

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** County Superintendents  
RESA Directors  
RESA Professional Development Coordinators  
County Math Contacts  
County Professional Development Coordinators  
Middle Level Principals  
Middle School Faculty Senate Chairs  
Middle Level Teachers

**FROM:** Larry Lamb, Mathematics Coordinator  
Murrel Hoover, MERIT Program Coordinator  
Pamela Smith, MERIT Project Coordinator

**DATE:** March 5, 2003

**RE:** Project MERIT Professional Development: 2003—2005

***“Ready or not... The world is different... Kids are different... Work is different... Communication is different... Information is different... And, teaching must be different too!”*** Enclosed is an opportunity for you to register a team of middle school mathematics teachers for the next round of **Project MERIT Institutes**, shining the light on teaching and learning in three contexts: learning mathematics, learning to teach mathematics, and learning to work collaboratively!

Project MERIT is a five-year, \$5.8 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for enhancing both the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of middle school mathematics teachers. A statewide cadre of 120 MERIT Leaders has received professional development in mathematics education and leadership and is implementing an NSF-funded, research-based curriculum, ***MathScape: Seeing and Thinking Mathematically***, with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. This curriculum exemplifies the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; aligns with West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives; and prepares students for the new state assessment. **Teachers, students, administrators, and parents involved with Project MERIT are reporting a high level of student engagement, a depth of understanding of mathematics concepts, and increased problem solving and communication skills.**

Over the next two years, MERIT Leaders will train additional middle school teachers to use the *MathScape* curriculum with the over arching goal of providing experience that will move mathematics curriculum decisions toward standards-based instruction in all middle school mathematics classrooms. We held planning meetings in each RESA during December 2002 and January 2003 to determine how best to make this training available to additional middle level educators. The tentative dates shown here and on the application are a result of those meetings. Some districts have not finalized their plans. Teachers will commit to participation in nine days of professional development and using three units during the first year of implementation. The second year they will continue with the Project and complete an additional nine days of professional development while

implementing *MathScape* fully. Most of the training occurs in the summer and on non-school days. Tentative training schedules are similar to the following:

- Summer 2003 – 4 days
- Fall 2003 – Spring 2004 – 5 days including unit training and local support
- Summer 2004 – 4 days
- Fall 2004 – Spring 2005 – 5 days including unit training and local support

MERIT Teachers will receive professional development in implementing the standards-based curriculum, building learning communities, communication skills, problem solving skills, cooperative learning, reading in the content area, writing across the curriculum, and other areas that will enhance mathematics education in your school. By developing these skills in all teachers of mathematics, students receive the benefits of consistency throughout their middle school instruction. Using *MathScape* at 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades provides vertical alignment and addresses a significant number of Algebra I and Geometry CSOs, making the transition to high school mathematics courses easier for all students. In addition to the training, during the first year, teachers will receive one teacher guide of *MathScape* material **at each training they attend**, and manipulatives required to teach the units. **We are asking that schools and counties provide stipends for non-school days, substitutes for school days, travel expenses, and at least one set of 25 student books for each unit.** (Student books cost \$7.95 each.)

Schools without a MERIT Mentor Teacher are asked to send a team (at least two teachers) in order to provide the best possible support during implementation. **All interested middle school teachers of mathematics at the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers in self-contained 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Special Education teachers who collaborate to teach mathematics, and Title I mathematics teachers are encouraged to apply!**

If you have questions regarding this opportunity or Project MERIT, please call our office at 304-558-4032 and we will be happy to talk with you. We are looking forward to working with you, your school, and your teachers to build a partnership that will enhance student learning and provide the best possible mathematics education for students in West Virginia!

**Please indicate the professional development session you will be attending (*tentative dates are listed*):**

RESA I July 28 - 31

RESA V July 28 – Aug 1

RESA II June 16 - 20

RESA VI Individual County Plans  
August 11 – 14 (Ohio County)

RESA III Individual County Plans  
July 21 – 25 (Putnam/Boone)  
August 4 – 8 (Kanawha/Clay)

RESA VII Individual County Plans  
June 11 – 13, 19 (Harrison Co)  
June 16 – 18 (Randolph Co.)  
August (Marion Co)

RESA IV Individual County Plans

RESA VIII Individual County Plans