

Coventry Public Schools

2005 - 2006

Mini-Grants Executive Summary

Technology in the Classroom (Grade 1) – Bruce Gale; \$700 (Second Year)

The Technology in the Classroom project will provide a non-traditional avenue for students to develop and master skills in all curriculum areas. The use of technology is an effective way to incorporate Differentiated Instruction, addressing the various levels of student capabilities. Computer programs and Internet sites are used to provide reinforcement for students who need additional help, as well as challenge advanced students. Grant money will be used to purchase an additional computer (and printer if possible) to create a “computer center” for the classroom. Pre-tests and post-tests will be administered to evaluate the effectiveness of this project.

Vision and Discovery (Grades 10 – 12) – Alison Blair; \$700

There are an increasing number of students who have shown an interest in photography. It is important to design creative, artistic, and intellectual assignments for this group. Grant money could be used for the teacher to attend “Vision and Discovery”, a week long intense photography workshop with mentor professionals. Attending this workshop will strengthen the Photography- Introduction to B&W program already in place at Coventry High School, with new insights, vision, technical information, and assignments to enrich the curriculum. Part of the final project will be a photo-narrative that relates directly to the students’ real world. There will also be an exhibition of student work in a community show as well as on the CHS website.

Science At Your Finger Tips (Grade 3) – Anne Burke; \$700

The teaching of science in the state of Connecticut will be undergoing many changes in the next several years. It would be extremely beneficial to develop hands-on inquiry based science kits to assist teachers in helping students meet the new standards. The Science At Your Finger Tips project could produce these kits which would be available to all third grade teachers. Each kit may contain several lessons related to one of the core science themes: Changes in Matter, Habitats, Water, and Earth Materials. With each unit an evaluative tool will be developed. These tools will be refined and revised as needed. By changing the delivery of instruction and creating an environment that encourages students to think like a scientist, students should develop the necessary thinking skills needed to process information and perform at a high level on the new state assessments. Grant funds will be used to buy the containers and materials for these kits. Available resources, such as the GEMS program and programs offered by EASTCONN, will be investigated for use.

Spanish Language Classroom Library (Grades 9-12) – Catherine Garrity; \$650

The Spanish Language Classroom Library project aims to create a Spanish-language library for students. Grant funds would be used to buy various reading material as well as two display racks to house the resources. By providing a wide selection of books and magazines geared toward the interests of high school students, it is expected that students will begin to acquire much more Spanish through reading. Dr. Stephen Krashen, a professor of education at the University of Southern California, contends that Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) programs are the most effective way of building fluency in a language. Each week, 15-20 minutes will be scheduled into the lesson plan for FVR. Every two weeks, a 30 minute segment of time will be allotted for the teacher to read a book to students with discussions in Spanish. Students will also be required to keep a reading log. Once per quarter, the logs will be shared with other class members either one-on-one or in full-class discussion. This plan is designed to foster an appreciation for reading in the students' second language and to help build fluency through such reading.

Walking/Running: Pedometers (Grade 6) – Christine Kessler, Rick Young; \$700

The Walking/Running: Pedometers project will enhance the current Physical Education curriculum and help prepare the students for the State of Connecticut Physical Fitness test (mile run). This project touches upon a health and physical education issue currently affecting middle school students: obesity. It has become a national crisis. Because children are becoming more and more overweight and less active, this unit will require students to use pedometers to help motivate them to achieve a higher level of fitness. The students will be given the distance it takes to travel from Coventry to different states. In pairs, students will choose a state and strive to walk/run that distance. They will transfer steps to mileage adding both partners' mileages together, and record it on a chart on the wall in the gym. In addition, the students must look up the capital, state bird, state flower, and the state's year of establishment. Grant funds would be used to purchase the pedometers. This project enables students to engage in an interdisciplinary endeavor while at the same time participate in a fitness project.

Stepping Up to the Middle School (Grade 6) – Esperanza Nugent; \$699.15

The Stepping Up to the Middle School project aims at helping students achieve a better understanding of the issues they face in middle school. Through the use of different activities and the Stepping Up booklet, students will learn coping mechanisms and strategies to make positive choices in their day to day life as they navigate through the middle school. Grant funds will be used to purchase the booklets. Six sessions will be scheduled for counselors to meet with students in a classroom setting. A short pre-questionnaire will be given to the students prior to the first session. At the end of the program a topic will be selected at random and students will be asked to write an essay describing their understanding of the subject. Students will realize they are not "the only one" facing these changes in their lives; they will face challenges with a positive attitude knowing that others have done it and succeeded; and they will gain the confidence needed to not only survive middle school, but to thrive in it.