



Mayville native, MSU grad to lead Whitewater Learning's expansion



Courtesy Photo
Allen Ralston

courses for educators via both group subscriptions for entire school districts and a variety of subscription options for individuals.

Whitewater Learning LLC has hired Allen Ralston, a North Dakota native, Fargo-area resident and long-time teacher in the state, as professional development consultant and business development director for the Dakotas.

Ralston will be responsible for marketing Whitewater Learning's group subscription model for online professional development coursework and capabilities to school districts and individual educators throughout North and South Dakota. He can be reached at 320-980-0110.

"My first order of business is to talk with every school superintendent and principal in North Dakota, to explain the advantages of using Whitewater Learning's online courses as a means for school districts to help all their teachers and administrators meet their needs for continuing professional development work," Ralston said. "I'll also be available for group presentations to

Educators in North Dakota and South Dakota can now tap into a new pipeline of high quality professional development coursework via the offerings of Whitewater Learning LLC, a Minneapolis-based company that offers online professional development

help teachers, school boards, community and business organizations to help them understand how Whitewater's approach can improve the quality of education in their schools, reduce ongoing training costs and hassles for educators and help school districts more closely align staff training with their district goals and needs."

A Mayville, N.D. native, Ralston grew up in a family that revered education. His father served as head of the science department at Mayville State University. Ralston himself went into teaching after graduating from Mayville State with a degree in biology and chemistry. While teaching in Grand Forks he graduated with a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of North Dakota. He taught science and coached sports for 28 years in North Dakota, the majority of his career was spent in Lisbon, N.D. and later at Red River High School in Grand Forks, N.D. He also served as high school principal of the Pine River-Backus School District, Superintendent at the Isle School District and the Clearbrook-Gonvick School District all in Minnesota. He also did graduate work in education at St. Cloud State University and the University of Minnesota, where he first met Whitewater Learning founder and CEO Ann Zweber Werner when she was the director of the University's Educational Administrators' Licensing Program.

"We are delighted to have Allen Ralston join our team to head up our product distribution in North and South Dakota," Werner said. "He completely understands how important it is for school districts and educators to have access to online professional development tools today – especially in states whose school districts are spread across vast rural distances, as in North and South Dakota."

WWL class modules are robust mini-courses based on university-quality requirements but

starting from the viewpoint of pre-kindergarten to grade 12 teachers, community educators and school administrators. Each module is flexible with the option of accessing all or individual parts of the whole, depending on the intended use. To date, 100% of Whitewater's modules have been accepted as evidence for license renewal.

Whitewater Learning also fills an enormous need in individual states and the nation as new performance evaluation requirements have been legislated for both principals and teachers. Whitewater provides the safety net for both the educator and the school district as each evaluation is required to include specific improvement statements. Because Whitewater modules are aligned with state and national standards and performance evaluation platform indicators, educators have a resource that can be tracked to show their commitment to address areas for improvement. Whitewater closes the cycle of performance reviews and corresponding professional development that starts at the federal level, moves to each state, district, school and educator. And each level can find its safety net in the company's resources. This new mandate is expected to be a strong marketing and driver for increased revenues for the company.

With more than 60 classes now offered through its website – and aiming for more than 100 courses by 2016 – Whitewater Learning is establishing itself as the gold standard of online professional development courses for educators. Founded in 2011, Whitewater courses are available in subject modules that address critical issues and areas of educational expertise of importance to school administrators and teachers. Courses can be purchased either individually, or by subscription.

For more information on Whitewater Learning, go to www.whitewaterlearning.org.