The Race
Lexington's Race to the Top Communiqué

Lexington Secures ODE Race to the Top Grant

Lexington local schools was one of 437 public school districts and charter schools in the state that won grant money through the most recent federal Race to the Top awards. The total amount delivered to the state from the feds was $400 million with $206 million going directly to schools who applied for the grant. **Lexington's share is $125,303.00 over a four year period.** It will be equally divided between four areas; transparent communication, standards and assessments, using data to improve instruction, and improving teaching and administration.


Our Plan

In 2014, Lexington Local Schools will look dramatically different than it does today. We will have transformed the way we use data and information, train and support our administrators and teachers, connect with and meet the needs of our students, and engage community members. Throughout this transformation, our constant goal will be to realize that through excellent instruction there is meaningful learning that provides each student every opportunity to be as well prepared as possible for whatever comes next.

Where does an Ohio School district begin a transformational process like this? It begins with the commitment to recognize that 21st century "schooling" is ever changing and not always enclosed in a physical building. All of our stakeholders—administrators, teachers, essential support professionals, students, parents, community members and others—will embrace the concept that "school" is about a process based on reflection and growth that never ends. Continuous learning requires new strategies and approaches to advance teaching and student learning. To succeed in the

21st century, we will apply new strategies, evaluate our progress in terms of student outcomes and share our positive and negative experiences to which other parties can take advantage.
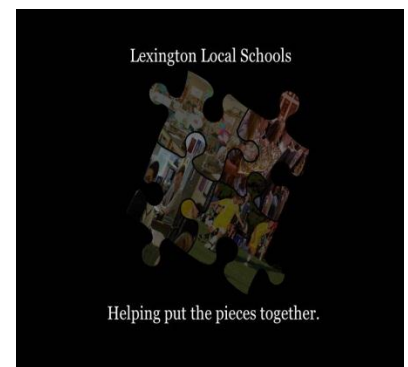
Lexington Local Schools

Helping put the pieces together.

The Plan (continued from front page)

"…our constant goal will be to realize that through excellent instruction there is meaningful learning that provides each student every opportunity to be as well prepared as possible for whatever comes next".

In 2014, we will be well on our way to having an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school—an essential bond for an effective learning environment. Accordingly, we will emphasize recruiting, training, evaluating and retaining the best and brightest educators. There will be a strong emphasis on empowering these educators with the knowledge, skills and information they need to effectively lead transformation in schools and classrooms. Teachers will see themselves differently—as "promoters of knowledge" which will help the art of teaching to evolve and expand. And, there will be an increased emphasis on principals becoming instructional leaders.

Data and information will aid our decision-making and involved learners in self-assessment and goal setting to address gaps between performance and potential. This will be part of our fundamental measure of success. Teachers and administrators will embrace data which will aid in the modification and improvement of professional development and collegial collaboration. Just as data will enable us to differentiate instruction for students, data will enable formative-oriented educator learning and growth. Data and information including multiple measures also will serve as critical components of how we identify and recognize highly effective teachers and leaders. By identifying these individuals we will be able to uncover the instructional practices that have a positive impact on students' academic performance and institutionalize these transformational practices with all teachers and principals.

Reinforcing that students are the ultimate beneficiaries of Race to the Top-related work is our priority. Through our work with enhancing instruction, students will benefit from: more relevant and rigorous course work and learning; higher expectations backed by formative instruction that propels all students to mastery; better use of data to guide students into instructional settings that recognize their potential and improve their chances of fulfilling it; improved integration of technology; use of student input to make better school- and district-level decisions; and, a more fully informed and engaged community that supports all the components of a truly successful 21st century education.

We recognize that our transformation work does not proceed on its own. Our vision includes a well-informed community that understands and supports our work. This may require some shifting from past perceptions about how schools operate and why change and reform is in everyone's best interest. As with administrators, teachers and students; implementing this part of our vision will be done proactively and strategically—with success and challenge monitored every step of the way.

What will be different for our students?

Our students will understand, starting well before high school that their post 12th-grade opportunities multiply dramatically when they acquire college- and career-ready knowledge and skills and then strive to reach their full potential. Students will realize that they are not only competing with those students in their own class, school, neighboring district or states, but internationally. Through our school improvement efforts, they will be well equipped for this competition. Our Transformation Model addresses students in these ways:

1. **Engaging all students in rigor, relevance and 21st century skills**

- Developing core skills for independent, critical and creative thinking and encouraging the pursuit of life-long learning.

- Enhance our AP, dual credit, Pre-AP, 8th grade algebra, flexible credit options and academic acceleration programs.

- Online and open-source courses and collaborative distance learning.

- Real-world work processes, problem-solving and products embedded in student learning.

- Implementing formative instructional practices to provide safety nets for all learners and to provide extended learning opportunities for learners, when needed.

2. **Expanding access to workforce development opportunities**

- Providing learning opportunities that connect to regional job-growth trends.

- Engaging students in academic counseling connected to career trajectory.

- Community and business partnerships to create entrepreneurship and economic development.
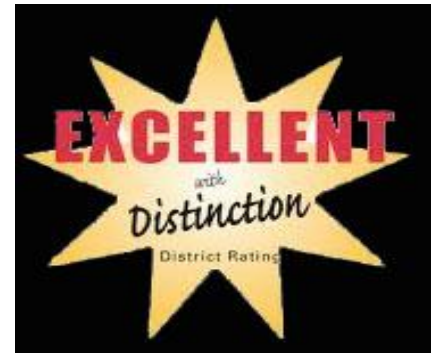
What will be different for our teachers?

We know that expanding academic opportunities for students depends on our teachers. And we know that in order for them to provide personalized and differentiated learning experiences to every student, they need access to data and information that is relevant to the students they teach. While we have long embraced the use of data for decision-making, it will be critical not to just provide teachers with data and information, but to ensure that they know how to accurately and effectively interpret and apply it to their instructional practice. Fundamental to this work will be extensive and focused professional development and coaching centered around:

1. **Measuring student growth through the use of value-added data.**

- Grades 3–8 in reading, math, science and social studies.

- High school end-of-course exams and the ACT college entrance exam for all students.

- Explore measures of student growth in grades K-2.

- Pilot growth measures for K-2 and non-core teachers.

2. **Using a variety of formative instructional practices to provide ongoing feedback to stakeholders.**

- Staff, students and parents know clear learning targets and have real-time, ongoing feedback.

- Common formative assessments are used for teams to learn and replicate what works.

- Summative and benchmark assessments to track student progress.

3. **Utilizing data to identify and accelerate best practices.**

- Identify, study and share practices of teachers who have high student growth rates.

- Use student academic projections (as derived from value-added analysis) for course placement and intervention.

- Use a student survey to assist in determining best practices of teachers.

What will be different for our administrators?

Change is difficult but necessary to achieve our goals. Because many of the changes we are making will be unprecedented, our administrators will be well versed in strategies for leading change and supported by collegial networking. To accelerate these changes and enable their success, our administrators will participate in extensive professional development and ongoing coaching focused on:

1. **Leading change and encouraging collaboration and continuous professional learning**

• Develop a shared vision of highly effective teaching across LEAs.

• Share challenges and successes with other LEAs.

• Address needs during change and support collaboration for ongoing growth.

2. **Using data to focus on highly effective teaching for every student**

• Understand and lead staff on how to use value-added, achievement and projection data.

• Support teams to act on data.

3. **Informing and engaging all community stakeholders**

• Ongoing, user-friendly communications

• Provide parent support to select, apply to and fund regional college and career opportunities.

• Collect feedback from community members, parents and all stakeholders.

In addition to developing our administrators to be more effective leaders, we will provide them with the support to better identify, support, recruit and retain effective teachers. This focus on

human capital development will be new for many administrators and a necessary step toward enhancing teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Our efforts will be geared toward:

1. **Collaborating regionally to create a shared vision of highly effective teaching practices**

• Teacher teams using data to focus on actions to improve learning.

• Coaches working with teachers and leadership teams for job-embedded learning.

• Digital and face-to-face collaboration networks to share best practice.

2. **Enhancing teacher evaluations that incorporate multiple measures**

• Walk-throughs and ongoing feedback for growth.

• Innovative pilot evaluations, including student growth and feedback.

• Establish Peer Assisted Review (PAR) across the region.

• Explore further metrics that have been proven to be valid and reliable.

3. **Developing talent through induction, mentoring and ongoing learning**

• Effective on-boarding experiences.

• Developing mentors to coach best practices.

• Culture of inquiry—online courses, face-to-face training and site visits.

Substantial progress has been made in defining and identifying highly effective teaching. When we apply proven processes for this and widely share transformational practices, we will dramatically impact our desired results. In addition, we are committed to exploring

the role that enhanced compensation and other creative recognitions related to highly effective teaching can play in achieving our goals for improving student outcomes. This is part of our overall, comprehensive and strategic approach to educational transformation—in this case, pioneering human capital development initiatives. Our approaches in this area will include:

1. **Investigating and innovating new ways to recognize educator excellence**

• Identify highly effective principals, teachers and schools to learn transformational practices.

• Research ideas across the country.

• Collaborate across districts and states.

2. **Creating and implementing pilot models for incentives**

• Investment incentives to provide resources to teachers to invest in their classroom.

• Opportunity incentives for teachers to participate or present at the state and national levels.

3. **Devising innovative approaches to career ladders for teachers and principals**

• Utilize multiple measures in combination to provide evidence of successful practice.

• Create advanced career levels that include leadership roles and other responsibilities.

What will be different for our community stakeholders?

The significant, positive change we envision involves the community and its diverse stakeholders. Education is a community enterprise and the results will impact the people and activities well beyond the school walls. Workforce development is vital to the state's future and is intimately tied to educational improvement. We acknowledge the importance of working closely with the individuals and organizations that will be integral to our success, including parents and families, community members, business leaders, civic leaders/organizations, higher education, philanthropic organizations and federal, state and local officials/agencies. Key strategies include:

1. **Increasing awareness/commitment for a new vision for educating children in the 21st century.**

- Lead discussions including data about the future of work that creates a vision for change.

- Provide opportunities to utilize expertise of volunteers across multiple stakeholder groups.

- Engage parents and students to embrace the vision for change and rationale for all students to be college- and career-ready.

2. **Partnering with regional higher education institutions to increase course rigor and support access to college. As a result, we will approach higher education institutions to:**

- Collaborate with our high school teachers in similar areas of expertise.

- Provide expertise and ongoing support to sustain the work after the grant.

- Directly support parents to help students successfully enter college.

3. **Working with business, civic groups and other organizations for economic development.**

- Create innovative entrepreneurial and workforce development opportunities.

- Provide access to the workplace for students.

- Assist in fund raising and providing ongoing resources.

Our Current Reality

Our school district has received an excellent school rating from the state of Ohio for the past eight years. We are currently engaging our students in a number of rigorous course areas and strive to provide a meaningful education to all students. Yet, even with our excellent ratings, we know we can achieve more and provide our students with even better educational opportunities. The relationship between the teachers and administrators, due to an antiquated evaluation tool, has left a gap in collegial collaboration. However, through this process with team building activities and a more thoughtful evaluation tool,

we plan to be a more unified school district by 2014.

As this transformation begins, the way we use data and information, train and support our administrators and teachers, connect with and meet the needs of our students, and engage community members could seemingly become a "herculean" effort. However, our dedication to this transformation is strong. Lexington Local Schools' constant goal has been and will be to realize that through excellent instruction there is meaningful learning that provides each student every opportunity to be as well prepared as possible for whatever comes next.

" We are currently engaging our students in a number of rigorous course areas and strive to provide a meaningful education to all students."

Lexington Local Schools
Phone: 419-884-2132
103 Clever Ln, Lexington,
OH 44904

PHONE:
(419) 884-2132

We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.lexington.k12.oh.us

Budget Summary

Lexington's Race to the Top funding comes from a **one-time grant** from the State and Federal Departments of Education. This grant money **does not go towards** and **cannot be used for** any of the district's salaries or operating expenses.

The total grant of $125,303 will be divided into four equal parts for each year **($31,325.00)** of the grant and then into four more required sections or "assistance areas" **($7,831.00)**

The money allotted to each assistance area will be spent mainly to promote and pay for professional development for staff.

Our Mission Statement...

"The Lexington Local Schools, through a partnership with our children's families and our community, will provide the BEST **possible curricular and co-curricular opportunities to challenge all students to reach their highest potential, to enjoy** **learning and to make positive contributions within their homes and communities."**

Lexington Local Schools
Phone: 419-884-2132
103 Clever Ln, Lexington,
OH 44904