

CENTER CONNECTIONS

An E-Letter from ACI's Center for Success in High Need Schools

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Best Practices Education Forum – Thursday, April 14, 2005

ACI's new *Center for Success in High Need Schools* will sponsor its inaugural education forum from 2:30 – 4:30 pm, Thursday, April 14, at the Union League Club of Chicago, immediately prior to ACI's 53rd Annual Meeting, *Making the Grade: High Expectations for High-Need Schools*. The Center's forum, *Best Practices: Preparing Talented Teachers for High-Need Schools*, will provide diverse perspectives in addressing one of the thorniest questions facing K-12 education in Illinois and the nation: How do we recruit, prepare, and retain the most talented men and women to teach our neediest children?

Terry Mazany, CEO of the Chicago Community Trust, will keynote the forum and moderate a panel discussion presenting six perspectives on the skills, knowledge, beliefs and character traits required of teachers in high-need schools. The scheduled panelists are:

Leslie Baldacci, Teacher, Chicago Public Schools
John Gambro, Dean, College of Education, University of St. Francis
Toni Hill, Director of Routes to Teaching, Chicago Public Schools
Mary Jean Lynch, Professor of Psychology, North Central College
Bruce Thezan, Principal, Ninth Grade Center, Waukegan Public Schools
John Zenchak, Professor of Biology, North Central College

There's still time to register for *Best Practices* and for ACI's Annual Meeting, which marks the official dedication of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*. The registration deadline is April 6. To register, email centerconnections@acifund.org and enter "invite me" on the subject line. Please provide your name, title, college, institution, mailing address and telephone number in the body of the email. For more information about *Best Practices*, please contact Jan Fitzsimmons, Center Director, at (312)263-2391 x 34 or via email at jan.fitzsimmons@acifund.org.

***Transition to Teaching and I-SPED Collaborative partners meet
on April 14, 2005 at the Union League Club of Chicago***

ACI's *Transition to Teaching* partners and *I-SPED Collaborative* (special education) members will meet prior to the *Best Practices* forum, on Thursday, April 14, 2005 at the Union League Club. *Transition to Teaching* partners will meet from 10:30-Noon, and *I-SPED* partners will meet from 12:15-1:45 pm. Lunch will be available beginning at noon for attendees from both meetings. (Note: All attendees should report to the fifth floor registration area upon arrival at the club.) Partners, both current and prospective, will discuss the status of current cohorts and lessons learned to date, plans for year 3 partnerships, including identifying possible shortage areas, new models and new potential partners. Participants also will discuss plans for ACI's *Teacher Induction Academy*, the new *Mentor Online* service, and the role of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*. Agendas have been emailed and may be obtained from centerconnections@acifund.org. All current member-partners and interested or prospective partners are welcome to attend these meetings. For more information, please contact Chris Johnston at (312)263-2391, ext. 21 or by email at chris.johnston@acifund.org.

In addition to these upcoming meetings the Center held its first joint TQE Implementation Team/Teacher Education and Arts and Science faculty meeting on the theme of increasing faculty collaboration to improve teaching in high need schools, on Friday, April 1. Look for outcomes of this exciting meeting to be reported in the May issue of *Center Connections*.

Initial Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) performance report submitted April 1, 2005

OER Associates, the firm hired by ACI's Center for Success in High Need Schools to serve as outside evaluator for the \$6.99 million five-year U.S. Department of Education TQE grant, has completed the initial six-month grant progress report. This first evaluation focuses on the establishment of grant implementation infrastructure. Documented infrastructure accomplishments include the creation of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* as a statewide initiative to incubate, test and disseminate improved models and best practices for both pre-service teacher education and induction of new teachers for high need schools. In addition, eight ACI member colleges and universities have established local TQE teacher improvement projects. In partnership with high need schools, these projects feature increased collaboration between teacher education and arts and sciences faculty. Other ACI members have submitted grant proposals to the *Center* for up to \$10,000 to undertake teacher improvement projects that

may result in improved program models and best practices for dissemination statewide by the *Center*. Initial review of these proposals is complete, and awards of this funding have begun.

The next deadline for *Center* project proposals is May 1. Future deadlines for submission of *Center* proposals during 2005 and 2006: August 15 and November 15, 2005; March 1, August 15, and November 15, 2006. If you have questions or would like to discuss a possible *Center* proposal, contact Jan Fitzsimmons (jan.fitzsimmons@acifund.org, or 312-263-2391 x 34) for more information about the member grants program and to obtain a copy of the RFP.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

ACI launches Mentor On-Line: web-based assistant for new teachers

ACI is pleased to announce *Mentor On-Line*, a convenient way for new teachers and student teachers to strengthen teaching methods and subject background in areas such as math, science, and literature. Staffed by experienced teachers and college faculty, *Mentor On-Line*'s electronic discussion board facilitates dialogue on technology and classroom management and keeps new teachers connected between *ACI Induction Academy* sessions. Plans are in place to expand topic areas to address social sciences, physical education and the arts.

To access *Mentor On-Line*, log onto www.aciteachers.org. Teachers can register by entering their name and pertinent information about their teaching assignment. Once registered, teachers may post questions and comments on the web site's bulletin boards in order to obtain feedback and ideas from mentors and peers. The web site also will include announcements of upcoming teacher events and resource tools for use in the classroom.

ACI's Teacher Induction Academy – March Session

Approximately 30 new and pre-service teachers attended the March 4, 2005 *Teacher Induction Academy*. Attendees spent time in small, topical discussion groups with mentors, veteran teachers and university faculty members. First-year teachers learned about “Using Differentiated Instruction with Cooperative Learning,” with Penny Finley of Elmhurst College and Gloria Harper of the Golden Apple Foundation. Second-year teachers deepened their understanding of assessment through “Teaching and Assessment as One,” facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Clemente of North Central College. Third-year teachers continued their work with Kathy Berry of Strategic Learning Initiatives to enhance their ability to address the diverse needs of learners. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with most participants indicating their intent to continue attending *Induction Academies*.

ACI's Center for Success in High Need Schools announces

Teacher Induction Academy – 2005-2006:

The Amazing Profession – Journeys in Teaching

Built around the theme *The Amazing Profession – Journeys in Teaching*, ACI's 2005-6 *Teacher Induction Academy* will kick off with a summer retreat, June 23-24 at the Lake Lawn Resort near Lake Geneva, WI. A partnership with Chicago Public Schools, the retreat will feature Anita Kishel, a consultant, presenting Dr. Ruby Payne's “Framework for Understanding Poverty” and its related modules, and Alan Lawrence Sitomer, teacher and author from inner-city Los Angeles and a *Newsweek* Teacher of the Year. Participants will also be able to choose from a variety of breakout sessions, with topics including “Hip-Hop Language Arts,” “Literacy Supports for ELL Learners,” “Effective Use of Reading Aloud,” “Best Practices in Mathematics and Science,” “Strategies in Special Education” and more. The summer induction retreat is especially designed for high-need school teachers in their first through fourth years of teaching.

The Amazing Race: Journeys in Teaching will continue during the 2005/2006 school year with four Friday evening sessions: September 30 and November 4, 2005, and February 3 and April 7, 2006. Sessions run from 3:30 pm to 8:30 pm. *Induction Academy* sessions are free of charge, and participants receive CPDU credit. Certified teachers will receive 10 CPDU credit hours for the summer induction retreat, in June, and 3-4 credits for each Friday evening session. To register for the summer retreat or for more information, please call 312-263-2391 ext. 37, or email handerson@acifund.org.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES

Editor's note: Beginning this month, *Center Connections* will feature one of the eight Curriculum Transformation Initiatives on ACI member campuses. These projects are funded by ACI's USDOE Teacher Quality Enhancement grant.

University of St. Francis launches Professional Development School

University of St. Francis has gotten an early start in implementation of its TQE-funded Curriculum Transformation Initiative. University of St. Francis is collaborating with Farragut and Marshall Elementary Schools, and Joliet Junior College in a Professional Development School (PDS) Partnership. The partnership seeks to develop a PDS attuned to the holistic needs of high-need school teaching and learning, e.g., teacher development, student needs and the learning environment, especially at the elementary and middle school levels. The PDS will provide professional development for both Joliet teachers and collaborating USF arts and sciences and teacher education faculty.

USF kicked off their implementation in a very public way on March 4, hosting an in-service on the topic of PDS for faculty and staff from Marshall and Farragut Elementary Schools, in Joliet School District 86. Three speakers presented information about the Maryville-Clark Professional Development School in Missouri. Two were faculty members from Maryville University: Mary Ellen Finch, interim dean for the School of Health Professions, and Katharine Doyle Rasch, dean of the School of Education. Colleen Fell, a second grade teacher from Clark Elementary School, gave an insider's view of what it means to be a mentor teacher in a PDS partnership.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1: TQE Implementation Team Meeting with Arts and Science faculty members from each member college. For more information, contact centerconnections@acifund.org.

April 14: *Best Practices Forum* and ACI's 53rd Annual Meeting, *Making the Grade: High Expectations for High-Need Schools*, at the Union League Club of Chicago, beginning at 2:30 p.m. For more information, contact centerconnections@acifund.org.

April 22: The final *Teacher Induction Academy* for the 2004-05 school year, to be held at Lewis University's Oakbrook campus, will focus on the best ways to meet learning objectives of students with special needs. First year teachers will participate in an insightful conversation with Dr. Therese Hogan of Dominican University in "Students with Special Needs: Sitting on Their Side of the Desk". Dr. Rebecca Clemente of North Central College will help second year teachers increase their communication skills in "How Am I doing? Providing Feedback to Students and Parents." Third year teachers will continue to deepen their understanding of differentiated instruction in "Planning for Differentiated Instruction" with Kathy Berry, of Strategic Learning Initiatives. For further information or to register, contact Heather Anderson at ACI, handerson@acifund.org, or at (312)263-2391 x 37.

June 23-24: *Induction Academy Summer Retreat* at Lake Lawn Resort in Delevan, WI. Contact handerson@acifund.org, or call 312-263-2391 ext. 37 for information and registration.

August 8-12: Science Teachers Workshop, North Central College, coordinated by Professors John Zenchak, Biology, and Mary Jean Lynch, Psychology. For more information, contact John Zenchak at jjzenchak@noctrl.edu.