

News Release

July 18, 2007

DeKalb To Receive I-ASPIRE Grant from ISBE

DeKalb School District 428 has been notified by the Illinois State Board of Education that they are the sole recipient in DeKalb County for a five-year grant under Part D of IDEA 2004 to fund research-based professional development.

Illinois ASPIRE (Alliance for School-based Problem-solving and Intervention Resources in Education) will establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities.

This goal will be accomplished through four project objectives, which are to:

- Deliver research-based professional development and technical assistance to schools.
- Increase the participation of parents in decision-making across district sites.
- Incorporate the professional development content into the general and special education preservice curricula.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.

Kari Cremascoli, Executive Director of Student Support Services, is obviously very excited about the potential benefits this grant brings to the students of DeKalb School District. "As a district, we are honored to be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as well as the I-ASPIRE facilitators with this grant. There are so many great things happening in DeKalb School District 428 for our students and our communities. This grant recognizes the efforts of our amazing staff in meeting the needs of all students. It will help us to further our efforts towards data-based decision making to ensure that every DeKalb student has the opportunity to reach his/her potential while allowing us to continue to provide professional development opportunities to our staff. We are thrilled with this opportunity and are excited about what it means for our students, our schools and our communities."

In the acceptance letter naming DeKalb School District 428 as a demonstration site, Mark Shinn, I-ASPIRE North Project Director, stated that DeKalb's application was "identified as one of our exemplary proposals." Due to the close geographic location to Northern Illinois University, the district will receive support through the Outreach Program at the university, coordinated by Dr. Christine Malecki, along with several highly qualified graduate assistants.

Superintendent Beilfuss added, "This grant is a tremendous benefit to the staff and at-risk students of DeKalb School District 428 by providing support for professional development in implementing research-based early intervention services. We are very proud of the work that Kari and her colleagues have done to make this happen for the staff and students of our district."

More information about Illinois ASPIRE is available at www.illinoisaspire.org.

#