

## **Innovation Fund 2011 grantees Project Summaries**

### **Albuquerque Teachers Federation**

The Albuquerque Teachers Federation will partner with PBS affiliate WETA to develop research-based professional development materials and model curriculum that will help teachers of English language learners (ELLs) implement the Common Core State Standards. The project will focus on teaching ELLs in grades 1, 4 and 8.

The project will have a broad reach to ELL educators across the country, as resources – including in-classroom video clips featuring exemplary teaching – will be distributed nationally through WETA’s *Colorín Colorado* bilingual website, created for educators and parents of English language learners to help them become better readers and succeed in school. This interactive, educator-driven professional development will serve as a model for the work of teachers around the country. WETA and the American Federation of Teachers have been partners for seven years in operating the award-winning website.

The project aims to ensure teachers have the tools they need to implement the CCCS and aims to produce engaging, practical content that will enable teachers to be more effective in their own classrooms. It will also enhance their capacity to serve students ELL students in Albuquerque, a majority-Hispanic school district where more than 15,200 students—one out of every six students—is an English language learner.

### **AFT St. Louis**

AFT St. Louis, together with St. Louis Public Schools, will develop a high-quality, districtwide professional development program for early childhood and pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals that can be used as a model for this growing group of educators across the country.

Each year, more than 2,000 children attend pre-K in St. Louis Public Schools, yet, the pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals in the school district face numerous challenges. Practices used from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade—including testing—are being imposed on pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals with little respect for appropriate, research-based procedures and methods. Also, principals and administrators often have not been exposed to the early childhood education research on brain development and the use of developmentally appropriate practices.



The training program—which will be piloted in the 2012-2013 school year for the 184 pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals in the district—will be developed by teachers and paraprofessionals in consultation with union and district leaders and outside experts.

### **Chicago Teachers Union**

The Chicago Teachers Union—which represent more than 30,000 educators in the nation’s third-largest school district—will design instructional units that include curriculum, instruction and performance assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCCS).

The units will focus on K-3 math; elementary interdisciplinary content; adolescent and young adulthood mathematics; career and technical education; and English language arts. The project will be developed by the CTU’s Quest Center, which has a track record through its training opportunities of supporting teacher excellence in the city.

The union will seek the input and advice of its university, business and trade union partnerships when creating the units. The CTU then plans to train teachers to use these prototypes as models for creating their own units. These will be shared in numerous ways, including via the Chicago Public Schools’ website.

### **Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees (DFPNSE)**

The Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees, in collaboration with the Denver Public Schools, will create a model employee incentive program call “The Good Food! Incentive Pilot” that will reinforce the district’s nutrition and wellness efforts.

This project will reinforce the important role food service workers’ play in promoting health and wellness in the school learning environment. This pay-for-performance program will provide additional nutrition and wellness education training and compensation for staff’s active participation in efforts to combat childhood obesity and promote wellness among school-age children.

By expanding training opportunities for food service workers and encouraging them to be part of the solution in solving the obesity crisis, food service staff will be empowered as key members of the school learning community and will strive to make a greater difference in their work, in student’s lives and in their school.

## **AFT West Virginia and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association**

The unions will work in partnership with Hope Community Development Group, a local faith-based organization, to transform an elementary and middle school in Charleston into true community schools that offer a range of supports and opportunities for children, families and their communities, including health and social services.

As part of the project, the union will facilitate bringing a needed service or services to the school during the 2012-2013 school year. Ultimately, this project will serve as a model for union involvement in community schools that encourages support from the West Virginia legislature.

The union will seek to engage parents, educators and community groups and leaders to help contribute ideas and resources to the project. They will also work closely with key teacher leaders and administrators at both schools to gain an understanding of the school's circumstances and what types of services should be offered based on the need in the schools.