

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wayne High School Achieves Program Success ***Local principal receives honorarium for efforts to increase student achievement.***

Charleston, W.Va. – The Education Alliance is pleased to recognize a Wayne County principal for her effort to increase academic achievement and spark interest in engineering among her students. Sara Stapleton, principal at Wayne High School, recently received an honorarium from The Alliance for implementing Project Lead the Way (PLTW) at her school. The purpose of this national initiative is to establish quality pre-engineering programs at secondary schools throughout the county. Stapleton's activities were a part of The Education Alliance's Student Educational and Economic Development Success (SEEDS) Program.

SEEDS is an exclusive professional development experience for public school principals in West Virginia that links them with a professional education consultant and a seasoned business CEO. Along with the principal, they develop and execute a business plan that targets key challenges at the school. The benefits of SEEDS include enhanced principal leadership skills, increased student achievement and community involvement, and improvements in facilities and management processes. Dr. Bobbi Nicholson, of Marshall University Graduate College, served as Wayne's educational consultant, and A. Michael Perry, of Heritage Farm Museum and Village, provided guidance as the school's business mentor. Both worked diligently to support the school's program activities.

Wayne High School had an existing robotics program that met after school. However, Stapleton realized with additional support and resources this club could be leveraged into a full PLTW course during the 2010-2011 academic year. Upon establishing the course, goals for the project included increasing enrollment, minority and female participation, the use of problem-based learning and engagement between students in the program and the rest of the school.

Stapleton is pleased with the progress of the project. PLTW at Wayne High school reached its student enrollment and content goals, and enjoyed national success as well. Students built a robot from the ground up and captured first place at the West Virginia SkillsUSA Contest in Martinsburg. Two Wayne team members also earned second place in the SkillsUSA National Competition in Kansas City, MO. Stapleton reports that interest in the program has led enrollment to double this school year.

"The Education Alliance has allowed us to generate a spark that has caused a lot of excitement and energy at our school," Stapleton said. "It has added a critical component to learning and achievement that is changing the lives of our students," she said. "We are opening doors that many of our students didn't know existed. This is what teaching is all about," Stapleton said.

"Project Lead the Way has helped some students at Wayne High School have an overwhelmingly positive educational experience," explained Dr. Patricia Kusimo, president/CEO of The Education Alliance. "The students will remember this and will likely draw upon the experience throughout their lives," she said.

Wayne High School is scheduled to receive \$50,000 over two years to help meet its goals and objectives. Principals and assistant principals were selected for the SEEDS program through a competitive application process. Preference was given to those with three or fewer years of experience, and who were in the top 25 percent of their Principal Leadership Academy class.

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