

Improving Teacher Quality Grants

The No Child Left Behind Improving Teacher Quality state grant for higher education is designed to improve teaching and learning. As a federal program, it operates under the NCLB Act of 2001. Authority for the administration of the Improving Teacher Quality State Grant, Title II, Part A, as well as the identification and evaluation of grant proposals, resides with each state.

In Kansas, the Kansas Board of Regents is authorized to receive and distribute the federal funds appropriated for this program. Guidance under the program allows for state flexibility in order to fulfill state priorities for increasing teacher content knowledge and other issues affecting teacher quality.

The purpose of the state grant program is to increase student achievement by helping 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 Kansas postsecondary institutions and local school districts identified as high-need.

The grants below were funded through a competitive submission process.

FY 2014 Grants Funded

Emporia State University: With the adoption of the Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies and the newly approved History/Government/Social Studies content standards, students in Kansas are being challenged to move beyond memorizing facts to developing a deeper understanding of subject matter, learning how to think critically, and applying what they learn to the real world. This means teachers will need to shift from previous "drill and kill" methods to more inquiry-based learning methods that will require students to apply information in authentic situations. To help teachers meet the challenges of implementing the standards and their accompanying assessments, The UPSCALE project, Using Primary Sources Collaboratively to Achieve Literacy standards for Everyone, is requesting \$102,000 for Emporia State University to partner with the Emporia school district to provide 90 hours of professional development for thirty social studies, ELL, ELA, and special education teachers in grades 6-12. Activities will consist of 56 hours of summer workshops and 34 hours of follow-up activities, both of which will include modeling and practice of inquiry-based instructional strategies that utilize primary sources, development of lesson plans and assessments aligned with the standards, and collaboration with colleagues across grade levels and subject areas as well as university faculty.

Award: \$102,000

Fort Hays State University: FHSU Teacher Education and Physics Departments, and Salina USD 305, Goodland USD 352, Solomon USD 393, Great Bend 428, and Liberal USD 480 have formed a partnership to support the professional development plans of the districts to prepare and implement the new Kansas College and Career Ready Standards in Science (KCCRSS). The project will directly impact a total of 50 teachers from the identified partner districts drawn from grades 3-8. The project, designed in cooperation with the partner districts, consists of a two week summer workshop (2014) and academic year district and cross-project based learning communities to develop a deep and intimate knowledge of the KCCRSS in the physical sciences and the science and engineering practices. Coupled

with the development of the knowledge needed to teach the standards will be the development of the skills necessary to implement the KCCRSS in the classroom. Teacher growth in core knowledge and pedagogical skill will be measured through research-based assessment tools that will promote professional growth.

Award: \$138,000 - \$154,330

This project is funded in part by a federal grant under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. \$138,000-\$154,330 (98%) of the cost of the project was financed with federal funds. \$3,000 (2%) of the cost of the project was financed by non-federal sources and excludes indirect costs as matching funds.

Mid-America Nazarene University: As advances in science multiply exponentially, employers seek employees with abilities to think creatively and critically in order to solve complex problems, thus advancing fields of study and industry. This industry need for science-minded workers facilitated the creation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), designed to infuse cross cutting concepts and design models for practicing elements of science and engineering. These performance standards contain elements of practicing science not formally a part of teacher preparation programs. In order for schools to prepare next generation students for college and science industries, teachers must be given on-going professional development as they employ the NGSS standards, which are different from the way they learned and currently “do” science. Planting SEEDS: Students Engaged in Exploring Design Solutions – Collaboration Improving Teacher Quality, a grant proposal, provides opportunities to improve P-12 student achievement in the sciences through powerful staff development programs and engaging student events, which allow for exploration and design in the sciences. The foundation of this program is equipping science teachers at the Turner and Kansas City, KS school districts with the knowledge and skills necessary for helping P-12 students meet NGSS. To this end, the implications of SEEDS will be far reaching, resulting in benefits to science industries and P-12 students.

Award: \$280,000

This project is funded in part by a federal grant under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. \$280,000 (96%) of the cost of the project was financed with federal funds. \$11,375 (4%) of the cost of the project was financed by non-federal sources and excludes indirect costs as matching funds.

FY 2013 Grants Funded

Emporia State University: The *WK-SEFA (Western Kansas-STEM Experiences For All)* project will target existing science and math teachers from schools with extremely low percentages of “Highly Qualified” STEM teachers, and to help these teachers develop the content and pedagogy knowledge to become STEM-teaching experts, who can then train fellow teachers. The project will focus on: 1) deep content knowledge in STEM concepts, 2) intensive training in teaching strategies that support learning for all students, 3) developing leadership, 4) self-reflection and growth through mentoring. Project outcomes include: (1) creating a robotics curriculum guide for educators/students which will be aligned with the Next Generation Science and Common Core Standard, (2) offering a summer academy and continual mentoring from IHE partners, increase teacher STEM content knowledge and instructional competency, (3) increasing student proficiency in identified STEM-focused state science standards, (4) creating and freely distribute a model for a 6-12 grade level Robotics STEM Curricular Pathway that can be replicated by districts state-wide and that can be applied to other STEM curricular units of study.

Schools involved in the project include Garden City High School, Liberal High School, Bible Christian Academy, High Plants Christian School, St. Dominic Elementary School, and St. Mary Catholic School.
Award: \$264,111

This project is funded in part by a federal grant under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. \$264,111 (86%) of the cost of the project was financed with federal funds. \$43,600 (14%) of the cost of the project was financed by non-federal sources and excludes indirect costs as matching funds.

Kansas State University: *SHIFTS* in Next Generation Science Teacher Professional Development is a project designed to increase conceptual understanding through effective high quality instruction. Science Learning Communities are established to increase middle and secondary student science mastery and ability to engage in higher-level reasoning of abstract science phenomena. These learning communities consist of science teachers, principals, special education teachers and paraprofessionals. The professional development project is designed to prepare teachers to transition to content integrative, research-based instruction. Common Core Standards for literacy in science are foundational to each component of the model. Middle level and secondary science teachers from USD 475 and USD 500 will receive ongoing professional development in advancing student achievement through scientific research and collaboration. Students will demonstrate ability to design authentic research projects and explain abstract concepts through textual and symbolic reasoning. This project will impact 2,500 students from diverse populations, increasing the number of students in preparation for STEM careers.

Award: \$260,050

FY 2012 Grant Funded

Fort Hays State University: FHSU and Pittsburg State University are partnering with eleven high-needs districts to improve the instruction of physical science and mathematics at the middle and high school level. Horizontal and vertical integration of science will be promoted by establishing a state-wide learning community of science and mathematics teachers. Thirty-two teachers at eleven rural high-need school districts and other districts will participate in an intensive summer program to enhance content and pedagogy and twelve months of e-mentoring with master teachers and project staff. The summer workshop includes thematic strands in scientific and mathematical modeling, structure of matter, energy and use of calculators and computers as scientific tools. With guidance from a physics faculty member at PSU, an education faculty member at FHSU, and a national leader in Physical Science Modeling, teachers will enhance their content knowledge in physical science and mathematics appropriate for teaching physical science, enhance their pedagogical knowledge for teaching middle school science, and re-design their middle school science curriculum. Academic year support provided by the project will include teacher engagement in an electronic professional learning community and mentoring from master teachers who have shown expertise in teaching physical science through modeling.

Award: \$179,972

Each project is 100% funded by a federal grant under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) administered by the Kansas Board of Regents, unless otherwise stated.

Opinions and findings expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Department of Education or the Kansas Board of Regents.