

@ HEALTH & WELL-BEING ISSUE

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FOCUS: EDUCATION INITIATIVE



Greg Nesbitt, chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees

Effective leadership is critical to ensuring that students will learn. With that in mind, The Rapides Foundation has kicked off its first-ever Educators Leadership Institute (ELI), a comprehensive program involving three-day workshops and team based efforts back in the districts, designed to nurture instructional leadership skills among Central Louisiana educators.

"Ultimately, what we're trying to do is train leaders who will create a good learning environment so that teachers can do their jobs with better results," said Greg Nesbitt, chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. "Leadership is key to an organization's success."

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ELI Program



Michiele Shaw, ELI advisory board member and vice president of human resources and organizational development for Cleco

Schools In A New Century

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The Foundation developed ELI after identifying leadership as a key issue in school success. It is the third component of the Education Initiative and the Foundation's newest endeavor to support educational efforts in our communities. The Foundation continues to be committed to the Initiative, which provided \$2.4 million to about 100 schools this year. The funding is for a variety of projects to improve student achievement, from character education to enhancing math, reading skills and technology instruction.

A pilot group of leadership teams from six parishes – Avoyelles, Catahoula, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides and Vernon – began the ELI program with an intensive, three-day session

in June. Each parish sent 15-person teams that included teachers, principals, superintendents and other educators in key leadership positions. The group will meet again in the fall, and in the winter and late spring of 2003. The Foundation then will extend participation to the remaining school districts in its 11-parish service area and the Diocese of Alexandria.

"It's a response to and an understanding of the complexity of the principal's job. Principals and school leaders are under a great deal of pressure and scrutiny," said Michiele Shaw, ELI advisory board member and vice president of human resources and organizational development for Cleco. "Couple that with the fact that school leaders are retiring younger and having a shorter work life, and fewer people are going into the field. The great thing about ELI is that it is addressing the problem and attempting to offer support to the people who are in that field."

Joe Rosier, president and CEO of the Foundation, pointed out that ELI is not the result of a deficit in the current school leadership. "We are proud of the people who work in leadership roles in our schools and have grown to appreciate our collaboration on the Education Initiative. We



Joe Rosier, president and CEO of the Foundation

are embarking upon leadership development work with schools and districts with which we already have partnerships and projects through our Education Initiative with the hope that working together we can achieve what each of us is

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Greg Nesbitt, chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees

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Cottrell Wrenn, Jr., director of music at Bolton High School and an ELI participant



*Vernon Parish Superintendent
Cynthia Gillespie, Ed.D.,
an ELI participant*

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unable to do alone.”

The June Institute workshop focused on understanding values and beliefs as characteristics critical for effective instructional leadership. The 98 educators learned about the critical need for effective leadership and examined their own beliefs and values about teaching and learning as instructional leaders. Participants explored ways to use data to make instructional decisions and studied models of effective teaching and assessment, among other things.

The Workshops, in the form of three-day retreats, are using an inquiry and action-based approach in which teams engage in activities that are focused on real work, current issues and challenges faced by the schools and districts.

“I think these Workshops will give them a

great opportunity to talk to each other and compare notes, and to listen to speakers who can address their specific problems,” Shaw said, noting the advisory board will provide feedback following each Workshop to recommend improvements for subsequent ELI sessions.

Newly appointed Vernon Parish Superintendent Cindy Gillespie, Ed.D., an ELI participant, sees the importance of nurturing leadership skills among potential leaders, especially since there is a nationwide shortage of qualified candidates.

“A lot of people don’t want to go into administration because of the paper work and the hassles that are involved with it,” she said. “Fewer males are going into education, and a lot of people aren’t going into education because they think they can’t support a family on the educator’s salary. It’s difficult to find future principals and that’s a problem.”

Gillespie said ELI will give her and other superintendents a chance to network and share ideas. It will give future leaders a chance to interact with their supervisors in an informal setting and to recognize their leadership potential.

“I think a system is strong if they can grow their leaders from within. And I think that’s what we need to be doing – not relying on somebody else to be growing our leaders to be leaders. And I think that’s what The Rapides Foundation is working on. It’s a great investment of their funds,” she said.

Accelerated Reader



Pat Ours, Riverside Elementary School assistant principal watches advanced readers take an Accelerated Reader test.

Accelerating the Development of Effective Reading Programs

When Riverside Elementary School began using the Accelerated Reader software program six years ago, teachers weren't fully aware of its potential.

After faculty members attended training sessions using funding from The Rapides Foundation, the reading program became a successful tool that has improved the learning environment in the Avoyelles Parish school.

"When we started, it was just meant to encourage children to read. We didn't really know how else to do it," said Pat Ours, Riverside's assistant principal. "In summer institutes and staff development meetings, we learned how

important it would be to get kids to read for pleasure. Then we began to discover more and more about Accelerated Reader - that took us further and deeper into a comprehensive reading program."

Accelerated Reader is a computer software program being used by close to 20 Central Louisiana schools that have obtained grants under the Foundation's Education Initiative.

On the surface, Accelerated Reader encourages reading by rewarding students who read books. But teachers discovered the program does much more when used to its fullest potential.

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“A better reader is just a better student. It has made a difference in our whole school. No one ever complains that they have to sit and read, which is wonderful.”

Gaye Lynn Ortis, Nachman Elementary School second-grade teacher and grant writer

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Students are learning to love books. In turn, their vocabulary is increasing, their knowledge in all subject areas is expanding and their enthusiasm about learning is growing, local teachers say.

Educators in three Central Louisiana schools – Riverside Elementary in Avoyelles Parish, Nachman Elementary in Rapides Parish and Evans High School in Vernon Parish – are using Accelerated Reader as a first step to develop comprehensive reading programs that motivate both students and faculty. They’ve each gone beyond Accelerated Reader by developing rich and varied programs that emphasize literacy and enhance reading skills among their students.

At Nachman Elementary School, students in all grade levels are eager to read books in order to collect prizes, points and attend parties, said Gaye Lynn Ortis, second-grade teacher and grant writer at the K-5 school. As a result, students are doing better in all academic areas.

“A better reader is just a better student. It has made a difference in our whole school,” she said. “No one ever complains that they have to sit and read, which is wonderful.”

Like Riverside Elementary, teachers at Nachman weren’t fully aware of Accelerated Reader’s potential until the Foundation offered its financial help. Seven years ago, the school had a small set of books to work with, and only one grade level used the computer reading program, Ortis said. Also, some teachers were reluctant to try out the program.

When Foundation grant money came in three years ago, teachers were able to get the proper training that showed them the many benefits of Accelerated Reader. As a result, the teachers “are really behind it” and students are eager to read.



Gaye Lynn Ortis teaches Nachman Elementary School students to excel using Accelerated Reader.

Ortis cited several success stories, including that of a fourth-grader whose grades picked up after he became involved with Accelerated Reader. Until then, the boy showed little interest in his schoolwork and was headed for failure. “He ended up being one of the top readers of his grade,” she said.

Nachman Elementary went beyond Accelerated Reader last year by installing a computer program that helps pupils with their cursive handwriting, Ortis said. Teachers may not have been willing to try out the new computer program had they not already been using

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Accelerated Reader

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Accelerated Reader. Next year the school will install more software that helps students in a variety of topics, including science.

Evans High School is unique in that Accelerated Reader is mandatory for all 350 students in the K-12 school. Principal William Carver said he sets aside 30 minutes for reading each day for students. "Hopefully by doing so, it will improve their vocabulary and help with the school profile scores. When you improve reading, you improve test scores," he said.

The scores have improved since the school started using Accelerated Reader two years ago. Results from the Iowa test show a 100 percent passage rate in language arts for grades 4 and 8. The percentages were lower in previous years.

Carver credited the Foundation with helping steer teachers in the right direction with Accelerated Reader. "They've allowed us to accomplish things we weren't financially able to accomplish before," he explained.

Evans High School Librarian Tammy Kay said the library's circulation increased by as many as 300 books per month after the school set its focus on reading and literacy. The school moved beyond Accelerated Reader when it purchased the Star Reading program. Also, the school uses its computer reading software to give students

"Our school sets aside 30 minutes for reading each day for students. Hopefully by doing so, it will improve their vocabulary and help with the school profile scores. When you improve reading, you improve test scores."

Principal William Carver, Evans High School

reading and vocabulary tests three times a year. The results are analyzed to determine whether the student-body's reading level has improved. According to Kay, test scores so far show an 80 percent improvement.

Carver said Evans High School also is requiring



William Carver, Evans High School principal observes teacher Bonita Phillips with an Accelerated Reader student.

students in language arts classes to write in a journal every day. The exercise is designed to increase both reading and writing skills, and to demonstrate to students the importance of literacy.

Riverside Elementary in Avoyelles Parish is using Accelerated Reader so successfully that all of its teachers and most of its students are participating in the volunteer reading program. And it's caught on so much that the public library in Simmesport is stocking its shelves with Accelerated Reader books for children to check out during the summer.

Ours said The Rapides Foundation grant money helped Riverside change its way of thinking about the way it was first using Accelerated Reader.

"We had all this wonderful software and all these computers but it wasn't doing what it needed to do. With funding from the Foundation, teachers were able to get together and decide what to do," Ours notes.

When teacher Janie Deshotels discovered

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Accelerated Reader

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that students could be rewarded on the quality of their reading rather than the quantity of books they read, Riverside Elementary made a bold decision to change the program's focus and "take the edge off the numbers. We are going to set the bar higher," Ours noted.

The school will continue to reward students who excel in Accelerated Reader, which has resulted in numerous success stories. Ours told of a fourth-grade girl who was a poor reader, primarily because she was choosing books that were too advanced. Accelerated Reader allows children to read books that are tailored to their individual reading levels, not their grade levels. "Earlier this year she read her first book. She now has confidence and is reading at a higher level."

Ours also told the success story of two first-graders who wanted to attend a Friday assembly for students who had achieved "independent reader" status. The children went to the principal's office on Thursday and asked for something to



read overnight. That next morning, they passed their Accelerated Reader tests, earned the "independent reader" status and got to attend the assembly.

The school is now focusing on improving the quality of reading, Ours said. For example, kindergarten students are being placed into groups based on their reading abilities so that teachers can better address their needs.

Riverside teachers have begun using Accelerated Reader test scores to find out how well groups of students are reading instead of using the program solely to measure individuals.

By doing so, teachers discovered students in the fourth-grade class as a whole were comprehending the books they read but were reading books below the fourth-grade level. To address the apparent problem, teachers this summer will "overhaul the reading program" and look at strategies to help the fourth-graders get back on track.

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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District Based Networks

Marguerita Krause, Sicily Island High School science teacher networks with Linda Neal

Networking Sessions 'Open Up Worlds' For Central Louisiana Teachers

Like other longtime educators, Sicily Island High School science teacher Marguerita Krause knows what it's like to feel isolated. "You would go to school, you came home. You had no idea what others were doing," she said of her early days as a teacher.

The Rapides Foundation, however, is working to change that by giving Krause and other Central Louisiana teachers the chance to attend networking sessions that allow them to share ideas and find out what other teachers are doing in other parts of the state. "The Rapides Foundation has opened up many worlds for us out here," Krause said.

Research shows that teachers value most the information they get from other teachers. It also shows that teachers who are isolated from their peers feel that the problems they encounter in the classroom are unique to them. Finally, research shows that educators who are involved in change

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Janis Landreneau, supervisor of secondary instruction and curriculum for the Evangeline Parish School District

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are likely to become frustrated and stop if they don't have the opportunity to get together frequently with people in similar situations to resolve difficult issues that predictably crop up.

As a result, the Foundation's Education Initiative program supports networking sessions

"The Rapides Foundation has opened up many worlds for us out here."

*Marguerita Krause,
Sicily Island High School science teacher*

and encourages school districts to host their own professional development networking opportunities. As teachers begin to share their knowledge and expertise, the school learning climate improves.

The networking opportunities motivate teachers and give them new and better ideas of how to meet the needs of the students, according to Janis Landreneau, supervisor of secondary instruction and curriculum for the Evangeline Parish School District. "We all suffer from similar problems, but just sometimes wear a different suit of clothes," she explained. "Being able to network with our peers in a non-threatening, congenial atmosphere allows us to share the down and dirties of how we do it, how it works for us and the lessons learned."

Last school year, Evangeline Parish teachers got the opportunity to attend a February session on data analysis. Some schools also brought experts to the district to help them with new teaching methods. "We would not have been able to do that without the Foundation," Landreneau said. "They have been very professional, highly knowledgeable and good to work with."

For example, when Bayou Chicot High School last year began block scheduling for grades 9-12

and a longer four-day school week for all grades, school staff used Foundation funds to bring in teachers from Merryville in Beauregard Parish to help them start the pilot programs. Merryville teachers had already gone through both transitions, and were able to share their successes and failures with their southern counterparts.

Bayou Chicot teachers learned that to keep high school students interested in a class that lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes, they would have to divide the lesson into segments, including time for hands-on activities, Curriculum Coordinator Helen Kelly indicated. Upon learning that working parents may have problems with having their children off on Fridays, Bayou Chicot teachers worked with local churches, which offered day-care assistance.

Some of the Foundation's networking sessions are designed to give teachers in a single parish the chance to meet and share ideas. Too often, teachers in one school may not know how their counterparts across the parish are solving

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Sheila Jackson, elementary supervisor of instruction and personnel for the Grant Parish school system

District Based Networks



Melanie Dupre, South Grant Elementary School fourth-grade teacher and her students

“The four Foundation schools are diverse, but they all have one mission and focus: improving student achievement.”

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common teaching and learning issues.

Last fall, for example, Grant Parish educators gathered for a session that allowed them to discuss problem areas and figure out strategies for overcoming bottlenecks. “We just sat down and had a roundtable discussion. The teachers were very receptive to it,” said Sheila Jackson, elementary supervisor of instruction and personnel for the Grant Parish school system.

In one part of the discussion, teachers analyzed test scores for the LEAP and Iowa tests and learned that one of the parish’s weaknesses was in mathematics. As a result, the parish focused its staff development on improving math instruction.

Among the participants was South Grant Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Melanie Dupre’ who enjoyed the opportunity to find out what other instructors were doing in the parish. She got to meet with junior high and high school teachers to learn about the instructional strategies they were using.

As a result, she now knows her pupils will have to do a science project in a few years and writing and research projects in high school. She can begin preparing her fourth-graders for these types of projects, which they had never been



*Jan Anyan,
Winn Parish school system grant writer*

exposed to before.

Winn Parish teachers last fall began meeting twice monthly for district-based networking sessions. The ongoing sessions include teams from each of the four schools that receive Foundation grants. Topic areas include sharing

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District Based Networks



Dorothy Ulmer, Vidalia High School 10th grade math teacher

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innovative methods teachers are using in their classrooms and how to integrate character education across the curriculum.

Winn Parish school system grant writer Jan Anyan said the four Foundation schools are diverse, "but they all have one mission and focus: improving student achievement."

Dodson High School's Foundation grant focuses on its agriculture science program. When the school last spring hosted Ag Day to give students hands-on science lessons in a fun atmosphere, other schools were invited through networking, giving all parish students the chance to learn about ag science. "They spread the word at one of the networking sessions. It helps a lot

with communication," Anyan said.

Dodson High is also using some of its grant money to bring in an expert this summer to help educators with curriculum mapping. Other schools are invited as well. "If we hadn't held the networking meetings, there's no way they could have made those plans," Anyan said. "We would never have done this without the Foundation."

In turn, teachers at two Winnfield schools have taught their counterparts in Dodson and Atlanta about how to integrate character education in their schools' curriculum. Atlanta teachers, meanwhile, are sharing what they have learned about improving student achievement, the focus of their Foundation grant.

Dorothy Ulmer, a 10th grade math teacher at Vidalia High School, said teachers last fall

observed a Central Louisiana elementary school, and they also attended a Foundation-sponsored session that taught how to interpret test scores. "I wouldn't mind participating in one on scores again," she noted.

The session, taught by expert Stuart Greenberg, Director of The Alliance Schools Project, showed educators how to make sense of high-stakes test scores. Too often, a school district doesn't know how to effectively interpret scores so that students will benefit.

Krause, the Sicily Island high school teacher, summed up the benefit of proper data interpretation: "It gives you a central focus and tells you where you should spend your efforts."

Building Teacher Leadership

Educators encouraged to take **Leadership Roles** in their schools



Linda Bard, Kinder Elementary School principal, encourages teachers to share knowledge to improve student achievement.

Kinder Elementary School Principal Linda Bard has quite a bit of talent among the school's 40 teachers. As a result, she's encouraging them to use their skills to help each other become better educators and improve student learning. "We can't rely on just the administrator to lead. It becomes a better school if leadership is shared," she said.

The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative encourages teachers to lead the effort to improve instruction in their classrooms and take on leadership roles within their schools. As one principal explained, "There's no end to what teachers can do if you give them the time and the opportunity."

The Education Initiative's philosophy stems from research that shows schools do best when leadership is shared. It's been proven that the collective knowledge of all employees makes for a better school. Teachers, therefore, should be given the opportunity to use their skills and share their ideas with others.

The Initiative's philosophy has become a reality at Kinder Elementary in Allen Parish, where teachers are encouraged to develop their talents and then share their knowledge and ideas with their peers.

Bard knows she can't do it all. In fact, she's quick to point out that she is certified in secondary education, so she relies on the brainpower of the faculty to help her run the elementary school.

When the school focused its efforts on integrating technology in the classrooms, some of the teachers went through various training sessions to become experts in computer technology. They have since taught the rest of the staff - even those teachers who weren't computer-savvy - how to effectively use computers in the classroom.

Other teachers excel in classroom management and others in curriculum and instruction. They, too, are sharing their knowledge with their peers.

"As we go out and learn other things, we come back and share it," she said. The efforts have paid off. When Bard took over as principal two years ago, test scores were trending negative, so teachers focused on ways to improve the scores, including increasing instructional time. The school's performance score jumped 14.4 points in just one year.

"These teachers really pulled it together and improved the test scores. I think it stemmed from the fact that the teachers jumped in and took on the role of leading one another," she noted.

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Building Teacher Leadership



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Bonnie Lord (right), Cherokee Elementary School principal with first-grade teacher Vicki Younger

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In Rapides Parish, Cherokee Elementary School Principal Bonnie Lord designates a “lead teacher” for each grade level to serve as a mentor and role model for her peers. The program helps take some of the workload off the principal. It also gives teachers new responsibilities that make them strive to do a better job, ultimately benefiting the students. It also gives them new skills.

“I think it builds morale,” she said. “It’s a good feeling to know you’re trusted.” Lord said she chooses people who have leadership qualities to be lead teachers. And to motivate her faculty and build leadership skills among still more staff members, Lord plans to choose a different lead teacher each year.

“I don’t think every teacher aspires to be an administrator, but I think every teacher certainly has

potential,” she said. “Every teacher has leadership qualities.”

Among the lead teachers at Cherokee last school year was Vicki Younger of Alexandria, a first-grade teacher who has been in education for seven years and hopes to be a principal one day.

“It helps you keep on top of things, especially if you’re planning on going into an administrative position in the future,” she said. “It’s a good place to be in because you have a small group that you help to manage and organize. It’s a good experience.”

Younger said she was given the opportunity to help new teachers who were working toward their certifications. She also enjoyed working with the older teachers, who helped to build her leadership qualities. “We learn from each other. It’s not a competition. It’s a team effort.”

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

These 99 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.

AVOUELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD CYCLE 1 SCHOOLS

ALERT School - LaSAS

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.

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

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.

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 improve 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.

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

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.

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

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.

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.

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.

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.

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

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.

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.

NATCHITOCHE 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.

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

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.

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.

EDUCATION INITIATIVE SCHOOLS:

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.

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.

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**

GRANT UPDATE:

The Rapides Foundation Grants from April - June 2002*

Initiative/Response Grants

Louisiana Technical College (Alexandria)

Fast track auto technician training program in association with four independent auto service employers

\$100,000 2 yrs

Louisiana Technical College (Natchitoches)

Years Two and Three of collaborative workforce training project with Martco, ConAgra and Trus Joist as employer leaders

150,000 2 yrs

Ninth Judicial District Court

To develop and implement a collaborative law process intended to result in better resolution for families contemplating divorce

200,000 3 yrs

Mini-Grants and Technical Assistance Grants (one year or less)

United Way of Central Louisiana (matching funds required)

Fiscal agent for community group looking to establish national faith-based mental health services model

\$5,000

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

Foundation funding creates new **Walking Trails**

Walking trails are an effective way to get people to exercise. The Foundation has funded four walking trails and we are now looking to fund additional trails through our current Mini-Grant Program. For more information call Annette Clark at 800-994-3394 or 318-443-3394.



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