

Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Program

Grantee Information:

Grantee: **Rotterdam-Mohonasen Central School District**

Abstract:

In addition to using funds in this grant to stabilize employment during a time of fiscal instability for public schools, the funds in this grant will also focus on three of the following reform areas: achieving equity in teacher distribution, improving the collection and use of data, and increasing and implementing enhanced standards and assessments. Specifically, the Rotterdam-Mohonasen Central School District will target the gap that currently exists between the achievements of high needs students (those with disabilities, those who are economically disadvantaged and English Language Learners) and their peers. While state assessment scores are showing slow but steady progress, there is still a great deal of room for improvement, particularly for those students with disabilities where assessment results are not showing similar improvement. In addition, the district is experiencing a shift in demographics; over the past eight years there has been an increase in the economically disadvantaged population from under 10% to nearly 30%. The district believes it is time to do a thorough assessment of its programs and instruction through: in depth analysis of student performance data; needs assessment of faculty and staff regarding instructional strengths and weaknesses (actual or perceived) and a special education program review/analysis.

The district will use this information to provide training, mentoring and in-class professional development and modeling particularly focusing on instructional strategies and differentiation, science, math, English Language Arts and technology in grades 3-8 where students receive foundation skills in these topics.

In order to effectively implement changes necessary to improve student achievement on new assessments which incorporate new state standards and common core curricula, it is critical to have teachers with expertise in key areas such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology and instructional strategies that “hook” students and motivate them to engage in learning skills associated with these key areas. The district will conduct a needs assessment with faculty and staff to discern their perceived needs in content and instructional delivery. In addition, the district has contracted with a consultant who will review the district’s special education and remediation programs, providing recommendations for implementation in fall 2013. Finally, the district will use student growth data to do the following: target district-wide professional development; offer opportunities for faculty to participate in college coursework targeting areas of need in either content specific areas or instructional strategies; and create 3 teacher on special assignment positions selecting teachers/leaders with expertise in STEM or differentiation of instruction and who are rated as effective or highly effective with the new APPR evaluation (the full time equivalents of these positions will be determined once candidates have been selected). All of the strategies implemented will continue through year two of the grant with the goal of improving the achievement gap between high needs and low/average need

students. In addition, the teacher/leader on special assignment positions offer teachers/leaders an opportunity to apply their skill and expertise in a manner that affects a broader population and allows those selected to experience a more formalized leadership position.

All of these strategies will allow the district to fully implement and enhance the new APPR teacher and leader evaluation system, gain additional data to facilitate analysis and understanding of the strengths and needs of the students and staff in the district, improve the performance of students and teachers in the district through increased, individualized mentoring and professional development, and provide career ladder opportunities for teachers and leaders within the district which, in turn, will enhance the culture and performance of the district overall.

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