

Hands-on Learning Grants – 2007-2008 School Year

Be Your Best University

Author: Sherrill Lindsey

School: Pilgrim Lane Elementary

Be Your Best University (BYBU) believes in creating an inclusive learning environment which supports the academic goals of our students. This extended learning program will offer diverse learning opportunities to support, enrich, and promote continuous learning for our youth, while building a base of mutual respect for themselves and others. BYBU will also offer a family education and support program. The goals of this initiative are: raise student achievement, promote self-esteem, increase family involvement, remove barriers which may prohibit students from participating in extended day programs which would benefit their academic success.



Assessment for Learning: Using Technology in the Mathematics/World History/Geography Classroom

Author: Erin Stowell

School: Robbinsdale Cooper High School

This project uses handheld audience response technology in the math and social studies curriculum for the purpose of providing both teachers and students immediate feedback on student performance. Students in mathematics, world history, and geography classrooms will use audience response technology to check their learning as they progress throughout the unit. This technology allows all students to participate without the risk of embarrassment. Students will use the responders (clickers) during class to answer questions about mathematical and reading comprehension.



Improving Science Education Through the Use of a Student Response System

Author: Colleen Hearne

School: Sandburg Middle School

Many students are reluctant to participate in class because of a fear of mistakes. An interactive Student Response System allows all students to actively participate in class by using a wireless remote to answer verbal or written questions within lessons and for assessments. Results can be immediately graphed and displayed anonymously to the entire class, which allows the students and teacher to correct mistakes and misconceptions as they occur. The technology involved allows for complete integration with class materials and PowerPoint presentations to create an interesting and interactive learning environment in which all students participate.



Wetland Health Field Study

Author: Dustin Dobitz

School: Highview Alternative Program

The Wetland Health Field Study will engage at risk students to monitor wetlands in their community. Students will be involved in studying wetland ecology and sampling wetland macro-invertebrates (dragon fly nymph, worms, snails, beetles, leeches, mayflies, caddis flies, small crustaceans and other insects). Students will provide important information to city and county planners, engineers, resource managers, and others. The data will also be used by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to track wetland health throughout the Twin Cities area. The information will be disseminated through a partnership with Hennepin County's Wetland Health Evaluation Program.



Building Language Together

Author: Joyce Beaird

School: Winnetka Learning Center

We own a curriculum, "Program Guide for Building Language Together", for preschoolers and their families based on research findings from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. We have not used this excellent resource, because we do not have the required activities planned and prepared. It provides wonderful opportunities for parents to learn ways to help their children get ready for later learning. The proposed project is to utilize this program guide hosting events throughout the year for children and their parents. We will be developing four units: Wired for Words, Opening Windows to the World, Structured for Sound, and Digging and Discovering.



WEB – Where Everyone Belongs – A

Author: Elizabeth Vu

School: Plymouth Middle School

WEB is an elementary to middle school transition program which provides a structured way for students to make connections. In our 2nd year of the program, WEB will continue to be a catalyst to help students form meaningful relationships through 6th grade orientation, social activities, and WEB curriculum. Starting the school year successfully paves the way for future gains. Because we believe in students and what they have to offer, we will develop student leaders within our school to make our 6th graders' transition easier. Students will feel more confident and less isolated, which will ultimately increase student achievement.



WEB – Where Everyone Belongs - B

Author: Geri Timperly

School: Robbinsdale Middle School

WEB is a middle school transition program that links 8th grade students with 6th grade students in a peer mentoring program. The 8th grade “Link Leaders” are trained to become positive role models, motivators, and support systems for the incoming 6th grade students. This year was our pilot project. Through the generous grants from Seven Dreams Foundation and Robbinsdale School District we trained two program leaders. In delivering the program we have found that we could not implement the complete program. We need to train two more program leaders and will do so with this grant.



Robbinsdale Career Competitions: Job Olympics 2007

Author: Sharon Forsman

School: New Hope – Special Education Transition Center

Robbinsdale Career Competitions: Job Olympics 2007 is an event for Work Experience students to pursue career excellence. Students in special education work programs will be given the opportunity to meet the challenges in our workplace and compete through interviewing, resume writing, completing applications, and customer service skills/problem solving. Various community groups such as Golden Valley Optimist Club, Twin West Chamber of Commerce, Pacer Center, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living, Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Minnesota Department of Education will be involved in these activities. The primary goal of this activity is to prepare students for successful employment in the community.



9th Grade Reading Communities

Author: Kate Fuller

School: Robbinsdale Armstrong High School

Current studies show that students read best when reading material is both interesting and reading-level appropriate. This project is an exciting opportunity to reach all levels of readers in our 9th grade English classrooms. Furthermore, it provides an excellent opportunity for fostering a community of readers and making connections with writers outside the school community. Students will select high-interest and ability-level appropriate books written by living writers, many of whom will be Minnesota writers. They will read and discuss the books in small groups and then write letters to the authors.



Family Histories

Author: Paula Kostman

School: Neill Elementary School

The English Language Learners (ELL) will collect information about their families' histories and funds of knowledge by interviewing the members of their families and documenting those interviews through the use of video cameras. The students will then present their documentaries at a special family night.



Building a Trebuchet – Phase 2

Author: Neal Rootes

School: Highview Alternative Program

For a number of years, our school has run a 3-week summer mini-course in math. A successful activity has involved the building and testing of model trebuchets (a type of catapult). It has proven to be a great hands-on project with math/science learning opportunities galore. Phase 2 would involve moving these students to the building of larger models (about 2 feet in height versus the 6 feet model from PITSO). Students in this phase would be shifting from a step-by-step detailed procedure of assembly to one involving the reading, understanding and construction of project plans.

