

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Weir Middle School Achieves Program Success

Local principal receives honorarium for advancing learning beyond the classroom.

Charleston, W.Va. – The Education Alliance is pleased to recognize a local principal for his commitment to extend learning beyond traditional classroom borders in order to enhance student learning. Joseph Paolo, principal of Weir Middle School, implemented an aggressive effort to enhance technology, teaching strategies and online resources to ensure teaching and learning continue after the school day ends. Paolo received an award and honorarium from The Education Alliance for his leadership in its Student Educational and Economic Development Success (SEEDS) program which is funding the initiative.

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 professional. Together, they develop and execute a business plan that targets key challenges at their schools. The benefits of SEEDS include enhanced principal leadership skills, increased student achievement and community involvement, and improvements in facilities and management processes. Dr. Louis Watts, a Marshall University faculty member, served as Paolo's SEEDS' consultant, and Tim Saab of Centra Bank, served as his business mentor.

Paolo built his SEEDS program around the belief that learning opportunities should be available after the school bell rings, and as part of the Weir initiative his team focused on after-school enrichment. The grant allowed Paolo to install a video center, upgrade technology equipment and provide staff with the necessary professional development to successfully integrate the added resources into instruction at the school. As a result, students and families could access school lessons and instruction from their homes.

After one year of the two-year program, Paolo reports that students in the SEEDS project that connected with a teacher to facilitate his or her learning received access to online opportunities which enriched their learning experience. "We have to give students and families greater access to instruction, and The Education Alliance is paving the way for us to do this," Paolo said. "Learning doesn't have to stop when the final bell rings at the end of the day," Paolo said. "What we are doing here is allowing education to continue in the home in a way that has not been accomplished previously," he said. "We would not have been able to turn this idea into reality this quickly without SEEDS."

"Educators everywhere are tasked with extending the amount of instructional time during the day," explained Dr. Patricia Kusimo, president/CEO of The Education Alliance. "Mr. Paolo's approach is an example of the boundless possibilities available through technology and innovative leadership." she said.

Weir Middle will receive \$50,000 in SEEDS assistance from The Education Alliance over two years to help meet the goals and objectives of its technology integration program.

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