

Date: December 29, 2010
 To: Mary Beth Schafer, Nontraditional Education Programs Specialist,
 Minnesota Department of Education;
 Ann Mavis, University of Minnesota
 From: Lynn Grundtner, Curriculum Coordinator
 Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916

Pathways to Employment
Building Capacity to Create Work Experiences and Competitive Employment Opportunities for
High School Students with Disabilities
Grant Report

This report will address questions as requested. The questions are in italics.

What goals have you been working on and an update in achieving them - what have you accomplished since your last report?

Intermediate District 287 and Northeast Metro 916 collaborative Pathways to Employment Academics in Career Education (ACE) team has been focusing on both goals one and two. Goal number one is: Create and pilot an instructional program that integrates mathematics and reading into the career area of computer applications. Goal number two is: Assist students in obtaining a job requiring computer application skills.

It has been reported that the timeline for the grant awarded to Northeast Metro 916 and Intermediate District 287 runs from January 2010 through January 2011. Late in January 2010, districts 287 and 916 received approval to access funds awarded. According to the timeline, planning and preparation would take place during spring semester and summer of 2010. Instruction was scheduled to begin in September 2010. There were some delays in beginning instruction right away in September due to students' issues around attendance and adjusting to school routines. By October Microsoft Office Specialist Skills courses are in session.

Since the last report the team members from the two intermediate districts have worked individually and together to prepare and implement a course in which students learn Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) skills, increase proficiencies in reading and mathematics, and apply MOS skills in work related activities. Syllabi, unit plans, lesson plans, assessment plans, materials, and teachers are prepared. Math and reading specialists have produced documents and materials that support academic learning in the context of the computer application lessons. Work coordinators are in touch with teachers in order to align work experiences with learning in the classroom.

The following table was created as a result of planning at a team work session. The table outlines tasks to be completed and includes descriptions of continuing work with students. The underlined and highlighted comments indicate progress to date.

Work Experience Coordinators	Teachers Licensed in EBD	Mathematics Teachers	Reading Specialists	Administrators
Identify jobs where Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) skills are needed; (continuing)	Include reading, math, and career exploration skills in the syllabus for the computer applications course. Done	Provide ways for teachers to manipulate measurements; make explicit the use of rational number concepts. Done	Identify strategies to make high level text accessible. Done	Envision the project. Done
Identify (Done) and use (continuing) a quality work-readiness survey.	Create lessons that have a computer application objective, and a math and/or reading objective. Done	Provide ways for teachers to use diagrams and multiple representations. Done	Use a research based process for explicit vocabulary instruction. (continuing)	Procure resources. Done
Include MOS work samples in student work experience portfolios. (Done and continuing)	Develop units that include reading and mathematics as well as application of MOS skills to work experience. Done	Include study of math terms used in Microsoft Office. (continuing)	Provide ways for teachers to apply before, during, and after reading strategies. Done	Engage staff. Done
Student research papers using MOS have career exploration as the topic. (continuing)		Apply math concepts to MOS, and show how concepts are applicable to other situations. (Done and continuing)	Use student writing projects to improve reading and MOS skills. (continuing)	Support the project with scheduling, staffing, structure, and encouragement. (continuing)

How are you using the Guideposts in your activities?

The Intermediate District 287 and Northeast Metro 916 collaborative project addresses the *Guideposts* in various ways. The computer applications course aligns with state standards in reading and math, the MOS skills are based on professional standards, and the course offers structured exposure to career opportunities.

Career preparation and work-based learning experiences as outlined in the *Guideposts* are an integral part of the project's activities for students. An example is the Transition/Work Readiness Skills Survey which focuses on work related soft skills, academic skills, and general job skills. This survey has been designated by the team as a tool to use before and after student participation in the course created by the project. Other examples are the identified departments and community agencies where students can practice MOS skills by creating newsletters, flyers, and brochures.

At the meeting in October team members took time to review the *Guideposts for Success* and talk about the connections to our work and the project. The *Guideposts for Success* outline ideas familiar to us as educators of students with emotional behavioral disorder (EBD) in specialized programs. Other connections noted were that the guideposts align with the areas of transition addressed in IEPs, individual education programs. All of the students we serve have IEPs which are reviewed and updated annually. Our Pathways project addresses particularly guidepost #1 and #2.

During the conversation around the *Guideposts* it was noted that due to interfering factors related to the students' disabilities, few students may achieve the MOS certification while still in high school. However, by having participated in the projects' MOS classes they will know about the potential for certification. The students who participate will know enough to be able to seek out completing MOS certification in the future.

As recommended in the *Guideposts*, students will have participated in a technical education program based on professional standards and been given the opportunity to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills.

How are you enhancing the existing career preparation and work-based learning experiences/structures currently in place?

The Building Capacity to Create Work Experiences, Pathways to Employment project builds upon continuing projects initially funded by other Academics in Career Education, (ACE) grants. With the addition of the Microsoft Office Specialist course students will have the opportunity for exposure, skill development, and work experiences in woodworking, culinary arts, and Microsoft Office skills. Existing staff bring their expertise to the project. Unit plans and rubrics from previous projects serve as templates for development of the current project. Past success of students engaging in work experiences and/or employment allow staff to envision ways computer skills can be applied in available environments.

How many students are currently involved in the activities, how many staff, locations of activities etc.

Currently there are nine students at one site, and six students at another site. Student participation is expected to increase as the school year progresses.

Ten staff members have been involved in development activities. Observation and consultation has taken place at South Education Center. Meetings involving the entire collaborative team have been held at Capitol View Center and in a meeting room at a coffee shop midway between the two sites. One teacher at Bren Road and one teacher at Capitol View Center are responsible for the instruction. Specialists and administrators continue to contribute structure, resources, and support.

The Microsoft Office courses are held at Bren Road Education Center and Capitol View Center. Work coordinators are seeking to plan work experience activities within the centers, at other district buildings, and for community organizations. The PAES, or Practical Assessment Exploration System, lab at the Work Experience Life Skills-North program is another resource that students will be able to access for development and practice of work skills. The PAES lab will offer a simulated work environment in which students become the employees, and teachers become supervisors. Strict work procedures are followed so that students get the feel of real work, at the same time learn and explore new career or vocational areas.

What data do you have that shows students are improving?

At a collaborative team meeting, it was decided that each student would be given a pre and post test in:

1. Reading – TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)
2. Computer vocabulary – Specialist designed assessment tool
3. Math – TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)
4. Transition/Work Readiness Skills Survey

So far, pre tests have been administered and there has been ten weeks of instruction with student attendance at roughly 60%. Participation in the class on days attending is at roughly

70%. Attendance and participation is similar at both sites. Factors outside the control of students and staff influence attendance and participation.

The students being served by this Pathways project are in need of intensive social and emotional support, so implementing instruction is often delayed or interrupted. When emotional, behavioral, or survival needs interfere, the time and support it takes to get back on track is provided. Then students and teachers pick up where they left off; interruptions cause delays, still teaching and learning continue.

There is not yet numerical data to show that students are improving. The anecdotal information is encouraging. A student at 916 is engaged enough in learning MOS skills so that he works on extra lessons to stay ahead of the group. 916 students have started portfolios which already include impressive looking flyers created using skills from the course. A student at 287 says that the MOS class influenced him to wear a shirt and tie. Last month he started in an unpaid community job where he uses Microsoft Office skills.

We are confident that the resources and our efforts will improve outcomes for students. More time is needed to implement instruction and work experiences.

What has worked well thus far? What, if anything, has been a challenge?

It has been especially helpful to the development process that some of the teachers and administrators who are working on the project have worked on previous projects involving academics in career education.

Due to the support offered by the grant, additional resources have been made available, specifically, additional computers for student use in a classroom where the course will be taught.

Consultation with teachers in other settings who have taught Microsoft Office Specialist Skills and study of the instructional materials help us understand that for many students in our specialized programs, the material may be daunting. We are working on ways to make the material accessible.

Another concern is that current economic conditions limit the availability of competitive employment opportunities. We are planning to mitigate this limitation by creating "in house" employment experiences when necessary.

Getting students on board and involved in the learning of computer applications is taking longer than planned. Teachers are finding it necessary to invest heavily in student motivation and relationship building before being able to fully implement instruction according to plan.

How are these activities related to your end product?

In order for students to maintain employment in a job related to computer application, the students must first acquire the necessary skills. Students with emotional and behavioral disabilities need effective direct instruction in computer application skills in “...learning environments that are small and safe, including extra supports such as tutoring...” (Guideposts for Success)

How do you see the Guideposts framing the evaluation of your activities?

Exposure to career opportunities, post-secondary opportunities, training to improve job-seeking skills, on-the-job training, and career assessment are at the core of the project. These aspects of the Guideposts will be addressed in the outcome data from the evaluation as described below.

What outcome data are you considering for use in evaluation of your activities?

Formative and summative evaluation of student learning is part of the unit plan. The *Transition/Work Readiness Skills Survey* will be used before and after completing the course. Rubrics will be used to evaluate particular reading and “soft” skills. From *Microsoft Office 2007 Introductory Concepts and Techniques*, (Shelly, Cashman, Vermaat, 2008) end of chapter reinforcements, tests, and application activities will be used to measure growth of computer skills. Mathematics teachers have identified tools to measure growth of math skills. Student grades and attendance records contribute to the evaluation.

Please describe one or more “highlights” that have been a part of your activities.

The May 12th work session was productive and teachers continued to reference discussion from that session in later work. See attached PowerPoint for a summary of some highlights from that session.

On August 11th another all-team session was held. The agenda included team members sharing the results of summer projects contributing to MOS course preparation. Teachers and others were as eager to learn from the work of colleagues as they were to offer their contributions to the effort. The team was able to make decisions by consensus using dialogue and discussion.

On October 25th the collaborative team met again to share resources, progress, and plans. The session was also an opportunity for staff new to 287 or new to positions involved with the project to get “up to speed” on the goals and progress so far. After others had left the meeting the teachers from 916 and 287 sat with their heads together, books and laptop open. They worked on identifying and grouping vocabulary terms for instruction and assessment in their classes.

December 3rd was another opportunity for the collaborative team to share progress and ideas. Though it was nearing the end of the project according to the grant award, the mood and work of the team was one of refining, building, and improving on the skills instruction and application in work experiences. It was decided that we would meet again so we could use what we learn from this year's work to improve the course and placements for students in 2011-2012.

We are again looking for information beyond what the data can tell us. These would be the "stories" of impact on students, parents, staff and/or community?

Unintended benefits include:

- EBD teachers studying model syllabi and unit plans to improve their ability to develop the course;
- Teachers planning with school colleagues to develop students' prerequisite skills in earlier grades so by high school students are better prepared for Microsoft Office Specialist instruction;
- District investment in student computers to equip teachers and students for the MOS course;
- Revision and refinement of the Transition/Work Readiness Skills Survey.
- Development of a unit plan with integration of academic and content learning.
- Dialogue about formative and summative assessment; decisions to coordinate pre and post testing.

See meeting notes at end of report.

Even though your activities may be just past the beginning stages, we are beginning to consider outcome data and sustainability. What activities are taking place to ensure sustainability once the grant funds are expended?

Intermediate District 287 and Northeast Metro 916 have a track record of sustaining career related projects once grant funds are expended. Two integrated courses that originated with Academics in Career Education funds are still place, woodworking and culinary arts. With resources, equipment, unit plans and instructional know-how developed and in place, the MOS course with related work experience will enrich student outcomes for years to come.

The collaborative team has had conversation about sustainability, expressing the intention to extend the work beyond the activities and timeline described in the grant proposal. The project is not dependent on one or two individuals for its existence, or its sustenance. The team includes members who have worked on similar projects, and members who are new to the process. Because we work together interdependently, when conditions change there are still individuals in both districts who can carry the work forward. Our students' pathways to employment are in connected hands.



ACE V – Academics in Career Education
Building Capacity to Create Work Experiences, Pathways to Employment

December 3, 2010

AGENDA

Present -

1. Rose Hobson – Intermediate District 287
2. Lynn Grundtner – Northeast Metro 916
3. Mary K. Peters – Math specialist, Intermediate District 287
4. Adam Tieter – EBD/Work Coordinator, Bren Road, Intermediate District 287
5. Anne Wegscheider, EBD teacher, Northeast Metro 916916
6. Barb Glansman – Work Exp. Coordinator, Intermediate District 287
7. Ann Mavis – U of M (evaluator) mavis001@umn.edu
8. Sharon U of M (evaluator)
9. Ken Pashina, EBD teacher, Intermediate District 287
10. Liz Shopbell – program manager, Northeast Metro 916916
11. Barbara Wojcik, admin. Support, Northeast Metro 916916

12:00 – 12:30 Administrators interview

12:30 – Collaborative Team Meeting

- **Example of how math/and or reading concept or strategy integrates into a MOS lesson**

Mary Kay Peters – review of math instructional programs (SMART board/Ppt. presentation)

- Poster of angles/degrees graphic – 0 degrees circle. Send out to teachers to print as a poster. Send to U of M evaluators also.
- Repository for this project – ACE V under curriculum repository for GRO website.

- **Sharing on progress regarding work readiness survey, vocabulary, and unit tests**

December 2010

Ken: vocabulary – word walls and reinforcement of common computer terminology

Anne: vocabulary – taught through the MOS 2007 book. More emphasis on oral instruction.

List development – Ken did a pre-test. Designed a shorter pre-test, 50 words, including math terminology. Anne has the same one. Post-test to be given at the end.

Lynn: interpret data by group, not just individual students, to make generalizations about progress made by students.

Ken – may revise the vocabulary pre-test and not have it be matching test. It may not be a true report of their understanding. Using a word bank instead of matching? 50 words is too many for this population. Revised to 10 words at a time for this group.

A consideration for the sustainability for the project in future years.

- **Examples of student engagement in a work experience using Microsoft Office skills**

Adam T. - Nov. 15 – work readiness placement – only 2 students scored high enough to be placed. 2 or 3 not ready to be placed.

Barb – average score was 1.8 – 2.3. Not ready for placement. Explained how she put together her work readiness scale.

Adam – PowerPoint of his presentation to prospective work sites, explaining the program.

Suggestion: Incorporate smart technology into the vocabulary wall. Using the students' own words for definitions. "Job talk" file.

Book titles used (Ken):

1. Cool Careers without College for People Who Love Video Games, by Nicholas Croce, Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.
2. Cool Careers without College for Animal Lovers, by Chris Hayhurst, Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.
3. Working Days: Short Stories about Teenagers at Work, edited by Anne Mazer. Persea Books, New York.
4. Oxford English for Information Technology, Oxford
5. Information Technology Workshop (workbook). Oxford

Question: have the student ready to be placed before their course? Or, have them take the course first? (Lynn- chicken/egg?). Adam: consider having the work readiness scale administered first before the course. Ann – yes, that could be valuable. Even though they are in the course, they are not ready to be placed in a work setting. Some students respond in the course. Juniors and Seniors may be most readily placed. Help younger students focus to prepare for next year's placement in the program.

Barb: We have to be creative with in-house placement - this will be used with most of the students. The economy has impacted availability of sites. She can integrate MOS skills into their job (for example, students using electronic time sheets in place of handwritten ones). Or,

have all homework be delivered and handed in as a Word document; make them work-like experiences. Have computer literacy begin at school.

Lynn & Barb: PAES – Lab/Practical Assessment Evaluation System. (at WELS North; a Northeast Metro 916 program). We are trying to integrate MOS skills in 5 career areas. This is simulated, industry standardized work; one area is computer technology. It is a work lab – treated as a work site. Our district purchased it for \$40K. Student data is collected and consolidated into a report. Student enters their own data.

Rose – inter-district networking has been a positive component of the grant.

- **Dialogue about sustaining the project**

Lynn - MOS won't end after ACE – V funding ends.

Adam: integrating time sheets and other tasks (in house) will continue.

Ann: grad requirements will require all students to have this. Definitely a need for this population or they will be further behind.

Mary: 287 team meets weekly to discuss program. (916 – Ann teaches all subjects).

Rose: would monthly meetings be a benefit? As we go forward – to continue this process? Bi-weekly to start with, then more flexible.

Ken – 287 staff meetings are very beneficial. Students seem to buy into it now.

Anne – classroom attendance is an issue. Less than 60%, generally. Participation is also low – less than 70%, due to outside factors.

Ken – 287's attendance and participation is about the same, even though 287 kids work on the computer, and Anne's use the book. Not much difference.

Anne- using the book, shows students being able to follow step-by step directions. It's another skill.

Barb: we can see the difference with the students from Anne's class.

Portfolios:

- **Going forward, what is needed to support the MOS course and to continue to strengthen connections to employment?**

Closing Whip: What is beneficial from this collaboration?

Thinking outside the box

Seeing growth from individual students

Seeing how MOS is required now; a must-have life skill. Seeing how these skill sets can be integrated to all sites, and keep the students engaged.

Pathways to Employment
Building Capacity to Create Work Experiences
ACE V Grant Collaborative Team Sharing and Planning
10/25/2010 Notes

Attending:

1. Rose Hobson – Supervisor, Career and Tech, Intermediate District 287
2. Lynn Grundtner – Curriculum Coordinator, Northeast Metro 916
3. Mary K. Peters – Math specialist, Intermediate District 287
4. Adam Tieter – EBD/Work Coordinator, Bren Road, Intermediate District 287
5. Anne Wegscheider, EBD teacher, Northeast Metro 916916
6. Barb Glansman – Work Exp. Coordinator, Intermediate District 287
7. Ken Pashina, EBD/technology instructor, Intermediate District 287
8. Donna Moe, Reading specialist, Intermediate District 287
9. Jody Delau, Supervisor, Bren Road, Intermediate District 287
10. Ginny Nyhus, Assistant Supervisor, Bren Road, Intermediate District 287

Project Evaluation

We will need to gather information from various people and sites to share.

Interviews early December before Winter Break

Days to avoid TIES conference 6,7 December

Pathways, ACE V, Building Capacity, various names for the project.

Report in September, another in January? What have we achieved?

Grantees should adhere to guideposts for success:

December 2010

How are we using Federal Guidelines?

Looking through the guideposts, identify how we are doing what is suggested.

Many students may not get the MOS certification but they will participate but they will have participated in a technical education program based on professional standards and been given the opportunity to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills. The students who participate in the projects' MOS classes will know that there is such a thing as MOS. The students who participate in the projects' MOS classes will know that there is such a thing as MOS certification so they could continue the work in the future.

Exchange Work Readiness Skills Survey, electronically.

MCIS job inventory

Collaborative effort is used to determine student skill levels

Interviews with Social Worker, Case Manager, Mental Health Staff, etc.

Tracked on EXCEL Spreadsheet.

916 has one in Fall, one in Spring.

Assessments will be done again in January.

If students do not have to complete certain aspects, leave them out of the assessments.

Email Lynn the explanation and rationale of how and why the assessments were taken.

Use of Guideposts

How are we enhancing the existing career preparation?

Email the structure of how the team is working together.

287, Ken's students will take Math and Reading Skills with Language Arts teacher.

916, Math and reading instruction is integrated, same teacher teaches math, reading, MOS.

Students will be creating portfolios that will definitely include a

Cover Letter,

Resume

Work on inputting information, not necessarily creating documents.

PAES, Practical Assessment Exploration System lab at 916.

Students could use MOS skills to create a PAES lab newsletter.

Overall numbers of students.

Bren (287) 7 students by October 25th; ALP (916) 6 students by October 25th

Numbers in training, number exposed to curriculum.

What data might we have to use?

December 2010

TABE is installed at Bren, issues with technology:
One reading two math tests?

Reading for sure,
Applied math, as well?

Why are we using TABE?

If reading skills are low, they may not be able to interpret the vocabulary, thus not able to answer the questions on the TABE appropriately. All assessments are partly a measure of reading/understanding vocabulary.

InVest students, scoring well, sometimes 15/15.

Collaborative team agrees to use TABE.

Needs to be done NOW. Pre-Test soon

Agreed TABE Reading
TABE Computational Math Skills
916 took 3 days to give the TABE.
Survey Snapshot of Skills, and shorter.
Testing computational skills.

Computer Vocabulary list. Test post-test. Ken Pashina, 287, Email.
Has not been administered yet.
Is it too long?

Both sites should use same list.

916, according to Robert Morzano & Pickering, limit level of vocab words & repeat.

287, reinforcing words repeatedly. Use them in consistently in class.

Words that are going to be repeated often in curriculum.

50 words testing: break into groups of 10.
Pretest vocabulary this week.

Again in January.

Tag the mathematical testing, as reflected on page 2

Challenges

December 2010

287, New Staff.

Students showing minimal interest in program.

Also at Epsilon.

AES aligns to MOS standards, as students make it through to next level. Print Reports, sent to Lynne.

Independent Living, CPU schools: Youth Development & Leadership

Teachers struggle with finding incentives so that students engage in the work.

Working on soft skills needed for the workplace at the same time as improving computer skills.

Highlights:

Collaborative

We'll be set up for starting in right away next year.

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Regular meetings for ACE Grant team members

Fill out grid on back of Agenda:

Date:

of students

Assessment TABE,

Vocab test,

Transition/Work

Readiness Skills

Career and Tech programs,

MCIS,

Too much, rather than not enough.

Closing

AMP flowchart, helping with sequential progress with technical reading.

Absenteeism: issue

Working together to meet challenges.

Next year.

Collaboration

Working together,

Better understanding for students of what is needed in the career world.

December 2010

What are students going to need most in the area of computer skills?

Not only will computer skills be needed for work, computer skills are needed for applying for jobs and for daily living.

Apps online, W4,

Accessing industry software.

Great to discuss, and collaborate

Started last year.

Challenging, but it is ok.