

# Teaching and Learning Services Update

Iowa Department of Education

September 2007

*"School improvement is not a mystery. Incremental, even dramatic, improvement is not only possible but also probable under the right conditions."*

*Mike Schmoker*

## Second Chance Reading Analyzing Data

State wide reading data suggest that reading achievement among middle school and high school students in Iowa is not improving at the rate necessary to accomplish the goals established in the state NCLB plan. In order to accelerate the achievement gains of struggling adolescents, it is necessary to provide a highly structured comprehensive approach to reading.

## Planning and Implementing

*Second Chance Reading (SCR)* is a program that provides a specific class for struggling readers at the middle school and high school. The focus of SCR is on comprehension of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Vocabulary, fluency, and writing are addressed as well. An Iowa Teacher Development Academy for SCR has been offered in 2005-06, 2006-07 and a new cohort has been initiated for 2007-08. These Academies have provided training in SCR to teachers and administrators in 64 school districts, 57 high schools and 43 middle schools in Iowa.

Last year 34 teachers and consultants completed the training-of-trainers process and are now Department of Education Recognized SCR Trainers. This year eight additional individuals began the process of becoming trainers. Approximately 37 districts have taken advantage of SCR training delivered by DE Recognized SCR Trainers.

## Evaluating Effects

In 2005-06 and 2006-07 the evaluation results for SCR examined the scores of 3090 students. Of the 2532 students who tested below grade level in the fall, 39.9% made two or more years gain in one school year (Stanford Diagnostic Reading Comprehension grade equivalent data).

## University of Kansas Strategic Instruction Model (KU-SIM)

The goal for the last three years has been to increase the skills of middle and high school reading/literacy teachers by expanding the use of scientifically based instructional strategies. Ann Hoffman, a certified Professional Development Leader with the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning (KU-CRL), was contracted to provide some of the professional development (PD) and to review participant portfolios. Iowa's currently certified KU-SIM trainers provided the additional PD and mentorship. The KU-SIM requires that anyone teaching teachers the Learning Strategies (LS) and Content Enhancement Routines (CER) must be certified. Participants learned new CER and LS to implement in schools. Then after implementing their learning with the help of a mentor, participants apply to become certified professional developers (CPD) in either one or both areas. This is accomplished through the submission of a portfolio containing evidence of successful implementation with students. Once certified, participants may teach other teachers to use the strategies and routines.

In the first year, there were 57 participants. That number grew to 72 in '06-'07 as new people asked to be brought into the initiative each year.

The major accomplishment over three years has been the provision of 27 days of PD. This included learning 13 LS and 11 CER days. An additional six days of PD focused on providing professional development was provided on a yearly basis by Ann Hoffman and were a required part of the certification process. Of the 68 participants, 7 had been previously certified for many years and acted as mentors to the new members. Of the 61 remaining, 25 are currently certified in one or both areas. Of the remaining 41, 18 were new to the initiative this year and all intend to finish the certification process within the next one to two years. This potential training cadre has representatives from 8 of the 10 Area Education Agencies (AEA) and 10 schools/school districts across Iowa.

The impact of the PD is just starting to be seen. In the third year of this project, 34 school districts, 5 private accredited schools/school districts and 1 alternative high school have implemented one or more LS and/or CER. Urbandale CSD is going district-wide with implementation in '07-'08 and has completed large scale planning for this implementation and its integration with other district initiatives.

As the University of Kansas requires CPD to attend an update institute every two years to remain certified, a summer institute will be held on June 10-11, 2008, here in Iowa. Professional development will also continue with two days of training for LS and two days for CER for those participants new to the initiative this past year. An implementation planning group and a summer institute planning group will continue to support and plan for the successful maintenance of the initiative.

A survey has been sent to all participants asking for suggested changes and needs for follow-up and support in the coming years.

## Supplemental Strategies and Educational Services Grant

SSES grants have been awarded and grant agreements have been sent. Eleven grants were awarded from a field of 19. There were a variety of activities ranging from after school tutoring, embedding in the school day tutoring, to summer school activities including in the grant selected. A total of \$2.5 million was awarded. Those receiving the awards and the amount of each award are listed below:

• Des Moines Independent School District	\$247,695.70
• Dubuque Community School District	\$301,994.82
• Clinton Community School District	\$210,666.82
• Davenport Community School District	\$500,000.00
• Anthon-Oto Community School District	\$ 31,205.44
• Bedford Community School District	\$ 90,118.18
• Storm Lake Community School District	\$ 87,957.82
• Oskaloosa Community School District	\$150,433.88
• Sioux City Community School District	\$290,922.82
• Van Buren Community School District	\$267,505.82
• Keokuk Community School District	\$321,498.70

## Before and After School Grants

Constructive learning activities during non-school hours, combined with adult guidance through school and community-based academic and youth development programs, result in greater achievement and social outcomes for children and youth throughout their school age years. The intent of state funds approved and appropriated by the 2007 Iowa Legislature was to expand the availability of before and after school programs, to enable communities to design and implement effective before and after school programs, to improve student achievement, and to be enhanced by and sustained through community partnerships beyond the term of the grant.

A total of \$900,000 of direct grant funding for before and after school programs was made available out of total of \$3.5 million for use by approved public school districts and other nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, public agencies, or private agencies whose students are part of the public school district attendance area. Grants were designed to serve elementary, junior high/middle school, and/or high school students. Collaboration and partnerships were strongly encouraged with all of these organizations in order to fully develop high-quality programs serving the needs of the community and students.

Funds are only available for a period of one year beginning July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008. The funding period for this grant ends June 30, 2008. Funds will be available no later than September 1, 2007, and must be expended by June 30, 2008.

The Iowa Department of Education received a total of 38 grant applications representing a good cross section of applicants from approved public school districts and other nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, public agencies, or private agencies from across the state. The total amount of funds requested by these grants was \$4,077,634. Of the 38 total grants submitted, 29 were eligible for grant reader review and scoring. We determined, based upon ranking scores and of the \$900,000 available to distribute on a statewide basis, that 9 grants awards can be made. The grant awards were made to the following agencies or organizations:

• Boys and Girls Clubs of Cedar Rapids	\$ 54,240
• Clinton Community School District	\$132,434
• Clear Creek Amana Community School District	\$187,530
• Jesup Community School District	\$102,606
• Lamon SAFE Coalition	\$ 81,092
• Oakridge Neighborhood Services	\$ 75,000
• Postville Community School District	\$ 74,000
• St. Mark's Community Center	\$ 56,572
• Storm Lake Community School District	\$136,526

The 2007 ELI summer institute was held at Simpson College July 30-August 2. A total of 130 AEA consultants, teacher leaders, administrators, and higher education representatives participated. Participants expanded their knowledge of the Five Essential Features of Inquiry and the Learning Cycle instructional model by experiencing two full Learning Cycles, identifying each component, and connecting it to the Essential Features. Teacher leaders in the group began designing a Learning Cycle to implement in their classrooms this fall. Team members who are not classroom teachers assumed roles as collaborators, observers, and critical friends. Teams also began working on plans to scale up the initiative in AEAs next year.

For the five sessions during the academic year, the focus will remain on the Learning Cycle. Each phase of the cycle will be considered with attention to its purpose and how and where it fits in the cycle. Participants will experience another full cycle as learners, and teacher leaders will develop one more full cycle to implement in their classrooms in the spring. At the final meeting in April, teams will be given a significant amount of time to work on their plans to roll out the Every Learner Inquires initiative in their schools, districts, or AEAs.