

Grants and Research Office (GRO)

INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION
Intermediate Districts 287 and Northeast Metro 916



GRO-o-gram March 2006

We will be editing our e-mail distribution list for the GRO-o-gram and other announcements during April. If you are not a member district of 287 or 916, please join as an associate member. You can now become a member as an individual. We also offer special rates for individual school buildings/organizations or for an entire school district. Your membership will ensure that you will continue to receive our GRO-o-gram. Other membership benefits include full access to our GRO web site, workshop discounts, as well as other grant help services. See #4 below for full details.

The member login method on the GRO web site was upgraded on February 1. Please take a moment to visit our web site and register with your own individualized user ID and password. Follow the step-by-step process in #5 below. E-mail us at info@grantsandresearchhelp.us if you have any problems. Our staff or webmaster will get back to you as soon as possible.

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1. EDUCATION FUNDING IS SAVED

On March 16, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced a bipartisan amendment to add \$7 billion to the education budget to avoid cutting programs like Striving Readers, Smaller Learning Communities, Dropout Prevention, Title I, and many others. In an overwhelming victory for education, the Senate passed the measure 73-27. If you want to keep up with important high school education issues, get on the e-mail distribution list of the *Alliance for Excellent Education* at http://www.all4ed.org/whats_at_stake/maillinglist.html and enter your information. For general information about the *Alliance for Excellent Education* go to www.all4ed.org and sign up for their twice a month e-newsletter: **Straight A's**.

2. GRANT FUNDS FOR SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The US Dept. of Ed plans to post the Smaller Learning Communities Grant Application online at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/slcp/applicant.html> on March 27. Applications are due on May 31 with awards being made to approximately 50 schools on July 31 for a total of \$47.5 million. For resource materials useful in developing this grant go to the GRO web site at <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/personalizing.asp>

3. RESOURCES ON THE GRO WEB SITE

Check out the Adolescent Literacy Resources located on the GRO web site under Scientifically Based Education at <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/adolescent.asp>

Need resources for your HS reform initiatives? Check on the resource list at <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/highschool.asp> under the Personalized Learning section of the GRO web site.

Are you re-evaluating your course sequences in math, science, or social studies? The member district curriculum sequences are posted on the GRO web site under Scientifically Based Education at <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/highschool.asp> for your reference.

4. ASSOCIATE GRO MEMBERSHIPS

Associate memberships are now available for individual schools, school districts, school organizations, or for individual staff members. In the past, only member districts of 287 and 916 enjoyed the benefits of the Grants and Research Office. You can make your job easier, using the research and grant information that we offer on the GRO web site and in our e-newsletter, the GRO-o-gram. We also offer networking opportunities, grant consultation, and discounted rates for workshops and forums.

Cost for individual school or school district memberships are pro-rated according to the size of the school or school district. If you are interested in a school membership or our district member option, please contact us at info@grantsandresearchhelp.us

If you are a curriculum specialist, a grant writer, or in charge of professional development, consider our individual membership options. The Grants and Research Office offers two individual categories of membership:

Individual Basic is \$30 and includes:

- Web-based Services and Resources
- Customized Grant Searches
- Membership Gift

Individual Comprehensive is \$60 and includes:

- Web-based Services and Resources
- Grant Consultation
- Comprehensive Monthly Online Newsletter
- Discounts to Workshops and Other Events
- Membership Gift

If you join anytime within an academic year, your membership benefits extend throughout the next academic year.

To join, send the membership fee and your name, school/district, address, phone number and e-mail address to Linda Ebert, Grants and Research Office, Intermediate District 287, 1820 Xenium Lane N., Plymouth, MN 55441. ***Once we receive payment for your membership, you will be able to “sign up” and register with your own user ID and password on our GRO web site.***

5. MEMBERS: 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. Employees of 287 & 916 member districts must register and “sign up” before gaining full access to the web site. This new system will enable GRO staff to identify who is 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

6. GRANT SEARCH HELP REQUEST FORM

Do you have a program or project for which you need funds? If you are a GRO member, we can provide you with a prospective grant list and link you to funders. Besides identifying community and regional foundations, we can also search a national database for grant prospects. Just fill out our short [grant search help request form](#) available on our web site. Describe your project and the difference you'd like it to make, and we'll send you some grant funder ideas and creative ways to find community support.

7. 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.

8. GRANT TIP: Writing A Compelling Project Work Plan

Explain what your school plans to do about the problem. What are your overall goals? You might write:

"The goals of this project are to increase the understanding among middle school students about the impact of smoking on their health, and to reduce the number of students who smoke."

Then provide details, including:

- Who is the target audience, and how will you involve them in the activity? How many people do you intend to serve?
- What are you going to do?
- What project planning has already taken place?
- Who is going to do the work and what are their credentials?
- When will the project take place?
- Where will the project take place?

You may not know the answers to all these questions when you submit your proposal. But the more you know, the better your proposal. Apply the "mind's eye test" to your description. After reading it, could the reader close her eyes and imagine what she would see if she came into the room where your project is happening? Many project descriptions are too vague.

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

9. GRANT FUNDER PROFILE: Star Tribune Foundation

The Star Tribune Foundation supports programs and organizations that strengthen the communities we serve. They focus on activities that enrich the shared life of the community and the social and physical infrastructure that connects us all.

The focus of grants is in four program areas:

- Helping children succeed
- Helping adults become economically self-sufficient
- Supporting cultural and arts programs
- Improving journalism and promoting freedom of speech

Small Grants

- *Star Tribune Employee Contributions Committee.* The group reviews and selects organizations for small grant awards. The program is offered twice a year, from March to May and June to August, for grant requests of \$5,000 or less. A total of \$200,000 is distributed through this program that helps Star Tribune employees learn about nonprofit organizations and the needs in our community.
- *The Star Tribune Imagination Fund,* a special funding program for teachers in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools. The goal is to provide grants that help teachers design unique, creative learning opportunities for their students. Emphasis is on projects that increase reading literacy. A total of \$50,000 is available through this program, with each small grant limited to \$1,000.

Information about these small grants is sent to schools at the beginning of each school year. The deadline for submitting applications is the end of October and funds are distributed in mid-December. Click here to get the application form and examples of proposals that were funded last year. Applications may also be obtained by calling the Foundation office at 612-673-7051. For more information, e-mail lmcadam@startribune.com.

Applications for funding may be made by writing a letter of intent, or by submitting a brief proposal (two-three pages) to the Foundation manager (sfleitman@startribune.com). You can use the Minnesota Common Grant Application.

Sandra (Sam) Fleitman, Star Tribune Foundation Manager
 Star Tribune Foundation
 425 Portland Avenue. Minneapolis, MN 55488
 Phone: 612-673-7051 E-mail: sfleitman@startribune.com
 Web site <http://www.startribunecompany.com/140>

10. SCHOOL FUNDRAISING IDEA: Selling Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Students can help families save money & energy and slow global warming by selling Compact Fluorescent Bulbs (CFLs). You can buy bulbs for about \$2.25 a piece and sell them for \$5 per bulb.

- Your school should purchase only energy-star rated bulbs to ensure high bulb quality (www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls)
- Schools can get a good price on Energy Star CFL bulbs from a metro area whole sale distribution company Whole Energy and Hardware www.wholeenergyandhardware.com
- Now is a good time to plan your CFL bulb sale for next fall. Often schools do better if they sell bulbs in October and November when people start leaving their lights on for more hours a day, during the EPA's national "*Change a Light Change the World*" Campaign. http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=2112

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

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