

OMB Clearance Request
Promoting Student Success in Algebra I

Appendix H: Site Recruitment Materials

Email communication to be sent to potential sites:

From: Walters, Kirk
Sent: XXXX, May 2014
To: XXXX
Subject: Study of Promoting Student Success in Algebra I

[Salutation]

The American Institutes of Research, together with the Windwalker Corporation, is conducting a project focused on Algebra I practices that are designed to support the needs of students who are struggling in Algebra I. The purpose of this project is to highlight findings from the most rigorous and relevant research as well as eliciting insight from practitioners who are on the forefront of best practices in Algebra instruction.

In particular, our project team is interested in learning from practitioners- teachers, administrators, district officials, instructional leaders - about their school or district's experiences developing and implementing exemplary programs that have fostered improved student outcomes related to Algebra I. Toward this end, our project includes a set of site visits exemplar districts and schools. At present, we are in the process of identifying sites, and your [district/school] was nominated because of your promising work in [insert topical area here]. If your [district/school] is selected to participate, we would like to send two researchers to visit your [district/school] for two days to interview administrators, teachers, and [insert other respondents, as appropriate for the topic area].

I am attaching a short summary of our project, as well as additional details on the site visit component. This may address questions you might have, but I am happy to talk further at your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Kirk Walters, PhD
Study Director
American Institutes for Research



**Promoting Student Success in Algebra I Case Studies:
Seeking Exemplar Schools and Districts for Algebra I Implementation -
Provide Feedback on your Successes to the U.S. Department of Education**

Mathematics education researchers at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Windwalker Corporation are working on a new project with the U.S. Department of Education that is designed to equip state and local education agencies with greater knowledge and resources to promote students' success in Algebra I, with a particular emphasis on helping all students complete the gateway course by the end of ninth grade.

For this project, *Promoting Student Success in Algebra I*, our research team is interested in learning from practitioners— teachers, administrators, district officials, instructional leaders - about their school or district's experiences developing and implementing exemplary programs that have fostered improved student outcomes related to Algebra I. We are specifically interested in:

- Strategies, processes, and policies in schools that have made an effort to blend procedural and conceptual foci in teachers' Algebra I instructional practices.
- Innovative practices in terms of professional learning opportunities designed to deepen teachers' content knowledge, conceptual understanding, and instructional capacity with regard to Algebra I.
- The use of instructional coaches to support teachers as they continue to improve their mathematics teaching.
- Districts that have developed and implemented a curricular framework that promotes the skills and understanding needed to be successful in Algebra I prior to enrollment in an Algebra I course.
- Structures and implementation processes associated with instructional programs in which students receive a "double-dose" of Algebra I instruction.

To gain insight into these five topic areas, our research team is **recruiting 10 exemplar sites (two "sites" per topic area) to participate in on-site data collection activities during spring-summer 2014**. These site visits will provide opportunities for practitioners and students to engage with researchers about their experiences with initiatives in these five areas and will inform the development of technical assistance documents designed to support other schools and districts in developing similar initiatives.

Participating sites will be chosen from across the United States, and depending on the specific Algebra I topic area, a *site* may refer to an interested district, a school, or both a district and schools nested within that district. We are currently seeking the following types of sites that are implementing an exemplary Algebra I program or initiative in the five topic areas:

Algebra I Topic Area	Number and Type of Exemplar Sites To Be Selected
1). Instructional Practices	Two schools
2). Professional Development	Two districts (or schools if professional development decisions are made at the school level)
3). Instructional Coaching	Two districts and two schools nested in those districts
4). Curricular Alignment	Two districts
5). Supplementary Algebra	Two schools in two districts

Particular data collection activities will vary by topic area but generally include:

- Site visit interviews and focus groups
- Telephone interviews
- Observations of classrooms and teacher professional learning activities
- Document data collection

Responses to this data collection will be used to summarize findings in an aggregate manner (within a school or district), or will be used to provide examples of implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific site or individual. In the publications, pseudonyms will be used for each site. The project team may refer to the generic title of an individual (e.g., "project director," or "eighth grade teacher") but neither the site name nor the individual name will be used. All efforts will be made to keep the description of the site general enough so that a reader would never be able to determine the true name or identity of the site or individuals at the site. The contractor will not provide information that associates responses or findings with a subject or district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

To be considered for this opportunity, and to receive more detailed topic-specific selection criteria, please contact Project Director Kirk Walters at kwalters@air.org or 202.403.5838.