



## 2008-2009 Annual Report

GRO is a dynamic and successful partnership between two Minnesota intermediate school districts. Intermediate districts partner with K-12 school districts to meet more effectively the unique learning needs of every student. In order to achieve this mission, GRO helps districts obtain resources, share effective practice, and stay on the cutting edge of educational research.

***Applying Research to Practice*** – a resource for best practice applications of research based teaching and learning, including 1) *Differentiated Instruction* 2) *High School Re-Design* and 3) *Scientifically Based Education*.

***Grant Seeking Assistance*** – a resource for GRO member districts and their staffs to write proposals and research funding prospects for projects they seek to fund.

***Professional Learning Opportunities*** – a resource for professional development offered by 287/916 such as training events, seminars and workshops, on-line learning, and idea sharing in repositories for curricula and what other districts are doing.

### Applying Research to Practice

#### Differentiated Instruction for All (DIAL) Project

- Exemplary programs and resources gathered from other schools and institutions are hot-linked to the website were updated and expanded.
- Differentiated strategies focusing on reading/language arts/English, math, science, and social studies for elementary, junior high/middle school and high school were expanded.
- An exploratory workshop on “Lesson Study to Support Differentiated Instruction” was facilitated by Peter Ziegler.
- Math Lesson Study Pilot Project was conducted with 14 participants from three school districts.
- NWEA MAP Tests Step 4 Workshop: Growth & Goals: Building Local Expertise was conducted in October, 2008.
- The three-level differentiated instruction learning communities program was made available to member districts. No learning communities were in operation during this year.
- The DIAL E-Learning Community was shared with a number of educators in both Minnesota and Arizona.

- The DIAL E-Learning Community courses will be included in the Hamline University catalog in the fall of 2009. The two foundation courses will be offered through Hamline with new titles.

### **Scientifically Based Education Research (SciBER) Project**

- Scientifically based education researched literacy curriculum, assessment, and instructional resources were expanded on the website.
- Scientifically based education researched science, math and social studies curriculum, assessment, and instructional resources were expanded on the website.
- Preliminary investigation was done related to the topic of video games and the teaching and learning process particularly as it relates to literacy.
- Jim Pellegrino will facilitate a workshop entitled Intensified Algebra: Interventions for Helping Students Over the Basic Algebra Threshold on June 16, 2009.
- Interventions for math and reading have been gathered and will be added to the website.

### **High School Redesign Project**

- At the first High School Success Emporium held in August, 2008, high school redesign success stories were shared by teams from Edina, Osseo, Richfield, Robbinsdale and South Washington County.
- Resources from the High School Success Emporium I are posted on the website.
- Proposals are being solicited from districts for the High School Success Emporium II scheduled for June 15, 2009.
- Expanded high school redesign resources were added to the website.

### **Grantseeking Assistance**

#### **Prospect Identification**

- The number of requests for services was on a par with the previous year, fielding six requests for prospect identification. Each request resulted in a list of approximately 15-25 prospective funders for the specific projects under consideration.
- A letter of inquiry was developed and sent to 23 prospects seeking capital support for the 'Math Embedded in Culinary Arts Project' at the Northeast Metro 916 location in Little Canada.
- A letter of inquiry is being developed to explore funders' willingness to support the Honors Mentor Program serving both intermediate districts.

#### **Grants Received**

- **MSTA**  
The Math and Science Teacher Academy (Region 11) has provided professional development to over 500 middle school math teachers in 59 schools from 34 metro districts. The focus this year has been on Grades 6-8 Algebra to Number.  
Funding period: May 27, 2008 – June 30, 2009  
Amount received: \$1,584,651

- **Transforming School Counseling**  
This program had two goals: (1) train and coach staff members to effectively counsel students to access post-secondary education and (2) enhance existing structures for supporting 80 first year high school students attending four area learning center programs.  
Funding period: April 2008 – June 30, 2009  
Amount received: \$99,309
  
- **CAREI Evaluation of ACE Project**  
This study was intended to examine teacher growth in delivering integrated curriculum that occurred during a previous grant project and investigate whether the changes are continuing without the support of grant dollars.  
Funding period: March, 2008 – June 30, 2009  
Amount received: \$3400
  
- **Alternatives to Suspension**  
A proposal was submitted in April 2009 to the Minnesota Department of Education. Grant dollars will be used to create a comprehensive program of support for reducing suspensions based on the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) model.  
Funding period: July, 2009 – June 30, 2010  
Amount received: \$19,756.00.

### **Professional Learning Opportunities**

- An exploratory workshop on “Lesson Study to Support Differentiated Instruction” was held for 15 participants.
- Math Lesson Study Pilot Project staff development sessions were held for 18 participants.
- NWEA MAP Tests Step 4 Workshop: Growth & Goals: Building Local Expertise was held for 40 participants.
- High School Success Emporium I was held for 35 participants.
- High School Success Emporium II is scheduled.
- A workshop entitled Intensified Algebra: Interventions for Helping Students Over the Basic Algebra Threshold is scheduled.
- Consideration was given to sponsoring a workshop on assessment and grading but a decision was made to not duplicate the efforts of Minnesota ASCD who is sponsoring this type of workshop in the fall of 2009.
- The Friday Forum network continued:
  - The Friday Forum network of gifted education professionals from area districts is sponsored by GRO in cooperation with Metro ECSU. Friday Forum explores effective practice in gifted education. Friday Forum met five times during the year to discuss issues common to the group and be exposed to the products available through GRO that promote gifted education. In 2008-09, there are 36 registered members in the Friday Forum Network, representing 28 area educational organizations and districts.

- Examples of Friday Forum initiatives include:
  - Work to design a **Middle School Student Career Commons**. The Career Commons is envisioned as an online clearinghouse where information can be accessed at the middle school level.
  - An online map (ZMap) showing schools or programs designed for highly gifted students in the Twin Cities Metro Area:  
<http://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=114380>

### **Grants and Research Office Communications**

- Issues of the GRO-o-gram e-newsletter were electronically distributed to over 1800 people. Format changes introduced this year included dividing the GRO-o-gram into a newsletter for grants and a second newsletter for applying research to practice. GRO-o-grams announce grant opportunities, updates, and promote workshops sponsored by the Grants and Research Office, Minnesota Department of Education, and other education service providers. Specifically, the grant-related related Gro-O-Gram issues were sent with calendars for corporate and foundation deadlines in approaching months and a thumbnail of the funders' respective interests or focus.
- A significant revamping of the website has resulted in:
  - Curriculum review process resources and resources for evaluating curricular areas have been added to the website.
  - Professional Learning Community resources have been added to the website.
  - A Curriculum Repository has been added to the website. A process for soliciting exemplary curriculum, assessment, and instructional procedures, practices, programs, policies and projects for addition to the website was developed and shared with district leadership.
  - Quick Links to Professional Development has been added to the website. Included within the quick links are the Teaching and Learning Leadership ShareSite and Professional Learning.
    - The Teaching and Learning Leadership ShareSite includes:
      - Curriculum Repository
      - Curriculum Trends
      - College Level Examination Program
      - Curriculum Review Process Resources
      - Resources for Evaluating Curricular Areas
    - The Professional Learning section includes
      - PLC Resources
      - Workshops
      - E-Learning Community
      - Friday Forum
      - Curriculum Repository
- Materials associated with GRO initiatives are frequently distributed at professional meetings and to intermediate district advisory groups.

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