

## **Seven Northwest Indiana School Corporations to Share Major STEM Grant**

*Merrillville Community School Corporation to lead Collaboration with College Acceleration Network and Purdue University North Central*

(INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – January 22, 2014) – Seven Northwest Indiana school corporations will share a \$450,000 federal Mathematics and Science Partnership grant administered by the Indiana Department of Education to enhance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education over the next three years. The STEM Innovations initiative, which was formed by Indianapolis-based College Acceleration Network, was created as a result of the grant and partners school systems with higher education institutions to assist teachers in strengthening their STEM skills to help impact student academic performance. The initiative is partnering with Purdue University North Central, which will develop key tools and implement training for teachers and administrators.

“We need to ensure that our students have the best STEM education possible and in order to do that teachers and administrators need the necessary tools and training from experts in their field,” said Nancy Sutton, executive director of College Acceleration Network. “This grant will help provide those necessary resources.”

More than 200 teachers in the seven school corporations in grades seven through nine will participate in summer institutes and key sessions throughout the school year to learn a number of skills including how to create more effective lessons that will enhance current Indiana Common Core standards and Indiana academic requirements. The school corporations participating in the initiative are: Crown Point Community School Corporation (Crown Point, Ind.), Gary Community School Corporation (Gary, Ind.), Merrillville School Corporation (Merrillville, Ind.), M.S.D. of Boone Township (Hebron, Ind.), School City of Hammond (Hammond, Ind.), School City of Hobart (Hobart, Ind.) and the School Town of Munster (Munster, Ind.). The school corporations are part of the ReadyNWI initiative.

The grant will also help the school corporations continue to build on the work they are already doing as part of a Math Innovations grant that provides professional development and leadership coaching in algebra and assessment data to teachers. The Math Innovations grant increases knowledge of the Common Core State Standards, focusing on the importance of math as an indicator of post-secondary success.

“The critical work we have been doing with the Math Innovations grant has created a strong foundation to launch the new STEM Innovations initiative in Northwest Indiana as a model for the state,” said Dr. Mark Sperling, superintendent of the Merrillville Community School Corporation. “Strengthening STEM instructional strategies and driving interest in STEM careers is key to our students’ achievement and to our regional economies. The STEM Innovations initiative also supports our Governor’s strong agenda in the development of STEM curriculum in schools.”

U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly (D-Indiana) said in a press release, “I am very happy to see Indiana school corporations and institutes of higher learning working together to provide our kids with the education and skills they need to succeed in today’s job market. I want to thank the Indiana Department of Education for making this investment in our children’s future.”

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**About College Acceleration Network**

The College Acceleration Network (CAN), an Indianapolis-based non-profit organization, is committed to helping educational leaders meet their college and career readiness goals. CAN provides services including assessment mapping, analytical tools and custom instructional and leadership coaching for secondary school leaders to help align the work of K12 to the needs of the regional economy. CAN has secured over \$1 million in external grant funds and currently supports leadership teams across 75 secondary schools in Indiana. To learn more visit [www.collegeacceleration.com](http://www.collegeacceleration.com).

**About Merrillville Community School Corporation**

Merrillville Community School Corporation develops in students: skills for independent learning, responsible citizenship, and productive employment; and it provides the community with educational, vocational, and recreational resources.