



The G U I D O A.  
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## WMU High Impact Leadership Project Receives Funds for School Libraries in Calhoun County Project Schools

KALAMAZOO, MI – Selected schools in Calhoun County will receive new classroom libraries thanks to a \$240,000 grant from the Guido A. and Elizabeth H. Binda Foundation. The Foundation is the newest partner to support the High Impact Leadership for School Renewal (HIL) Project—a collaborative effort of Western Michigan University (WMU), the Reading Now Network (RNN), and the General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Literacy Task Force.

The funds were awarded to Ottawa Area ISD (OAISD) to provide classroom libraries and reading areas in all HIL Project Cohort A schools located in Calhoun County. The schools include: Verona Elementary and Ann J. Kellogg Elementary in Battle Creek Public Schools; Bellevue Elementary and Beadle Lake Elementary in Harper Creek; Lillian Fletcher Elementary in Homer; MIngos Brook and Riverside in Lakeview; and Harrington Elementary in Marshall.

The schools, their principals, and the Calhoun ISD have committed to participating in the HIL Project through September 2020. They will take part in educational rounds and leadership coaching and receive funding to help support reading improvement efforts. The Binda Foundation’s contribution to robust classroom libraries will increase the likelihood of student success.

This contribution could pave the way for other entities to join the efforts to support HIL Project, RNN, and GELN Literacy Essentials schools across Michigan.

“In the last several months, we have seen an amazing response to the HIL Project, with people all over Michigan lining up to be involved,” said Kyle Mayer, OAISD Assistant Superintendent, who requested the funds on behalf of the HIL Project.

### HIL Project Enlists Collaborators for Instructional Rounds, Facilitation, Coordination

Over 300 educators from across Michigan have volunteered to serve on instructional rounds teams in each of 75 HIL Project Cohort A schools. Eventually, Project leaders will enlist volunteers to do the same for a second cohort of schools. The number of volunteers illustrates how the WMU HIL Project and the RNN/GELN Literacy initiatives are unifying school leaders, teachers, and community stakeholders around a vision for literacy for all Michigan's students. Instructional rounds play a critical role in honoring the work schools are already doing and empowering educators to achieve full literacy for all students.

Since September 2017, Project leaders also have seen an exciting response to the recruitment of highly qualified and skilled educators to serve as implementation facilitators for each HIL Project school.



## HIL Project Receives Binda Foundation Grant, cont'd

“Candidates come from all over West Michigan and beyond,” said Pete Haines, OAISD Superintendent and RNN Director. “They are passionate about literacy for all children and ready to walk alongside principals and teacher leaders with helping hands, resources, and strategies to achieve high integrity and fidelity implementation of the RNN/GELN Literacy strategies.”

The HIL Project’s Core team includes leaders representing RNN, the GELN Literacy Task Force, WMU, Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA), and several intermediate and local school districts. The Core Team facilitates the partnerships and collaborations that are key to the Project's success and assists WMU in achieving maximum impact from the \$12.5 million U.S. Department of Education that funds the HIL Project.

“This team is the beating heart of a growing collaboration with foundations, economic and talent development groups like Talent2025 and Southwest Michigan First, and other literacy and leadership development initiatives,” said HIL Project Director Dr. Patricia Reeves of WMU.

### Work in Schools to Begin February 2018

Momentum is growing inside the HIL Project as instructional rounds teams discover much to appreciate about how participating schools are already working to achieve literacy for students. Project leaders are training Facilitators and matching them to each Cohort A school. In February, Facilitators will begin their work with the ongoing guidance of the Facilitator Coordinating Team, who will provide training, support, and resources.

“We have great optimism that the additional support Facilitators provide to principals and teacher leaders will accelerate and sustain literacy transformation and leadership development for all HIL Project schools,” said Susan Townsend, GELN Early Literacy Project Director.

The mounting support from partners such as the Binda Foundation and others adds to that momentum.

“With the kinds of cooperation we are seeing as people rally around the WMU HIL Grant and RNN/GELN Partnership, it is possible to envision that Michigan could lead the nation in literacy achievement for all elementary school children and, eventually, all K-12 graduates,” Reeves said. “It is beginning to feel like the HIL Project could become the catalyst for one of Michigan's most significant educational collaborations in decades.”

For more information on the HIL Project, contact [info@hilwmu.org](mailto:info@hilwmu.org) or follow us @WMUHILproject

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*The High Impact Leadership for School Renewal (HIL) Project is a leadership development program for practicing principals working with a team of teacher leaders to implement the GELN Literacy Essentials in high poverty Reading Now Network (RNN) elementary schools.*

*The Guido A. and Elizabeth H. Binda Foundation is a private foundation established in 1977 by Guido and Elizabeth Binda. Guido was an architect specializing in school design. Elizabeth, a former educator and world traveler, was an avid reader and devotee of the opera, classical music and the arts. Guido and Elizabeth lived in Battle Creek and chose to focus on creative educational programs in areas throughout southwest Michigan.*

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