Move On When Ready Learning Collaborative eNewsletter
January School Spotlight: Amphitheater High School, ASU Prep Academy, and Gary K. Herberger Young Scholars Academy

Highlights of CFA’s Embracing the Full Potential of Summer Learning Grant

This month, we spotlight the winners of CFA’s recent summer learning grant competition, which made funds available to Move On When Ready (MOWR) schools that demonstrated commitment to developing unique and effective summer programs to support the performance-based education model of MOWR. For their proposals, Amphitheater High School (Amphi), ASU Prep Academy (ASU Prep), and Gary K. Herberger Young Scholars Academy (Herberger Academy) were each awarded a one-time $15,000 grant to aid in the planning and implementation phases of innovative summer learning programs.

Based on empirical research studies that have identified best practices for summer learning and made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor, CFA’s Summer Learning Grant is designed to encourage partner schools to build innovative programs for rising 9th and 10th grade students. These programs will promote student success in MOWR’s college and career readiness qualification system.

Each of the winning proposals showed dedication to creating groundbreaking summer learning programs that extend well beyond the traditional models of credit recovery and remediation. All three schools are taking steps to build fun and engaging experiences outside of the classroom while incorporating curricula aligned to the instructional systems used by Move On When Ready schools. For example:

- In preparation for Cambridge IGCSE science lab work at Herberger Academy, experiential activities will consist of students designing and executing experiments “in the field.”

- As practice for the coursework requirement in Cambridge IGCSE American History at Amphi, students will engage in historical thinking activities, conducting primary source research during various trips to local historical sites.

- To promote advanced academic behaviors, ASU Prep’s curriculum will be grounded in “Hands-on/Minds-on” activities that emphasize creativity and exploration.

1 e.g., the Rand Corporation’s 2013 report, “Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success”
The summary below offers the basic frameworks of the schools’ summer learning plans and insight into the collaborative process they shared in order to develop and refine them.

**Amphitheater High School**

Amphi’s new summer program centers on addressing the learning gaps students bring with them to high school, not only relative to academic performance, but in understanding differences between the type of instruction they received in middle school and what they will receive through Cambridge IGCSE courses. In addition, based on the observation that many students need more time than the typical academic year allows (i.e., the 180 day school calendar is often not sufficient for some students to achieve foundational skills and grasp content), the summer session will develop the habits of mind and skills needed to succeed in rigorous, performance-based courses. To this end, the Amphi design focuses on three groups of students:

1. Incoming freshmen for whom the program will offer an immersion into the “Cambridge experience,” with six weeks to set expectations and build familiarity
2. Rising sophomores who may need an extension of the freshmen year, especially in math and biology, to build proficiency
3. Sophomore students who are wrapping up requirements for the Grand Canyon High School Diploma (e.g., completing work in economics and Cambridge IGCSE Art and Design)

While incorporating traditional academic skills and offering the school some flexibility to leverage resources already being deployed on campus (e.g., transportation, security, classified staffing, and school meals), this summer program is distinct from traditional summer school programs like AIMS Prep, credit recovery, or Arizona’s four-hour block of intensive instruction for English language learners. As a departure from a “credit recovery” mindset, the program is not designed for students to earn “hours” or credit, but to practice the types of activities they will be doing during the formal academic year. For example:

- The summer program’s Algebra Academy offers college immersion experiences through activities on the University of Arizona campus consisting of project-based learning with university faculty. This aspect of the program will encourage students to become familiar with a college campus environment.
- A competitive rocketry unit is a hands-on STEM learning experience that integrates model rocket building (engineering) with math and graphing calculation.
- Some students will use the program to get a jump on building a portfolio in Cambridge IGCSE Art and Design, which will allow them to either lay a foundation for their fine arts requirement as freshmen or to extend their fine arts experience into a second or third year.
ASU Preparatory Academy

ASU Prep’s program design revolves around experiential activities to help students at each of its two campuses make connections across fields of study. The learning objectives of the program will be presented through the lens of the Cambridge IGCSE First Language English (FLE) course with an emphasis on the concept of “understanding author’s effect.” The choice of this particular objective within this particular course was based on analysis of IGCSE exam results data from 2011 and 2012, which revealed advanced literacy is foundational to demonstrating college and career readiness (in preparation to earn the performance-based Grand Canyon High School Diploma).

The plan is purposefully designed to ensure students are exposed to an array of enrichment activities that are fun and engaging, allowing students to explore Arizona as if enrolled in a study-abroad program. An overarching intent is to connect students to their sense of place and encourage them to commit to their local communities after college. For example, students will:

- Participate in a week of activities devoted to exploring the architectural styles of Paolo Soleri and Frank Lloyd Wright (supported by field trips to Arcosanti and Taliesin West). Students will be asked to interpret these authors’ effects (desired and actualized) using primary source documents and their own “hands on – minds on” experiences.
- Study Justice Sandra Day O’Connor’s effect and impact on the world through a civic engagement and legal perspective, culminating with a trip to the O’Connor House.
- Explore science writers’ effects during an overnight experience at Biosphere II in Tucson.

The program also seeks to infuse technology into the students’ work, bridging the two ASU Prep campuses together via technology before, during, and after the field trips. Each student will use an iPad to document their learning through a digital portfolio they will develop. Students will present a 2-5 minute oral presentation each week in addition to assignments intended to focus on the development of writing and critical thinking skills. A group of junior and senior ASU Prep students trained through the Arizona State University peer writing program will serve as peer mentors for program participants.

Gary K. Herberger Young Scholar’s Academy

Herberger Academy’s new summer program is designed strictly as a series of enrichment opportunities for students. Uniquely, the program will not be limited to Herberger Academy students, and will be open to a cohort of students made up of a combination of Herberger Academy students and students from across the network of MOWR schools. Staffing opportunities will also be open to teachers from around the MOWR network of schools.

The program is based on a series of project-based learning “blocks,” featuring activities that integrate instruction in either STEM or Humanities areas. While students may engage in both areas, they are not
required to do so. For STEM, science and math teachers will work together to conduct integrated projects. In the humanities, English and history teachers will develop the activities.

The program is not unit-focused in the traditional sense. That is, while students may work on projects based on Cambridge IGCSE coursework, it will not be restricted by any formal course requirements or tied to course syllabi.

- “Lessons” will be experiential (based on Herberger’s regular school-year curriculum, which is almost entirely project-based).
- Friday field trip days will serve as a summary activity for students based on each week’s central topic.
- The program will conclude with a college immersion experience consisting of a three-day college campus residency in the ASU West Campus residence halls.
- The final day of the program will consist of exhibitions, demonstrations, and colloquia during which students will present culminating projects, performances, oral reports, etc.

The MOWR Summer Learning Collaborative

Since receiving notification of their grant awards, the schools have formed a MOWR Summer Learning Collaborative based on the larger, network-wide MOWR Learning Collaborative model. Thus far, the schools have held two face-to-face meetings (including a campus visit to Amphi High School in Tucson) and will continue to meet periodically as they prepare to implement their respective programs. Conversations held in the collaborative setting have resulted in the three grantees building expanded partnerships between their campuses.

Members of the MOWR Summer Learning Collaborative will share their experiences with the entire MOWR Learning Collaborative both prior to launching their respective programs and after conducting program evaluations at the end of the summer session.

*Interested in diving deeper into the grantees’ plans for supporting a performance-based model through innovative summer learning models? Please join school leaders from Amphi, ASU Prep, and Herberger Academy at the January 31, 2014 MOWR Learning Collaborative Winter Summit, where they will lead a discussion on the steps they have taken to create and implement effective summer learning programs in the context of MOWR.*