Alternate Reform Model Proposal: Creating Great Classrooms

Since the 2003-2004 school year, Cumberland County Schools has promoted and implemented a research-based instructional model for student success, Creating Great Classrooms (CGC), which centers on climate, academic rigor, and accountability as a foundation for significant improvement of teaching and learning. This proposed reform model extends the instructional foundations of Creating Great Classrooms initiative into school-wide, intensive, deliberate focus on the learning environment, teaching practices, professional development and on-going accountability of all stakeholders. As a reform model, Creating Great Classrooms is closely aligned with the goals, objectives and specific practices of the FRAMEWORK. The administration and staff are committed to the foundations outlined in the CGC model and are prepared to fully implement these in an intensive, school-wide model for success over a three year period (2009 – 2012).

Timeline:

2009 – 2010  The focus for E. E. Smith during 2009 – 2010 will be on Characteristics of Great Classrooms and Creating Great Classrooms which will allow a very strategic, laser like focus, by developing a school-wide common language for academic success. This language will focus on two distinct areas: (1) The academic language of critical thinking that is cross-curricular; (2) The content specific language of the disciplines. The entire faculty of the school working with Chris Yeager (CGC), Carol Lloyd (Consultant CGC), and Central Services personnel will work together to develop school-wide and content specific vocabulary lists based on information analyzed from school test data and the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Once the language is identified, each department will also select an effective instructional focus from the Characteristics of a Great Classroom - emotional climate, organized lesson, active engagement, meaningful learning, academic rigor, and continuous feedback. This instructional emphasis, paired with a concentrated focus on academic language and content language, our language of academic success, will provide a framework for pre and post assessments, classroom instruction, Professional Learning Community meetings, faculty meetings, and professional development. The ownership for this initiative will be grounded in the theme of “Our Students, Our Content, and Our Choice.” Every student and every teacher will be issued a binder containing essential materials associated with academic language. Content language will be issued to every student and every teacher according to course study to insert into their binder. Throughout this first year, all staff will read and participate in a book study using the text, “A Framework for Understanding Poverty” by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

2010–2011  During the 2010–2011 school year, the focus will be Applying Great Classrooms with a continued strategic outlook on school-wide common language for academic success to ensure the Characteristics of Great Classrooms are prominent and evident. During this phase, we will also consider the implementation of Thinking Maps to positively impact student learning. However, professional development will focus on strategies and practices that encourage and promote the six characteristics. Teachers will submit strategies applied in their classrooms and share their experiences with the strategies in their collaborative professional learning communities. Strategies will be shared, modeled, and teachers will apply them in their classrooms. Teachers will also visit model classrooms in other schools that are implementing the Applying Great Classroom
strategies. Throughout this second year, all staff will read and participate in a book study using the text, “Classroom Instruction that Works” by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock.

2011 – 2012  In the 2011 – 2012 school year, the focus will be Examining the Student Work of Great Classrooms which will center on the characteristics of an organized lesson built around clearly defined objectives, with a continued strategic outlook on school-wide common language for academic success. In collaborative content teams, teachers will deconstruct vertically aligned objectives, write guiding questions, collect congruent student work from these objectives and examine student work following specific protocols and procedures. Monthly sessions will focus on analyzing the ways to differentiate instructions so that all students can be successful in classrooms and examine student work to ensure that all classrooms are exhibiting characteristics of great classrooms. Teachers will bring samples of their students’ work to be utilized in the staff development. Examples of clearly defined expectations for student work will be developed. Teachers will also look at grading and classroom practices that will motivate students to make the effort to succeed. Throughout this third year, all staff will read and participate in a book study using the text, “Classroom Assessment and Grading That Works” by Robert Marzano

1. **Justification for requesting alternate model:**

For the past two years Ezekiel Ezra Smith High School has been implementing America’s Choice School Reform Model. America’s Choice is a comprehensive school reform model organized around five design tasks: 1) Standards and Assessment; 2) Aligned Instructional Systems; 3) High Performance Leadership; 4) Professional Learning Communities; 5) Parent Guardian Community Involvement.

Since the 2007-2008 school year, Ezekiel Ezra Smith High School (E. E. Smith High School) has implemented certain elements of America’s Choice reform model, namely ramp-up classes in literacy and math to include the 25 Books Campaign, and various professional developments in content literacy. The effectiveness of these programs has been evaluated by using surveys, analyzing student achievement data, and attendance data. Although we have seen slight increases in student performance, E. E. Smith High School continues to be a priority school, forcing school leaders to reexamine the current reform efforts and identify a model more closely aligned to the needs of E. E. Smith High School.

2. **Commitment to following model in its entirety:**

NCLB establishes high standards of accountability for State and local educational agencies, by requiring them to raise the achievement of all students, including students in the nation's poorest schools. We are a school committed to excellence willing to exhaust every effort to ensure our students succeed. Ezekiel Ezra Smith High School is totally committed to the reform process to improve student achievement. The U. S. Department of Education’s non-regulatory guidance, “Designing School-wide Programs,” March 2006, outlines that, in the reform process: 1) schools conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies the school’s strengths and challenges that are key to student achievement; 2) schools identify and commit to specific goals and strategies that address those needs; 3) schools conduct a comprehensive plan; and 4) schools conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the program and revise the plan as necessary to see if all students, particularly low-achieving students, improved. For the past year, we have completed an extensive needs assessment based on formal and informal data-achievement
results, attendance, discipline data, extra-curricular data, and etc. Strengths and opportunities for improvement are being addressed in our School Improvement Plan and our Framework for Action. The faculty and staff developed strategies to assist with improving programs and practices for each area of improvement. Data sessions will be held at the beginning of each year and in January – the end of the first semester. Data from these sessions will assist with making instructional decisions and revisions to the overall plan. The Creating Great Classrooms model has been developed with input from the students, total staff, parents and the community at large. The School Improvement Team with assistance from DPI instructional specialists, and Cumberland County Schools’ Central Services personnel will monitor and revise as necessary the plan four times each year with a comprehensive evaluation at the end of each year. The Cumberland County Board of Education will be updated at their regularly scheduled Curriculum Committee Meeting. Individual Growth Plans for teachers and lesson plans will revise and develop strategies to increase the effectiveness of the plan for the following year based on the evaluation results. The School Improvement Team of Ezekiel Ezra Smith High School is truly committed to all aspects of this model. It is our belief that our model will make a significant improvement in our total school program.

3. **External help and support for the model:**

Outlined below are the needed supports to implement the model over a three-year period. Funding amounts are included in the budget section of this proposal. Some additional funding will be needed but some of the assistance needs are already being met by Central Services. Central Services personnel assisted with the development of the Creating Great Classrooms reform model and therefore are fully committed to implementing the entire model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>Presenter/Staff Development</th>
<th>Provided by:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>McRel Walkthrough Technology</td>
<td>Assigned to Administrators</td>
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<td>Benchmark Tests</td>
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<td>Teachers/Substitutes</td>
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<td>SIT Retreat – January and June</td>
<td>SIT/Administration/Facilitators</td>
<td>Central Services</td>
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<td>Chris Yeager, Carol Lloyd Consultants for Creating Great Classrooms – Follow-Up for Three Years</td>
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<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>Creating Great Classrooms N. C. Turnaround Initiative</td>
<td>Wanda McPhaul – CCS NCDPI</td>
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4. **Model's sufficiency to bring about change:**

The Creating Great Classrooms model is different than the other plans proposed by the state. A study done by Wright, Horn, and Sanders in 1997, indicated that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. It continues to state that the immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. This model focuses on the how and why of the teaching and learning process to guide classroom practice. It also utilizes the implementation plan: study, discuss, practice, and feedback. At the end of each monthly session, curriculum ideas are given in all content areas for teachers to use in their classrooms. Teachers then practice using the strategies, observe other teachers using the “Great Classrooms Learning Walk,” and discuss strategies during collaborative planning time while also developing interventions based upon weekly common formative assessments.

This model also addresses the elements of the N. C. high school reform component requirement to improve personalization and instructional content and pedagogy:

- Highly structured, clear focus,
- Measurable goals and benchmarks for student achievement including formative assessments,
- Orderly, personalized environment focused on learning,
- A special ninth grade component
- On-going, high quality professional development relevant to the reform effort and needs assessment results,
- Collaborative spirit and collaborative structures,
- Commitment to continuous review and improvement and a plan for interval monitoring, and
- A record of success as evidenced by data from other schools.

Having monitored over the last year the assessment data, student attendance, teacher attendance, and classroom learning walks and teacher observations - the administrative team and the School Improvement Team agree that teachers must be held accountable for providing effective instruction for increased student achievement. The faculty and staff understand that the next three years are vital in our school reform. The staff is committed to this hard work and on-going school improvement effort.

5. **Model's consistency with the Framework for Action:**

**Goal 1: Freshman Transition**

- Next year will be the third year of Freshman Academy with three teams
- There will be a counselor assigned to work exclusively with freshmen
- A summer transition program will begin in June, 2010 for twenty days - it will be mandatory for 8th graders to attend who scored Level I and or Level II as indicated on 8th grade data - instruction will focus on reading, writing, and math
- Students failing the 8th Grade Computer Skills Test will have an opportunity to attend a two week long computer camp and have an opportunity to re-take the test
- Ninth grade teachers will have a common planning period each day
- Ninth grade teams will plan and implement one unit each semester that integrates content and instructional strategies.

**Goal 2: Formative Assessment**

- Teachers will develop an instructional calendar with weekly objectives using the summary goals from testing data and take analyses
- Teachers will develop common formative assessments to be given every two weeks
- Teachers will use data from growth tests to determine interventions, re-teaching and acceleration strategies
• County developed benchmark test will be given in the five exit standard EOC courses twice each semester
• Instructional strategies will be used in developing interventions for data from formative and summative assessment – differentiated instruction and examining student work
• Practice writing test will be given at grade 9 and 10 to assess intervention strategies
• Classroom expectations and grading practices will be addressed for assessments - formal and informal
• Credit recovery opportunities will be provided to students – rescheduling for second semester, web academy, NCVPS courses, learn and earn classes.

Goal 3: Plan for Struggling Students
• Evidence of differentiated instruction will be detailed in teachers’ lesson plans
• Active student engagement will be evident during classroom learning walks
• The literacy coach will provide instructional strategies for teachers of all EOC courses
• The literacy coach will set up a model literacy classroom for teach visits to include strategies and materials for all courses
• Use of varied instructional strategies from Creating Great Classrooms for Saturday study sessions will be used
• The school-wide Seminars will provide teachers an opportunity to implement new strategies for vocabulary, writing, conflict resolution and etc.
• Instructional planning days will be scheduled after each benchmark test to allow teachers to work collaboratively about what strategies worked and how to adjust and differentiate instruction according to individual student data

Goal 4: Literacy
• the literacy coach will assist struggling teachers with literacy strategies that will increase effectiveness for student success
• students will be required to complete a summer required reading project – activities will be based on strategies learned in Creating Great Classrooms
• vocabulary activities will be integrated into the curriculum
• Creating Great Classrooms will provide non-English/Reading teachers with the research and strategies on alternate methods of lesson design other than lecture and note taking
• The literacy coach will set up a model literacy classroom for teacher visits to include strategies and materials for all courses

Goal 5: Professional Development
• All staff will participate in Socratic Seminars on the following texts;
  o Year 1  “A Framework for Understanding Poverty” by Ruby Payne, Ph.D.
  o Year 2  “Classroom Instruction that Works” by Marzano, Pickering, and Polluck
  o Year 2  “Classroom Assessment and Grading that Works” by Robert Marzano
  o Year 3  “Classroom Assessment and Grading that Works” by Robert Marzano
• All staff will participate in the July 28-29 School Reform Implementation Retreat “Our Students, Our Content, Our Choice” facilitated by Chris Yeager and Carol Loyd
• Community Leaders, and other stakeholders will participate in the School Improvement/Leadership Retreat in January and June

• All staff will participate in ongoing school-related workshops that focus on
  o 90 minute block scheduling lesson design
  o Improving Classroom Instruction
  o Classroom Management
  o Creating Great Classrooms
• All staff will participate in Great Classroom Learning Walks.
Goal 6: Review of Policies and Procedures
- teachers will have available every day lesson plans built around an organized lesson - these will be in the teacher’s instructional planning notebook
- classroom observations and learning walks will include evidence of the six characteristics of great classrooms
- teachers will be trained to utilize the Data Track warehouse in order to make use of data to make instructional decisions for individual students
- the principal and assistant principals will commit to at least 90 minutes of time spend every day conducting learning walks and observations

Goal 7: School Community
- parent representations will be included in the January Data Retreat and the summer school reflection committee to ensure we are positively impacting student learning.
- the principal will share with the community through home visits and guest speaking about the efforts of the Creating Great Classroom model
- student will be asked to complete a student perception survey about the change in instruction in the classrooms at the end of the first semester along with a course/teacher evaluation

Goal 8: Professional Learning Communities
- weekly collaborative planning by course will be scheduled weekly
- Socratic seminars/book studies will be held for professional books being read
- Instructional planning day will be formatted so that teachers will spend the majority of the time collaborating on more effective strategies for success

Goal 9: Redesign and Reform Model
- Creating Great Classrooms
6. **Detailed professional development plan:**

As of this writing, all funding is dependent upon approval by the Cumberland County Board of Education. Upon approval from the Cumberland County Board of Education, exact funding cites and resources will updated in this document and the document will be resubmitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year One</th>
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| **June-September**  
One session each Month | Book Study – “A Framework for Understanding Poverty”  
Participants: All Staff  
Location: School  
Presenters: School Improvement Team  
Cost of books: $3,750.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **June 23 – 24, 2009** | Planning Retreat  
Participants: Lead Teachers  
Presenters: Administrative Team  
Location: E. E. Smith High School  
Cost: $3000.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **July 28 – 29, 2009** | “Our Students, Our Content, Our Choice” Reform Implementation Retreat  
Participants: All Staff Members  
Location: E. E. Smith High School  
Presenters: Chris Yeager, Carol Lloyd  
Cost: $29,000.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **August – December, 2009** | Book Study - “Understanding by Design”  
Participants: Administrative Team  
Location: E. E. Smith High School  
Presenter: Admin/Central Service  
Costs: $750.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **September 2009 – May, 2010**  
One session each month | Characteristics of Creating Great Classrooms  
Participants: All Staff  
Location: School  
Presenters: Administrative Team, Assistant Superintendent, School Improvement Team  
Costs: $1,000.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **January, 2010** | School Improvement Team Data Retreat — Two days  
Participants: School Improvement Team  
Location: Fayetteville, N.C.  
Costs: $3,000.00  
Funding: Pending |
| **June, 2010** | School Improvement/Leadership Team Retreat - Three days  
Participants: School Improvement Team  
Location: Calabash, NC.  
Cost: $7,000.00  
Funding: Pending |
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<th>Year Two</th>
<th>Year Three</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 2010 – May, 2011</strong>&lt;br&gt;One session each month</td>
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<td>Book Study – “Classroom Instruction That Works”&lt;br&gt;Participants: All Staff&lt;br&gt;Location: School&lt;br&gt;Presenters: School Improvement Team&lt;br&gt;Costs: $3,750.00&lt;br&gt;Funding: Pending</td>
<td>Book Study – “Classroom Assessment and Grading That Works”&lt;br&gt;Participants: All Staff&lt;br&gt;Location: School&lt;br&gt;Presenters: School Improvement Team&lt;br&gt;Costs: $3,750.00&lt;br&gt;Funding: Pending</td>
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<td>Applying Great Classroom Strategies&lt;br&gt;Participants: All Staff&lt;br&gt;Location: School&lt;br&gt;Presenters: Administrative Team, Assistant Superintendent, School Improvement Team&lt;br&gt;Costs: $1,000.00&lt;br&gt;Funding: Pending</td>
<td>Examining the Student Work of Great Classrooms&lt;br&gt;Participants: All Staff&lt;br&gt;Location: School&lt;br&gt;Presenters: Administrative Team, Assistant Superintendent, School, School Improvement Team&lt;br&gt;Costs: $1,000.00&lt;br&gt;Funding: Pending</td>
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<td><strong>January, 2011</strong></td>
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7. **Research documenting the model's effectiveness:**

Since the 2003-2004 school year, Cumberland County Schools has promoted and implemented Creating Great Classrooms (CGC). Various schools throughout the county have experienced positive student achievement from modeling Creating Great Classrooms.

- Achievement data from John Griffin Middle School evidenced an increase in student overall performance from 84.1% to 91.4% during the three years with expected or high growth achieved during the model’s implementation. Short and long term suspensions were reduced by 23%. In 2006, only four eighth grade students of 364 eighth graders were promoted to the high school non-proficient on the eighth grade end-of-grade test.

- Jack Britt High School also implemented the Creating Great Classrooms three-year staff development program. Each year scores on end-of-course test have increased, short and long-term suspensions have decreased, and the Teaching Working Conditions Survey results from both schools indicate positive responses for collaboration among staff, using data for instructional decisions, and overall support for the programs in place.

- Pine Forest High School was approved by NCDPI to implement Creating Great Classrooms as their reform model during the 2008-2009 school year and experienced an increase in student achievement. Their overall performance composite increased from 52% to 60%.

- Gray's Creek High School was approved by to implement Creating Great Classrooms as their reform model during the 2008 - 2009 school year and experienced an increase in student achievement. Their overall performance composite increased to just above the 70th percentile.

This model is also based on the research and theory to guide classroom practices consistent with other suggested reform models. This model focuses on research outlined in literature as indicated below;

- “Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement®” - Robert Marzano
- “Classroom Instruction That Works” - Robert Marzano
- “A Framework for Understanding Poverty” - Ruby Payne
- “How the Brain Learns” - David Sousa
- “Brain Compatible Strategies” - Eric Jensen
- “Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence:” - Daniel Coleman
- “On Common Ground – The Power of Professional Learning Communities” - DuFour, Esker
- DuFour
- “Learning by Doing” - DuFour, DuFour, Eaker
- “Common Formative Assessments” - Ainsworth and Viegut
8. **Budget supporting the model’s implementation:**

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<td>Parent Involvement Coordinator</td>
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<td>Literacy Coach</td>
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<td>$80,000.00</td>
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E. E. Smith High School
Reform Budget Request
2009 – 2010 SCHOOL YEAR

Positions
1 Literacy Coach
2 Certified Teaching Positions to reduce class sizes………

These positions are already in our ADM allotment and are essential towards our continued progress to move our school forward. I have included this in our request for an alternate reform model under #8 to ensure the clarity regarding the importance of these positions. I have also included these positions based upon a previous conversation with Dr. Henderson.

Human Resources 30,000.00
1-Classified Position Parent Involvement Coordinator

This is one of the components from America’s Choice that is a great asset to our school. Our current Parent Involvement Coordinator has galvanized members of the community, alumni, family, and friends to volunteer within the school to bring about positive change. Whether it is having parents, members of the community, and other stakeholders walk the hallways, proctor for EOC exams, volunteer to do tutorials, monitor the cafeteria, help students in need, volunteering resources to help students lacking resources to participate in educational opportunities, losing this position will be detrimental and cause a backwards spiral. Our current Parent Involvement Coordinator has established a PTSO that was nonexistent. He is currently working on establishing partnerships with business in the community, increasing the number of parental participation in PTSO, establishing a parent booster club and other initiatives to bring about positive changes to positively increase student achievement. The Parent Involvement Coordinator is also responsible for assisting teachers in making parental contact with struggling students. Jimmy Harvey is a great fit for this position and has had a significant impact on positive change within our building and community. He is greatly needed…..

Cut Positions Needed Back 50,000.00
1-Certified Position Freshman Guidance Counselor
E. E. Smith High School is the most transient high school in Cumberland County….. We are the high school of Fort Bragg and service a multitude of situations and scenarios unlike any other school in the county which requires time to research and to make contacts. We also service a high volume of students from group homes along with housing the largest EC Population in the County. Our commitment to excellence and service to all students, parents, and members of the community is crucial to changing negative perceptions and providing the best service to the students we serve. Having a Freshman Counselor is also needed to be in alignment with the constructs of the Framework for Action, as required by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction regarding students transitioning from middle school to high school…
Summer School Transition Program 28,000.00

- 4 Teachers for 3 weeks intense enrichment for at-risk students
- Transportation
- Materials/Copies
- Child Nutrition

During my first year at E. E. Smith, Dr. Henderson and Dr. Warren worked with our school by providing the resources necessary to run a transitional summer school program for struggling students entering high school from our feeder schools. The impact of working with these students afforded our staff the opportunity to establish positive relationships to positively impact student learning. Teachers are able to provide intense enrichment remediation in a less restrictive and threatening environment, which fosters confidence, and outlines specific expectations for the upcoming year. Not having a summer school transition program will negatively impact learning for struggling students entering high school. For example, this year we will receive approximately 28 students from Spring Lake Middle School who have not passed their EOG’s and were unable to be retained for various reasons…. Upon entering high school, without question, these students are going to struggle without pre-established safety nets. Without any type of transition program for student enrichment, struggling students in transition, are high-risk candidates to drop-out prior to their sophomore year of high school.

Software/Programs 40,503.00

- Plato Lab 30,395.00
  This was a directive in conjunction with Judge Manning. It has always been paid by Ricky Lopes. The Plato Lab is used excessively and has been a benefit to increased student achievement in our school.

- NovaNet (Requesting 8 Sites) 5,600.00
  The request is based upon better serving our struggling students with attendance issues, behavioral issues, and students with extenuating circumstances. By having NovaNet, we will be able to increase our graduation rate while reducing our dropout rate at the same time.

- McRel Walkthrough + License (750*4 + 190*4) 3,760.00
  This request is based upon our new county initiative to improve instruction by an established common language to monitor instructional strategies in the classroom. By having the additional software and technology, each administrator will be able to work collaboratively from a common perspective.....ie, a common language.
Materials  

The request for the following materials is based upon what we feel is needed to implement our reform model to fidelity. Each student and teacher will receive a binder along with inserts based upon the core courses that the students has and the teacher is teaching. As we continue to work on the finalization of the materials, if need be, adjustments can be made. However, our goal is to produce the best product to positively impact student learning. The numbers are based upon projected student enrollment and printing cost.

- Student Vocabulary 3-Ring Binder 7,420.00
- Student Vocabulary – inserts per class 10,446.33
- Teacher Planning 3-Ring Binders 1,416.33
- Vocab Strategies (1 per Teacher@36 per book) 4,320.00
- Teacher Planning Sheets 5,223.33
- Student Planners 7,850.00
- Book Study (120 @ 36 per book) 3,750.00

Faculty Stipends  

- Faculty (120) – 2 days @ 100.00 per day 24,000.00

The entire faculty will meet on the 28th and 29th of July to work on our alternate reform model. We will be creating the binders for teachers and students based upon CGC and Reform Model, “Our Students, Our Content, and Our Choice.”

Chris Yeager and Carol Lloyd will be facilitating the workshop along with the Administrative Team

Consultant Costs  

Chris Yeager and Carol Lloyd will be working exclusively with our faculty and staff to ensure implementation to fidelity. We will continuously monitor, evaluate, reflect, and adjust.

- Chris Yeager 5 days @ 1800.00 per day 9,000.00
- Carol Lloyd 8 days @ 1200.00 per day 9,600.00

Professional Development  

- Reform Model Implementation Retreat 29,000.00

This is the workshop scheduled for the 28th and 29th of July.

- Quarterly Instructional Planning/Student Assessment Days 6,000.00

This will allow for teachers of EOC’s to assess data and collaborate regarding next steps.....
• **Model Classroom Visits**  
4,000.00  
This will allow teachers to visit model classrooms to improve instructional strategies to impact student learning. Model classroom visit will not be limited to E. E. Smith rather CCS best teachers in EOC’s based upon data and principal recommendations.

• **January Retreat 2010**  
3,000.00  
A retreat to evaluate, reflect, and adjust for the Spring

• **June Retreat 2010**  
7,000.00  
A School Leadership Retreat to evaluate, assess data, reflect, revisit focus, and plan according for the upcoming school year to positively impact student learning.

**Total:** $280,528.99