



January 7, 2010

BCPS gets math, science funds

Fellowship to place trained teachers into area's schools by fall 2012

*Annie Martin
The Enquirer*

Battle Creek Public Schools is one of five Michigan school districts that will receive math and science teachers trained through a program funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation starting in fall 2012.

The Woodrow Wilson Michigan Teaching Fellowship will allow 240 teachers to earn master's degrees in education and place them in middle and high schools for at least three years.

The districts chosen have a high number of vulnerable students and a shortage of math and science teachers, said Huilan Krenn, a program officer with the foundation. The first group of teachers will be chosen in spring 2011 and enter classrooms in fall 2012. Detroit Public Schools, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Benton Harbor Area Schools and Grand Rapids Public Schools will also receive teachers through the fellowship.

President Barack Obama said Wednesday those districts are part of a national \$250 million public-private effort to improve science, technology, engineering and math education. The teaching fellowship is the result of a partnership between the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in Princeton, N.J. The \$16.7 million grant was announced in the fall but the participating school districts were not revealed until Wednesday.

Understanding math and science usually means students can succeed in school and life, said Kathy Griffey, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for BCPS.

"Math and science are two areas where if we have students who are able to do well in those areas, we know they can read well, and we know they can reason well," Griffey said. "We know that they have good study habits and have developed as a student."

The fellows will attend one of six state universities, including Western Michigan University, who will receive funds through the program. Those schools will have 21 months to redevelop their teacher education programs in math and science before the first fellows enroll. The fellows can be college seniors, recent graduates or older workers who want to change careers.

Additionally, those teachers can serve as models for other teachers in the district and help improve the instruction in the other classrooms, Griffey said.

Having strong math and science education programs can help the community draw people who are trained in those fields as well as employers, said Becky Rocho, assistant superintendent of the Calhoun Intermediate School District. It's often hard for districts to find good math and science teachers because other employers want to hire them, too.

"Engineering and science are critical shortage areas and we have a hard time competing with the private sector for those individuals," she said.

Annie Martin can be reached at 966-0468 or almartin@gannett.com.