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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BUCYRUS ELEMENTARY RECEIVES 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GRANT**

**BUCYRUS, OH (Nov. 4, 2010)** - The Bucyrus Elementary School is very proud of all of the hard work and dedication the teachers bring into their classrooms each and every day, and supports the teachers' continual search to find innovative ways to engage any student who might be struggling along the way. The Elementary School understands that each child is unique; learning in different ways and at different speeds, and that some may require unique learning opportunities to better suit their needs. However, the issue of lack of time, money and personnel often ties the hands of the teachers and forces the administration to think outside the box. Thanks to the hard work of Bucyrus City School Grants Director Bob Laipply and Bucyrus Elementary School Principal Robin Showers, the Bucyrus Elementary School recently received a grant from the Ohio Department of Education that will allow the school to provide an extraordinary learning program.

The 21st Century After School Community Learning Center Grant is a voluntary program for targeted students in third, fourth and fifth grade, who might be struggling with reading and math, the opportunity to learn outside the hours of a typical school day. Students involved in the program can attend 15 hours of programming per week, both before and after school, as well as one special family learning activity per month.

The program is not simply an extension of the school day. It's a non-traditional supplement to the lessons they learn in class, but with a unique twist. "This program is designed to help our teachers in reaching their students," said Laipply, "not compete with what they are doing in the classroom." In addition to math and reading help, students enrolled in the program will participate in enrichment activities, such as art and music, community service and character education programs, learn nutrition and healthy eating/lifestyles tips and partake in family engagement events.



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The family engagement events, which are scheduled to take place one Saturday per month, are open to students in the program who attend at least 70 percent of the regular sessions and show a continued commitment to learning. There will be no cost to attend, and immediate family members are invited to accompany their student. Free transportation will be provided by the grant when traveling off campus. Activities may include a trip to COSI, “Math & a Movie”, healthy cooking and other hands-on activities for families to enjoy. “With all of the challenges families face today, this might be the only time some families get a chance to interact all together,” said Laipply. “Our hope is that these activities help families’ foster positive memories that will last them a lifetime while learning together.”

The program, which is designed to address academic as well as non-academic barriers to learning, has one main goal, to improve student’s grades by a letter and a half over the course of the academic year. “Our belief is that every child wants to learn,” said Laipply. “We will allow them to be a part of the planning process by simply finding out what they are interested in and then building the program around that as much as possible. Our hope is to engage them in a specific area of interest, while still teaching and educating.”

Grant requirements state that students wanting to participate must fit one of the three criteria set by the state: below proficiency in reading or math or residing in an economically disadvantaged home. Letters are being sent home notifying parents of students who qualify and explaining more about the program.

In order to maintain a high level of safety for the students, parents wishing to participate must fill out a pink release form identifying who is responsible for picking up the child at the conclusion of each day’s program. There is flexibility in the schedule so parents can make arrangements with staff members if their student needs to be released early. “We want to partner with our families and accommodate them as best we can,” added Laipply. “We’re hoping students and parents see a positive change in their students at home and in their education, as a result.”

The program will begin at Bucyrus Elementary on Wednesday, November 17, and hopes to eventually serve up to 60 students. “Our goal is to eventually expand the program to all our students who might benefit from this help,” said Laipply. The District is committed to keeping programs like this going, but is in need of mentors and volunteers. “We want to surround our kids with caring adults, and we want to help parents with challenges of raising kids in today’s world.” Those interested in helping will need to fill out an application, which can be found at the Lincoln Administrative Center, 170 Plymouth St., answer a short interest questionnaire and pass a background check.



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For more information about the After School Program or ways you can get involved, contact Bob Laipply at

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