

Progress and Innovation Grants – 2008-2009 School Year

Guided Math

Authors: Patrick Smith

School: Sonnesyn Elementary School

As educators, we are continuously looking for strategies to help provide the most positive and effective learning environment for all students. We would like to develop a guided math program for teachers to use in their classrooms. This grant would allow us to create guided math kits that would include ideas and materials for the teachers to use in order to create math centers. These kits would allow teachers to spend more time working with children on a more one-on-one and small group basis while providing enriching opportunities for all students.



Increasing Motivation and Achievement with Classroom Response Systems

Author: Jacob Givand

School: Robbinsdale Middle School

Motivation is the foundation of achievement. We propose to increase motivation and achievement through the use of classroom response systems. We will tap into students' natural interest in technology to provide them with immediate feedback on their progress. Teachers will have an efficient way to see how each individual in their class is doing, not just the students who raise their hands often. We will involve over 400 students and make professional development available to every teacher in our building. Success will be measured by staff and student surveys as well as achievement data from class grades and standardized tests.

Binders for Niners

Author: Tim Palm

School: Robbinsdale Cooper High School

Organization is an important skill for academic success and is not a natural talent, therefore needs to be explicitly taught. Teaching students organizational skills must be done by all teachers in a systemic manner. The AVID Binder Strategy and the use of Ninth Grade Interdisciplinary Team Teachers provide the perfect system to address this organizational need. The AVID Binder strategy involves each student using a large 3-ring binder and sub-dividers to organize their classroom materials. The Ninth Grade Team Teachers would work together to develop a systematic approach to teaching the organizational skills of the binder.



Culinary Arts I

Author: Mary Byron

School: Robbinsdale Cooper High School

The Culinary Arts I course will provide high school students with the opportunity to study food preparation principles, management, purchasing, and customer relation skills, the students will gain experience in managing an in-school/district business. The hope is to establish the class in order to develop an in-district culinary cafe in the future. The Culinary Arts I course is a new addition to the Small Learning Communities Humanities + program. The course will develop into a ProStart certification opportunity for learners. ProStart is a nationally recognized program sponsored by the National Restaurant Association.



How Do I Look?

Author: Brenda Van Vugt

School: Robbinsdale Transition Center

Students with special needs, especially students on the autism spectrum, have difficulty forming accurate perceptions of their communication style and personal appearance and the impact these two areas have on their interactions with others. Many students with disabilities and especially students on the autism spectrum are visual learners and require demonstration and pictures to learn information and understand their own behavior and appearance. The use of a video camera, a notebook computer, and a projector will be used to enhance feedback to students on their facial expressions, words used, body postures, physical appearance and interaction with others.



Native Tongue Reading Program

Author: Paula Kostman

School: Neill Elementary School

Students who read in their first language will transfer that knowledge to their learning of English. In this program, volunteers from the community who are literate in our students' first languages will read to and be read to by our ELL students. This grant would provide books in the various languages spoken by our students as well as transportation for those students who need it.



Special Education Library

Author: Lindsay Wessling

School: Robbinsdale Cooper High School

Special education students at the high school level often lack in reading proficiency. A special education library would have graphic novels, magna novels, and books accessible to students to read during class time or check-out and bring home. The titles would be culturally relevant to excite students and introduce them to the joy of reading.



Balance to Learn; Learn to Balance

Author: Judy Besch

School: Sunny Hollow Elementary and Robbinsdale Middle School

We would like to create a Balance to Learn; Learn to Balance Workshop which would incorporate a child's natural inclination for physical movement into the regular classroom environment in order to enhance academic achievement in the elementary and middle school setting. Our goal is to teach students how movement, balance and rhythm can have a positive effect on the readiness and ability to focus, pay attention and then learn. This workshop would incorporate activities from "Brain Gym" and "Bal-A-Vis-X" which are designed to strengthen neuropathways or connections between the left and right brain hemispheres of the brain. This brain/body integration would involve balance boards, bean bags, balls and movement sticks which support student opportunity to improve balance, full body coordination, vision, auditory precision and rhythm.

