

## Gov. Branstad announces Iowa school districts receive Teacher Incentive Funding

Written by Office of the Governor of the State of Iowa  
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(DES MOINES) – Gov. Terry E. Branstad announced today that the Central Decatur Community School District and the Saydel Community School District won a grant in partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) from the U. S. Department of Education’s 2012 Teacher Incentive Fund.

The goal of the project is to create a new teacher leadership and compensation structure in each district to help boost student achievement. This will be done by putting in place NIET’s Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), which creates mentor and master teacher roles that provide more support for classroom teachers to help them improve instructional strategies. As part of the project, the districts will make it possible for teachers who specialize in science, technology, engineering and math to seek more training at local universities. Helping principals become more effective also is a focus of the project.

The grant provides \$2.3 million for the first two years, with the possibility of nearly \$9.6 million total over five years depending upon annual congressional appropriations.

“This is an outstanding opportunity to implement a new teacher leadership and compensation structure, which will better support teachers in the classroom as they work to raise student achievement,” said Branstad. “I would like to thank the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching and the Central Decatur and Saydel school districts for working together to win this grant. Their superintendents, school boards, teachers’ associations and others did an

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extraordinary job of moving this application forward in a short time frame. Graceland University and Grand View University also deserve to be commended for their support for the grant application. So does the Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Advisory Council."

"The creation of mentor and master teacher roles will give teachers new career options in these two districts," Branstad added. "We cannot continue the one-size-fits-all approach toward the teaching profession, which limits professional opportunities."

The Central Decatur and Saydel superintendents said the grant will better support work already under way in their districts.

"We are excited to have this opportunity. The core concepts of the Teacher Advancement Program align with the work we have done and conversations we already have had as a district. We feel this will help provide more structure and better consistency to sustain and improve student achievement," said Chris Coffelt, Central Decatur superintendent. Coffelt added that the grant will offer teachers multiple career paths, and will help the district have more success retaining and attracting great teachers.

"I believe the grant has the power to be transformational. It is such a great opportunity to improve teaching to increase student learning," said Saydel Superintendent Brad Buck.

Buck said Saydel teachers work extraordinarily hard now, but the additional support will help them accelerate student achievement.

"In line with Governor Branstad's and Education Director Jason Glass's reform blueprint, this will open up new career opportunities in our district with the designation of mentor and master teacher roles," said Buck. Master teachers will spend 100 percent of their day providing staff with instructional coaching and analyzing student achievement data, among other duties, he said.

"This is an exciting new day for the teaching profession in Iowa," said Glass. "This is the first

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federal grant of its kind ever awarded to the state and a marked change from the one-size-fits-all profession that has come to limit career opportunities for teachers. We are incredibly proud of these two districts and their innovative spirit, and we look for them to lead the way in this exciting new era of the teaching profession.”

The grant won by Central Decatur and Saydel is one of 35 grants announced today by the U.S. Department of Education to “improve pay structures, reward great teachers and principals, and provide greater professional opportunities to teachers in high-poverty schools.” For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-boosts-district-le-d-efforts-recognize-and-reward-great-t>

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