

## **Exercises for Regional Workshops**

## **Exercise 1: Executive Summary Discussion**

Consider the following two Executive Summaries from submitted proposals:

- A. The Strategic Human Capital System at Our Local School District will reduce staffrelated costs attributed to recruiting, selecting and inducting highly effective employees while also increasing the district's capacity to direct a greater share of resources to the classroom.
- B. School transportation as operated with little change since the first chain driven buses are grandparents used to ride. Innovative approaches can drastically reduce the cost of school transportation. This proposal to lay out innovation in transportation that will combine services and approve realistic its application.

Which do you prefer? Use the space below to explain why.

#### **Exercise 2: Project Description**

The following excerpts are response to Goal 1: Academic Achievement. Read these project descriptions and match the scorers' comments to the descriptions. Which one do you think was funded? Why?

#### **Project Description A**

Addressing Student Reading Achievement:

The proposed program will incorporate afterschool reading tutoring program, Saturday Reading Enrichment Programs and additional academic enrichment activities that support student achievement in the classroom, and help students meet proficiencies required by Ohio Department of Education. The school has established a promotion policy requiring that students being promoted from second to third grade meet the performance requirements in a least two of the three cornerstone areas of reading, writing and number sense.

The afterschool Reading Program includes:

Reading to Exceed expectations is a supplemental program that will prevent or remediate skill deficits for students who are below or significantly below grade level.

- Small group tutoring session twice a week
- Individualize lesson plans to meet the needs of the individual students being serviced in the program
- Assistive technology to support instruction for the learners with disabilities
- Hands on activities and audio style supported materials to reach different learning styles

#### **Project Description B**

SOIL will significantly improve student achievement by accelerating classroom transformation toward responsive outdoor learning centers with accompanying TPBL modules. While the labs are being built, the 9 SOIL schools will send 1 teacher and 20 students to KI Field Station for 1 week to experience hands-on learning. The KI Field Station will host 12 weeks of innovative field experience. The first 9 weeks are reserved for SOIL schools and the final 3 weeks are open to all Ohio students. During the SOIL programs, students will engage in immersive, programs pivoted on environmental issues utilizing the island's ecosystems, aligned to Common Core, Ohio and Next Generation Science Standards. Alongside students teachers will experience the excitement and importance of applied learning in an outdoor lab, gaining critical insight into the mechanisms of TPBL. The KI field station infrastructure shows teachers how to implement modules using an innovative learning environment. SOIL also fortifies the KI Field Station as a demonstration rapid prototyping platform capable of influencing the future of environmental education in Ohio. PAST will provide both expertise and staffing for SOIL field experiences, as well as ongoing PD for teachers throughout the project.

After the KI field experience teachers will attend PD workshops to design TPBL modules to be implemented at the SOIL labs. Developed modules will be archived and available for all Ohio schools. To significantly expand impact and develop sustainability, participating teachers will be required to participate in the SOIL Plus One initiative. Plus One requires SOIL teachers recruit other teachers to develop modules for the outdoor labs. SOIL teachers will mentor at least one, cross-curricular, colleague in developing TPBL modules for the lab. This process will quickly expand the bank of SOIL TPBL modules.

A late June convening of SOIL schools will present both the Statements of Invention for lab construction and planned TPBL modules that will inaugurate the labs. Each team will develop a PR packet for a planned media event to introduce the opportunities and potential of the new outdoor labs to the surrounding communities and schools.

The SOIL deliverable products will establish a process to benchmark and track creation of outdoor labs. SOIL will serve as an articulated processes and products model for the future. These impacts significantly expand shared resources, build collaborative learning communities, and transform learning environments. Simultaneously these impacts reduce costs associated with non-traditional learning environments and reduce the cost of remediation.

## **Scoring of the Sample Project Description**

**Item 1.** How well does this proposal identify bold and innovative solutions that will advance the goals identified by the applicant?

**Item 2.** How well does this proposal describe this innovative project?

3	Strong	Applicant provides great details about the innovativeness of this work.  Engaging students in outdoor science labs seems innovative. Furthermore, applicant connects the goals of the Straight A Fund back to this work.
4	Exemplary	Applicant does an exemplary job of explaining this project. Applicant provides very small, important details of this project. For example, applicant states that SOIL will provide the development for 9 outdoor learning labs, 18 TPBI modules, etc.
3	Strong	The proposal expands on an already successful outdoor education program to achieve the identified goals.
4	Good	Some details about the labs were provided.
3	Exemplary	The outdoor learning labs are extremely bold and innovative.
4	Exemplary	The descriptions of the project is highly detailed and plausible.

#### **Scoring of the Sample Project Description**

**Item 1.** How well does this proposal identify bold and innovative solutions that will advance the goals identified by the applicant?

**Item 2.** How well does this proposal describe this innovative project?

3	Inadequate	The applicant's plan is neither bold nor innovative and the lack of details to support this plan makes it highly unlikely the plan will lead to improved student achievement.
4	Good	The applicant provides a list of services and program components that will be offered in the afterschool program as evidenced by their inclusion of a tutoring program, a Saturday Enrichment program, and additional academic enrichment activities. The applicant does not, however, provide sufficient details to support their project to ensure its innovation and to also ensure it will lead to improved student reading achievement.
3	Marginal	Reading program and technology are not bold or innovative.
4	Marginal	Project description is weak and lacks details.
3	Marginal	Bold and innovative would not be how I would describe this program, although a program that seeks to provide early intervention is usually worthwhile in the right context.
4	Marginal	The application presents a broad picture of what the program would look like. Full and complete details about the program were not presented.

#### **Exercise 3: Implementation**

The following examples are taken from a funded and a non-funded proposal. Compare and contrast each of the implementation plans and comment on why one proposal was funded and another was not. Be prepared to discuss.

If you were a grant-writer helping these districts rewrite their implementation plans, what are the possible barriers they might encounter? Why?

#### The following example is from a funded proposal

#### Implementation Example A

Implementation: 12/23/2013 - 8/01/2014

- 1. 12/13: Inform all stakeholders of the grant award with methods outlined in communication plan. The communication of PLP will be a continuous effort throughout the project.
  - 2. 12/13: Math KPM SME development will outline the learning precedence of mathematics and learning dependencies.
  - 3. 12/13-4/14: Content learning objects reviewed/created/aligned to CCSS to provide up to 5 pieces of content per standard meeting every student's needs in a manner consistent with iNACOL standards.
  - 4. 12/13-Early 6/14: LMS Customizations to adjust some LMS features to accommodate the PLP functionality as envisioned. Areas with customization development work include:
  - a. User Interface adjustments.
  - b. Gap list reporting developed.
  - c. Standards-based report cards.
  - d. Content search.
  - e. Assessment engine upgrades.
  - 5. 1/14: Acquire NWEA item bank featuring 70,000 rigorously developed items aligned to the Common Core designed to measure student knowledge and learning.
  - 6. 2/14-4/14: Assessments created based on KPMs using NWEA item bank to identify a student's academic level and measure learning.
  - 7. 4/14: Content learning objects uploaded into LMS reactor repository by the IQ Innovations Development team.
  - 8. 6/14-7/14: Teacher, administrator, and help desk PLP user training.
  - 9. 7/14-8/14: PLP piloting, quality assurance, and refinements.
  - 10. 8/14: School begins. System goes live to the school.
  - 11. During the school year PLP adjustments executed as needed.
  - 12. Summer: 2015 PLP becomes available statewide via ilearn Ohio.

The first step of implementation will be to operationalize the Continuing Communication plan to keep stakeholders informed of project progress. Communication: During implementation ongoing communication plan will move beyond informing and engaging administrators, teachers, parents and students regarding the PLP, but also empowering them. School staff will be notified regarding the PLP, its benefits and progress through

official channels such as announcements at regularly scheduled PD days, general employee announcements, and MS Sharepoint. If appropriate these engagement channels will be adjusted. During implementation PD to properly use the PLP will be a part of regularly scheduled training. The vision of the PLP and what it means to students will be communicated to parents and students via school newsletters, open houses, and the Parent Portal. Additionally, the school offers a "Facebook" connection. Barrier: A barrier that will impact planning, implementation, and evaluation is a need for more CCSS aligned math content readily available in our LMS content repository. The school would like to have up to 5 standard-aligned learning objects per academic standard to allow for multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement consistent with the Universal Design for Learning Framework so that all students receive content tailored to their strengths and preferences. This will be remedied by assigning a content team of mathematics curriculum design SMEs to review existing content from a variety of premium and open-source resources and creating additional content where content is missing. These SMEs will use a rigorous content review and creation rubric that will ensure content utilized is consistent with the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses. This content will be loaded into the system upon completion of the vetting process.

## Scoring of the Implementation Plan Example A

**Item 8.** How well does the proposed time line reflect significant and important milestones in an appropriate time frame?

**Item 9.** Are realistic barriers to the work identified and are reasonable solutions to the barriers being proposed?

**Item 10.** How strong is the plan for implementing, communicating and coordinating the project with its various activities and events?

8	Exemplary	The timeline reveals careful and thoughtful planning in an effort to achieve the significant milestones.
9	Exemplary	Barriers are identified at each stage and appropriately addressed.
10	Strong	Communication of the project is continually mentioned throughout the proposal.
8	Good	difficult to assess whether this project can be accomplished with high quality in the short time-period stipulated by this proposal
9	Good	barriers are identified and responses provided. limited discussion about time barrier
10	Strong	detailed process for communication and coordination between the schol and IQ, as well as within the school organization
8	Exemplary	Already in progress, ready to go, clearly defined

9	Strong	multiple barriers are acknowledged and addressed
10	Strong	communication is addressed on many fronts with many stakeholders

#### The following example is from a project that was not selected for funding.

Implementation: 3/1/2014-4/30/2015

Work with the energy conservation and curriculum vendors to assure successful timing of benchmarks necessary to complete project. January, 2014, would begin the construction phase of the project and would have a completion date of June, 2014. Curriculum items will be delivered to teachers in March of 2014. Training will be held for teachers on the purpose of the project and on the instructional use of the alternative energy materials May through August, 2014. The new curriculum will begin in August, 2014 and be delivered to students. A pretest would also be administered to students during this time to access student understanding of alternative energy. We will continue to highlight this project through our website, newsletters, businesses, and social media.

#### Scoring of the Implementation Plan Example B

**Item 8.** How well does the proposed time line reflect significant and important milestones in an appropriate time frame?

**Item 9.** Are realistic barriers to the work identified and are reasonable solutions to the barriers being proposed?

**Item 10.** How strong is the plan for implementing, communicating and coordinating the project with its various activities and events?

8	Strong	It does state when the equipment will be installed, when solar entities will be given and used, when the students will be taking pre and post tests.
9	Weak	I could not find anywhere that talked about any barriers.
10	Marginal	It did not state how the plan would be implemented-just the time line, how it is to be communicated to the teachers that they will be teaching this, or specifically besides the students seeing the solar panels, what they will be doing.
8	Weak	The applicant included a limited time line with sparse details.
9	Inadequate	The applicant does not identify any barriers or solutions for the proposed project.
10	Weak	The applicant includes a sparse communication plan for the project activities and events. For instance, it is unclear if and how much information the classroom teachers will obtain regarding classroom implementation of if this will be a mandate.

8	Weak	There is no evidence of a plan to engage teachers in the selection of "curriculum materials to be ordered," or in the "training of teachers."
9	Inadequate	No barriers were identified or addressed.
10	Marginal	Only the goal of reducing costs is adequately developed.

In the space below, list information that you might ask for, if you were a grant-writer helping this

district rewrite their implementation plan. Can you think of some possible barriers that they might encounter during implementation and how they might plan for them?		

#### **Exercise 4: Substantial Impact and Lasting Value: Evaluation**

After you read an example taken from an unfunded proposal, please brainstorm measures and methodologies that might better to serve them in evaluating their project.

As mentioned in the answer to question 23 above, we will have 5 quantifiable measures of progress and success that we will be tracking. For measure 1, we will use photo source data to document the success of the Beach gym renovations. Measure 1's success will be based on the completion of the renovation. For measures 1-3, we will use financial records to measure progress and the impact of this project. Success will be based on these documents indicating that no district funds were spent to complete the requested projects. For measure 3, we will also use professional development evaluations as a measure of progress and impact. Success will be measured by the number of surveys completed, as well as by the participants' measure of PD effectiveness. For measure 4, an electronic system is in place, and will continue to be, that tracks facility use. Each year, we will be able to compare these logs to the year previous in order to show growth in the number of activities taking place in OT Learning Center. An increase in the number of events year after year will be indicative of success. For measure 5, we will use 12-13 student performance data (data that in no way includes the effects of the project) as the baseline against which to measure student achievement success as a result of this project. The source of our student performance data points are ODE provided local building and district report card data, ACT and SAT scores, AP test scores, and diagnostic assessment data. Increases in student performance data will be indicative of success. Measures 1-3 will be measured by September 30, 2014. Measure 4 will be measured annually for five years on June 30 of each year. Measure 5 will also be measured annually for five years on September 30 of each year.

## Scoring of the Evaluation Non-Funded Proposal's Evaluation Plan

**Item 17.** How strong is the proposed evaluation plan to assess both the process of implementation as well as outcomes/benchmarks identified in the proposal?

**Item 18.** How well does the proposal describe the evaluation methodology and resources the consortium/partnership and member school(s) will use to determine the success of the project at the end of the grant period?

17	Good	many data points are listed as to the evaluation of the project
18	Good	many data points are listed as to the evaluation of the project
17	Weak	Though an evaluation plan is present, it is minimally quantifiable with the details given.
18	Weak	The methodology is not described in detail.
17	Marginal	The evaluation plan consists of mainly financial documents relating to building and maintenance costs. That seems more of an administration of the building more than an evaluation of if the project was successful. The professional development will use a evaluation that hinges on comparing student performance data, but without knowing what the PD goals are, it seems that the performance data could fluctuate given many different factors other than a conference that was attended.

18	Marginal	The evaluation plan consists of mainly financial documents relating to building and maintenance costs. That seems more of an administration of the building more than an evaluation of if the project was successful. The professional development will use a evaluation that hinges on comparing student performance data, but without knowing what the PD goals are, it seems that the performance data could fluctuate given many different factors other than a conference that was attended
18	Marginal	development will use a evaluation that hinges on comparing student performance data, but without knowing what the PD goals are, it seems that

Although this project listed a number of measures, their overall evaluation plan fell short. The project proposed use of Straight A Funds to develop a learning center. This is how they describe the goals of their project:

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

The Mission of the Our Town City School District is: "Globally Competitive-Exceptional Opportunities-Caring Environment-Successful Students." Among the many objectives enumerated in our district's Strategic Plan are: \*Recruit, hire and retain exceptional staff and provide professional development to accomplish our mission and strategic objectives; \*Ensure availability of technology and training necessary to support achievement of our mission and strategic objectives; \*A rigorous curriculum ensures that every student is appropriately challenged and learning at his/her highest level, and; \*A facilities master plan provides a blueprint for buildings that support student success. More importantly, it is our goal to ensure that all students will engage in contemporary, globally competitive curricular and co-curricular programs of excellence, and will participate in a student-centered environment that addresses educational, social and emotional needs. We believe, supported by the narratives above and below, that OT Learning Center, once complete, will provide a facility that will help us achieve our desired outcomes. Creating a space where students and teachers can come to learn and collaborate, without doubt, supports and improves student achievement. Obtaining grant funds to subsidize the renovations for OT Learning Center will result in spending reductions in the 5-year forecast.

Use the space provided to brainstorm measures and methodology that might better serve them in evaluating their project.

# For your reference, here is an example of a funded proposal's evaluation and scorer comments.

The plan to evaluate the impact of the project involves evaluating the phases of the project, short-term objectives, and the various intended outcomes to determine the amount of positive effect on the long-term object, improving student achievement.

Data to be collected include: pre/post survey responses about eating habits, exercise patterns, and cafeteria opinions; sales in the cafeteria, including profit/loss and number of lunches sold; test/class grades from staff who use the classroom physical activities; use of the exercise equipment; pre/post attendance data for students and staff; dollar amount spent on substitutes for staff illness; number of visits to the school nurse for illness; and semester grade averages and final GPA's. The health and wellness team will assist the grant team with data collection.

A pre/post survey will be used to measure short-term effects of the changes in the cafeteria. Students and staff answered questions about cafeteria usage, thoughts about the food, and physical activity during planning stage. A post survey given in May will allow team to compare the attitudes, eating habits, and activities after project's implementation.

Cafeteria sales will be tracked - the profit/loss and number of lunches to see if more students are participating in lunch program and if salad bar and steam table to prepare and serve new foods are cost effective. If surveys and cafeteria sales do not evidence a positive effect on students' food choices and participation in the program, the awareness campaign aspect of the project will be evaluated and re-launched in September 2014.

Teachers will be surveyed to determine how physical activities were added to their classrooms and the activities affected students' classroom grades. Professional development can be repeated and model lessons and strategies from staff can be shared to increase use of effective physical activity strategies in the classroom if initial evaluation shows low-participation. If participating teachers see no difference in their class grades or students' engagement in class, other methods for increasing physical activity will be explored.

Usage of equipment will be monitored via sign-in to determine how many people participate in before school and after school activities and how many classes use the exercise equipment and Exercise Science lab for organized activities and lessons during the school day. Model lessons, increased activities, and in-school awareness will be increased for September 2014 if evaluation shows initial usage is lower than anticipated. Usage statistics and participation in scheduled activities will determine what activities and how often activities are offered for the 2014-2015 school-year.

Improving health to decrease absenteeism is an anticipated outcome that can contribute to improved achievement and be measured by comparing pre/post attendance records of students and staff. In addition, the frequency of visits to the school nurse pre/post project will be compared to see if the project has an effect on the number of students in the clinic for illness or asking to be released early because of illness. Although attendance/time-out-of class for illness data will be gathered and reported on at grant's end, it is anticipated that no decrease will be realized in the initial evaluation.

The long-term objective of increasing student achievement will be measure by comparing students' semester grades and year-end GPA's pre/post program. If no increase if found at the end of 2014-2015 school year, after all aspects of project have been fully implemented, the

health and wellness will re-evaluate the components to determine what can be strengthened to improve the project. Since similar projects in school districts across the country have realized gains in student achievement, TCTC's health and wellness team will continue evaluating the activities and making modifications so that the project is successful.

#### Scoring of the Funded Proposal's Evaluation Plan

**Item 17.** How strong is the proposed evaluation plan to assess both the process of implementation as well as outcomes/benchmarks identified in the proposal?

**Item 18.** How well does the proposal describe the evaluation methodology and resources the consortium/partnership and member school(s) will use to determine the success of the project at the end of the grant period?

17	Exemplary	The evaluation plan is very strong and if implemented should result in a meaningful evaluation of the project.
18	Exemplary	The methodology of the evaluation is appropriate with a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data.
17	Strong	Evaluation plan is comprehensive and coherent in analyzing process and outcomes.
18	Strong	Strong evaluation methodology, use of resources to determine success; convincing and well-conceived.
17	Exemplary	The evaluation is clear and directly tied to both implementation and outcomes. It is well thought out and seeks the input of all relevant stakeholders.
18	Exemplary	The proposal indicates who will collect evaluation data and how they will report outcomes. Also included in the proposal is a description of possible evaluation challenges and potential solutions for those challenges.