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## Promise and Potential Grant

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## Promise and Potential Grant

March 3, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. –The Educational Studies Department at Illinois Wesleyan University has received a \$25,000 grant from the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank, Trustee and the Commerce Bancshares Foundation. The grant award will support the Promise and Potential Partnership between Illinois Wesleyan University and Bloomington Junior High School (BJHS). This partnership, administered by Professor Robin Leavitt at IWU and Counselor Mary Aplington at BJHS, was formalized in 2001 with a start-up grant from the State Farm Companies Foundation.

The primary mission of the partnership is to support the promise and potential of all students, particularly those vulnerable students who may be struggling in school and who may lack the social, structural or institutional support required to succeed academically. The secondary mission of the partnership is to prepare future teachers and other child and family professionals to work with diverse student populations. All IWU undergraduates enrolled in Education and Social Justice, and Studying Children and Adolescents spend two semesters mentoring and tutoring BJHS students. During each fall and spring semester, approximately 56 IWU student tutor-mentors contribute a total of more than 100 hours at the school working with pairs of BJHS students. More than 100 BJHS students participate in the program each year.

A primary component of the grant is support for the integration of technology in the "school-based" tutor-mentor program. Funds will be used to purchase mini-laptops with educational software and a wireless classroom management application that allows teachers and IWU tutors to make available supplemental learning experiences and resources, retrieve students' schoolwork, and track students' progress. The technology will help develop and support students' skills in writing and literacy, mathematics and research. It will be used by IWU tutors and participating BJHS students to check grades and homework posted on their teachers' Web sites, read on-line textbooks, access on-line content areas set up by BJHS teachers and complete written assignments. These laptops will also be used by BJHS students in the program to follow up on the previous day's tutoring sessions or to prepare for their next session together. Use of technology will also serve administrative needs of the Promise and Potential Program, including the ability to store information from qualitative and quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the partnership.

For additional information, contact Leavitt at (309) 556-3504.

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