

**Improving Teacher Quality  
State Grant Program**

**2010-2011 Allocation  
to the State Agency for Higher Education**

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**Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education**

## IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANTS: SUMMARY SHEET – 2010-2011

Projects in bold are recommended for funding by the Independent Review Panel

| PROJECT TITLE   | INSTITUTION/DIRECTOR     | DESCRIPTION  | AMOUNT              |
|---|--------------------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>1. Going the Distance: An Interactive On Line Teacher Development Project for Teachers of World Languages</b>  | UNL / Ali Moeller        | Continuation of pilot project to design online graduate course to help teachers develop technology skills while improving their target language skills and cultural knowledge                        | \$80,666.00         |
| <b>2. Coaching Science Inquiry for Middle and High School Science Teachers</b>  | UNL/DeChenne             | Improve teachers' knowledge of science inquiry and methods of teaching inquiry by training 10 teacher coaches who will coach up to 20 other teachers   | \$79,568.00         |
| 3. iPad Integration: Using the iPad and applications to support math and language arts instruction in grades 4 and 8 in two northeast Nebraska elementary schools | WSC/Adams                | Pilot study using an iPad to identify and remediate weakness in reading and math skills of students in fourth and eighth grades; develop expertise of six teachers in two schools                    | \$68,439.76         |
| 4. Use of New Literacies in Elementary Classrooms Today: A Partnership to Enhance Student Learning through Teacher Preparation and Professional Development       | UNL/Trainin              | Collect and analyze information on teacher education programs, observe best practices in technology integration; design workshops for teachers to learn new ways to effectively integrate technology | \$115,138.00        |
| <b>5. Connecting for Change: Phase Two-Building Capacity through Developing Relationships</b>   | UNO / Sarah Edwards      | Continue to develop and support a network of teacher leaders devoted to literacy teaching and learning in the Omaha area, especially in middle and high schools                                      | \$82,512.00         |
| <b>6. Nebraska Writing Project: Writing Ways Out West 2011 Summer Program</b>   | MPCC / Anne Schmit       | Improve the teaching of writing skills for 25 teachers and improve student writing proficiency via workshops and online discussion groups  | \$35,124.00         |
| <b>7. Essential Skills for an Informed Citizen: Matching Social Science Skills to Nebraska Content Standards</b>  | NETA / Sandy Blankenship | Increase social studies content knowledge and strategies for incorporating social studies into language arts, math, and science curricula; 16 teams state-wide with 5 teachers each                  | \$63,577.00         |
| <b>TOTAL REQUESTED</b>  |                          |  | <b>\$525,024.76</b> |

The panel felt that proposal 3 had objectives that would benefit Nebraska teachers but did not meet the federal criteria.

## **IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANT PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Improving Teacher Quality State Grant Program is to increase student academic achievement by helping to ensure that highly qualified teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals have access to sustained and intensive high quality professional development in core academic subjects. The program provides grants to partnerships comprised of Nebraska institutions of higher education and high-need local educational agencies (LEAs) for projects to improve the skills of teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION PANEL December 10, 2010**

The evaluation panel met on December 10, 2010 at the Coordinating Commission office in Lincoln. Seven proposals were submitted by partnerships that involved four different institutions, an association, and a variety of school districts and educational service units (ESUs). The institutions were UNL, UNO, Wayne State College, and Mid-Plains Community College. The association was the Nebraska Educational Technology Association.

In recent years the Commission has routinely received 8 to 12 proposals. Projects did not receive funding for more than one year, but project directors frequently resubmitted proposals for extensions of funded projects or for funding of “new” projects that were closely related to one previously funded. At the suggestion of the 2008-09 review panel, the RFP for 2009-10 and the one for 2010-11 included a new priority (as well as additional points) for projects that “are new, creative, or innovative and, ideally, not previously or recently funded through this grant.” Three of the seven proposals submitted clearly met this priority. While it was exciting to see new ideas, it is possible that the Commission’s attempt to encourage new projects and/or project directors ultimately resulted in our receiving fewer proposals.

The total amount of funds available for awards in 2010-2011 is \$425,689. The total amount recommended for the following five projects is \$336,154. The remaining funds will be available for projects that may have more participant applications than slots funded or other unexpected costs, or will be carried forward for use in the 2011-2012 competition.

Below are synopses of the five proposals the panel has recommended for funding. The title of the project is listed, followed by the project director, the required federal partners, and any other partners. Projects that are open state-wide may not have all additional partners identified until after their recruitment phase.

**Academic Programs Committee concurs with the panel’s recommendations.**

## **Going the Distance: An Interactive Online Teacher Development Project for Teachers of World Languages**

**Project Director: Dr. Ali Moeller**

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Education and Human Sciences**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures**
- **High-need LEA: Omaha Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: Lincoln Public Schools**

This project was funded in 2009-10 as a pilot to develop an online graduate course for world language teachers. The goal of the project was to help teachers develop technology skills while improving their target language skills (German, Spanish, French) and cultural knowledge and eventually serve as trainers for other teachers. The first group of teachers will be starting the new class in January 2011. Funding for 2010-11 will allow the project director to offer the class a second time with adjustments made based on the feedback from the pilot course. It will also give the first group of teachers time to train others.

Amount Requested: \$80,666

Amount Recommended: \$75,103

Rational for decreased funding: reduce indirect cost to 8%

## **Coaching Science Inquiry For Middle and High School Science Teachers**

**Project Director: Dr. Sue Ellen DeChenne**

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Education and Human Sciences**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Engineering**
- **High-need LEA: Omaha Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: Lincoln Public Schools and Lincoln Pius X High School**

The goal of this project is to improve teachers' knowledge of science inquiry as well as methods to teach inquiry. The activities will focus on ten middle and high school science teachers who will learn how to coach science inquiry. They will each then coach one to two other science teachers in a workshop (funded from an outside source) and throughout the school year. The project director estimates that 1,500 students of at least 30 teachers would benefit from the project in the 2011-2012 school year.

Amount Requested: \$79,568

Amount Recommended: \$79,568

## **Connecting for Change: Phase Two-Building Capacity through Developing Relationships**

**Project Director: Dr. Sarah Edwards**

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): University of Nebraska at Omaha, Teacher Education Department**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): University of Nebraska at Omaha, English Department**
- **High-need LEA: Omaha Public Schools**

Funded for the first time last year, this project developed teacher leaders and a formal network of professionals devoted to literacy teaching and learning. Funding for the current year will allow project directors to model research-based strategies proven to increase the reading success of middle and high school students. Teachers in the Omaha metro area will again be invited to a workshop on the UNO campus, have access to a Web site, and be involved in a mentoring project.

Amount Requested: \$82,512

Amount Recommended: \$82,512

## **Writing Ways Out West 2011 Summer Program**

**Project Director: Anne Schmit**

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): University of Nebraska-Lincoln**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): Mid-Plains Community College**
- **High-need LEAs: Southern Valley Schools**
- **Other identified partners: North Platte Public Schools, Platte Valley Christian Academy, Cherry County Schools, Ogallala Public Schools, Our Redeemer Lutheran School, St. Luke Elementary School, North Platte Catholic Schools**

Associated with the Nebraska Writing Project, this activity was funded in 2009-10. It included pre-workshop reading assignments coupled with a weeklong online discussion and an eight day hands-on work session held at sites in west central Nebraska. Funding is recommended for 2010-11 for up to 25 teachers primarily from schools that did not participate in last year's project.

Amount Requested: \$35,124

Amount Recommended: \$35,394

Rationale for funding increase: Mathematical errors in original request

## **Essential Skills for an Informed Citizen: Matching Social Science Skills to Nebraska Content Standards**

**Project Director: Sandy Blankenship**

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): Doane College**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): Doane College**
- **High-need LEAs: Walthill Public School, Santee Community Schools, Wausa Public Schools, Niobrara Public Schools, Greeley-Wolbach, Thedford**
- **Other identified partners: Johnson Brock, Fullerton, Doniphan-Trumbull, ESU #1, ESU #2, ESU #3, ESU #4, ESU #6, ESU #7, ESU #8, ESU #9, ESU #10, ESU #11, ESU #16, ESU #17, NETA (Nebraska Educational Technology Association)**

This project will focus on the social studies curriculum in the elementary classroom. Teachers will increase their social studies content knowledge and learn to utilize student-learning time efficiently by incorporating social studies content into the language arts, math, and science curricula. Sixteen learning teams from across Nebraska with five teachers on each team will be created with team members eventually sharing model projects with their ESUs, districts, and schools. Two 2-day activities, one day working with technology, a conference presentation, and a minimum of four online chats will compose the formal training. The meetings and activities will be held at locations across the state to make attendance possible for all participants.

Amount Requested:           \$63,577

Amount Recommended:   \$63,577

## **Panel for Evaluating Improving Teacher Quality Proposals**

**December 10, 2010**

### **Voting Members**

Daphne Hall  
Vice President for College Planning and  
Outreach Services  
EducationQuest  
Lincoln/Henderson

Jim McGahan  
Grand Island Northwest High School  
Chemistry and Physics (Retired)  
Grand Island

Pat Madsen  
Teacher Education Program Specialist  
Nebraska Department of Education  
Lincoln/Stuart

Renae Kelly  
7-8 High Ability Learners  
La Vista Junior High School  
Springfield

Mike Mansour  
Jesuit Middle School of Omaha  
6-8 Science, Math, Geography  
Omaha

Mike Musil  
9-12 Language Arts  
Lincoln North Star High School  
Lincoln

### **Staff**

Kathleen Fimple  
Academic Programs Officer

Miste Adamson-DaMoude  
Administrative Assistant