



PROJECT EXCELL!

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Project EXCELL! Phase II Briefing

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Project EXCELL!, Amphitheater's implementation of the United States Department of Education (USDOE) Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grant, is a wonderful opportunity for our teachers, students and the district as a whole. The grant also presents healthy challenges for us. We are in Phase II of our project with the start of the 2008/2009 school year. Eleven of our schools have qualified for participation.

Calculating Your Pay Out

The January 16, 2009 pay out will include the following components:

Professional Development	\$1250 (Maximum Potential)	\$208.33 per point, maximum of 6 points, 2 point minimum
Leadership	\$1250 (Maximum Potential)	\$208.33 per point, maximum of 6 points, 1 point minimum
Classroom Assessment	\$1250 (Maximum Potential)	Range: \$0=1-10 indicators met \$250=11-13 indicators met \$750=14-17 indicators met \$1250=21 indicators met
My School (AIMS Results)	\$1250 (Maximum Potential)	Varies by school. AIMS results in Elementary and MS were analyzed using a value-added growth model taking into account SES, ELD, SPED, and Mobility. At the High School the pay out is based on passing rates and establishes a baseline where AHS will compete against itself for higher passing rates each year. Lowest award: \$312.50 Highest award; \$1250 (one school of the eleven)
Total Potential Award for January 16th Pay Out	\$5000	

Participants will receive a letter no later than January 6th with detailed information on the pay out.

The Project EXCELL! Documentation will include feedback on the submittal, and on the Classroom Assessment. This will be useful when preparing for the remainder of the year.

Revision of Leadership and Professional Development Plans

At this time revisions of Leadership and Professional Development Plans can be made if necessary. This is not required. A revision may be required if an activity was cancelled, or if the participant is no longer able to complete an activity for some other reason. The process of approval is the same. Three revised and signed copies of the plan are submitted to the building principal for review and signature. One copy goes back to the participant, one copy stays with the principal and another copy is sent to the Performance Pay Office at Wetmore Center.

REVISED PLANS ARE DUE JANUARY 16th (Plan revisions are not required, as needed only.)

Plans may be changed during a pay cycle if an activity is cancelled by someone other than the participant. For example, if a committee is cancelled at the district level, the participant has ten working days to revise their plan and resubmit.

No handwritten changes to plans are acceptable at any time.

21st Century Teaching and Learning

Please be sure to keep up to date on 21st Century Skills. Know what they are and where you can learn more about each one. The readers noticed that several participants are not using the language of the 21st Century Skills when choosing one for their assessment. Take a look at the list. The web address you need to know is www.21stcenturyskills.org.

Reflection Quality

Reflective practice builds instructional practice. As you write your reflections for the rest of the year, think deeply about the discussions you are having with your colleagues. Take notes. Consider how you are applying what you are learning to your classroom teaching. If you are working on a four point activity, reread the indicators for that level. Are you synthesizing your learning and developing new practices? Are you evaluating what you are doing with students and holding on to what works and eliminating what does not work as well? If you are working on a two point activity, how are you applying what you are learning in the classroom? Put your thoughts in your writing. What you say in your reflections is important. Writing is thinking on paper.

Survey Results

337 Project EXCELL! participants responded to the on-line survey sent out by email in October-November. Surveys are especially important for program evaluation. They assist in providing information to consider as Project EXCELL! develops. The following results from this survey which may be of interest:

How satisfied are you with the following in Project EXCELL!?

(Note: Score range was 1-4)

Communication= Mean 3.24

Development of your LPDP=3.26

Method of documentation=3.12

Explanation of award levels for student achievement=2.99

General implementation of the project=3.13

It was very interesting to note that when rating usefulness of collaboration activities with your colleagues, the mean rating was 3.50. This is great!

The highest ratings of need for training appear to be Classroom Assessment and Research Based Instructional Strategies followed by Data Analysis and Curriculum Alignment.

Thank you for your input.

Documentation Submittals

The final stage of data collection from the submittals is occurring now. Readers worked diligently for several days reviewing the work and preparing feedback for participants. When the envelope is returned, you will find two yellow forms. One is the general review form and the other is a form the reader used to review the Classroom Assessment. Take note of the comments, they will assist you with your data submittal in May.

Special note: No handwritten reflections, classroom assessment forms, changes to plans, etc. are acceptable at any time.

Assistance with Documentation

When you receive your Project EXCELL! documentation in January, you may have questions on some aspect of the feedback. Please see an Instructional Support Leader at your school site for assistance. For assistance with particular teaching strategies or assessment strategies that may enhance student learning in your classroom, please see an Instructional Coach or utilize your collaborative groups.

What is the process for documentation reading?

Reader(s) are assigned to one or more schools. Each reader is given approximately 25 documentation folders to read. Readers are assembled in small teams/groups for reading and all reading takes place at Wetmore Center. If a reader has a question about a submittal, they ask one or possibly two more readers to review the information and a discussion takes place prior to the final decision on the scoring. If no decision can be reached, the Project EXCELL! Coordinator reviews the recommendations of the readers and makes a determination based on the goals of the project. All of the readers are trained in advance of the reading sessions and work in collaboration with other readers to complete the reviews.

Focus Groups

Thank you to the members of Focus Groups who participated in one of the two sessions we held this semester. Your feedback is a valuable and necessary component of the success of the project.

Spring Deadlines/Timelines

Letters to participants sent regarding pay out amounts with explanation	January 6 th , July 1 st
Documentation Envelope Return	Week of January 12 th
Pay Days	January 16 th , July 17 th
Individual Leadership and Professional Development Plan Revisions	January 16 th
Second "Pay Out" Documentation Submittal	May 13 th
Documentation Envelope Return	August

NEXT ISSUE: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT