

Council on Postsecondary Education
November 6, 2009

Improving Educator Quality State Grant Program

ACTION: The staff recommends that the Council on Postsecondary Education award federal *No Child Left Behind*, Title II, Part A, funds in the amount of \$1,144,000 for January 1, 2010–June 30, 2011, to support eight projects.

- *Increasing College Readiness Through Assessment Led Instruction in Middle and High School Classrooms* (Morehead State University): \$150,000
- *The Math and Science Partnership: Increasing Math and Science Instruction and Achievement in Middle School Classrooms—Year 2* (Morehead State University): \$140,000
- *West Kentucky Mathematics Partnership II—Year 2* (Murray State University): \$140,000
- *Certifying World Language Teachers for Kentucky* (Northern Kentucky University): \$145,000
- *Literacy + Numeracy=Exponential Learning* (University of Kentucky): \$150,000
- *Number Properties and Operations: A Key to Student Success on EPAS—Year 2* (University of Kentucky): \$139,000
- *Science Literacy for Middle School Teachers—Year 2* (University of Kentucky): \$140,000
- *Learning Capacity Advancement in Middle School Science and Mathematics—Year 2* (Western Kentucky University): \$140,000

The Improving Educator Quality State Grant Program awards grants to partnerships that deliver research-based professional development programs to P-12 teachers. To be eligible, a partnership must include a postsecondary institution's school of arts and sciences and its teacher preparation program, as well as at least one high-need local school district. The program enables states to fund training for teachers and administrators in any core academic subject.

In 2006 the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 130 requiring the P-12 assessment program to include a high school readiness examination in the 8th grade, a college readiness examination in the 10th grade, and requiring all students in the 11th grade to take the ACT. This has resulted in the implementation of ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) in Kentucky.

EPAS, which includes the EXPLORE assessment in the 8th grade, the PLAN assessment in the 10th grade, and culminates with the ACT assessment in the 11th grade, provides a longitudinal, systematic approach to educational and career planning, assessment,

instructional support, and evaluation. EPAS places emphasis on the integrated, higher-order thinking skills which students develop in grades P-12 that are important for success both during and after high school. The system focuses on a number of key transition points that young people face, particularly 8th graders preparing to enter high school, 10th graders planning and preparing for college and the workplace, and 11th and 12th graders being ready for life after high school.

Senate Bill 130 also requires the Council on Postsecondary Education and public postsecondary institutions to offer support and technical assistance to schools and school districts in the development of accelerated learning for students who demonstrate a need for intervention due to low scores on the high school or college readiness exams. To that end, the Council is focusing Year 8, as it did with Years 6 and 7, of the Improving Educator Quality State Grant Program on projects which integrate EPAS professional development that assists teachers in providing intervention in Core Content areas for students in need of accelerated learning.

External reviewers and content-area specialists reviewed 16 grant proposals and made recommendations to the Council staff. Eight proposals were selected. Brief descriptions of these projects follow.

Morehead State University: \$150,000

Increasing College Readiness Through Assessment Led Instruction in Middle and High School Classrooms

Krista Barton, principal investigator

Morehead State University, in collaboration with Berea College, proposes to improve college readiness skills among middle and high school students in all content areas as a result of increased reading comprehension and the processing of written information. The project will identify students in need of accelerated learning through rigorous and scientifically researched assessment practices to make appropriate content-based interventions or referrals for assistance in reading instruction. These students will be assisted through the implementation of research-based instructional methods for teaching reading comprehension embedded in content instruction. The project will integrate EPAS professional development to assist teachers in providing intervention in Core Content areas for students in need of accelerated learning. This project has been selected by Council staff as eligible for renewal for a second year based on adequate progress in the first year.

Morehead State University: \$140,000

The Math and Science Partnership: Increasing Math and Science Instruction and Achievement in Middle School Classrooms—Year 2

Cathy Gunn, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, Morehead State University proposes to continue to increase mathematics and science achievement of middle school students in several eastern Kentucky school districts through the integration of scientifically researched instructional strategies that

have been effective in math and science achievement. The project will foster the development of active, engaged, independent scientific and mathematical thinkers in middle school classrooms. In addition, it will foster the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support learning strategies used by science and mathematics teachers that result in active, engaged, and independent middle school scientific and mathematical thinkers.

Murray State University: \$140,000

West Kentucky Mathematics Partnership II—Year 2

W.A. Franklin, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, Murray State University, in collaboration with the University of Kentucky/Paducah Engineering School, proposes to build upon the work of their previous West Kentucky Mathematics Partnership grant to continue to improve teacher content knowledge and student achievement in mathematics in the districts served by the project. The project will focus on using student assessments to improve and guide instruction. An important goal of the project is to incorporate real-world applications into the math that is taught in the classroom. Participating districts are particularly focused on using EPAS data more effectively to improve instruction and move their students toward college readiness.

Northern Kentucky University: \$145,000

Certifying World Language Teachers for Kentucky

Tom Leech, principal investigator

Northern Kentucky University, in collaboration with Thomas More College, proposes to offer an intensive scholarship-based Option 7 summer institute to prepare fifteen qualified candidates for certification as world language teachers in Kentucky. The project will serve individuals already teaching world languages in Commonwealth schools with limited or emergency certification, as bilingual aides, and as substitute teachers, as well as those with the appropriate academic degrees and language proficiency who wish to teach, but who did not or cannot pursue traditional paths to teacher certification. The project includes six weeks of graduate instruction, a week of immersion in a world language day camp, and a series of embedded follow-up activities, observations, and mentorship. This project has been selected by Council staff as eligible for renewal for a second year based on adequate progress in the first year.

University of Kentucky: \$150,000

Literacy + Numeracy=Exponential Learning

Susan Cantrell, principal investigator

The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development at the University of Kentucky, in collaboration with Eastern Kentucky University and Northern Kentucky University, proposes to increase 5th to 12th grade student access to and comprehension of mathematics texts and content material for accelerated learning. This project will provide professional development for up to 45 upper elementary, middle, and high school mathematics teachers. Teachers in four rural districts will be grouped into professional learning communities to further support

and extend their learning using both face-to-face meeting and an online community of practice. This project has been selected by Council staff as eligible for renewal for a second year based on adequate progress in the first year.

University of Kentucky: \$139,000

Number Properties and Operations: A Key to Student Success on EPAS—Year 2

Kim Zeidler, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, the University of Kentucky, in collaboration with Eastern Kentucky University and Somerset Community College, proposes to further a project that is helping all students to develop the aspirations and skills to be successful in postsecondary settings. This project will provide the content and strategies to increase student performance in the algebra and geometry components of EPAS and the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT). The project will enhance secondary teachers' conceptual understanding and pedagogical content knowledge as well as their ability to implement effective mathematics instruction using research-based strategies to prepare all students for success on the EPAS assessments.

University of Kentucky: \$140,000

Science Literacy for Middle School Teachers—Year 2

Carol Hanley, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, the University of Kentucky, in collaboration with the University of Louisville, proposes to continue to present teachers with an opportunity to learn content related to current issues in life, Earth, and environmental sciences along with 21st century literacy skills for learning and teaching that content. The project will provide professional development for teachers to learn Internet-based strategies that will be contextualized in current science issues using a "train-the-trainer" model.

Western Kentucky University: \$140,000

Learning Capacity Advancement in Middle School Science and Mathematics—Year 2

Roger Pankratz, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, Western Kentucky University, in collaboration with Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, proposes to continue to provide professional development to middle school teachers for the purpose of improving students' performance on the EXPLORE portion of ACT/EPAS. Teachers will be given intensive summer training that will be followed with mentoring and embedded professional development. The project will use formative assessments to help teachers make data-based instructional decisions and track student progress. It will also establish a teaching and learning support network among teachers and with outside resources through structured and informal interactions using teleconferencing and face-to-face contacts.