

**Council on Postsecondary Education
November 7, 2008**

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 \$1,115,000 for January 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010, to support eight projects.

- *The Math and Science Partnership: Increasing Science Instruction and Achievement in Middle School Classrooms* (Morehead State University): \$140,000
- *West Kentucky Mathematics Partnership II* (Murray State University): \$140,000
- *E²: Enlivening and Energizing EPAS Professional Development* (Northern Kentucky University): \$140,000
- *Embedded Teacher Learning Through Online Modules: Leveraging Professional Development Resources in Kentucky* (University of Kentucky): \$135,000
- *Mathematics and Special Education* (University of Kentucky): \$140,000
- *Putting All Students on Track: A Partnership to Ensure Success in College Level Mathematics* (University of Kentucky): \$140,000
- *Science Literacy Project for Middle School Teachers* (University of Kentucky): \$140,000
- *Learning Capacity Advancement in Middle School Science and Mathematics* (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 7, as it did with Year 6, 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 13 grant proposals and made recommendations to the Council staff. Eight proposals were selected. Brief descriptions of these projects follow.

Morehead State University: \$140,000

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

Cathy Gunn, principal investigator

Morehead State University, in collaboration with Pikeville College, proposes 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

W.A. Franklin, principal investigator

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. Participating districts are particularly focused on using EPAS data more effectively to improve instruction and move their students toward college readiness.

Northern Kentucky University: \$140,000

E²: Enlivening and Energizing EPAS Professional Development

Lenore Kinne, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, Northern Kentucky University, in collaboration with Thomas More College, the Kentucky Center for Mathematics, and local GEAR-UP schools, proposes to develop a “train-the-trainer” model for teachers to use EPAS results to develop and implement students’ Individual Learning Plans, particularly encouraging enrollment in higher-level mathematics and science courses to promote postsecondary, career, and life goals. The project also will apply research-based strategies to build intrinsic motivation to learn in middle and secondary students, to promote effective scientific and mathematical reasoning in middle and secondary students through reading comprehension strategies, and to accelerate and enrich mathematical and scientific knowledge and reading in middle and secondary students, integrating these skills into EPAS-identified areas of need.

University of Kentucky: \$135,000

Embedded Teacher Learning Through Online Modules: Leveraging Professional Development Resources in Kentucky

Lars Bjork, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, the University of Kentucky proposes to launch four online professional development short courses, or modules, specifically targeting activities designed to promote student success and readiness for high school, college, and career. Those modules were created in the first year of the project. In the second year of the project, additional modules will be completed and launched. Most modules will involve conversion of existing professional development materials into an online format, which will leverage resources already invested for much broader consumption. Modules created by this project will target important teacher learning needs in Kentucky, such as understanding and utilizing EPAS and providing intervention strategies in core content areas.

University of Kentucky: \$140,000

Mathematics and Special Education

Kim Zeidler, principal investigator

The University of Kentucky, in collaboration with Eastern Kentucky University and Somerset Community College, proposes a project that will help all students 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. In addition, science skills will be reinforced through a focus on number properties and operations. 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

Putting All Students on Track: A Partnership to Ensure Success in College Level Mathematics
Kim Zeidler, principal investigator

In the second year of this project, the University of Kentucky, in collaboration with Somerset Community College, proposes to develop and field test strategies to help all students achieve success in high school mathematics as measured by EPAS. In addition, the project will develop and field test a course for college-bound high school seniors that will require them to solve complex problems utilizing skills and concepts learned in their high school course work. The project will increase counselor, teacher, and administrator awareness of college readiness standards and Work Keys information. It also will provide teachers with strategies to align ACT college readiness standards to the Kentucky Program of Studies. Information will be provided that will empower teachers with specific strategies to raise student performance on summative assessments such as EPAS.

University of Kentucky: \$140,000

Science Literacy Project for Middle School Teachers
Carol Hanley, principal investigator

The University of Kentucky, in collaboration with the University of Louisville, proposes 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
Roger Pankratz, principal investigator

Western Kentucky University, in collaboration with Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, proposes 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.