

The Oklahoma State Department of Education through the Darlington Public Schools sponsored a program called “OK-RMSP: Oklahoma Rural Mathematics and Science Partnership.” The program focus is to increase content knowledge, expand the information technology readiness, the creation of standards based mathematics and science lessons for K-12 teachers in rural western Oklahoma, the creation of communities of practice to allow for the teachers to be linked to each other during the school year and to create a living document from the imposed standards. The objectives of OK-RMSP come from the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS, 1995) as well as the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM) from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 1995) and the National Science Education Standards (NSES) from the National Research Council (NRC, 1996). OK-RMSP is also in alignment with the goals and objectives set by Oklahoma Teacher Education Consortium.

Forty teachers will attend a four-week Oklahoma Rural Mathematics and Science Partnership Institute (OK-RMSP) at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma. In addition to the four-week summer institute the teachers will attend six sessions during the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters. The summer and school year sessions prepare the teachers to participate in an electronic community of practice to take the lessons learned at the partnership workshop and to integrate them into the daily classroom activities.

The teachers learn to use blogs, wikis, and electronic groups to enhance the classroom learning experience and how to create the instruments to allow for electronic collaboration between members of the class. They share electronic documents to use in their classes. In Oklahoma the PASS Standards are very important. By having a live working document and the ability that the wiki allows for collaboration among members and using the standards as the focal point it is easy at the end of the year to demonstrate how the PASS document drove the actual running of the class. The teachers are encouraged to allow the students to set up their own communities of practice to encourage interactive communication among students.

According to director Dr. Brian Campbell, OK-RMSP is intended to increase content knowledge and the creation of standards based mathematics and science lessons for PreK-12 teachers in rural western Oklahoma.