

**School Board Workshop:**

**October 9th, 2023**

**Subject:**

**Grow Your Own Grant  
Future Teacher Academy**

**Presenter:**

**Amy Ernst, Director  
Special Services  
Mark Mischke, BHS Principal  
Jessa Rakotz, FTA Coordinator**

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**SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:**

Report, no action necessary

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District was awarded a five-year grant accessing "Grow Your Own" funds. This grant will support a student pathway with the intention of recruiting interest in the field of teaching special education. There is a well-documented need nationwide and in our own district to recruit and retain special education teachers and seek more teachers reflective of a diverse student population. This grant, which totals \$663,893.31 over the course of five years, will allow our district to recruit high school juniors and seniors to the field of special education. The grant will fund up to 25 students per year who after accessing the BHS Intro to Education course, will attend a one week on-campus stay at St. Cloud State University where they will have an opportunity to gain three credits toward special education licensure. They will also receive three mini-sessions leading up to their experience in the residence hall which will prepare them to explore a career in teaching. Following this experience, they will be offered the opportunity to spend ten hours in a BHM special education classroom to continue to explore this career. The grant has also allowed us to hire a future teacher academy coordinator who will work collaboratively with the Department of Special Services, Buffalo High School and St. Cloud State University. The coordinator will be responsible for data collection and reporting for MDE, marketing, student recruitment, a one-week stay on campus at SCSU supervising students participating in the program, and ongoing coordination of field experience placements in the district following the SCSU experience.

Our district has the building blocks in place to inspire interest in this rewarding field and this grant will support us in doing so. Recruitment will be done through the avenues that have been established by many dedicated individuals who believe in the value of serving individuals with disabilities. These include Bison Connections, unified classes and mentoring programs. Recruitment will also happen through Essence and Step-up as part of Northwest Suburban Integration District.