical assistance from TLA. This assistance will be available from April 2 until May 9, but will need to be arranged proactively.

Proposal teams will be provided space to work throughout the day, if desired and by request. Technical questions about this request for proposal and submission rules may be submitted in writing to tmoore@reyn.org; responses will be provided within 48 hours. Advice/suggestions about the *quality* of ideas and available opportunities will be available through TLA technical assistance.



Application Format: All applications must include a cover sheet with the applicant school principal's signature, indicating support of the proposal and accuracy of the information provided. The proposal narrative is where the applicant addresses the selection criteria and the absolute priorities that reviewers will use to evaluate the application. It is recommended that application narratives are limited to no more than 10 pages, not including budget sections or appendices. There is no limit to appendices, but also no guarantee that all appendices will be read by reviewers. The following guidelines are also recommended:

- Pages are 8.5 X 11, single sided with one-inch margins on all sides
- Pages are numbered
- Line spacing is set to 1.5 and font is 12 point Times New Roman

Applicants are encouraged to follow these standards for proposals, however, applications that deviate from them will be considered. These standards are designed for readability purposes, and deviations should be designed to improve readability, rather than detract from it.

Budget Format: Two budget tables (described below) are required as part of each proposal. Customized templates for budget tables will be provided to applicants by the treasurer's office upon request. Use of the treasurer's templates is required for all proposals.

Evaluation of Proposals: Proposals will be evaluated by a team of district administrators and outside experts. Proposals may earn as many as 100 points, and will be scored by evaluators against a rubric. The rubric will be made available to applicants prior to the submission deadline.

Awards: Selected proposals will be funded by the district, by TLA or by a combination of the two. In-kind support from TLA or one of their partners may also be awarded, as appropriate. The number of awards will depend on the quality of proposals. There is no cap on the amount an applicant may request in a proposal. Amounts requested should be reasonable and proportional to the proposed work. Awards may be used to fund operating expenses, including supplies, purchased services, personnel and technology. Awards will be deposited in an account for winning applicants to withdraw as necessary and may be used over the course of three years, according to the approved grant budget. Budget amendments after awards are made must be approved by the superintendent and treasurer.

Reports: Winning applicants will be required to submit regular information on grant spending, implementation progress and performance measures. Reports will be designed in alignment with the approved "Continuous Improvement" plan outlined by the applicant in the proposal narrative (below). Additional expectations - particularly of blended learning-focused projects - might include assisting The Learning Accelerator in gathering research through focused data requests, surveys, site visits or other means as agreed to by TLA, district and school leaders at the time of the award.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are Reynoldsburg schools. Collaborative proposals involving consortia of schools also are permitted. Partnerships with outside organizations/agencies or non-Reynoldsburg schools are encouraged. All funding awards will be made directly to the school or schools applying for funds. Funding designated for partner organizations will be made available only with an approved contract with the district. Contracts may be negotiated and approved after awards are made but prior to payment to outside organizations or non-Reynoldsburg schools. All district procurement practices must be followed (i.e. bidding projects or board approval of contracts as necessary). Eligible projects may be school-wide initiatives, program initiatives or pilot



programs in one or more classrooms. There is no limit on the number of proposals that a school can submit individually or as part of a consortium of schools.

Absolute Priorities

Proposals must address both absolute priorities in order to be eligible for funding. These priorities should be addressed in the proposal narrative in response to the prompts, and need not be addressed as separate sections of the proposal.

Absolute Priority 1: Improving student outcomes. To meet this priority the applicant must define the problem to be solved, set relevant goals and performance measures, and describe how the proposed initiative will directly address the problem.

Absolute Priority 2: Increasing productivity and/or reducing school operating costs. To meet this priority, the applicant must identify areas in the school operational budget where long-term cost-savings will occur. These savings may be achieved by reducing/eliminating expenditures deemed ineffective, no longer needed or less important than the proposed initiative. Savings also may be achieved by replacing expensive line items with less expensive line items. Proposals that generate sufficient revenue to cover increased expenses also will be considered.

Proposal Narrative

Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria. The proposal narrative should include responses to each of the following prompts (a-g). Absolute priorities should be addressed within the responses to these criteria.

- a. Disruptive Innovation:** Explain the problem your proposal addresses. Provide evidence that quantifies and/or qualifies the problem. Explain the significance of the problem. Briefly outline your hypotheses and describe the proposed initiative and the rationale explaining how it will address the problem you have defined. (15 points)
- b. Organization of Resources:** Describe how your team will be structured to meet your targets, as well as a rationale for this structure. Describe the strengths of your team that will be maximized by this structure and how. Identify what your team needs to be successful. Describe the resources and tools that will be provided. Describe what trade-offs will be necessary to sustain this approach in the long term. (20 points)
- c. Participants:** Name all Reynoldsburg schools participating in the proposal, as well as outside partners. Define the number of grade levels, classrooms and students who will be impacted by the proposed initiative. (5 points)
- d. Goals & Performance Measures:** Identify 1-3 goals and related performance measures. Provide baseline data (or describe how you will collect baseline data) for performance measures, and set targets for three years. (5 points)
- e. Scope of Work:** Explain in detail what will be involved in implementation. Include tasks, timelines and responsible parties. (30 points)
- f. Continuous Improvement:** Explain how progress will be evaluated and the process for adapting the initiative based on formative assessments of progress. Describe who will be responsible for monitoring progress and recommending adaptations/improvements. (10 points)
- g. Scalability:** Explain the potential for the initiative to be scaled to additional students or schools, or to be replicated in other contexts. (5 points)

Budget

Narrative: List and explain all expenses associated with the initiative by line item. Distinguish between one-time and ongoing costs. List and explain cost-savings over three years. Explain how any on-going costs related to the proposed initiative will be offset by costs-savings. (10 points)

Budget Tables: Complete the provided budget and forecast. Table 1 is specific to the grant dollars. Table 2, which does not include the grant dollars, shows all operating expenses for the school and should reflect cost savings over three years. (10 points)



Top Ten (OK, 11) Reading List

Inspiration/support for development of Reynoldsburg Disruptive Innovation Investment program

1. Is K–12 blended learning disruptive? It depends
<http://www.christenseninstitute.org/is-k-12-blended-learning-disruptive-it-depends/>
2. Organize the team and then train the teachers
<http://www.christenseninstitute.org/organize-the-team-and-then-train-the-teachers/>
3. Secret to organizing teachers for blended learning
<http://www.christenseninstitute.org/secret-to-organizing-teachers-for-blended-learning/>
4. Blended Learning Educator Competencies
<http://learningaccelerator.org/media/4f1a35f3/TLA-Educator%20Competencies%20v2.2.pdf>
5. School Design 101: The Class Schedule is Your Enemy
<http://www.christenseninstitute.org/school-design-101-the-class-schedule-is-your-enemy/>
6. Optimizing Personalized, Blended, Competency-based Schools
<http://gettingmart.com/2013/11/optimizing-personalized-blended-competency-based-schools/>
7. Redesigning Schools to Extend Excellent Teachers' Reach
<http://opportunityculture.org/reach/>
8. Review of “Breakthrough Leadership in the Digital Age,” by Frederick M. Hess and Bror Saxberg
<http://www.aei-ideas.org/2013/11/review-of-breakthrough-leadership-in-the-digital-age-by-frederick-m-hess-and-bror-saxberg/>
9. Which Way for K-12 Blended Learning?
<http://www.blendmylearning.com/2013/02/12/which-way-for-k12-blended-learning-part-1/>
10. Blended Learning Implementation Guide 2.0
<http://learningaccelerator.org/media/5965a4f8/DLNSS.BL2PDF.9.24.13.pdf>
11. How to Teach 800 Middle Schoolers
<https://www.edsurge.com/n/2014-03-19-how-to-teach-800-middle-schoolers>