

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday, May 13, 2002

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Partnership, Collaboration Highlight This Year's McDowell Projects

Partnership and collaboration are common threads among this year's successful applicants from the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching.

A year after having celebrated its 10th year anniversary, the Foundation review committee awarded another \$82,294 in research grants for a dozen new projects.

There were over 30 applicants this year, with those chosen including six from Saskatoon as well as half a dozen from other areas throughout the province ranging from Meadow Lake in the northern area to North Portal on the U.S. border.

Verna Gallén, Research Coordinator for the McDowell Foundation, said that the breadth of this year's successful projects indicated that the message about the work being done by the Foundation is getting across to people.

"When you look at some of these projects, I think there continues to be breakthroughs and new ground, which is what the McDowell Foundation is all about.

"We're finding that when it comes to education research it can take many forms and one of the gratifying aspects is how in several of these cases it brings together people in the community with teachers, students and university educators. That has become one of the subtexts of what the Foundation is doing."

Among this year's projects was the "Isbister Park Heritage Project", spearheaded by Val Drummond and Lindsay Graham as well as teachers and community members from Prince Albert. The group received \$13,481 as part of their effort to delve into the history of the city's community.

According to Gallén, the review committee viewed this as one of those projects that demonstrated the increased community involvement in public education.

The project receiving the single largest cash amount – \$15,000 – was a collegial approach of four Saskatoon elementary schools. Entitled "Using Language to Build Understandings about Teaching and Learning" the project included 50 K to grade five teachers, including project leaders Debbie Mann and Trudy Capes.

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The other Saskatoon-based ventures include the following:

- Teachers, Boys and Schools. \$10,000. Jeff Park, Sam Robinson, Anne Browne, Vicki Somerfeldt, Mark Wilderman, Barry Gay and Al Luciuk.
- Respecting and Responding to the Voices of Aboriginal Students. \$7,300. Richard Julien, Lenore Stiffarm, John Hansen and Norine Tourangeau.
- A Flexible Approach to Math Instruction in Middle Years. \$2,050. Diane Côté, Guy Werbicki, Doug Schmitz and Joanne Ursaki.
- Community Schools Transitions Support Project. \$2,700. Terrance Cratty, Belinda Daniels, Sharon Laflamme, Ben Garchinski and Bev Hanson.
- Effects of Social Skills Groups During and After Periods of Regular Group Meetings. \$11,410. Bev Brenna and Gail Sajtos.

Among the more intriguing projects was one entitled “Different Minds Learn Differently” (\$7,100) which involves Nicole Smigiel, Kari McKersie and Tasha Geisel of Minto School in North Portal. The three teachers are the only ones at the tiny school and they will be involving the entire student population.

The remaining projects are:

- Beyond the Mouse and Modem: The Truth about Teachers and Technology. \$2,495. Ian McCuaig, Karen Henderson and Wendy James, Meadow Lake.
- Learning for All, a pilot project by Herchmer Community School. \$5,100. Brenda Olliver, Connie Newton, Cheryl Nicklin, Simon Verville and Greg Enion, Regina.
- Professional Growth for Cooperating Teachers. \$1,780. Shannon Ochs, Kindersley.
- Connecting the Dots: The Link Between Professionalism and Teaching Practice. \$3,878. Pat Lyster, Jackie Kirk, Laurie Ann Harkness and Bev Haugen, Scenic Valley School Division.