

ARISTOS GRANT PROGRAM

END-OF-YEAR SUMMARY for ARISTOS PROJECT ARCHIVE

Project Title: East High School Literacy Plan

Project School/Department: East High School Reading Department

Grade Level(s): 9 - 12 **Implementation Year:** 2006-2007

Project Leader: Sharon McPike

Part I—Project Description

Indicate Primary (P) and Secondary (S) impacts of project in the appropriate box(es) below. (Leave boxes blank if effects were minimal.)

	Students	Staff	Parents	Community
Engagement	P			
Learning	P	P		
Relationships	S			

Project Abstract (copy from original proposal-- **highlight** new or unique aspects):

The East Literacy Commission assumed overall responsibility for guiding the total school literacy improvement effort to enhance student academic achievement. The commission was comprised of interdisciplinary, multi-grade teachers, including EEN and ESL representatives, and administrators. In order to build a strong literacy foundation that leads to increased student achievement in reading and writing, the members of this commission developed deep understandings of effective literacy practices in order to become school literacy advocates and leaders. **This deliberate design of a commission of teachers and administrators collaborating for student literacy improvement was unique to MMSD high schools.** Its primary purpose was to develop leadership capacity that will then sustain a **total school literacy focus for years to come.** In addition, because of the involvement of the two MMSD Adolescent Literacy Support teachers in this effort, **the ability to transport the leadership training model to other high schools was assured.**

Goals and Objectives (copy from original proposal--**highlight** objectives attained):

- To develop a cadre of school literacy leaders with school-wide representation
- To provide literacy leadership training to literacy commission members
- To develop a literacy action plan that systematically addresses student literacy needs both with a short term and long term vision
- To pilot a school literacy leadership process that can be implemented in other MMSD middle and high schools.

Activities (copy from original proposal--**highlight** new or unique aspects):

Training was initiated with a full-day leadership development seminar (Sept. 06) with Dr. Judith Irvin of the National Literacy Project who led the commission through the literacy training and a planning process using materials **currently published through ASCD, entitled *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders***. This process set the groundwork for assessing the **current state of literacy at East High and for developing a school-wide literacy action plan**. A second full day (Oct. 06) allowed the Literacy Leadership Commission to integrate the application of the literacy planning tools into the articulation of a literacy action plan. The commission continued to meet three additional half-days, Nov. 06, Dec. 06, and Feb. 07, and one full day in Apr. 07 to study roles and responsibilities of effective literacy leadership using the ASCD implementation guide referenced above, resources, and to craft the final literacy plan for East High School. An afternoon meeting took place in May 07 to review staff survey results and make final plans for literacy objectives implementation beginning 2007-2008. **The staff survey results indicated an over-whelming high percentage of staff supporting the literacy plan. (See attached)** The members of the literacy commission were recognized for their hard work, interest in literacy, and dedication to the project by receiving a MMSD certificate of recognition. Future plans were made for enlarging the literacy commission to thirty members. Involvement in grant writing for future staff-development was initiated in May, 2007. Committees will need to be formed around goal objectives.

Part II—Reflection / Advice

List the activities or other aspects of this project you will work hardest to preserve or expand beyond the grant implementation year. If none, explain.

The greatest aspect of this project is the investment the literacy commission members made in expanding personal knowledge in the area of literacy. Teachers grew to appreciate the need for extended time to develop literacy strategies and promote teacher sharing. Teachers were articulate about their concerns with teaching literacy skills for all students with an emphasis on the struggling reader. Teachers indicated, throughout the process, their desire to become better, more effective teachers. This, followed by the credible, thoughtful plan that was developed for the future teaching and learning at East High School should preserve the ambitious, yet necessary goals that were developed around creating and sustaining East as a literacy rich environment.

Having a team of teachers representing departments from across the building, who were dedicated and committed to the commission's work was a key ingredient to the successful development of the final literacy document. The document however, must be used as a blueprint for a grand structure that will support a school-wide effort to improve student literacy. The structure will take time to build and will require much commitment and effort. The blueprint alone is nothing more than a piece of paper that has ambitious ideas on it.

Working with and learning from distinguished experts in the field of literacy guided our work and energized our vision. There was never a wasted minute of the time spent by the commission while working on this project.

List any resources or support systems you have discovered or developed which will help in sustaining part, or all, of this project in the absence of continued Aristos funding. Include current contact information, if applicable.

The application of the Literacy Toolkit, which was piloted by our group, should assist other high schools who participate in literacy program assessment. Involving the entire staff in the process should encourage ownership in literacy instruction, commitment and involvement. Having administrators, sitting side by side with teachers, interested in the project, and willing to commit to it, should encourage sustainability. Addressing school-wide structure as an important component to sustainability provides a basis for feasibility. Time, student schedules and resources must also be built into a plan in order for it to be feasible. Investing in teacher learning by providing opportunities, addressing content material appropriation and application and setting specific teaching objectives to be applied cross curricula maximizes potential learning and achievement. New grant submissions will include plans for expanding staff-members in staff-development, while retaining others to act as mentors.

Briefly share any practical advice, encouragement, or caution you would give to another MMSD staff member interested in replicating part, or all, of your project. (Bear in mind that it is unlikely Aristos funds would be available to this person.)

A comprehensive literacy plan can happen at your school. Ideally, the goal of creating a plan should begin with a group of respected teachers who are interested in student achievement and the role of literacy in their building. Collect and read the vast array of recent national reports on literacy and secondary education. Involve an administrator who is dedicated to increasing student achievement and supporting staff members.

Investigate funding sources and begin a literacy team. Because this work is so important, it should be done during the normal school day as staff-development.

Do not copy another school's plan. Your plan will only be valid if you go through the assessment plan designed by the Literacy Project, referenced in this document.