

Grants and Research Office (GRO)

INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION
Intermediate Districts 287 and Northeast Metro 916



GRO-o-gram February 2006

There are still spaces available to attend our Differentiated Literacy Workshops on March 21 (elementary focus) and on March 22 (secondary focus). The Grants and Research Office is pleased to bring Liz Kuzmich from Colorado to District 287's Service Center. Liz is a leader and author in the field of differentiated literacy. For more information, go to #1 below. To sign up now go to: www.prepcenter.org

On February 1, the member login method was upgraded. Please take a moment to visit our web site and register with your own individualized user ID and password. If you have had problems getting into our web site, please try again and see the detailed instructions to "sign up" in #2 below. *(We have had some problems with the new system, but the process has been simplified.)* Please e-mail us at info@grantsandresearchhelp.us if you have any problems. Our webmaster or staff will get back to you as soon as possible.

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1. DIFFERENTIATED LITERACY WORKSHOPS 3-21 or 3-22

The Grants and Research Office (GRO) is sponsoring two workshops for educators entitled **Differentiated Literacy Strategies for K-12 Student Growth and Achievement**. Liz Kuzmich from Loveland, CO will facilitate two day-long sessions, one for elementary teachers on March 21 and one March 22 for secondary teachers.

Each session will examine research-based, data-driven strategies that address literacy learning in the differentiated classroom. Participants will explore how to accelerate literacy learning for all K-12 readers, writers, speakers, and listeners in diverse elementary and secondary classrooms.

Liz Kuzmich is a Senior Consultant for the International Center for Leadership in Education. Liz has provided training and consulting to school districts around the country and presented at national conferences. Some of her publications include *Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades K-6*, *Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades 7-12*, and *Data Driven Differentiation in the Standards-Based Classroom*.

Both sessions will be held at the Intermediate District 287 Service Center, 1820 N Xenium Lane, Plymouth, MN 55441. Each session is from 8:30 to 3:30 and worth 6 hours of CEU's. Cost to GRO Members: \$120; Non-GRO Members: \$150

To register: Go to: <http://www.prepcenter.org>. If you have difficulty with online registration, contact the PREP Center at 763-550-7274.

Questions? Contact Duane Udstuen, GRO Research-to-Practice Consultant, dhudstuen@district287.org for additional information on the DIAL Project go to: <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us>. Click on "Differentiated Instruction."

2. VISIT THE GRO WEB SITE AND "SIGN UP!"

On February 1, we upgraded the member login method on our web site. The new system asks you to enter your own user name and password. Members must register and "sign up" before gaining full access to the web site. This new system will enable GRO staff to identify which employees of our member districts are using the web site. (If you do not work in a member district, you need to join the Grants and Research Office for full access to the web site and to receive other membership benefits. See details on associate memberships at the end up this update.)

To register for a new account and sign up with your individualized user name and password, go to the home page of the GRO web site: www.grantsandresearchhelp.us On the home page, follow this process:

1. Click on "register" or "become a member" in the left column. (You can also click on "sign up" at the top right corner of the screen.)
2. A screen will appear for you to "Register for an account." Enter your own individual user name and password X2 (you do this twice to make sure you entered it correctly). NOTE: We encourage you to pick a user name that you already use and

a password that is easy to remember. (The system will help you retrieve your access information if you forget!)

3. Enter your e-mail address. (If you do not use your school address, let us know your role and the school/district of your employment when you fill in your profile.)
4. Click on Submit. (An automatic e-mail from info@grantsandresearchhelp.us will bounce back with your user name and password. Print out this e-mail and file for future reference.)
5. Click on "sign in" in the upper right corner of your screen. Enter your user name and password.
6. Click on "edit profile" in the left column. Fill in your profile and submit. (Let us know your school, position, and educational topics of interest!)
7. Browse! Now you can get into all sections of the GRO web site.
8. "Sign out" each time you are finished visiting our site. ("sign out" is located in the upper right corner of your screen.)

All employees of member districts 287 and 916 are members of GRO and are therefore eligible to register for a new account. Not sure if you are a member of District 287 or 916? Go to <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/html/about.asp> and see a list of member districts.

If you work outside our suburban districts or in greater Minnesota, you can now join as an associate member. If you are interested in joining as an individual, please e-mail Linda Ebert at llebert@district287.org and request a membership brochure. If you are interested in our district or individual school membership options (membership rates are based on school enrollment), please e-mail your request to our staff at info@grantsandresearchhelp.us

3. GRANT COMPETITION NOW OPEN: IMPROVING LITERACY THROUGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES (Applications due 4-11)

The U.S. Department of Education is now accepting grant applications for the Improving Literacy through School Libraries (LSL) program. The program focuses on providing funding to public school libraries in districts with 20 percent or more family poverty. Funds are used to improve reading achievement through updating the library collection, expanding Internet connections, purchasing new technology, providing professional development for library media specialists, and extending school library hours.

Applications are due by April 11. Approximately \$19 million in funding will be available for an estimated 100 grants. More information on the grant program and the full application package are available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/isl/index.html>

Any questions should be directed to Dr. Irene Harwarth, the team leader for the Improving Literacy through the School Libraries program, at irene.harwarth@ed.gov

4. STRIVING READERS UPDATE

Awards for the FY 2005 Striving Readers grant applications will be made by the end of February. Many people have been inquiring about the FY 2006 Striving Readers competition. Kathryn M. Doherty of the U.S. Department of Education has sent this message to schools interested in Striving Readers: "The FY 2006 budget provided \$29.7 million for Striving Readers---this is approximately a \$5 million increase over FY 2005. Given the modest increase in funds provided, the Department is likely to award an additional grant or two from applicants for the FY 2005 competition. There is no NEW competition scheduled for Striving Readers awards in 2006."

5. DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING RESOURCES

Are you interested in flexible grouping, tiered lessons or using varied questioning strategies? Go to the RESEARCH section of the GRO web site and click on "Differentiated Instruction." Scroll down to "Differentiated Lessons and Units by Content Areas." Here you will find many articles, strategies, and direct links to materials you can use to design differentiated lessons and units for specific content areas for elementary, junior high/middle school, and high school.

6. CALL FOR GRANT WRITERS!

Are you a grant writer or know someone who has experience writing grants? We would like to feature more grant writers on the GRO web site. Please consider making your services available to our member districts. In exchange for this free listing, we encourage grant writers to offer special rates to our member districts. Visit our web site to apply for a listing at: http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/html/apply_writer.asp After you fill out the application form on-line, we will contact you about being listed on the GRO web site.

As a special service to our members, the Grants and Research office features potential grant writers on our web site. We feature only writers who have experience relevant to education grant writing. Please feel free to [browse](#) our listings. For each writer, you will find a resume, professional biography, and list of references. If you feel you may be interested in working with one of the featured grant writers, you may contact him/her directly for more information and/or contact the writer's references. Because the Intermediate Districts have asked writers to offer special rates to member districts in return for the feature listing, we hope that this service will allow you to obtain high-quality, affordable assistance in applying for grants.

7. GRANTSEEKING FOR BEGINNERS SEMINAR (MCF) 3-22

The Minnesota Council on Foundations' popular **Grantseeking for Beginners** seminar will be offered on March 22, 2006 from 8:30-3:30 at the Continuing Education and Conference Center, University of Minnesota's St. Paul Campus, 1890 Buford Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108. This seminar provides essential information for grantseekers interested in learning the basics of grantwriting. Presenters include fundraising consultants, foundation representatives, and other leaders in Minnesota's grantmaking field.

The seminar will help you to:

- Enhance your ability to identify potential funding sources in an informed and well-researched manner by examining the most commonly used directories - including electronic sources.
- Review the proposal development process and pinpoint key elements and information to include in your grant proposals - including budget development.
- Present the proposal review and decision-making process from a grantmaker's point of view during a grantmaker panel discussion.

Cost for the seminar is \$95 (for this rate, you must register by March 15). Cost includes lunch, refreshments, program materials and related costs. For more information and to register go to: <http://www.mcf.org/MCF/grant/beginners.htm> Questions? Contact the Minnesota Council of Foundations by Phone: 612.338.1989 or E-mail: info@mcf.org

8. GRANT TIP: Writing a Need Statement

After your introduction you need to convince the funder that the issue you want to tackle is important and show that your school team is an expert on the issue.

The GRO web site also has helpful research and data you can use for this section of your grant. Here are key tips for the Need Statement of your grant:

- Describe a problem that is about the same size as your solution. Think of the activities and strategies you want to carry out through the grant and list relevant needs.
- Don't assume the funder knows much about your subject area.
- Why is this situation important? To whom did your organization talk, or what research did you do, to learn about the issue and decide how to tackle it? The GRO web site has many best practices from research listed which you can refer to.
- Describe the situation in both factual and human interest terms, if possible. Providing good data demonstrates that your organization is an expert in the field.
- Describe your issue in as local a context as possible. Explain the issues facing your school or district, not facing education in general.
- Don't describe the absence of your project as the problem. "We don't have a tutoring program" is not the problem. The *problem* is students not reading at their grade level. Tutoring is a *solution*.

Adapted from *Writing a Successful Grant Proposal*, MN Council on Foundations
<http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm#problem>

9. GRANT FUNDER PROFILE: The Graco Foundation

The Graco Foundation provides funding for education-related capacity-building and capital improvement projects for schools in the Twin Cities area, with a geographic focus for north and northeast Minneapolis, and the northern and northwestern suburbs.

Founded in 1926, Graco supplies technology and expertise for the management of fluids for commercial and industrial markets. The Foundation's goal is to help organizations grow their ability to serve community needs through grants specifically aimed at expanding or enhancing services to clients, including capital projects and program development. The Graco Foundation addresses the needs of the community in the following areas:

Productivity and Self-Sufficiency

Priority will be given to organizations that have a proven track record in enabling people to be self-sufficient and more productive. Emphasis will be placed on educational programs, human service programs that promote self-sufficiency, and sports/youth development programs.

Business Awareness

Business depends on and thrives in healthy communities. Likewise, communities depend on and thrive around healthy businesses. Special consideration will be given to organizations that promote knowledge of business and the free enterprise system.

Before sending in a short proposal, call the Graco Foundation (612) 623-6684 and visit their web site www.graco.com/Internet/T_Corp.nsf/Webpages/Foundation to see if your school and project would fit with their focus.

10. SCHOOL FUNDRAISING IDEA: Botanical Interests Premium Seeds

When your project needs a small amount of start up money, it may not be worth the time and money to write a grant. Consider a fundraiser that makes a connection to your project or presents a new product. For example, if you would like to start a school garden with your students, this would be an excellent way to raise funds.

Botanical Interests provides a unique, quality product--premium flower, vegetable and herb seeds. They promote their seed fundraiser by asking if you are interested in selling a product that:

- ◆ Doesn't get the all-too-common response "Oh-no --not another fundraiser!"?
- ◆ Is the highest quality and most unique product of its type available?
- ◆ Is unconditionally guaranteed?
- ◆ Is environmentally sound and is produced by a small, family owned business?
- ◆ Provides profit margins that aren't marginal?

Botanical Interests, Inc. of Colorado also produces a unique seed packet that also educates! Designed for folks who don't have a lot of experience gardening, each packet of seed "has more information on the front, back, and inside of the packet than most books!"

Contact Botanical Interests at 800-486-2647 (ask for Curtis) or e-mail them at the following address: fundraiser@botanicalinterests.com

Rachel Hefte, GRO Grants Manager & GRO-o-gram Editor

Send comments, suggestions, and ideas to: rmhefte@district287.org