



PERKINS INNOVATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS

YEAR TWO WINNERS

Nebraska Department of Education
Nebraska Career Education
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The Federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 provides the authority to the Nebraska Department of Education to distribute federal funds to eligible schools and community colleges through a competitive grant process to assist in building capacity to implement the Nebraska Career Education (NCE) Model and improve career technical education as a part of their career education programs.

Grants awarded:

Alliance Public Schools	\$71,242
Educational Service Unit 04	\$108,305
Grand Island Public Schools	\$79,750
Lincoln Public Schools	\$30,000
Metro Community College	\$47,535
Northeast Community College	\$60,168
Omaha Public Schools	\$45,000
Papillion-LaVista Public Schools	\$39,895
Plattsmouth Community Schools	\$18,105

2010 PERKINS INNOVATION GRANTS

Funded under the auspices of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006

The purpose of the Perkins Innovation Grant Award Program is to assist local educational agencies (LEAs) in building their capacity to implement the Nebraska Career Education (NCE) Model and improve career technical education as a part of their career education programs.

- Eligible recipients include the following:
- Public school districts that offer approved CTE programs of study as a part of their career education programs and that participate in the Federal Perkins Grant program
- Community colleges that offer career technical education programs and that participate in the Federal Perkins Grant program
- Educational Service Units that manage a Perkins consortium
- Consortia of public school districts, Educational Service Units and/or community colleges meeting the above mentioned criteria

Eligible recipients must meet one of the three criteria as required by federal law listed below:

- *Serving Rural Area:* For purposes of this RFP, “Rural” is defined as those eligible recipients located outside of the Omaha and Lincoln Metropolitan areas
- *Serving a high percentage of NCE students:* For purposes of this RFP, “high percentage of NCE students” is defined as more than 50% of the student population non-duplicated count, (if a secondary school, grades 9-12 only) enrolled in one or more NCE courses per year.
- *Serving a high number of NCE students:* For purposes of this RFP, “high number of NCE Students” is defined as 300 or more students non-duplicated count, enrolled in one or more NCE courses per year

ABSTRACTS OF PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR FUNDING

Alliance Public Schools

Amount: \$71,242

CAREER/TECH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (December 2006) identified problem areas as: low and declining Career/Tech enrollment, not meeting state targets for academic and career proficiencies, not meeting targets for non-traditional enrollment, and not connecting to post-secondary education programs.

FIVE YEAR LOCAL PLAN PRIORITIES (2008): 1) align Career & Technical Education courses with the Nebraska Career Education Model; 2) correlate Career & Technical Education course numbers with the State Model Programs of Study; 3) increase student and nontraditional enrollment in Career & Technical Education courses; 4) develop/maintain four-year plans; 5) increase dual-credit and on-line courses that connect to Post Secondary Schools; 6) increase connections with Business & Industry, and Community Agencies.

CAREER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FACULTY made the following recommendations to the High School Principal and School Superintendent at the end of the 2007/2008 school year: 1) move the General Shop classes (high school 9th grade) to the Middle School as exploratory classes (grades 7 and 8); 2) create courses in the construction pathway to compliment the cabinetry courses; 3) move the high school's version of Computer Office Applications Skills to the middle school and add Micro-Soft Office Applications to the high school curriculum; 4) support the use of the State Approved Programs of Study and the development of Four-Year Career Plans.

ACCOMPLISHED (MARCH 2010)? The Moodle Server provides over thirty On-line courses; an E-Learning course (offered on the Moodle server) for high school students has twenty-four (24) participants; an On-line student follow-system has been developed/implemented; the high school registration materials have been rewritten to reflect The Nebraska Career Education Model (Clusters/Pathways); all Career & Technical Education Courses are aligned with the Nebraska Model Programs of Study Guide, numbered accordingly, and are in a career pathway. Exploratory General Shop courses will move to the Alliance Middle School in Sept. 2010. We intend to purchase six (6) "hands on trainers" (self-contained learning modules): Architectural Structures; Construction Measurement; Residential Plumbing; Residential Wiring; Welding; and Residential Construction, that will provide all eighth grade students with exploratory hands on experiences comparable to industry standards. We believe that adding these exploratory experiences to the middle school curriculum will enable students to make better high school career choices (thus increasing our Concentrator and Nontraditional student populations).

In 2010/2011 the house wiring course will expand to include two (2) new 'green' occupations: wind energy technician and solar energy technician; as well as powerline construction and maintenance technician. We intend to create an alternative energy pathway (capstone) in 2011/2012. Post-secondary programs are available at Laramie County Community College and Western Nebraska Community College. The western Nebraska panhandle is one of the best wind producing areas in the state. We are less than one hundred fifty (150) miles from one of the best wind producing areas in Wyoming. We believe the industry will be huge for our area.

IN ADDITION, we intend to add the green architecture and construction cluster pathway to the high school industrial technology curriculum in 2010/2011. The new pathway will offer six (6) new courses: drafting revit; drafting inventor; principles of construction masonry; principles of construction plumbing; principles of construction framing; and principles of construction finishing. The semester courses will give 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students an opportunity to master competencies required in the Residential Construction Pathway.

We will add: applications in green construction in 2011/2012 as a capstone course. The course will provide students an opportunity to apply skills learned in the (semester) principles of construction courses, to on-site construction projects. Work force development projections suggest construction workers will be in demand throughout the area. We intend to use the national center for construction education & research's construction technology as our curriculum (guide/standards). Students may elect to continue their training (after high school graduation), with the building construction program at mid-plains community college, North Platte, Nebraska. We will continue offering the manufacturing cluster pathway (woods and welding) courses. Student registration numbers (2010/2011) for the new classes are impressive. However, with the addition of the new exploratory modules at the middle school (for all students), the utilization of career pathways, and the creation of electronic four-year plans, we think we will see a huge increase in student concentrators and nontraditional students, at the high school

Educational Service Unit 4

Amount: \$108,305

The mission of Education Service Unit 4's existing Career Academy, established in 2009, is to provide opportunities for high school students to explore career fields, gain career readiness, and earn college credit. In support of expansion of this program, an Energy Career Academy will be developed and implemented. A pocket model, a format that allows local teachers to provide the energy program of study within their own high school, will be utilized. The academy will provide opportunities for all students, including special populations, to experience various hands-on career explorations within the walls of their schools, communities, and surrounding areas. The Energy Academy will be aligned with post-secondary programs and regional economical needs.

The creation and implementation of an Energy Academy was chosen to address global environmental concerns that will generate a demand for high skill, high wage occupations in the field of current and emerging energy professions. Current data provide a strong rationale for a focus on energy. The Nebraska Department of Labor shows that almost one fifth of Nebraska's wages were paid to Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industries in 2008. Data from the Economic Modeling Specialist Rank Career Clusters Report for the Education Service Unit 4 five-county area (2008) were examined. The highest-ranking cluster by growth was Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources.

The Nebraska Public Power District (hereafter NPPD) and the Omaha Public Power District (hereafter OPPD) have facilities in the five-county Education Service Unit 4 area. NPPD reports that as of April 1, 2010, almost 47% of its employees are eligible for retirement. By April 1, 2015, that number could be as high as 62% (see charts in documents section). Energy industry is a stable employer with opportunities for entry-level to advanced careers covering a broad base of educational experiences. This strong rationale supports the timeliness and need for the Energy Academy.

Measurable outcomes of the project that will meet the goal of developing an Energy Academy are to:

1. Develop curriculum for two one-semester courses that focus on current and emerging energy professions and the exploration of renewable energy resources. By July 2011, complete a curriculum focusing on renewable or 'green' energy generation sources and current and emerging energy professions
2. Train rural educators to provide rigorous energy career instruction using the developed curriculum. By June 2011, one teacher from each of the eleven ESU 4 schools will participate in professional development that prepares them to deliver the curriculum for two one-semester courses
3. Employ a coordinator to act as a liaison between rural schools, energy industries and post-secondary institutions. The Career Academy coordinator will be responsible for organizing, planning and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Academy

These goals are innovative, realistic, and attainable. They directly support the needs described in the framework of this project.

Grand Island Public Schools

Amount: \$79,750

The project proposes creating an educational plan for a Grand Island Public Schools (GIPS) Career and Technical Center (CTC) in a former manufacturing plant that GIPS purchased in December 2009 for \$650,000. A CTE facility planner with extensive experience in creating and implementing CTC educational plans would be hired to lead a design group.

The needs addressed are: 1) A comprehensive plan that incorporates input from students, parents, GIPS staff, postsecondary education representatives, local businesses, community leaders, and others is needed; 2) Local businesses, particularly manufacturers such as Case IH and Chief Industries that produce metal items, need more trained workers; 3) The city needs more resources to enhance economic development; 4) A well-developed CTC would help increase the GIPS graduation rate; 5) More GIPS students should pursue postsecondary education; 6) Adults need training so that they can work in local jobs and pursue higher-paying jobs.

The proposed solutions are: 1) A CTC expert will be hired to lead a design group in creating an educational plan; 2) The design group (30 to 40 people) will include stakeholders whose needs will be considered as the plan is developed; 3) The plan will include strategies to enhance economic development, to increase the number of high school graduates, to encourage more students to pursue postsecondary education, and to make the CTC available to adults.

The rationale for funding this project includes: 1) This project supports creation of a high-quality CTC that could be replicated elsewhere; 2) An experienced CTC facility planner is needed to maximize the center's use so it meets the needs of students, local businesses, and others; 3) The GIPS graduation rate is below the state average, and a high-quality CTC is one tool to increase the graduation rate; 4) Local businesses, foundations, and others are more likely to donate to a well-planned CTC.

The planner will meet with a design group that includes students, parents, Board of Education members, business leaders, architects, postsecondary education representatives, government leaders, community-based groups, and GIPS staff (administrators, teachers, and other staff) between September 2010 and April 2011. GIPS administrators will select the design group members and an executive committee after consulting with the planner. The design group will participate in six meetings (approximately five hours each) to discuss each design phase, make recommendations for a final report, and review the final report. The group will discuss topics such as design phases, background information, what students may attend the CTC (GISH students, adults, and area high school students), the teaching/learning plan, community partnerships, staff development, technology, and facility development. The executive committee will meet after each group meeting to review discussion and plan for the next meeting. The process may include stakeholder surveys; tours of the high school, CTC site, and businesses; and review of existing relevant data. The final report will be presented at a Board of Education meeting and used in creating a detailed CTC facility plan.

Discussion of the need for a CTC has occurred during the last three years and involves officials from GIPS, Central Community College (CCC), large manufacturers, major employers such as St. Francis Medical Center, Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce, and Grand Island Area Economic Development Corp. (EDC). In January 2009, the Chamber president attended a workforce development conference in Tempe, Ariz., after which a group was organized to tour East Valley Institute of Technology and Western Maricopa Education Center in Maricopa County, Arizona. Eighteen people from Grand Island and a Nebraska Department of Economic Development staff member traveled to Maricopa County in April 2009. The group included representatives from manufacturers, other businesses, the Chamber, GIPS, CCC, GIPS Board of Education, and a newspaper reporter who wrote a four-day series of stories. Then, a steering committee was formed to study enhancing CTE for Central Nebraska high school students. During the fall of 2009, GIPS officials negotiated buying the former Pentair Water manufacturing plant comprised of five buildings (97,000 square feet total) located on 7.65 acres with \$1.46 million assessed value. The GIPS Board of Education approved purchasing the plant in December 2009 for \$650,000 using ARRA Build America Bonds.

The CTC will be located in the main building (69,097 square feet) that is comprised of two areas - the former main manufacturing area (62,926 square feet) and a two-story air-conditioned office (6,171 square feet). Three metal warehouses (15,800 square feet, 9,000 square feet, and 1,280 square feet) and an open shed for wood chip storage (1,600 square feet) are also at the site. The plant has 100 parking spaces and six loading docks on the main building.

Lincoln Public Schools

Amount: \$30,000

Lights . . . camera. . . action! What used to be boring announcements over a mundane public address system are now quality video productions produced by high school students in Digital Media and Journalism classes. The productions will be entirely the work of students who write, record and produce every element. Sometimes the broadcasts are for high school students only; others are delivered on the schools' websites for parent and community information. Other productions may include such things as school event coverage, current issue discussions, documentary profiles, or classroom instructional support videos for special populations. Some video projects may be selected to air on

the district's local cable Channel 21 or other venues. The productions will vary in content, length and audience depending on course objectives, student interest, and community need. The six Lincoln public high schools (LPS) will build capacity in their information technology and journalism curriculum through the purchase of industry-standard audio-video equipment to teach the principles of quality design, production, editing, and broadcast journalism. None of the LPS high schools have industry-standard equipment for quality production and are very limited in equipment capacity and portability to teach these concepts in their classrooms and on site. These grant funds would enable students to work within teams in their classroom rotating responsibilities but simulating the deadline pressure, preparation, and presentation found in the workplace. There is currently no direct connection between the advanced Digital Media class curriculum (technical creation, production and editing) with the journalism curriculum (writing, reporting, and presenting). The career pathways of Audio/Video Technology and Film and Journalism and Broadcasting will be more fully developed and communicated with counselors and students to recognize the need for both the academic and technical skills needed in these careers. This collaboration will reflect recommended Nebraska Programs of Study course content, knowledge, and skills. Professional development will be delivered to increase the technical skills related to the new equipment purchases along with knowledge and skills to use recent Adobe software purchased by the district. Business professionals will serve as advisers, trainers, and resources for both teachers and students in Digital Media and Journalism classes. The visibility and information provided will increase student and public awareness of opportunities in this career cluster and encourage skill development through high school classes.

Metro Community College

Amount: \$47,535

The Process Operations Technology Initiative (PROT-I) will build MCC's capacity to train a new generation of MCC students, through a new generation of technologies, for employment in a new generation of agricultural processing and energy production systems. While the PROT Initiative will have broad industry relevance, the priority of the PROT Initiative is to build MCC's capacity to train process operations technicians for industries in Washington County, NE. This includes the Ft. Calhoun nuclear power plant, as well as an array of agricultural based industries located near Blair, NE. Industries on the Blair campus produce an array of outputs such as enzymes, biodegradable plastics, chemicals, ethanol, and corn sweeteners. These area producers have ever-growing workforce needs due to sweeping changes in production systems, anticipated expansions, product diversifications, and imminent retirements of veteran employees.

Currently, MCC does not have well developed educational pathways for Washington County power and processing industries, or for a new generation of similar industries in the Omaha Metro. Within the Manufacturing career cluster, MCC does not yet offer programs that fully address next generation workforce training needs related to Manufacturing Production Process Development. The area industry need for process operations technicians is projected to increase 16% over the next five years. While MCC's program of study for Process Operations Technology has gained internal and industry approval, much work and investment remain to implement the new program. Efforts are underway with partners to establish a training facility in Blair, hire faculty, continue planning with industry to customize PROT options for specific industry types (such as biofuels, hydro power, nuclear), develop curriculum plan articulations with high schools and four year programs, and design systems that result in industry credentials for program graduates.

To support the much-needed launch of PROT training, MCC needs to build its capacity through acquiring state-of-the-art industry training equipment and industry-driven, high quality curricula. Area process and power industries identified steam system training equipment as a priority for MCC capacity building. A steam system trainer will be purchased through this Initiative. Due to the number of skill sets required by the workforce, a series of three courses will be developed to teach steam system operation. To support steam system curriculum development, PROT-I will support a site visit to the National Energy Center of Excellence at Bismarck State College, which offers a range of programs developed around process technologies. Once developed, steam system operations courses will be offered beginning in November, 2010, training 90 students by June 30, 2011.

In addition to developing curricula and courses for PROT skills common to several industries, there is a need for more specialized PROT Options, such as for nuclear and renewable energy. This project will support curriculum development for the area nuclear industry, offering the opportunity for an MCC faculty member to participate in the Uniform Nuclear Curriculum (UNC) workshop provided by the national Nuclear Energy Institute. This workshop brings together training institutions and industry experts from across the nation in an effort to develop consistent, high quality, transferable training and credentials. MCC and OPPD are partners in developing a uniform curriculum for area nuclear training.

Advisers have also recommended the incorporation of contextualized virtual labs and simulations to support student engagement, learning and access. New industry systems are requiring stronger math, science and technical skills and simulations provide a proven strategy for enhancing learning of abstract and complex processes. PROT-I will establish work groups and consultative support to develop a plan for incorporating virtual learning tools in 25 lessons - 15 within PROT courses, 5 within a UNC math course and 5 within a UNC physics course.

Finally, PROT-I will establish the first Trades dual credit course offerings in area rural high schools, with the advent of a Power Plant Operations Academy. This academy will introduce fifteen students to the trades, work readiness, and career pathways in area industries, while teaching them industry skills in steam system operation.

Together, PROT-I will address three Perkins Innovation grant target areas: Alignment to Regional Economies and High-Skill, High-Wage and High-Demand Jobs, Programs of Study/Curriculum Development and Innovative Delivery Models/Equity of Access to Instruction. PROT-I will result in new PROT educational and career pathways for existing and emerging rural industries. This will be accomplished through state-of-the-art technologies and delivery systems that promote access to and enrollment in career education in both rural and Metro communities.

In a 2009 study of the Siouxland Metropolitan statistical area, the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness identified two primary areas of manufacturing activity that are and will remain essential to the Siouxland economy. These industries include meat packing and food and dairy manufacturing. The meat processing industry accounts for over 40 percent of the region's manufacturing employment and represents roughly one out of every 20 jobs. These jobs will increasingly require more education and training in order to work with more advanced processes and equipment. Much like the region's meat processing firms, food and dairy manufacturing companies are continuously investing in greater technology and automation. In order to remain competitive, companies in these industries must continue to find and develop workers who can multi-task and solve problems. More specifically, they also have a need for experienced maintenance and quality assurance workers.

In support of the growing automation and corresponding plant updating required to maintain technological currency and operating efficiencies of these industries, skilled workers in the areas of plant design and maintenance will be required. Computer aided drafting and design skills directly correlate with industrial facility layout and design activities. In short, drafters skilled in industrial plant processes and facility design will be an integral part of aiding food processing manufacturers to operationalize the required facility and technology upgrades. To help meet the demand for industrial plant drafters, Northeast Community College (NECC) has recently developed an option in its drafting program that will concentrate on industrial plant layout drafting, which will be offered through its College Center in South Sioux City, Nebraska.

This program of study has been guided through input received from manufacturing and engineering firms operating in the Siouxland area who have demonstrated strong approval. In addition, local school districts have indicated a keen interest in partnering with NECC in the development of a cooperative effort to introduce students to the field of industrial plant drafting, and provide them with college coursework as part of a manufacturing career academy corresponding to the NDE Career Academy model.

There are three proposed activities that NECC will implement to continue to build the program. NECC will host "train the trainer" workshops that will prepare secondary instructors to teach a part of the curriculum in their high school. An Industrial Plant Drafting Camp will be held at the College Center in South Sioux City highlighting careers in the manufacturing cluster. These events will promote industrial drafting programs and build a better understanding of what a career in this industry entails. Equipment purchased with grant funds will be used at both events to demonstrate the types of skills and training a student needs for employment. The equipment will also expand the existing program at NECC and enhance the skills of students currently enrolled in the program. The primary goals of the project are to build the capacity of secondary instructors to teach industry specific coursework in their classrooms, provide career information for high school students, and expand the existing equipment intensive program.

Omaha Public Schools

Amount: \$45,000

The Career Center is partnering with Creighton University Medical Center (CUMC) in offering an Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) course with a dual enrollment opportunity for Career Center students for the 2010-11 school year. The Career Center is a program that serves as an extension of the seven Omaha Public High Schools (OPS) offering career and technical education capstone courses. CUMC has indicated a need for more space due to high demand and will be utilizing the Career Center lab for instruction in the evening for CUMC students. The course will be taught using instructors from CUMC and the Career Center during the day for high school students. High school registration is indicating high interest levels in the EMT-B course. Due to this demand the Career Center will provide two daytime sessions for OPS students. The United States Department of Labor, 2010, indicates EMT employment is expected to grow nine percent by 2018. This is due to increasing call volume due to the increasing aging population. Employment in 2008 was 210,700, projected employment in 2018 is 229,700. Career Center students will have the opportunity for internships and job shadowing. CUMC will be training the OPS instructor over the next three years to be able to teach the class independently as an EMT-B. The implementation of the EMT-B course will require additional resources such as laboratory space, equipment, classroom space and staffing needs.

Papillion-LaVista Public Schools

Amount: \$39,895

There is growing concern that the United States is not preparing a sufficient number of students, teachers, and practitioners in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). A large majority of secondary school students fail to reach proficiency in math and science, and many are taught by teachers lacking adequate subject matter knowledge.

When compared to other nations, the math and science achievement of U.S. pupils and the rate of STEM degree attainment appear inconsistent with a nation considered the world leader in scientific innovation. In a recent international assessment of 15-year-old students, the U.S. ranked 28th in math literacy and 24th in science literacy. Moreover, the U.S. ranks 20th among all nations in the proportion of 24-year-olds who earn degrees in natural science or engineering.

Advances in science and engineering are essential for ensuring America's economic growth and national security. During the next decade, U.S. demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at four times the rate for all other occupations. But today's high school students overall are not performing well in math and science, and fewer of them are pursuing degrees in technical fields.

Nationwide, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 39 percent of the population under the age of 18 is a racial or ethnic minority. Yet, in 2000, only 4.4 percent of the science and engineering jobs were held by African Americans and only 3.4 percent by Hispanics. Gender differences in STEM education are also of major concern and the subject of numerous studies.

According to the ACT Educational Planning & Assessment System (ACT EPAS), students most likely to major in STEM fields in college (and persist to earn their degrees) are those who develop interest in STEM careers through early career planning and take challenging classes that prepare

them for college-level science and math coursework. Over the past ten years, the percentage of ACT-tested students who said they were interested in majoring in engineering has dropped steadily from 7.6 percent to 4.9 percent. Over the past five years, the percentage of ACT-tested students who said they were interested in majoring in computer and information science has dropped steadily from 4.5 percent to 2.9 percent. However, students who plan early and strategically and have access to high-level and rigorous coursework are more likely to be prepared to succeed in the STEM fields. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment in science and engineering occupations will grow 70 percent faster than the overall growth for all occupations. STEM graduates on average enjoy better employment prospects and higher starting salaries than graduates in non-STEM fields.

In order to change this downward trend, it will be necessary to introduce STEM education opportunities to students at an earlier stage in the educational career through the implementation of a STEM Academy. To build capacity for the development of a STEM Academy, we will need to:

1. Develop common goals with our stakeholders (PLSD, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Business and Industry).
2. Develop STEM curriculum, innovative instructional strategies, and technical support.
3. Develop and attend professional development opportunities for the purpose of strengthening our STEM knowledge base.

Plattsmouth Community Schools Amount: \$18,105

The mission of Plattsmouth Community School District is to work in partnership to ensure academic excellence, responsible behavior, and civic engagement for all students. The district has recognized the importance of career education in meeting this mission and to implement the NCE model. The district is dedicated to giving students opportunities to apply 21st Century skills in work environments. Students are gaining this experience and developing relationships with local businesses through projects (curtains for downtown shops, designing store front options), participation in branding activities (creating giant P's for display around town), and involvement in community groups and events (attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, designing logo for Fall Festival). With these important pieces in place, the Perkins Advisory Committee began researching and selecting/developing a career academy that met the needs of the students and community. A thorough needs review led to the selection of business as the academy focus and to High School of Business (HSOB) as the program of choice. The district applied for and was one of only twenty-seven districts nation-wide that was awarded membership in the National High School of Business program.

As a HSOB participant, PCSD signed a contract promising to meet the high-quality implementation standards of MBA Research and in exchange be allowed to use its research-based training and materials. This program infuses in students the 21st Century skills needed to excel in college and the workforce by challenging students with rigorous, industry specific administration content. The 3-4 year program includes five interrelated parts: 1) Pedagogy based around a series of real world problems, 2) Content based on business administration and academic core standards, 3) Course sequence based on research of collegiate business administration programs, 4) High quality professional development, and 5) A cross-functional steering team including members of the local business community and post-secondary representatives. The alignment between the PCSD mission, state interests,

and the needs and interests of student and community partners makes this the perfect program and ensures the district will work to implement it with fidelity and to sustain it for many years to come. Innovation Grant Funds are being requested to implement this High School of Business (HSOB) and to provide a model for state programs appropriate for large or small districts. With a high poverty rate and a tradition of community involvement and a career focus, implementing this program can help all involved.

Although the HSOB program does relate to all target areas, PCSD has chosen three primary focus targets:

- Target Set I: Innovation and Equity Goal: to increase by 15% the number of students successfully involved in a business academy.
- Target Set II: Programs of Study, Curriculum Development Goal: to adopt a program of study that infuses in students the 21st Century Skills and content knowledge needed to excel in college and the workplace.
- Target Set III: Professional Development Goal: To prepare teacher(s) to challenge students with rigorous, industry-specific business administration content.

Correlated with the national standards for business administration, math, English, and economics, this curriculum provides students with a thorough understanding of business concepts, fosters economic understanding in the context of business decision making, and incorporates the use of technology while stimulating innovative and entrepreneurial thinking. Students who are interested in business will be encouraged to take the three years of courses (one each semester) that culminate in a twenty-hour internship where the learning from all six courses is applied. Funds will be used to purchase the research-based curriculum and instructional materials (not textbooks) for this program. Simulations, Promethean boards, laptops, and other materials needed to work with community partners and solve real-world issues will be purchased through the grant. Funds will also be used to provide the HSOB teacher with the training needed to begin the program, integrate leadership and wealth management training into other courses, and to share experiences with interested educators across the state.

The HSOB program includes the use of multiple assessments designed to evaluate the program and student skill levels. PCSD will administer the surveys and end of course exams used to evaluate the program. Demographic data will be collected and the academic growth of students in the program will be compared with that of students outside of the program. This data will be reviewed by the Steering Team, presented to the community, and used to set goals and plans for continual improvement.

This program will be a benefit to PCSD students, teachers, and community members as well as to the state of Nebraska.