



Stimulus Package for Education

Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools (MCES) is ready to support your school's ARRA and Project Reimagine efforts. MCES is an eligible non-profit partner and is seeking visionary and bold districts to apply for the Project Reimagine demonstration site grants. We have the knowledge, skills, and success rate for securing grants and getting results in improved student achievement.

The Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools is a non-profit with a proven track record of assisting schools in meeting or exceeding these assurances by providing technical assistance and coaching support for leadership teams, principals, and professional learning communities. MCES was an effective provider of comprehensive school reform in almost 50 K-12 schools; most of them were high-poverty, low-performing schools and showed significant gains improvements in teaching and learning. MCES provided professional development and school improvement coaching using the Cycle of Continuous Improvement for data-driven decisions that focus on vision, measure current reality, research best practice, implement interventions, and monitor results. MCES can help your school increase student achievement and has extensive success in:

- Training instructional coaches
- Training teacher-leaders to look at student work and engage in school leadership
- Coaching principals, teacher-leaders, content teachers to improve schoolwide and classroom practice
- Supporting Special Education co-teaching
- Facilitating School Improvement planning based on Comprehensive Needs Assessment that make the plan deep using substantive reform to build capacity to address the most vexing challenges

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SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools (MCES) formed the Michigan Smaller Learning Communities Consortium in 2007 and received a federal SLC grant bringing more than \$6 Million to six Michigan high schools for the purpose of creating personalized school environments that are conducive to student growth and achievement. According to national research, smaller learning communities within large high schools will result in improved academic performance, fewer discipline problems and reduced dropout rates.

The Consortium schools, representing four diverse geographic areas within Michigan, unanimously agree that a collective and collaborative effort dramatically enhances the likelihood of success as opposed to individual efforts to improve and reform. Each school has designed SLC's that personalize the high school experience and create an environment in which teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, monitor each student's progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed. MCES provides project management, technical assistance, and professional development support throughout the process.

MCES PARTNER SCHOOLS' SUCCESS STORIES

The Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition facilitates "school-community partnerships to develop students as citizen-stewards of healthy ecological-social systems."

The Hope of Detroit Academy is involved with this effort, adopting the school-wide theme, "What is community?" The 4-8 grade projects seek outcomes to these questions: 1) "How do communities change over time?" 2) "What decisions get made and what are the social and ecological consequences of these decisions?" and 3) "What would we like our community to be like?" The approach involves an outdoor Schoolyard Habitat project and an examination of SW Detroit land use, including neighborhood brownfields. In addition, the school has developed a recycling and composting project. Hope of Detroit holds an annual school-wide science fair; this year's theme focuses on "How can Science help our community?"

Muskegon's Marquette Elementary is sustaining its MCES efforts by utilizing staff meetings to hold CSS/Critical Friends groups devoted to the examination of student work. This practice has kept staff focused on student work, best practices, and collegial conversations, the CES Common Principles, along with habits of mind.

Two Gallery Walks and a Differentiation Fair were held. Each staff member toured the fair and commented via Post-it Notes on how the student work displayed differentiated instruction or posts asked probing questions. Questions were answered in a sharing out session. Monthly All-School meetings occur with

classrooms volunteering to "Share What They Know" about topics chosen by their students. It is also a time to recognize students through the MiBLSi positive behavioral support success and other awards earned via accelerated reader, study island, attendance, birthdays, etc. The Celebration of Learning – with all students exhibiting their learning projects – was combined with the Michigan State Extension Office SPLASH program. Booths of healthy exercise activity were available in the gym and a healthy fruit dish was part of the supper provided.

MCES notebooks are used regularly to find protocols, rubrics, gain more definition to topics, and search for strategies to use with staff during professional development activities. Data analysis is a very regular thing now at each meeting. MEAP scores continue to improve for the general education population.

Grayling High School continues to use the many and varied protocols that were learned during their Critical Friends Group training. Staff meets weekly during the school day for 70 minutes with PLC teams. Looking at Student Work protocols are used by teams each trimester. Teachers alter instruction, re-teach topics, and address the individual learning needs of students based on the interactions and feedback generated in these powerful sessions. The school has the protocols posted on their CASD PLC website so that staff can use them whenever they decide to conduct a session. The team also shares, via team notes, highlights from the session with administration after each session. This is a practice that GHS has embraced and is part of the professional culture.

Inkster School District is receiving professional development and coaching that is comprehensive and progressively directed toward teachers being more reflective and inquiry-based. School improvement efforts centered on the leadership in each school; developing professional learning community, teaching the value of shared leadership and the skills necessary to empower teachers, creating school improvement plans that act as roadmaps for sustainability, and developing collective efficacy.

Teachers in grades K-8 developed curriculum maps for all core areas and disaggregated assessment data, so that they could determine the type of instruction that students needed to close gaps in learning. Literacy training is ongoing with major emphasis on reading comprehension and writing. Teachers participated in Lesson Study to work together on meaningful lessons, implement them, and gain critical feedback from each other. Standards of Assessment were stressed and teachers began creating assessments that better exemplified student learning. The second year of Community Exhibitions of Student Work occurred, and students and teachers throughout the district proudly displayed and explained their work to the continuous flow of families, community members, and other educators. An Inquiry Group has created a learning community that is conducive to reflection and inquiry. Teachers developed questioning techniques that push students to infer, create, evaluate, analyze, reflect, hypothesize, interpret and transfer. Each designed and implemented an action research project used in the classroom. Results were amazing as students became more involved in literature circles, learning centers, and teaming activities.

