

## 2017-18 Professional Practice Organizing Grants

OEA's Center for Great Public Schools awards Professional Practice Organizing grants to help local associations engage members around important issues that impact teaching and learning. The grant may be used to support professional learning and/or to enhance and improve professional practice in a specific area. Supporting members as they address issues of professional practice enables them to collaboratively create solutions designed to shape the future of education, improve student learning, achieve educational equity, and enhance their profession overall.

Grants recipients are selected each fall to receive up to \$5000. During the 2017-18 school year, five locals from across the state were awarded Professional Practice Organizing Grants.

### Medford Education Association, Medford Oregon Equity to Improve Cultural Responsiveness

The Medford School District has 20 schools, not including charter schools. A team of MEA members noted that although the community had begun growing and becoming more diverse, the practices being used in their classrooms and community were not. They decided it was time to work on becoming more culturally responsive in order to meet the needs of the diverse population of the students they were serving.

Their goal for year one was to work on changing perceptions and mindsets of educators and students alike in order to empower and engage members to become more culturally responsive and equitable in their teaching practices. The team used a Professional Practice Organizing Grant to get to work on implementing their plan.

The first thing they team did was establish an equity team within their local association. They collaborated with association leaders, their UniServ consultant, and OEA to gather more support and resources. They chose two leaders to attend the NEA Leadership Summit so they could gain knowledge and insight on how to host an equity summit for their own local association. The impact of this local summit was both encouraging and empowering for MEA members. The team was pleased and amazed to see so many members from MEA and surrounding areas engaging in this important topic. All attendees were given PDUs for attending the summit, and members felt their time at the summit was valued and honored.

For the 2018/19 school year, the team will work with the Medford School District, the MEA Executive Board, The Building Rep Council, and OEA to continue their journey towards equity and cultural responsiveness. They plan to expand their efforts this year by putting on more events throughout the year and reaching out to the community for support and involvement.

# Chintimini Uniserv Council

## Early Career Educator Retreat



Many early career educators and new OEA members do not see their association as a resource for meeting their professional learning goals. They may also struggle with a variety of issues in their schools and classrooms, and it can be difficult to find support for their unique needs. The Chintimini UniServ Council used grant funds to hold a retreat for early career educators and local leaders to allow them to engage in important conversations about topics such as how to keep a healthy life-work balance, what their union does, ways to raise member voices in issues that matter, and union history. This retreat gave them the opportunity to network, learn, and provide support to one another. In all, 29 members from five of the Council's nine locals attended the event.

In 2018, Chintimini UniServ Council hosted their second annual Chintimini Early Career Educator Retreat (CECER). The goal of this event has been to understand the lack of participation in association advocacy and action by giving members the opportunity to engage with their local unions, Chintimini UniServ Council, and OEA. The event provides professional learning opportunities tailored to the needs of early career educators who are identified by local leaders as outstanding teachers and leaders amongst their peers. The council hopes to continue hosting the event as a yearly staple in their efforts to engage new educators in their local unions.



# Glide Education Association, Glide SD

## Mentoring New Teachers

### Teacher Mentoring

2018 marked the fourth year of Glide EA’s mentoring program for educators who are new to the profession. They started small in their first year by forming a three-person committee to explore the needs and opportunities around creating a mentor program. The second year the team reached out to veteran teachers to serve as mentors and began working with the district in order to gain support and sustainability for their program. They began to have in-service luncheons once a month as a way of bringing mentors and mentees together, and they also created resources for their mentees to access online. Year three helped them focus on adding a “Jump Start Day” for the mentees – a paid professional learning day which occurs prior to their scheduled work days at the beginning of the year. They were also able to add multiple opportunities for paid professional learning throughout the school year.

During the 2017-18 school year, the team continued to refine the practices that were working well, and they were also able to incorporate the ODE mentor grant into their current system. They attended training through the New Teacher Center to help support and guide their mentors in the program. They now have 17 willing volunteer mentors, and they have gained district support and resources and begun to work with the ESD to further leverage resources. They plan on continuing this work into the next school year.

