

Excerpts from CESA 11

SOARING Grant Final Narrative

RSN - Ali Kahl & Robyn Spencer-Beck

Elk Mound Middle School Team - Elk Mound School District

Overall this experience has been a very positive one for us as professionals and for our students. We are most proud of the implementation of our summer reading program and the results it has brought. Seventy-five percent of the students that attended last year maintained or increased their fall 2016 MAP reading scores compared to the previous spring. Our goal was to avoid the “summer slide”. Many of our students’ scores decrease in the fall due to lack of summer reading. The summer reading program not only increased their scores, but maybe more importantly increased their motivation to read. We used grant money to offer incentives to increase this motivation. These incentives encouraged students and families to read over the entire summer, not just during the three week program. Motivation continued after students saw their results in the fall.

This grant reinforced the beliefs we held as professional about student motivation and the importance of reading. Through this grant we were able to purchase high interest-low level reading books, which allow students to be successful in the general education class without standing apart from peers. Paula Kluth was an inspiration to us and reinforced our philosophy about the power of inclusion. We had the opportunity to listen to her speak and read several of her books. As supporters of inclusion, this grant has allowed us to not only improve our co-teaching and inclusion practices, but improve our small group reading interventions. By focusing on these interventions and incorporating decision rules, it has allowed us to continue to manage and improve small group interventions to meet the needs of individual students, while furthering student success in the classroom.

Osceola Middle School Team - Osceola School District

Was there a central theme to improvement planning?

- Creating a process - decision making rules to place and exit students
- Establish progress monitoring protocols and using the data to inform instructional practices

- Communication and collaboration between and within buildings to standardize how students are tracked

What were the lessons learned?

- It takes a lot of time, effort, planning, and people
- It's possible
- Good things happen for student learning when people communicate
- Processes create clarity which allows us to serve students appropriately

What were the successes?

- Decision making rules are being used practically
- Additional resources and training have allowed teachers to serve students more effectively
- It's opened up collaboration/communication between the buildings
- Helped bring general ed, special ed, and school psych together on the same page
- Data shows that special education students have shown growth

Boyceville Middle School - Boyceville School District

Lessons Learned

The main lesson that was learned is that “we are still learning.” The “Soaring” monies were a start to our improving literacy within our district. We hope to continue to “Soar” into providing our students with the best possible education and help all students improve their literacy skills across all academic settings.



Viking Middle School Team - Baldwin-Woodville School District

- The final big takeaway has been the renewed emphasis placed upon data. We have become better at using data to drive instruction, and more clear about what our expectations are as it relates to the data that we collect. I feel that we have made significant gains with using multiple data points (Forward Exam, Global Scholar, locally developed assessments) to guide our decision making rules, identify truly struggling learners, and influence instructional strategies. In addition, we have incorporated more hard data as it relates to professional goals for staff. More of our teachers are developing SMART goals around the literacy data that we collect annually, and adjusting their instruction accordingly.

Clayton Middle School Team - Clayton School District

Our second long-term goal is: “Collaborate with the District Family Engagement (FE) Liaison to coordinate an annual family literacy activity.” Although our school year is not yet over, we have yet to reach this goal. We have, however, made strives to work our way closer to completion.

One of the things we have done is secure a local Family Engagement Liaison. She will be our resource for coordinating with the CESA assigned FEL and our district staff to facilitate a family literacy event. Our next step will be to plan the literacy event with a target date of late May or early June. This event could possibly be a kick-off to a summer reading challenge or activity....Overall, this grant has allowed us to rejuvenate, evaluate, and polish our English/Language Arts standards...Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it has had a very positive effect on our parent connections and involvement.