



2014-2015 Annual Report

The Grants and Research Office (GRO) is a dynamic and successful partnership between Intermediate District 287 and Northeast Metro 916. These intermediate districts partner with their member K-12 school districts to meet more effectively the unique learning needs of every student. In order to achieve this mission, GRO helps districts stay on the cutting edge of educational research, share effective practice and learn from successful grants.

Applying Research to Practice – a resource for best practice applications of research based teaching and learning, including 1) Differentiated Instruction; 2) Secondary School Redesign; 3) Evidence Based Education and 4) Learnings from Grants.

Grant Seeking Resources – 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

Exemplary programs and resources gathered from other schools and institutions are hot-linked to the website.

Differentiated strategies focusing on reading/language arts/English, math, science, and social studies for elementary, junior high/middle school and high school are provided.

Resources included on the website to enhance academic rigor are provided.

Evidence based education, research, literacy curriculum, assessment, and instructional resources on the website are provided.

Evidence based education research on science, math and social studies curriculum, assessment practices, and instructional resources are provided on the website.

Curriculum review process resources and resources for evaluating curricular areas are provided on the website.

Professional Learning Community resources are provided on the website.

The Curriculum Repository on the website includes a process for soliciting exemplary curriculum, assessment, and instructional procedures, practices, programs, policies and projects from district leadership.



The Learnings from Grants section is included on the website to share significant outcomes of grants received. Included are:

- Math and Science Teacher Academy Partnership
- ACE V (Academics in Career Education)
- Alternatives to Suspension
- CAREI: PLC Sustainability Project
- Transforming School Counseling
- ACE: Improving Academic Achievement for EBD Students through Career and Technology Training Program
- EngrTEAMS (GRO is a partner with Metro ECSU and the U)

Grant Seeking Resources

The Grants section of the website provides grant writing information for member districts.

Grants attained include:

- Continuation of the Region 11 Math and Science Teacher Partnership Academy: Life Science, Grades 3 and 5, and Number Sense, K-2.
- Partnering with the University of Minnesota and Metro ECSU to administer the EngrTEAMS - Engineering to Advance the Education of Analysis, Measurement, and Science; a NSF (National Science Foundation) grant, \$8 million over a 5 year period. School district partners are Northeast Metro 916, North St. Paul, St. Paul, and South Washington County. Year two concludes at the end of May, 2015. Year three begins in June with the 3rd Summer Institute and curriculum pilots.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Prioritizing Instruction: A Seminar Series for School Leaders in Non-General Education Settings

- Facilitated by Jane Holmberg
- School principals are becoming increasingly clear that their primary role is to lead instruction in their buildings. Recognizing that this is a challenging shift in focus for many general education administrators, it can be even tougher for those who lead Setting IV special education programs, schools for at-risk learners, or educational programs in Care & Treatment or with a Career-Tech focus.
- To help leaders of these specialized schools and programs to focus on instruction when behavioral needs or other management tasks might otherwise consume most of the



organizational energy, a special seminar series was designed. The series examined how programming can focus on instruction, offering practical ways to integrate best practices from general education while not losing the benefits of the specialized setting.

- Number of Participants: 16

Becoming a Reflective Teacher in a Highly Engaged Classroom

- Facilitated by Tina H. Boogren, Ph. D., Marzano Research Laboratory
- In this highly interactive workshop, Dr. Boogren guided participants to learn how to raise students' energy levels, demonstrate a positive demeanor, express enthusiasm, and use humor to create a highly engaged classroom culture in which all students are accepted and challenged. Participants learned to facilitate emotions for students such as enthusiasm, interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and pride. Additionally, participants worked on developing their own teaching expertise by learning how to implement reflective processes in order to examine their own practices, set growth goals, and use focused practice to achieve those goals.
- Learning outcomes:
 - Execute specific strategies to engage students throughout their learning.
 - Use four categories of strategies on a daily basis: effective pacing, demonstrating intensity and enthusiasm, building positive teacher-student and student-student relationships, and using effective verbal feedback.
 - Improve practice through the reflection process.
 - Articulate growth goals around student engagement.
 - Pursue growth goals through focused strategies.
- Number of Participants: 45

9 Ways for “Strategic” Teachers to Support Struggling Readers in Content Classrooms Grades 6-12.

- Facilitated by Allyson Burnett
- The overall goal of this workshop was to show content teachers how to become “strategic” teachers who know and systematically use an impactful assortment of research-based literacy strategies to make informational texts more accessible to their students.



- Participants:
 - Identified the strategies used by proficient readers and learn how to teach them to all students
 - Learned practical, ready-to-use strategies to be implemented with students before, during, and after reading
 - Explored the relationship between vocabulary, reading, and writing
 - Incorporated highly effective strategies to help students learn and remember content vocabulary
 - Accessed writing strategies that help students to process and demonstrate their understanding of what they read
 - Completed a Literacy Lesson Plan Template to use as a model in future planning
 - Created an action plan to ensure the successful implementation of the strategies learned

- Number of Participants: 34

Neurodiversity in the Classroom: A Revolutionary New Concept for Special Education

- Facilitated by Dr. Thomas Armstrong

- A new concept in human diversity has emerged over the past ten years that promises to revolutionize the way educators provide services to students with special needs. Just as we celebrate diversity in nature and cultures, so too do we need to honor the diversity of brains among our students who learn, think and behave differently. Best-selling author Dr. Thomas Armstrong argues that we should embrace the strengths of such neurodiverse students to help them and their neurotypical peers thrive in school and beyond.

- The workshop focused on five specific diversities: autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, intellectual disabilities, and social and emotional disorders.

- Dr. Armstrong introduced the concept of neurodiversity and outlined five basic principles of neurodiversity covering neuroscience, anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary biology. The workshop emphasized the idea of "positive niche construction" or creating positive environments within which students with special needs can flourish in the classroom.

- The majority of the workshop was structured around seven basic components of positive niche construction:
 - strengths awareness
 - assistive technologies and Universal Design for Learning tools
 - strength-based learning strategies
 - positive environmental modifications
 - positive role models
 - enriched social networks
 - affirmative career aspirations

- Number of Participants: 29



Becoming a Reflective Teacher in a Highly Engaged Classroom: Level II

- Facilitated by Tina H. Boogren, Ph. D., Marzano Research Laboratory
- Research has clearly shown that student engagement happens as a result of a teacher's careful planning and execution of specific strategies. This basic premise drives Dr. Boogren's Level II Workshop, *Becoming a Reflective Teacher in a Highly Engaged Classroom*, which features advanced strategies for increasing student engagement and reflecting on practices related to engagement in the classroom. Participants will leave this highly interactive workshop with specific strategies and action steps that can be used to create and reflect upon a classroom environment where engagement is the norm, not the exception.
- Participants
 - Executed specific strategies to engage students throughout their learning.
 - Deepened their understanding of four questions that must be answered positively, in order to create an environment where student engagement levels are high.
 - Improved practice through the reflection process.
 - Articulated growth goals around student engagement.
 - Pursued growth goals with focused reflection strategies, including engaging in focused practice, receiving focused feedback, and observing and discussing teaching.
- Number of Participants: 97

Visible Learning Two-Day Institute

- Facilitated by Aimsley Rose, Dave Nagel and Barb Pitchford; Corwin
- The Corwin Visible Learning Institute is a two-day conference designed to introduce participants to the core concepts and research of Visible Learning. Visible Learning is an in-depth school change model of professional learning and development based on the research of Professor John Hattie.
- Through the lens of Visible Learning evidence, participants learned to systematically examine effective instructional practice in order to determine the “impact” on student achievement and learning. By considering the effects of the practices of teachers and leaders, schools will be able to make substantial gains in student achievement.
- John Hattie's work is based on his meta-analysis of more than 1,000 research reviews comprising more than 50,000 studies involving more than 250 million students around the world. Hattie found that the #1 most effective method for improving achievement was by giving students 100% visibility into what they are learning and why.



- After participating in the institute participants:
 - Understand the Visible Learning research findings and the meta-analyses process
 - Understand and develop knowledge core of concepts of Visible Learning including:
 - Using data to know the impact
 - Effective Feedback
 - Know the importance of using student voice
 - Understand the dispositions and qualities of Visible Learners
 - Receive next steps and action items to begin using the Visible Learning research in daily practice
 - Teachers have more efficacy, as they utilize effect size calculations to understand what is and is not working, and make adjustments with students to focus on what works best
 - Leaders have increased clarity in what to look for in terms of effective classrooms and instruction, and offer feedback with the tools of strong instructional leadership

- Number of Participants: 150

The following workshops were developed and offered and then cancelled due to lack of enrollment:

- Doing School: Helping Boys Make the Grade
- 2014-2015 Digital Learning Leadership Network
- Claiming Your Place in the Digital Future
- Rigor in Action

Grants and Research Office Communications

GRO information was electronically distributed to over 1600 people. The distribution list is compiled from member district administrators, GRO workshop participants, and those requesting to be included on all updates.

The Grants and Research Office webpage is updated frequently and is accessed at <http://grantsandresearchhelp.us/>

Materials associated with GRO initiatives are frequently distributed at professional meetings and to intermediate district advisory groups.

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