

Rockwell

Grants to provide after-school programs in math, science

Iowa News Service

CEDAR RAPIDS — Six area schools have been awarded grants of \$13,000 each to provide after-school programs to support instruction in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM areas, as they are called.

The grants are designed to help schools provide after-school programs to youth in grades 3 through 8.

Schools receiving the grants are Cedar Rapids McKinley Middle School; Prairie Heights Elementary and Prairie Middle School in the College Community district; English Valleys Elementary; Hills Elementary in the Iowa City district; and Novak Elementary in the Linn-Mar school district.

Funding for these mini-grants came from a \$200,000 competitive grant awarded by the Iowa Department of Education to the Grant Wood Area Education Agency. The grant was authorized by the Iowa Legislature.

Goals of the project are to increase the number of Iowa students who enter scientific or technical careers and expand student understanding of those academic areas.

Each site will provide weekly hands-on learning activities weekly for up to 30 participants. Schools will be asked to form partnerships with local businesses and support organizations like Iowa State University Extension, The Workplace Learning Connection, Science Station and the Grant Wood AEA Van Allen Science Teaching Center.

Grant Wood AEA has hired a teacher in residence to train teachers and provide support as they connect the after-school activities to district curriculum.

Jim Thornton, a former Ce-

dar Rapids district administrator, is coordinating the grant.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to show growth in not only interest in STEM-related fields of study but an increased awareness and knowledge of STEM careers and the opportunities that are available in the Corridor and the state of Iowa," he said.