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**To learn more about NYS Teacher Centers,
please visit:**
www.nysteachercenters.org



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Far West Teacher Center Network

NYS Teacher Centers – Professional Learning For Teachers, By Teachers

New York's Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers were established by the New York State Legislature in 1984 under [Education Law 316](#). The initial appropriation of \$3.5 million established 44 Teacher Centers throughout the State. The Legislature continued to approve Teacher Center funding through 2010 when the overall level of appropriations increased to \$40 million, supporting 133 Teacher Centers, 7 Regional Networks and 5 Statewide Committees. **Since 2010 Teacher Center funding has been cut by more than 64%**, currently operating at a \$14.26 million statewide budget. Despite increases to other education budgets over the past few years, **Teacher Centers have not received an increase since 2013.**

We need your support to increase our funding to the 2010 level of \$40m.

WHY? Teacher Centers have led the **INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY** into curriculum and instruction in New York State. We have **COLLABORATIONS** with teachers, districts, schools, institutions of higher education, and other education stakeholders, including several business agreements, to provide tens of thousands of professional development opportunities every year, many aligned with and/or directly supporting local school improvement goals.

Teacher Centers have also been, and continue to be, primary supporters and trainers of the development and implementation of New York's Regents Reform Agenda and its alignment with the NYS Professional Development Standards. We have been recognized by NYSED as approved providers of CTLE programs. We support **TEACHER LEADERSHIP** through **NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION**. We provide assistance to teachers of **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS** to ensure equal education for ALL students. In addition, Teacher Centers partner with **HIGHER EDUCATION** to bridge the gap between P-20 and ensure new teachers are well prepared for the classroom and students are well prepared for college and careers.

To carry on our great work, we NEED your help! Please advocate for education and professional learning by continuing to fund NYS Teacher Centers and increase our funding to \$40 million.

REMEMBER, EVERY VOICE COUNTS! MAKE YOURS HEARD.

A MESSAGE ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER:

These newsletters are intended to keep our constituents and supporters aware of the great work currently going on in the various Teacher Centers across the WNY region. They are available in both paper and electronic copy. Please note that in the electronic copy you can learn more about each Center by clicking on the Center's name. To view these newsletters electronically and learn more about the Far West Teacher Center Network, please go to:

<http://fwteachercenter.wix.com/fwtc>

REGIONAL HAPPENINGS

FAR WEST NETWORK

The [Far West Teacher Center Network](#) is comprised of 16 regional centers serving educators in Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Cattaraugus, Allegany and Chautauqua Counties. Our network serves over 20,000 educators on a limited combined grant from the state of \$1,022,000. From 2010-2013 our program funding was severely cut by an astronomical amount of 64%. Thanks to our legislators and the support of our constituents, our funding was increased in 2013 but we are still operating at only about 36% of 2010 levels.

- 2009-10 Total funding=\$2,800,000
- 2010-11 Total funding=\$0
- 2011-12 Total funding=\$1,400,000
- 2012-13 Total funding=\$730,000
- 2013-14 Total funding=\$1,022,000
- 2014-15 Total funding=\$1,022,000
- 2015-16 Total funding=\$1,022,000
- 2016-17 Total funding=\$1,022,000

The following pages highlight some of the great work our local Teacher Centers provide throughout the Western NY area which focuses on improving teacher practice and student learning. Each Center collects relevant data on the impact of these programs to ensure the money granted us is used in an effective and meaningful manner with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. Please contact the local Center for more information on any of the programs.

FAR WEST NETWORK

Poverty Simulation



Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families. But unless you have experienced poverty, it is difficult to truly understand.

The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) bridges that gap from misconception to understanding. CAPS is an interactive immersion experience that sensitizes participants to the realities of poverty.

The simulation involves participants who take on the roles of members of 26 families, all facing a variety of challenging, economic circumstances. It is the families' task to provide food, shelter, and other basic necessities by accessing various community resources during the course of 1 "month". After the experience, individuals discuss what they have learned with their peers. Through the simulation and the rich discussion that follows, we believe participants are more inclined and better prepared to identify areas of change that can directly impact the effects of poverty on their students.

Our Far West Network facilitates these simulations by request to Districts across WNY. Our hope is that through this program, teachers will develop the empathy and strategies to best support their students and prepare them for a meaningful and successful life following school.

ALDEN TEACHER CENTER

Robotics as a Tool for Student Engagement in Math & Science
This workshop was developed through a partnership with the University at Buffalo Engineering Department and was designed to be an engaging, supportive environment to help K-6 teachers learn more about STEM, coding, and robotics. Teachers learned practical information during a foundation session and practiced those skills during a development session. The final component was called the implementation session and consisted of a supported planning session to design their own classroom lesson as receive hands on coaching during the implementation of that lesson.



BUFFALO TEACHER CENTER

Teacher Assistant Pilot Program

The Buffalo TC is offering a joint program with Erie Community College Education Department. We are working with a cohort of 10 teacher aides who will complete the Teacher Assistant (18 hr) college coursework that leads to the Teacher Assistant Level 3 Certification. This college level work is required by the SED to certify teacher assistants to work in NYS public schools. The teacher aides will take classes at the Center and receive a small tuition stipend after completing passing coursework. It is our hope that the program will assist teacher aides in the District to continue their education to the benefit of the Buffalo Public School children. There are 65 teacher aides currently in the process.



CATTARAUGUS-ALLEGANY

Global Competence Training/Coaching

On Friday, February 3, 2017, the Teacher Center hosted training on what global competence is and how to infuse the skills of it along with other 21st century skills into your classroom/school/district at Genesee Valley School District. Following this workshop, Dr. Margy Jones-Carey from St. Bonaventure University will offer 4 months of online coaching support to all participants.



ERIE-CATT TEACHER CENTER

"TECH TOOL TRYOUTS"



After 5 years of recording data, determining if "iPads" make a difference in Common Core Classrooms, and verifying they do if teachers are given time, support and professional development opportunities; Erie-Catt Teacher Center's (ECTC) Board decided to expand into other technologies. Many districts have received State funding for technology and it is easy to make purchasing mistakes when decisions are made without adequate testing. **Tech Tool Tryout (T3)** a project that began in June 2016 with 8 volunteers that will test and assess the instructional worth of selected tools. Each volunteer is responsible for researching subject appropriate tech tools, learning how to use the tool, creating a direction sheet, demonstrating the tool and participating in a collaborative rubric to assess the success of the device. Monthly each member reports instructional use, notes from lesson plans and determines if the tool is one that improves instruction and learning. Most importantly they determine if the tech tool should be recommended for programming and purchase.



KENMORE STAFF DEV CENTER

Our Center has three major program initiatives for 2017; Online learning, Advancing Professionalism through National Board Certification, and Response to Intervention.

On Line Learning: Teachers becoming actively involved as they seek to improve professional practice by incorporating instructional strategies which promote better student engagement in the classroom. The sophistication and learning which takes place in these workshops has resulted in local Districts approving staff to take our trainings which previously was not allowed. Participants and their students are deriving benefit as a result of our offerings.

National Board Certification: Over 22 teachers in Ken Ton are Nationally Board Certified. We offer workshops which outline the National Board Process as well as provide mentoring and support for teachers who are working toward this certification.

Response to Intervention: Our staff center will host a comprehensive workshop which will provide learning and professional collaboration around serving students who demonstrate difficulty in and out of the classroom. Our goal is to provide opportunity for planning as well as best practices for understanding and appreciating the issues which impact our students.



LACKAWANNA TEACHER CENTER

Creating Visuals to Enhance English Learners' Comprehension

The Lackawanna City School District has a very high population of ENL students (limited English or no English at all). We have 2 - 4 ENL teachers in each of our buildings that provide services to our students. In the spring of 2016, we issued a needs assessment to all of our teachers ... ENL, general education and special area teachers. Overall we learned that teachers were looking for ideas on how to best help these students in a classroom setting. We provided this needs from this survey to the ENL teachers and asked them to create workshops specifically targeting the needs of the teachers in their buildings. We are excited to be offering the first of hopefully many workshops at the early elementary level (Pre-K through Grade 1) and are actively preparing to expand on this to all higher grade levels as well!



NIAGARA FALLS TEACHER CENTER

Understanding the Multicultural Populations in Our Schools

The Niagara Falls Teacher Center provides 3 hour multi-media courses during which participants watch informational documentaries on the various cultural groups that have been or will be resettled in our district. The group then engages in collaborative discussions focused on the various contextual factors that our teachers have or will encounter in their classroom and strategies for working through these challenges. The program also incorporates an online reflection piece to prepare the teachers to most effectively educate the incoming population of ELL students.



ORLEANS-NIAGARA TC

Google Academy – Higher Ed Partnership

On August 16, 2016, the ON Teacher Center partnered with Niagara University to offer a Google Academy technology conference. The conference provided P-20 educators with an introduction to some of the educational resources available through Google. The conference included a keynote; 15 breakout sessions; and a Flash Share Out. The Academy was attended by over 100 educators from across Western NY and received rave reviews from participants. We believe these types of conferences offer an opportunity to reach a large diverse audience and introduce them to new technologies that can enhance their instructional practice and improve student learning. By partnering with higher education institutions and providing research-based, current professional development programs such as this conference, our Center is meeting the requirements and supporting the intended use of grant funds as outlined by NYSED.



PIONEER TEACHER CENTER

Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies

The Pioneer Central School District has a New Teacher Mentoring plan to foster new teacher success and to promote the personal and professional well-being of new staff members. In collaboration with the district, the Pioneer Teacher Center offers new teacher workshops that support this induction plan. This fall, third year teachers were offered a "Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies" course to support their development in behavior intervention strategies and classroom management skills. Varied behavior strategies and methods were presented with opportunities for application in the classroom. The course was offered online so that participants could share classroom scenarios with possible interventions and then receive feedback from their peers. New teachers appreciate the opportunity to collaborate, problem solve and learn from each other. This collaboration will continue between the district and Center to provide support for new teachers hired in the future.



SOUTHTOWN TEACHERS' CENTER

Meeting the Needs of ELLs in General Educations Classrooms

Elementary classroom teachers, Special Education Teachers, and Support Staff participated in this course. Resources and materials were available to close the learning gap and assist with differentiated instruction. The participants felt the course was meaningful and relevant and that it would have a significant impact on engagement, motivation, communication skills, and other strategies used in daily instruction that includes ELL students. Participants indicated that much of the content was new learning and felt their learning was increased because of the way the content was presented. They felt that the information that was learned will help students to acquire and use new skills, and apply them to a variety of situations and contexts. This course was first offered in Summer 2016 and due to need and interest, it will be offered again in Spring 2017.



SWEET HOME TEACHER CENTER

Poverty Training

The Sweet Home Teacher Center partnered with the Far West TC Network to provide 1/2 day training for over 100 teachers, staff members, BOE and district personnel to participate in a Poverty Simulation. Sweet Home's free and reduced lunch student population has grown to 43% district wide. This session provided a grassroots effort between Sweet Home High School and the Teacher Center to provide necessary training about families who endure extreme poverty in our community. The experience has been recommended to the district's PDP committee to include district wide opportunities for all staff members in the upcoming school year.



TEACHER CENTER OF CHEEKTOWAGA

Professional Development Study Groups

Emphasis for the first half of this year has been focused on 21st Century Skills, understanding property and the needs of low-income students, and programs that have convincing impact on Teacher Improvement. Teachers enhancing their curriculum lessons by sharing successful activities and curriculum materials amongst themselves has proven to be professionally and personally valuable through the use of study/share groups. Once again, the EOY extract will focus on one of the eight share groups sponsored by the Teacher Center of Cheektowaga for Western New York educators. These groups cover the content areas of biology, chemistry, math, speech, FACS, LOTE, ENL for elementary teachers and ENL for middle/high school teachers.

TONAWANDA-GRAND ISLAND TC

Engaging Students with Kagan Structures: A Partnership with Buffalo State College

General and Special Education teachers and Support Staff from Grades K-12 will participate in a Kagan Professional Development Study Group. Through the group study they will:

- Evaluate cooperative learning structures used in classrooms.
- Look at the research behind cooperative learning strategies.
- Learn and practice Kagan cooperative structures to promote increased engagement for students using the TeachLivETM lab.
- Participate in an asynchronous e-learning environment that will serve as a "virtual study group".
- Collect data on student performance through the use of fidelity checks.
- Record and post one Kagan structure implemented with their class on the Kagan Study Group YouTube site.



WEST SENECA TC

National Board Support

Over the past year, the West Seneca Teachers' Center has sponsored professional development classes to both interest and support teachers in the work of National Board certification. These classes, although not exclusive to National Board Candidates, offer teachers engaging and effective strategies to motivate students using the same standards and approach as the National Board. Some of these courses, include "Student Mindset and Motivation", "Stepping Up to the Plate: Helping Teachers Learn to Value Themselves as Experts and Leaders", "Changing Your Way of Thinking", "Facilitating Effective Classroom Discussions" and "I've Collected Evidence. Now What?" These courses help candidates as they work through the components of certification, and they interest teachers who might be interested in engaging in the arduous yet rewarding work of the certification process. The West Seneca Teachers' Center is proud to support this work.



WESTERN NEW YORK TC

ENLs and Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

English language learners present special challenges for teachers in today's classrooms. A successful ELL teacher learns to balance the language learning needs of the students with the appropriate content. The knowledge and skills students gain in ELL classes positively affect their lives at school and home. As the diversity of the United States increases, so too does the need for teachers of second language learners. Participants in this course will create lesson plans that incorporate strategies to reach ELL students.



WILLIAMSVILLE CENTER

Get Ready for the 2017 Great American Eclipse

On Monday, August 21, 2017 the shadow of the moon will pass across the US making a line from Oregon to South Carolina. August 21, 2017 is going to be a BIG deal, and we want to help you get ready. It is estimated that 50 million people will be able to witness "totality" for a few minutes as the moon completely blocks the sun. While Western New Yorkers will only be able to witness a partial eclipse, it will still be remarkable as about 75% of the sun will be obscured by the moon. Join us to learn about how eclipses happen, what to expect, and safe methods for viewing the eclipse. We want to empower you to become eclipse experts so that you can prepare your students to make the most of this remarkable event. In this Make-And-Take workshop you will make a viewer to safely view the eclipse—a great Makerspace Project!

FAR WEST SPOTLIGHT

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION SUPPORT

NBC, the most respected certification for teaching professionals, demonstrates the ability to meet or exceed standards established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The rigorous, voluntary and time-consuming process verifies deep reflection, practice analysis and instructional decisions that showcase talents and improve diverse instructional practice. Research indicates that National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) taught students outperform their peers. NBCTs also become leaders and school, district and state-level advocates.

Certification for most teachers would not be possible without the **support of NYS Teacher Centers**. The Far West Teacher Centers, in collaboration with National Board of NY, offer candidate support groups, awareness sessions, professional learning opportunities, writing retreats, A Teacher Leader Summit, equipment loans, and provide resources free of charge to candidates. There are over 70 NBCTs in the Far West and 25 teachers currently pursuing certification. **We are proud to be part of this program that elevates the teaching profession.**

