

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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NORTH DAKOTA RECEIVES LARGEST EARLY READING FIRST GRANT IN THE NATION

North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead is pleased to announce the Department of Public Instruction received a 2008 Early Reading First grant from the U.S. Department of Education. North Dakota was the top funded Early Reading First grantee out of thirty-one entities. In total, North Dakota will be receiving \$5,601,665 in Early Reading First funds over the next three years. Sanstead said, "The fact that this is the largest early literacy grant given in the nation is significant. Preparation to implement the North Dakota Early Reading First program has already begun with full implementation scheduled for next spring. "

The Early Reading First program supports the development of early childhood centers of excellence that focus on all areas of development, especially on the early language, cognitive, and pre-reading skills that prepare children for continued school success and that serve primarily children from low-income families.

The name of the Early Reading First program in North Dakota is MiND PLACE, or Minot, North Dakota Preschool Literacy Acquisition Collaborative for Education. The MiND PLACE Early Reading First program aims to improve the school readiness of children attending preschools in three regional Head Starts; Minot Public Schools Head Start, Early Explorers Head Start, whose office is located in Towner, and Three Affiliated Tribes Head Start, whose office is located in New Town. The MiND PLACE Early Reading First program will collaborate with the Reading First programs at the Sunnyside Elementary School in Minot and Mohall Elementary School, as well as other regional elementary schools, to coordinate preschool to kindergarten transitional activities.

MiND PLACE Early Reading First plans to feature eight strategies: 1) increased time for learning, 2) research-based literacy curriculum, *Pearson's Opening the World of Learning*, 3) print- and language-rich classrooms, 4) research-based instructional practices that support individual learning needs, 5) ongoing assessment and progress monitoring, 6) *Scaffolding Early Literacy*, a research-based professional development, 7) home-school linkages, and 8) a comprehensive preschool to kindergarten transition program.

For more information on the North Dakota MiND PLACE Early Reading First Program, contact Gail Schauer, Department of Public Instruction, Program Administrator, at gschauer@nd.gov or at (701) 328-2285.