



MSI- PHASE II SPRINT TO EXCELLENCE GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As an extension of the highly successful Model Schools Initiative, St. Croix Foundation will be launching the Sprint to Excellence Grant Awards Program in the fall of 2011. Through this new initiative, we seek to support 21st Century best practices in St. Croix's public and small private and parochial schools. Sprint to Excellence (STE) Grants will be awarded for high impact academic-based projects that serve to enhance student performance, teacher quality and leadership effectiveness. We have developed strict reporting guidelines and phased grant award disbursements to ensure the highest degree of accountability and focus in meeting outlined goals and timelines.

The Sprint to Excellence Grant Program is modeled after some of the most successful programs which were implemented during Phase I of the Foundation's Model Schools Initiative. Competitive grants will be awarded to public and small private schools on St. Croix in support of targeted, comprehensive academic-based projects in the following areas;

- 1. Innovative Instruction and Professional Development**
Maximum Award: \$7,500
- 2. Reading Counts: Literacy Reinforcement and Assessment**
Maximum Award: \$5000
- 3. Model Learning Environments: Classroom Management**
Maximum Award: \$2500
- 4. Mentoring and Personal Development**
Maximum Award: \$2500



MODEL SCHOOLS INITIATIVE -PHASE I PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Launched in the fall of 2005, St. Croix Foundation's *Model Schools Initiative* (MSI) was created with the ultimate goal of developing a strategic and collaborative approach to improve public education. In the years since, the Foundation has supported replicable models of literacy-based academic programs and instructional best practices in our many of our local schools. Today, our Model Schools Initiative represents a targeted, community-based educational venture through which the Foundation has sought to address systemic problems in the Territory's educational system.

Through our Initiative, which was piloted at St. Croix's most troubled junior high school and targeted middle school students, the Foundation was given considerable access to many of our public schools, to our local educators, and to our students. We spent five consecutive years on the ground at Elena Christian Junior High School witnessing up-close and personal what so many in our community sit on the sidelines and pontificate about. The end result of our on-the-ground efforts has ultimately been extraordinary insight into what is working in our schools as well as what is plaguing them, based on both experiential and quantitative data. As objective "outsiders," the Foundation initially began our journey into education with no other agenda than to better understand some of the root causes of the "failures" in our schools so that could, in turn, develop strategic ways to support them toward success.

Overall, our Model Schools Initiative afforded us entrée into some of the complex challenges that make far too many of our schools ineffectual and inadequate in the 21st Century. On the flip side, however, we have also been enlightened and encouraged by the untold stories of success, which illustrate the potential our schools have to be truly innovative and highly effective in preparing our students for successful lives beyond graduation.

Since the launch of our Initiative in 2005, so much of what the Foundation brought to the table, beyond money, served to fill real voids and skill gaps in many of our public schools. But, access to the flexible funding which the Foundation provided was unquestionably an important value-added component of the Initiative for our school partners. In total, throughout our Model Schools Initiative, **the St. Croix Foundation expended in excess of \$500,000 to support our public schools-** an exorbitant amount of money for a small un-endowed community organization that has to raise the equivalent of that each year just for overhead. It is also important to note that although we did reach out to numerous entities in the public sector to support us in this public sector-based endeavor, *every single dollar raised and expended for this Initiative came from the private donors.*

As we launch Phase II of our Model Schools Initiative, (Sprint to Excellence Grant Award), the Foundation is cognizant of the fact that the success and well-being of our young people is the single greatest insurance for the economic and social welfare of our entire community. It is with this understanding, that we have made a firm commitment to continue to develop innovative programming. In the months and years ahead, we seek to encourage average citizens and community stakeholders to work more collaboratively, to pool resources, and to advocate for more high quality educational opportunities for our students. We hope you'll join us!