

# Request for Applications – Seniors to Sophomores Early Adopters Program

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February 26, 2008

## I. Background & Purpose of the Application:

### A. Rationale & connection to policy directions:

In the 2008 State of the State address, Governor Ted Strickland announced a new initiative called *Seniors to Sophomores*. The goal, he said, is “to raise the aspirations of all students, to challenge students who might feel disengaged from their high school studies, and to help students who want to accelerate their college education.”

Ohio is committed to making higher education a priority for the state and a driver of its economy. Governor Strickland has directed Chancellor Eric Fingerhut to create a 10-year plan that will increase enrollment in the state’s public higher education institutions by 230,000. Access, participation, and success in higher education are the keys to helping Ohioans fully participate in the new global economy.

*Seniors to Sophomores* is designed to help fulfill higher education’s responsibility to prepare and “pull up” students in high school to help them aspire and be successful in college, while also making a college education significantly more affordable for those who participate.

HB 119 appropriated funds for the Ohio Department of Education to work collaboratively with the Ohio Board of Regents and the Partnership for Continued Learning to increase participation in, and find solutions for the barriers encountered in the current Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program. Because the barriers to participation in the current PSEO program vary widely from school district to school district, “Early Adopters” of *Seniors to Sophomores* will be encouraged to develop strategies to address their unique challenges with the assistance and support of the Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Department of Education, and Partnership for Continued Learning. Funding from this Request for Applications (RFA) and the technical support of the partnering agencies will allow “Early Adopters” of *Seniors to Sophomores* to address the specific needs of their students and districts and create a variety of models that can be duplicated across the state, providing Ohio high school seniors the opportunity to gain an edge for their future education.

This RFA describes a grant program for “Early Adopters” to plan and begin implementing the *Seniors to Sophomores* program.

### B. Program description:

*Seniors to Sophomores* is a dual enrollment program, which enables academically qualified high school seniors to earn both high school and college credit at the same time. Students who participate in *Seniors to Sophomores* will be enrolled in college classes on a University System of

Ohio campus and will have the opportunity to earn a year's worth of both high school and college credit at no cost to the student. Participating students can avail themselves to on-line college coursework, provided that option is available to regular college students at the collaborating University System of Ohio (USO) partner school.

“Early Adopters” may also choose to expand and encourage other dual enrollment or accelerated learning programs such as Advanced Placement, College Tech Prep, International Baccalaureate, and the traditional Post-Secondary Enrollment Option Program. These alternatives may include offering college classes on the high school campus provided certain quality criteria are met (see program criteria below). However, respondents to this Request for Applications must offer the *Seniors to Sophomores* program as one option to qualified students, enabling the students to earn a full year of credit by enrolling at a University System of Ohio campus. (Note: While *Seniors to Sophomores* allows students to attend college full-time, it does not include living on a residential college campus.)

Senior to Sophomores Program Criteria are as follows:

1. Eligible students must meet all of the following criteria:
  - A. Pass all parts of the Ohio Graduation Test, and
  - B. Complete Algebra II or the equivalent with a grade of “C” or better, and
  - C. Complete three years of high school English with a grade of “C” or better, and
  - D. Score college ready on the college partner’s placement assessment as currently defined by the college.

Longer term agreement must indicate a willingness to adhere to the proposed statewide placement policy.

2. The *Seniors to Sophomores* program will offer qualified high school seniors the opportunity (through dual enrollment) to earn a year of high school and college credit on a USO campus at no cost to the student. A full year of credit is at least 24 college semester hours or 36 college quarter hours. “Early Adopter” school districts are responsible for ensuring that participating students are able to earn their high school diploma through this program.
3. The program must be piloted by Fall 2008, and it must be available to all qualified students within a reasonable period of time.
4. Student support services are identified and provided to participating students. “Early Adopters” are also encouraged to develop programs and services that increase student and parent awareness of *Seniors to Sophomores* and other dual enrollment/accelerated learning opportunities at earlier grades (i.e. middle school).
5. College partners must agree to adhere to state level articulation and transfer policy.
6. The identified plan may include expanding other college credit options – Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Tech Prep, Early College High School, and PSEO, but “Early Adopters” must develop the *Seniors to Sophomores* program as one option for eligible students.

7. Any dual enrollment agreements where college credit is offered on the high school campus must include the following quality assurance criteria:
  - a. All faculty meet Higher Learning Commission criteria.
  - b. All courses offered are either Transfer Assurance Guide (TAG) or Transfer Module Courses or courses that are the beginning of Technical degree programs.
  - c. All courses use the college text(s), assessments and syllabi.
  - d. The college agrees to identify a college faculty member or academic administrator liaison to monitor the quality of the course and visit the high school site at least once per term.

The awarded "Early Adopters" will be school districts that partner with University System campuses (including: universities, community colleges, branch campuses, and facilities that house adult career programs) to create an agreement that will offer the *Seniors to Sophomores* opportunity to high school students beginning in FY 2009 (school year 2008-2009). Technical assistance will be provided by the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Education and the Partnership for Continued Learning staff.

## II. Objectives of the Planning Grants:

- A. To identify innovative public school districts and community schools interested in expanding college credit opportunities that are aligned with the *Seniors to Sophomores* program criteria.
- B. To identify existing partnerships between high schools and University System of Ohio institutions, or to provide incentives to create partnerships where they do not currently exist.
- C. To identify innovative, replicable models that use existing funding to support Seniors to Sophomores college credit opportunities.

## III. Eligibility:

Any public school district or community school may apply in collaboration with an identified University System of Ohio partner(s). The school district or community school must serve as the fiscal agent. Grant dollars will go to awarded school districts. However, a portion of the funds may then be provided to universities and/or Educational Service Centers to serve as plan facilitators/conveners leading to a multiple school district collaboration.

## IV. Scope of Work

Planning Deliverables:

- a. Replicable model with a pilot program Fall 2008 and a scale up plan for offering *Seniors to Sophomores* to all qualified seniors within the district within a reasonable period of time.
- b. The identified plan should include how the *Seniors to Sophomores* program coordinates with other types of accelerated learning or college credit opportunities such as Advanced Placement, Early College High School, regular PSEO, International Baccalaureate, College Tech Prep, etc.
- c. Sustainable fiscal model for funding the *Seniors to Sophomores* program that does not rely on public grant funding. **After the first year of the grant, implemented programs must rely on state funding currently being paid to schools or state share of instruction funds that will be paid to higher**

**education institutions based on enrollment as freshmen – as well as any private or other partnering organization funds.**

**V. Eligible Expenses**

Planning dollars may be used for any legally permissible expense. A limited portion of the grant dollars may be used to pay for student tuition in the pilot year, but funding for the *Seniors to Sophomores* program must be sustainable beyond the grant period and a budget plan for the second year must be included in the deliverables. Operational grant funded expenses include, but are not limited to: planning, implementation, administration, marketing, materials, and transportation activities.

**VI. Project Term**

Grants will not be released before July 2008. However, grant recipients may use grant dollars to reimburse themselves for program-related expenses incurred in FY 2008 between the time award notification is received and July 2008. All funds must be expended by June 30, 2009. Final grant reports and expense reports will be due August 15, 2009.

**VII. Anticipated Awards**

Planning grants will be awarded up to \$100,000 each. The *Seniors to Sophomores* program is not intended to be a competitive grant process. All acceptable applications will be funded up to a total of \$4 million. The Board of Regents/Ohio Department of Education are **not** obligated to expend all of the dollars that have been set aside for this initiative.

**VIII. How to Submit an Application**

Emailed applications will be accepted beginning March 10, 2008, and should be sent to: Deborah Gavlik c/o the Partnership for Continued Learning.

[dgavlik@regents.state.oh.us](mailto:dgavlik@regents.state.oh.us)

*\* Any questions regarding this RFA should also be addressed to Deborah Gavlik at the email address above.*

Applicants are responsible for verifying receipt of applications. The respondent understands that incomplete submittals, incorrect information, or late submittals could be cause for disqualification. Applications containing all required elements will receive careful consideration but cannot be guaranteed funding. Proposals become the property of the Ohio Board of Regents.

The applicant understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the respondent in submittal preparation. To the best of the Regents knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the Board of Regents does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying proposal. By submitting a proposal, responders expressly agree to these terms.

The Board of Regents reserves the right to withdraw this solicitation at any time without prior notice and makes no representation that any agreement will be awarded to any respondent. Additionally, the Regents reserves the right to postpone opening

responses to this solicitation for its own convenience, and/or to waive any informality or irregularity in the responses received.

The Chancellor, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and the Partnership for Continued Learning, reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new proposals from interested parties, to reject any or all proposals responding to this RFA, or to re-issue the RFA if it is determined that it is in the best interests of the State of Ohio. Issuing this RFA does not bind the State to making an award. The Regents Staff will administer the RFA. The Regents reserve the right to adjust the dates for this RFA for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate.

**Below are the required elements of each application:**

- 1. Cover letter.** Cover letters should not exceed one page and must identify one contact person and the fiscal agent by name, address, telephone number, email, and fax. The grant recipient and fiscal agent must be a public school district or community school. The fiscal agent will ultimately be responsible for fulfilling the objectives of the grant. All collaborating University System of Ohio partners must be identified in the cover letter.
- 2. Application.** The application should be no more than seven pages in length, including the timeline and budget narrative. Proposals should be double spaced, 1” margins and a 12-point sized font. The seven page limit does not include the cover letter or letters of commitment. The application should follow the numbering system below:

**2.1 Identify Partnering organizations.** Each partnering organization must submit a letter of commitment with the application that indicates a willingness to be a partner and a willingness to abide by the established criteria of the *Seniors to Sophomores* program.

**2.2 Description of proposed planning activities.** The applicant must provide a description of how the proposed planning activities will lead to a program that meets the *Seniors to Sophomores* program criteria, including the goal of serving student populations who traditionally do not fully participate in higher education. The plan should also include a description of the student support systems (such as career planning, ongoing advising, and college orientation activities) that currently exist or will be enhanced through the grant. In addition, the description should address any connection between the proposed *Seniors to Sophomores* program and the regional economic development needs when appropriate.

**2.3 Relationship of the *Seniors to Sophomores* plan to other dual enrollment/accelerated learning opportunities.**

**2.4 Timeline** for planning grant activities and scaling up to full implementation. Please use document provided in the appendix of this RFA.

**2.5 Project budget and narrative.** Please use the document provided in the appendix of this RFA.

**2.6 Sustainability.** Describe how the planning grant activities will lead to the sustainability of the *Seniors to Sophomores* program. The application must provide a clear description of plans to ensure the program will become fiscally self sustaining.

**IX. Selection Process**

Applications will be evaluated based on completeness, alignment of budget to identified grant activities, and evidence of continued partnership commitment and sustainability. Award notices will be sent to applicants approximately one week after they are received.

**Key Dates**

February 27, 2008	RFA released
March 6, 2008, 8:30-10 a.m.	*Conference call for interested parties
Beginning March 10, 2008	Applications will be accepted
July, 2008	Funds will be released to grant recipients
June 30, 2009	Grant Deadline – all funds must be expended by recipients
August 15, 2009	Final report due

**\*Interested parties should contact Corey Hawkey at (614) 466-5812 to receive dial-in instructions for the March 6, 2008 conference call.**

**X. Appendices**

**1. Grant Goals, Activities & Timeline Page**

Use this page to describe specific activities, timelines and outcomes for this grant. Duplicate if necessary for completeness.

<b>Grant Goals</b> Enter the goals of the planning grant.	<b>Activities / Tasks</b> List and briefly describe the activities and tasks that will be used to accomplish each goal, including timelines.	<b>Measurable Outcomes/Due Dates</b> Describe a successful outcome for each goal and how it will be measured. Include due dates.

**2. Budget Narrative Page**

Use this page to briefly describe how funds will be used for each line item expense that you are requesting funds for that explains: (1) how the costs align and support the goals/activities of the RFP; and (2) a description explaining contributed support or funding provided by partners in this proposal, if any. In-kind support is not a requirement of this RFP.

<b>Object Codes</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>	
	<b>Requested</b>	<b>In-kind</b>
<b>100 Salaries</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>200 Retirement/Fringe Benefits (Percentage must be defined)</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>400 Purchased Services</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>500 Supplies</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>600 / 700 Capital Outlay (Including equipment, buildings)</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>800 / 900 Other (Bonds, bank charges, insurance)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>