



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2011-131

TO: District Superintendents
Principals

FROM: Joanne Whitson

DATE: October 17, 2011

SUBJECT: Wyoming Awarded Distance Education Grant Opportunity to Train Local Teachers in Sensory Impairments and Autism Spectrum Disorders

Wyoming Awarded Distance Education Grant Opportunity to Train Local Teachers in Sensory Impairments and Autism Spectrum Disorders

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) a distance education grant via the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for Project SASI (Students with Autism and Sensory Impairments-Addressing the Personnel Shortages of Rural, Remote, and High Need Areas). This is the second time the WDE Deaf-Blind Project has been awarded a grant to assist in training teachers to teach those with sensory disabilities.

The focus of the grant is to assist school districts with the growing demand of providing highly qualified teachers in the areas of sensory impairments and autism. WDE Deaf-Blind Project partnered with Texas Tech University to provide an opportunity for local teachers to attain certification / Master's degrees in the following fields: Teacher for the Visually Impaired; Orientation & Mobility Instructor; Deaf-Blind Educator; Teacher for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing.

Training in each area will also include specialized training in working with students who have Autism Spectrum Disorders in addition to a sensory impairment. Wyoming has been granted up to four slots in each discipline. This is a graduate program and is open to individuals already holding a teaching degree.

Over the past few years several Wyoming teachers were able to obtain degrees in low incidence disability fields and provide this specialized expertise. It is widely known that in a rural state like Wyoming finding highly qualified teachers in the low incidence disability areas is difficult, but through this grant WDE can continue to address this need.

School districts that are interested in participating in this opportunity are being encouraged to contact Joanne Whitson, Project Director by calling 307-324-5333 / 877-875-9467 or via email at joanne.whitson@wyo.gov.