



A partnership dedicated to youth development,  
lifelong learning, cultural celebration,  
and community engagement

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*College of St. Scholastica \*East Hillside Community  
Club \*East Hillside Patch \*  
Grant Magnet School \* Grant PTA  
Head Start \*YWCA of Duluth*

ISD #709 Education Committee Members  
215 N. 1st Ave. E.  
Duluth, MN 55802

January 25th, 2010

Dear Education Committee Members,

The Grant Community School Collaborative members and staff wish to extend our appreciation for the generous in-kind support of program space, after-school instructors, and professional development opportunities that have helped us to achieve our mutual goal of increasing children's assets and achievements in multiple areas of their lives.

As we approach a transition in our organization so that we may serve an expanded school/neighborhood community, we respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you at your February 9th committee meeting. The purpose of our visit would be to share highlights of our partnership with the school district, and to answer any questions that you may have about the scope of our work as we align the mission of our organization with the school district's long-range facility plan.

Enclosed is an organizational overview, and other materials that describe the Grant Community School Collaborative's current structure and program offerings. We hope that this will be useful background information to help frame our discussion with you. Thank you in advance for making time in your full agenda to meet with us.

Most Sincerely,

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## Grant Community School Collaborative Organizational information

### History, mission and goals

The Grant Community School Collaborative (GCSC) was formed in 1997 in response to the persistent needs of Duluth's urban East Hillside neighborhood. At our inception, we attended a three-year series of "Building Collective Community Leadership" workshops sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education, conducted neighborhood needs assessments, surveyed educational research, and mobilized community agencies, individuals and colleges to support the development of free, year-round enrichment programs for youth and families which began in 1998.

In 2001 we became seven member nonprofit agency composed of professionals, parents and community members. We apply the principles of a "Community Schools" model to program design: intentional partnerships with and mobilization of key organizations and individuals, clear outcomes and high expectations, embracing diversity, building upon the strengths of our community, and working in close partnership with a school to address neighborhood needs.

**Our mission** is to enrich the Grant School Community by fostering strong partnerships that expand opportunities for positive youth development, community involvement, life-long learning, and appreciation of our diversity. **Our goals** are to offer a rich selection of free cultural, academic and social enrichment programming, maintain youth, parental and community involvement and leadership within our programs, and increase developmental assets of children in the Grant School Community.

### **Outcomes:**

- Outcome 1: Improve or maintain school attendance
- Outcome 2: Increase academic achievement
- Outcome 3: Contribute to positive youth development through skill development in the arts, sciences, culture, fitness, and other enrichment opportunities

In February of 2004, former President Carter presented the Grant Collaborative and the College of St. Scholastica with the inaugural Minnesota Carter Partnership Award, which honors highly effective community and college partnerships, and in October of 2005 we were selected from 147 Northland Foundation grantees to receive a Bronze Touchstone Award for going "Above and Beyond."

### Current programs and activities

Since 1998, GCSC has been offering innovative and free after-school and summer youth development programs to 300+ at-risk youth ages 5-15 (unduplicated) who live in Duluth's urban East Hillside neighborhood. Typically, 85% of participants can be classified as low/moderate income (HUD). Activities are based on current research and best practices, and are uniquely suited to the community. Youth Programs extend school day curricula and life skills into thematic and applied instruction, and monthly Family Events build bridges between home, school and community and celebrate the school's diversity.

In 2002, GCSC was invited to move office and programming space into Grant Language and Arts Magnet School, allowing program staff to work very closely with school staff to better meet the needs of youth. GCSC attend school trainings, use Responsive Classroom strategies, and participate in weekly Student Support Team meetings. Classroom teachers serve as after-school instructors and meet with the GCSC Family Liaison and parents to set academic goals for some of the highest-needs youth. The Reading Corps member works during the school day to provide targeted literacy skills to K-3 youth, and the AmeriCorps member recruits up to 150 college and community volunteers to provide after-school and school day program support. In the fall of 2009--to help address needed program expansion--the Duluth Parks and Recreation Department provided additional in-kind program and office space adjacent to Grant School.

### **Academic and cultural enrichment activities benefit youth and families**

We believe, and research supports the notion, that hands-on, thematic, experiential classes help kids who have had limited exposure to materials, mentors, and instruction to build the connections that help them problem-solve, gain conceptual understandings and increase vocabulary. Our programs seek to affirm the cultural identities of students and families and provide opportunities for intercultural understanding in an integrated learning environment. We encourage students to expand horizons through exploring cultural, artistic, scientific, and academic enrichment classes and summer programs.

We hope that *youth* will do better in school, develop extra-curricular interests, connect to program staff, and increase both cultural literacy and developmental assets. We hope to see students prepared for success in middle and high school: positive attitudes, intellectual curiosity, creativity, and social skills that will give them the confidence and resources to challenge themselves academically and develop interests that make constructive use of their time.

We work to create a program structure that makes volunteering a rewarding experience, and hope parents and community members who volunteer/work in our programs receive useful job skills, and parents on our Advisory Board develop leadership skills. We hope volunteers gain parenting, civic engagement, and career skills both from training and from working with youth under the direct supervision of experienced educators. It is important for the 150 college students who volunteer with us to gain skills and knowledge relative to working with low-income and culturally diverse youth, allowing them to gain respect for their own and other cultural identities, to appreciate each child as an individual, to experience themselves as good role models, and to understand how to actively engage children and families in educational activities.

### **Criteria for success**

**Outcome 1:** Attain or maintain school attendance rate of 90% or higher for 95% of youth who regularly participate in programming. **Indicator:** Spring school attendance records

**Outcome 2:** 50% of youth participants will show improvement or no need for improvement in reading and math. **Indicator:** Fall and spring report cards

**Outcome 3:** 50% of youth participants will show improvement or no need for improvement in academic achievement. **Indicator:** End of Year Learning Points Teacher Profile

**Outcome 4:** 75% of youth participants will experience growth in life skills and academically supportive behavior. **Indicator:** 7 question, end of semester, student survey

**2008-09 Evaluation highlights**

1. 93% maintained an attendance rate of 90% or higher in the spring

2. Grades: Reading                      Math  
                   48% Maintained    52% Maintained  
                   26% Improved        35% Improved

3. Teacher survey

Category	Maintained	Improved	Total
Timely Homework Completion	35%	63%	98%
Satisfactory Homework Completion	30%	69%	99%
Participation in class	24%	67%	91%
Volunteering in class	65%	34%	99%
Attendance	78%	18%	96%
Attentiveness in Class	40%	54%	94%
Behavior in Class	53%	42%	95%
Academic Performance	28%	70%	98%

4. Fall Semester 2009 Student Survey Results (105 total responses.)

note: TT= Terrific Tuesdays    YE=Young Explorers

Program Goal	Corresponding Survey Question or other pertinent data	Results	Summary of Anecdotal Responses
Expand opportunities for academic, creative, and cultural enrichment.	This program offers me opportunities I would not otherwise have	TT 86% yes 14% no YE 91% yes 9% no	"I learned things I would not have learned in my own home or school" " Learning to do things I didn't know how to." "Learning how to sew and use needles." My favorite part of Young Explorers.. "When we learn about things we don't know ."(5) "Learning about birds." (4)

Provide life skills learning experiences.	This program has taught me things that will help me out in life.	TT 83% yes 17% no YE 97% 2% no	"It helps me be more healthy and more active" " I can do anything I put my mind to" (4) "If you try new things you get better at it" I discovered... "that I could do a lot with my life" " My favorite part... "Learning to sew, so I can make my own clothes. I discovered... "to creatively express myself."
Program activities are planned and facilitated by positive, caring adults.	In this program, I have met adults who care about me.	TT 91% yes 9% no YE 97% yes 2% no	"What was most helpful to me was.. Mentors." "Getting help with homework from mentors (11)" "The Mentors (10)" What was most helpful to me was..."The wonderful teachers and volunteers "(24)
The program culture will be designed to encourage and teach cooperative interaction and constructive conflict resolution.	This program has helped me learn how to get along better with others.	TT 83% yes 17% no YE 74% yes 26% no	" (I learned) "That I can get along with others." "Listen to others when they are talking helps." "What was most helpful to me... "Learning not to hit anybody (2)" "Learning to make friends." My favorite part of Young Explorers.. "Being involved and not left out" " games and being with the other kids (4)"
PACE programs will contribute to building academic skills	Being involved in this program has helped me to be a better learner.	TT 79% yes 21% no YE 86% yes 14% no	"What was most helpful... Writing by myself." "Some day I might have to take test on Shakespeare (like high school) so now I know a bit about him." "I discovered ..."To be a better learner (5)"
PACE program will contribute to building literacy skills.	Being involved in this program has helped me to become a better reader.	TT 54% yes 46% no YE 77% yes 23% no	I discovered... "I can read well." I learned... "That I am a learner and a reader (2)" "I can read (2)"
PACE programs will encourage regular school attendance.	I look forward to coming to school on the days that I am involved in this program.	YE 77% yes 23% no	

Research and practice both point toward the conclusion that community-based organizations, operating in close partnership with schools, can collectively impact children's academic and social success in ways that neither could hope to accomplish independently.

### **Program Goals 2010-2011**

1. *Expansion of Afterschool and summer Elementary and Middle School Enrichment Programs to include Nettleton Magnet School students.* A 2009 study by the Harvard Family Research Project states that, afterschool program "... participation can result in less disciplinary action; lower dropout rates; better academic performance in school, including better grades and test scores; greater on-time promotion; improved homework completion; and improved work habits. ..also for middle and high school youth, whose participation in afterschool programs can help keep them connected to positive role models and learning and engaged in their education at a time when many are beginning to disengage from schools. "(Little)

2. *Expansion of Family Events to include Nettleton Magnet School Community.* Research reviews indicate that, on average, children whose families are more involved display higher levels of achievement than children whose families are less involved (Jeynes, 2005). Additionally, increases in family involvement in school predict increases in literacy achievement, and family involvement in school *matters most for children at greatest risk* (Dearing et al, 2006)

