

FACT SHEET

South Dakota Innovation Labs

PROJECT SUMMARY

- Group of small, rural schools within Mid-Central Educational Cooperative region moving forward with an innovative approach to instruction and learning:
 - South Central School District (enrollment: 136 students)
 - Wessington Springs School District (enrollment: 292 students)
 - Platte-Geddes School District (enrollment: 446 students)
 - Armour School District (enrollment: 166 students)
- Delivering rigorous and relevant content through engaging methods, not limited to traditional classroom experiences
- Moving from traditional “silo” mentality of learning and approaching curriculum more holistically – currently using science as a central pivot point
- Shifting the role of teacher from instructor to facilitator, who guides students through content-rich projects. Teacher is:
 - Expert at project/problem-based delivery
 - Has thorough understanding of academic content standards and alignment
- Emphasis on project/problem-based learning – using science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) as platform for delivery
- Learning not limited by physical location – takes place in classroom, in participating communities, online, via distance, in mobile labs, and other venues
- STEM professionals partner with teachers as mentors and reservoirs of deep content, regardless of proximity
- Local community engages with schools and students by providing learning opportunities tied to career skill-sets
- Starting small – with interested teachers; project will look different in each school

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Schools supported by Mid Central Educational Cooperative, PAST Foundation, The Sanford PROMISE, and the South Dakota Department of Education
- Mid-Central Educational Cooperative – The cooperative consists of a group of school districts joined together to form an educational service unit authorized under South Dakota law. Organized in 1978, the cooperative functions to enhance educational services and opportunities

for all students regardless of school district affiliation and to encourage maximum utilization of cooperative efforts among school districts.

- PAST Foundation – By partnering anthropology with science and technology, PAST invites the world to design, construct and engage in experiences that link learning to life. The PAST Foundation’s role in this project is to provide professional development and assistance to participating schools and teachers.
- The Sanford PROMISE – The Sanford PROMISE’s mission is to increase the community’s understanding of science and their awareness about the benefits of research to society. The Sanford PROMISE’s role in this project is to provide rich content/curriculum resources, as well as access to equipment and expertise.
- South Dakota Department of Education – Enhancing learning through leadership and service is the S.D. Department of Education’s mission. The department’s role in this project is to help participating schools navigate state requirements that might impede innovation, and to provide technical assistance.