

# Great Teaching and Leading Fund Final Annual Report

## White Pine County School District

### I. Summary.

#### A. Program Name and Overall Goals/Objectives.

Name: Lighting the Fire (teacher preparation and recruitment).

Goal: 30 District students identified as promising future teachers will have demonstrated proficiency on the following areas of content, identified by White Pine as helpful for future teachers after a review of teacher preparation programs. Students will earn grades of B or better in each content area, based upon the District's Standards-Based Learning Rubric. Students will submit a final comprehensive essay at the end of the experience outlining what they have learned and their intentions regarding becoming a future educator.

- Basic educational psychology theories, including Gardner, Maslow, Papert, Aronson, Gagne, etc.
- English usage and writing for teachers, including grant writing, communicating with parents, creating graphics and newsletters, championing a cause, and communicating with legislators and policymakers.
- Math usage for teachers, including statistics and analyzing data.
- Basics of assessment theory, including writing items that assess basic and more sophisticated types of knowledge.
- Interpersonal communication.
- Balancing family and work.

Name: Lighting the Fire (teacher preparation and retention).

Goal: White Pine's Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to successfully complete the Principle of Learning and Teaching Praxis test. White Pine will have in place a minimum of five ARL teachers for the 2016-2017 school year. The second part of the Lighting the Fire teacher's job is to mentor, observe, train, provide feedback, and be a support for these outstanding individuals who are brave enough to take on the challenge of teaching but lack the pedagogical background. The action plan and timeline are outlined below.

- Conduct group training sessions for the ARL teachers in August, October, December, March, and May.
- Meet with each ARL teacher individually in August to help organize, plan, and prepare for a successful first week of school.

- Conduct six observations, complete with pre-conferences and post-conferences with each ARL teacher through the course of the school year.
- Meet regularly with principals to coordinate and communicate.

The content included in the group trainings and individual mentoring includes the following.

- High expectations.
- Classroom management.
- NEPF.
- Functioning as a high performing team member in a learning community (Learning Forward).
- Models of designing learning (Learning Forward).
- Using data beyond just informing (Cox).
- Utilizing scarce resources (Learning Forward).
- Rigorous and relevant assessment (Daggett).
- Standards (Marzano).

Name: Building Capacity (leadership development).

Goal: By November 15 of 2016, 15 District leaders will learn research based leadership strategies designed to clarify, expand, and implement effective models of school improvement. Leaders, including teachers and future principals, will attend the “Leadership Now” conference sponsored by Solution Tree in Las Vegas on November 2-4. DuFour and other respected and research based experts in the field will help leaders examine their own practices and provide tools for the leaders to audit what is going on in their own schools and compare those practices with what research says is most effective. The cohort will meet an additional three times during the school year to develop their internal capacity and share through structured protocols their implementation efforts.

Goal: By June 30, 2017, 15 District leaders will refine research based leadership strategies designed to clarify, expand, and implement effective models of school improvement. The same leaders identified in item 1, having built capacity and belonging through the year, will attend the PLC at Work conference in Las Vegas on June 7-9. The cohort will meet once after the conference to conduct a second leadership audit of their schools. Each individual will develop his or her own leadership goals for the following year based upon the learning the cohort has experienced through the course of 2016-2016. Additionally, the cadre of leaders based in each school will develop its collective leadership plan for the following year.

#### B. Abstract and Results Overview.

The WPCSD's overarching purpose of this grant was to increase the capacity of people working in, or soon to be working in, the schools. This was done through teaching a new class for current high school and middle school students who were interested in education as a profession, providing extensive mentoring and induction for new and struggling teachers (particularly ARL teachers), and conducting collective building of shared knowledge among current and future leaders in the district across all schools. Overall, the expected outcomes outlined in the grant were achieved and participants gained valuable experiences contributing towards the positive progress of the school district.

C. Next Steps.

The WPCSD applied for the Great Teaching and Leading grant again in 2017-2018 using the same premise as funded in 2016-2017. Unfortunately, the request was only partially funded. Due to this, the leadership development component was moved to another initiative and the focus of this year's grant is teacher preparation. New and struggling teachers are continuing to receive mentoring and Friday workshops in order to provide support and facilitate growth.

II. Grant Funded Activities--Leadership Development.

- A. Name of activity and overview. **Professional Development for Teacher/Leader Retention in the Area of Leadership Development (specifically designed to increase retention of effective educators and/or expand effective models of school improvement).** The Building Capacity portion of this program was directly linked to this important State Board of Education priority. In an area as remote as White Pine, and with so few teachers/leaders/principals, whenever an employee departs, the District suffers an enormous loss. This has occurred, unfortunately, rather frequently through the budget cut process necessary to remain solvent over the last few years. Several high quality employees who were outstanding teachers and leaders and amazing facilitators of learning left for other opportunities because their positions were eliminated. So building the capacity of those who are left was critical. Moreover, providing the teachers/leaders/principals with support for their intrinsic desire to make an impact on others in a positive way was extremely important in such a rural District. Everybody wears so many hats that it is easy to forget why the profession was chosen in the first place. Building Capacity allowed for a cohort of educators to journey through the 2016-2017 year together, offer mutual support and capacity, learn new skills to expand effective models of school improvement through attending high quality

professional development together, and ultimately build a network of increased capacity and belonging making it less likely to feel isolated and overwhelmed by the many responsibilities that come with working and leading in such a small District, thus increasing retention due to the increased feelings of loyalty and belonging. Current and future leaders met a number of times throughout the year to build the revised WPCSD Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals associated with the DPP. They addressed issues critical to school culture in the district, including codifying PLC team norms, agreeing to gently confront those who violate the district values, bring in Anthony Muhammad to model and teach about how outstanding organizations work towards a collective goal. Participants attended the Leadership Now Summit in Las Vegas in the fall of 2016 as well as the PLC at Work Institute in San Antonio in the summer of 2017.

- B. Participant information.
  - Adam Young, Superintendent
  - Rebecca Murdock, Principal
  - Susan Jensen, Principal
  - Robert Bischoff, Principal
  - Alan Hedges, Assistant Principal
  - Lori Hunt, Board Chair
  - Steffani Thompson, Counselor
  - Kelly Sturgeon, Teacher
  - Roger Dunnavant, Association President
  - Karen Wines, Teacher
  - Kenna Hall, Teacher
  - Melony O'Flaherty, Teacher
  - Kristina Ernest, Teacher
  - Terrill Trask, Teacher
  
- C. Areas of Effectiveness Measured.
  - i. Improving recruitment/selection/retention of effective principals.

All participants in this program were retained for the 2017-2018 school year. Moreover, three of the participants have begun masters programs in Educational Leadership and another has committed two have committed to do so within the next two years. One of the objectives was to build the pipeline of future principals in the district; this experience helped accomplish that objective.
  
- D. Effectiveness measure for each area, including rationale for chosen measure. Effectiveness measures as identified in the grant application include self reflections of conference attendees, practices revised through Building Capacity, and survey data. The rationale for these measures was to provide

qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the Building Capacity initiative.

- E. Implications for future implementation. Other outcomes of the Building Capacity program include a complete, three year district performance plan. This plan was developed by the participants in the program. It provided clear focus and direction for the district going forward, including adding coherence to a variety of initiatives like Read by 3, College and Career Readiness, Nevada Ready 21, 1003a, etc. Because of the strength of this district plan, there is a clear sense of direction for grants, student performance, and adult behavior necessary to create an environment where improvement is priority.

### III. Grant Funded Activities--Teacher Recruitment.

- A. Name of activity and overview. The Lighting the Fire component of this program is aligned with this identified priority of the State Board of Education. Recruiting teachers to a remote area like White Pine is extraordinarily difficult. Telling potential teachers that the nearest Walmart is a three hour drive scares them off. Anecdotally, one potential music teacher traveled from Alabama to White Pine for an interview. After landing in Salt Lake City and driving across the Salt Flats, the candidate arrived in Wendover and promptly called the White Pine High School principal to say that he would be turning around and going back to the airport before ever even reaching White Pine County! There are other similar stories. It takes a special person to teach in White Pine: one who doesn't mind spending 30 minutes in the grocery store talking with a parent who had questions about the last report card; one who enjoys a certain celebrity status and is recognized at the gas station, the restaurant, the swimming pool by students and former students; one who is comfortable going to students' houses to give them rides to school or loaning them a spare bedroom because mom and dad are drinking and fighting again. In short, the great teachers in White Pine have no anonymity. They teach World History, Government, French, Senior Achievement, and Yearbook every single day. They leave school and go straight to practice so they can coach. They spend seven hours one way on buses to get to other schools for games **every weekend**. The principals teach multiple classes each day because the teaching staffing is not sufficient to cover even the basics. The rookie superintendent even continues to teach his long term choir class because if he doesn't do it the program will go away. The District's best method of recruiting teachers to this challenging and difficult work is to target current students and community members who "get it." They see it going on every day. They know the expectations and demands. They don't have to be "recultured" to adjust to the quirks of the community. Lighting the Fire provides an innovative and forward thinking initiative that is the very best way to increase the talent pool necessary to recruit the next

generation of teachers in White Pine. The Lighting the Fire teacher will introduce the challenges, joys, skills, and knowledge necessary to inspire current students, current community members, and current employees who are not teachers to take the plunge and gain the education to “come home” and become teachers who change the lives of learners in White Pine.

- B. Participant information.
  - Veneta Young, Lighting the Fire Teacher
  - Maryn Van Tassell, WPHS Student
  - Kendra Thompson, WPHS Student
  - Marco Pacheco, WPHS Student
  - Michaela Llona, WPHS Student
  - Zoe Acord, WPMS Student
  - Kiara Adams, WPMS Student
  - Isaiah Griffin, WPMS Student
  - Wynell Hodges, WPMS Student
  - Marisa Kemmler, WPMS Student
  - Precious Robertson, WPMS Student
  
- C. Areas of effectiveness measured.
  - i. Improving recruitment/retention of effective teachers. As described above, White Pine has success when recruiting teachers who have local roots. All four of the WPHS students who participated in the Lighting the Fire class conducted classroom observations, taught lessons, assisted teachers in the classroom, researched learning theory, and committed to become teachers. Two graduated in 2017 and have begun college. Two graduate in 2018.
  
- D. Effectiveness measure for each area, including rationale for chosen measure. In the grant application, the effectiveness of Lighting the Fire was to be measured by the number of students earning As and Bs in the Lighting the Fire classes at WPMS and WPHS and students’ final essay describing learning and intentions related to education in Lighting the Fire classes at WPMS and WPHS. These qualitative measures have provided the district with data regarding the effective nature of the Lighting the Fire program as it pertains to recruiting future educators.
  
- E. Implications for future implementation. Unfortunately, this portion of the district’s grant was not funded for 2017-2018. The program was not sustainable through the general fund.

IV. Grant funded activities--Teacher Retention.

A. By June of 2017, White Pine's Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to successfully complete the Principle of Learning and Teaching Praxis test. White Pine will have in place a minimum of five ARL teachers for the 2016-2017 school year. The second part of the Lighting the Fire teacher's job is to mentor, observe, train, provide feedback, and be a support for these outstanding individuals who are brave enough to take on the challenge of teaching but lack the pedagogical background. The action plan and timeline are outlined below.

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- Utilizing scarce resources (Learning Forward).
- Rigorous and relevant assessment (Daggett).
- Standards (Marzano).

B. Participant information.  
Veneta Young, Mentor  
Jenny Ahlvers, Mentor  
Cindy Havenstrite, Mentor  
Thomas Oakes, Teacher  
Mike Belin, ARL Teacher  
Shauna Pintar, Teacher  
Paula Moore, Teacher  
Elizabeth Crosby, Teacher  
Jody Crampton, Teacher  
Charlee Hamilton, ARL Teacher  
Marlee Long, Teacher  
Emily Munk, Teacher  
Amy Sorensen, ARL Teacher

Terrill Trask, ARL Teacher  
Tanya Drayton, Teacher

- C. Area of effectiveness measured
    - i. Improving retention of effective teachers. The objective with the mentoring program was to assist ARL, new, and struggling teachers with the skills they need to to be effective, thereby promoting retention. Of the 12 teachers involved, 10 were retained for the 2017-2018 school year. The two who were not retained were identified as needing assistance early in the school year. They received intensive assistance which would not have been available without the grant. They were probationary teachers and were not retained. This is viewed as a positive as well, as the teachers demonstrated an inability to improve despite the intensive assistance. So, 83% of the hires in 2016-2017 were retained and made significant progress through the year at a quicker trajectory than would have been possible without the mentoring.
  
  - D. The measure of effectiveness chosen was ultimately the number of these new/ARL/struggling teachers who were retained. As noted above, the figure is 83%. In addition, survey results obtained for the mentoring program indicate that 97% of those participating either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the activities strengthened their practice as the year evolved.
  
  - E. Implications for future implementation. Though not fully funded for 2017-2018, the mentoring program continues in a somewhat scaled down version. Group mentoring sessions are occurring every two weeks on Wednesday evenings. The full time mentoring position was not funded, so individual mentoring is occurring less frequently than it was last year.
- V. Budget Summary
- A. Great Teacher and Leaders funds were used for Leadership Development, Teacher Recruitment, and Teacher Retention. White Pine was able to provide Teacher Trainers, Lighting the Fire mentoring training, PLC Training, on-site professional development with Anthony Muhammad and laptops to new teachers & mentors.
  
  - B. Salaries were paid to four mentors who met with each ARL/new/struggling teacher throughout the year in and out of the classroom. One mentor taught a Lighting the Fire class and worked with students at White Pine High School and White Pine Middle School.

Teachers and administrators that participated in the Lighting the Fire mentoring program were paid to attend at a negotiated rate of \$225.00 for 6 hours per training day.

Leadership Professional Development was paid at a negotiated rate of \$225.00 for 6 hours per training day.

PLC registration was paid for the 29 attendees. Travel was paid for 15 attending the Las Vegas conference, and 14 attending the San Antonio, Texas conference. Travel included per diem, flight, and use of the District car.

Professional services were paid to Anthony Muhammad for an on-site visit.

Laptops were provided to 10 teachers who participated in the Leadership and Lighting the Fire trainings.

- C. Funds were expended in all categories approved. Most of our unexpended funds were in the salaries/benefits category totaling \$10,370.60. Originally this was budgeted for 1 certified teacher. We were unable to find a qualified candidate for this position but were able to find 4 retired teachers to fill this position on a temporary basis.

The district was awarded \$162,110.67 and spent \$150,689.80 leaving an unexpended amount of \$11,420.87.