



**Report on the
Schools Mentoring
Schools Regional
Sites Program for
2008-09**

March 2009

**Report
To the
Legislature**

**As required by
Minn. Stat. §
122A.628**

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Mentoring
Schools
Regional Sites
Program**

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Minnesota

Statute §

122A.628

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**FY 2008 LEGISLATIVE REPORT
ON
Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites Program**

Estimated Cost of Preparing This Report

This report provides information that is maintained and published by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as a part of its normal business functions. Therefore, the cost information reported below does not include the cost of gathering the data but rather is limited to the estimated cost of actually analyzing the data, determining recommendations and preparing this report document.

Special funding was not appropriated for the costs of preparing this report.

The estimated cost incurred by the MDE in preparing this report is \$200.

Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites Program

This 2009 Legislative Report has been prepared as required by Minnesota Statutes, 122A.628, subdivision 1 that directs the commissioner to select and grant funding for up to four school districts, or partnerships of school districts, for the purpose of assisting other school districts in the region with the development of thorough and effective teacher mentoring programs by offering coaching/mentoring training, in-class observation training and train-the-trainer opportunities. This report describes the process MDE established to carry forward the identification of Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites and provision of program funding of \$50,000 in FY 2005-07. Although the program remained in statute, MDE funding did not continue in FY 2008-09. A formal request to remove Minnesota Statutes, 122A.628 will be submitted by MDE in FY 2010.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites Program
2009 Legislative Report

“High-quality induction programs not only increase the retention of beginning teachers but also improve their teaching practice and raise student achievement” (Strong, 2005). Minnesota’s establishment of the Schools Mentoring Schools (SMS) Program was an initiative to provide assistance to schools in developing comprehensive induction programs for new teachers that promote collaboration with colleagues and a shared commitment for novice teachers to become highly effective teachers.

The 2005 legislation that established the SMS program did not allocate funds for the initiative. Therefore, MDE provided \$50,000 of agency funds for FY 2006 and FY 2007 to award two-year grants for up to four school districts or partnerships of schools to be designated as SMS regional sites.

In October 2005, four applications to become regional sites were received. In November 2005, a MDE-directed review panel using application scoring guidelines awarded grants to three regional sites and their approved activities for FY 2006 and FY 2007. Grants were awarded to one school district (Brainerd School District) and two school district partnerships (Minnesota State University – Mankato and Lakes Country Service Cooperative).

The three regional sites provided assistance to other school districts in their geographic area in developing effective teacher mentoring/induction programs. At the completion of the grant, regional sites submitted final reports (program activities and budget information) and MDE conducted a program evaluation. Information concerning grant activities, use of funds and evaluation results were reported in the 2008 SMS Legislative Report.

The SMS program statute remained in place in FY 2008 without legislation allocation of funds, and MDE did not have funds to continue the program. The continuation of SMS program did not occur in FY 2008, and no grant activities or expenditures have occurred since June 30, 2007. MDE will submit a formal request in FY 2010 to remove Minnesota Statute 122A.628 (Appendix A).

PART I
Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites Program

Directed by Minnesota Statute 122A.628 (Appendix A), MDE established an application and review process to award up to four SMS Regional Sites Program grants. The funded sites implemented a program to provide assistance to nearby school districts in developing their own effective system of support for new teachers. The regional sites offered: coaching/mentor training, in-class observation and train-the-trainer opportunities.

A memorandum announcing the grant program was sent out via a superintendent mailing to school administrators and staff development specialists from Deborah Luedtke, Schools Mentoring Schools Grant Coordinator at MDE. The application was included with the memorandum. The application review was conducted by a panel of MDE education specialists, and factors including geographic balance were included in the application review process.

Three applicants were selected as SMS Regional Sites: Brainerd School District, Lakes Country Service Cooperative and Minnesota State University–Mankato. One of the sites had to be Brainerd School District as stated in the legislation. The review panel did not approve a fourth application due to an absence of required components.

- A total of \$50,000 was available for two years (December 1, 2005-June 30, 2007). Brainerd School District and Minnesota State University–Mankato each were awarded \$18,000. Lakes Country Service Cooperative was awarded \$13,000. Any balance left after FY 2006 was available for use in FY 2007.
- These sites provided mentoring assistance and service to participating districts.

Each grantee implemented action plans and provided reports. The FY 2006 grant reports provided evidence of grant activities completed and, if necessary, revised the FY 2007 action plan and budget. Year-two grant reports documented grant results and final expenditures.

The legislation that established the program did not allocate funds; therefore, MDE funded the program for two years. The SMS Regional Sites Program was limited to two years and agency funding was not continued in FY 2008 or FY 2009. MDE will submit a formal request to remove Minnesota Statute 122A.628 in FY 2010 to eliminate the program.

Part II
Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Program Activities

MDE established a process and timeline for identifying sites as Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites. Information inviting districts or partnerships of schools to apply to become a SMS Regional Site was distributed on September 22, 2005. Grant applications were received by MDE on October 26, 2005, and reviewed by a panel of education specialists on November 14, 2005. The Commissioner of Education reviewed

recommendations of the panel and approved three sites as a SMS Regional Site: Brainerd School District, Lakes Country Service Cooperative and Minnesota State University–Mankato. On November 29, 2006, three grantees were notified as being Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites with grant work to begin December 2005 and continue through June 2007.

Two-year grants were awarded to each regional site: Brainerd School District and Minnesota State University–Mankato each were awarded \$18,000. Lakes Country Service Cooperative was awarded \$13,000. The three regional sites provided assistance to participating districts in their geographic area. Regional sites provided grant-funded activities unique to the structures of their programs aligned with grant action plans. Planning and implementation activity program reports were required for events held during both FY 2006 and FY 2007. All sites reported providing the option of train-the-trainer sessions to build leadership and training capacity of the local school district.

Brainerd School District

Year 1: Brainerd School District invited districts in their geographic area to participate in Brainerd’s Beginning Teacher Support System activities. Neighboring districts accepted invitations for training in instructional mentoring, mentoring/coaching for the special education teacher and cognitive coaching skills. Four (4) districts participated in training for an instructional and special education mentor. Nine (9) districts participated in Cognitive Coaching Training, a foundational mentor training component. The report evidenced that follow-up activities were made available to participants.

Year 2: Brainerd School District offered Pathwise Assessor (teacher observation) and Cognitive Coaching training as well as a Train-the-Trainer option workshop during the summer of 2006. Throughout the 2006-07 school year, refresher courses for Pathwise and Cognitive Coaching, Mentor for Special Education training, and New Teacher Seminars were provided.

Minnesota State University-Mankato

Year 1: Minnesota State University-Mankato developed a mentor network advisory committee to support implementation of teacher induction programs within each of their nine (9) partner districts to provide input into network meetings and mentor training sessions. The network hosted monthly advisory meetings and two training sessions for the partnering districts (Foundations in Mentoring and Meeting the Needs of New Teachers: Orientation and Ongoing Professional Development). The strength of their program was the ongoing evaluation of program activities and the effect on follow-up, determining future plans, and network sponsored activities.

Year 2: Minnesota State University-Mankato offered Framework Observation Program Training and continued the Advisory Committee Meetings to provide ongoing support to program advisors from each district for mentor program implementation. In addition, Mentor Network Events offered a variety of face-to-face trainings relating to induction of new teachers.

Lakes Country Service Cooperative

Year 1: Lakes Country Service Cooperative instituted a teacher induction consortium in west-central Minnesota. District representatives to the consortium assisted one another in establishing district-centered mentoring programs with selected activities provided regionally. Based on the needs of the consortium, training was developed and implemented in the areas of teacher evaluation and instructional coaching. Thirteen (13) schools from five (5) school districts attended the two-day training with follow-up activities delivered through the Lake Country Service Cooperative's teacher induction consortium.

Year 2: Lakes Country Service Cooperative assisted many districts in the design of their own mentoring programs by providing a two-day Introduction to Mentoring training with a follow-up planning day for those looking to design or refine their new program. During the school year, workshop topics included understanding the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers and going more deeply exploring the role of the mentor.

Part III: Schools Mentoring Schools Survey Results

All three SMS Regional Sites (Brainerd School District, Minnesota State University–Mankato and Lakes Country Service Cooperative) implemented a program to provide assistance to nearby school districts in developing their own effective system of support for new teachers. The regional sites offered coaching/mentor training, in-class observation and train-the-trainer opportunities.

In an effort to monitor the effects of the SMS grant program, MDE designed and distributed a survey to training participants in fall 2007. A summary of the SMS survey results indicated the following:

- (1) The school/district of the SMS training participant placed major focus on Orientation for new teachers (63.6%), Teacher observation (60.6%), and Mentoring skills, tools, and strategies (57.6%).
- (2) Among the majority of these elements, Mentoring skills, tools, and strategies (36.4%), Orientation for new teachers (57.6%), and Teacher observation (36.4%) reached full implementation at schools after SMS training sessions were delivered.
- (3) A relatively large percent of the respondents had a need for a more sufficient budget for the new teacher program.
- (4) Only a few SMS training participants indicated that their district new teacher program required mentees to observe best practices in the classrooms of experienced educators.

Although SMS was a two-year mentoring project, this survey identified significant relationships between the level of focus on each topic at SMS training sessions and the

focus on each topic after SMS training sessions. It also indicated significant relationships between the level of focus on each topic and its progress toward full implementation. The responses from open-ended questions highlight strengths and weaknesses in implementing SMS. Even though they faced challenges (e.g., lack of support from the school board and limited time and funds in implementing SMS elements) most of respondents indicated that they benefited from having information on best practices, collegial networking, practical examples and useful materials.

Part IV
Schools Mentoring Schools Grant Program Expenditures Report

MDE provided \$50,000 for FY 2006 and FY 2007 for the SMS Program. Up to four regional sites would implement a program to provide assistance to nearby school districts in developing their own effective system of support for new teachers under Minnesota Statute 122A.628. This was a two-year grant and any balance in the first year did not cancel but was available in the second year.

A process for disseminating up to four grants was established requiring applications be reviewed through a panel using scoring criteria created by MDE. On November 18, 2005, the review panel recommended to the Commissioner of Education three applicants as Schools Mentoring Schools Regional Sites. Grant awards were extended to Brainerd School District for \$18,000, Minnesota State University–Mankato for \$18,000, and Lakes Country Service Cooperative for \$13,000. As a recipient of a Schools Mentoring Schools Grant, each regional site was required to submit an annual end-of-fiscal-year report by July 31. Final expenditures were reported each fiscal year.

Financial Report FY 2006-07

	ISD 181, Brainerd Public Schools	Minnesota State University, Mankato	Lakes County Service Cooperative
2005-06			
Salary and Wages (100)		\$113.53	\$1,028.36
Employee Benefits (200)			\$123.71
Travel Expenses (366)	\$120.15	\$3,500.00	\$617.91
Purchased Services (300)	\$6,050.00	\$250.29	\$1,060.00
Supplies and Materials (400)		\$54.50	\$352.00
Other (800)		\$195.90	\$156.60
Total:	\$6,170.15	\$4,114.22	\$3,338.58
2006-07			
Salary and Wages (100)	\$591.00		\$2,912.80
Employee Benefits (200)			\$353.14
Travel (366)		\$3,500.00	\$863.40
Purchased Services (300)	\$11,238.85	\$6,170.72	\$4,474.97
Supplies and Materials (400)		\$3,515.04	\$534.93
Other (800)		\$696.49	\$499.68
Total:	\$11,829.85	\$13,882.25	\$9,638.92
GRANT AWARDED	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$13,000.00
Total Reimbursed for 2005-07	\$18,000.00	\$17,996.47	\$12,977.50

Reference:

Robert Gordon, Thomas J. Kane, and Douglas O. Staiger. (2006.) “Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job.” The Brookings Institution: Washington, DC.

Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain. (2005.) “Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement.” *Econometrica*: Princeton, NJ.

Thomas M. Smith and Richard M. Ingersoll. (2004.) “What are the Effects of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teacher Turnover?” *American Education Research Journal*: Washington, DC.

Michael Strong. (2005.) *Research Brief: Mentoring New Teacher to Increase Retention*. New Teacher Center: Santa Cruz, CA.

APPENDIX A

Minnesota Statutes 2005

122A.628 Schools mentoring schools regional sites.

Subdivision 1. **Program.** The commissioner of education shall select up to four school districts, or partnerships of school districts, for the purpose of assisting other school districts in the region with the development of thorough and effective teacher mentoring programs. The commissioner shall use geographic balance and proven teacher induction programs as criteria when selecting the sites. One site must include the Brainerd teacher support system, which has been cited by the Minnesota Board of Teaching as a model program and was one of only six programs in the nation to be recognized for the 2004 NEA-Saturn/UAW partnership award. The sites shall be known as schools mentoring schools regional sites.

The sites shall provide high quality mentoring assistance programs and services to other nearby school districts for the development of effective systems of support for new teachers. The sites shall offer coaching/mentor training, in-class observation training, and train-the-teacher opportunities for teams of participating teachers. The sites shall use their recognized experience and methods to equip schools to work with their own new and beginning teachers. The commissioner shall review and report annually to the legislature on the operation of each training center.

Subd.2. **Revenue.** A school district that is selected to participate in the schools mentoring schools program under this section may utilize its professional compensation revenue under section 122A.4142, subdivision 4, to pay regional training sites for staff development and training services.

HIST: 1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 47

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