



## **GRO-o-gram      April 2006**

News coverage about the high school dropout problem has been plentiful in recent weeks. Perhaps you read **TIME** magazine for the week of April 17 or caught the Oprah special during your spring break. We have included some links to more information about the dropout crisis (see #1 below) and small school resources (see #3 below) because it relates to our initiative of high school reform and supporting smaller learning communities. We hope this is helpful if you are working on school reform and/or preparing to apply for a smaller learning communities grant (see #2 below)

Many school leaders across the state have been receiving complementary GRO-o-grams during this last year. If you are outside our member district boundaries, we hope you will consider joining the Grants and Research Office. We have a number of important services that can save you time and resources to benefit your programs. We have individual, school building, and school district memberships available. If you join now, your membership will continue through the 2006-07 school year (See #6 below).

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## 1. HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT PROBLEM IN THE NEWS!

On April 11 and 12, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* focused its estimated 49 million U.S. viewers' attention on "American Schools in Crisis," a 2-day report on the poor state of America's high schools. Bill and Melinda Gates unveiled STAND UP, a national campaign to make the public more aware of the dropout crisis in American high schools and to provide them with the tools to make a difference. The campaign's goal is to ensure that students receive the support they need to graduate from high school ready for college, work, and citizenship. While the Gates Foundation has supported many schools to redesign and create new high schools, STAND UP is a new campaign "to provide all Americans--parents, teachers, community leaders, and others--with information they need to take action so our high schools prepare all young people and our country for a strong future." Visit [www.standup.org](http://www.standup.org) to learn more.

The April 17 issue of *TIME* also features a cover story on the "Dropout Nation." Available online at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1181646,00.html>.

*The Oprah Winfrey Show* also teamed up with *TIME magazine* to conduct a poll on Americans' attitudes on the educational system and on high school dropouts. For more information on Oprah Winfrey's "American Schools in Crisis" report, including features from the show, the STAND UP campaign, and complete results from the poll: [http://www2.oprah.com/tows/slide/200604/20060411/slide\\_20060411\\_284\\_101.jhtml](http://www2.oprah.com/tows/slide/200604/20060411/slide_20060411_284_101.jhtml).

The Alliance for Excellent Education has also developed a new portal on its website, <http://www.all4ed.org> that provides information on the crisis in American high schools and the cost to America, as well as updated state and local information on high schools, including graduation rates, college readiness rates, and student achievement data. The Alliance features the results from their nationwide survey about Americans' attitudes about high school reform, videos on student attitudes about high school and literacy, and several reports that address the crisis in high schools and offer policy solutions.

## 2. SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES GRANT due 6-30-06

The US Department of Education has promised to post the application for the Smaller Learning Communities Grant Application online at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) on April 28. Go to <http://www.ed.gov/programs/slcp/applicant.html> for the most recent information on this program. Applications are due on June 30 with awards being made by the end of August to approximately 72 schools for a total of \$47.5 million.

GRO provided grant development support to Robbinsdale Cooper and Armstrong High Schools for a Small Learning Communities Grant they received from the US Department of Education last spring (2005). Their grant includes an emphasis on advisory, 9th grade orientation and program, mentoring, academic rigor, and the AVID program. They are interested in exploring career clusters and pathways in the future. For information on the implementation of their grant contact Rebecca Augustine via e-mail at [Rebecca\\_Augstine@rdale.k12.mn.us](mailto:Rebecca_Augstine@rdale.k12.mn.us) or Brenda Damiani at [Brenda\\_Damiani@rdale.k12.mn.us](mailto:Brenda_Damiani@rdale.k12.mn.us) .

For other resource materials useful in developing this grant go to the GRO web site at <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/personalizing.asp>

### 3. SMALL SCHOOL RESOURCES

**Rethinking Schools** has back issues of their journal for summer 2005 available: *Is Small Beautiful: The promise and problems of small school reform*. Order on-line at [www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org) or call 1-800-669-4192. Here is a sample of resources from their publication:

**Making Students Partners in High School Redesign: What Kids Can Do.** Actively engage students in the issues of school reform. Free pdf at <http://www.whatkidscando.org/images/general/WKCDResources.pdf>

**CES Small Schools Project.** The small school project of the Coalition of Essential Schools. [http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces\\_docs/ssp/ssp.html](http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/ssp/ssp.html)

**New Visions for Public Schools.** Organization promoting small school reform in New York City. <http://www.newvisions.org/>

**The School Redesign Network.** Stanford University-based project led by Linda Darling-Hammond. [www.schoolredesign.net/srn](http://www.schoolredesign.net/srn)

**Small Schools Project.** Support network for schools receiving funding from the Gates Foundation. [www.smallschoolsproject.org](http://www.smallschoolsproject.org)

**Small Schools Workshop.** Founded in 1991, this is one of the oldest support networks for small school reform. [www.smallschoolsworkshop.org](http://www.smallschoolsworkshop.org)

GRO also has resources available on our web site for HS reform initiatives. Check <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/highschool.asp> under the Personalized Learning section of the GRO web site.

### 4. SEND US YOUR GRO IDEAS OR QUESTIONS!

The Grants and Research Office Advisory Committee is meeting on May 11. Discussions will include GRO services and initiatives for the upcoming school year that can benefit your school district. Do you have ideas to share or questions to pose to our advisory group? Please send your suggestions to Duane Udstuen at [dhudstuen@district287.org](mailto:dhudstuen@district287.org)

### 5. START A DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING COMMUNITY!

Now is the time to begin planning for next year! Could your school benefit from participation in a differentiated Instruction for All (DIAL) E-Learning Community to support differentiated instruction in your classrooms? For an overview of the content, processes, and technology associated with the DIAL E-Learning Program go to [teachers.edenpr.org/~nguldberg/DIAL/DIAL.promo.htm](http://teachers.edenpr.org/~nguldberg/DIAL/DIAL.promo.htm) Click on "slide show" in the lower right corner to view the show without the side bar.

Questions about the program? Contact Duane Udstuen: [dhudstuen@district287.org](mailto:dhudstuen@district287.org)

Watch for upcoming information in May on additional levels of the Differentiated Instruction for All (DIAL) E-Learning Community programs that will build upon the current program. For information on the current program, go to [http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/dif\\_elearning.asp](http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/dif_elearning.asp)

To view samples of differentiated lessons and units by content areas, go to [http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/dif\\_samples.asp](http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/dif_samples.asp)

## 6. ASSOCIATE GRO MEMBERSHIPS

In the past, only member districts of 287 and 916 enjoyed the benefits of the Grants and Research Office. Now associate memberships are available for those who work outside our suburban districts. Associate memberships can be purchased for individual schools, school districts, school organizations, or individuals can join on the basic or comprehensive levels (see below).

You can make your job easier, using the research and grant information that we offer on the GRO web site. We also provide research links, grant announcements, grant tips and more---in our e-newsletter, the GRO-o-gram. We also offer grant searches, networking opportunities, grant consultation, and discounted rates for workshops and forums.

Cost for individual school buildings, small charter schools, or school district memberships are pro-rated according to the size of the school or district. If you are interested in a school membership or our district member option, please contact us at [info@grantsandresearchhelp.us](mailto: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 now, your membership benefits will extend throughout the next academic year, 2006-07.

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.**

## **7. 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.

## **8. GRANT TIP: OUTCOMES / IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES**

Tell the funder what impact your project will have — what will change about the situation as a result of your project. For example, your pregnancy nutrition counseling program intends to increase the birth weights of the young mothers' babies. The impact of a project is sometimes hard to define. For example, what is the intended impact of a performance of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony?"

Impact can be difficult to measure. The desired impact of a smoking cessation program is clear, but the desired impact of a leadership program for teenagers may be ambiguous and difficult to quantify.

To add to the difficulty, few groups can prove conclusively that a given impact was caused directly by their project. The babies may weigh more, but the cause may not be your nutrition program. Nevertheless, you must do the best job you can to define your intended impacts.

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

## **9. GRANT FUNDER PROFILE: ST. PAUL TRAVELERS FOUNDATION**

The St. Paul Travelers Foundation (formerly the St. Paul Companies Foundation) has a long history of supporting programs that educate underserved populations to create social and economic opportunities. Priorities include:

- To help people of all ages develop and strengthen academic skills necessary for them to succeed
- To increase educational opportunities for children and young people who traditionally have difficulty gaining access to education

To determine eligibility, please read the complete Grantmaking Guidelines that apply to all charitable corporate and foundation contributions made by St. Paul Travelers.

**St. Paul Travelers fund educational initiatives that educate under-served populations to create social and economic opportunities.**

- **Pre-Kindergarten** – Educational initiatives which prepare young people for academic learning through age-appropriate, structured, academic preparatory activities.
- **Intervention** – In-school and after-school academic activities which enable youth to strengthen their academic skills as well as programs that address barriers to learning.
- **Post-Secondary Preparation and Attainment** – Activities which prepare youth for learning, enable them to attend post-secondary programs, and guide them to successful completion.
- **Adult Education** – Supports academic preparation for independent living for low-income and under-served communities.

For more information please contact  
 St. Paul Travelers Foundation  
 (formerly The St. Paul Companies, Inc. Foundation)  
 385 Washington St., M.C. 514D  
 St. Paul, MN 55102  
 Phone: (651) 310-7757  
 Contact: Mary Pickard, Pres.  
 Web site: <http://www.stpaultravelers.com/about/community/index.html>

## **10. SCHOOL FUNDRAISING IDEA: Beyond the Giant Candy Bar!**

Are you tired of candy and gift wrap fundraisers? Now there is an alternative that can be educational and/or entertaining! Colleen Needles, local TV personality, has started a new internet-based company, the Family Catalog, to help schools and nonprofits become more effective fundraisers.

The Family Catalog and website allows schools to offer a prescreened selection of family-friendly movies, along with historical and nature documentaries, fitness and educational programs and a selection of music CD's for adults and children.

Students can go door-to-door collecting orders, or schools can do orders online and have them shipped directly to the customer, which saves time and effort on the delivery end of the fundraiser. Families can also continue to order products on the Family Catalog website and every time they purchase, schools receive the benefit.

Based in Minnetonka, the Family Catalog has eight employees and is growing. Check out the possibilities for your next fundraiser at [www.thefamilycatalog.com](http://www.thefamilycatalog.com)

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