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.

<u>**Section A**</u>

1. General School Information

a) ***Name of Applicant (LEA)***: Ridgemont Local Schools	b) ***Name of School(s)***: Ridgemont Jr/Sr High School
c) ***Superintendent of Schools***: ***(or equivalent)*** Name: Emmy Davis Address: 330 W. Taylor Street Mt. Victory, OH 43340 Telephone: 937-354-2441 Fax: 937-354-2194 Email: edavis@ridgemont.k12.oh.us	d) ***LEA RttT Contact***: Name: Emmy Davis Address: 330 W. Taylor Street Mt. Victory, OH 43340 Telephone: 937-354-2441 Fax: 937-354-2194 Email: edavis@ridgemont.k12.oh.us
e) ***School Vision***: The Ridgemont School District will be a safe, comfortable learning environment in which all students respect themselves and others and are eager to become a part of the ongoing learning community	f) ***School Mission***: The Ridgemont Local Schools will work with parents and the community to graduate students who think critically, solve problems, make decisions, and have the skills necessary for productive citizenship and lifelong learning.
g) ***Primary Goals of School:*** 1. To increase student achievement in order to prepare students for 21st century life after high school	h) ***Teacher/Student Ratio:*** 15.4/1

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 <u>March 10th</u> Innovation Symposium :
Emmy Davis, Superintendent

2. SCHOOL PROFILE

STUDENT INFORMATION		
Grades served:		
Enrollment (total number of students served in school applying for Innovative Program):		
Grade Level	**Enrollment**	
Pre K-5	252	
6	49	
7	41	
8	38	
9	46	
10	39	
11	62	
12	39	
Ethnicity and gender data (% of enrollment):		
Black: 1.3%	White: 96.4%	Male: 47.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%	American Indian/Alaska Native: 0%	
Hispanic: .08%	Multi-Racial: 2.1%	Female: 52.2%
Percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch: 36.4%		
Percent of students identified as special education: 13.7%		
Names of current competitive grants LEA has been awarded (2010-2011): Scott's Lawn Company – Community Garden Grant - $1,500 Ohio Farm Bureau Federation – 21st Century Skills in Ag - $3,000 Recycling and Liter Prevention – Earth Day Celebration - $500 Sodexo – Hunger Grant - $500 Hooked on Hydropontics - $500 National FFA's Learn to Serve Rural Safety Grant - $3,000 Youth Serve America – Community Garden Grant - $1,000 Learn and Serve - $15,000		
Please attach 2009-2010 school Report Card: Attached – Exhibit A		

Section B

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

   ☐ *Asia Society (International Studies Schools Network)* _____

   ☑ *AVID ** *1*

   ☐ *Early College High School* _____

   ☐ *New Tech Network* _____

   ☐ *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.

Being a small, rural school with no close connections to higher education or industry it is vital that we make those connections for our students within the context of school. AVID will help us in our current work to make those connections and prepare our students for a world that is yet to be defined. One of the district academic strategies is to increase the rigor of instructional practices to prepare students for 21st century learning and work. As we make strides within our school to do this, we are looking for research-based programs that will support our efforts. AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. This is bringing the reality of 21st century skills and expectations to the classroom. Our Jr/Sr High School is quite different from traditional school buildings. Many of our students work with flexible schedules to allow them to accomplish independent studies, project based learning, and credit flexibility course work. In many regards, we have already broken the mold for what is "traditional" and "expected" within our walls. We still have a long way to go, but we believe our journey to reform our school is shorter than most. Through this application, we intend to draw the connection between our strong service-learning curriculum, HONDA's Project SOAR, our nationally recognized FFA Chapter, and our vision for student preparedness. We will show how these initiatives align with the mission of AVID and will demonstrate how AVID will only serve to strengthen the work we are doing. AVID will not replace or be in addition to our current strategic plan.

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

In grades K-6, our teachers and students work each year through the HONDA of America Project SOAR; Students of Ohio Achieving Results. This project brings the quality control principles that have made HONDA very successful into our classrooms. The HONDA Education Outreach Program strives to improve academic achievement by offering quality-based training. HONDA believes that quality communities are just as important as quality products and therefore invests its money and expertise to:
• Enrich student achievement in K-12 public classrooms;
• Provide quality process and tools training to local school districts; and
• Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.
This process teaches each of our students about goal setting, creating strategies to achieve their goals, and how to monitor and evaluate their progress. Our students understand what a mission statement is and understand what it means to be dedicated to a cause. This process for implementing quality practices is reinforced each year through additional staff training and will be expanded into our 7th through 10th grades for the 2011-2012 school year. This process of identifying areas of need, setting goals, and then working toward them with monitoring and evaluation as part of the process will go hand in hand with the tenants of AVID which seeks to close achievement gaps for students and make college and career readiness not just their goal but their reality.

Likewise, our entire district is involved in service-learning curriculum. Our students don't just volunteer, they learn the same academic content Ohio requires of all of its students but through the context of giving back to their community and world. Our students see a problem and develop a proposal for a solution. Our students identify the Ohio Academic Content Standards they will study in order to achieve the solution. In grades K-12 our students have completed 35 service-learning projects, donated over 13,000 hours of work and almost $300,000 worth of effort to our community. Research on service-learning says repeatedly that students who participate out score their non-participating peers on standardized tests. Similarly, students report more cognitive engagement and attention to detail and improved behavior. In other words, students have a reason to be interested in what they were learning; therefore they are engaged and active. It is truly an authentic experience.   In fact, research states that higher order thinking skills are developed as students engage in civic practices, become involved in their world, and make far greater connections to career awareness than those who do not participate. (Billig & Klute, 2003; Klute & Billig, 2002).

In the 2011-2012 school year, service-learning projects will be focused on content areas of weakness as demonstrated through data. We will use service-learning as alternate teaching method to help students master content where they have historically struggled. The individuals with Learn and Serve Ohio and RMC Research are working with us to publish the results of our work. Benchmark data will be submitted along with student gains through service-learning. It may be the first action research project of its kind in Ohio.

These two programs which seek to prepare our students for their place in "the real world" through authentic problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation and are aligned with AVID. Each program would serve to strengthen our students understanding of what it takes to be college and career ready. Likewise, our students will have the goal setting skills needed to develop their personal plan toward success.

Similarly, out of 183 students in grades 9-12, 88 of them are members of our FFA Chapter which has been named the number one chapter in Ohio for two years running and number one in the country for the 2010-2011 school year. Without a deep understand of what being an FFA member entails, someone may not see the connection between this program and AVID's mission. However, our students work on learning skills which include goal setting, career awareness and preparation, interview skills, resume creation, public speaking, facilitation of meetings and collaborative work. In addition to this, students have created proposals, implemented programs, monitored success and evaluated work in the areas of a safe driving campaign, an anti-bullying education program, farm safety instruction, and "food for America" education for elementary school students. All of these items are student initiated, student led, and student served.

The work being done in Ridgemont Local Schools already supports the mission of AVID. Introducing the program will allow us to bring a more structured, systematic approach to our implementation. It will allow us to use the power of research for the benefit of our students.

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

Ridgemont Jr/Sr High School is a small, rural school with approximately 250 students in grades 7-12. We have a close knit staff who is truly dedicated to reaching all students. The idea of gaining "buy-in" is not as difficult for us as it may be for some schools. Because we are small, we communicate face to face and have built trusting relationships between teachers and administrators. Over the past couple of years, our school has been engaged in the work of Project SOAR, service-learning, career exploration, and increased expectations around academics. These themes align well with the goals of AVID. Our FFA program has over 80 students and our FCCLA program has 61 students. These programs continuously focus on the same type of curriculum AVID offers. We do not see AVID as "something else to do." We see AVID as a structured, systematic approach to successfully implement the goals we have already been working toward. Likewise, our District Leadership Team, Building Leadership Team and our newly forming Teacher Based Teams are committed to engaging in the Ohio Improvement Process in order to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate our progress toward higher academic achievement. We have aligned all goals in the Ohio Improvement Process with our Race to the Top initiatives and linked each to our Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan to ensure that all funding, resources, and planning are focused on the same goals and strategies. This streamlined process allows us to monitor our programs, make mid-course corrections, and evaluate our success objectively.

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

As already described, AVID will be another extension of our work toward college and career readiness in a global society. Because our initiatives are so well aligned, bringing AVID into our school is not a "change of culture." It is a strategy to deepen our commitment, strength our resources, forge our resolve, and better prepare our students for their adult lives in the 21st century. Our Family Consumer Science and Agricultural curriculums already support much of the work of AVID. The elective course AVID offers will align with these curriculums and fit nicely into our schedule. The trainings AVID offers to teachers are in direct correlation of our Race to the Top Scope of Work and goals under the Ohio Improvement Process. The technical assistance AVID offers through the course of the school year is in agreement with our philosophy for continuous professional development and staff support. If there was ever a place where AVID could completely integrate into the culture and daily practices of a school, Ridgemont Jr/Sr High School is that place.

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

Our percentage of students going on to a four year college and who are prepared to do so is less than the national average of 39%. With AVID, we hope to increase our population of college ready and college bound students to the 90% range. In doing so, we will set higher expectations for all students, provide role models for all students for higher academic success, and provide the skills students need to be college ready. Because we have a very small staff, sending a team of 8 teachers to the Summer Institute will mean that about half of our staff will be trained in AVID's rigors strategies from the very beginning. This will be a huge asset to us in advancing the cultural expectations of AVID as they integrate with our district's philosophy of higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and 21st century skills. All students will be affected by the higher expectations of staff. All students will benefit from the rigorous training of our staff members.

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

The Innovative Program Grant funds will sustain the implementation of our program for the first three years. After this initial implementation, the cost of continuing AVID decreases from year one at $25,000 to $3,000 after year four. This final yearly amount required to sustain the program will be funded either through federal entitlement dollars such as Title II-A or through our general fund. The Board of Education is aware of the cost associated with this program and is committed to sustaining this program which we are confident will result in increases in student achievement.

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?

After completing a gap analysis related to our instructional and professional development practices, one of the greatest barriers in our district is time. It is difficult to build time into the day for the professional responsibilities of teachers outside of the classroom. Implementing AVID will be no different. However, we are moving toward integrated team planning times in grades 7-12, professional development meetings which are short but frequent and utilize floating subs for classroom teachers, and paying teachers for work outside of their contracted work day through Race to the Top funds, Title II-A, or Title I Schoolwide as we move from Targeted Assistance for year 2011-2012.

We are working to build upon our culture of collaboration as we strengthen our District Leadership Team, institute our Building Leadership Teams, and mold Teacher Based Teams. For the first time in our district, there is a true spirit of team between administrators and teachers for the sole purpose of academic improvement. After the year we have been through as a staff, there is no doubt we can and will rise to the occasion and support the tenants of this program.

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

Our schedule will be changed to implement the AVID elective course into our middle school curriculum. In year two, all students will be required to take the course. After junior high school, students will be held to rigorous academic standards in all content areas. Using HONDA's Project SOAR, all students will have personal academic

goals, implementation strategies, and the ability to monitor their progress. This aligns nicely with AVID's goal to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. Likewise, we will use the SOAR program which is already fully functional in our K-6 building to implement career and college fairs for elementary school students and begin college and career awareness and planning for our younger students. This will become the norm in our district.

9. Identify a timeline to achieve a successful implementation.

During the months of March through May 2011 the superintendent was selected as the AVID District Director and our Jr/Sr High School was selected for implementation. The AVID Implementation contract was not completed because we do not yet know if we will receive funding to implement AVID. However, the superintendent is available to attend first week of required AVID District Leadership training in the fall. As soon as we are notified of our grant award, we will add the AVID course to our master schedule. We have already identified the teacher, Ms. Zucker and the building administrator, Mr. Becker, who will be a part of the campus site team. Many of the other pieces of implementation are dependent on the award of this innovative grant. Should we be selected, we will move forward with summer training, tutor selection, and sharing more detailed information with parents and staff members.

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

Ridgemont Local Schools is a unique school district. You almost have to come here and visit with our students to believe the responsible, proactive ownership they take in their learning. In every arena where they are given the chance to excel, to design their own curriculum, to serve their community through academic study, and to solve problems, they rise up to the occasion and do so. In many cases our students are our leaders. Our service-learning initiative, FFA, and Project SOAR our existing initiatives make AVID the next step for our district. In many regards, we think of school in "non-traditional" ways which have allowed our students to find their passion and develop it. AVID will help us to systematically prepare more students for college. AVID aligns with our Race to the Top initiatives and Ohio Improvement Process goals. Because we have streamlined our resources, time, goals, strategies and vision, we scrutinize every opportunity to ensure that every endeavor moves us closer to our anticipated results. AVID is another tool that will help us to do that. If there was ever a school where AVID could just fit in as a piece of the puzzle without disruption or skepticism from the staff and community, Ridgemont Local Schools is that district.

SECTION D

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

Proposed Innovation:					
Budget Categories	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
Salaries (100)		$2698	$2698	$2698	$8,094
Retirement/ Fringe Benefits (200)					$ -
Purchase Services (400)		$22,302	$22,302	$22,302	$66,906
Supplies (500)					$ -
Capital Outlay (600)					$ -
Other (800)					$ -
9. Total Costs	NA	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$75,000

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

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

Interested LEA/Schools are required to submit the requested grant information electronically to jay.keefer@ode.state.oh.us no later than Friday, May 20, 2011.

Questions may be directed to

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