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LEARNING COMMUNITY **Liaisons to help students and let teachers focus on instruction**

Date: April 21, 2011 **Section:** News

The Learning Community on Wednesday signed a \$484,260 contract with Lutheran Family Services to put support workers in 15 Bellevue and **Omaha schools**. The workers, called family liaisons, will work with families of children whose academic success is hampered by poverty, poor attendance, frequent changes of residence or language barriers.

"If the teacher doesn't have to worry about trying to find a resource for eyeglasses for the student, or anything else, and they can hand that off to these folks, then they can focus more on learning needs," said Ted Stilwill, chief executive officer of the Learning Community.

The initial contract runs through Aug. 31 and could be renewed for an additional year, through Aug. 31, 2012, at a cost of \$726,389, Stilwill said.

One liaison will be assigned to each **school**.

They will work in Bancroft, Castelar, Druid Hill, Gomez, Franklin, Kennedy, King, Jackson and Skinner elementary **schools** in the **Omaha Public Schools** and Bellaire, Bertha Barber, Betz, Birchcrest, Central and Twin Ridge elementaries in the Bellevue **school** district.

The liaisons will work with a student's family and teachers to develop a plan and help them obtain what they need to address the problem.

Officials said a variety of problems might interfere with a student's learning, including drug abuse in the home, a parent's job loss, domestic violence or sexual abuse.

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