

View the online version of this newsletter [here](#).

View a printable PDF version [here](#).

# What's Working in Schools

*Failure Is Not An Option*<sup>®</sup>

**6 Principles for Making Student Success the ONLY Option**

The HOPE Foundation

Volume 3, Issue 3

March 1, 2010

## How Schools and Districts are using their ARRA Funds to Sustain Student Success

by Eric Mokube Ph.D.

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) surveyed districts and schools on their efforts and plans to use ARRA Title I funds; top responses were:

- Professional development 63 %
- Saving existing personnel positions 58 %
- Classroom technology 53 %
- Classroom equipment 38 %
- Software 35 %.

The statistics confirm that districts are in fact using their ARRA funds to improve student achievement in their schools.

This month we have three examples of how schools and districts are sustaining student success using ARRA and School Improvement Grant funds. Information culled from these examples suggests that collaboration among educators is a crucial factor in school success and transformation.

The first example is from a rural district in central Minnesota. Brainerd School District collaborated with its community to create and foster a better alternative high school in which students who drop out, or are at risk of dropping out of school can - return to the classroom and earn their diploma. In Brainerd, the ARRA funding was instrumental in hiring Dr. Gunderson who has been successful in helping students effectively deal with their struggles outside of the classroom.

The second example looks at the tough balancing act districts face and the growing urgency for them to collaborate and quickly find better ways to meet the many fiscal challenges they face today. It's clear: planning for school success requires a collaborative effort.

The final example underscores a concerted effort to change a school culture to one built around the students and the strategies used for student success. The funds in this case were used to follow the School Improvement Plan (SIP) by identifying the needs of students. Again, the driving force was the school's willingness to embrace collaboration among all stakeholders.

Most of the districts in the AASA survey and our examples used their ARRA funding to enhance their professional development to attain student success. Feel free to read the examples presented in this newsletter for more details.

## In This Issue

[How Schools and Districts are using their ARRA Funds to Sustain Student Success](#)  
by Eric Mokube Ph.D.

[New Federal Funding Supports Brainerd's At-Risk Students: Educationally and Emotionally](#)  
by Ruth Nelson

[Funding In Tough Times](#)  
by John McKenna Ed.D .

[How Shambaugh Elementary Is Using Its Funds To Close Achievement Gaps](#)  
by Shawn Smiley



If you would be interested in submitting an article for review, please [click here](#).

For more on our professional development resources [click here](#).



**Eric Mokube Ph.D.**  
Research Associate for the HOPE Foundation.

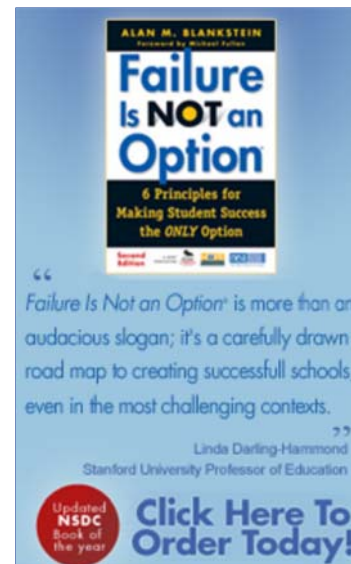


Our Twitter



Our Facebook

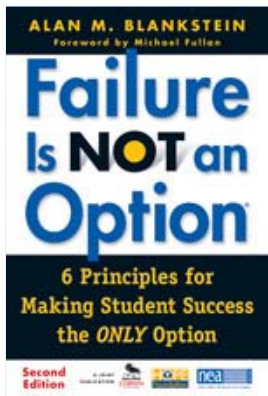
Visit Our *What's Working In Schools* Blog



Join the [Courageous Leaders Network](#) to be a part of a community of educators devoted to sustained success in schools.

**Build your team with a book package & receive FREE shipping**  
**Enormous Savings: more than 10%**

Designed for schools and districts who want to create large scale change, this package contains research-based and field-tested resources for student success and closing achievement gaps. Receive 10 or 50 copies of *Failure Is Not an Option*®, a copy of the Facilitator's Guide, and free shipping to advance your team!



***Failure Is Not an Option*®**  
6 Principles for Making Student Success the ONLY Option

More than 100,000 leaders throughout North America, China, India, and South Africa are using *Failure Is Not an Option*® to access the most up-to-date approaches to building "courageous" leadership capacity and learning communities that sustain student and school success. As Michael Fullan wrote, "*Failure Is Not an Option*® addresses all the elements that are absolutely necessary for effective and enduring educational reform. It is a deeply passionate call to arms, combined with the wherewithal to take systematic, continuous, and effective action."

**Order Today!**

10 Copy Package: \$300  
50 Copy Package: \$1400

## New Federal Funding Supports Brainerd's At-Risk Students: Educationally and Emotionally

by Ruth Nelson

The Brainerd School District, located in central Minnesota, is a rural district with a high percentage of Title One students. When additional federal funding became available through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds (ARRA), Marlee Larson, Principal of the Alternative Learning Center, was confident she could use these funds to help her students succeed and graduate. She knows these students often come from disadvantaged and troubled backgrounds, have a high risk of dropping out, and need additional support to succeed in school. She already had one school counselor meeting one-on-one with some of her 280 students, but he couldn't reach all of the kids that needed help. Utilizing some of the district's ARRA funds, Larson was able to hire another counselor, Gary Gunderson, Ed.D.

President Barack Obama's goals for transforming education support Larson's plans. In an education speech this month President Obama said, "Of course, getting it right requires . . . giving students who are behind in school a chance to catch up and a path to a diploma. It requires focusing on students, from middle school through high school, who face factors at home, in the neighborhood, or in school that put them at risk of dropping out . . . So that's why we'll build on the efforts of places like Communities in Schools that make sure kids who are at risk of dropping out have one-on-one support. That's why we'll follow the example of places like the Met Center in Rhode Island that give students that individual attention . . . It's also why we'll foster better alternative high schools and transfer schools, where students who have dropped out and who are at risk of dropping out, can return to the classroom and earn their diploma."

Larson assigned Dr. Gunderson to meet individually each week with 34 of her high risk students to help provide the extra support they need to succeed in life and to graduate high school. Gunderson is booked solid on Tuesdays and Thursdays to meet with these students. He often brings his certified therapy dog, Kaiser, to help break down the emotional barriers these students bring with them. Many of these students come from difficult backgrounds and have dealt with domestic violence, chemical dependence, grief and loss issues and severe depression. Students' time with Gunderson count as a health and wellness credit, necessary for graduation in Minnesota, so even students who are not readily interested in accepting one-on-one help have an incentive to meet with Gunderson.

Dr. Gunderson said, "Schools are changing, the line between what is an educational issue and what is an emotional issue is being blurred. We need to continue to find more ways to support the emotional needs of our students. When I can help them deal effectively with their struggles outside of the classroom, then I see great success in their academic lives. And this is what it is all about, helping kids succeed both in school and in life."

Brainerd's Alternative Learning Center is focused on helping at risk and struggling students thrive in the classroom. And with the help of some additional ARRA funds, Principal Marlee Larson and Dr. Gary Gunderson, this job just became a little bit easier.



**Ruth Nelson,**  
Brainerd School Board Director

## Funding In Tough Times

by John McKenna Ed.D.

" Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another. "

-G. K. Chesterson



Here is an opportunity to move a District forward.

The Federal Government, through the Federal Stimulus Plan, is distributing billions of dollars into State Fiscal Stabilization Funds.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds will help propel Districts forward on the front of professional development, technology capacity and student outcomes. But Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, warns, "If states play games with these funds, the 2nd round of stabilization funds could be in jeopardy and they could eliminate their state from competitive grant money" (Humbert & Butry, 2009 pg 1).

While this is trickling down to new monies for districts, school administrators are dealing with lost state funding and the reality that these funds are supplanting State Aid and Grants. These dollars also come with strings attached. They must be used for very specific purposes.

The reality is that district administrators must work within this new order and craft budgets that will minimize job loss, create innovative programming and align with the vision of the school district. Funds have gone directly for staff in Title I designated schools, special education classrooms; technology advances such as SMART Boards and Promethean Boards, and professional development.

Utilizing ARRA funds will help school districts fund creative new ways to meet the many fiscal challenges we face today.



### John McKenna, Ed.D.

John McKenna has been principal of Fletcher Elementary School in Tonawanda, New York since 1995. He completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of New York at Buffalo in 2008. It was a comprehensive seven year study entitled A Case Study of the Development & Implementation of a Balanced Literacy Intervention Program. Dr. McKenna may be reached at:

[jmckenna@tona.wnyric.org](mailto:jmckenna@tona.wnyric.org).

## ***Failure Is Not an Option*® 3 DVD Last Chance!** **Effective Assessment for Effective Learning:** **Seven Instructional Principles for Guiding Student Achievement**

This DVD is based on the ASCD Leadership article titled "Seven Practices for Effective Learning," (McTighe and O'Connor, 2005) and features **Jay McTighe**, **Linda Darling-Hammond**, **Carol Tomlinson**, **Larry Bell**, **Michael Fullan** and many others. The DVD also demonstrates how schools in two high-performing, diverse districts use well designed classroom assessments and grading practices to provide specific, personalized and timely information to guide both teaching and learning.

Specifically, this DVD is divided into three parts—diagnostic, formative and summative assessments—demonstrating how to:

- Use summative assessments to frame meaningful performance goals (and three common errors in doing this!)
- Best develop and use diagnostics before the teaching even begins
- Offer appropriate choices for students to demonstrate their learning
- Provide constructive feedback that is motivational and enhances learning
- Encourage student assessment and goal-setting
- Make grading meaningful and fair so as to keep students learning and engaged

Each *Effective Assessment for Effective Learning* resource is accompanied by a facilitator's guide and bonus DVD of additional interviews with the featured experts and practitioners. Additionally, all of our resources carry a money-back GUARANTEE.

**Call by March 31 and receive a copy with a 30-day preview period. If you are not satisfied, we will cancel your invoice immediately upon receiving the returned resource(s). You are only responsible for the cost of shipping the resource(s) and insuring that the resource(s) are returned within 30 days in resalable condition.**

For more information, [click here](#) or email [leadership@hopefoundation.org](mailto:leadership@hopefoundation.org).

## How Shambaugh Elementary Is Using Its Funds To Close Achievement Gaps

by Shawn Smiley

At Shambaugh Elementary and Fort Wayne Community Schools, we have used grant money from various sources (Title I, state funding, and the Wallace Foundation) as an opportunity to close achievement gaps and sustain student success. Different schools in our district have made different "how" and "what" choices based on the needs of our students. At Shambaugh, we are creating a school culture built around our students specifically. We use strategies for student success that are measureable, visible, and identifiable for the short and long term, and combine this approach with relevant and applicable professional development specifically designed to target the needs of our students.

Grant monies support our existing School Improvement Plan, which identifies student needs. Gaps in our students' learning and achievement show up especially in gender and race, and we all understand that the overall success of our schools hinges on our success in these areas.

We made a conscious effort to change our mindset of educating and engaging students in the building, and to create specific plans to implement change. We changed our procedures and how we talk to students, and found we increased attendance, provided more specific and relevant instruction, and were able to ensure the safety and productivity of all stakeholders.

We have created a 30/90 intervention block that includes every student, from the lowest achieving student to the highest achieving student, which has created an environment where behavioral episodes have dropped 34% in the past year and a half.

Components of the intervention block include but are not limited to:

- 90 minute uninterrupted literacy block for every student. No student is removed during this time. This block is provided and maintained daily.
- 30 minute intervention block.
  - During this 30 minutes:*
    - Special Ed. Direct students receive services,
    - RTI intervention students receive services, and
    - Teachers identify 4-6 students left in the room with a common academic need (determined through hard data).
    - Classroom teachers work in a separate area on a specific skill/standard.

Classroom assistants enter the grade level with the remaining students (generally "at or above" grade level) to facilitate their own "Intervention". This normally includes working higher level thinking problems in addition to what they receive

during the normal day.

- Maintaining and providing relevant and planned Professional Development for teachers and assistants.
- Ensuring students are not being pulled for various services throughout the day, causing continual classroom disruption and lack of consistency for the students.
- Empowering every adult to be accountable for change
- Implementing our Data Wall to better encompass and understand building levels as a whole that produce a successful school.



**Shawn Smiley,**

Principal, Willard Shambaugh Elementary School

Shawn Smiley is the Principal at Willard Shambaugh Elementary School, Fort Wayne Community Schools; IN. He has been an educator for over a decade; his experiences include: Football and Baseball Coach, Math and Science Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal.

---

### Upcoming Professional Development Institutes

#### Pittsburgh, PA

June 29 - June 30, 2010



#### Kansas City, MO

October 12 - October 14, 2010



**[View all upcoming events and information.](#)**

*Where There Is HOPE, Failure Is Not an Option<sup>®</sup>*

If you would like to continue receiving email communications from the HOPE Foundation regarding professional development opportunities, news, and strategies please [click here](#).