



NEWS RELEASE

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CCPE Announces 2008-2009 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Recipients

Lincoln, Omaha, Overton, Ewing, Winnebago and Santee public school districts and their postsecondary institution partners are among several schools to receive funding for teachers' professional development.

LINCOLN, Neb. – Programs for Nebraska teachers seeking to sharpen their instruction skills were given a financial boost thanks to federal grants awarded recently to selected teaching-improvement courses.

Programs where Spanish teachers can earn sought-after Spanish endorsements and rural math and science teachers can learn how to better teach their students were among the programs awarded Federal Improving Teacher Quality State Grants. The grants, which the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) administers, fund courses that are designed to improve teachers' professional skills. The CCPE approved the funds at its Commission meeting on January 22, 2009. Details on the programs are provided below.

Improving Teacher Quality state grants are project-based grants designed to help increase student achievement by providing educators with professional development activities to improve their teaching skills. The program provides funds to partnerships established between Nebraska's postsecondary institutions and high-need, low-income local education agencies (LEAs). The partners use the funds for specific projects pertaining to core academic subjects.

"Because our teachers face a variety of educational challenges among their low-income areas across the state, the Improving Teacher Quality grants offer additional assistance for creative, innovative projects that might otherwise never be undertaken," said Marshall Hill, executive director of the CCPE.

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**CCPE Announces 2008-2009 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Recipients
(Add one)**

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title IIA) funds the grants. The total amount of funds available for awards in 2008-2009 is \$344,398. The total amount recommended for the six projects that received funding was \$346,877. The additional funds will come from funds not awarded in 2007-08.

This year's recipients of Improving Teacher Quality state grants are as follows:

Summer Teaching Workshops

Project director: Rita Ricaurte
Higher education partners: Nebraska Wesleyan University, Humanities;
Nebraska Wesleyan University Department of Education
High-need LEA: Keya Paha County Schools
Other identified partners: St. Mary's School, Bellevue; Lincoln Public Schools;
Omaha Public Schools

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. The third year helped 13 participants complete the courses for endorsements. The fourth year allowed 13 additional teachers who needed a large number of courses to complete the last courses for their endorsement. This fifth year of funding will allow additional teachers to complete the courses needed for endorsement as well as offer professional development for elementary and secondary foreign language teachers. The program will take place on the Nebraska Wesleyan campus.

Amount Funded:* **\$58,906*

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**CCPE Announces 2008-2009 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Recipients
(Add two)**

Improving Teacher Quality and Tracking Student Learning in Foreign Language Classrooms

Project director: Ali Moeller
Higher education partners: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Modern Languages; University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education
High-need LEA: Omaha Public Schools
Other identified partners: none to date

Initially funded in 2003-04, this project provides a two-week immersion experience for 30 Spanish teachers on the UNL campus. Following the first year of funding, the Nebraska LinguaFolio was developed to track student learning. UNL received funding again in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 for the immersion experience and to instruct teachers in the implementation of the LinguaFolio in their classrooms. This year's funding will do the same. Through the immersion experience, participants are able to improve their Spanish language skills and content-specific pedagogical expertise, as well as learn to integrate the LinguaFolio into their curriculum the following school year.

***Amount Funded:* \$84,318**

Discovering Knowledge: A Statewide Science Inquiry Project

Project director: Sandy Blankenship
Higher education partners: Doane College (arts and sciences);
Doane College (teachers college)
High-need LEAs: Walthill, Santee, Omaha Nation, Southern Valley, Maxwell, Rock County, Bloomfield/Wausa, Ewing, Niobrara and Chambers Public School Districts
Other identified partners: Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA), Waverly Public, Villa Marie (Lincoln), York Public and Private, Red Cloud, Morrill and Ogallala School Districts; and Educational Service Units #1, #3, #4, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #13, #16, and #17

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**CCPE Announces 2008-2009 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Recipients
(Add three)**

In 2006-07 science was the teaching area in Nebraska with the lowest percentage of high school teachers endorsed in the area taught. This project will address improved science content, brain-based learning, instructional strategies, infusion of technology and science instruction. Fifteen learning teams with five participants each will be created across the state with principals included on the teams. Two, 2-day activities, a conference presentation and a one-day technology workshop will compose the formal training. The teams will work together online and meet locally to develop their projects.

Amount Funded: \$55,371

Project L.I.F.E.: Literacy Is For Everyone, Part 3

Project director: Amy Hill
Higher education partners: Wayne State College, School of Arts & Humanities;
Wayne State College, School of Education & Counseling
High-need LEAs: Winnebago, Omaha Nation and Niobrara Public Schools
Other identified partners: ESU # 1 (Wakefield); Coleridge, Laurel-Concord,
South Sioux City, Pender and Wakefield Public Schools

This project targets middle grade teachers in northeast Nebraska. First funded in 2006-07 and again in 2007-08, the goal of the project is to improve content knowledge in analyzing nonfiction text and using comprehension and questioning strategies. This year's project will also cover vocabulary strategies. Aligned with the Nebraska Reading Standards, the professional development activities will take place in summer 2009 and during the following school year with 25 participants.

Amount Funded: \$83,664

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**CCPE Announces 2008-2009 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Recipients
(Add four)**

**Distance Delivery of UNL's Comprehensive and High Quality Professional Development
Math and Science Summer Technology Institute**

Project director: Dr. Laurence Rilett
Higher education partners: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Engineering and
Technology; University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of
Education and Human Sciences
High-need LEA: Omaha and Overton Public Schools
Other identified partners: St. Patrick High School (North Platte), Scottsbluff High School
Lincoln Pius X, Lincoln and Omaha Public Schools

A program to increase the math and science content knowledge of middle and high school teachers was funded in January 2006, 2007 and 2008. This project introduced teachers to multimedia tools that provided real-life applications such as bridge design and crash testing. Teachers participated in the co-development of instructional modules that were integrated into their classrooms in the following school year. The Nebraska Department of Education received a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to cover some of the costs of the 2008 institute. The onsite format of the original workshops restricted widespread teacher participation. Therefore, ITQ funding for this project will cover costs to develop the professional development activities for distance delivery, with the particular goal of reaching rural areas. Funding will also cover costs for piloting the distance program.

Amount Funded: \$59,999

About Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) is a state constitutional agency that serves as an independent voice within Nebraska's higher education system. It serves to promote sound policies that apply to the best interests of taxpayers, students and Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. The CCPE recommends policy to the legislative and executive branches to improve and support postsecondary education. The CCPE also reviews and recommends operating budgets, administers the Nebraska State Grant program, approves academic degree programs, and reviews for approval new tax-funded building projects proposed by Nebraska's public institutions. The CCPE is governed by 11 commissioners appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Nebraska State Legislature. For more information about the CCPE, please visit www.ccpe.state.ne.us.

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