

FY23 Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report Form

Instructions:

Please send an electronic copy of the Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant (TMRG) final completed report **by June 30, 2023** to Laura.Dyer@state.mn.us.

Report components:

- I. **Coversheet**
- II. **Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Program Narrative** – Please describe how your proposed activities for the teacher mentorship program has strengthened and/or supplemented your existing or attempted mentorship or retention efforts and how the awarded funds allowed you to do the work.
- III. **Program Data** – Please provide data from the past 3 years, as well as the year funded by the grant. Please also describe how grant funding has impacted the data from the most recent reporting year. You are welcome to include graphs.
- IV. **Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure** – Please list all awarded funds, differentiating between funds spent and funds yet-to-be-spent this fiscal year. Fill in the “method of progress monitoring” and “data” columns based on the information in sections VI of your proposal.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report

Grantee Information

Legal Name of Applicant Organization	Willow River Area School
Total Grant Amount	\$3992.58

Identified Official with Authority

Name of official with authority to sign	Laura Carlson
Title	Business Manager
Address	8142 Pine St.
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Phone Number and Email	218-372-3131 ext. 214, lcarlson@isd577.org

Primary Program Contact

Name of program contact	Melissa Johnson
Title	High School Principal
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Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Narrative

Willow River Area School is a small, rural district. In recent years, we are struggling to attract highly qualified teaching staff to our district, especially in areas of teacher shortages such as agriculture, family and consumer science, business education teachers, special education, and interventionists. Our goal is to strengthen and enhance our teacher mentorship program and foster a sense of community and loyalty to the district to promote teacher retention.

Willow River Area School proposed to strengthen our teacher mentorship program by offering a stipend to teacher mentors, hosting monthly new staff workshops/ check-in meetings, and providing opportunities for mentor/mentee teams to observe in each other's classrooms as well as other professional development team activities.

We have had an informal teacher mentorship program in place for many years. During the 2020-21 school year, the district and teachers' union formed a committee to develop the mentorship program in a more formal capacity. Some of the changes included:

- Our teacher mentorship program was expanded from a one-year program to a two-year program.
- At the completion of each school year, mentors are eligible for a stipend.
- Each month a mentor/ mentee team presents on a topic to the rest of the mentorship program members
- Mentor/ mentee teams have a full-day workshop in August that includes a bus tour of the district.
- Mentor/ mentee teams follow a checklist of monthly topics to cover over the course of the year.
- Mentors and mentees observe each other's classrooms once per semester.

Changes added in Fall of 2022:

- Year 2 mentor/mentee teams had separate monthly meetings that were roundtable discussions. Facilitation of the discussions rotated by team each month.

This awarded grant allowed us to better facilitate peer observations by helping to fund substitute teachers. It also allows us to expand on teambuilding and professional development activities for the mentor/ mentee teams. The 2022-23 school year presented some challenges with a lack of availability of substitute teachers. Despite these challenges, our mentors supported our mentees with formal and informal support.

Willow River Area School is grateful for this grant award. It helped to make strides in promoting a culture of loyalty, caring, and community.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Data

Table 1: Total number of teachers new to the profession or district that received mentoring as a result of this grant.

Number of teachers disaggregated by race or ethnic group	Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district	Tier 2 new to the profession or district	Tier 1 teachers new to the profession or district	Teaching residents	Teacher in license shortage areas	Teachers with special needs	Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2	0	4	1	0
Total	1	1	2	0	4	1	0

Table 2: Total number of mentors who were paid stipends under this grant for providing mentorship to teachers.

Number of Mentors by race or ethnic group	Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district	Teaching residents	Teacher in license shortage areas	Teachers with special needs	Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0
Black	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	2	1	0
Paid Mentors of color who received additional stipends	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2	1	0

Analysis of Data

We continue to face a fair amount of turnover with our staff. We are located directly on the I35 corridor in east central Minnesota but tend to have trouble attracting and retaining staff for a number of reasons: lower pay scale in general, minimal insurance/ benefits package options, and lack of housing options in the immediate geographical area. As a community, there is a need to attract more industry and housing options to sustain our local school districts. Willow River began sharing our superintendent, business manager, and accounts payable/payroll clerk with another local district in July 2022. This helps both districts with some of their financial burden but also helps fill open positions that were challenging to attract applicants. This should help with district sustainability in the short term. For the 2023-24 school year, we will also begin sharing a technology coordinator and possibly teaming up on busing/ transportation.

The Willow River school district has historically sustained having a fairly robust career and technical education department with industrial technology, family and consumer sciences, and business education. In the past two years, we have had teacher turnover in those areas. We were fortunate to be able to add in agricultural education when we were unable to fill the family and consumer science area. These are areas of teacher shortage for the state and nation, but as a district, we try to prioritize these offerings for our students as it is a community priority. We once again have a CTE opening for the 2023-24 school year.

The effects of the pandemic have included an influx of special education evaluation requests. Special education teaching staff can be hard to attract and retain as well. This area of licensure can be more labor-intensive to obtain. Our greatest success in hiring and retaining special education teachers has been somewhat of a “grow your own” program. Staff that were hired for other positions decided to move to an out-of-field special education teaching position as they completed their special education degrees. One teacher that was working with out-of-field permission in special education has completed her special education degree and two others are nearing completion.

Finally, as a district, we need to take a closer look at how we advertise our open positions and attract applicants. We advertise on our school website, school social media pages, and on St. Cloud EdPost. A fresh look at our process, language, and advertisement may show that we are inadvertently not attracting a variety of applicants with varied ethnic background potential.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure

Table 3: Grant Funds Expenditure

Amount	Description of Use of Funds	Primarily Used for:		Method of Progress Monitoring	Data
\$3992.58	Mentor Stipends	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Induction		Monthly attendance at Mentor/Mentee Meetings	Engagement Data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction			