**Brevard Schools Foundation**

**I3 Grant Project Report**

**Evidence of how your relationship with the district has changed and deepened through this work**

Brevard Schools Foundation has enjoyed an already deep relationship with the district’s Office of Professional Learning & Development. These types of grants can help provide a proving ground for ideas without tapping the district’s already stretched budget and create benefits to justify continuation without seed money. For example, BSF, along with this office, first initiated Teacher Meet-ups as part of another CFEF grant. With those learnings, the district took ownership, sought sponsorship and recommended improvements for what became the New Teacher Networking sessions for the I3 project. The Foundation is allowed to push from the outside, ideas that might not have been implemented otherwise.

**Evidence of actions or efforts initiated in the project that have or are expected to improve instruction, or what was learned in the effort**

**Welcome to Brevard Night Out for New Teachers** – Thirty new teachers to Brevard and their mentors attended an evening out on Saturday, August 24 at a local restaurant. The purpose of the night out was to encourage new teachers to network, meet key district people, and acquaint those new to the area with some highlights of things to do and places to visit. Our goal was to support their social emotional well-being and introduce them to some attractions in Brevard County. To align with research suggesting that building connections, especially with mentors can help support the retention of new teachers, we encouraged mentors to attend. (92% of teachers assigned a mentor their first year returned the next year and 86% were on the job by the fifth year. Of teachers without mentors, just 84% returned the second year, declining to 71% in the fifth year. - EdSource, July, 2015)

 **New Teacher Networking** - Twenty three new teachers joined in two evening sessions designed to support new teachers with both curriculum/instructional strategies and with classroom management/behavior intervention strategies. As of March 30, 2020, all new teachers who were given support through our Welcome to Brevard Night Out and the October 29 New Teacher Networking session have returned for second semester and are still employed with the district.

**October 29** - New teachers participated in three twenty minute make and take stations of their choice on the following topics: elementary math and science, secondary math and science, cloze reading and AVID strategies. The 3rd grade elementary math lesson (Standard MAFS.3.NF.1.2) used string, index cards, and clips to create a working number line, where teachers could identify fractions greater than and less than the benchmark fraction. This concept then evolved into comparing decimals as well, which could be used in the upper grade levels. Teachers were given the materials to take home to create their own lessons. Elementary science showcased an investigation where teachers were asked to observe an unknown substance (Nature of Science Investigations - standards appropriate for K - 5) and use scientific skills to determine what the substance was composed of. At the end of the session, teachers were given a survey on what topics would be beneficial for the second networking. The topics presented in the February 5 session were chosen based on high responses to this survey.

**February 5** - Teachers were given the opportunity to learn de-escalation strategies to better handle classroom management and ask questions to our student services resource teachers. Afterwards, they were given the chance to participate in three stations of their choice focusing on behavior interventions, lesson planning using online tools, understanding their student data, and online resources to support engaging instruction.

**New Teacher Wellness Event** - Fifty new teachers and their mentors attended this evening event focused on health and wellness. Breakout sessions included topics on the following: Healthy Eating for Teachers, Aromatherapy for Wellness, Wellness Tools for the Classroom, Mindfulness for Teachers and Students, and Functional Fitness. Give-aways included a nutrition book written by one of our presenters for each participant, exercise bands, essential oils, and Fitbit watches, so that participants could continue practicing the skills learned during the event. Each session included strategies for teachers to make connections to their classrooms. A follow-up survey revealed that 60% of the attendees shared the practice of mindfulness with their students, 33% incorporated more movement in their classroom routines and 7% utilized functional fitness. Below are several quotes from teachers who participated in the wellness sessions.

What strategy have you implemented from the training?

* I get my students up and moving around whenever possible. I also have begun to eat some breakfast every morning and drink water upon waking.
* Incorporating more movement into daily activities
* Functional Fitness with my students. Recipes from holistic nutrition

What results have you seen that have positively impacted your life?

* Students use the techniques, especially breathing, in class.
* As a result, I have a better attitude, and better relationships with my students. My classroom is calm and a relaxing place for students during art
* Students are able to calm down quicker

**Plan for sustaining the district and foundation partnership in working toward improved instruction**

Because of this grant opportunity, we have gained new working partners whose contributions will help sustain teacher development for increasing instructional impact. Northrop Grumman has previously supported STEM activities and is committed to helping financially to fund professional development grants. Brevard Federation of Teachers (teacher’s union) helped support the networking sessions for this grant and has expressed interest in supporting professional development grants financially. Our Teacher Leadership Council members have also been integrally involved in these activities and continue to seek ways to support each other organically using our foundation’s committed support. It is our hope that by fortifying supporting holistically the needs of new teachers, we’ll continue to see lower teacher turnover, better instructional practice and ultimately better student outcomes.

**Please also indicate if and how project activities could not be completed or were adjusted due to current school closures related to student health and safety.**

Early in the second semester, BSF surveyed teachers about professional development grants and there was overwhelming support for summer learning. However, due to COVID, our efforts shifted towards meeting teachers’ immediate needs as they adapted to distance learning. Consequently, we offered Critical Needs Grants for Online Learning to teachers, inviting new teachers the opportunity to apply first. To date, we awarded $15,000 in grants for 300 teachers and are planning a second round to award at least $8,000 more.