

Grants and Research Office (GRO)

INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION
Intermediate Districts 287 and Northeast Metro 916



GRO-o-gram May-June 2006

Summer is a great time to start your grant planning and making connections with local businesses, foundations, and corporations. Check out the GRO web site at www.grantsandresearchhelp.us and click into the grants section and then search for foundation and corporate prospects that focus on your topic and fund in your geographic area. If you want to expand your grant search, take a trip to see the new Minneapolis Central Library in downtown Minneapolis. They have a large Foundation Center Cooperating Collection available on-line and it is free to the public! (See #7)

The GRO web site also has great resources for curriculum planning and staff development. Visit the research section and check out the differentiated resources and the great links to quality resources. Also check out the Math, Science, and Social Studies sequences of Intermediate District 287 member districts under the Scientifically Based Research section of the GRO web site.

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1. SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Grant funds for Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) will be awarded again this summer. 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. View the grant application online at www.ed.gov Go to <http://www.ed.gov/programs/slcp/applicant.html> for the most recent information on this program.

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 or Brenda Damiani at Brenda_Damiani@rdale.k12.mn.us

2. RESOURCES FOR HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

If you are working on creating changes in your high school, there are many resources to help you research best practices and connect with others who are working on improving the climate, personal connections, and learning success for all students:

The Alliance for Excellent Education has a special section of their web site devoted to Small Learning Communities. The Alliance includes SLC headlines around the country, research reports, issue briefs, case studies, and an overview of their SLC Initiative, including recommendations for effective small learning communities.

Go to: http://www.all4ed.org/learning_comm/index.html

Rethinking Schools devoted their summer 2005 journal to the topic of high school reform: *Is Small Beautiful: The promise and problems of small school reform*. Order this back issue on-line at www.rethinkingschools.org or call 1-800-669-4192.

The Grants and Research Office (GRO) also has resources available for a variety of high school reform initiatives: Go to the Personalized Learning section of the GRO web site: <http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/highschool.asp>

3. TEN KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL

How effective is your community's high school in educating its students? Drawing from the work of leading researchers and educators from around the country, the Alliance for Excellent Education has identified ten key Elements of a Successful High School – elements that every high school should have in place to ensure that all students are successful. This checklist can help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your community schools and determine steps for improvement.

Go to: http://www.all4ed.org/whats_at_stake/elements.html to learn more about the ten key elements: challenging classes; personal attention for all students; extra help for those that need it; bringing the real world to the classroom; family and community

involvement; safe learning environment; skilled teachers; strong leaders; necessary resources; and user friendly information.

The Alliance for Excellent Education has also developed a new portal on its web site, <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.

4. GRANTSEEKING FOR BEGINNERS SEMINAR (MCF) 8-14

The Minnesota Council on Foundations' popular **Grantseeking for Beginners** seminar will be offered on August 14, 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 August 7). 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 on Foundations at 612-338-1989.

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 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

Watch for upcoming information this summer 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

To view samples of differentiated lessons and units by content areas, go to http://www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/research/html/dif_samples.asp

6. ASSOCIATE GRO MEMBERSHIPS

Do you know of school staff outside of our 287 and 916 member districts that would benefit from this GRO-o-gram? Forward this May-June issue as a sample of GRO services and encourage them to sign up for an associate membership. Associate memberships can be purchased for individual schools, school districts, school organizations. Individuals can join on the basic or comprehensive levels (see below).

GRO has many services to help make your job easier. We 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

If you are a teacher who needs funding for your project, a curriculum/grant writer, or in charge of professional development for your district, consider our individual membership options. We have 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. SEARCH FOR GRANTS AT THE NEW MPLS CENTRAL LIBRARY

The new Minneapolis Central Library in downtown Minneapolis is home to a Foundation Center Cooperating Collection. Come explore their on-line collection of information on foundations, grants, giving and nonprofit resources to get you started. Free information classes on this valuable resource will be held this summer in their Best Buy Tech Center: June 14, July 12 or August 9 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Central Library is located at 300 Nicollet Mall, one block from the Nicollet light rail station. (There is also underground parking beneath the new library.) Call 612-630-6000 to register.

8. GRANT TIP: OUTCOME EVALUATION

Keep these points in mind when you are planning the evaluation for your grant:

1. A sound evaluation design will measure the extent to which your program was effective in achieving its objectives.
2. Evaluation design must be carefully aligned with the program objectives and should do the following: cover products and process, define evaluation criteria, describe data gathering methods, describe the process of data analysis.
3. The following questions need to be included in designing the evaluation system:
 - Did the program accomplish its objectives?
 - Did the program operate as it was designed to operate?
 - What variables need to be considered in monitoring the program structure?
4. An evaluation plan should identify who will be performing the evaluation and their expertise in the area to be evaluated.
5. Evaluation design must provide for a continuous monitoring system.
6. An appropriate analysis and reporting system must be incorporated in the evaluation design.

NOTE: Evaluation is any systematic process that is designed to reduce uncertainty about the effectiveness of a particular program component. Evaluation should also include considerations of various alternatives for continuing, expanding, or terminating the program.

From the GRO web site www.grantsandresearchhelp.us/grants/html/evaluation.asp

More Basics on Evaluation

- Map for Nonprofits www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/evaluatn.htm
- MN Council of Foundations www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm#evalua
- MN Evaluation Studies Institute <http://education.umn.edu/EdPA/MESI>
- CAREI www.education.umn.edu/CAREI

9. GRANT FUNDER PROFILE: ATHWIN FOUNDATION

The Athwin Foundation funds education programs in the Twin Cities area, including general operating support and special projects. The Athwin Foundation will accept 2-page letters of inquiry twice a year by March 1 and October 1. Guidelines and instructions are available at www.catchcod.com/athwin.php Send letters of inquiry to: The Athwin Foundation, 5200 Wilson Road, Suite 307, Minneapolis, MN 55424

For Questions/Additional Information, contact: Jim Storm, Ph.D., Consultant, 612-379-3817 jstormcod1@aol.com Center for Organizational Development, 1313 Fifth Street SE Minneapolis, MN 55414.

10. SCHOOL FUNDRAISING IDEA: BLUE SKY GUIDE

Are your students and parents tired of candy and popcorn fundraisers? Then try Blue Sky Guides, a healthy choice for families and our planet! *Blue Sky Guide*, the coupon book for healthy living, is the smart choice for fundraising. With a focus on health, community, environment and saving money, *Blue Sky Guide* is a feel-good fundraiser. In the past couple years, more than 200 area schools and community organizations have used *Blue Sky Guide* to raise much needed funding. With one of the highest returns available - up to 50% - and no up-front costs, *Blue Sky Guide* fundraising is fun and easy. Sign up for your Fall 2006 fundraiser this week and earn \$10 for each book sold. For details please visit <http://www.findbluesky.com/fundraise.asp>

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

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