

MOC-Floyd Valley receives state pre-school dollars

ORANGE CITY — Fifty-two of 176 school districts who applied for the first of four year's funding by the State of Iowa supporting four-year-old preschool programs were funded. And, one of the districts receiving funding was MOC-Floyd Valley.

Also receiving funding in the area were Rock Valley, George-Little Rock, Cherokee and Pocahontas Area.

The district received \$115,200 in state dollars to offset costs of four-year-old preschool programming for 20 children at Orange City Area Child Care and 16 at the Orange City Christian School.

The grant supports 10 hours of instruction a week for each child, an aide to ride the bus and help with lunches, two assistants and administrative costs.

The grant application was completed by Sherwood Forest Grants of Orange

City, "a complex, competitive process," according to Marcia De Graaf, principal of MOC-Floyd Valley Elementary School in Hospers, who is administering the program for the district.

Proposals were submitted by July 1 for the program established on May 10 by House File 877 and signed by the governor. A total of \$15 million was appropriated for 2007-2008, and that amount is expected to be appropriated in each of the next two years, as well as \$16.2 million in the last year of the four-year program.

The state legislature is expecting the program to result in 90-percent participation by Iowa four-year-olds in pre-school programs supported by state and federal funds by 2011. The program goal is to expand opportunities for young children to access pre-school environments which will help prepare them for school.

Applicants were judged on availability of current pre-school programs, collaboration within the community in early childhood services, poverty levels in the area and district size.

Selected districts will not be required to apply for subsequent years. Funding will be based on a pre-school aid formula, based on each year's enrollment. The MOC-Floyd Valley district has approximately 60 four-year-olds taking part in collaborative programs and could qualify for more funding in the next round of funding, if appropriated by the state legislature.

Any child four years of age in Iowa is eligible to take part in the state program.

State dollars are also funding scholarships through its "empowerment" program for children to take part in other qualifying pre-school programs.