



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
OFFICE OF SCHOOL INNOVATION
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February 6, 2013

Pless Dickerson
Superintendent
Wyandanch Union Free School District
1445 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Wyandanch, NY 11798

RE: Notice of Award: Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround Grant
Round 2
Award Amount: \$234,510
Time Period: February 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014

Dear Superintendent Dickerson:

The New York State Education Department, School Turnaround Office (NYSED STO) is pleased to inform you that the Wyandanch Union Free School District has been approved for the above referenced grant. As a reminder, if your district's current approved APPR is set to expire prior to the end of the grant, subsequent APPR plans must obtain and maintain Commissioner approval with no break in force or effect in order for the grant to remain in good standing.

The NYSED STO will serve as your lead program office for project oversight, assistance, monitoring, and reporting. Within the next several weeks you will be contacted by a representative from NYSED STO to set up an initial welcome and introduction telephone call.

We look forward to working with you and your leadership team on this innovative opportunity to improve student achievement in underperforming schools.

Sincerely,

Sally Bachofer

c: Sandra Herndon
Owen Donovan

Executive Summary

The mission of the Wyandanch Union Free School is to empower each student with courage, skills and knowledge necessary to become a creative thinker and lifelong learner committed to pursuing his/her goals and contributing to the technologically advancing global community.

The plan described in this proposal outlines how we may move closer to our goal by:

- Strengthening the support given to schools by creating School Leadership Teams for collaborative decision making and distributing leadership in a manner that links the district and classrooms in our four schools around core instruction in English language arts and mathematics.
- Building the capacity of district and school leaders to co-design and implement school turnaround plans that ensure dramatic gains in student academic performance through the effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), systems for teacher and leader effectiveness, and a cycle of data-driven instruction (DDI), inquiry, and action.

The Wyandanch Union Free School District is committed to focusing its efforts and combining resources to more effectively support school turnaround through collaboration that reaches into classrooms at all grade levels and empowers a cadre of teachers to become instructional leaders who facilitate teacher work groups and create instructional units that align to the CCSS in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics from kindergarten through grade 12. We believe that these actions will help improve instruction so that we may live out our mission and its desired impact on all of our students.

It is the intent of the Wyandanch Union Free School District to provide a focused path of intensive trainings that will support professional growth for our district and build leaders and School Leadership Teams, providing settings for collaborative reflection and refinement of professional practice and building upon our current strengths centered on the implementation of the CCSS for ELA and mathematics. These teams will facilitate teacher workgroups charged with implementing all initiatives, use data to monitor progress, and become the systems for change in each building. Distributing leadership in this manner will build professionalism and ownership for teachers in a manner that recognizes their important role.

Synchronously, the District is in the process of transforming our Central Office Staff. The District has hired a Director of Elementary Education, and the Assistant to the Superintendent for Educational Services has taken on additional responsibilities that will consist of principal support, use of data to drive instruction, alignment of the Core Curriculum, and the creation of Student Learning Objectives.

More than a decade ago, Elmore (2000¹) warned that unless public schools dramatically change how they define and practice leadership, they will fail “massively and visibly” in the eyes of the public with respect to broad scale, standards-based school reform. “The way out of this problem,” he argued, is through “the large scale improvement on instruction,” possible only through “dramatic changes in the way public schools define and practice leadership.”

¹ Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.

Building well-trained School Leadership Teams around a shared goal of improving instruction through collaborative practice has the potential to eliminate this divide, improve instruction, and promote school turnaround.