

Post Grant Evaluation Report – FY17 **U.S. Trust - Philanthropic Solutions**

Agency name/grantee: Emporia State University

Name of Foundation: Emporia State University Foundation

We look forward to receiving a report on the progress of the funded program within **one year of the grant APPLICATION date**. Please include brief responses to the following questions:

1. How did you fulfill the goals set by your organization in the grant application? The overarching goal: All students in the tri-county area to achieve grade-level literacy skills by the end of third grade beginning in year 2021. This will be accomplished by focusing on school readiness, summer or extended learning, and/or school attendance. During this first year, eight of the eleven districts chose school readiness as their target area and the others concentrated on summer or extended learning.

As anticipated, during this first year, districts collected baseline data using a variety of assessments tailored to their district's needs and initiatives. Currently, the only assessment that is common for all districts is the state mandated third-grade reading assessment; however, each district is administering additional developmentally appropriate exams throughout the school year. These more formative checkpoints will help guide instruction and curricula decisions as students progress from grade-to-grade.

Note: The Kansas State Board of Education recently voted to approve the Ages and Stages Questionnaires to become the measurement tools used annually to collect kindergarten entry data for every district. Therefore, at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, there will be additional uniform data to determine children's strengths and needs so interventions and extensions can begin immediately at the beginning of children's K-12 experience.

2. What are the lasting benefits of the project? Literacy proficiency by the end of third grade is the most important predictor of success in school, college, career, and life. The targeted areas, school readiness and summer/extended learning, are key pillars to attaining this benchmark. Research shows students who dwell in low-income, non-English speaking, or homes where parents do not spend enough quality time with their children are more likely to need extra attention in the areas of school readiness and summer or extended learning. Approximately seventy-four percent of students who fail to read on grade level by the end of third grade will not finish high school on time, if at all. It was very apparent, when the districts met in April 2017, collaboration within community organizations and between districts has grown immensely during this first year and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Not only has the technology expanded in terms of quantity, the quality and sophistication has grown as well.

3. What problems did you encounter during the course of this project? Some of the challenges included: 1) Districts identifying the most critical impediments keeping many of their students from reaching grade-level literacy skills by the end of third grade. 2) Strategically allocating and spending funds to leverage other district and community resources in order to yield the most progress toward this goal. 3) Schools cannot address this issue alone: building partnerships with community members and businesses can be a challenge in some communities. 4) Due to scheduling conflicts and high workloads, it was difficult to secure Emporia State reading and early childhood faculty to serve as consultants for the districts. Therefore, most consultants are practicing school administrators, directors, instructional

coaches, or lead teachers who have vast experience with children ages 0-8. 5) Although districts were offering great opportunities for children advertising, transportation, and consistent student attendance became challenging. 6) Staff turnover and hiring quality staff was also difficult for most districts.

4. Please provide an itemized income and expense summary for the total project. Please indicate specific sources of all income. *If there is a remaining grant balance, please explain here.* During this first year, approximately \$264,000 of the \$400,000 budget was allocated to the school districts to support their efforts in addressing their target areas of school readiness or summer/extended learning. The remaining funds were used for administrative costs: salaries for director, faculty liaison, administrative assistant, project evaluator, consultants, and expenses related to travel, meals, and supplies.

Note: Due to the sharing of administrative costs with the Kansas Masonic Literacy Center, the allocation to school districts will rise to nearly \$330,000 per year for the remainder of the project beginning in the 2017-18 school year: nearly a thirty percent increase!

Grant Expenditures

Please provide an itemized breakdown of grant expenditures.

- A. \$264,000 was distributed to the school districts
- B. \$133,000 was allotted for salaries for the director, faculty liaison, administrative assistant, project evaluator and consultants
- C. \$3,000 was used for expenses related to travel, meals, and supplies

5. If this project is on-going, please list the sources for future funding. Due to the generosity of the Jones Trust, the children in these districts will continue to experience the benefit for the next four years. During this time, districts should be able to use the gains in student performance as evidence when soliciting additional funders (including federal and state grants) and demonstrate to local constituents, reasons to reallocate resources within the districts' budgets to support their efforts.

6. What are the specific plans, if any, for continuing the work started by this project?

Each district's year-two action plan reflects the abundance of knowledge learned in the first year. Although many are keeping their same target areas and goals, the action steps, assessments, and budgets were altered based on their first-year experiences.

In order to support the Mobilizing Literacy project efforts, the Kansas Masonic Literacy Center will offer three opportunities for the tri-county area school districts: 1) Expand the number of libraries participating in the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. 2) Provide parent workshops for parents of preschool age children. 3) Offer the WordsMatter/Words/Count program designed to reduce the 30,000,000-word gap evident by age four. WordsMatter/Words/Count is designed to help families increase the quantity and quality of words spoken at home and escalate the occurrence of conversational turns.