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## **Barancik Foundation awards grant for elementary math teacher training**

SARASOTA COUNTY, Jan. 7, 2016 – Elementary teachers in Sarasota County will get special training to help students overcome math anxiety, thanks to a grant from the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation. The organization is providing \$619,000 in funding for the school district to hire a mathematics expert, train teachers and evaluate the effort.

The goal is to change the way elementary teachers approach math lessons. Research suggests that when it comes to student performance in the subject, an effective teacher has two to three times the impact of any other school factor, including technology, facilities and school administration.

“The most important part of this initiative is investing in the talent of teachers,” said Teri A Hansen, president and CEO of the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation. “The teacher is the critical component of student success and we want to invest in the human capital inside the classroom.”

In addition to providing teachers with the guidance of a math expert and special training in effectively teaching the subject to elementary students, the initiative will allow teams of teachers to collaborate on math lesson plans. Teachers on the team will have the opportunity to engage in “instructional rounds” together as they attempt to perfect their lesson plans. Instructional rounding is the process of having teachers and administrators observe and reflect on lessons being taught. The concept is based on the medical model of health care professionals observing patients together and planning the next steps in their care.

“We’re grateful to the Barancik Foundation for recognizing the importance of great teaching in this equation,” said Laura Kingsley, executive director of elementary education for Sarasota County Schools. “This program will provide our teachers with expert training to fill any gaps and stretch their thinking. It will encourage them to work through deeper math discussions and learn to ask the questions that foster real understanding in their students.”

Kingsley cites frequent comments among children and adults such as “I hate math” and “I was never any good at math.” Some studies have found that 25 percent of four-year college students experience moderate to high math anxiety, that teachers with math anxiety tend to have students with lower performance in math, and that 50 percent of students in first and second grade are “afraid” of math.

“We need to alleviate that anxiety among our elementary teachers so they can help address it in their students,” said Kingsley. “This initiative will give our teachers the tools to help our students enjoy the productive struggle that is always present when they are learning something new and challenging.”

The elementary math teacher training initiative is funded through March 2017, with possible additional funding after its effectiveness is evaluated.

(MORE)

Math teacher training grant, cont'd.



**About the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation**

The Charles & Margery Barancik family has long believed in the power of philanthropy to shape our world and enrich the lives of all people. It was the expression of this belief that led them in 2014 to establish the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation — a private, family foundation located in Sarasota, Florida. The Barancik Foundation creates initiatives and awards grants in Sarasota and beyond in the areas of arts and humanities, education and science, humanitarian causes, medical research, and the environment. For further information, please contact Kelly Romanoff at [KRomanoff@BarancikFoundation.org](mailto:KRomanoff@BarancikFoundation.org).

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