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NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

November 29, 2018

Mr. Patrick J. O'Donnell
Clerk of the Legislature
Room 2018, State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

In accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1054 (4), please find a report to the Legislature on the Nebraska Innovation Grant Program and the progress of its five recipients in the second consecutive year of the grant program. The Nebraska Department of Education is pleased to share their progress with you.

This competitive grant program provides funding to local education agencies (LEAs) to support the development, expansion, and investment in innovative best practices to improve education outcomes for K through 12 students while helping them toward successive education and subsequent assimilation into the workforce.

Since their award in February 2017, the five approved recipients and their respective projects have witnessed substantial growth, from increased engagement to improved student achievement. The projects have grown in leaps and bounds over the past two years, incorporating cutting-edge technology, innovative teaching methods and a special emphasis on the overall socio-emotional development of the students. The innovation grant has led the way for great ideas to materialize as examples that can be replicated. The program has helped set the stage for high expectations in the development of evidence-based practices intended for dissemination and possible replication throughout Nebraska.

One of the many requirements of the grant that sets it apart from other investments is a third-party evaluator, tasked with capturing processes and outcomes of the Innovation Grant. These evaluations create a menu of options for schools wishing to achieve improved student achievement.

The successes of the first two years shared in this report stand as evidence to the fact that the recipients are on a fast track to realizing their goals as outlined in their project plans. The overall achievements of each grant recipient will be furnished in the final report of the evaluation, which is due December 2019.

It will be exciting to see these projects realize their intended outcomes.

Please contact the Department of Education with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew L. Blomstedt".

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education



INNOVATION GRANT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

By Abhijit Mohanty

December, 2018

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NEBRASKA INNOVATION

GRANT PROGRAM

Report Prepared by;



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December 1, 2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Education Innovation Fund and Innovation Grant Program were created with the passage of Legislative Bill (LB) 519, effective August 30, 2015. On October 20, 2016, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) requested applications for grants through the Innovation Grant Program.

This competitive grant program provides funding to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to support the development, expansion, and investment in innovative best practices to improve education outcomes for students in K through 12 while helping them pave their paths towards successive education and subsequent assimilation into the workforce.

The Nebraska State Board of Education approved five applications on February 3, 2017, after a total of 18 applications were received by the NDE totaling \$17,692,476 in requests. These five approved recipients and their respective projects have demonstrated substantial growth, from increased engagement to improved student achievement. The projects have grown leaps and bounds over the past two years, incorporating cutting-edge technology, innovative teaching methods and a special emphasis on the overall socio-emotional development of the student lives the program touches. Thus changing the way education is imparted in the state, and the possibility of scaling up, after the successful realization of the goals outlined in their plans. The program has helped set the stage for high expectations in the development of evidence-based practices intended for dissemination and possible replication throughout the state of Nebraska.

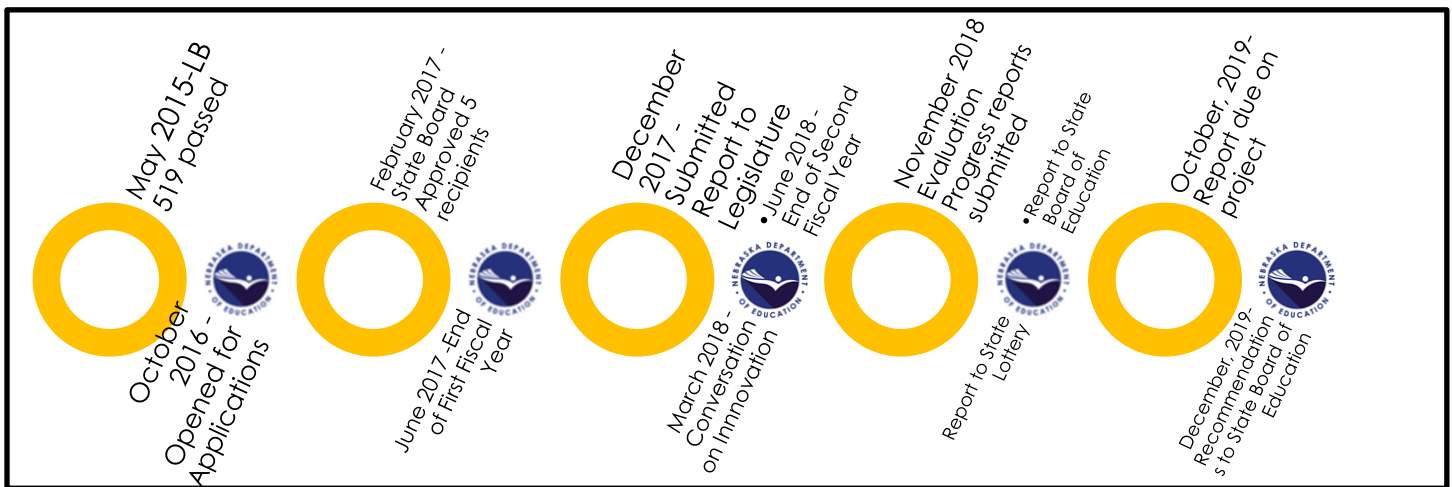
The five recipients, with awards totaling \$4.4 million, have successful practices in improving student success in the state. One requirement of the grant process is a third-party evaluator, tasked with capturing processes and outcomes of the Innovation Grant. These evaluations will be utilized to create a menu of options for schools wishing to achieve improved student achievement. This emphasis on “scaling up” effective practices sets this grant apart from other such investments.

The Innovation Grant Manager is routinely responsible for supporting the grant recipients, managing grant financial requests, ensuring strong evaluative practices, and assisting other schools in scaling up and replicating innovative initiatives to improve student achievement. This individual also reports on progress to diverse stakeholders throughout the project.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Education Innovative Grant Fund and the Innovation Grant Program were created with the passage of Legislative Bill (LB) 519, effective August 30, 2015. This bill initially appropriated \$2.7 million to carry out the provisions established in LB519. Each subsequent year through the 2020-21 fiscal year, the bill appropriates 17 percent of the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund managed by the Nebraska Department of Education to be used for the Innovative Grant Fund. This competitive grant program provides funding opportunities to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to support the development, expansion, and investment in innovative best practices that improve:

- *Education outcomes for early childhood, elementary, middle school or high school students;*
- *Transitions between any successive stages of education; or*
- *Transitions between education and the workforce.*



Time Line: Innovation Grant

ALLOCATIONS AND BUDGETARY BREAKDOWN

| Fiscal Year | Education Innovation Fund Allocation | NDE Innovation Grant Allocation | Grant Awards to Recipients | Operating/Salary |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 2016-17 | \$5,089,907 | \$2,763,911 | \$1,302,876 | \$128,860 |
| 2017-18 | \$6,839,207 | \$1,959,747 | \$1,821,484 | \$129,787 |
| 2018-19 | \$6,398,484 | \$1,718,178 | \$1,242,239 | \$129,701 |

As provided in the *Nebraska Revised Statute (NRS) §79-1054*, the State Board of Education establishes the *Innovation Grant Program*, with the Nebraska Department of Education administering the funds which consist of :

Transfers pursuant to *NRS §9-812 (State Lottery Operation Trust Fund and Nebraska Education Improvement Fund)*; Repayments of grant funds; and Interest payments received in the course of administering the fund.

The State Board of Education awarded grants to projects deemed sufficiently innovative, with a high chance of success and statewide significance. Grant recipients are required to generate evidence of the project’s effectiveness through a rigorous independent evaluation, culminating in the identification, validation, replication, and potential “scale-up” of innovative best practices.

Funded projects must have the potential to be both replicable and scalable, with priority consideration given to those: Serving “High Needs” students; Serving students attending “Needs Improvement” schools; Focusing on the tenets of Nebraska’s *AQuESTT System*, or Leveraging technology to support instructional practice and professional development.

The program is fiscally structured on a *Reimbursement Payment* basis, with grantees reimbursed after making project-related expenditures. Funded projects must be annually evaluated and report progress toward stated goals, measurable objectives, and targeted outcomes. Based on those reports, the State Board of Education will submit an *Innovation Grant Program Annual Report* to the Clerk of the Legislature by December 1 of each year. Grantees must also submit a *Summative Evaluation of Progress Report* to the State Board and Legislature’s Education Committee by July 1, 2019.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2018

CONVERSATION ON INNOVATION



In March 2018, the Nebraska Department of Education organized the “Conversation on innovation”. This event was formed around a central idea to foster connections between K-12 education innovators and Nebraska’s funding community through dialogue and discussion, thereby creating a new long-term relationships that would bridge the gap between potential funders and educators, that would eventually lead way to opportunities to address new funding needs in the form of public-private collaborations.

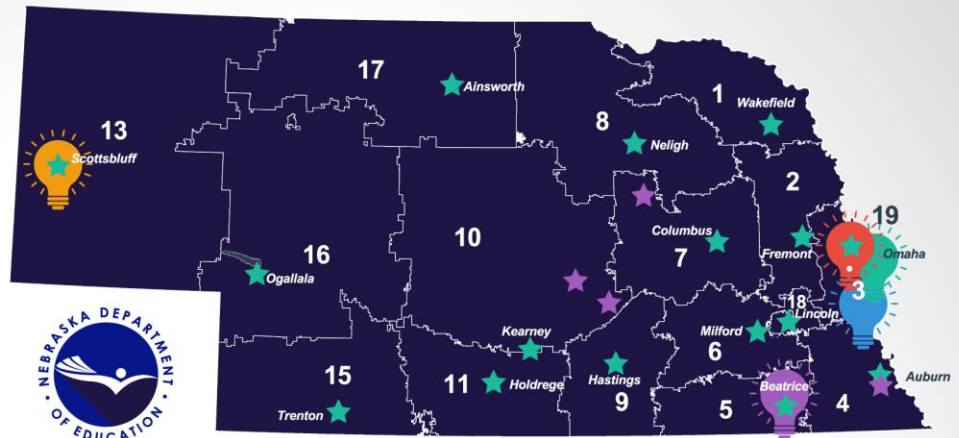
The meeting agenda for this event outlined objectives that would address a growing need to connect K-12 Education Innovators with foundation partners, Highlight funding needs of diverse projects in Nebraska K-12 schools and finally celebrate year one success of the Nebraska Innovation Grant Program.

INNOVATION PROJECTS

Five recipients were awarded Innovation Grants in February 2017. Grant awards totaled nearly \$4.4 million over the 36-month period. The grant emphasizes evaluation, scaling up, and recording best practices for other schools to replicate. The five recipients represent a diverse array of initiatives, detailed below are their respective evaluation and progress.



NEBRASKA INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM



Expanded Learning Opportunities Design Challenge - \$893,565

Nebraska's Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Design Challenge is a partnership that provides a statewide coalition of districts, community partners, and key education and community stakeholders with opportunities to design and test new models of ELO curriculum that support Nebraska Career Readiness Standards.

Plattsmouth Community School District - \$107,089

Plattsmouth High School (PHS) uses the Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness project to refine its wall-to-wall academy program into a model for Nebraska's schools. The PHS model is based on student interests, learning preferences, and career goals and involves extensive partnerships with community businesses and educational programs.

Westside Community Schools (WCS) - \$896,993

The Personalized 21st Century Learning Initiative uses instruction tailored to meet each individual student's needs, skills, knowledge, and learning interests. The project includes an overarching goal of promoting the academic performance of all WCS students through personalized learning opportunities with particular emphasis on those experiences which leverage technology.

Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) - \$1,640,839

The Data-driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching and Improving Learning for Students (DE²TAILS) project enables the ESUCC to incorporate multiple online educational and data-collection systems into one statewide, secure, single sign-on portal. The system develops, implements, and sustains an integrated ecosystem to allow relevant teaching and learning applications and tools to integrate, sharing data elements for the improvement of student learning and reporting.

Scottsbluff Public School District - \$827,913

Scottsbluff Public Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career Academy model includes six career academies. As students progress through middle school and their freshman and sophomore years, they are provided with instruction and experiences that help them determine areas that interest them. Then, as juniors and seniors, they select and refine their focus in Foundational Academies.



★ indicates multiple locations participating in the grant

ABOUT

The mission of the Plattsmouth Community School District is to work in partnership to ensure academic achievement, responsible behavior, and civic engagement. Plattsmouth High School uses the “Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness” project to refine its program into a model for Nebraska’s schools. The project goal is to increase student academic, CTE competence by implementing an AQuESTT aligned, and National Career Academy Coalition certified career academy program at Plattsmouth High School (PHS).

PROGRESS

Consistent with the assessment model provided with the grant application, PHS is working closely with the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) while developing a wall-to-wall academy model that meets NCAC standards. As PHS moves towards NCAC model school status, it has completed the following tasks and some count for major accomplishments as of fall 2018. The three PHS Career Academies are being discussed at the middle school level. It is making way for afterschool programs, summer programs, and special events, along with the freshman career connections, which is being fine-tuned. A capstone course has been approved and is in the process of being developed while students are meeting with business mentors once a month, mentor program training materials have been developed, and a sequence of topics for the meetings has been articulated. PHS students are completing internships within the community. Identification and decoration of Career Academy hallways successfully took place. A student Academy Core Leadership (ACL) team was also developed and representatives from this team sit on the Advisory Board. Three civic engagement career projects designed to introduce middle and elementary school students to career options and PHS academies. The academy has identified a service organization and conducted civic engagement activities to educate others about the organization while raising funds for the group. Teachers are in the process of applying their professional development and developing three integrated learning projects. All teachers associated with the program have moved their classrooms into



academy hallways and to a more research-based block schedule, which supports project-based and work-based learning experiences seven of the teachers participated in summer externships. Three teachers are piloting EdReady, a program that ties core learning to career readiness. Ten teachers have attended the National Career Academy Coalition national conference, shared their knowledge with their peers, and have identified their learning preference and implemented academy-based learning preference approaches in their courses. These implementations have resulted in the all-round improvement of the school’s ACT scores. A Future Farmers of America group has been established at PHS. The DECA group went to state and had two students in the top five and 4 students in the top ten. The Early Childhood Education dual credit courses have seen a significant increase in enrollment. There were multiple courses were added, of which some are dual credit courses to the school’s course guide and certified instructors were hired for the purpose. The courses were in agriculture, Industrial technology and computers. 2018 has witnessed substantial growth in numbers of concentrators, which increased from 60 in 2017 to 73 in 2018 and nontraditional participants increased from 31 in 2017 to 65 this year.



POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY

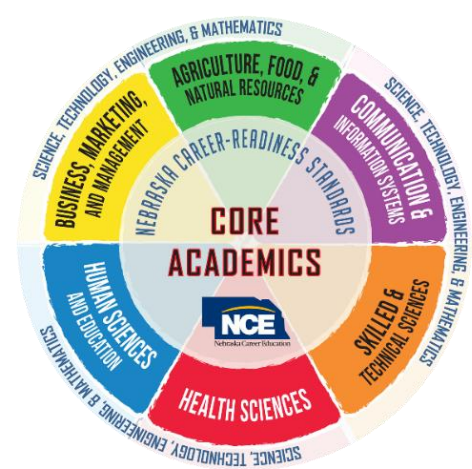
Replication and scalability are central to the NCAC national standards of practice. The project also includes support from the NCAC with implementing the academies and is available to schools joining the coalition. NCAC has provided examples of portfolios, capstone courses, and business mentor programs. They have also done a preliminary review and identified key areas of focus. As predicted, the wall-to-wall model that PHS is implementing and refining are both replicable and scalable. This model is scalable for larger class ‘A’ schools to include more than three broad categories. The PHS model would work well for both large and small class ‘B’ schools. Smaller class ‘B’ and class ‘A’ schools could be scaled to one or two academy clusters with teachers integrating career and academics with projects, a capstone course, and other experiences. The school and community, community colleges, and/or distance learning can be used to provide career /academic experiences.

ABOUT

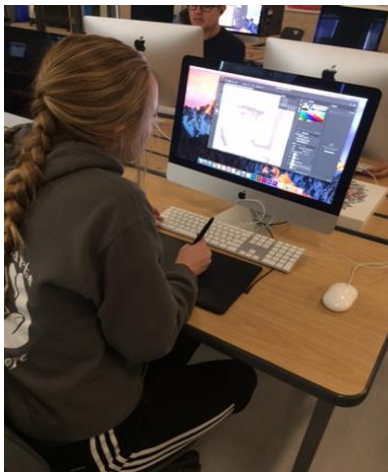
Scottsbluff Public Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career Academy model includes six career academies as identified by the Nebraska Career Education Model, and each Academy includes multiple career pathways, namely Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Business, Marketing and Management; Communications, Arts, and Technology; Health Sciences; Human Sciences and Education; and Skilled and Technical Science. The program is uniquely designed to include and engage every student attending Scottsbluff Senior High Schools in a Career Academy.

PROCESS

As students' progress through middle school, they are provided with instruction and experiences that will help them determine areas about which they would like to learn more. Then, as juniors, they select one Foundational Academy among the six alternatives. As seniors, they have an option to select a second Foundational Academy in a new area. Reversibly, if they really enjoyed their junior year experience and want to move further along, they can select a Specialized Academy in the same area.



PROGRESS



As evaluated, the project's impact on a variety of educational and career outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative data and covering a range of perspectives the analysis shows several encouraging trends emerging. Data support an increase in the number of dual college credit hours earned per student, from 3.88 credits per student in 2016-17 to 4.32 credits per students in 2017-18. A rise in the percentage of students earning dual credit from 82.4% of seniors to 90.7%. An increase in the number of Scottsbluff Senior High students who earn industry certifications, from 27 students in 2016-2017 to 41 students in the current 2018-19 year, along with improvements year-over-year when looking at NWEA MAP Growth scores in reading and math. On the other hand, the strong education-business partnership model that currently engages 86 businesses, as compared to the 32 businesses who were involved in the project upon its inception. More so, the dissemination effort resulting by the program has resulted in target consultation around the Academy with nearly a dozen districts and agencies within the region, including North Platte, Hastings, Ralston, Kearney, Torrington School District (Wyoming), Rapid City Public Schools, and the South Dakota Department of Education, among others. This suggests the project's potential as an encouraging model for increasing student achievement, engagement, as well as college and career preparedness.

POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY



The Evaluation data trends to date, are already supportive of the idea that the Wall-to-Wall Career Academy model is worthy of replication in a variety of other educational settings, both rural and urban. The reforms taking place within Scottsbluff Senior High School largely entail restructuring of existing educational programs while incurring relatively minimal costs as compared to other programs entailing significant reform, providing a cost-effective solution to robust career programming. Further, the project leverages substantial resources from its local business community in order to expand student exposure to and engagement in authentic learning opportunities, which again maximizes cost efficiencies while fostering high-levels of impact. The number of schools and agencies that have contacted or met with Scottsbluff Senior High School regarding the model evidences the most indicative measure of the potential replicability of the Scottsbluff Wall to Wall Academy model. This effort is greatly needed given the shortage of workers in key industries, particularly in a rural community where industries and talent pools are often limited.

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY DESIGN CHALLENGE

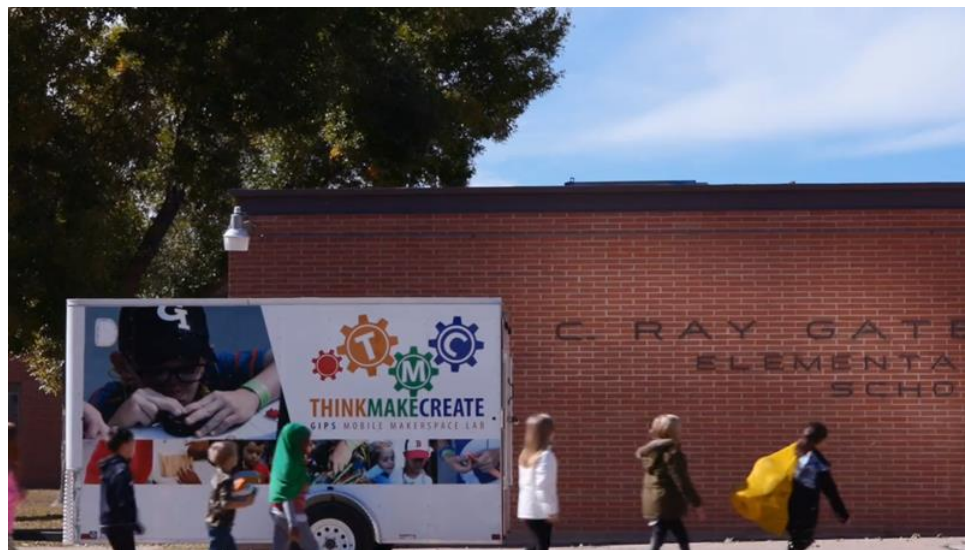
ABOUT

Nebraska’s Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Design Challenge (Challenge) is a statewide partnership to formulate, develop, prototype, validate and ultimately, scale up replicable and economically viable models of intentional, engaging, high-quality afterschool and summer curriculum and programming that supports K-8 student and school success and are powered by strong school-community partnerships. Communities involved include Boone Central, Centura, Beatrice, Grand Island, and Auburn.

| Public Schools | Students | FRPL |
|----------------|----------|------|
| Auburn | 866 | 39% |
| Beatrice | 2,150 | 49% |
| Boone Central | 600 | 25% |
| Centura | 490 | 35% |
| Grand Island | 9,550 | 65% |

PROGRESS

Some of the highlights brought through the ELO Design Challenge are as follows; Beyond School Bells designed, fabricated, and stocked five mobile Think Make Create (TMC) makerspace labs, one for each community. It has collaborated with Nebraska Extension to provide curriculum and training for the labs and piloted a career readiness program called “So You Wanna Be A...”, in a Lincoln-area elementary school after school program and are adapting it for use in the ELO Design Challenge communities. Additionally, it has collaborated with Whispering Roots to provide support for community gardening initiatives at each ELO Design Challenge and the Nebraska Community Foundation are collaborating with each community to develop sustainability plans. Auburn developed a partnership with Peru State College to recruit education majors to staff their program and implemented the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program. Beatrice expanded their already successful summer enrichment program to include after-school programs and developed the “Working Wednesday” career readiness program with local organizations, business, and extension agents to expose elementary students to a variety of career opportunities. Boone Central began their afterschool program and provided nine weeks of full-time summer programs to their community while its ELO program “Cardinal Kids Club” was provided dedicated space in the former Free Masons building opposite to the school. Centura developed and adopted a variety of curricula and activities for the afterschool context and piloted the Mission to Mars STEM curriculum developed by Beyond School Bells with elementary students. At Grand Island developed a residency program where each elementary school gets to use the mobile TMC makerspace lab for two weeks and piloted the “Mission to Mars”, the curriculum also developed by Beyond School Bells with middle school students.



POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY

Additionally, materials developed through Expanded Learning Opportunity Design Challenge activities have been initiated in communities participating in BSB’s Statewide Coalition of ELO.

ABOUT

The Personalized 21st Century Learning Initiative leverages more than two years of intensive planning and infrastructure development to support the full implementation of personalized learning across Westside Community Schools' 14 school sites. It is a pedagogical approach where instruction is tailored to meet each individual student's needs, skills/knowledge, and learning interests. As such, personalized learning fully rejects the outdated, passive learning model where instruction is prescribed and delivered to the masses, rather than delivered in accord with the specific needs and interests of diverse students possessing varying interests, achievement levels, and learning styles. The project includes an overarching goal of promoting the academic performance of all its students through a rich continuum of personalized learning opportunities, with emphasis on those experiences, which leverage technology.

PROGRESS

Through its Innovation Grant award, Westside Community Schools seeks to extend the foundation it has developed around personalization since it first adopted the pedagogy more than five years ago. The grant supports coaches, supplies and other resources to increase the frequency and quality of personalization in the classroom. Key findings from the grant project include increases in the use of personalization strategies within the classroom. These are indicated by the rise in the number of days when, students are provided greater voice and choice in the classroom; receive instruction within flexible groupings, while the teachers facilitate data-informed activities and use activities that allow them to better know their students. These increases in frequency using personalization strategies suggest the project is firmly on track toward meeting its overall goal of fully implementing personalized learning across the district. With increasing interest in personalized learning both locally and nationally, the project's evaluation is on pace to produce findings that can provide a basis for adoption of personalized learning and support for its implementation.

POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY

While the extent of reform required by personalization is significant, many of these approaches are relatively inexpensive and cost efficient. Westside has identified and refined this model carefully, frequently drawing from research and best practice. These strategies that can be easily and incrementally incorporated into a classroom. While professional development to increase teacher proficiency in these areas may be required, this is relatively minimal expense given the extent of reform taking place and the associated impacts of these reforms. Particularly, it is shown that personalized learning can impact students' performance in the areas of mathematics and reading using standardized tests, especially for disadvantaged students (RAND Corporation, Continued Progress, 2015). The relatively low cost of adoption coupled with the growing evidence around personalization's impact supports its replication in Nebraska, as well as other settings in the United States. As Westside continues to implement the project, it is developing and refining replicable strategies, tools, and resources, which can be used by other districts adopting this pedagogical innovation.



Further, Westside's model features several distinct components, which further position it for additional study and support. Consistent with personalized learning itself, the model features a strong emphasis on the individual needs of students. It also includes a focus on the use of technology as a tool to expand learning and an opportunity to learn. Lastly, Westside's implementation is generating an understanding and tools that can support dissemination and replication in other districts across the state and Westside has already expressed an interest and willingness to work with other districts to disseminate best practices and to share insights and findings regarding this promising educational innovation.

ABOUT

The Data-driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching and Improving Learning for Students (DE²TAILS) project enables ESUCC to incorporate multiple online educational and data-collection systems into one statewide, secure, single sign-on portal. The goal is to develop, implement, and sustain an integrated ecosystem, governed by policies and practices, to allow relevant teaching and learning applications and tools to integrate, sharing data elements for the improvement of student learning and reporting. In the state of Nebraska, as per state statute 79-1246, Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) is charged with coordinating statewide efforts with all Educational Service Units (ESUs) leading 17 ESUs serving 245 school districts employing 22,000 teachers educating 307,000 students. Funded by the state innovation grant, in the 2016-2017 school year, ESUCC developed the “Data-Driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching and Learning (DE²TAILS)” project, integrating multiple state data systems and resources into an ecosystem of support, tools, resources, and data designed to enhance an environment centering on blended and personalized learning.



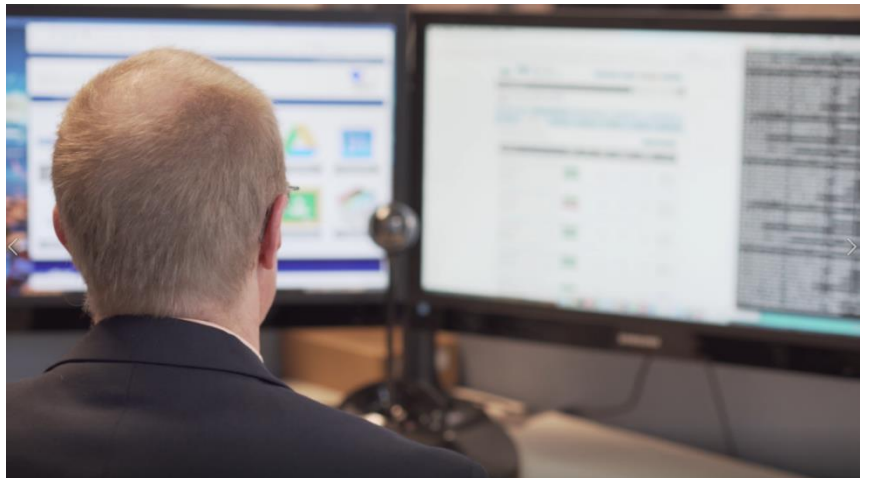
PROGRESS

The documents for the project and leadership interviews provide evidence the program is being implemented as per proposed goals and objectives. Evident, as an increasingly sophisticated project being implemented in ways that meet program goals and objectives and support participants. Leadership interviews also confirm that ADVISER, BlendEd, EdReady, and SIMPL projects displayed substantial progress on their objectives. Attendees of the BlendEd summer training reported that the professional development experience has an overall high quality, surveys suggesting that the training was above average to excellent with the highest rating to instructor preparedness. Participants also agreed or strongly agreed that what they learned in the BlendEd professional development has a positive influence on the implementation. It is also indicated a strong agreement that the training will help them implement the program with their students. Similarly, for the teachers, the opportunity to collaborate with peers during the training and appreciated the ideas, resources, and information they could take back to their classrooms as they work to implement BlendEd. They learned about new resources, technology implementation, and tools to make BlendEd work effectively in their classrooms, to organize information for students, and options for grouping students for instruction.



POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY

Although implementation varied by schools, most teachers and administrators believed the use of BlendEd positively impacted their students. As perceived, students are more engaged in the lessons, gained deeper mastery of the topics, had better retention of information, set educational goals, became more self-motivated, had more ownership of their learning, and utilized technology more effectively. Both respondent groups saw increases in academic achievement and reported improvements in assessment scores and grades as well as with writing. BlendEd has also demonstrated a positive impact on participating teachers and administrators. Within the 30-month funding period, the DE²TAILS project proposed to develop this technology ecosystem that is replicable across schools in every ESU and scalable across all ESUs as a statewide system of teacher and student support to bring positive impact on ESU institutional changes, K-12 partner school institutional outcomes, teacher practices, and ultimately student academic achievement.





LOOKING AHEAD

With each project looking ahead to progress along their identified requirements to fulfill their objectives, in the year ahead, the Innovation Grant will continue to spur innovation at the classroom, school, district, and community levels through its different grant offerings. The grant has consistently proved and will continue to be a boon to the citizens of Nebraska and comes at a time that most fulfills the state's and country's need for an equipped generation of well-rounded individuals and workforce.

The innovation Grant will continue to support teachers throughout the state by providing a small amount of funding to seed big ideas. Ideas, that will help make a great leap for our present generation for a successful future. The innovation grant will not only fuel these ideas. Some of the outcomes will be that Nebraska students would find themselves to more employable, educated and prove to form a stronger support network for the society in all fields of the economy.

School districts will be able to reimagine their students' educational experience by growing and piloting never-before-seen approaches to education. Finally, it shall be exciting to see 2019 unfold and stand witness to the collective power of the Innovation Fund and continue building the next generation of Nebraska's schools.

Plattsmouth Community Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness

The National Career Academy Coalition review is taking place in May and based on the Advisory and Academy self-assessment data, it is likely that the academy will be approved and possible that it will reach model status. PHS along with community partners are collaborating to ensure that much as possible is done to meet all the grant goals, increase student academic, career, and technical skills attainment.

Scottsbluff Public Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career Academies

The evaluation process is designed to generate data regarding the project's impact relative to student academic performance, postsecondary enrollment, and career outcomes, and the evaluation will eventually provide data regarding the relevance of these interventions on various groups of students, particularly as additional students graduate. The external evaluation process is steadily moving into additional areas of exploration and refinement as the data set becomes more complete with the 2018-2019 achievement data and project outcomes.

Expanded Learning Opportunity Design Challenge

The MAP Academy has conducted site visits at four of the five ELO Design Challenge communities, has conducted interviews while collecting artifacts from program directors and other stakeholders at each site. It has also piloted a post/retrospective-pre measure of career engagement for ELO programs. It will be conducting Dimensions of Success (DoS) observations at each site this spring and will assist communities in developing appropriate evaluation tools for their programs.

The five communities included in the ELO Design Challenge are making great strides towards their personal goals and the project's goals. Throughout the past year and a half, the evaluation team has had the privilege of observing programs and interviewing individuals who are leading efforts to provide high quality extended learning opportunities in Nebraska. During the first year, the MAP Academy staff primarily focused on identifying the goals of the five communities and working to understand the context of each program. For the second year, MAP Academy is building on relationships formed with each community to enhance their evaluation efforts. We will continue to focus on individual community goals, understanding communities are at different stages of the process, and the broader goals of the grant.

Westside Community Schools' 21st Century Personalized Learning

The evaluation is tracking a variety of formative and summative data to determine the frequency in use of personalized strategies through the perspective of teachers and students as well as student performance over the period of the grant to draw potential correlations between these strategies and such academic outcomes as standardized test scores and graduation rates among others. Personalized learning is an instructional strategy where instruction is tailored to meet each individual student's needs, skills, knowledge, and interests.

Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) - Data-driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching And Improving Learning for Students- DE2TAILS

RMC Research Corporation serves as the external evaluator of this innovative project conducting a mixed method quasi-experimental study to assess the implementation and impact of the grant. The evaluation assesses whether the project is making satisfactory progress towards its stated goals; recommend reasonable, evidence-based adjustments to project plans and activities; support the development and validation of survey and assessment tools, and describe the impact of the DE²TAILS project.

FUTURE GOALS

With each project being distinct in its own way and fulfilling a different, need in the society. It is important to envision a future that fulfills each project's needs.

Plattsmouth Community Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness

After two years with this Nebraska Innovation Grant, PHS is on track for implementing all but one of the key elements of the program and reaching all the goals. The turnover of the high school administration led to a slight delay in the implementation of the capstone course. The course will be developed by May 2019 but will not have been implemented.

Scottsbluff Public Schools' Wall-to-Wall Career Academies

As per the evaluation team, the remainder of the grant, it will initiate several additional evaluation strategies that furnish quantitative and qualitative data to support pre- and post-analysis and deepen its understanding of the project. This includes a second round of focus groups with students in the Career Academy; the administration of post surveys for teachers and industry partners; as well as the ongoing collection of academic performance data in preparation for the project's final report.

Expanded Learning Opportunity Design Challenge

The *short-term goal* of the ELO Design Challenge is to develop ELO programming powered by community partnerships that align with the Nebraska State Board of Education 2013 ELO Policy statement and supports the AQuESTT's tenets, Nebraska Career Readiness Standards, and NDE's STEM approach. The *long-term goal* of the ELO Design Challenge is the creation of new models and the enhancement of existing programs, providing K-8 students across Nebraska with additional hands-on, project-based learning opportunities enhancing student success.

Westside Community Schools' 21st Century Personalized Learning

As the evaluation looks toward the remainder of the project, it will be collecting data, particularly academic data, to measure the impact of personalized learning on students' academic performance. The Westside Community Schools' Personalization for 21st Century Learning Initiative appears to be a promising candidate as a best practice and replicable model for state support. As the project in Westside continues to evolve, evaluators will then be able to dig into quantitative data trends more carefully. However, the following are some anticipated next steps for evaluation expansion and refinement in 2018-2019; Correlation Analysis, Teacher Personalized Learning Fidelity, College Enrollment Insights, Personalized Student Projects, Technology Engagement in Personalized Learning and finally Parent Feedback.

Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) - Data-driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching And Improving Learning for Students- DE2TAILS

The most consistent lesson learned, as expressed by teachers and administrators, was the significant amount of planning time involved with implementation. Administrators emphasized the importance of creating a common planning time for teachers, so they could develop lessons together and share successful strategies as well as obstacles they faced. To improve the professional development activities, overall feedback suggests more collaboration and application time using the BlendEd strategies and more examples or videos of teachers and students engaging in BlendEd learning, along with collaboration time with teachers, particularly those in their own content area, would be helpful. Data also suggest a demand for an extension of sessions for better collaboration, which will allow more time to apply their training.

APPENDIX B

| <i>Local Education Agency</i> | <i>Project Name</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>\$Amount Awarded</i> |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Plattsmouth Community School District</i> | <i>Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness</i> | The Plattsmouth Community School District is to work in partnership to ensure academic achievement, responsible behavior, and civic engagement. Plattsmouth High School uses the “Wall-to-Wall Career and College Readiness” project to refine its program into a model for Nebraska’s schools. | \$ 107,089 |
| <i>Scottsbluff Public School District</i> | <i>Wall-To-Wall Career Academies</i> | Scottsbluff Public Schools’ Wall-to-Wall Career Academy model includes six career academies as identified by the Nebraska Career Education Model, and each Academy includes multiple career pathways, namely Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Business, Marketing and Management; Communications, Arts, and Technology; Health Sciences; Human Sciences and Education; and Skilled and Technical Science. The program is uniquely designed to include and engage every student attending Scottsbluff Senior High Schools in a Career Academy. | \$ 827,913 |
| <i>Beatrice Public Schools</i> | <i>Expanded Learning Opportunity Design Challenge</i> | Nebraska’s Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Design Challenge (Challenge) is a statewide partnership to formulate, develop, prototype, validate and ultimately, scale up replicable and economically viable models of intentional, engaging, high-quality afterschool and summer curriculum and programming that supports K-8 student and school success and are powered by strong school-community partnerships. Communities involved include Boone Central, Centura, Beatrice, Grand Island, and Auburn. | \$ 893,565 |
| <i>Westside Community Schools</i> | <i>21st Century Personalized Learning</i> | The Personalized 21st Century Learning Initiative leverages more than two years of intensive planning and infrastructure development to support the full implementation of personalized learning across Westside Community Schools’ 14 school sites. It is a pedagogical approach where instruction is tailored to meet each individual student’s needs, skills/knowledge, and learning interests. The project includes an overarching goal of promoting the academic performance of all its students through a rich continuum of personalized learning opportunities, with emphasis on those experiences, which leverage technology. | \$ 896,993 |
| <i>Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC)</i> | <i>Data-Driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching And Improving Learning for Students</i> | The Data-driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching and Improving Learning for Students (DE ² TAILS) project enables ESUCC to incorporate multiple online educational and data-collection systems into one statewide, secure, single sign-on portal. The goal is to develop, implement, and sustain an integrated ecosystem, governed by policies and practices, to allow relevant teaching and learning applications and tools to integrate, sharing data elements for the improvement of student learning and reporting. In the state of Nebraska, as per state statute 79-1246, Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) is charged with coordinating statewide efforts with all Educational Service Units (ESUs) leading 17 ESUs serving 245 school districts employing 22,000 teachers educating 307,000 students. Funded by the state innovation grant, in the 2016-2017 school year, ESUCC developed the “Data-Driven Ecosystem Enhancing Teaching and Learning (DE ² TAILS)” project, integrating multiple state data systems and resources into an ecosystem of support, tools, resources, and data designed to enhance an environment centering on blended and personalized learning. | \$ 1,640,839 |