

New Underwood School District 51-3
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March 31, 2011

Dr. Kris Harms
Department of Education
700 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501

Subject: School Improvement Grant – New Underwood High School

As we move through year one of the school improvement grant (SIG), the district has identified several areas the district could better utilize year one SIG funds. To this end, the following bullet comments address recommendations for your consideration. The items are not in any special order or priority.

1. **Funding for Friday School** - The initial grant submission budgeted \$4,091.00 in the areas of Personnel and Employee Benefits to support this area. Due to the high number of students participating in Friday School and the success of the program, we believe additional staffing is required

Recommendation: Increase the allocation to this area to a total of \$8,091.00.

Impact: Increase of \$4,000.00

2. **Equipment-Laptops/IPADs**: The initial grant submission included funding for the purchase of Laptop computers for a Reading Lab, a Math Lab and Laptop carts. Due to increased prices and the number of computers needed, the district recommends an increase to this budget area. The district is also exploring the benefits of purchasing some IPADs as part of this project.

Recommendation: Increase the allocation in this area to a total of \$75,000.00

Impact: Increase of \$6,000.00

3. **Equipment -Desktops & Printers**: The district has identified areas in the grant that will not fully execute the scheduled budget in Year 1. With that in mind, the district identified a need in the area of Desktop computers utilized in the fixed computer lab. This lab is utilized heavily in support of several of the Project Based Learning events we have completed in the grant. It is recommended that the district purchases new computers and printers for the fixed computer lab.

Recommendation: Allocate \$35,000.00 to this need.

Impact: Increase of \$35,000.00

4. **Accelerated Reader Program:** The district has staffed and identified this program as highly beneficial to improving the district's overall reading programs and raising the student's interest level in reading. They have also identified a definite shortage of books geared toward high school student's wide range of reading ability and interest.

Recommendations: Allocate \$12,000.00 to this need.

Impact: Utilize the \$8,000.00 currently allocated toward Reading Supplies and shift the \$4,000.00 currently allocated toward Math Supplies, both found in the Supplies Budget Area, to cover this \$12,000.00 expenditure.

5. **Travel:** Due to the small number of staff who will be attending National Conferences in Year 1, the budget will not be fully executed.

Recommendation: Adjust this budget area from \$15,925.00 to \$5,925.00.

Impact: Decrease of \$10,000.00

6. **Contractual:** The initial grant submission in this area budgeted for Reading Experts (\$7,000.00), Math Experts (7,000.00) and Summer Consultants (\$8,000.00). Based upon district planning, these areas will not be fully executed.

Recommendation: Adjust Reading Experts down to \$2,000.00, Math Experts down to \$2,000.00 and Summer Consultants down to \$3,000.00.

Impact: Decrease of \$15,000.

7. **Professional Development for Masters Degrees:** The initial grant submission provided \$36,000 for current staff to pursue a Masters Degree. Given the number of staff who already have a Masters Degree and the number who have stated they are intending to pursue a Masters Degree in Year 1, this number was earlier reduced to \$28,302.00. Based upon anticipated need, the district is now comfortable further reducing that allocation.

Recommendation: Adjust this budget area from \$28,302.00 down to \$8,302.00.

Impact: Decrease of \$20,000.00.

As identified above, the recommended additions and changes are offsetting and remain within the initial budget provided for Year 1. I trust you will find these recommendations to be sound educational practices and that when implemented will greatly serve the students and staff of the New Underwood district as they move down the road toward becoming a distinguished high school and school district.

Should you have any further questions regarding these recommendations, please feel free to call or write. Thank you for your review of these recommendations and for your support to the New Underwood District.

Sincerely,

Jeff Marlette
Superintendent