

# @HEALTH & WELL-BEING ISSUE

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FOCUS: EDUCATION

## Foundation's Education Initiative Reaches All Schools in LaSalle Parish

**"We want to move all our students up, so that 'unsatisfactory' is a word that is no longer a part of our vocabulary," explains LaSalle Parish School Superintendent Cary McGuffee. "I want zero failures."**



*Cary McGuffee, LaSalle Parish School Superintendent*

Some people may be startled to hear a district administrator speak with such determination about student performance. In LaSalle Parish, McGuffee's lofty expectations seem to be shared by many at the

district and school levels who are working as a team to help students reach new heights.

LaSalle Parish is the one school district in The Rapides Foundation's 11-parish service area to have all of its schools apply for and receive grants under the Foundation's Education Initiative, an ambitious five-year program to improve student achievement in Central Louisiana. Since the Initiative's inception in 1998, 111 schools have received grant funding for an array of innovative projects that are already producing results as the program has matured.

From replicating successful nationally-recognized educational models to infusing technology into the classroom to developing effective literacy programs, these projects are breeding excitement and optimism within schools throughout the region.

A recent Efficacy Study produced for The Rapides Foundation by Dr. Diana Rigden, vice president of the Council for Basic Education, says, "There is already evidence that teacher capacity has improved, that the 'learning environment' is being transformed, and that activities are beginning to have a positive impact on student learning."

More than \$4.9 million has been awarded by the Foundation to date to schools under the Education Initiative, which focuses on enhancing student achievement by fueling the creative energies of teachers and stimulating instructional improvement. The Foundation provides one-year grants of up to \$25,000 to a school; the grants are renewable upon tangible evidence of progress over a period of five

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# Education Initiative Reaches All Scho

years.

In LaSalle Parish schools, Foundation funding has helped advance that district's ambitious efforts to make systemic improvements throughout its instructional program. Several years ago, LaSalle school officials began to develop a comprehensive plan to upgrade teacher training, increase the use of technology and improve student academic performance at the same time the state was heightening its emphasis on high-stakes testing.

"We needed to get our teachers trained to enhance student achievement - that was our ultimate goal," remembers McGuffee, who became LaSalle's superintendent almost six years ago. He visited schools in Sabine Parish that had a successful technology plan, and worked to design and drum up support for a similar program in his home parish.

Through the leadership of McGuffee and other school officials, the district acquired funds from local, state and Federal sources to put computers in every classroom, get appropriate training for teachers and get related reforms underway. Technology was especially important to McGuffee, who could see

**"Our test scores have increased to the point that LaSalle was one of the top school systems in the state in student performance this year."**

*Cary McGuffee,  
LaSalle Parish School Superintendent*

how students needed such training to thrive in the 21st century. Today, all the parish's classrooms are networked, and teachers have received many hours of intensive instruction in how to integrate computer use into all curriculum areas.

Grants from The Rapides Foundation have been used primarily for a major professional development program that has helped shift the district's priorities to making teachers the best they can be. These grants have allowed LaSalle schools to bring in technical support and trainers, and pay teacher stipends for time spent in workshop and planning sessions throughout the year. The district also has helped make it easy for teachers to take time off for such training by providing teacher's aides

and parent volunteers to fill in classrooms when needed.

Additionally, teachers who have previously received training are now able to train their peers, perpetuating and multiplying the educational benefits. "We're developing our own experts within our system," McGuffee says. "That means we're getting better trained people who live in LaSalle Parish."

LaSalle's overall plan seems to be paying off for students. "Our test scores have increased to the point that LaSalle was one of the top school systems in the state in student performance this year," McGuffee says, adding that classroom grades and standardized test scores should correlate.

"If we are teaching our children well, they should be approaching basic and above. We want to move all our scales up," McGuffee adds. "We want to be the best."

Such results have come through broad-based cooperation, he explains, with a supportive school board and community, motivated teachers and administrators and willing students. Without the support of The Rapides Foundation, says McGuffee, the schools' computers "would have been sitting idle on desks. We couldn't hire a computer guru



*Sandra Hester, LaSalle High grant coordinator and Tish Budemer, Jena High grant coordinator worked together to schedule joint technology training workshops.*

# ols in LaSalle Parish

(continued)

ourselves, and we knew if we didn't get help it wasn't going to work."

After two elementary schools - Jena Elementary and Olla-Standard - initially applied for and received grants during Cycle One of The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative, their success encouraged teachers and principals in other schools in the parish to seek help from the Foundation. "It's been kind of a mushroom effect," says McGuffee, with teachers sharing ideas and encouraging one another.

At Jena High School, for example, standardized test scores have improved as teachers have embraced the use of technology to a degree that has "shocked" school principal Melba Pugh.

"Our teachers are gung-ho," she says. "Teachers who were once afraid to turn a computer on are now like pros, using it every day. They are so much more confident."

Using computers to enhance teaching and deepen student understanding of subject matter is happening throughout the school, explains Pugh. She points to an American History teacher who, in a lesson about the Hoover administration, led students to an Internet site so they could listen to music from that era. The school also has added a computer repair course.

**"When teachers are involved in the grant development, they are more excited about participating,"**

*Kathryn Tyler,  
LaSalle district liaison to The Rapides Foundation*

Jena High School and LaSalle High School have worked together to schedule training workshops for their teachers, says Pugh, and the sessions have been very well attended. The cooperation between the Jena and LaSalle high schools has been "wonderful," says Tish Budemer, Jena High's grant coordinator.

"We've become closer colleagues and partners in education," she says. Such newfound cooperation was "not a benefit we predicted" from The Rapides Foundation grant award. "It's really been inspiring to



*Kathryn Tyler,  
LaSalle district  
liaison to  
The Rapides  
Foundation  
facilitates  
communication  
between schools,  
the Foundation  
and technical  
assistants.*

see teachers working together. I think the collaboration between the schools will long outlive the five years of grant funding."

Such collaboration is important because it serves to reduce teachers' traditional isolation from one another while building trust and encouraging shared knowledge and expertise.

"When teachers are involved in the grant development, they are more excited about participating," says the LaSalle district liaison to The Rapides Foundation, Kathryn Tyler. In addition, the experience with the Rapides Foundation has "given our teachers more confidence to write grants, and to venture out to seek other funding as well."

In her role as district liaison, Tyler helps to facilitate communication between her school system, the Foundation and the district's technical assistant, and offers help and advice to individual schools as needed.

"Our classrooms are becoming more student-centered," Tyler adds. With more individualized education comes greater opportunities for teachers to provide remediation or enrichment, depending upon each student's needs.

Ongoing staff development, giving teachers the training they need and learning new teaching methods, are essential to the "ultimate goal" of enhancing student achievement, Superintendent McGuffee believes. "We have to feel good about the product - and students are our product - that we are sending out."



The Rapides Foundation is a philanthropic organization that provides grants to organizations throughout an 11 parish service area that share the Foundation's mission to improve the health and well-being of Central Louisiana.



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

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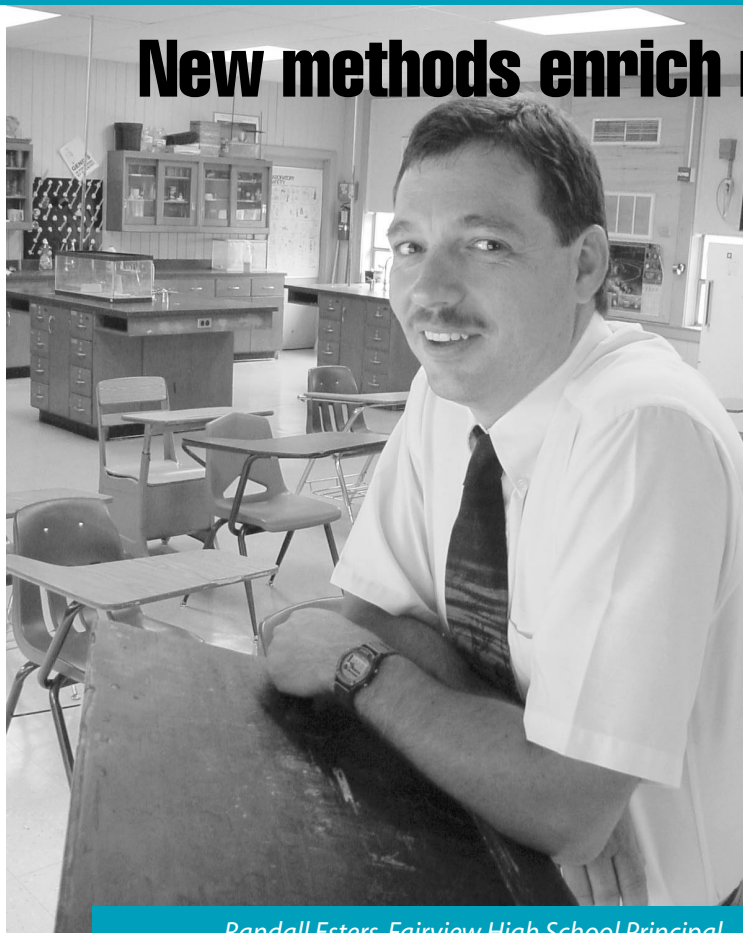
# Cenla schools adopt national educational models

Fresh philosophies that rejuvenate and unite a school from top to bottom. New ways of reaching at-risk students for whom school too often means "failure." New instructional methods that give teachers better tools for prompting students to excel.

Often, schools need to look beyond their walls for help in making their educational programs the best they can be. Throughout The Rapides Foundation's 11-parish service area, several schools are doing just that - seeking strategies for educational improvement that have demonstrated success in other locales. Some have found the right ingredients that suit their particular needs by looking to nationally-recognized research and educational models. Here are highlights of a few of these innovative approaches.



## New methods enrich rural Allen Parish school



*Randall Esters, Fairview High School Principal*

**A** fresh approach to teaching academically-challenged students, as well as the more traditional computer-based Accelerated Reading and math programs are among the exciting changes taking place at Fairview High School in rural Allen Parish, says Principal Randy Esters.

Last year's implementation of a new Accelerated Reading and math program at the Pre-K through 12th grade school is already making a difference there, he explains. At recess, for instance, he has noticed "pockets" of children who gather to read books, something he calls, "refreshing to see."

An initial grant from The Rapides Foundation helped fund the Accelerated Reading and math program, and this year, the effort will be expanded to include new "brain-based" teaching strategies. In fact,

**Fairview will serve as a national model for the program designed by the Utah-based National Academy of Child Development (NACD)**

# "It's starting to change the culture at our school."

Fairview will serve as a national model for the program designed by the Utah-based National Academy of Child Development (NACD). The school will begin by focusing its efforts on younger students and those who are not functioning academically at their chronological age.

"This is the first time this program has been implemented in a public school - it is usually used in a home school setting," says Esters. Utilizing the latest research on how children's brains function and process information, the program evaluates each child and addresses his or her particular learning needs. Teachers will then use one-on-one techniques, computers and group activities that bring each child "up to level." (The Northwestern State University Lab School in Natchitoches has a similar Foundation-supported program that has provided teacher training in brain research.)

"The result is that a lot of children with learning disabilities can meet or surpass what other kids on their grade level are doing," said Esters, who has done considerable investigation into the innovative program. "It changes the way teachers teach."

Trainers from the NACD are conducting a workshop for Fairview teachers this summer, and there will be additional follow-up and implementation assistance. Student testing prior to and after the program's implementation, as well as a written report, will be done by the education department of McNeese State University.

Esters is enthusiastic about using the new "neuro-developmental model" at his school, and is optimistic about its potential for improving students' educational success and test scores.

## Avoyelles Public Charter School



# Direct Impacts with Direct Instruction

*Julie Durand, Principal and Kimberly Gagnard, Direct Instruction coordinator for the Avoyelles Public Charter School*

**"W**e believe that all children can read, and all can be successful," says Julie Durand, director of the new Avoyelles Public Charter School in Mansura.

The premise that all children can learn is at the heart of this nontraditional school in Avoyelles Parish that opened in the fall of 2000. Located in a newly-constructed building in Mansura, the state-chartered school began with 240 students, a number that is expected to expand by another 135 by this fall.

It operates as a Type II charter school under the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE); the school included kindergarten through grade five its first year, and will add a grade each year.

The school is led by Durand, an experienced teacher who for five years worked with others to overcome a daunting set of challenges to get this innovative school up and running. Durand was troubled by what she saw as "deficiencies" in some schools and wanted to look for new ways to effectively reach all students.

After exhaustive research that included trips to Colorado and Oregon, Durand found what she thought were sound educational strategies that would reach

all children. She has incorporated these philosophies and methods into the program at Avoyelles Public Charter School. The school's program combines "direct instruction" and "core knowledge," teaching philosophies and national models which were developed by Dr. Siegfried "Ziggy" Engelmann of the University of Oregon, and E.D. Hirsch, respectively.

"Direct instruction helps every child to be successful, especially students needing extra help," explains Durand. Using materials published primarily by SRA/McGraw Hill, teachers follow scripted lesson plans for skills instruction in reading, math, spelling, reasoning and writing.

"Rapid pacing and choral group response, punctuated by individual turns, characterize the delivery of a DI lesson," according to a publication of the Association for Direct Instruction. Every child is moved through lessons at a pace that maximizes his particular learning potential. Repetition, review, positive intervention and praise are important to the program, as well. Each child can be remediated or accelerated to 100 percent mastery, an accomplishment Durand calls "amazing."

"It's a very regimented system," she says, "but the teacher is directing the instruction." During its first year of operation, the school contracted with J/P Associates of New York to coordinate teacher training, coaching and monitoring of the Direct Instruction method. The teacher training has been critical to the program's success, says Kimberly Gagnard, the charter school's Direct Instruction coordinator.

"Getting feedback from our consultant on a regular basis has been so helpful," she says. "The idea is to promote student achievement through staff development." A grant from The Rapides Foundation is helping pay for teacher stipends and materials.

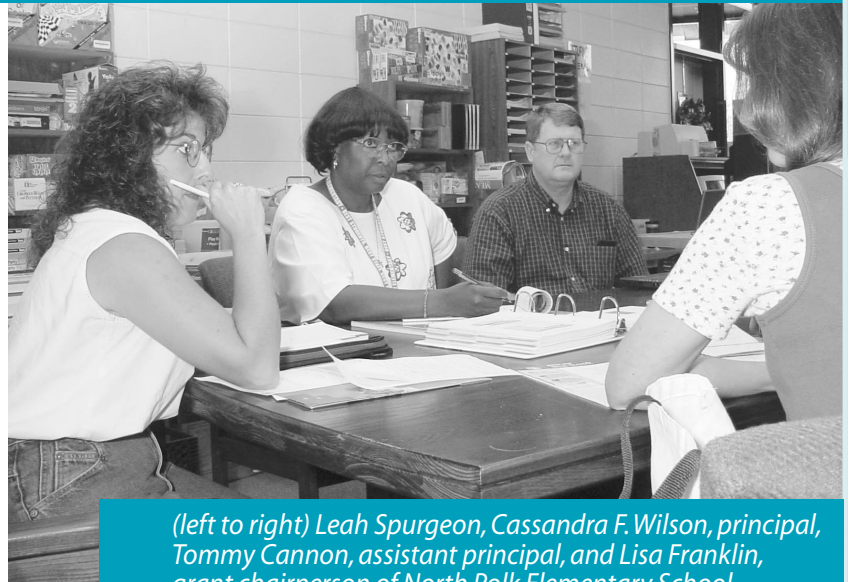
School officials have already begun to see results. Kindergarten students tested at the beginning of last fall scored significantly higher when tested again in the spring. "We're hoping that in five years' time, all our kids will be at the 80th percentile and above," says Gagnard.

Durand is passionate about helping each child reach his or her full academic potential, and she believes the Avoyelles Public Charter School can make that happen. "To see the success of these children is amazing."



## North Polk Elementary, Vernon Parish

# Teaching That Fits



(left to right) Leah Spurgeon, Cassandra F. Wilson, principal, Tommy Cannon, assistant principal, and Lisa Franklin, grant chairperson of North Polk Elementary School

**"W**e're trying to get away from so much pencil and paper work," explains North Polk Elementary kindergarten teacher Lisa Franklin.

Less confining "deskwork" is just one way teachers are tailoring instruction to a young child's developmental needs at this Vernon Parish school. North Polk Elementary, a Pre-K through first grade school, has embarked on a new path to teach students using learning centers that are more "developmentally appropriate" for their ages and cognitive levels. Supported by a first-year grant from The Rapides Foundation, the school's project is called "Challenging Higher Individual Learning Development," and its ultimate aim is to improve the achievement of younger students.

**"We want to increase test scores, and we also want our children to become more involved in learning and to enjoy learning."**

*Lisa Franklin  
grant committee chairperson for North Polk Elementary*

"This (learning center) approach is more child-oriented and hands-on," explains Franklin, who chairs the school's grant committee. "We know that our education and training tells us not to have students sitting still in their desks for long periods of time."

By tailoring a curriculum and instructional program to fit the developmental level of the very young child, says Franklin, the school hopes to improve the overall learning environment. "We want to increase scores, and we also want our children to become more involved in learning and to enjoy learning."

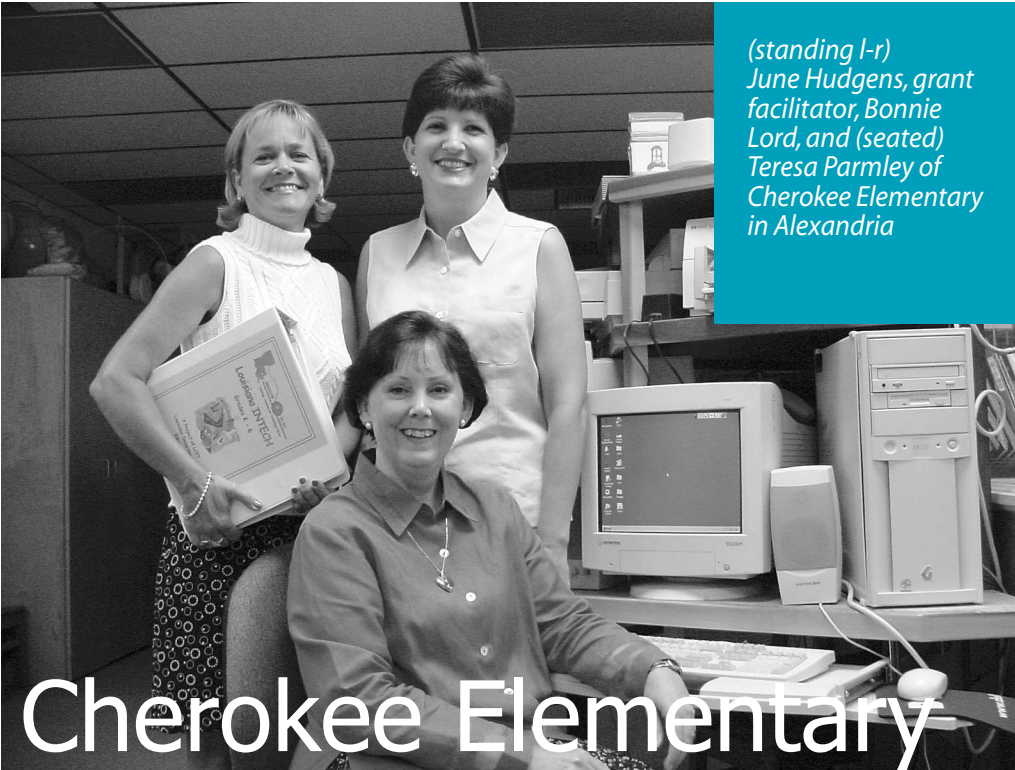
With the full support of the school's principal and district administrators, North Polk's teachers collaborated to extensively research effective developmentally-appropriate practices. They then sought grant support from The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative.

Training for the school's 37 teachers is taking place this summer in a three-day workshop led by education professionals who have successfully used the developmental model. The workshop sessions will be followed by frequent grade-level and faculty meetings during the school year, says Franklin.

"We will also have teacher teams who will do research in certain areas and make presentations to the faculty," she adds. A parent orientation at the beginning of the school year is also planned to fully explain the new classroom approach.

"We hope we can set an example for other schools in our area who focus on early childhood education, so we can help them to become more developmentally appropriate."

## Cherokee Elementary, Rapides Parish



(standing l-r)  
June Hudgens, grant  
facilitator, Bonnie  
Lord, and (seated)  
Teresa Parmley of  
Cherokee Elementary  
in Alexandria

# Cherokee Elementary Advances Basic School Model

A drive for school excellence has propelled Cherokee Elementary School in Alexandria to become the first school in Louisiana to be a part of the national Basic School Network.

"We hope to become a Basic School Network demonstration school," says June Hudgens, the school's grant facilitator and librarian. The Basic School is an educational model based upon the work of Dr. Ernie Boyer, head of the Carnegie Institute for the Advancement of Education. The approach, says Hudgens, "affects everything in the school; it's really a school philosophy."

That philosophy emphasizes four educational priorities that are seen as building blocks for a school. These include 1) The school as a community, 2) A curriculum with coherence, 3) a climate for learning, and 4) a commitment to character. The Basic School model aims to nurture academic excellence and civic

and personal responsibility.

Cherokee chose to focus its first year on the character component which delineates "seven virtues" that set the tone for the school. These include honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance and giving. Posters and banners throughout the school emphasize the virtues, and classroom discipline plans have been rewritten to include them as well.

The program, Hudgens believes, is already resulting in positive attitudinal changes among students, and higher thinking skills and test scores. "Our school performance scores for the last two years have been high; we believe this will make

us an even better school."

Grant funding from The Rapides Foundation has helped Cherokee provide staff development for teachers that includes Basic School workshops, retreats and consulting support from nationally-recognized Basic School experts. This summer's retreat for the school's teachers will focus upon "A Curriculum with Coherence."

"It's a total school commitment; that's what's really neat," says Hudgens, who added that the school's new principal, Bonnie Lord, fully supports the program. Such a commitment is also reflected in the faculty's decision last year to read and study together "The Basic School: A Community for Learning," authored by Dr. Boyer and Dr. Mary Ellen Bafumo.

By becoming a demonstration school for the Basic School Network, Cherokee can "start sharing with other schools so they can see what we are doing," adds Hudgens.

Cherokee has also used Foundation funding to support its work to integrate technology into its curriculum. The school is the third in Louisiana to have all 30 of its teachers become La. INTECH (Integrating Technology into the Curriculum) trained and certified.

**Cherokee chose to focus its first year on the character component which delineates "seven virtues" that set the tone for the school.**



## Louisiana School for Agricultural Science

# Avoyelles School Adopts Agri-Science Model

"We're teaching these students that school doesn't mean failure," explains Jude Pitre, coordinator for the new Louisiana School for Agricultural Science (LASAS) in Avoyelles Parish.

The school, which is about to begin its second school year, is a charter school that offers an agri-science-based curriculum to students identified as high risk for dropping out of traditional schools.



(left to right) Natan Laborde and Jude Pitre, coordinator for the new Louisiana School for Agricultural Science in Avoyelles Parish review educational resources aimed at keeping high risk students in school.

"We were looking for a way to keep kids in school," says Pitre, who is also coordinator of the parish's ALERT program for suspended and expelled students. After researching a number of ideas, officials chose an agricultural-based curriculum that fit the community and its workforce needs. "We wanted to have a hands-on program, a less traditional school where kids could make a connection with school and the real world."

The school is modeled after similar programs in Chicago, Philadelphia and Miami, says Pitre, but its placement in a rural community makes it unique in the nation. Agricultural learning is integrated throughout the school's curriculum, so that traditional

subjects like math, English and science are linked with a common theme. Also emphasized are such job skills as small engine repair work, construction and woodworking.

A grant from The Rapides Foundation is supporting professional development and training, with a particular focus on helping teachers deal with at-risk students, using technology in the classroom and the content and implementation of an agriculture curriculum. This summer for instance, a two-week workshop for teachers brought in educational consultants with expertise in how to integrate agri-science throughout the curriculum. Follow-up sessions during the school year will supplement this training.

In its first year, LASAS had 60 eighth grade students, and with the addition of ninth graders this year, expects to double that number. "We have kids on the waiting list to get in," adds Pitre.

A low student-teacher ratio allows the school to give individual attention to students to address specific learning issues or problems, says Pitre. The school's Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter is thriving, and was named the fourth best in the state this year. The school has also caught the attention of State Education Superintendent Cecil Picard, who has indicated his intention to replicate the innovative program in other areas such as Shreveport, Pitre says.

The Louisiana School for Agricultural Science has been housed with the ALERT program in Marksville in a building that once housed a middle school, but it will move to a new facility between Hessmer and Bunkie within the next two years. A local advisory committee made up of representatives of business, parents, Farm Bureau, universities and others are helping guide the school. The school is funded by the state and parish, as well as from charter school and other grants.



Misty Thibodeaux helps set up the LASAS greenhouse

## Network Meetings and Leadership Development



**"The act of teacher collaboration can, by itself, begin the transformation of the learning environment for students."**

— Dr. Diana Rigden, of the Washington-based Council for Basic Education, in a recent efficacy study for The Rapides Foundation

Teachers typically work in isolation, in an environment circumscribed by the walls of a particular classroom in a particular school.

That structure often can make it difficult for teachers to share successful teaching strategies with one another, either across the hall or across town, or even less so, across the nation. Schools often operate in a similarly independent fashion, competing rather than working collegially to share effective practices that improve education.

The Rapides Foundation, through its Education Initiative, is trying to change that constrictive environment in its 11-parish area.

"All of the research on school improvement tells us that school leaders in the process of effecting change in their schools need to meet periodically with their counterparts from other schools to share good practice and strategies for surmounting the formidable obstacles that they encounter every day,"

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## Network Meetings and Leadership Development

says Dr. Kenneth J. Tewel, educational consultant for The Rapides Foundation.

The Foundation is making a serious effort to help area teachers and schools work together for common objectives. The Foundation's Education Initiative has two goals: to build the human capital of schools and to improve the student learning environment. To help schools achieve these goals, and thereby boost student academic achievement, the Foundation provides funding assistance for specific projects.

Yet the Foundation is going beyond simply supporting individual school projects. By providing technical assistants to schools, by sponsoring educational workshops and by encouraging leadership development at the school and district level, the Foundation is working to fulfill its overall mission to improve the health and well-being of Central Louisiana.

**Technical Assistance** – The Foundation provides technical assistance to schools to help them fashion high quality proposals and develop solid follow-through plans. Technical assistants, highly experienced and respected educators from around the country, serve as mentors, advisors and intermediaries between the schools and Foundation.

**"Leadership development is critical for sustaining educational reforms."**

*Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.*

sources and experts, but also share information with their peers at area schools. Several workshops, focusing on topics such as middle school reform, math education, accelerated reading and technology in the curriculum, have been sponsored by the Foundation and hosted by Education Initiative schools during the past several months.

### **Networking Opportunities**

– The Foundation has provided networking and learning opportunities for teachers and administrators so they may not only access information from national



**Leadership Development** – Leadership development within the schools is another important area that will get increasing attention from the Foundation in the near future. A new program that addresses this issue is in the early stages of development.

"Leadership development is critical for sustaining educational reforms," says Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

"It makes no sense to provide schools with grants without doing the important work to deepen and sustain the improvements that are being made at schools through the collaborative work of the schools and the Foundation," says Dr. Betty Webb, a technical assistant for The Rapides Foundation.

Dr. Webb, who has been involved with the Foundation's Education Initiative since its inception three years ago, points out that while the grant money provided schools has been significant, the benefits of the Initiative far exceed what those dollars have bought.

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## Network Meetings and Leadership Development

# Going Beyond Grants

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*Jo Tassin of Our Lady of Prompt Succor helps pre-K teacher Julie Booth during a technology forum sponsored by OLPS*

"Over the years I have witnessed a change in culture in the schools with which I work – new knowledge, new skills, new and better relationships," she explains.

Building better relationships and helping teachers and administrators learn from one another was the focus of a series of networking workshops sponsored earlier this year by The Rapides

Foundation and Initiative schools. Here are some highlights:

### Technology Forum

Our Lady of Prompt Succor School in Alexandria hosted a technology forum in February of this year that taught teachers how to use computers to enhance academic subjects. The private parochial school demonstrated strategies they have used successfully to integrate technology into their classrooms, explains Jo Tassin of OLPS.

She notes the increased collaboration among teachers and greater enthusiasm of students as results of using the computer as a classroom tool. "It's highly motivating for students."

### Reading Workshops

Two reading workshops in Avoyelles Parish called "Cast Your Reading Net Wide" focused on the Accelerated Reading program and implementing core knowledge throughout the curriculum. Because the school has so successfully incorporated both these programs, Riverside Elementary School in Simmesport was chosen to present the forums for other area school professionals.

Such workshops, according to assistant principal Pat Ours, are good ways to share information and promote best practices. "Though all schools are different, you may learn something that works for you," at a networking workshop. Several participants made follow-up calls, came back to visit or asked for assistance from Riverside's teachers after the workshops.

"Research has long shown that teachers learn best from each other," says Dr. Webb. The networking component "provides the opportunity for school teams to come together and share knowledge, skills and experiences with each other."

### Math Education

Two math workshops at Pineville High School this year introduced teachers to several innovative strategies for mathematics instruction. Carolyn

(continued)

## Network Meetings and Leadership Development

Boniol, teacher and co-director with Marie Reech of Pineville High's grant program, explains that the workshop generated interest and enthusiasm among participants.

The workshops included sessions on restructuring the geometry curriculum to fit student needs, using writing to teach math to special education students and teaching math "without boundaries."

Boniol says Pineville High, in its third year of the Foundation's grant program, has adopted new teaching strategies, developed a "math terminology" handbook for the parish and a math achievement student tracking system. The school has worked closely with its "feeder schools" to align math teaching, and has seen improvements in both standardized test scores and literary rally results.

What we are seeing that is exciting is that teachers are becoming inspired to use new methods and try new projects in the classroom," she says. "We've seen a lot of positive results."

### Leadership and the Use of Data

"Data, Data and More Data - Once you have it, what do you do with it? For educators today, that is the question."

In an era of increasing public demands for accountability from teachers and schools, more and more students are taking tests that determine whether they will advance to the next grade or graduate. These tests produce mounds of data that must be collected, reviewed and managed in some way to be of educational benefit.

Addressing these new challenges were two workshops for teachers and school administrators conducted earlier this year in Alexandria by The Rapides Foundation. The aim of the training sessions was to help educators effectively use data generated by new high-stakes testing of students, and to discuss school reform strategies.

The workshops attracted more than 100 participants from the Foundation's 11-parish service area, who learned about how to take test data and analyze it to make instructional decisions that



improve learning. Leading the January workshop was Stuart Greenberg, coordinator of the Alliance of Quality Schools in Broward County, Fla., who shared his experiences working for school reform there. Donald Hoover, the former deputy superintendent for the East Baton Rouge Parish public schools, co-facilitated the program.

Greenberg suggested that schools have an "instructional focus," a skills goal that is the focus for all teachers within a school. "It's getting people away from being textbook driven to content driven," he said. He also discussed ways for educators to periodically assess students' knowledge in advance of high-stakes tests to ensure subject matter is understood. Greenberg added that teachers "shouldn't slack off" after tests are completed, but rather should get a head start on next year's tests by thoughtful preparation.

# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

These 104 Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 schools are participating in The Rapides Foundation Education Initiative. This program aims to provide teachers and principals with the resources needed to upgrade the skills of the teaching corps and to improve the environment for teaching and learning. The schools are eligible to receive up to \$25,000 annually for a period of five years.

## ALLEN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

### Oakdale Junior High School

To support a whole school reform effort to reorganize the school class schedule, institute interdisciplinary team teaching, and improve class management.

### Oberlin Elementary School

To address low reading performance through expanded professional development in assessment techniques, identifying student weaknesses, and development of individualized interventions.

## CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

### Fairview High School

To improve student achievement in reading and math through Reading Renaissance, Math Renaissance and other strategies.

### Kinder Middle School

To improve student performance in math through new teaching strategies and the expanded use of technology.

### Oakdale High School

To implement a career education program. Included will be a change in the school's schedule to longer instructional blocks.

### Oberlin High School

Beginning in grades 7-8, use the Accelerated Reader to improve the ability of teachers to respond to student needs and to develop appropriate intervention strategies.

## CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

### Allen Parish Alternative Education School

To improve student achievement particularly in reading and math. The school will begin with Reading Renaissance.

### Kinder Elementary School

To improve student achievement by rethinking curriculum content and developing new teaching strategies in math and language arts.

## AVOYELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

### Avoyelles Parish School Board

To support program development, organization and staff training on new curricula to meet the needs of at-risk students involving the integration of technology at a new agri-science alternative high school.

### Bunkie High School

To support faculty training for integration of technology into curriculum to improve reading achievement.

### Lafargue Elementary School

To improve student performance through a multi-year school restructuring project addressing teacher content knowledge, teaching strategies, and integration of technology into instruction. Teaching collaboratives, team teaching, and a re-conceptualization of curriculum changes will be involved.

### Marksville Elementary School

To improve student reading performance through the use of Spalding and Reading Renaissance strategies in language arts instruction and to institute technology training for students and their parents.

### Riverside Elementary School

To restructure the school educational program with a formal, on-going professional development program that will include new teaching methods, new content and problem solving activities to engage students as active learners.

## CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

### Avoyelles High School

To provide teacher training in use of technology throughout the curriculum.

### Bunkie Elementary School

To improve student test scores through the integration of technology into the curriculum, developing interdisciplinary units and thematic teaching.



# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

## Mansura Middle School

To assist teachers in effectively utilizing state mandated benchmarks to improve instruction. The focus will include content knowledge and use of technology.

## Marksville High School

To provide the training necessary for teachers to incorporate technology into curriculum and instruction.

## Plaucheville Elementary School

To integrate the use of technology into daily lessons and to develop and then implement the use of thematic units as the foundation for curriculum.

### CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

## Cottonport Elementary School

To upgrade student achievement in mathematics primarily through integration of technology into the math curriculum.

## Marksville Middle School

To improvement student achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary. The school will use an interdisciplinary approach by including reading in all subject areas.

## CATAHOULA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

## Martin Junior High School

To improve reading skills in grades 5-8 through a comprehensive professional development program addressing diagnosis and individualized improvement plans based upon student need. The program will include teacher training to integrate reading skills throughout all subject areas, collaborative teaching, classroom management, motivational teaching strategies, etc.

## Sicily Island High School

To develop standards-based, career oriented student instruction and learning through a staff training program addressing teaching methods, strategies, integration of technology into curriculum, interdisciplinary lessons and collaborative teaching.

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

## Jonesville Elementary School

To provide training for teachers for hands-on, minds-on strategies in math, science and social studies.

## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

## Holy Ghost Catholic School

The school, in a collaborative effort with Sacred Heart School, St. Joseph's, and St. Anthony's will address the technology training for teachers required to integrate technology into instructional strategies.

## Our Lady of Prompt Succor School

The school will address the integration of technology use into the classroom and curriculum through an intense teacher development and training program.

## Sacred Heart School

The school, in a collaborative effort with Holy Ghost School, St. Joseph's, and St. Anthony's, will address the technology training for teachers required to integrate technology into instructional strategies across the curriculum.

## St. Anthony's of Padua

The school, in collaboration with Holy Ghost, Sacred Heart, and St. Joseph's, proposes technology training for its teachers to build new teaching strategies and integration of technology use into everyday instructional strategies.

## St. Joseph's School

The school, in collaboration with Holy Ghost, Sacred Heart, and St. Anthony's, will undertake technology training for its teachers to build new instruction strategies and integration of technology into the curriculum.

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

## Holy Savior Menard Central High School

Development of a comprehensive professional development program that includes standards alignment and integration of technology into the curriculum. It will include opportunities for application, critiquing, and on-going evaluation that is directly linked to improved student achievement.

## St. Mary's Assumption School

To train teachers in the use of technology so that students use higher order thinking skills in solving problems across all curriculum areas.

## St. Mary's Catholic School

To provide teachers with new skills that improve student achievement in reading and writing. The school will focus on aligning curriculum and use coaching and project-centered learning activities with a writing emphasis.

## St. Rita Catholic School

To improve student achievement through improved instruction in mathematics.

## CONCORDIA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

## Vidalia High School

To provide teachers with training in the use of technology as a tool for more effective instruction in all curriculum areas.

# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

## **CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS**

Ferriday Junior High School

To equip faculty in the use of technology across the curriculum as a strategy for improving student performance and state assessments.

Ferriday Upper Elementary School

To improve reading achievement by developing a comprehensive reading program. The school will begin efforts with training in the Accelerated Reader.

## **EVANGELINE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD**

### **CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS**

Bayou Chicot High School

To restructure the school's education program to include the school schedule (block scheduling) and teacher training in multi-sensory, integrated learning techniques to actively engage students in the learning process.

Carver Elementary School

To implement character education learning into the curriculum through new teaching strategies.

Chataignier High School

To implement character education through new teaching methods and more active engagement of students in their own learning.

Hester Heath Elementary School

To improve literacy for students using Write Track and Accelerated Reader.

Ville Platte High School

To improve student performance and attendance through an intense teacher training program focusing on new and more successful teaching methods.

### **CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS**

James Stephens Elementary School

To provide faculty with advanced training related to instructional programs curriculum for a cadre of teachers who will then serve as teacher trainers or mentors. The program will initially focus on language arts.

Ville Platte Lower Elementary School

To improve student reading achievement through assessment and diagnosis of student needs and then new program development.

## **GRANT PARISH SCHOOL BOARD**

### **CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS**

Colfax Elementary School

The school effort will focus on improving student performance through the development of small adult learning communities that will emphasize instructional strategies, assessment procedures and changing learning environment.

Georgetown High School

To improve language skills in grades 5-12 using new teaching/learning techniques. Teacher training will focus on reading and writing activities.

South Grant Elementary School

To focus on reading achievement using professional development in assessment and diagnosis of learning barriers, alternatives for the learning disabled students, and improved motivation strategies.

Verda Elementary School

To improve student achievement through a professional development program focused on new teaching strategies/learning techniques in reading.

## **CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS**

Dry Prong Junior High School

To implement the middle school model using interdisciplinary teams for instruction to enhance and improve student learning.

Pollock Elementary School

To improve student achievement in math through the use of hands-on activities and other teaching strategies such as manipulatives.

## **LASALLE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD**

### **CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS**

Jena Elementary School

The school, in collaboration with Olla-Standard Elementary, will institute technology training for teachers focused on the integration of computer use within curriculum and classroom learning activities. Training will include classroom management and interactive learning activities.

Olla-Standard Elementary School

The school, in collaboration with Jena Elementary, will institute technology training for teachers focused on the integration of computer use within curriculum and classroom learning activities. Training will include classroom management and interactive learning activities.

### **CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS**

Goodpine Middle School

To improve student performance by equipping paraprofessionals in the use of more individual and small group instruction in all subject areas.

Jena High School

To increase student achievement through the use of technology, to provide training for teachers on the full integration of technology throughout the curriculum.

LaSalle High School

To increase student achievement through the use of technology, to provide training for teachers on the full integration of technology throughout the curriculum.

# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

## CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

Fellowship Elementary School

To improve the student achievement through the integration of technology in all curriculum areas.

Jena Junior High School

To provide training in the use of technology as an instructional tool to improve student achievement in all subject areas.

LaSalle Junior High School

To provide faculty training in the use of technology as an instructional tool to improve student achievement on state tests.

Nebo Elementary School

To develop a comprehensive reading program by beginning with the Accelerated Reader.

## NATCHITOCHES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

Cloutierville Elementary/Junior High School

To refine and focus strategies to improve student achievement in reading and writing, emphasizing evaluation, assessment and the management of classroom instruction.

Lakeview Junior/Senior High School

To address weaknesses in the language/communications skills of students through the development of strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum.

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

NSU Elementary Lab School

To improve student achievement through the use of new brain research on how young people learn. It will include changes in class scheduling, assessment methods, new strategies for teachers and expanded use of technology.

### CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

Natchitoches Central High School

To improve instruction through a broadened curriculum and the implementation of team/multi-disciplinary teaching as well as technology integration.

## RAPIDES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

Bolton High School

To build staff capacity to implement the Bolton Model: training to restructure teaching, broaden the curriculum content for team/multi-discipline use, and infuse technology in curriculum.

J. B. Nachman Elementary

To improve student reading achievement using the Accelerated Reader and to provide professional development for teachers in reading strategies.

Mary Goff Elementary

To provide teacher training related to new and more effective teaching and learning strategies to raise student achievement.

Peabody Magnet High School

To focus on student learning centered around career paths, and to upgrade teaching skills to teach within inter-disciplinary clusters.

Phoenix Magnet Elementary School

To improve student achievement in reading literacy and vocabulary through new teaching strategies.

Pineville High School

To improve achievement and standardized test scores in math with an effort involving eight feeder schools, focusing on new teaching strategies for the math teachers. Secondly, to bring the science department into the project to allow the science and math areas to support and reinforce student learning.

Pineville Junior High School

To implement the "middle school" concept and to provide staff training in team teaching and interdisciplinary learning and project-centered curriculum.

S. M. Brame Junior High School

To reorganize the school using the middle school concept, develop staff skills in team teaching and improve content knowledge.

W.O. Hall Primary School

This is a collaborative effort with its feeder school to improve student attainment in math by redesigning the math curriculum and providing professional training and inter- and intra-grade planning that would include new teaching methods.

Walter D. Hadnot Primary School

The project is a collaborative with its feeder school. They will address staff training and curriculum re-design to include alternative, hands-on activities to enhance comprehension of math concepts. Training will be expanded to include parents and other community resources.

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

Alexandria Junior High School

To plan for and implement a modified middle school model with an emphasis on improving math and reading scores.

Alexandria Senior High School

To build staff knowledge in new strategies and teaching techniques, develop a relationship with the business community and increase communications with parents all focused on improving student achievement.

Arthur F. Smith Junior High School

To implement the middle school concept with training for teachers in academic teaching teams, advisory programs, and interdisciplinary teaching.



# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

## Buckeye High School

To implement technology instruction and learning strategies to improve student critical thinking skills. The focus will be on math.

## Cherokee Elementary School

The school will redefine curriculum content and skills by grade level and the connections among them using the Basic School model. The objective is to improve student higher-thinking skills and test scores.

## E. C. Hayes School for Exceptional Students

To provide training for special education teachers in new strategies and techniques for special education students.

## Hayden R. Lawrence Middle School

To improve student writing skills through staff training in new standards and approaches of teaching writing skills.

## Plainview High School

To provide staff training to improve student achievement in math.

### CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

## Glenmora Elementary School

To improve student achievement in reading and math.

## D. F. Huddle Elementary School

To improve student achievement in math and language arts through the development and use of interdisciplinary thematic units and team teaching.

## Reed Avenue Elementary School

To improve student achievement by incorporating instructional methodologies such as team teaching and planning new assessment strategies.

## Ruby Wise Elementary School

To improve student learning through creative team-teaching strategies to be integrated into the curriculum, including creative writing, arts and music.

## J. S. Slocum Elementary School

To improve student achievement in math by implementing a teacher assessment program to identify areas of weakness, improve teacher content knowledge and then develop instructional strategies.

## Tioga Elementary School

To improve student achievement in math and language arts through the integrated use of technology in instruction and performance assessment strategies.

## VERNON PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

## Leesville High School

To develop and plan the "career academy" as a means of fostering academic achievement, reducing absenteeism and drop outs, and improving test scores. The grant provides assistance for curriculum development and staff training and support efforts to develop business coalitions.

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

## East Leesville Elementary School

To create an integrated curriculum plan for science and social studies through extensive writing and problem solving/critical thinking.

## Evans High School

The school will address the new teaching methods required in order to make the most effective use of time under block scheduling.

## Leesville Junior High School

To implement the middle school concept, to provide teachers with additional training in understanding adolescent development and individual learning styles.

## Pickering Elementary School

To provide staff training to deepen and expand the writing curriculum.

## West Leesville Elementary School

To implement a school-wide focus on literature and reading as a means of improving student achievement.

### CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

## Anacoco Elementary School

To improve reading and math achievement through interdisciplinary teaching strategies.

## North Polk Elementary School

To improve student achievement through a curriculum that is built around developmentally appropriate learning opportunities based upon the developmental level of the child.

## Pickering High School

To improve student reading comprehension and develop critical thinking skills through a program that emphasizes writing across the curriculum.

## Simpson High School

To improve student achievement through collaborative team planning and cross-curricular teaching using interdisciplinary approaches.

## South Polk Elementary School

To improve student achievement in math and reading. First strategies include Accelerated Reader and Math Renaissance programs.

## Vernon Middle School

To improve student achievement in reading and vocabulary through the use of Project Read.

## WINN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

### CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

## Dodson High School

To develop an aqua-culture/horticulture program emphasizing math and science concepts as the method of improving student performance. Grant funding is used for consultation, curriculum development, staff development costs, training materials, etc.

# EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

## Winnfield Intermediate School

To develop and implement, in collaboration with the primary and middle schools, a character education effort.

## Winnfield Middle School

To develop and implement, in collaboration with the primary school and intermediate school, a character education effort which will include staff development, training materials, etc.

## Winnfield Primary School

To develop and implement, in collaboration with the intermediate and middle schools, a character education effort which will include staff development, training materials, etc.

## CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

### Atlanta High School

To improve student achievement in reading, language arts and English through changed teaching strategies and practices for the whole school. The school will start with and then build upon existing teaching tools such as Accelerated Reader and targeted instructional focuses.

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### CYCLE 2 SCHOOLS

### Grace Christian School

To implement a professional development program to build technology skills and to integrate technology use in the classroom so that student learning involves higher thinking skills.

## CYCLE 3 SCHOOLS

### Avoyelles Public Charter School

To provide training in the use of Direct Instruction to improve reading achievement of students.



**Toll-Free Foundation Number** **1-800-994-3394**

## The Rapides Foundation Grants from April-June 2001 \*

<b>Alexandria Metropolitan Foundation</b> Planning retreat with the Alexandria Business League and the Small Business Incubator Committee.	\$10,000	1 yr
<b>Cotile-Gardner Volunteer Fire Department</b> Matching funds for purchase of Jaws of Life equipment for use by multiple departments within region.	10,000	1 yr
<b>4-Rivers Youth &amp; Adult Community Association</b> IOWA and LEAP preparation for at-risk students in Jonesville.	10,000	1 yr
<b>Inner-City Revitalization Committee</b> Resident support services and programmatic technical assistance for Single Room Occupancy apartment complex to be constructed on Lower Third Street in Alexandria.	50,000	1 yr
<b>Mount Zion Development Corporation</b> After-school educational program for at-risk youth in Rapides Avenue/Bolton Avenue area of Alexandria.	10,000	1 yr
<b>Natchitoches Parish School Board</b> Technical assistance for planning efforts towards comprehensive school-based health center at Natchitoches Central High School.	8,000	1 yr
<b>Town of Olla</b> Matching funds to conduct health and wellness programs for older adults.	5,000	1 yr
<b>Southeastern Louisiana University School of Nursing</b> Pilot implementation of school-based first aid instructional program for rural middle school students.	9,877	1 yr
<b>Unity Clubhouse</b> GED tutoring by new Lower Third Street-based nonprofit.	7,000	1 yr
<b>YMCA</b> Needs assessment to determine viability of facility in Winnfield.	10,000	1 yr

\*Major health and well-being and arts and humanities requests were not considered during the second quarter.



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