MEMO

To: Bill Smith, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services and Coni Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Legal Services

From: Dorothy VanderJagt, Director of Teaching and Learning

Re: Early Literacy Coaches

Date: February 5, 2016

Michigan as a state is focusing on increasing the early literacy skills of our students. The Early Literacy Initiative is a major activity that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will work on over the next few years. Research shows that if students are not proficient in reading by third grade, their chances of becoming proficient are minimal. MDE believes that to ensure the early literacy skills of all Michigan's students, we need to develop and deliver an educational system that provides high-quality instruction to all students, provides regular information on student progress and strategically intervenes with research-based strategies when students fall behind.

Funding for the ISD Early Literacy Coaches grant has been authorized by Section 35(a)5 of the State School Aid Act, P.A. 85 of 2015. The grant has been awarded to assist ISDs with the cost of Early Literacy Coaches.

Kent ISD has been awarded three grants of $37,500 each for the hiring of three (3) Early Literacy Coaches. Intermediate School Districts are required to match ISD funds to create a full time position. Kent ISD will supply matching funds for the position from Teaching and Learning Accounts.

RECOMMENDATION: Request approval from the Kent ISD School Board to hire three (3) Early Literacy Coaches at a cost of $75,000 each. Half of this cost will be covered by an Early Literacy Grant received from MDE and half of the cost will be covered by Kent ISD matching funds from Teaching and Learning Accounts.

Title:
Early Literacy Coaches

Reports to:
Director of Teaching and Learning

Description:
The Early Literacy Coach will provide leadership in all areas of K-3 literacy, interventions, consultation and program planning. The Early Literacy Coach will need an understanding of MTSS and be able to learn and identify evidence-based practice for improving teacher instruction, develop these skills with teachers. The coach will need to provide support for implementation of learner-centered instructional practices. The coach will spend the majority of time working in classrooms with teachers (e.g. modeling, observing, co-teaching). The coach may provide supplemental after school tutoring services to students who may need additional support and will play a strong role in analyzing and using evidence of learning to impact instructional decision making. The focus of the coach's work is to assist teachers in understanding how to use evidence of learning for instructional planning that will have a positive impact on student achievement. The coach may facilitate teacher study groups in which they analyze student work and lesson plans and plan for the enhancement of instructional strategies. The coach's analysis of student work and teaching and learning data will inform what occurs during coaching sessions with individual teachers and in the teacher study groups.

SPECIFIC TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Participating in all required coach professional development. The coach is charged with acquiring the knowledge, skills, technology skills, and instructional strategies necessary to effectively impact the instructional practices of the teachers that are coached.
- The coach must remain knowledgeable about current and past research in the specific content area and other pedagogies relevant to the coaching role.
- The coach must develop deep content and pedagogical knowledge in the evidence-based learner-centered approach to instruction.
- The coach identifies school teaching and learning needs, barriers, and weaknesses by analyzing evidence of learning and organizing and implementing problem-solving actions with teachers.
- The coach facilitates school-based professional development, working with teachers (in teams or individually) to refine their knowledge and skills. Professional development could include, but not be limited to: in-class coaching, observing, modeling of instructional strategies, guiding teachers in looking at student work, developing lesson plans with teachers based on student needs, supporting data analysis, supporting the integration of technology, co-planning with teachers, etc.
- The coach monitors instructional effectiveness and student progress using tools and strategies gained through professional development.
- The coach will monitor implementation fidelity of selected evidence-based instructional strategies, practice, and curriculum.

- The coach builds and maintains confidential relationships with teachers. The conversations and interactions that the coach has with teachers must always remain confidential so that a high level of trust is created and maintained between the teacher and the coach. Exceptions to this include imminent physical or psychological danger to the students.

Qualifications:

1. Valid Michigan teacher certification to teach at the elementary level

2. Five years or more experience teaching ELA at the elementary level – Preferred.

3. Master's degree in the area of Reading or related field – Preferred.

4. Knowledge of K-3 state literacy standards

5. Instructional skills and knowledge base in early literacy components such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension

6. Ability to utilize data from screenings and diagnostic tools to determine additional extra supports needed in order to read at grade level by the end of 3rd Grade

7. Ability to use observational data and formative assessment processes to guide professional learning and coaching

8. Ability to develop and deliver curriculum and assessments aligned to standards.

9. Communication, organizational and networking skills required.

10. Must possess excellent organizational skills, technology skills, be detail and team oriented.

11. Experience working with elementary age students and diverse student population – Preferred.

12. Experience implementing student interventions/support.

13. The use of technology as an instructional and organizational tool

14. Demonstrated teacher leadership skills.

Position Type:
Grant Funded

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Work with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports Team
- Work with school districts in assessing needs and integrating Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for K-3 literacy including coaching building-level teams in analysis of data
- Develop and model high quality literacy lessons and units for K-3 teachers
- Coach one-on-one in high needs K-3 classrooms, building and maintaining confidential relationships
- Serve as a regional source for development and delivery of professional development related to research-based literacy strategies and interventions for teachers of Grades K-3

- Supporting the integration of technology in effective literacy instruction
- Participate in school improvement activities focused on improving instructional practices as evidenced by student outcomes in Grades K-3
- Participate in required trainings for Michigan ISD K-3 Literacy Coaches
- Remain knowledgeable about current research and pedagogical recommendations relevant to the coaching role
- Provide training and support with implementation of a comprehensive system of literacy instruction
- Assist local districts in identifying strengths and needs in support of an early literacy continuum
- As needed for completion of duties, attend meetings outside of normal working hours
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned