

2006-07 Improving Teacher Quality State Grant Program Recipients

Project L.I.F.E.: Literacy Is For Everyone

Primary Institution: ESU # 1 (Wakefield)
Project Director: Amy Hill, ESU #1
Other Partners: Wayne State College School of Education & Counseling and
School of Arts & Humanities; Niobrara Public School

This project targets middle grade teachers in northeast Nebraska. The goal is to improve content knowledge in analyzing nonfiction text and using comprehension and questioning strategies. Aligned with the Nebraska Reading Standards, the professional development activities would take place in summer 2007 and the following school year with 25 participants.

Amount Funded: \$59,899

Northeast Nebraska Educator Development Cohort for K-6 Paraprofessionals

Primary Institution: Wayne State College
Project Director: Dr. Frank D. Adams, Wayne State College School of Education & Counseling
Other Partners: Northeast Community College Division of Humanities, Arts & Science; Madison, Norfolk, South Sioux City and Winside Public Schools

The project directors will target bilingual/minority individuals who are employed in schools or are interested in working in elementary schools. They will provide enhanced academic advising to participants and will take special steps to ensure that the courses needed by participants to earn an associate degree will be available. Each of an estimated 25 participants will sign a "contract of agreement" as part of the program. Project funding is for participant stipends, special advisors, a stipend to participating elementary schools, and instructional supplies. Participants will pay their own tuition.

Amount Funded: \$99,993.60

"Teaming Up" for Improving Learning Across Nebraska

Primary Institution: ESU # 6 (Milford)
Project Director: Sandy Blankenship, ESU #6
Other Partners: Doane College; University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Economics Education; Niobrara, Santee, Walthill, Wausa, Winside

and Winnebago School Districts; Educational Service Units #2, #4, #6, #7, #9, #10, #11

Teacher surveys indicated that a high percentage of teachers in the region had no recent professional development in brain-based learning, effective instructional strategies, infusion of technology into the curriculum and economic principles. This project will create 18 K-12 state-wide learning teams, including principals, that will meet all together and individually to address these topics.

Amount Funded: \$59,999

Professional Development Math and Science Technology Institutes, Continuation

Primary Institution: University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Project Director: Dr. Laurence Rilett, College of Engineering and Technology
Other Partners: University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education and Human Sciences; Elba, Lexington, Omaha and Lincoln Public Schools

A program to increase the math and science content knowledge of middle and high school teachers was funded in January 2006. This project introduced teachers to multimedia tools that provided real-life applications such as bridge design and crash testing. During a three day summer institute, teachers participated in the co-development of instructional modules that were integrated into their classrooms in the 2006-07 school year. This project would continue last year's activities.

Amount Funded: \$78,514

Summer Spanish Teaching Endorsement Workshops

Primary Institution: Nebraska Wesleyan University
Project Director: Dr. Rita Ricaurte, Wesleyan Department of Education
Other Partners: Nebraska Wesleyan University Humanities Division; Educational Service Units #1, #10, and #17

In 2003-2004 the Nebraska Department of Education identified 95 teachers who were teaching Spanish but did not hold endorsements in Spanish. In January 2005 an Improving Teacher Quality grant funded the first year of a project designed to provide an accessible program of courses for completing a subject endorsement in Spanish. The second year of funding was awarded in January 2006. This third year of funding will again target teachers in high need districts within the three participating ESUs and in other parts of the state. The program will consist of a two-week, six credit workshop held at Nebraska Wesleyan in June 2007. An additional course will be offered in a six-week, primarily online format.

Fifteen teachers from 10 ESUs participated in 2005; 21 teachers from 15 ESUs participated in 2006. Two teachers have completed their endorsement and two have provisional endorsements. Other past participants need additional time to complete an endorsement. New participants will also be invited.

Amount Funded: \$59,991