



**Ohio's Race to the Top Innovative Programs Grant Application**

**Application Period- March 11-May 20, 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) <b>Name of Applicant (LEA):</b></p> <p>Dr. Judy Hennessey</p>	<p>b) <b>Name of School(s):</b></p> <p><i>Dayton Early College Academy and yet unnamed K-6 school</i></p>
<p>c) <b>Superintendent of Schools: (or equivalent)</b></p> <p>Name: Dr. Judy Hennessey</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>300 College Park Dayton, OH 45469</p> <p>Telephone: 937-229-5780</p> <p>Fax: 937-229-5786</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>judy.hennessey@notes.udayton.edu</p>	<p>d) <b>LEA RttT Contact:</b></p> <p>Name: Dr. Judy Hennessey</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>300 College Park Dayton, OH 45469</p> <p>Telephone: 937-229-5780</p> <p>Fax: 937-229-5786</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Judy.hennessey@notes.udayton.edu</p>
<p>e) <b>School Vision:</b></p> <p>A K-12 rigorous school system for urban youth to position 100% of its graduates to enroll and graduate from college</p>	<p>f) <b>School Mission:</b></p> <p>The Dayton Early College Academy immerses prospective first generation college students in a uniquely personalized high school to assure they will succeed in college</p>

<p>g) <b>Primary Goals of School:</b></p> <p><i>Prepare prospective first generation urban students for college – academically, socially, emotionally, and financially</i></p>	<p>h) <b>Teacher/Student Ratio:</b></p> <p>18</p>
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**PLEASE NOTE: In you enter into a collaboration with another LEA, please mark with an \* which LEA will serve as the FISCAL AGENT if selected for one of the competitive grants.**

**Names and titles of individuals who participated in the March 10<sup>th</sup> Innovation Symposium :**

**Dr. Judy Hennessey (superintendent) and Dr. Marge Mott (PCSP Dissemination Project Director)**

**2. SCHOOL PROFILE**

STUDENT INFORMATION		
<b>Grades served: proposed K-6</b>		
<b>Enrollment (total number of students served in school applying for Innovative Program):</b>		
Grade Level	Enrollment	
Pre K-5	<b>480</b>	
6	Current DECA data	80
7	↓	83
8	↓	85
9	↓	105
10	↓	44
11	↓	36
12	↓	40
<b>Ethnicity and gender data (% of enrollment):</b>		
<b>Current DECA data project similar ratios in K-6</b>		
Black: 78.4%	White: 11.6%	Male: 36%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 0	American Indian/Alaska Native: 0	
Hispanic: 2%	Multi-Racial: 5.4%	Female: 64%
<b>Percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch: 73.7%</b>		
<b>Percent of students identified as special education: 3%</b>		
<b>Names of current competitive grants LEA has been awarded (2010-2011):</b>		
<b>PSCP Dissemination Grant, Mathile Family Foundation Grant</b>		
<b>Please attach 2009-2010 school Report Card: attached</b>		

## **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 \*** \_\_\_\_\_
- Early College High School** \_\_\_\_\_
- New Tech Network** \_\_\_\_\_
- STEM\*** \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Proven Model (please list)** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*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. (Note: If "Other", please include research evidence that justifies how the "other" innovation will accelerate student achievement and progress.**

This proposal from the Dayton Early College Academy (DECA) to launch a K-6 school replicates many successful strategies employed by the early college model and is truly an innovative response to the myriad problems in urban education. As educators, we are excited about the new school's potential to initiate the Dayton Public School District's youngest students into an academically rigorous school environment that pairs high expectations with nurturing support. Based on our successes since DECA's inception in 2003, we believe the new school will pre-empt achievement gaps and prepare self-confident, college-ready graduates. With genuine learning as its mission, the school will help to break the cycle of poverty and set a new generation of Daytonians firmly on a path toward productivity and prosperity. **DECA proposes to create a "college-going" K-6 urban school as a next step in the research and development of the early college model.**

This proposal for an elementary school that uses educational strategies shown to be successful in the DECA model is rich with research opportunities. We believe it will address the following specific problems in urban education:

## 1. Problem: School cultures of low expectations and alienation

For low-income students, a college education is becoming one of the only ways to escape the cycle of insolvency all too familiar to their relatives and friends. It is essential for schools to help these students believe that a demographic characteristic will not predict their fate.

According to the Jobs for the Future website, one in ten students from the bottom socioeconomic quintile attends and graduates from college. For more privileged students, those statistics are significantly more favorable, with one out of every two students earning a four-year degree.

Benard (2003) writes in Closing the Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices, "Of course, higher expectations must be accompanied by the supports necessary to achieve them. High standards without concomitant supports would not only be ludicrous but cruel and frustrating, robbing students of their intrinsic motivation for learning...Inherent in high expectations is the 'no-excuses' message. (p. 5).

Hoffman, Vargas, and Santos (2007) summarize, "To create a successful transition to postsecondary education and get on a secure path to attaining a credential...a rigorous academic program that sequences and scaffolds academic demands in a trajectory that moves without break is essential" (p. 19).

Hoffman et al. (2007) cite the work of two other urban researchers, Nakkula and Foster, in the publication, *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It*, reporting that, "The transition to postsecondary education can be demoralizing and humiliating for students coming from under-resourced and underperforming high schools. Their research over many years tells them that most students have the intelligence to catch up, but psychological factors often stand in the way" (p. 22). DECA's experience would echo this but add that for most students, creating the foundation for academic rigor must begin, at minimum, in the primary grades, pre-empting low expectations followed by poor results.

### Implications for Action:

DECA must address the cumulative effect of low expectations every day, in every facet of the early college high school experience. To counter this, one of the pivotal strategies has been to create a culture of achievement where learning expectations are fixed, but the time to achieve them is variable. In practical terms, students who fail to meet a standards-based assessment are not given a low grade and then pushed onto the next assignment. Instead, work is revised and resubmitted until mastered; skills are re-taught and then reassessed. DECA embeds college readiness into every aspect of the curriculum, forcing the faculty to teach for deeper understanding of high priority concepts. (The work of Doug Reeves and The Leadership and Learning Center and David Conley's College Knowledge has served as a guide for implementing DECA's standards-based curriculum.)

Consistent with Ohio's RtT focus on formative assessment, from the beginning of students' first year at DECA, a data trail follows them. Data-driven instruction is commonplace. If "red flags" are raised, students enter into a series of intensive interventions. This process often leads to before, during, and after-school tutoring/study tables, participation in study groups, mentoring from a peer or volunteer, mandatory review sessions before reassessment, additional community placements (e.g. internships) to reinforce the relevancy of the skill(s) in its natural application, or more instruction outside the school day. Each student has a teacher-advisor who is ultimately responsible for tracking the data for his/her advisees. This role affords a

primary point of contact for parents, with the contact being current about the status of the student's data.

Equally important is DECA's concerted efforts to create a "college-going" culture through every aspect of the school facility, curriculum, policies and practices, and pedagogy. DECA's absolute focus on preparing students for college has taught us to attend to the social, emotional, and financial challenges for first-generation college students. The power of high school students actually attending college classes on the college campus cannot be overstated. Students begin to mirror the academic behaviors of their college classmates, as well as internalize the will to persevere through difficult subject matter and stressful family circumstances. DECA celebrations are centered on academic improvement; extra-curriculars are academic competitions and activities. Community volunteers are recruited to tell their college journeys, including how they managed finances and loans, roommates from different cultures and levels of wealth, etc. The same focus on creating a community of college going will dictate practice in the K-6 school.

## **2. Problem: Poor academic results---inadequate preparation to compete in college**

In "Rising above the Gathering Storm Revisited," the presidents of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering and the Institute of Medicine (2010) conclude:

In spite of sometimes heroic efforts and occasional very bright spots, our overall public school system—or more accurately 14,000 systems—has shown little sign of improvement, particularly in math and science. Finally, many other nations *have* been markedly progressing, thereby affecting America's relative ability to compete effectively for new factories, research laboratories, administrative centers-and jobs...The only promising avenue for achieving this latter outcome, in the view of the *Gathering Storm* committee and many others, is through innovation (p. 4).

Locally, achievement data continue to document the low performance of students in Dayton's lowest socio-economic school districts. The Learn to Earn Project (2010) gathered longitudinal data on the 3,202 students who entered ninth grade in 1998-1999 in the five poorest districts in the Dayton area. By 2001-2002, at the end of twelfth grade, 1,312 students had dropped out. Seven years later, the original pool produced only sixty-two college graduates.

A review of Dayton Public and charter elementary school report cards verifies the lack of solid academic results. Seventeen of Dayton's twenty-two elementaries are either in *academic watch* or *academic emergency*. Charters fare only slightly better. Many students enter DECA in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, ill-prepared to tackle grade-appropriate content. In some years, fully half of the class has been two or more grade levels behind in math; 30% in reading. Students become frustrated with the expectations for increased engagement in class and homework. Students must learn to multi-task to meet DECA's series of performance milestones. DECA classes, college courses, and independent community-based experiences must be juggled simultaneously. Despite many support services, too many students simply give up and transfer to schools where they believe compliance will earn them passing grades.

### **Implications for Action:**

DECA employs a performance-based curriculum that emphasizes the development of thinking skills rather than the mere acquisition of information. The curriculum uses the core standards developed in the Ohio Department of Education model. Additionally, science and math curricula also are based on recommendations from National Science Teachers Association, the national Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and research from the National

Mathematics Advisory Panel. Implementation of DECA's rigorous single track curriculum is built upon six critical strategies: (1) the attainment of core knowledge and skills that builds a base for college readiness; (2) student and teacher performance are data driven; (3) each learner is an individual and should have an individualized plan; (4) each student's ideal pace is different; (5) soundly constructed indicators from a wide range of learning and skill-building components replace arbitrary measures such as Carnegie units as determinants of learning; and (6) student success is not negotiable.

Nearly all of DECA's graduates, 87% of who are the first in their families to go to college, have enrolled in college. Tracking student retention and college graduation, DECA has found a remarkable 84% of DECA graduates are on track to earn a bachelor's degree or have graduated. This is in stark contrast to a less than ten percent college graduation rate for students of poverty reported in Minding the Gap (2007). As measured in college preparation ACT scores, DECA's results have grown steadily to a composite average of 20.5. This compares with Dayton Public Schools' scores of 17 where only 30% of graduates even take the ACT and an average of 21 for all students in Ohio who take the test. (While outstanding by urban school standards, our objective is to see our graduates compete with the best suburban schools and average ACT scores in the mid 20's.) First-try passage rates on the Ohio Graduation Test have ranged from 96% to 100% over the last five test cycles. DECA has performed similarly to the other schools participating in the end-of-course exams –in challenging content such as chemistry, pre-calculus, and algebra II. From both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, DECA is a successful urban high school reform.

Adequately prepared students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade will result in meaningfully better college preparation for our high school graduates. Higher college admission scores directly impact college scholarships and grants to our financially needy students. Young students, their families, and their teachers will be held accountable for results in each grade and in each content area.

Much of what has worked in the successful early college high schools, including DECA, appears to be the concurrent changes in expectations for urban learners and the development of a nurturing school culture with almost “no excuses” achievement.

### 3. **Problem: The prevalence of “the pedagogy of poverty”**

It is important to review the seminal work of Martin Haberman when developing an urban school that purports to raise academic expectations to position students for subsequent college readiness. In his explanation of the “The Pedagogy of Poverty Versus Good Teaching,” Haberman (1991) describes the classrooms of the poverty, based on his observations in thousands of urban schools. He notes:

(It is) a tightly controlled routine in which teachers dispense, then test students on, factual information; assign seatwork; and punish noncompliance.

Essentially, it is a pedagogy ‘in which learners can succeed without becoming either involved or thoughtful (p. 4).’ He observes that it is ‘noticeably different from the questioning, discovering, arguing, and collaborating that is more common among students in suburban and private school’ (p. 4).

Haberman (1991) says that two conditions must be exhibited before there can be a serious alternative to the pedagogy of poverty: (1) the whole school faculty and school community, not the individual teacher, must be the unit of change, and (2) there must be patience and persistence of application. Haberman's work will serve as foundational to DECA's development of this K-6 early college elementary. His description of quality teaching will be studied and referenced as instructional decisions are made.

Similarly, in the “Study of Academic Instruction for Disadvantaged Students: Academic Challenge for the Children of Poverty,” researchers Knapp, Shields and Turnbull (1992) concluded:

Students extensively exposed to instruction emphasizing meaning and understanding perform better on tests of advanced academic skills at the end of the school year, even after initial differences in student achievement and poverty level are taken into account (p. iii).

In “Breaking the Cycle of Poverty,” Lewis argues, “At the core of the problems of those on or nearly on welfare is the inadequacy of the schools’ efforts to teach what they should first and foremost—language. Children must learn to read, write, speak, and listen” (p. 186).

### **Implications for Action:**

Ohio’s RtTt goals include the improvement of instruction through improved student assessment and more rigorous curriculum in the core content of English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Congruent with these goals, the K-6 early college elementary will work to redefine the pedagogy of poverty. With direction from the work of Haberman and his associates, the K-6 instructional strategies will have the following in common: they emphasize meaning and understanding, embed the teaching of discrete skills in content, and draw connections between academic learning and students’ home lives. Specifically, the following practices will be the focus of the K-6 pedagogy:

- *Mathematics*: instruction on multiple mathematical topics with emphasis on non-routine problems as well as skill building
- *Reading*: instruction aimed at maximizing comprehension—explicitly teaching comprehension strategies, integrating reading and writing, increasing the amount of time students read text, and providing opportunities for children to discuss what they are reading
- *Writing*: integrating reading and writing, teaching the writing process and mechanics in context, and writing extended text (e.g. whole stories, reports, poems, and journals). (Lewis, 1996).

#### **4. Problem: Parent disengagement**

In her book, “A Framework for Understanding Poverty,” researcher Ruby Payne (2005) cites James Comer assessment of the problem of disengagement : “No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship” (p. 4). The work by Payne (2005) has contributed to the knowledge of the hidden rules of those who live in poverty, in the middle case, or in wealth. Typically, schools operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of the middle class. She reminds educators,

An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he was raised. Even though the income of the individual may rise significantly, many of the patterns of thought, social interaction, cognitive strategies, etc. remain with the individual...Two things that move one out of poverty are education and relationships (p. 3).

Considerable evidence points to a common feeling of disconnect or disengagement of parents from schools in families of generational poverty (Shipler, 2004), (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997), (Natale, 1992). Yet, for adults from poverty, the primary motivation for their success will be in their relationships. Urban schools must plan relationship-building with their

parents. In fact, action plans for school improvement that do not include a concerted and consistent effort to partner with parents in meaningful ways will have slim chances of succeeding.

**Implications for Action:**

Experienced urban educators know they cannot bring about change alone and welcome the contribution of families, community-based organizations, and community volunteers to grow the capacity of their schools. DECA has structured its outreach to parents in unconventional ways. The results have been exceptional. Upon enrolling their child in DECA, parents sign a compact with the school indicating they will attend the parent academies tailored to their child's cohort group and their child's performance milestone conferences. Attendance is taken and parents are reminded of their commitment if they miss meetings. Transportation and babysitting are offered. Building parent attendance into the performance requirements provides leverage. Even more important than coming to school by parents is whether parents provide insistence, expectations, and support at home. Many of our parent sessions include speakers on how to interact with adolescents in positive ways. DECA teacher-advisors communicate diligently with the families of their advisees and are available to them after school hours. Having a primary point of contact lessens parents' fears of reaching out to the school. As DECA's practice has reinforced, when parents are treated respectfully, and held to their commitments, children see the primary adults in their lives as a unified force. In the end, DECA's relationships with parents expand DECA's ability to create a community around college-going. The plans for the K-6 school focus on capitalizing on the lessons learned at DECA about meaningful, respectful parent engagement.

**5. Problem: Few opportunities for students to see the application of skills in the community**

Sacks (2011) wrote that in light of predictions that urban environments and infrastructures will become increasingly unstable, K-12 schools will need to work in much closer connection with their communities. According to Adams (2011), it is application to real-life experiences that brings education alive. It turns kids on if they take an action component and make an improvement in their school community or backyard. Oakes and Saunders (2009) sum up the school-community experience saying, "Being able to experience these kinds of programs-flexible, intensive, drawing on human interaction and real-world problem-solving – will help them meet the lifelong learning needs that await them" (p. 3).

**Implications for Action:** DECA is truly a community school in the sense that it was developed with and continues to enjoy significant support and assistance from a wide range of partners in the Dayton community. A major component in the early college model is student acculturation to college, so DECA's higher education partners, University of Dayton, Sinclair Community College, and Wright State University, add critical dimension to this early college K-12 proposal. These institutions facilitate DECA student enrollment in introductory level courses, actively recruit DECA graduates into their undergraduate programs, and design programs that help DECA students and their families to better understand college admissions and the higher education environment. DECA has developed close ties with area businesses and government/nonprofit agencies to support its requirements that students complete a required Corporate Etiquette course and participate in job shadowing, career planning research, volunteer service, and non-paid internships. Based on this overwhelmingly positive experience, the K-6 program will capitalize on the opportunity to reinforce skills in their natural settings. Professional development will be needed to explore the possible community locations and develop lesson plans that incorporate the community.

**6. Problem: Teacher evaluation processes fail to increase teacher efficacy and fail to remove marginal teachers.**

Many positive ideas for the improvement of teacher evaluation are presented in the literature and research. Peterson (1995) summarized, in chronological order, notable directions to improve current practice: independent support systems for teachers; evaluation of evaluators, such as supervisors and principals; prudent development and use of student questionnaires; consideration of teaching content as part of every teacher evaluation; examination of actual student growth; and inclusion of a professional portfolio. The researchers recognized the pervasive dissatisfaction with teacher evaluation practice resulting in "...professionals who are non-idealistic, timid, conservative, alienated, and ultimately, of lower quality" (p. 210). While many teacher evaluation efforts are poorly conceived and have resulted in unintentional, nonprofessional conceptions of teaching, the focus on teacher competence has brought national recognition that teachers are the key component to sustained educational reform.

### **Implications for Action:**

Consistent with Ohio's RttT emphasis on designing teacher evaluation that considers student achievement as one data point in measuring the efficacy of teachers, DECA has committed to identifying the metrics of successful teaching in our non-traditional setting, both at the teacher level and the school as a unit. DECA has four years of experience with faculty compensation based on school performance but much work needs to be done to differentiate evaluation used to identify the technical competence (classroom instruction, assessment, classroom discipline, etc.) of entry level teachers from the more subtle and critically important mastery teacher competencies (for example, classroom control as a consequence of teaching rather than as a prerequisite) developed over time. Using multiple measures and providing classroom-embedded support will help translating those metrics into fair evaluations for teachers and administrators in the K-6 school. Accountability, fairness, and supreme importance placed on student growth will guide our efforts.

### **Summary**

Groups leading reform such as the Leadership and Learning Center argue that the highest performing schools who serve children of poverty made decisive, dramatic changes in their curricula, pedagogy, teacher assignment, assessment, and styles of leadership at all grade levels. Most importantly, they created a culture of achievement K-12. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in its 2005 report, "High Performing School Districts: Challenge, Support, Alignment, and Choice," offered this conclusion: "It is easier to start a good school than fix a bad one..." (p. 2). While the discussion of college readiness may seem counter-intuitive when planning for primary students, the evidence would suggest K-12 "college going" schools makes absolute sense.

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

DECA is involved in seven school transformation initiatives. They are: (1) **RttT**- engaged as both a charter school and an early college high school; (2) **Aspirations demonstration site**- one of six Ohio demonstration sites for Aspirations (My Voice) led by the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations; (3) **Battelle for Kids Ohio Value-Added High School initiative**- beta test site for end-of-course exams and professional development to forge new pathways to college; (4) **early college high school student assessment protocol**- student assessment prototype for performance-based high schools funded by Jobs for the Future; (5) **computer-based mathematics intervention**- pilot location for Sinclair Community College's mathematics modules to address gaps in foundational topics and avoid prolonged enrollment in developmental courses; (6) **field trials for the "common application"**- participation in the refinement of the "common application" used nationally by over 400 private colleges and universities ; (7) **Public Charter School Program (PCSP) dissemination grant** -DECA was

awarded a PCSP dissemination grant with the major activity being a two-day institute to be held in June, 2011.

(1) DECA has outlined an ambitious RtT scope-of-work, both as a LEA and as an early college. The transformation team has met weekly and content cohort groups have begun the task of translating the new standards into formative assessments. DECA's assessments are tied directly to the standards at the indicator skill level. Our RtT work is congruent with the student assessment protocol project with Jobs for the Future. A teacher research committee has worked closely with Sysinterface to refine the customized software used to track performance data. Their work triggered a deep analysis of value-added data and grading practices and exposed weaknesses and unintended consequences of some of the performance assessments. While performance-based graduation requirements are problematic when the time comes to translate them into a traditional transcript preferred by colleges, DECA faculty see the value of embedding "college-going" behaviors (preparation courses for ACT, college visits, college applications, scholarship essays, non-paid internships, etc.) into the requirements. RtT has supported this careful audit of DECA's assessment practices and will result in a refined system that can be replicated in other performance-based high schools.

DECA's RtT scope-of-work also includes continued commitment to institutionalize the coaching model of professional development. Groundwork has been laid to empower teachers to propose a teacher evaluative system that, at minimum, uses multiple measures, including student growth as the significant factor. DECA's faculty and administrator compensation for the previous three years has been based on school-wide metrics. The culture of the school supports high performance for faculty and the removal of low-performing teachers after they have received opportunities and support to improve. No less will be expected in the K-6 school. State-led professional development will be helpful as DECA and the K-6 school work with other LEAS, both traditional and charter, to address the evaluation challenge. This is exciting work and DECA, with its flexibility and supportive governing authority, wants to be on the leading edge of professional evaluation practice.

(2) Another area of groundbreaking work is our partnership with the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations. The Ohio Department of Education selected DECA as one of six demonstration sites for the use of Quaglia survey data as a strategy to create school cultures of higher academic expectation. DECA has four years of experience administering and analyzing the results of Quaglia's student and faculty surveys. The survey results are benchmarked against eight conditions of high performing schools (*Belonging, Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun & Excitement, Curiosity & Creativity, Spirit of Adventure, Leadership & Responsibility and Confidence to Take Action*). To date, we have hosted the research team and chief academic officer to begin our work as a demonstration site. While our survey results are strong, there are areas where we anticipate professional development from the Institute, beginning with participation in the Aspirations Boot Camp in June 2011 and bi-monthly follow-up visits next year. DECA will then be a site for professional development and consultation with other Ohio schools attempting to improve their student engagement and aspirations through culture.

(3) As part of Battelle for Kids Ohio Value-Added High Schools initiative, DECA has participated in the testing of end-of-course exams for the past two years. Value-added analysis at the school-, subject-, and teacher-level has strengthened our curriculum and targeted interventions. Modifications to pedagogy, course offerings, and formative assessment have resulted. ACT end-of-course exams have been given in all offered subjects: Algebra I, Algebra II, Precalculus, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, and English 9, 10, and 11. DECA continues to participate in professional development with other beta sites for Battelle for Kids as part of this project. DECA has engaged in professional development in assessment, value-added achievement tracking, and alternative teacher evaluation systems.

(4) Jobs for the Future (the lead coordinator, manager, and policy advocate for the Early College High School Initiative for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) has partnered with DECA for the past two years to develop and refine software to track multiple data points for individual student achievement. As software development is both expensive and tedious, DECA has welcomed this support. The ultimate goal is to have a user-friendly tracking system for traditional academic assessments, as well as community-based and independent projects. The tool must allow for disaggregation of data to afford teachers the diagnostic information to reinstruct and reassess power indicators. Jobs for the Future plans to present this assessment protocol nationally as an alternative to single-data point assessments.

(5) Capitalizing on our close association with Sinclair Community College, our math content chair has served on a problem-solving task force examining the needs of college students who repeatedly fall into the “developmental math” trap. These students perform poorly on the Accuplacer and must successfully pass developmental courses as a prerequisite for credit-bearing ones. Currently, Sinclair has placed a lab-based course at DECA to pilot this form of intervention. A DECA teacher instructs the lab and the data are shared with the Sinclair task force. We expect to continue this pilot next year. Again, this demonstrates DECA's ability to engage in sustained research and development of strategies focused on college readiness.

(6) DECA's college liaison is on the national advisory board to assess the validity and utility of the common application. The intent is to position students to state their best cases for admissions in a simplified “one stop” process. DECA students have engaged in this application process and our input is an attempt to articulate the issues with potential first-generation college applicants. (The Common Application is a not-for-profit membership organization committed to providing reliable services that promote equity, access, and integrity in the college application process. The Common Application provides both online and print versions of its First-year and Transfer Applications to more than 400 institutions, representing the full range of higher education institutions in the United States. )

(7) Finally, DECA will present a two-day institute this June as part of the PCSP dissemination grant. Ten Ohio school teams who work in high-poverty schools or existing or new charter schools will engage in activities to enhance their own efforts at creating a culture of achievement through personalized high school experiences, demanding academics, and building a peer coaching program. The institute will afford time and suggest mechanisms for participating schools to create follow up action plans and timelines, congruent with the RttT transformation plans.

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

Several factors result in DECA's ability to implement this proposal as the operator of the K-6 early college elementary school: the strength of the DECA Board of Trustees; capacity of administrative leadership; track record of stellar financial management; faculty leadership; extensive parent and community ownership; and university engagement.

While it is anticipated that the governing authority of the K-6 school will be slightly different, the same stringent process will be exercised in the selection of trustees. The current DECA Board includes business and community leaders with financial and leadership expertise, as well as representation from parents. Voting members include retired and senior executives (two CEOs and two vice-presidents) of international corporations, a medical system, and a community college, as well as a partner of a large law firm. Ex-officio members are professional educators, including the University of Dayton's Dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions, the DECA superintendent and principal, one liaison from the Dayton Public Schools, and a retired engineer now consulting in STEM education. Dr. Thomas Lasley, former Dean and executive director of the Dayton region's “Learn to Earn” initiative continues as a consultant to the DECA Board. DECA Board members possess the

following qualifications at minimum: history of leadership on corporate and non-profit boards, educational expertise, business acumen, significant fundraising experience, and extensive experience managing large budgets. With these strengths, the board is positioned to lead the creation and implementation of a K-6 elementary school which replicates the success of the junior-senior high school. The K-6 Board will have the powers permitted by law to manage the new school's business and financial affairs. It will establish policy and oversee operations, ensuring that the K-6 school operates according to its authorizing contract and federal, state, and local laws.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the board adopts an annual budget; appoints and evaluates the superintendent and treasurer; develops, implements, and monitors the school's policies; reports to the sponsor, DECA parents, and the community. The board delegates authority and responsibility for managing day-to-day instructional and administrative operations to the superintendent and principal. The current superintendent earned a doctorate in school leadership and has twenty-five years of administrative experience. She served as superintendent of one of Ohio's highest performing districts (Oakwood City) for seven years. She also founded and led a successful primary school. Her past experiences with grants include successful awards from the Gates Foundation, the US Department of Education, the Mathile Family Foundation, and the Ohio Department of Education. The designated K-6 principal has served as a superintendent in two school districts, as well as principal of a middle school and a district curriculum director. His leadership has been exceptional in engaging teachers in the use of data to direct reform at the classroom level. The board's and administrators' capacity to lead the creation of the K-6 school are further evidenced by DECA's many successes in its four years of operation as an Ohio charter school focused on college readiness.

It is important to note several other governance practices that speak to DECA's ability to operate a new charter school: (1) DECA has been audited each year and has received the best opinion possible by the State Auditor's office. (2) DECA has planned and implemented a succession plan for school leadership. The current DECA principal began his teaching career at DECA and assumed various roles until appointed the principal in the 2010-11 school year. Other aspiring leaders are being groomed for leadership roles. (3) The school's leadership team is exceptional. Teachers and support staff are integral to any programmatic decisions; they are vested in recruitment and selection of teachers, budget planning, curricular initiatives, and community interface. (4) DECA has embedded its community-based learning in more than ninety businesses and non-profits in the greater Dayton community. Students job shadow, complete non-paid internships, and fulfill community service to expose them to a wide variety of careers. This has resulted in broad support for the K-6 school. In fact, DECA has a cadre of one hundred thirty "foster alumni" assisting in many roles to provide the support DECA students need. (5) DECA's parent contract with the school has resulted in an exceptionally high level of participation of parents in students' performance presentations and parent education workshops (offered through Title I funding). Focus groups of parents have substantiated the support of parents to create a K-6 school with the focus on college readiness from day one. Parents have been willing to invest their time and other resources as volunteers for a variety of activities. (6) DECA has full intentions to continue its close association with the University of Dayton, Sinclair Community College, and Wright State University as it plans and implements the K-6 school. Currently, UD serves as DECA's academic operator, overseeing the curriculum and instruction. UD is also a source of many volunteers. Sinclair is the host school for most of the college classes DECA students take while in high school. Wright State has engaged in a number of initiatives to introduce students to college majors, in particular, the Young Business Scholars for DECA students interested in pursuing business majors.

DECA was originally a 9-12 early college high school. With its expansion to grades seven and eight, DECA created a school within the school. Early results have affirmed that decision:

Now, DECA has the capacity and commitment to create the elementary experience needed for college readiness—not just college eligibility—of its graduates. This would be ground-breaking

research, leading to a K-12 prototype for urban schools focused on college accessibility for all students.

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

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2005) concludes, "The common challenge, from classroom to state house, is to build a much more productive educational system---a transformation requiring an environment of high challenge and high support" (p. 3).

This proposal offers DECA the opportunity to create a high performing prototype for K-12 urban schools—an innovative early college system that delivers college-ready graduates, both academically and socially. This proposal also represents the opportunity to extend the scope of work already defined in DECA's RttT plan to a K-12 effort:

- 1. Faculties of both schools will meet often to plan activities to create the college-going community K-12. Bold actions to improve student learning will be recognized and supported. Teachers K-12 will know their students and students will own their learning.**

*Relationship with Ohio RttT:* Early college high schools have increased graduation rates, reduced graduate rate gaps, and increased college enrollment among students aged 19 and below. However, bolder, earlier action must be taken to better prepare students for the rigor of ECHS and create school cultures where it is ok to be smart.

**Content cohorts will meet to coordinate curriculum and community experiences K-12. Cross content pollination will be the work of instructional teams consisting of teachers from mixed grades and content.**

*Relationship with Ohio RttT:* Professional development to build the capacity of individual teachers to translate the new, more challenging standards into lesson planning and formative assessment is integral to Ohio's plan.

- 2. The relentless pursuit of the effective match between individual learners and teaching strategies will rely on data to inform short and long term instructional planning.**

*Relationship with Ohio RttT:* Broad, effective use of data to improve instruction is central to Ohio's RttT plan. Professional development, strong leadership, and sustained focus will be required to meet the full range of goals by 2014.

- 3. Teacher and principal evaluation will result from the analysis of multiple data points, with importance placed on student growth and system-wide outcome data.**

*Relationship with Ohio RttT:* Using Ohio's talent pool, great teachers and principals will staff Ohio's classrooms. Evaluations will be based on student growth, and reflect adequate support for teachers to become masterful in their classrooms. Marginal teachers will be removed from Ohio's classrooms.

- 5. Parent academies will be coordinated K-12. Young parents will be inspired by the results--- DECA graduates enrolling and graduating from college. College going behaviors will be the common language of parent meetings K-12.**

Relationship with Ohio RttT: Transformation plans will not succeed if parents are left out.

Transformation and communication plans required by RttT allow for local differences and nuances but uniformly require that parents be players in school reforms.

6. **Instruction in all classrooms K-12 will include a repertoire of common strategies, DECA's instructional framework, designed to promote the use of cooperative learning groups and the judicious use of classroom discussion and independent work. Instructional coaches will reinforce a shared pedagogy and align and embed professional development to support it.**
7. Relationship with Ohio RttT: Professional development for teachers has evolved to become more results-oriented, more classroom –based, and more fluid, depending on the transformation plans of the school and district. State-wide professional development grows the capacity of Ohio's schools and provides common reform language. Professional development must respond to the needs of the teachers in ways that are more accessible and timely than the status quo.
8. **New teacher selection and induction will be a joint function with faculty from both schools engaged in selection committees, peer coaching, and mentoring.**

Relationship with Ohio RttT: The critical factor in student growth is the skill of teachers. New teachers require special attention. When existing faculty engage in the selection of new cohorts, they mentor and assist them more readily. Great teachers are developed at the local level, beginning with the selection and induction processes.

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

Implementation increase student achievement for ALL:

In the recently published longitudinal study "Double Jeopardy," Donald Hernandez (2011) offers the following findings:

- One in six children who is not reading proficiently in third grade does not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers.
- Children who have lived in poverty and are not reading proficiently in third grade are about three times more likely to dropout or fail to graduate from high school than those who have never been poor.
- Black and Hispanic children who are not reading proficiently in third grade are about twice as likely as similar white children not to graduate from high school. (p. 3)

Hernandez asserts,

Educators and researchers have long recognized the importance of mastering reading by the end of third grade. Students who fail to reach this critical milestone often falter in the later grades...What's more the study shows that poverty has a powerful influence on graduation rates. The combined effect of reading poorly and living in poverty puts these children in double jeopardy (p.3).

Richard Milner IV (2010) agrees and states,

Research tells us again and again that when students do not achieve, their underachievement is a function of the opportunities that they either have—or have not had. There is no question that opportunity gaps are pervasive in

education, and, by opportunity gaps, I mean stark differences in students' exposure and experiences—their economic resources, the qualifications of their teachers' expectations, and their parents' involvement in their education (p. 1).

David Conley (2005) believes that after more than ten years of research and development, the construct of early college has demonstrated merit in more than 200 schools and with more than 80,000 students across the United States. Early college high schools have offered urban, mostly poor, students the opportunity for rigorous academics, indeed considerable college experience while in high school. The data verify the efficacy of highly personalized, college-focused small high schools.

DECA's experience, however, especially with the addition of seventh and eighth grades, has shown that the construct generates even more powerful impact when students in earlier grades are immersed in its rigor and high expectations. Our belief is that the building blocks of college readiness begin with the earliest grades, as evidenced by Hernandez' (2011) findings.

This proposal takes action to address the inherent weaknesses so clearly exposed by Hernandez' study—the undeniable, almost insurmountable skill gaps created when students' elementary grades are substandard and they live in poverty. This proposal will set in motion an elementary K-6 school mirroring DECA's singular goal of preparing potential first generation college students through three foci: (1) literacy for ALL students with third-grade reading proficiency by third grade; (2) heavy emphasis on early STEM experiences to create aspiration and confidence to master challenging core content in high school; and (3) proficiency in Algebra I content in the eighth grade as the path to college readiness in mathematics. The addition of the K-6 school ultimately strengthens the viability of the early college model.

DECA's curriculum plan will create a literacy program to not only teach how to read by third grade but also to meet the grade-level expectations of a literacy continuum for grades 4-6. As students begin to "read to learn," a strong emphasis will be on establishing the practices that characterize exceptionally strong academic schools with high poverty populations, according to Reeves (2003). Among these are an emphasis on nonfiction reading and writing; collaborative scoring of student work; frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement; frequent feedback to students and parents regarding progress in literacy; and mid-course corrections when data indicate the instruction has not been successful. It is expected that all adults in the K-6 school will be engaged in literacy initiatives and teacher collaboration an everyday practice. The balanced literacy approach calls for guided reading, intensive word study, writer's workshop, and interactive writing. Instructional coaches model techniques, provide additional help for at-risk students, and facilitate collaborative groups to plan and analyze specific pedagogy. As cited before, it will be essential to replicate DECA's culture of collaborative decision-making, led by a non-authoritative principal to achieve this set of literacy goals. The "cross-pollination" of culture will begin as the K-6 principal selects teachers who have both content experience and desire to work with urban students. The K-6 faculty will interface with their DECA cohorts on a regular basis. Faculty must communicate across grade levels if the literacy goal of all ninth graders being proficient in English/language arts content BY THE NINTH GRADE is to be achieved (Conley, 2005).

Similarly, early science and math experiences will require radically different pedagogy from that documented in studies of failing urban schools. DECA has learned that classroom instruction forcing students to apply fundamentals to create a very specific product (cardstock roller coasters in physics, construction of a robot, etc.) are superior to purely didactic approaches. It is expected that elementary and secondary faculty from the two schools will plan a continuum of labs and experiments to maximize the relationships between math and science teaching. Daily attention to vocabulary building, informational text, use of graphics, and scaffolding will make difficult STEM concepts accessible to the K-6 population. Using what has already been done locally, DECA will access the P-12 curriculum and the professional development of the Dayton Regional STEM Center.

This proposal does not imply that by merely creating a K-6 school, the results will come. Urban education is complex. While it is clear in the literature that, "Students who plan to take advanced mathematics and science courses during high school and begin to study algebra during middle school are at a clear advantage..." According to NELS, approximately 60% of the students who took calculus in high school had taken algebra in eighth grade. The typical high school sequence of rigorous science courses (biology, chemistry, and physics) also necessitates an early background in algebra and geometry, according to the U.S. Department of Education (1997). A white paper on the instruction of algebra in Virginia's Henrico County Public Schools (2008) reports, "Especially troubling is the way mathematics appears to separate the 'haves' from the 'have-nots.'" Research for the U.S. Department of Education by Horn and Bobbitt (2002) revealed 14 percent of first-generation of college-bound students took high school-level in the eighth grade compared with 34 percent of students whose parents were college graduates. We recognize that many current DECA students are not ready for algebra as ninth graders; the goal of ensuring all eighth graders have solid algebra concepts is doable, however, with additional instructional time, razor-sharp focus, and enormous classroom creativity.

The metrics to assess the K-6 program in literacy and STEM content are grounded in the Ohio content standards. DECA's commitment to ACT end-of-course exams set the exit standards and tracking college graduations make the end-product transparent. This process must begin, at minimum, in kindergarten—with clear instructional focus and the expectation that all students will meet or exceed grade-level benchmarks.

## **6. How will you sustain this Innovative Program post RHT?**

If DECA is to meet the challenge of having all of its graduates truly prepared for college—particularly if students choose a STEM major—the creation of the K-6 school is seen as a critical evolutionary step. DECA has a history of sustainability studies/research. Pilot projects are designed, implemented, and then evaluated for efficacy. Programs demonstrating merit toward our singular goal of preparing prospective first-generation students for college have been built into the operating budget, often requiring less effective programs to be discontinued. Examples of this process are the retention of "OGT Boot Camps" offered on Saturdays, the use of after-school review sessions before permitting retakes of major exams; and the use of flexible summer sessions to remediate specific power indicators within content areas. Conversely, the use of MAP testing has been eliminated once a student passes the OGT and replaced with computer-based ACT preparation.

To assess the financial viability of a K-6 early college elementary, a school finance expert and former Centerville (OH) schools treasurer, Dr. Steven Hinshaw created a budget model for the proposed K-6 charter school. Dr. Hinshaw assumed similar revenues from both state and Federal sources as projected for FY' 12. He also used a composite blend of a teaching triad for calculating expected personnel costs (in this scenario, one staff member makes a \$45,000 salary and the two other faculty members make \$35,000 each; benefits are estimated at 33%.) While neither the state nor Federal budget process has been completed, this is a reasonable projection. With an initial enrollment of 200 students in grades K-2 and 6, the elementary school would be financially sustainable. However, the elementary school's financial position would improve with increased enrollment when all grades K-6 are represented in the budget. The enrollment goal is eighty students per grade level or a total enrollment of 560. The critical assumption is that the elementary school could "break even" within the first couple of years of operation, with a beginning enrollment of 200 students. Please refer to the budget model attached to email submission.

It is also important to consider that DECA has consistently worked with private donors to sustain essential programs not funded by public revenues. Donors have been generous and eager in their support of DECA and its success with Dayton's urban student population, generating nearly \$90,000 per year in project-specific and unrestricted revenues. Already the goals of this project have been

shared with current donors and referenced in inquiries for potential foundation grants. The award of this grant would allow DECA to leverage the other potential sources of support. Aggressive efforts to secure other grants, as well as private philanthropy, will enable DECA to implement research-based approaches and refine the ECHS model K-12.

Given the current job market, sustainability factors such as availability of skilled, vested teachers and administrators are less problematic. Similarly, competitive purchase service vendors for network maintenance, EMIS data submission, and school nursing and speech therapy services, etc. are readily available. The City of Dayton has been cooperative in the past regarding code regulations. With many empty facilities within the city boundaries, securing a suitable location for the school may be labor-intensive but clearly feasible on the established timeline.

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 ?**

Potential challenges/barriers for PD and strategies to overcome

All innovations face challenges. As the innovation attempts fundamental change, the challenges and barriers evolve along with the reform effort. Michael Fullan (1991) in his book The New Meaning of Educational Change , was clear about the role of professional development in creating learning-enriched schools, stating, "...staff development cannot be separated from school development" (p.331).

At the initial stage of the creation of this K-6 school, four potential challenges with the professional development requirements are identified with this proposal:

- (1) Lack of local exemplars- As outlined earlier, the Dayton community has virtually no exemplars of high performing elementary schools in the core city. The leadership team charged with planning the creation of the K-6 school has visited a number of urban charter schools, both in Ohio and other states, whose metrics indicate strong programs in the primary grades. Meetings have also been held with the highest performing suburban district in the Dayton area. The budget reflects modest costs to **continue networking with these successful urban elementaries** where travel is involved.
- (2) Time- While the planning phase of the school affords adequate time to recruit students, select a faculty, and order the necessary start-up supplies and equipment, time will also be allocated to the on-going enculturation of the faculty, staff, and parents to a "college-going" environment. DECA faculty has eagerly engaged in professional development when it is job-embedded, culturally-relevant, and focused on either content or pedagogy. As example, two years ago, all teachers at DECA committed to training in professional coaching. Subsequently, all DECA teachers have assumed the role of coach and have been coached by a peer. RtTT funds will continue the position of a full time job coach, thereby maintaining the emphasis on shared technical help, scaffolded content, and interdisciplinary connections. The same culture of shared expertise and willingness to seek help from professional cohorts will be the expectation for the K-6 faculty. A full time instructional coach is reflected in this budget proposal. Many lessons have also been learned about the selection and induction of new faculty. DECA's support network has resulted in faculty stability and improved instruction in classrooms taught by entry year teachers. **Embedding professional development in the classroom will be the primary strategy to address the ever-present demand for more time.**

- (3) Adequate technical expertise- DECA plans to seek technical support through its network with high performing schools and through **the expertise of Doug Reeves and the Leadership and Learning Center, as well as continued association with Battelle for Kids and Jobs for the Future**. Doug Reeves has worked extensively with Ohio districts, helping schools bridge the critical gap from knowledge to action, taking plans through the sometimes messy process of implementation. Their most significant work is their study of the 90/90/90 schools (90% poverty, 90% minority, 90% of students meeting or exceeding standards).

Battelle for Kids' SOAR Collaborative is a school improvement collaborative designed to accelerate student progress through comprehensive use of value-added information to innovate and leverage strategic school improvement efforts. SOAR enables advocacy, innovation, collaboration, and the exploration of new opportunities to provide the greatest impact on student learning. DECA has been engaged in the SOAR Collaborative since its inception. Their support has positioned DECA to use the RtTT activities to drive student growth.

(4) Resources – Resources for professional development are pivotal to the success of the K-6 school. **The budget in this proposal reflects the necessary support to replicate the culture of achievement developed at DECA.** Extensive efforts to inculcate new faculty with the practices of a personalized school will be especially critical. Professional development must provide teachers with the level of support necessary to face the challenges unique to urban classrooms. The use of an instructional coach with extensive literacy training would be provided by these funds. Additionally, teachers would be expected to observe in high performing school, both urban and suburban, and then share their learning with the staff. Experience has taught us that resources are needed to not only create high expectations for teachers but also to provide the resources to needed to make those high expectations reasonable. Sustained, job-embedded professional development will be the deciding factor in the success of the K-6 school. The supreme importance attached to professional development is evidenced in the budget proposal in the form of an instructional coach, provision of classroom observations in other high performing schools, and time for specific skill training in formative assessment, literacy across content, and culture-building around achievement, and other pedagogy---all directed at building the capacity of the K-6 team to create “college-going learners.”

8. **How will the implementation of this Innovative Program increase college and career readiness of all students?**
9. **(1)Replication of DECA's career-going culture** – As part of an early college high school, DECA students are expected to prepare for, enroll in, and experience college courses while in high school. Many deliberate steps have been taken to create and sustain this culture. For example, performance requirements dictate college visits, college-board test preparation, independent reading, and relentless writing of the three-five page, cogent paper. Extra-curriculars are academic with membership in Mock Trial and Robotics considered high status. Parent education is presented through a series of parent academies on the emotional, academic, and financial aspects of college with the goal to create a community of parents around going to college. Attention is paid to personal accountability and a sense of connectedness in each student. All teachers serve the dual role of content teacher and advisor to a core group of students, called advisories. Students are coached in how to mentor younger students in their advisories. Even the physical environment reminds students at every turn of the advantages of going to college.

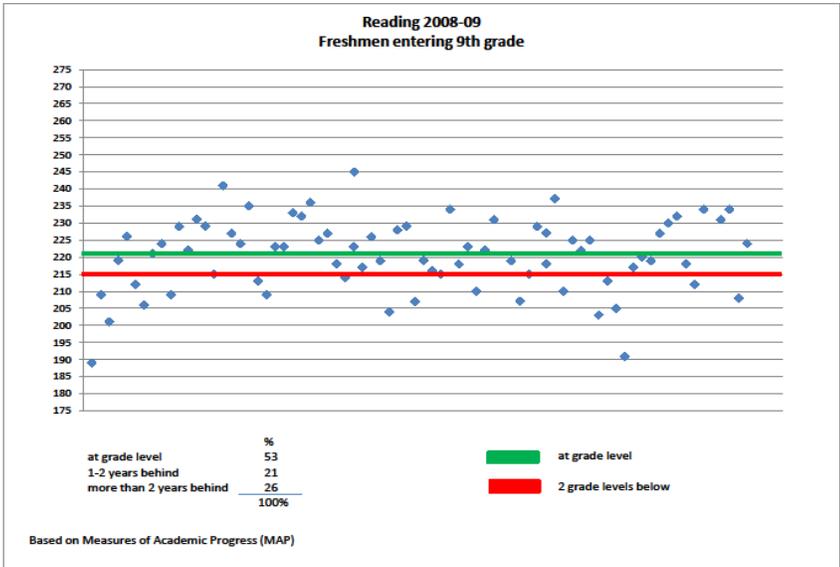
Empirical evidence has been collected to measure the perceived impact of culture-building strategies over time. Using the My Voice student survey instrument, data collected over a four year period illuminates the perceptions of DECA students regarding the academic climate and culture of their school. These data are dissected by faculty teams each year, examining trends that might reflect differences in the needs of cohort groups and/or a specific gender. It bears repeating that a culture of achievement is seen as the single biggest contributor to DECA's track record of nearly 100% of its graduates enrolling in college and 84% of its first four graduating classes still enrolled or graduated. The same deliberate multi-faceted process and relentless attention to culture-building is proposed for the K-6 school.

**(2) Use of an aligned curriculum K-12 with science and math literacy giving students true access to college preparatory content when they enter high school** – The curricular emphasis of the K-6 school will be literacy in both language arts and math. As stated earlier, students must be grounded in **how to read by third grade**. Using reading skills to learn will be the emphasis of grades 4-6 across all content. The capacity to understand text and other non-fiction will be augmented with the type of experiences that make science, math, and social studies memorable. Schmoker (2006) in his book, *Results Now*, supports this almost singular mission:

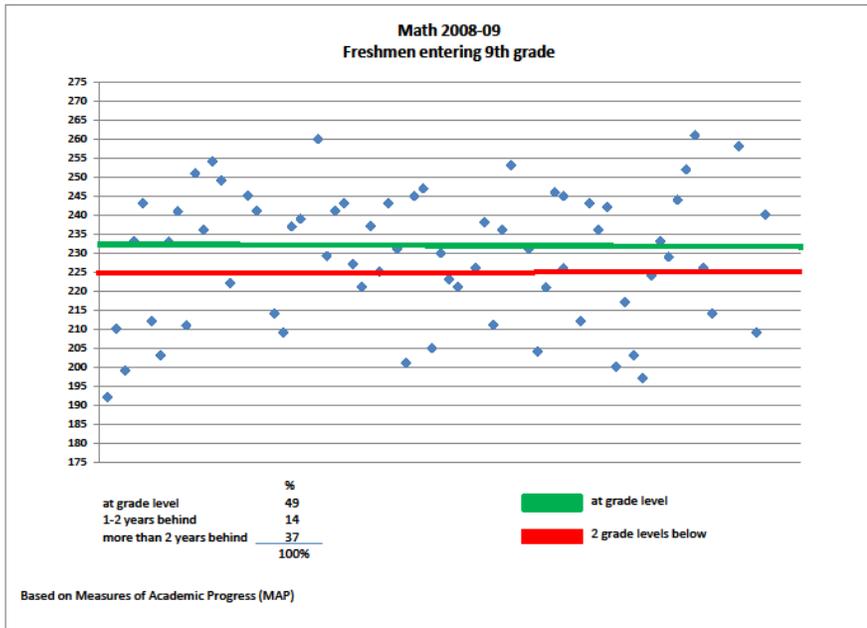
*Generous amounts of close, purposeful reading, rereading, writing, and talking, as underemphasized as they are in K-12 education, are the essence of authentic literacy. These simple activities are the foundation for a trained powerful mind- and a promising future. They are the way up and out-of boredom, poverty and intellectual inadequacy. And they're the ticket to ensuring record numbers of minority and disadvantaged youngsters attend and graduate from college (p.53).*

With a K-12 focus, it is important for all teachers to understand the common core. K-6 teachers will develop standards that support the goals of students being prepared to take algebra in the eighth grade, as well as physics and chemistry in the later grades. DECA's experience has taught us that partnering with science incubators, such as Tec^Edge, IdCast, and the Wright Patterson Air Force Base Sensors Directorate, afford students the opportunity to discern that STEM majors are realistic for them. Summer residencies for teachers have strengthened core instruction and stretched teachers' confident use of projects and labs. The framework for cross-pollination of a K-12 curriculum has been established. Math and science literacy will begin in kindergarten with the goal of students reaching the seventh grade ready for grade-appropriate or above application of content.

While being ready for high school courses in ninth grade seem to be a given for most suburban students, the data tell a different story for DECA. As demonstrated in these charts, the entry level reading and math skills of ninth graders indicate that 47% are not ready for high school reading and 51% for math curriculum.

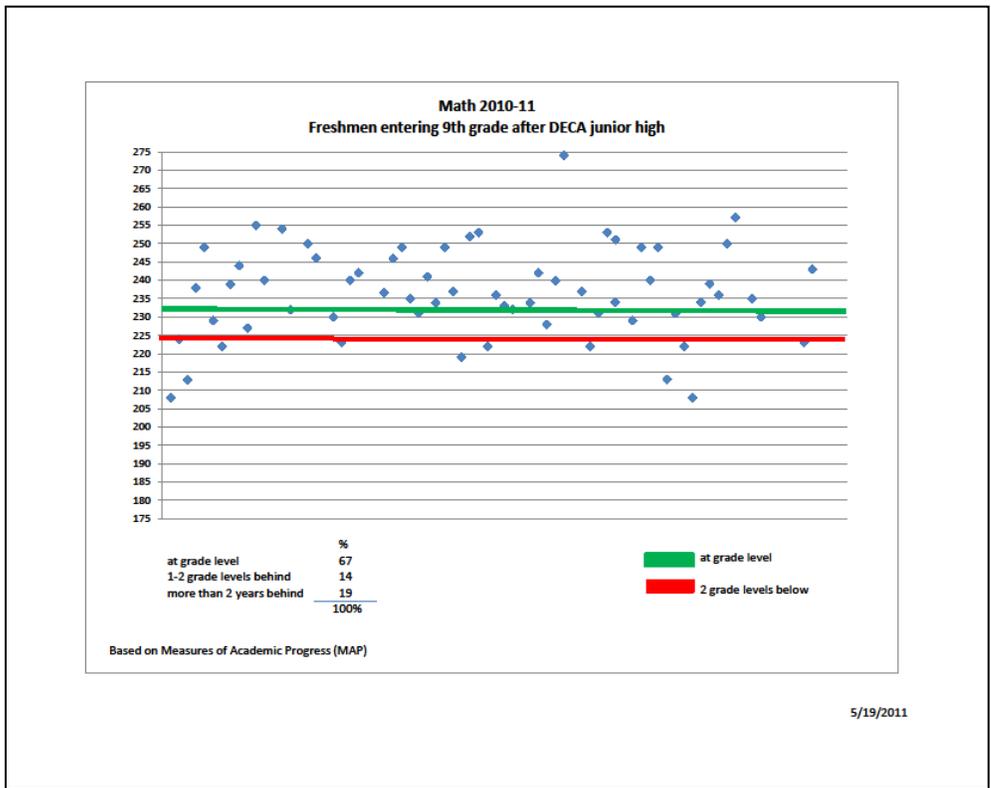
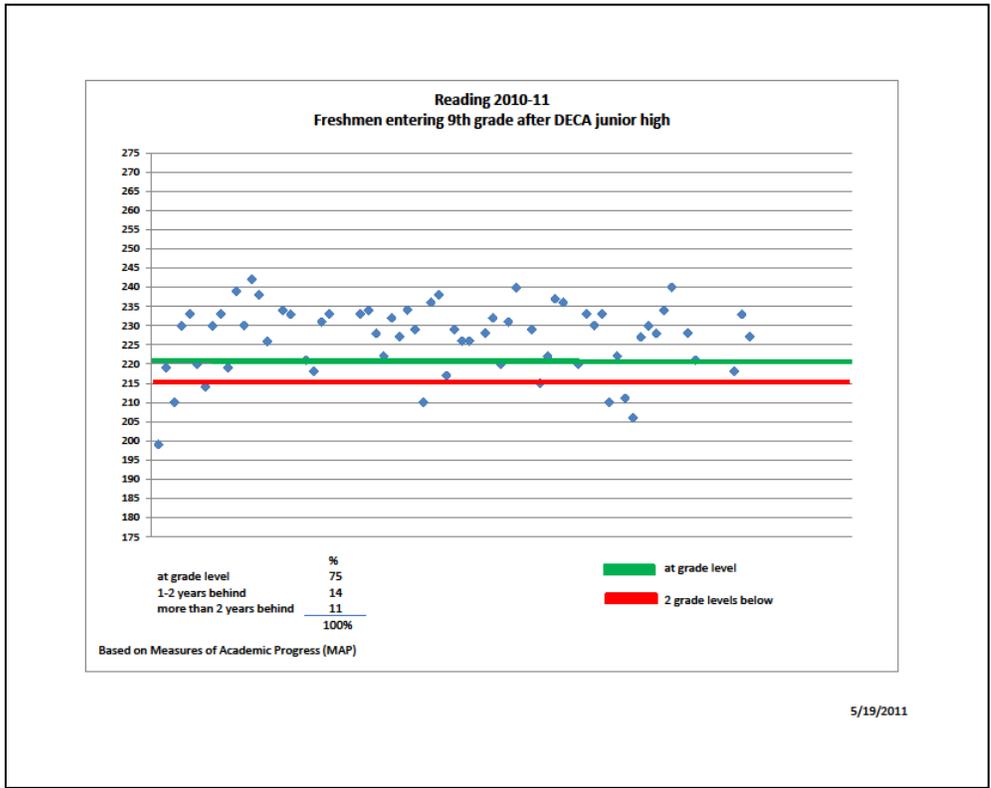


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However, promising data emerge from the Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) results for 2010-11 school year. This is the first year DECA students who enrolled as seventh graders have progressed to the ninth grade. Early academic results would affirm the decision to expand DECA's program to include grades seven and eight, as indicated in this graphic:



Starting earlier is intuitively correct. An *Education Week* article authored by Caralee Adam features the founder of the No Excuses University Network of Schools, Damen Lopez, who asserts, "Waiting until they are in high school for college readiness is as crazy as starting parenting when a kid is 13. You miss the opportunity...For kids who live in poverty, it will take a childhood to break down myths about college and get the child to the place where they can see college in their future" (p. 1). DECA seeks to build the K-6 prototype to position students to be ready to meet the expectations of early college high schools.

**(3) Testing protocols clearly used to improve instruction** - The use of Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and ACT secondary end-of-course exams reinforces a consistent focus on content standards leading to college readiness skills. DECA has committed considerable resources to address test-taking strategies and to review test content outside the school day. Programs such as Saturday OAA Boot Camp and intensive language arts study groups have positively impacted scores. However, the strongest interventions have resulted from consistent use of diagnostic data to inform the next day's lessons in DECA classrooms. Consistent with DECA's RtTt scope-of-work, the K-6 school will define clear formative and summative assessment strategies, and more importantly, focus on the efficacy of instruction based on the data. Lessons learned from the 7-12 model will be adapted to young learners with the same level of intensity.

**(4) Teacher leadership across all major decisions affecting the school** – Teacher leadership is often cited as the hallmark of high achieving schools. According to Milbrey McLaughlin (2001), "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the ability for school personnel to function as professional learning communities" (p. 106). Tom Peters (1987) cites self-managing teams as the "basic organizational building block" in effective companies (p. 297). The agreement in the literature on this research is remarkable; team-based "learning communities have become, in both education and industry, the state of the art for improving performance" (Schmoker, p. 108).

DECA's teacher culture has encouraged teachers to take responsible risks with new pedagogy. Capitalizing on the training received at University Park Center High School in Wooster, MA, over the last two years, DECA's coaching program has grown the band width of teachers. Instructional coaches have helped establish a common framework of six major teaching strategies. Students now encounter these strategies across all content areas and all classrooms. DECA's faculty engage in leadership in curriculum, grants and special projects, establishment of policies regarding school organization, discipline, interface with the community, etc. With administrative encouragement, teachers present at state and national conferences frequently. Teachers' sense of ownership is verified through the *My Voice Teacher* survey. (For example, on the last administration of the survey, 71.4% of the faculty agreed that they are "involved in school-wide decisions." Eighty-two percent (82%) indicated "I see myself as a leader.") The same expectation for teacher leadership is considered essential in the development of the K-6 school where the focus will be on bold innovation to assure students are mastering grade-appropriate or above skills and content.

**(5) Intensive attention given to building a community of parents supportive of their first-generation college student** – Typically, eighty-seven percent of DECA's students will be the first in their families to go to college. While it is labor-intensive to secure wide participation from parents, the return on investment is great. DECA parents sign contracts signaling their commitment and DECA administration holds parents to their word. Each cohort of parents (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) meets monthly as part of their parent academies. Parents are also in attendance for student evaluation conferences, affording them the opportunity to see their child shine as they meet a performance milestone. Many opportunities exist for parents to provide input into decisions affecting the school and to learn what real college readiness encompasses. The same respectful model of parent input and education will be adapted to the K-6 school.

Hrabowski, Maton & Greif (1998), authors of Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males, searched for the reasons why some African American males beat the odds to excel in careers in math and science. What emerged from their interviews was supportive of DECA's emphasis on partnerships with parents. "For the vast majority (80 percent) of the sons we spoke with, their skill development, interest, and success in math and science reflect to a substantial extent the primary influence of a parent" (p.149). Interestingly, they also concluded, "In addition to parents, a second major influence on the development of early capabilities and interest in science is the elementary school" (p. 154).

## 10. **Identify a timeline to achieve a successful implementation.**

The following timeline for implementation is inclusive of the many of the major legal, governance, curricular, and fiduciary steps that must be accomplished for a K-6 public charter school to be opened in 2012-13. This new school will form a charter management organization (CMO) with the Dayton Early College Academy. The first year is outlined month-by-month with the understanding that this is an optimal schedule:

**JULY 2011: The DECA superintendent will:** Finalize the Governing Authority (technically referred to as the Development Board at this stage). Finalize Ohio public charter school sponsorship. Refine initial draft budget. Obtain IRN and safe account with ODE.

**AUGUST 2011: Designated principal begins, along with an administrative assistant.** Principal begins regular meetings with DECA superintendent and principal of DECA. **With the DECA superintendent and principal, the K-6 principal will:** Review and finalize "must replicate" and "must preserve" aspects of DECA identified in the early concept development stages of the K-6 school. Develop website and post initial information. Develop an aggressive student recruitment plan. Continue to explore potential facilities. Develop job descriptions for all anticipated positions. Determine salary ranges for recommendation to the Board. Determine school calendar for 2012-13. **The superintendent will:** Complete RFP for health care and other benefits. Complete 501(c) (3) and articles of incorporation legal processes. Submit Federal Public Start Up grant if available. Hire a part-time treasurer. Establish essential business functions.

**SEPTEMBER 2011: The DECA superintendent will:** Advertise and select insurance providers as part of the DECA charter management organization (CMO). Finalize Worker's Comp insurance. Determine data acquisition site and EMIS coordinator. **The K-6 principal will:** Begin to commit core curriculum and full education plan to writing. Complete counseling/social work service plan. **With the DECA superintendent and principal, the K-6 principal will:** Begin policy development with required "start-up" policies, reporting child abuse, anti-bullying and harassment, non-discriminatory hiring practices, financial transactions, etc.

**OCTOBER 2011: The DECA superintendent and K-6 principal will:** Begin discussion with Dayton Public regarding transportation. Finalize facility and begin meeting with architect and contractors for necessary modifications. **The K-6 principal will:** Begin selection process for the instructional coach.

**NOVEMBER /DECEMBER 2011: The DECA superintendent will:** Recruit and finalize Governing Board membership. Obtain quotes from vendors for purchased services such as network maintenance, copy equipment and service. Secure necessary permits to begin building modifications. Submit charter application to the Office of Community Schools, if available. **The K-6 principal will:** Begin preparation for book/material orders. Establish equipment/assets inventory. Begin consultation with ODE's Office of Federal Programs to develop Title I and other Federal applications. **Full Board begins monthly meetings with meetings advertised on the web site.**

**JANUARY 2012: The DECA superintendent will:** Advertise/ select food service provider. Complete STRS and SERS application. **The K-6 principal will:** Begin implementation of recruitment plan via media advertising of open enrollment period for grades K, 1, 2 and 6. Begin information meetings for interested families. Select an instructional coach and begin familiarization with DECA. Advertise faculty and support staff openings. Begin to recommend faculty for the 2012-13 opening. Begin teacher curricular meetings with teachers and coach. Assess professional development needs. **Facility modifications begin.**

**FEBRUARY / MARCH 2012: The DECA superintendent will:** Continue program planning meetings with principal, instructional coach, and teachers who have been selected. Contract for nursing services. **The K-6 principal will:** Facilitate curriculum development meetings with assistance from current DECA faculty. Principal will access consultants from Doug Reeves & Associates, Learn to Earn Initiative, and Dayton Regional STEM Education Center, as needed. Continue informational meetings for prospective families. Develop or modify available student performance tracking program. **Facilities modifications continue.**

**APRIL 2012: The K-6 principal will:** Begin recruitment of a cadre of community volunteers for classroom assistance, using DECA's *foster alumni* model. Develop the school safety plan. **Facilities, curriculum, financial work continues.**

**MAY 2012: The K-6 principal will:** Begin student diagnostic testing. Data are recorded in the tracking program. Meet with Fire Dept. to develop emergency exit plans and conduct building inspection.

**JUNE 2012: The DECA superintendent and K-6 principal will:** Finalize transportation and food service provider. Submit required end-of-fiscal year reports. **The K-6 principal will:** Enter student enrollment data in state reporting system; secure all required records such as immunizations, proof-of-residency, etc. Parent academy begins with DECA parents used as consultants. Develop class rosters.

**JULY 2012: The DECA superintendent will:** Obtain occupancy permit. **The K-6 principal will:** Conduct pre-opening site inspection with sponsor, making sure all safety equipment meets code. Advertise for substitute teachers. Distribute and/or install purchased equipment and provide training to staff.

**AUGUST 2012:** School year opens. **The DECA superintendent will:** Select parent member for a one-year term on the Board. **The K-6 principal will:** Begin consistent use of teach-assess-reteach cycle using student formative assessment data. Continue parent academies. Initiate intervention and acceleration support activities. Begin to implement job-embedded professional development through instructional coaching and peer observations.

**SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013: The DECA superintendent will:** Submit fiscal and programmatic annual reports. Conduct fiscal audit through the Auditor of State. **The K-6 principal and the DECA principal will:** Evaluate the efficacy of the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other components of the school grades implemented in the first year. Implement the statewide achievement testing as required in grade six. Problem-solve action steps to resolve areas of ineffectual practice or procedures. Modify as needed and repeat student recruitment programs to add grade four. Evaluate faculty and offer another one year contract to teachers whose performance is excellent. Repeat selection process for new faculty to staff the additional grade level. Expand the capacity of the school through volunteer recruitment and training.

**SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014: The K-6 principal and the DECA principal will:** Repeat data collection, analysis, and action planning needed to evaluate the performance of the school in its initial year. Repeat successful programs and processes to add grade five. Continue strong collaboration with DECA faculty to ensure successful transitions for students entering DECA from the K-6 elementary.

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

The inability to educate students to world-class standards casts a long shadow on the lives of not only children but the community and the nation as well. Research by McKinsey & Company (2009) on the impact of achievement gaps in America paints a disquieting picture:

*... the underutilization of human potential in the United States is extremely costly. For individuals, our results show that ... avoidable shortfalls in academic achievement impose heavy and often tragic consequences, via lower earnings, poorer health, and higher rates of incarceration. For many students (but by no means all), lagging achievement evidenced as early as fourth grade appears to be a powerful predictor of rates of high school and college graduation, as well as lifetime earnings ... If the gap between low-income students and the rest (of students) had been (closed), GDP in 2008 would have been \$400 billion to \$670 billion higher, or 3 to 5 percent of GDP. (p. 5-6)*

Like many urban American communities, Dayton is failing its children with educational strategies and structures that simply are not working despite significant efforts and investments. The Dayton Public School District's (DPS) 2009-10 Report Card again exposed severe gaps in student performance. For example, among the district's eighth graders, only 24.4% meet state standards in science, 36.4% meet state math standards, and 56.75% meet reading standards. Similar shortfalls across the grade levels and over time have placed the district in "academic watch" status.

DECA, however, is different. Established in 2003 as an early college high school, DECA offers Dayton's students—mostly low-income students of color—an alternative to the district's low-performing schools. The school provides a rigorous academic program, high expectations in a nurturing environment, and a clear path to and through college. The first school of its kind in Ohio, DECA requires students to take college courses while still in high school. Since the school's inception, DECA students have earned 4,500 college credit hours while in high school; earned \$3.6 million in scholarships and grants; and completed 14,000 volunteer service hours. DECA boasts a college enrollment rate of nearly 100%. Eighty-four percent of DECA's graduates are on track to earn a college degree or have graduated.

DECA has been on the leading edge of educational innovation, having been recognized in numerous ways including *U.S. News and World Reports'* 2009 bronze medal as one of America's Best High Schools, selection as one of five programs in the nation named "most innovative" in a study by WestEd for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and consistent ratings at the top levels of the state report card designations.

In short, the DECA model is working.

The initiative to launch a K-6 school based on the DECA model began as a grass-roots effort. The catalyst has been the absolute lack of a high-performing elementary school within DPS. This void leaves few viable options for urban families seeking high-quality education for an elementary school student. Noting DECA's record of success, Dayton's parents, business and community leaders, and educators have been eager to see the positive impact of DECA's structures, strategies and practices extended to the community's youngest learners. This new elementary school will allow students to avoid squandering the early years in ineffective schools and give them the opportunity to achieve no less than grade-level performance from the very outset of their academic careers. The McKinsey & Company (2009) research findings indicate there is merit in this concept:

*New York City's experience suggests that the period between third grade and eighth grade can be critical. When starting from a similar point, students who are able to improve their performance between third and eighth grade are much more likely to graduate with honors and thus benefit from higher earnings over time. This means that while some students may have different starting points than others, reaching low-achieving students in the early years of their education can have a tremendous impact on their life outcomes. (p. 18-19)*

## **Why DECA Should be Awarded an Innovative Programs Grant**

This project is a strong candidate for a Race to the Top Innovation Grant for several compelling reasons:

- ***DECA's implementation of the K-6 school will align with the vision, goals and strategies articulated in Ohio's Race to the Top Plan.***
  - The primary goal of the early college model is to prepare typically under-represented urban students—usually first-generation college-goers—who will graduate from high school, enroll in college, and graduate with degrees. The new K-6 will begin this process with the Dayton area's youngest learners, thus pre-empting achievement gaps and matriculating college- and career-ready graduates. In a similar vein, Ohio's RtT Plan envisions increasing graduation rates and college enrollment.
  - In implementing the early college model, DECA staff and teachers regularly collaborate with higher education faculty to improve students' performance, focusing largely on the use of assessment data to generate curriculum, enhance personalized learning and drive targeted professional development to create great teachers. These practices will be extended to the elementary school as well. Similarly, Ohio's RtT Plan recognizes the pivotal role of professional development in creating great teachers and leaders, the single most powerful contributor to students' success, as research by Sanders and Horn (1995) and Darling-Hammond (2000) revealed.
  - DECA has been—and will continue to be—prolific in its collection and dissemination of data about effective practices in education for at-risk populations. In fact, DECA was awarded an ODE Dissemination grant in 2010, which resulted in the creation of the DECA Institute to share successful school strategies with teachers this summer. With the implementation of the elementary school, DECA will open the doors of both schools to provide opportunities for urban teachers and leaders working in other education models to learn about and adapt successful practices that could reduce performance gaps, as prescribed by Ohio's RtT Plan.
- ***The early college model has a proven track record.*** The early college model represents a highly successful education innovation. Eighty-six percent of early college graduates go on to higher education. Fifty-four percent go on to four-year institutions. More than 90 percent of early college tenth graders scored proficient or higher on the Ohio Graduation Test in reading, writing, mathematics and social studies, outperforming the state average. Of students from nine of Ohio's ECHS schools, 55 percent scored accelerated or advanced on the reading portion of the Ohio Graduation Test, and 72 percent scored accelerated or advanced on the math portion of the OGT last year, indicating a high level of college readiness.

Appropriately modifying and applying the early college model's various structures, data-driven practices, focus on job-embedded professional development, and principles of individualized learning intuitively suggest positive outcomes for elementary students. We believe learning could be accelerated and time spent in remediation minimized or eliminated as students progress toward upper grades.

- **DECA has first-hand experience in the successful implementation of an innovative education model within an urban school district.** Having established a successful early college high school within the past eight years, DECA has implemented, refined and utilized many transformative strategies. The DECA faculty is well versed and facile in testing new approaches and evaluating their efficacy. The DECA administrative and academic teams have anticipated barriers and will address issues as the planning and implementation proceed. The DECA Board and administrative team know what to expect and how to respond during the start-up phase of the new elementary.
- **The project offers true innovation with minimized risk.** This project is innovative insofar as the early college model has not been implemented in an elementary school elsewhere, although its performance at the high school level suggests significant potential across the grades. The model's successes nationwide, along with DECA's demonstrated capacity and commitment to help Dayton's urban students achieve academic success and the goal of a college degree, suggest that the risk of attempting implementation of the K-6 school will be minimized.
- **DECA has the organizational capacity to move forward immediately.** The community's goal to move forward immediately can be fulfilled because DECA's planning, as well as organizational, financial, and administrative functions are securely in place. The plan has been outlined according to a reasonable timetable. The needed personnel have been identified so there will be no delays in implementing the K-6 school.
- **The research opportunities are rich.** This project is innovative insofar as the early college model has not been implemented in an elementary school elsewhere. Thus, it is rich with opportunities for data collection, research, and analysis. DECA has, and will continue to serve as a test site for the application of programs and strategies deemed to have potential to advance DECA's goals.

DECA's implementation of the early college model in an elementary school setting offers the opportunity to advance educational innovation in a district where true reform is needed desperately and immediately. For the past eight years, DECA has been a bright spot among Dayton's high schools—a shining example of what can be accomplished when talented individuals dedicate themselves to achieving an ambitious goal despite seemingly impossible challenges. DECA will bring this same combination of passion and expertise to implementing the K-6 school because the fate of Dayton's youngest learners—and indeed, the community's future—are at risk.

## 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.

<b>Dayton Early College Academy IRN#009283 Proposed Innovation: Other –Urban Early College K-12 Model</b>					
<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>FY2011</b>	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>FY2013</b>	<b>FY2014</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Salaries (100)</b>		130,740	120,600	122,200	373,540
<b>Retirement/ Fringe Benefits (200)</b>		35,158	33,536	33,792	102,486
<b>Purchase Services (400)</b>		40,240	47,514	40,008	127,762
<b>Supplies (500)</b>		30,315	26,995	27,020	84,330
<b>Capital Outlay (600)</b>		13,547	19,653	26,000	59,200
<b>Other (800)</b>					-
<b>9. Total Costs</b>	\$ -	250,000	\$248,298	\$249,020	\$747,318

Budget Narrative Innovation Grant  
Dayton Early College Academy  
IRN #009283

	A	B	C	D	E
1		FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	
2	<b>SALARIES</b>				
3	Instructional coach	54,000	54,000	54,000	
4	Community-based learning coordinator	35,000	35,000	35,000	
5	Fringes (16%)	14,240	14,240	14,240	
6	Stipends for professional development teams for formative assessment, teacher evaluation, and data analysis, including the creation of artifactual chronologies of formative assessment in classrooms and site visits to high performing urban schools	41,740	31,600	33,200	
7	Fringes (16%)	20,918	19,296	19,552	
8					
9	<b>PURCHASE SERVICES</b>				
10	Contracted psychological services	3,000	4,500	4,500	
11	Contracted social worker/family advocate 3 days per wk. @\$110 per diem	7,040	10,560	10,560	
12	Software modifications to student achievement tracking tool developed by DECA IIS	25,000	4,754	748	
13	NWEA-MAP testing	4,000	4,700	5,200	
14	CMO fees for data and business services	1,200	15,000	15,000	
15	Development of formative assessment protocols (K-1,2)		4,000		
16	Development of formative assessment protocols (4,5,6)		4,000	4,000	
17					
18	<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
19	Parent Academy materials-notebks, chart paper	375	425	450	
20	Electronic copies of reference books	440			
21	Software for math, early reading, and science-READ 180, Rocket Ship	29,500	26,570	26,570	
22					
23	<b>CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>				
24	Computer hardware-desktops mobile labs w/net bks.	8,747	18,053	24,400	
25	Smart boards for classroom use	4,800	1,600	1,600	
26					
27		250,000	248,298	249,020	747,318