

## 2015 Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act Grants Project Abstracts from the U.S. Department of Education

### Statewide Grants (8)

**The Arizona Department of Education, \$410,202.** The overarching goal of Arizona's *Aligning Efforts for Talent Development* project will be to improve the equitable access, participation and performance of high ability and high potential students, particularly those students from traditionally underrepresented groups. The project is collaboration between the Arizona Department of Education and five of Arizona's regional service centers. Initially, the project will support activities in seven pilot districts, and expand through randomly selecting a minimum of two sites per region from the state's list of schools identified for improvement for the 2017-18 school year. The schools receiving services will be low-performing schools that have been designated as Priority, Focus or Pre-Intervention schools; or earned a grade of D or F on the state's school grading system. The primary areas of work with the project schools involve collaborative school improvement and sustainability planning; integrated professional learning; technical assistance and support for leaders and teachers; family outreach; and data collection and reporting. Overall, the project seeks to improve the capacity of schools to engage in effective school-wide talent development by supporting leaders and teachers to shift their attitudes, perceptions and beliefs regarding talent development, and purposefully infusing the elements of talent development within their school improvement plans and activities. The project will engage in a two-fold evaluation process to determine the constancy of implementation and the effectiveness of the implementation.

**The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), \$283,780.** The goal of the (CDE) grant is to use various resources and implement innovative, locally defined programs so strong sustainable gifted programs exist in every part of the state, especially in rural and at-risk populations where aspirations and practices fluctuate depending upon person, vision, and recorded history. In particular, this grant will focus on districts located in rural areas, along the southern third of the state, which has a high degree of poverty, English language learners (ELLs), and Hispanic and Native American students. Specific focus will be on gifted students on free or reduced lunch, ELLs, and Hispanic and Native American learners. Participating districts, yet to be selected, will be located in four Colorado geographic areas. In three of these four areas, the percentages of identified gifted students in participating member districts are less than those of the percentages of identified students in the overall geographical area. CDE will partner with the University of Denver (DU) staff each year to build workshops, materials, protocols for interactions with administrators and teachers, workshop facilitation outlines, and evaluator support activities. For professional development (PD), leaders and teachers within administrative units (AUs) will receive PD tailored to reframing their gifted program and instructional practices to address unique local needs and resources. PD will be provided via video and web-based technology, online courses, and professional learning community models.

**The Kentucky Department of Education, \$363,853.** The Kentucky Department of Education will partner with the University of Louisville, Western Kentucky University and Jefferson County Public Schools on the *Reaching Academic Potential Project*, a demonstration of the Young Scholars Model. With 500-1000 participants, in a total of 10 schools, the project will serve grades K-3. The project will provide professional learning to school leaders on the Excellence Gap and increase state capacity to identify and serve more underrepresented students. Teachers in grades K-3 will participate in professional learning to enhance their understanding of gifted behaviors. Teacher learning will focus on instructional methods to differentiate instruction, advance curriculum resources to meet the needs of gifted students as well as classroom strategies to promote critical and creative thinking. The project will also provide social and

emotional supports to students along with parent engagement activities. Project goals and objectives include increasing identification of and services to students from underrepresented groups for the gifted and talented program to reduce Kentucky's Excellence Gap; increasing teacher understanding of the behaviors that correlate with high potential in underrepresented populations; and enhance teacher professional practice to foster and support diverse learners and emerging talent.

**The Minnesota Department of Education, \$147,255.** The Minnesota Department of Education will implement *Project North Star* designed to elevate the identification and programming approaches provided for disadvantaged and underserved rural populations by preparing their teachers, school administrators, and communities with the knowledge and skills their gifted students need to be successful in the greater world. The project will utilize six of the state's Regional Educational Centers in determining "treatment" schools or districts within regions. Selected centers represent state poverty centers as well as locations of American Indian Reservation Schools. The project design includes developing three, two-year professional development asynchronous on-line training modules: one for teachers, another for school leaders, and a third for family and community. The project also provides support for implementing services and instructional practices through teacher and school leadership collaboration and peer coaching. A field tested Educator Growth Indicator system will be developed to determine the effectiveness of the professional development modules as well as to document application of learning in respective schools or districts. Project North Star's research design is quasi-experimental with some elements of pre-experimental design. Evaluation data and analysis will measure and examine: (1) teacher growth, (2) school/district leader growth; (3) parent/community growth; and (4) student growth. *Project North Star* will disseminate project results locally and nationally.

**The Ohio Department of Education, \$323,088.** The Ohio Department of Education's *Online Curriculum Consortium for Accelerating Middle School (OCCAMS)* is a partnership between the state department of education, the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University, the Center for Gifted Education at William & Mary, and five diverse school districts in Ohio. The goals of OCCAMS are to increase the identification of underrepresented students by raising academic achievement and expanding screening opportunities, to increase access to advanced coursework for disadvantaged students who are identified as gifted but are not currently receiving gifted services, and the creation of a sustainable online multi-district infrastructure to enhance diverse schools' capacity to identify and serve all gifted learners. Key activities include: (1) developing a compacted online English language arts curriculum for 7th and 8th graders; (2) facilitating online courses and providing support for economically disadvantaged learners; and (3) preparing a cadre of teachers and coordinators to provide high quality online instruction and student support through professional development. Participants will include 250 economically disadvantaged students of promise who have not yet attained state criteria required for gifted identification and 250 economically disadvantaged students who have been identified as gifted but currently lack access to gifted education services. Educators in each partner district will receive high quality professional development to support implementation of the curriculum and build capacity for long-term sustainability. The external evaluator for OCCAMS is the Censeo group who will employ both qualitative and quasi-experimental methods based on The U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards with reservations.

**The Utah State Office of Education, \$352,715.** The Utah State Office of Education will support a comprehensive initiative to improve services for advanced and gifted readers through the Utah Center for the Advancement of Reading Excellence (UCARE). Utah has proposed to select up to 60 Title I schools including public, private, and charter schools to participate in this project. Overall the focus of the project is to identify advanced and gifted readers throughout the state, provide professional

development for teachers around organizing instruction for gifted readers, and use strategies to address the learning profiles of these students. A professional development coaching model will be implemented. The goal of the model is to build the capacity of teachers in the selected schools to improve the identification and services to gifted and advanced readers. Utilizing technology will be a key resource in implementing a statewide project. Professional development activities will center around the creation and ongoing utilization of a website for gifted teachers. The website will allow teachers to access one portal to locate information on identification procedures, gifted reader models, collaborative coaching, training modules, videos, webcasts, program assessment, and adaptations for students. Through this new project Utah will continue their work with the Utah State University (USU). USU has provided professional development to k-6 teachers in Utah and mainly through their State of Utah Endorsement in Gifted and Talented Education coursework. In addition the project includes a strong evaluation component that will advance the knowledge of the field around what procedures and instruments will increase the identification of economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient students as gifted readers. A randomized controlled study will investigate the effect of treatment on reading achievement and attitudes.

**The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, \$373,547.** Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's HiCapPlus project will identify effective practices for instruction and program operation, and distribute new information and knowledge essential for the continuous improvement of Washington's gifted education program. The project is a partnership between the state's office of public instruction, seven pilot local education agencies (LEAs), University of Washington, and Whitworth University. The pilot LEAs, which include educational service districts, public school districts, charter and tribal compact schools, and private schools, represent the great variety of educational settings that exist across the state. The goal of the project is to develop a comprehensive and innovative system of professional development and technical assistance designed to help educators identify learning potential, and serve gifted and talented students—regardless of economic disadvantage, disability or proficiency with English. The partnering organizations will develop modules of professional development, and related media and materials that address the key elements of highly effective instruction and assessment. These robust modules will be structured around key topics that relate to the National Association for Gifted Children's and the state's learning standards. Education Northwest will conduct the external evaluation gathering relevant and actionable quantitative and qualitative data to guide implementation, and document promising practices.

**The Wisconsin Department of Education, \$376,983.** *Expanding Excellence*, a project of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, seeks to mitigate the excellence gap that exists for low-income students and English language learners in three large urban school districts. Specifically, this project seeks to expand the expertise of demonstration site staff regarding best practices in gifted education with a targeted emphasis on how to best meet the advanced learning needs of two groups of disadvantaged students: those who qualify for free or reduced price meals and English language learners. A larger goal is to increase identification rates and rates of high achievement among these populations to close the excellence gap. The goals of the project are in the areas of collaboration, assessment and instruction. To accomplish the goals, District Leadership Cadres and classroom teachers from twenty demonstration schools in three large urban school districts will be provided training in, among other things, analyzing data for disproportionality, implementing a Response to Intervention framework that includes services for high ability/high potential students, culturally responsive practices, USTARS~PLUS (a research-based program previously funded by Javits), content from a state approved Educator licensure program in gifted education, the Dual Capacity-Building Framework and Academic Parent Teacher Teams. The project will also train a State Leadership Cadre to scale up the models used in the demonstration sites statewide using a strategic plan created by multiple stakeholders.

### **Demonstration Grants (3)**

**The University of Virginia's (VA) \$438,425** project is framed by two overarching goals. The goals for *Project KALEIDOSCOPE* are to (1) increase the gifted identification of primary-aged students from under-represented groups by focusing on wrap-around services in the area of literacy; and (2) increase the reading achievement of primary-aged students from under-represented populations. To accomplish these goals, three objectives are included: 1) to increase teachers' ability to use data to make effective and culturally responsive instructional choices in support of talent development; 2) to increase primary-aged students achievement in the areas of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concept of word in text, or instructional oral reading level, as developmentally appropriate; and 3) to provide a mechanism to scale-up school- and home-based parental involvement in supporting their potentially gifted children's literacy development.

Project activities include the implementation of a research-based identification model that includes an intervention composed of the following components: (a) professional learning for teachers to address the academic needs of diverse primary-aged students in the area of literacy; (2) increased academic challenge for primary-aged students throughout the academic year, (3) a summer intersession to reduce the effect of the summer slump that has been well documented, and (4) a mechanism for scaling-up the school-home connection by offering parental workshops on supporting the literacy development of their children and becoming advocates for the children regarding gifted programming as well as offering the opportunity to participate in the summer intersession as teaching assistants.

Four schools will receive services through the project and across the four schools there are approximately 900 preK-1 students. Of the 900 students, 50% percent of the students are classified by the school systems as economically disadvantaged, 20% African American or Black, and 20% Hispanic.

The evaluation focuses on the extent to which project goals and objectives are met using a quasi-experimental design where four schools will receive project services and four matched schools will serve as the control schools.

**Seminole County Public Schools (FL) \$500,000**, in partnership with the University of Central Florida's College of Education and Human Performance, proposes to significantly reform the identification and service models for gifted and talented education within the district's highest minority and most economically disadvantaged schools, with a special focus on including English Language Learners (ELL). Centered on best practices in gifted education, the project – ELEVATE: English Learner Excellence eVolving through Advanced Teacher Education – will present *all students* with alternative methods for identification of giftedness and ensure the foundation for developing excellence.

The goal of Project ELEVATE is to increase the percentage of ELL and students who are economically disadvantaged (ED) that are identified for gifted services and infuse the curriculum for developing intercultural excellence for diverse learners. To achieve this goal, Project ELEVATE will scale up services by using research-based practices in gifted education for special populations and proven innovative technology to develop alternative identification criteria for underserved English Language Learners and learners impacted by poverty; develop culturally and internationally responsive curriculum and advanced content in core subject areas; design experiential and online professional development for teachers using new technologies; and disseminate products at professional conference presentations.

The project will serve *five* focus elementary schools (3748 students) in years 1-2; and expand identification and talent development to *seven* additional schools (6075 students) in year 3, 4 and 5, to include two middle schools with significant ELL populations.

**The University of Wisconsin (WI) \$466,902** proposes to address both the opportunities for and achievement of underrepresented gifted students in the state of Wisconsin through first increasing their access to sustained, high-quality gifted programming by scaling up “Smart Spaces,” a research-based *systemic* model of gifted instruction, and then leveraging this increased access to improve the students’ achievement in writing and reading.

Smart Spaces is an initiative of the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth (WCATY) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison that has served more than 30,000 of Wisconsin’s brightest students since 1991. Grant funds will be used to scale up tested, high-quality, and challenging curriculum modules targeting underrepresented students within the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. Throughout 5 years of implementation, this project aims to serve approximately 600 middle school students, each of whom will receive one 4-week and one 9-week blended online WCATY RtI curriculum module per year over the course of 2 years. Half of the students will come from approximately 10 Milwaukee public schools. The remaining students will come from Madison Metropolitan School District, Green Bay Area Catholic Schools, and rural schools in central Wisconsin.

The Value Added Research Center at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research will conduct a rigorous, mixed-method evaluation of the impact of WCATY RtI modules on student achievement and engagement, as well as the nature of program implementation.