

Intermediate District 287

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District 287 partners with Cultural Jambalaya to provide cultural education resources to more than 200 school districts

District's award-winning collaboration provides digital curriculum, reaching hundreds of thousands of students

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (March 1, 2016) – Intermediate District 287, an education leader focused on innovative solutions for 12 member districts in the Twin Cities, has selected Cultural Jambalaya as a partner in its award-winning Minnesota Partnership for Collaborative Curriculum (MPCC). The MPCC, a one-of-a-kind initiative in the United States, provides digital curriculum to more than 200 school districts in Minnesota and nationwide, reaching hundreds of thousands of students.

In recent years, school district leaders have expressed the need for a radically different approach to connecting students to digital materials in a post-textbook world. The MPCC collaborative was formed as a grassroots effort to provide all Minnesota teachers with access to high quality, easily adaptable digital materials aligned to Minnesota standards in four core subject areas, including social studies.

Cultural Jambalaya is a nonprofit that uses global photography and videos to promote understanding and respect for all cultures. The Twin Cities-based nonprofit was selected by the MPCC to provide cultural relevance in its courses by embedding images and other information from Cultural Jambalaya's resources. Other key partners of the MPCC project include the Southern Poverty Law Center, Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Humanities Center and Wolf Center, among others.

"Students live in a global society and crave more cultural knowledge and understanding. Cultural Jambalaya is a perfect complement to our program," said Jon Fila, course facilitator and writer for the MPCC project. "Because our schools are becoming increasingly diverse, educators need learning materials and resources that are culturally relevant and grow a student's understanding of our world. Cultural Jambalaya's materials – as well as its core mission -- aim to provide a greater respect and appreciation for our similarities as well as our differences."

Most school districts experience budget challenges every year. The MPCC uses technology to replace expensive text books, saving schools thousands of dollars each year. The MPCC's sustainable model and collective effort is the largest-ever collaboration among Minnesota school districts. All content must be available digitally, be usable on multiple platforms, and conform to fair use standards, making the content available at little further cost to the user. Over 70 Minnesota teachers contributed lessons and materials to the digital curriculum.

Cultural Jambalaya's national award-winning "*Windows & Mirrors*" educational series – also offered free online at www.CulturalJam.org – is used by teachers in the classroom to broaden world views of students. The educational DVDs include videos on the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

“We are extremely proud to be a partner of the MPCC’s innovative program,” said Gail Shore, founder and executive director of Cultural Jambalaya. “Educators use our teaching tools to ignite curiosity with their students about our diverse world and its rich cultures. Cultural Jambalaya believes that in order to break down cultural barriers, we need to focus more on the similarities that bind us together as fellow human beings.”

Cultural Jambalaya most recently released its “Customs & Rituals” DVD, and in May will launch its next video, “Religion & Spirituality.” The “*Windows & Mirrors*” series is produced by Twin Cities-based Tremendous! Entertainment, creator and producer of *Travel Channel’s* hit series, “Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern.”

About Intermediate District 287

District 287 is an education partner focused on innovative solutions for twelve member districts including: Brooklyn Center, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Orono, Osseo, Richfield, Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park, Wayzata and Westonka, as well as numerous non-member districts. The innovative MPCC project earned a prestigious “Local Government Innovation Award” from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs in December 2015. For more information about the MPCC, visit <http://mncollaborativecurriculum.org>.

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