

PRESS RELEASES

News Brief - 9/13/01

[Welcome to WGU](#)

[What We Are](#)

[Who's Involved](#)

[Vision, History & Mission](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Administration](#)

[About Your Privacy](#)

[Glossary](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Return to Press Releases](#)

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\$1 Million from Gates Foundation Earmarked for Utah Principals and Superintendents

SALT LAKE CITY - The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a \$1 million grant to help train Utah school principals and district superintendents in technology leadership. The announcement was made this week in Salt Lake City by Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. According to Robert Mendenhall, president of Western Governors University (WGU), the funds will create a coordinated statewide initiative that promotes integration of technology in teaching and learning focused on increased student achievement. He said all 949 district superintendents and principals in Utah qualify for the program.

A full description and enrollment information is available on the Web at www.wgu.edu/tplus.

Mendenhall said the \$1 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation State Challenge Grant for Leadership Development is being matched by the State of Utah through funds specifically set aside by the legislature last year as part of Senate Bill 61.

WGU will deliver the "T-PLUS" program through its online education system, making it available to the superintendents and principals where they live and work. "Not only will it be convenient for the program participants, but they will also be given recognition for the competencies they already have," Mendenhall said. Like all WGU certificate and degree programs, the Advanced Certificate of Technology Leadership is based on the successful demonstration of competencies within the areas of study. "Principals and superintendents will have demonstrated skills in technology integration and technology implementation upon completion of the program," he said. The Utah State Office of Education has determined that 144 relicensure points are available to Utah administrators who earn this certificate.

During the presentation by the Gates Foundation, Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt said the T-PLUS program fits within the state's overall plan to increase technology in schools. "We have provided educational incentives and programs for teachers, and this will ensure that principals and superintendents become leaders and advocates of technology," Leavitt said.

Western Governors University was founded and is supported by 19 governors and 22 Fortune 500 companies and foundations to expand access to higher education. With just a few clicks at www.wgu.edu, a student can find descriptions of competency-based degree programs, an online catalog of quality distance-learning courses, an online library, bookstore, and one-on-one access to a personal WGU mentor, who will guide a student through his or her customized degree program. The university offers associate's, bachelor's and master's programs in technology, business and education.

