



Ohio's Race to the Top Innovative Programs Grant Application

Application Period- March 11-April 8, 2011

Please ensure that ALL questions are answered completely in each of the four sections as incomplete applications will not be returned for modifications or completion.

Section A

1. General School Information

<p>a) Name of Applicant (LEA): Akron Digital Academy</p>	<p>b) Name of School(s): Akron Digital Academy</p>
<p>c) Superintendent of Schools: (or equivalent) Name: Fred Schuett Address: 335 South Main Street, Akron, OH 44308 Telephone: 330-237-2200 Fax: 330-237-2207 Email: fschuett@akron.k12.oh.us</p>	<p>d) LEA RttT Contact: Name: Ed Pfeiffer Address: 335 South Main Street, Akron, OH 44308 Telephone: 330-237-2214 Fax: 330.237.2207 Email: epfeiffe@akron.k12.oh.us</p>
<p>e) School Vision: Ensure all students will receive a quality 21st century education.</p>	<p>f) School Mission: The ADA's mission is to provide a quality, online education grades K-12 that promotes achievement for all students and prepares them for success in completing quality work at the next level.</p>
<p>Primary Goals of School: To provide urban youth the 21st century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers and leaders. To remove the gap between the knowledge and skills students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21st century communities and workplaces. To successfully prepare students for rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges and a globally competitive workforce. To infuse students with critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration; and creativity and innovation skills.</p>	<p>g) Teacher/Student Ratio: 22.82/1 By FTE's from SOES reports of student FTE's April 2011, divided by FTE teachers from Payroll reports, 35 hours per week = 1 FTE teacher</p>

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PLEASE NOTE: In you enter into a collaboration with another LEA, please mark with an * who the FISCAL AGENT will be if selected for one of the competitive grants.

**Names and titles of individuals who participated in the March 10th Innovation Symposium:
Ed Pfeiffer, School Improvement Coordinator and Bill Romano, Special Projects
Coordinator**

2. SCHOOL PROFILE

STUDENT INFORMATION		
Grades served: K-12		
Enrollment (total number of students served in school applying for Innovative Program):		
Grade Level	Enrollment	
Pre K-5	43	
6	18	
7	28	
8	53	
9	215	
10	101	
11	106	
12	82	
Ethnicity and gender data (% of enrollment):		
Black: 47.7%	White: 46.2%	Male: 48.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander: N/A	American Indian/Alaska Native: N/A	
Hispanic: N/A	Multi-Racial: 5.1%	Female: 51.2%
Percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch: 87%		
Percent of students identified as special education: 25.8%		
Names of current competitive grants LEA has been awarded (2010-2011): Race to the Top		
Please attach 2009-2010 school Report Card:		

Section B

1. Please check circle(s) next to the specific Innovative Program(s) for which you are applying. Prioritize your preference order to the right of the program, with "1" being your first priority. **A separate application must be submitted for each Innovative Program.**

- Asia Society (International Studies Schools Network)** _____
- AVID *** _____ 1 _____
- Early College High School** _____
- New Tech Network** _____ 2 _____
- STEM*** _____

***Priority may be given to the lowest-achieving schools**

Section C

Questions Addressing Innovation Selected- Please answer these questions in the text boxes provided. Provide as many details as possible so that the reviewers can gain a good picture of your school.

1. Identify your selected Innovative Program and the reasons for selection.

AVID school wide transformational approach increases achievement for all students. It is a proven system that increases the college enrollment of traditionally underserved students. AVID also provides an intensive professional development program that makes good teachers great. As a full-service community school, the goal of Akron Digital Academy (ADA) is to reduce dropout rates and increase graduation and college-bound rates by providing a targeted educational environment and credit recovery opportunities for at-risk students by addressing both the academic and non-academic barriers to learning. Students' backgrounds at ADA are bleak. Many ADA students have low reading and mathematics achievement scores, at least two years behind their peers, live in multi-generational poverty, have been incarcerated, and/or come from physically and emotionally abusive situations. Many students suffer from wellness issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse, dysfunctional relationships, obesity, diabetes, poor dietary practices and teen pregnancies. They lack the supportive environment of a well-functioning family; have poor peer relationships and social skills with a narrow world view. They lack positive role models and the establishment of a strong work ethic. At-risk students have unrealistic perceptions of their skill levels; therefore, they are unable to set reasonable goals. Additionally the student may have their own alcohol and drug abuse as significant factors contributing to their drop-out rate. We chose AVID to teach ADA students self-determination. As the information above shows, students at ADA arrive with little to no support structure for success. The implementation of AVID will enforce ADA's belief that a school environment conducive to empowering students to become more responsible for their learning will lead to increased grades, increased graduation rate, and increased college-bound students.

ADA's students with their numerous barriers to success still lag behind their traditional school counterparts. Standards-based reform is not the only answer to this discrepancy, but fundamental changes in curriculum and instruction, teacher professional development, school organization, and home-school relations must also take place (The College Board, 1999).

The emphasis on exposure to an academic environment similar to that found in college classrooms, college entry skills and academic survival skills including study, organization, management, and critical reading skills, along with standardized college entrance exam preparation, are integral to for the students at Akron Digital Academy. Targeted by the AVID teacher and tutors in the AVID elective class.

Akron Digital Academy is constantly looking for ways to reform the traditional school setting.

Restructuring schools to meet the needs of all students is the most effective strategy for reducing dropout rates and increasing graduation and college-bound rates. ADA's design is based on proven models of similar schools across the nation, analyzing the successes and challenges of these schools to develop an effective, evidenced-based program.

ADA's programs create a supportive environment to increase expectations, school engagement, and student confidence by providing opportunities for success, communicating the importance of education, and helping students build internal motivators for success, improve problem-solving skills and coping mechanisms.

Our goal by choosing AVID is to prepare more underrepresented students for college, thereby addressing accountability standards such as graduation rates, students graduating on advanced graduation plans, advanced course enrollment, and AP results.

2. In what other school transformation strategies has your school been engaged and its/their status.

ADA was started in 2003 as a traditional e-school. In a traditional e-school, students must possess more personal responsibility and employ a higher level of academic skill compared to their traditional school counterparts. In its first year of operation, ADA served over 130 students who earned more than .5 credits and had a performance index of 38.1. Testing and analysis showed that the average ADA student was at least 2 years behind the original group. Within two years of the original performance index of 38.1 in 2003 ADA had achieved a performance index score in the mid 70s. Over the years ADA has evolved to better accommodate its at-risk student population by providing different transformation strategies to ensure that the most effective and successful teaching methods are employed. Today, ADA is considered a hybrid, charter school. This model allows for students to have labs to meet and work with teachers, attend enrichment classes, and get the additional help necessary for at-risk students to succeed. Since 2003 ADA has continued to implement innovative transformation strategies. These strategies have been implemented in hopes of improving our performance.

Akron Digital Academy believes that transformation strategies are essential to achieving a successful work environment for our student population. Akron Digital Academy competed for and won the Race to the Top grant. As winners of this grant, ADA has established the Transformation Strategy Assurance Areas. Individuals who are able to focus on each assurance area. ADA is in the process of implementing this transformation throughout all of our sites. As a result of winning the Race to the Top award Akron Digital Academy is in the process of creating a heavily data-driven environment.

ADA also implemented Direct Instruction to enrich the online curriculum offered to our students. ADA as a hybrid, charter school was started as a way to serve the at-risk student population that local school districts no longer had the resources to focus on. Students at ADA are provided a free computer so that they may work on the online curriculum from home. We do ask that they attend labs twice a week either in the morning or afternoon in order to have an opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss curriculum as well as take quizzes and tests. ADA students learn more than the typical student. The Direct Instruction is utilized as an enhancement to the already existing online curriculum. Teachers are tasked with identifying subjects that our students typically struggle with and offering hands-on presentations that bring the curriculum into a real world setting. Direct Instruction has been successful with our at-risk student population. They find that Direct Instruction helps clarify and solidify concepts and it enhances their learning experience. This is an ongoing addition to our online curriculum.

Akron Digital Academy has established Professional Learning Communities (PCL). These PCL's consist of content departments meeting twice a month to discuss best practices. This forum provides content area teachers the opportunity to learn what is working for their colleagues and to share what is working. It allows ADA teachers to learn from each other in a continuous search for improvement in their methods and delivery.

Gaining Productive Skills is a credit-recovery dropout prevention program that is geared towards students ages 16-22, who have less than 5 credits towards their high school diploma. This program has transformed the way ADA teachers teach. Over 34% of students in Akron's local schools need school-based mental health counseling; 23% exhibit a history of substance abuse, and over 60% are considered economically disadvantaged. Goals, strategies and evaluations for academic and wellness goals are articulated in each individualized plan monitored by teachers, wellness coordinators and a special education consultant.

ADA implements an authentic, interdisciplinary Project-Based curriculum aligned with the OACS. Students actively participate in meaningful projects and community service relevant to their experiences, developing knowledge competencies, application and reflection. This type of project-based learning and an interdisciplinary curriculum better engages at-risk learners. Additional projects include establishing relationships with local employers to provide students career readiness skills, and student-managed small business projects to provide economics experiences. ADA also provides additional instructional time through an extended day and school year to include, tutoring, basic life skills, counseling, and part-time work experiences. Trained, interdisciplinary staff mentors students, teaching necessary skills for success in school and in life.

The position of School Improvement Coordinator was created over 2 years ago. This position is dedicated to researching and identifying ways that ADA can re-imagine teaching and learning for our students. This position has worked with a team to identify and implement Scantron which is used school wide as a benchmark. When students enroll at Akron Digital Academy they are required to take the Scantron test. From this information ADA can ensure that students are being placed at the right level for their learning ability. Students are tested two additional times throughout the year to gauge improvement. The Scantron tests help teachers, parents and students identify the appropriate individualized learning plan that will best serve the student. The School Improvement Coordinator is also dedicated to coordinating the RtT.

Even with all of the above transformation strategies, Akron Digital Academy's performance index has hovered around the mid 70s. It is time for Akron Digital Academy to innovate again in order to fully succeed in ensuring that all students are prepared to succeed at the next level. The innovative school model, formed around project based learning with a focus on 21st Century Skills will provide the pathway to ensure academic and career success in all that our students do. In an increasingly competitive global economy, it is not enough for students to acquire subject-level knowledge alone. Skills like creativity, problem-solving, communication and analytical thinking are necessary for all levels of success, from entry-level jobs in engineering and technical fields. The AVID model helps today's schools create an environment that prepares students for college success, work readiness and increases student's awareness of basic employability skills (such as attendance, timeliness and work ethic).

3. Describe the capacity your LEA/school has to ensure a successful implementation.

The Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Program Directors have fully committed to the implementation of AVID. The Executive Director, Fred Schuett and the members of the Board are in the process of developing an AVID Site Team that includes an Administrator, AVID Coordinator/Teacher, Core Subject Teachers and a School Counselor, The selected members of the AVID Site Team will be respected site leaders who work well with secondary school personnel and college students and faculty, who can organize curriculum as well as activities, and who is committed to serving the needs of target students. The team will act as partners with their colleagues ensuring that AVID methodologies are implemented school wide. This team will be in attendance at one of AVID's Summer Institutes. ADA is in the process of confirming their Master Calendar and upon award of the grant will add the AVID Elective. This elective, for our at-risk student population will enhance the programs that we currently offer throughout their experience at ADA. Many of our students need additional help learning organizational and study skills, critical thinking and asking probing questions, get academic help from peers and college tutors, and enrichment and motivational activities that make college seem attainable. Tutors are essential to the success of the AVID elective class, where they facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum. As students from colleges and universities, tutors receive formal training and also serve as role models. AVID students who continue their education in college often return to the program as tutors. The AVID implementation team will take an extensive look at our students testing scores on OGT, OAA, and Scantron to ensure that students are placed at the right level to ensure success. The team will also consider wellness and personal goal completion listed in each student's individualized learning plan. Through our Board Member, Dr Sajit Zachariah, Associate Dean of Education, College of Education a partnership will be established that allows Akron Digital Academy to recruit tutors and train them properly to ensure success with the AVID Elective class. Akron Digital Academy is dedicated to implementing the AVID methodologies in content area. ADA will implement AVID school wide through strong committed leadership, evidence of outstanding student achievement, and creating a school wide college going culture that targets college readiness as the basic expectation.

4. How will you integrate the specific Innovative Program into your school culture and current transformation plan/Scope of Work?

At Akron Digital Academy, with the current implementation of a Career Education program as well as Race to the Top, AVID will enhance these already existing strategies. The Executive Director, Fred Schuett and the Board of Directors have already defined the vision of ADA with the use of AVID as a place where underrepresented students can come and enjoy the opportunity to excel and meet the high expectations of college readiness.

The selected site team will mentor and support all teachers in implementing AVID strategies, methodologies, and resource materials. Teachers will meet bi-monthly to discuss AVID strategies as well as successes and failures.

All classrooms are modeled on the AVID classroom to increase student achievement and parent engagement across the entire school.

ADA will utilize the AVID division staff and consultants to provide ongoing coaching, training and support to transform the culture.

5. How will implementation of this Innovative Program increase student achievement and progress in your LEA/school for ALL students?

The Ohio State Board of Education minimum academic performance measurement is that 75% of students in 6th & 8th grade are at or above the proficiency level on statewide assessments. The standard increases to 85% of students at or above proficiency for the result of the 9th grade test by the end of 10th grade. In addition, non-test standards include 90% graduation rate and 93% attendance rate. As a state, Ohio is not meeting the identified standards for 10th grade students in reading and math. ADA's 2008-2009 OGT scores showed 64.9% of 10th graders were proficient or better in reading vs. 66.2 % in 2009-2010 on the OGTs. Compared to Akron Public Schools (APS), 2008-2009 students, 75.2% scored proficient or better in reading vs. 74.2% for 2009-2010 on the OGTs. ADA students, 2008-2009, were 54.4% proficient or better in math vs. 62.2% for 2009-2010. Compared to APS, 2008-2009 71.6% of their students were at or above a proficient math level vs. 69.4% for 2009-2010 on the OGTs. This data indicates that while improvements have been made there is still a significant portion of Akron's, student population that is not proficient in reading and/or math. Many of these students are part of major student subgroups, which include minority populations, economically disadvantaged students, & students with disabilities. AVID will help Akron Digital Academy increase academic and social benefits by: (1) 80% of the first cohort of students will improve raw scores on state-wide reading/language arts and mathematics tests by more than 8 points and on local assessments by 10%; (2) 85% of the students entering the program during the year will continue to attend and decrease their overall absences by 5%; (3) Graduation rates will increase by 50% with the collection of life and academic skills geared toward success; and (4) College acceptance will increase by 25%. Evaluation and assessment of the program's PPOs will be time specific and include: student, teacher and parent.

AVID will increase the completion rate of 4 year college entrance requirements for ADA students. Based on research AVID has helped; 94% of African Americans complete college entrance requirements vs. only 25% for African Americans nationwide without AVID; Latinos by 90% vs. 22%; and Caucasians enjoy 92% success with AVID whereas environments without it only 39% of Caucasians are successful. With the demographic break down of Akron Digital Academy as 46.2% Caucasian, 47.7% African American, and 5.1% Multi-racial AVID's proven track record will help our students increase the completion rate of college entrance requirements.

Students who take algebra in eighth grade are prepared for more advanced coursework in math and science once they reach high school. They are also more likely to attend and graduate from college than eighth-graders who do not take algebra. AVID encourages its junior high students to pursue college-preparatory coursework such as algebra, and they complete it at an impressive rate of 61% vs. 22% for the nation without AVID. With our current 8th grade Math scores on the OAs at 31% performing at or above proficient the rigorous course work AVID provides will help bring more of our students up to or above proficient and allow the students prepared to excel to do so.

In the Akron area, 6 high schools have graduation rates between 73.1% and 78.7%. Other at-risk programs in the area have graduation rates of 7.4%, 8.9%, and 11.2%. Akron Digital Academy currently has 35.1% of its graduates have been accepted to college. The implementation of AVID will help increase graduation rates as well as college acceptance rates. When AVID is implemented into schools they have a success rate of over 98% of seniors graduating from high school. From the graduated seniors, 71% are accepted to four-year colleges. AVID is also successful in closing the achievement gap with proven college- and career-readiness instructional strategies. It will turn our schools around to cultures of achievement and hope with its evidence-based system

6. How will you sustain this Innovative Program post RttT?

The unique nature and success of AVID schools increases the capacity to develop a sustainability plan. Several factors, such as the anticipated achievement of ADA AVID students, the distinctive high quality infusion model using a Highly Qualified faculty, and the specialized make-up of the Board of Directors (representing stakeholders with invested interest and expertise) will interact to attract new partners and serve as rationale for funding sources. The Board of Directors has proven to be an insightful, bright, and forward-thinking unit that will continue to guide and support ADA's evolution as each member of the Board brings specific experiences and expertise to the governance responsibilities. AVID's model will increase parent and student interest, ensuring its continuation and expansion.

Akron Digital Academy (ADA) understands successful collaboration is the key to sustainability. ADA partnerships are acquired based on need indicated by the multiple data sources supporting informed programmatic decisions. The membership of the Board of Directors is stable and invested in the AVID program. They understand alternative education and the programmatic and personal strategies necessary to meet the needs of at-risk learners and forge a path to postsecondary success. ADA staff will work hard to build authentic partnerships, working toward common goals of all stakeholders. All of these strategies work to create and sustain ownership of and investment in AVID and will easily transfer to the future. Continual pursuit of local, state, national and private grant funding will ensure continuation and growth. AVID is an extremely cost-effective solution that embeds sustainability into a school through the methodologies and professional development that become part of the school culture. Implementation costs are frontloaded during the first three years of implementation so that sustaining the program in the long run is affordable. AVID Center helps to sustain the program by providing member schools with: Divisional training events, Ongoing Site Team Support, Annual Certification Process, and Ongoing technical assistance from Program Managers and consultants

7. Describe any potential challenges or barriers with the mandatory professional development and Innovative Program requirements for the framework that you have selected. What strategies will your LEA/school implement to overcome these potential obstacles ?

AVID has developed a flexible implementation timeline to accommodate start-up in Ohio. The planning and implementation of new methodologies across the board always presents barriers. The problem that often occurs is proper training and development in the new processes, procedures, and climate that comes with the re-imaging of teaching and learning. ADA is dedicated to overcoming any potential barriers by ensuring fidelity of implementation. Utilizing the tools provided as part of the AVID framework, focus on prioritizing communication through all the appropriate channels. Sharing the benefits of AVID will allow teachers and staff alike to seamlessly understand the end goal and more readily buy into the AVID way of teaching.

AVID provides several opportunities for core subject teachers and administrators to meet and work together to discuss strengths and weaknesses about their teaching/administrative methods. The majority of AVID's professional development seminars including the Summer Institutes in Chicago or Dallas will ensure that our teachers and staff are well versed in how to deliver AVID and why it is an integral part of college and career readiness. Teachers will be able to utilize AVID's numerous online training opportunities to reduce missed class time. AVID's seminars ensures that the staff will be fully prepared and well versed to deliver an exciting college and career readiness curriculum.

Another potential barrier that many large school systems face when taking on a new program or establishing a specialty school are Unions. When Unions exist in schools, schools are required to properly request teachers in order to assign them to new projects. This process prevents school systems from having autonomy in the staff decision making process. Akron Digital Academy is not a unionized school district.

Lastly, to ensure quick and accessible technical assistance, local program managers and consultants are available via phone, e-mail or in-person.

8. How will the implementation of this Innovative Program increase college and career readiness of all students?

By implementing the AVID College Readiness System the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges and succeed in postsecondary education and training will increase. AVID's school wide approach will influence the belief system, culture and instructional strategies of Akron Digital Academy. AVID is an intensive professional development program that makes good teachers great. AVID will work with ADA's students because it will accelerate under achieving students through more rigorous course work, broaden academic skills, provide in-class tutors for additional support, create a positive peer group for students and develop a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination. All students, particularly low-income and minority students will close the achievement gap and be ready for success in a global society. Students' critical thinking, reading and writing abilities will allow them to participate and succeed in courses of high rigor and better prepares them for postsecondary access and success. ADA with the implementation of AVID will build a culture of college- and career-readiness and confidence in the ability of all students to achieve their dreams; thus creating an exponentially positive momentum to transform schools and school districts. AVID will transform the leadership, structure, instruction, and culture of the ADA all in pursuit of college and career readiness. Of the 256 students who currently participate in AVID nationwide, 99.2% are enrolled in a "College Prep" track of courses. Students will develop as readers and writers, improve communication skills, critical thinking skills, develop specific content strategies, and appropriate behaviors to be successful in college and the working world.

9. Identify a timeline to achieve a successful implementation.

AVID has adapted its standard implementation timeline for a quick start in Ohio. ADA is dedicated to adhering to that schedule to ensure an efficient implementation.

2011

April - June: AVID divisional staff work with schools to prepare for implementation in school year 2011-2012. Select an AVID District Director, Identify schools where AVID will be implemented, Execute AVID Implementation contract with AVID Center, District Director plans to attend first week of required AVID District Leadership training in the fall, Identify resources for full implementation of the AVID program at all campuses that will implement AVID. Add AVID to the Master Schedule, Identify the AVID elective teacher(s) and a campus administrator on each campus who will be part of the campus AVID site team, Clarify the goals of the program for school faculty and parents to gain their input and support, Provide faculty and parent awareness session(s) about AVID, Identify resources for full implementation of the AVID program at all campuses that will implement AVID, Sign and return AVID Contract, Register for the AVID Summer Institute (AVID District Director, or school, is responsible), Continue to build faculty awareness of AVID, Identify the interdisciplinary AVID site team, Identify and recruit students for AVID Elective Class, Schedule class and students for fall semester, Register for the AVID Summer Institute, Make Summer Institute travel/hotel arrangements for AVID Site Team, Recruit and hire college students as AVID tutors for the fall semester, Schedule and plan AVID tutor training,

July - August: Summer Institute Training, Curriculum Library is delivered to sites per the AVID contracts, AVID teams attend an AVID Summer Institute, During Summer Institute, write AVID Site Team Plan for the site.

August-September: AVID Elective Begins, District Director begins AVID District Leadership training Tutors are hired and begin work, Trained AVID teachers begin using AVID strategies in Elective and content classes, AVID school team implements their Site Team Plan and begins monthly meetings, Teachers continue to attend local workshops and trainings by AVID Center, AVID divisional staff coach and support the school via visits, WebExs, phone calls and local trainings.

10. Why should your LEA/school be awarded an Innovative Programs grant?

Mastery of 21st century skills occurs through intentional instructional design, direct instruction of quality curriculum and meaningful assessments— regardless of whether the students complete courses online or in a brick and mortar building. Akron Digital Academy, as an e-school is inherently well-equipped to provide expanded and innovative learning opportunities. The leaders at Akron Digital Academy have embraced the 21st century skills vision and they are dedicated to employing teaching and learning methods into our current online strengths and achieve outcomes that matter for our students.

ADA's leaders want to include 21st century skills directly, intentionally and measurably into design and quality standards. AVID will allow the students to utilize high quality course design standards. Students in general and particularly at-risk students need skills to learn and study—and keep learning throughout their lives. They need “college knowledge” to gain admission to and navigate the postsecondary system. Students utilizing AVID can learn core subject knowledge and higher-order thinking skills through career exploration in career and technical education programs, work-based learning experiences, or both.

Akron Digital Academy is dedicated to implementing AVID because we have seen firsthand what project-based learning can do for at-risk students. Students' backgrounds at ADA are bleak. Many ADA students have low reading and mathematics achievement scores, at least two years behind their peers, live in multi-generational poverty, have been incarcerated, and/or come from physically and emotionally abusive situations. Many students suffer from wellness issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse, dysfunctional relationships, obesity, diabetes, poor dietary practices and teen pregnancies. They will lack the supportive environment of a well-functioning family; have poor peer relationships and social skills with a narrow world view. They lack positive role models and the establishment of a strong work ethic. At-risk students will have unrealistic perceptions of their skill levels; therefore, they are unable to set reasonable goals. Additionally the student may have their own alcohol and drug abuse as significant factors contributing to their drop-out rate. Over 35% of ADA students are in need of mental health counseling, 21% are pregnant or parenting, 66% have juvenile records and 23% have a history of drug and alcohol abuse. Economic status is one indicator of Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) passage rates and 90% of ADA students are economically disadvantaged.

Akron Digital Academy focuses on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and family and community engagement in order to improve student achievement and attendance, stronger and more involved families, and healthier communities.

ADA currently works with a Family and Civic Engagement team that aids in parent and community involvement. Community members that serve on the board include the Next Step Program, Akron Urban League, Mustard Seed Development Center, and Greenleaf Family Center. These partners provide services that allow ADA to provide a “blended” learning environment where students not only gain academic readiness, but necessary life skills to succeed in life.

ADA has struggled for the past 6 years to raise our performance index out of the 70s. We are constantly looking for innovative ways that will help increase our student's success.

Akron Digital Academy students have been skating by their entire life. No one has asked much of them or expected anything from them. The implementation of a rigorous, curriculum that pushes students to take responsibility and accountability for their learning success is exactly what Akron Digital Academy need to raise their performance index out of Academic Watch into the next level. Many ADA students are historically underserved in four-year colleges, they would be the first to attend college, and come from a low-income household. But, each one of these students possesses academic potential that needs cultivation and support to flourish. These students are often left behind by the traditional system and eventually drop out of high school never reaching their full potential. They need a school climate that is dedicated to providing an alternative way of learning and does not see their barriers as preventing them from success. College and career readiness in this ever-changing global environment is more important now than ever. Ohio still lags behind the nation in the proportion of college graduates--almost 27% of adults living in the US held at least a bachelor's degree in 2002. It is well documented that education is an important indicator of economic well being. Not only do higher levels of educational attainment translate into higher earnings on both the individual and national level, but in many circumstances more education leads to better levels of health and well being. In the Akron alone, an estimated 2,400 students dropped out of high school in 2010 at great costs to themselves and to their communities. Cutting that number of dropouts in half for this single high school class could result in tremendous economic benefits to the region. Akron Digital Academy wants to implement the AVID model because we know that a project based program that focuses on 21st century skills will provide at-risk students the opportunity to realize their full potential thus potentially resulting in fewer dropouts and more college educated individuals.

SECTION D

Please include LEA Name, IRN#, and proposed Innovation Program information at the top of this table. Include a breakdown of the annual expenditures anticipated in each budget category during each grant-year that equals the total dollar amount of the innovation program selected.

Proposed Innovation: AKRON DIGITAL ACADEMY 149054					
Budget Categories	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
Salaries (100)					\$ -
Retirement/ Fringe Benefits (200)					\$ -
Purchase Services (400)	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	\$ 56,000
Supplies (500)					\$ -
Capital Outlay (600)					\$ -
Other (800)					\$ -
9. Total Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

RHT Innovative Programs grant applications may be found on the Ohio Department of Education website under Race to the Top at:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=694>

Interested LEA/Schools are required to submit the requested grant information electronically to jay.keeper@ode.state.oh.us no later than **Friday, April 8, 2011.**

Questions may be directed to
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