

Coventry has eyes on prize

\$100,000 grant from Gates Foundation would personalize learning environment

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COVENTRY — “There’s money out there, why not try to get some of it?” asked Coventry High School Principal Michael Hobin.

Coventry School Superintendent Mike Almeida, Hobin and Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Principal Arthur Lisi applied for a \$100,000 Gates Foundation Grant targeted at personalizing the learning environment for students (providing differentiated instruction, technology, advisory, virtual learning, alternative pathways to graduation and more)

“The grant aligns perfectly with the district’s strategic plan,” said Hobin and Almeida.

Hobin explained that the idea of applying for the grant sort fell into their laps.

Through the League of Innovative Schools and the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) large schools can be considered for the Gates Foundation Grant.

These organizations partner with schools in an effort to keep innovative programs moving forward.

“They want to keep up with the things that are going well and fix what isn’t working,” said Tobin.

Officials only learned about the possibility to receive the grant while they were attending a conference.

Grant would award school dept. \$100K

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The NESSC is a regional partnership that promotes innovative thinking and promotes greater educational equity and opportunity for all students.

Their goal is to increase graduation rates across their region which includes Rhode Island, Connecticut, Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire.

"We assembled all our data and the other necessary paper-

work to apply within a week's time," said the principal. "We were invited by the NESSC to apply for the grant with Cumberland, Smithfield, North Smithfield and others."

One aspect that makes this grant different than some others available is that this is in three phases; planning, implementation and evaluation.

"Each year has its own amount that a school can receive," he said.

Hobin said one of the proj-

ects grant money could be applied to is the capstone projects because technology and innovation play such a huge role in those.

"Students are asked to identify a real problem and come up with an innovative way to resolve it," he explained. "If, and I say if because there's quite a bit to it, but if we are awarded any of this money, then this is just one aspect of the district's education plan we can improve upon; there are so

many things."

Almeida is very excited to apply for this and said when he read some of the details, he knew it fit right into the district's mission.

"We're always seeking ways to offset our costs and this is, yet again, another opportunity to do that," said the school superintendent.

The district hopes to hear if they've been awarded by December.