

## Grades 3-8 Common Core Mathematics Project Begins at UW-River Falls

September 9, 2014--"Core Math Progressions through Fractions and Algebra" will kick-off its first year of workshops and seminars later this month at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The project was funded \$119,182 through the UW System to provide professional development for elementary and middle school math teachers in Western Wisconsin. The focus of the project is to provide training and assistance on implementing the Common Core math content and practice standards.

Faculty from UW-River Falls and UW-Eau Claire will work with 40 elementary and middle school mathematics teachers in Western Wisconsin. Districts included in the grant are New Auburn (main partner), New Richmond (main partner), Bloomer, River Falls, Luck, Clayton, Chetek, Durand, Elk Mound, Prairie Farm, and Barron. A group of teacher candidates from UWRF will also participate in the project.

Participants will meet on average once per month during the school year, which includes after school seminars and weekend sessions. During the summer there will be a weeklong intensive workshop and during the academic year the project will focus on the Common Core domains of Number and Operation (grades 3-5) and The Number System (grades 6-8). An emphasis will be placed on fractions, algebraic thinking, and exploring the eight mathematical practice standards.

"This project will complement work we have been doing the last two years as part of a Mathematics Partnership grant with middle school and high school teachers in the region," said Erick Hofacker, associate professor of mathematics at UWRF and project co-director.

"We wanted to provide support for math teachers at all levels [elementary, middle school, and high school] as we go through such an important implementation of new standards." Sherrie Serros, professor of mathematics at UW-Eau Claire and project co-director said.

"This program has great promise to enhance the learning of mathematics in this corner of the state. The enthusiasm of teachers enrolling in the program should provide for a very productive community of educators," Kathryn Ernie, emerita professor of mathematics at UWRF and project co-director stated. "An exciting feature of this project is that it provides a professional learning community for educators across multiple districts to learn from each other on how to successfully implement the standards. It also involves math teacher candidates from UW-River Falls working alongside practicing teachers. It will provide them first-hand experience working with in-service teachers in a professional development environment."

Funding for the project is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title II Improving Teacher Quality Program.

For more information on this program, contact Hofacker at 715-425-3347 or [erick.b.hofacker@uwrf.edu](mailto:erick.b.hofacker@uwrf.edu).

## Mathematics Partnership Project Begins Third Year at UW-River Falls

Sept. 4, 2014--"Math Transition into the Common Core Era" will kick-off its third year of workshops in October at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The project, funded through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, provides professional development for middle and high school math teachers in Western Wisconsin over a three-year period.

A major focus of the \$471,969 grant is to prepare teachers to implement the content and practice standards associated with the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. Funding for the grants is part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title II Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program.

The main partners in the grant are UW-River Falls and the Rice Lake Area School District. Additional partners include UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, and 14 other school districts in Western Wisconsin (Baldwin-Woodville, Barron, Bruce, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Ellsworth, Hudson, Luck, Menomonie, Mondovi, Osseo-Fairchild, Prairie Farm, Prescott, and River Falls). Currently there are more than 50 teachers involved in the project.

"It has been great working with such dedicated and committed professionals in our region of the state," said Erick Hofacker, associate professor of mathematics at UW-River Falls and co-project director.

"It is exciting to see the impact our project has on everyone involved when we get to visit each teacher's classroom to observe what has been discussed and modeled in our workshops, and then implemented with their own students," said Sherrie Serros, professor of mathematics at UW-Eau Claire and co-project director.

"It has been a pleasure to work with teachers genuinely devoted to the teaching profession and the learning of their students," said Kathryn Ernie, emeritus professor of mathematics at UW-River Falls and co-project director. "An exciting outcome of this project is that teachers have become a professional learning community across multiple districts, supporting, sharing, and learning from each other."

The project is being evaluated by Barb Bennie, associate professor of statistics at UW-La Crosse. "Through the first two years of grant workshops, we have observed significant gains in knowledge and worthwhile reflection on and rethinking of teaching practices among participants," Bennie said. "We look forward to seeing this growth continue in the coming year."

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