OHIO CORE GRANT PROGRAM

The Ohio Core state initiative requires students beginning with the high school graduating class of 2014 to complete a rigorous curriculum as a requirement for high school graduation and prerequisite for admission to most of Ohio's four year state assisted colleges and universities. The Core requirements in mathematics and science for high school graduation are:

- Four years of mathematics, including Algebra II or its equivalent
- Three years of science with inquiry-based laboratory experience including physical science, biology, and advanced study in one or more of the following sciences: chemistry, physics or other physical science; advanced biology or other life science; astronomy, physical geology or other Earth or space science.

Up to $16.8 million has been appropriated in Fiscal Year 2007 for the Ohio Core Grant Program. Funds shall be used to support grants administered by the Ohio Department of Education.

Grant funds shall be used by eligible school districts to directly support Ohio Core purposes such as building teacher capacity, recruiting and retaining teachers in required disciplines, providing intervention services to students and other related purposes.

The grants shall be awarded by the department to eligible school districts, as determined by the department. The department shall consult with the Partnership for Continued Learning in establishing processes and procedures to distribute funds to eligible school districts. The department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the grant program. Language in the Ohio Core legislation indicated that the General Assembly intends to fund the Ohio Core Grant Program from Fiscal Year 2008 through Fiscal Year 2012 at a minimum of $16.8 million each fiscal year.

APPROVED STRATEGIES FOR USE OF CORE FUNDS

Districts may use Core funds to implement one or more of the following approved strategies:

BUILD TEACHER CAPACITY - MATHEMATICS

1. Conduct an external evaluation of the curriculum in grades 4-8 to determine alignment with the state curricular requirements in grades 9-12. Based on the evaluation findings, develop a plan for making changes to the middle school curriculum to ensure that all students are prepared for a rigorous high school mathematics course by grade 9.

2. Provide intensive professional development for middle school teachers in mathematics content and pedagogy specific to the middle grades.
3. Provide intensive professional development for secondary teachers designed to strengthen instruction in advanced algebra.
4. Provide funding support to teachers seeking to obtain the P-6 Mathematics Specialist Endorsement.
5. Provide support to teachers pursuing the Advanced Placement mathematics teaching credential.

BUILD TEACHER CAPACITY - SCIENCE

6. Conduct an external evaluation of the curriculum in grades 4-8 to determine alignment with the state curricular requirements in grades 9-12. Based on the evaluation findings, develop a plan for making changes to the middle school curriculum to ensure that all students are prepared for a rigorous high school science course by grade 9.
7. Provide intensive professional development in:
   - Middle school science content and pedagogy to assure students are prepared for more rigorous high school science.
   - High school physical sciences, earth and space sciences, chemistry and physics to enhance teacher content knowledge and strengthen inquiry-based instructional approaches.
8. Train teachers to implement research-based middle school or high school science curricular materials proven effective with students similar to those in the school.
9. Provide support to teachers pursuing the Advanced Placement science teaching credential.
10. Develop science curriculum around an Ohio High School Science Program Model that meets the need of the school/district.

MATH & SCIENCE TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

11. Provide financial incentives (e.g., hiring incentives, loan forgiveness, tuition waivers, retention bonuses, and salary supplements) for mathematics or science teachers, and provide high-quality teacher mentoring and induction for new mathematics or science teachers, especially career-changers and those coming into teaching through alternative routes.
12. Collaborate with institutions of higher education to recruit and fund scientists or mathematicians to teach science or mathematics classes on a regular basis, and share instructor positions to meet increased enrollments in advanced high school mathematics and science courses.

13. Collaborate with institutions of higher education to offer on-site programs for teachers seeking advanced degrees or expanded licensure in mathematics or science.

STUDENT INTERVENTION

14. Provide intervention through targeted summer instruction, extended instructional time in ninth grade Algebra I (8-10 class periods a week), and mathematics labs attached to ninth grade Algebra I, for students who are below proficiency in mathematics at the end of the eighth grade.
15. Provide intervention through summer instruction, extended instructional time in ninth/tenth grade physical sciences and biology, and science-related tutoring attached to foundational science courses, for students who are below proficiency in science.

OTHER

16. Districts may also propose other activities for use of these funds. Districts choosing this option shall describe those activities for review and approval by the Department of Education.

PLANNING GRANTS

17. Districts receiving the $2,000 allotment may use the funds for planning purposes, including covering the cost of teacher release time in order to plan for implementation of the Core Curriculum.

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