

**Improving Teacher Quality
State Grant Program**

**2012 - 2013 Allocation
to the State Agency for Higher Education**

Project Summaries, 2012-2013 2

Recommendations 3

Panel Members 7

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY STATE GRANTS: SUMMARY SHEET – 2012-2013

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

PROJECT TITLE	INSTITUTION/DIRECTOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
1. Coaching for Sustainability: Peer Coaching Science Inquiry in Rural Schools	UNL / Lee	Improve teachers' knowledge of science inquiry and methods of teaching inquiry; engage in peer coaching to support curriculum implementation; 16 science teachers from rural areas	\$80,000
2. Mathemantics II: Learning the Power of Mathematical Communication Phase II	UNO / Hodge	20 Omaha area teachers of grades 6-12 will learn how to express mathematics symbols and processes in words so that they can help students better understand the concepts behind mathematical computations	\$78,122
3. Technology Education in Digital and Global Environments (Tech EDGE)	UNL / Trainin	Workshops for teachers to learn the content of new literacies and ways to integrate the technology into language arts curricula; 80 teachers teamed with 70 pre-service teachers; 30 teacher educators	\$78,430
4. Working Together to Improve Writing Across the State	NETA / Moore	Increase writing ability and content knowledge and strategies for incorporating writing into other curricular areas; 15 teams state-wide with 5 teachers each	\$66,857
5. Teachers Training Workshops: Enriching Science Education in Nebraska Schools through Hands-On Experiments in NanoScience	UNL / Ducharme	8 workshops for 20 teachers to learn to utilize nanoscience experiments to explain fundamental concepts already in the curriculum	\$138,285
TOTAL REQUESTED			\$441,694

NOTE: Project #5 did not have the required signatures from university and K-12 representatives

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 17, 2012

The evaluation panel met on December 17, 2012 at the Coordinating Commission office in Lincoln. Five proposals were submitted by partnerships that involved three different institutions (UNL, UNO, and Doane College), Nebraska Educational Technology Association, and a variety of school districts and educational service units (ESUs).

At this time, the total amount of funds available for awards in 2012-2013 is \$283,552. The total amount recommended for the following four projects is \$284,327. While this exceeds the current available amount, previously funded projects often return funds at the end of the grant, funds that can be applied to the current grants. If there should be remaining funds, those 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 2013-2014 competition.

Below are synopses of the four 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.

Committee recommendation: Committee members concur with the panel's recommendations.

Coaching for Sustainability: Peer Coaching Science Inquiry in Rural Schools

Project Director: Dr. SoonChun Lee

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): UNL, College of Education and Human Sciences**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): UNL, College of Arts and Sciences , Department of Chemistry**
- **High-need LEA: Wynot Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: Creighton Public Schools, St. Anthony School, Greeley-Wolbach Public Schools, Spalding Academy, Minden Public Schools, Educational Service Unit #1, #2, #3, #5, #7, #10, #11, and #16**

A 2011 study indicates that Nebraska teachers' knowledge of science inquiry is lacking despite the fact that it is included in the state standards. Two years ago a pilot project was funded (under a different director) to help teachers translate traditional science labs into guided science inquiry lessons and to engage in peer coaching to support implementation of the lessons. The pilot focused on urban and suburban schools. This project will provide the same opportunities to 16 rural science teachers.

Amount Requested: \$80,000
Amount Recommended: \$79,000
Reason for reduction: Reduced administrative costs

Mathemantics II: Learning the Power of Mathematical Communication Phase II

Project Director: Dr. Angela Hodge

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): UNO, College of Education**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): UNO, College of Arts and Sciences**
- **High-need LEA: Omaha Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: some activities will be open to other area schools**

Funded in 2011-12, this project targeted mathematics teachers in grades 6 through 12. It introduced a new concept called *Mathemantics*, loosely defined as the art and science of translating between English and mathematics. Teachers learned how to express mathematics symbols and processes in words so that they could help their students better understand the concepts behind mathematical computations. Last year 66 teachers applied for the 20 available spots in the summer workshop. This project will again offer professional development to 20 teachers, giving priority to those who could not attend last year and to those who sign up as a team from a single school.

Amount Requested: \$78,122
Amount Recommended: \$68,900
Reason for Reduction: Lowered consultant fees and instructional/administrative costs

Technology Education in Digital and Global Environments (Tech EDGE)

Project Director: Dr. Guy Trainin

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): UNL, College of Education and Human Sciences**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): UNL, College of Arts and Sciences, English Department**
- **High-need LEA: Banner County Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: Concordia University, Lincoln Public Schools, St. John Lutheran School, Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School, Seward Elementary School, Concordia Academy, Trinity Lutheran School, Messiah Lutheran School**

This project was first funded last year and focuses on new literacies—the skills, strategies, and thought processes necessary to use and adapt to the changing information and communication technologies and contexts rapidly emerging in today’s world. This year teachers will learn to use the new literacies to deliver grade appropriate language arts content. This project will offer four professional development conferences for 80 teachers teamed with 70 pre-service teachers, and 30 teacher educators.

Amount Requested: \$78,430
Amount Recommended: \$76,430
Reason for Reduction: Lowered instructional costs

Working together to Improve Writing Across the State

Project Director: Julie Moore

- **Higher education partner (teachers college): Doane College**
- **Higher education partner (arts and sciences): Doane College**
- **High-need LEAs: Walthill Public School, Niobrara Public Schools, Rock County Public Schools, Wakefield Community School, Red Cloud Community Schools, Brady Public Schools, Southern Valley Schools, Madison Public Schools**
- **Other identified partners: Santee Community Schools, Schuyler Community Schools, Minden Public Schools, Falls City Public Schools, Falls City Sacred Heart School, Sutherland Public School, Educational Service Unit #1, #2, #4, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #16, #17, and Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA)**

This project has been funded several times, each time focusing on a different subject area. This year the project director will focus on improving the writing skills of Nebraska students. To accomplish this, teachers from 15 teams across the state will learn how to apply new technologies and instructional strategies to the writing portion of their curriculum as well as applying writing skills to other content areas. Regional summer institutes will be held in three locations, participants will attend a writing workshop, and ESU personnel will provide onsite support to teachers throughout the year. In addition to the high-need LEAs,

six of the schools listed are also low-performing. The average writing test scores for every participating school are below the state average.

Amount Requested: \$66,857

Amount Recommended: \$59,996.75

Reason for reduction: Lowered consultant fees and travel costs; reduced substitute pay budget to reflect administrative positions not needing substitutes

Note: The review panel requested all project directors to reduce their budgets without eliminating participants so that four projects could be funded. The recommended amounts for projects 2 and 4 were calculated by the project directors to meet the panel's request.

Panel for Evaluating Improving Teacher Quality Proposals

December 17, 2012

Voting Members

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

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

Mattie Olsen
Instructional Technologist/Social Science
Creighton Preparatory School
Omaha

*Mr. Musil was unable to attend the panel meeting but provided his rating sheets and comments for the other panel members to consider in their discussion.

Staff

Kathleen Fimple
Academic Programs Officer

Miste Adamson-DaMoude
Administrative Assistant

Kadi Lukesh
Office Manager