

PRESS RELEASE

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Results show improvement in teaching and learning of mathematics

Teachers with improved mathematical content knowledge. Classroom practices that are in tune with how 5th through 8th grade students learn mathematics. Students that achieve at higher levels in mathematics. These are the final results of a four-year project to improve teaching and learning of middle school mathematics. A research and evaluation team from Western Michigan University will meet with school leaders on August 21, 2008, at 11:15 a.m. at Muskegon Heights Public Schools Administration Building to talk about the impact and implications of the *Muskegon Area Middle School Mathematics Improvement Project*, also known as M³IP. The project involved 45 teachers from Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, and WayPoint Academy (formerly Muskegon Technical Academy). These general and special education teachers consistently participated in hundreds of hours of intense year-round professional development.

Officials from the external evaluation team of *Science and Mathematics Program Improvement (SAMPI)* at Western Michigan University determined that the project met its goal of improving teacher mathematical content knowledge, classroom practice, and student achievement in mathematics. Over the course of the project, teachers completed the *University of Michigan Learning Mathematics for Teaching Test* and other tests before and after training. Their scores showed steady and statistically significant increases over the course of the project. The evaluation team also observed and scored teachers on how they delivered math lessons to their students, and randomly tested students at the beginning of each school year. A final check of *Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Mathematics Test Scores* also showed improvement in most schools.

The project was funded by the *No Child Left Behind Title IIB Math/Science Partnership Program* through the Michigan Department of Education. The Muskegon Area Intermediate School District's Regional Mathematics and Science Center, in partnership with Western Michigan University and Muskegon Community College, was awarded a competitive grant in 2004 and coordinated the training that impacted students in 15 school buildings. The teachers solved problems, explored mathematical connections, tried hands-on lesson approaches, analyzed student work for evidence of understanding, and explored instructional strategies to help their students learn mathematics. David Krebs, Program Director for the Regional Mathematics and Science Center, said teachers benefited from the added training. "Teachers told us that because of the training they have become more thoughtful about the types of questions they ask. They encourage students to explain how they arrived at their answer so they can better understand their thinking."

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