

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Verna Gallén, Foundation Coordinator

McDowell Research Projects Varied Both in Scope and Locale

This year's successful applicants to the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching cover a wide spectrum of projects from seeking educational opportunities for the gifted to finding rewarding careers for youth with cognitive disabilities.

The latter project, being conducted by Vickie Reiman and Pat Walker from Campbell Collegiate in Regina, received \$12,112 as the largest share of the 12 projects throughout the province that will be sharing \$86,500 in research grants for 2006-07.

The study is intended to assist students with cognitive disabilities in building self-esteem and self-confidence while teaching them how to take risks and to advocate for themselves, particularly in gaining and retaining meaningful employment.

Other subjects to be dealt with in the McDowell projects include French immersion, reading and literacy and challenging students to be competitive in a technological world.

Barb Wotherspoon, a teacher at E.D. Feehan in Saskatoon, is developing a unique three-credit class that will be comprised of English, Christian Ethics and Arts Education. Her premise is that the Arts Education component can be used to enhance high school attendance and academic achievement in the compulsory subjects.

While the majority of the projects – five – are centered in Saskatoon, there are three from Regina and one each in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Balgonie and Radville.

This marks the 15th year for the Foundation, which was founded with the goal of fostering teacher research in Saskatchewan. More than \$900,000 has been distributed in grants during that time.

"It continues to impress me how teachers are addressing the most current and important issues through a wide range of research projects," Foundation coordinator Verna Gallén said.

She praised the work of those committed to the research process, adding that, "This is basically teachers volunteering their time above their regular classroom duties. I think it shows that the innovation and passion are really there and they are committed to best meeting the needs of their students."

Gallén indicated that she is heartened by the fact there was a definite upswing in interest displayed by Regina teacher researchers. According to her, Regina had been somewhat under-represented in the past in terms of projects.