



**DATE:** September 7, 2011  
**TO:** Board of Education  
**FROM:** Daniel A. Nerad, Superintendent  
**RE:** High School REaL Grant Updates

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**APPENDIX NNN-3-2**  
**September 26, 2011**

I. Introduction

A. MMSD High School REaL Grant Updates

B. Joe Gothard

C. Background Information: In 2008, MMSD received a 5.3 million dollar grant Smaller Learning Communities Grant from the Department of Education. This grant is known locally as Relationships, Engagement, and Learning (REaL).

D. Action Requested: None at this time

II. Summary of Current Information

A. Year four of the five-year REaL Grant has several key areas of focus to support our three grant goals:

- Increase student achievement for all students
  - Strengthen student-student and student-staff relationships
  - Increase post-secondary outcomes for all students
- Following the completion of the K-12 Literacy Evaluation during the 2010-2011 school year there is a renewed commitment and expectations to develop core practices in literacy across the content areas. Professional development around literacy has been scheduled for the 2011-2012 school year and includes: instructional resource teachers, reading interventionists, learning coordinators, literacy coaches. Data from WKCE and EXPLORE indicate the need to improve core practices in literacy.
- The division of Curriculum and Assessment has structured the entire 2011-2012 school year with high school department chairperson meetings across the district. The central purpose of this important dialogue is to build consensus around a curriculum scope and sequence that is aligned to both the ACT Career and College Readiness Standards and the Common Core State Standards. Much progress has been made with the adoption of common course names and numbers throughout our high schools.

- AVID/TOPS has increased in capacity throughout the high schools and preliminary data indicates continued significant differences in the success of our AVID/TOPS students and their comparison group counterparts. Several teachers and departments outside of our AVID/TOPS classrooms have adopted the AVID/TOPS strategies and we look forward to supporting this demand helping our schools develop consistent systems of support and shared high expectations for all students.
- Several professional development opportunities over the summer were supported by the REaL grant. Examples include: Critical Friends, Adaptive Schools, AVID Institute, and Align by Design. Additionally, school leadership teams under the direction of principals, REaL grant coordinators and literacy coaches met to create the Welcome Back Conference sessions for their respective schools.
- Principals and teacher leaders continue to increase their capacities as instructional leaders. This year we also have in place a coordinated plan to help assistant principals progress their roles as instructional leaders. This has been an area clearly lacking in the first three years of the grant. Principals and all assistant principals will receive the same professional development each month.
- The four high schools received a significant grant from the DPI to support safe schools. These added resources and action plans will compliment the REaL grant goals of improved relationships. High schools continue to address critical student behavior issues with a greater systematic approach. Two areas identified district wide based on the success in one school are: Youth Court and Restorative Justice classes.

B. Recommendations: None at this time. This update is a general update as we begin year four of the grant.

### III. Implications

A. Budget: There are two future discussions and possible decisions that will have to be considered:

1) EPAS: High school juniors in the 2012-2013 school year will all take either the ACT and/or the practice ACT (an actual retired ACT that we can purchase). Fee waivers are available from ACT for students who qualify.

2) AVID: If AVID is fully expanded in the Middle Schools there may be increased numbers of freshmen who want to participate in our high school programs. There will be increasing cost related to professional development for middle school teachers and the possibility of expanding our sections for freshmen (currently two sections and ~50 freshmen/school).

B. Strategic Plan: Aligns with the MMSD Strategic Plan

C. Equity Plan: Aligns with the MMSD Equity Plan

D. Implications for the Organization: Improved student achievement

IV. Supporting Documentation

A.

B.