

CENTER CONNECTIONS

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

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 13 Center For Success meeting to focus on community college partnerships

Carol Lanning, interim Executive Vice President of the Illinois Community College Board, and Cynde Kuck, Illinois Independent Higher Education Committee Chair, AAT Early Childhood Committee, and Professor of Education at **Concordia University** will be featured speakers at the Wednesday, July 13, meeting of ACI's *Center for Success in High Need Schools*. The meeting will be held in the third floor conference room at One North Franklin Street in Chicago (located on the corner of Franklin and Madison Streets), beginning with lunch at 11:45 a.m. and concluding at 3:00 pm. Lanning will address the development of the Associate of Arts Degree in Teaching (AAT) at Illinois' community colleges, as well as partnership opportunities ACI members might explore with community colleges to increase the quality and diversity of teachers in high-need schools. Kuck will comment on the implications of the AAT for ACI member institutions. Discussion will follow on how ACI member institutions might take advantage of partnership opportunities.

ACI members, especially campuses funded for *Curriculum Transformation Initiatives*, are asked to host their community college and public school partners, and arts and science faculty members at the meeting, which will also address: next steps in planning for the *Center's* September 30 Arts and Sciences Colloquium; launching ACI's *Center for Success* website; guidelines and implementation of the *Center's* online journal; participation in *Center for Success* grant programs; plans for sponsorship of a Chicago Public Schools Student Teacher Summit; and development of an administrative manual for ACI's *Center for Success* grant program policies, activity documentation and funds distribution.

ACI member partners are reminded to complete the online journal survey and provide feedback to proposed online journal and Center communications guidelines by July 11. For your convenience, a copy of the survey is attached to this message.

June 9 Center Meeting Spotlights School Partnerships

The *Center's* June 9 meeting featured Jim Rosborg, Belleville Public Schools superintendent, and Donaldo Batiste, Waukegan Public Schools deputy superintendent, who spoke with one voice on some of the challenges facing high-need schools – especially the need to focus on assessment and rubrics for state improvement. Rosborg and Batiste explained that college/school partnerships are most helpful to high-need schools when colleges and universities work with school partners in a truly collaborative fashion, with sensitivity to local school culture. They agreed that release time for college faculty to co-teach in partnering high-need schools would be valuable for both the school and the college or university.

Following the general meeting, breakout sessions addressed *Alternative and Accelerated Certification* programs and *Curriculum Transformation Initiatives*. Partners expressed interest in pursuing *Transition to Teaching* cohorts in bilingual education and reading, as well as the need to move programs to a sustainable model before federal and state grant funding runs out. Josephine Gomez, an administrator from North Lawndale College Preparatory High School, reported on the value of enrichment and induction programs for both teachers and inner city K-12 students.

In the alternative and accelerated certification breakout, partners discussed an exciting idea for program collaboration that illustrates the innovation the *Transition to Teaching* grant can encourage: **Knox, Monmouth and Eureka Colleges** would like to offer degree programs in special education to address critical teacher shortages in their communities. Currently, none of the three colleges have the capacity to do so. Consequently, they are in conversations with **McKendree College** seeking to use distance learning technology to offer the McKendree degree program in special education to teachers in their local communities.

Proposed editorial guidelines were distributed for the new online journal of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*. The proposed guidelines, along with a survey asking for editorial suggestions and nominations of potential editorial board members, issue editors and article reviewers have been emailed to *Center* partners with a request for feedback and suggestions. Comments and completed surveys are requested by Monday, July 11, to aid in preparation for discussion at the July 13 *Center* meeting.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

One hundred teachers attend *Teacher Induction Summer Retreat*

Inner City Practicum and *Transition to Teaching* interns and dozens of teachers from communities including Waukegan, Joliet, Aurora, Chicago, Cicero, and Berwyn spent June 23-24 at the *Teacher Induction Academy Summer Retreat*. Attendees described the workshops and seminars as “phenomenal,” “morale boosting,” and “incredibly helpful.”

On Thursday, Anita Kishel of aHa! spoke of the circumstances and educational needs of students who live in poverty, offering strategies for forging effective learning relationships with these students. Kishel and **Quincy University's** Dorothy Nelson emphasized that students from poverty-afflicted homes must be taught what it means to have choices in life and be provided specific instruction in the “formal register” language used in schools. These students require explicit demonstrations of many unspoken “school rules” that too many teachers consider to be “common sense.” Dawn Abt-Perkins of **Lake Forest College** presented a workshop on integrating the ISBE Learning Standards into lesson planning and assessment. Her presentation included a variety of resources, strategy ideas and examples. Reflecting on Thursday's programming, participants commented: “it helped to change my perspective about my students,” and, “it provided practical information and strategies closely linked to the standards.”

Friday morning began with “Breakfast and Best Practices,” followed by an inspiring keynote address by Illinois Teacher of the Year Deb Perryman. Perryman discussed the strategies she has found successful in

her Elgin High School classroom, particularly the efficacy of service learning-based curricula. Breakout sessions included such options as HipHop Language Arts, Science and Service Learning, Grant Writing for CPS Teachers, Literacy Supports for ELL Learners, and Reading Aloud in the Secondary Classroom. Los Angeles high school teacher and author Alan Lawrence Sitomer's afternoon keynote remarks stressed the importance of education as a profession, the beauty of discovering that one has changed a young person's life for the better, and the importance of preventing burnout by spending time with inspiring colleagues and maintaining a balance between work and home.

For the concluding workshops, participants divided into groups based on their years of classroom experience. This summer's retreat featured the first breakout workshop for 4th year teachers: Technology Use in the Classroom, facilitated by Donna Goodwyn of **Elmhurst College**.

Attendance at this summer's retreat was the largest to date: 27 elementary school teachers; 16 middle grade teachers; 15 high school teachers, 25 *Inner-City Practicum* interns, five new teacher candidates and five *Transition to Teaching* participants. For 30 of these participants, the retreat was their first ACI *Teacher Induction Academy* event. All expressed interest in attending *Induction Academy* events during the coming school year.

An invitation to visit ACI's *Inner City Practicum*

Please join us for a visit to ACI's *Inner City Practicum*, hosted by **North Central College's** Junior/Senior Scholars Program, Wednesday, July 20. Tours of classes and an opportunity to see the *Inner City Practicum* interns (pre-service candidates interested in teaching in high-need schools) in action will begin at 1:00 p.m. at North Central's Old Main, 30 N. Brainard St., Naperville, Illinois. A reception for the interns will be held at 3:30 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge of White Activities Center, with opportunities to see pictures and hear tales of learning by experience on a "Solar Safari." *Please RSVP to the Center by Monday July 18 by calling (312) 263-2391 ext. 37.*

ALTERNATIVE AND ACCELERATED CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Annual reports submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and Foundation for the Improvement of Higher Education

ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* submitted fiscal year 2004-05 performance reports for the *Transition to Teaching* and *I-SPED* grants, demonstrating that these projects are well on track to meet program targets.

The *Transition to Teaching* program target is to prepare 440 teachers for high-need schools by grant year 2007. To date, 128 teachers are enrolled in or have completed an alternative or accelerated certification program through ACI *Center* programs. Current projections are for 174 new enrollees in Year IV and 150 in year V. ACI's *Center for Success* is seeking additional partnerships in high-need subject area, and all institutions interested in an alternative or accelerated certification program are welcome to participate.

For more information, contact Chris Johnston, Director of Alternative and Accelerated Certification Programs at (312)263-2391 x 21 or chris.johnston@acifund.org.

The first *I-SPED* cohort is being hosted by **Saint Xavier University**, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools. The goal is to enable other ACI institutions to develop special education certification programs using resources from **Saint Xavier** to develop their programs. **McKendree College** is awaiting Illinois state board approval to start classes with a new cohort later this year. The *Center* is seeking a third ACI member partner to start *I-SPED* programming in Year II. *For more information, contact Chris Johnston, Director of Alternative and Accelerated Certification Programs at (312)263-2391 x 21 or chris.johnston@acifund.org.*

PILOT PROGRAMS AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Three new Center activity proposals approved for funding

ACI's *Center for Success* is pleased to award funding for three *Center* activity proposals to be implemented during the upcoming school year. Grants were awarded to the Chicago Public Schools, **St. Xavier University** and **Dominican University**.

The Chicago Public Schools' Student Teaching Initiative received a *Center* activity grant to support their Fall 2005 Student Teaching Summit, to be coordinated by Ray Salazar, coordinator of the CPS Student Teaching Initiative. The summit will provide ACI member student teachers in CPS schools with strategies for high-quality instruction and inform them of the resources available to teachers employed by CPS. Each participant will attend three 90-minute workshops geared toward the grade level to which they are assigned. These workshops will focus on classroom management, literacy strategies and reflective teaching practices. The presenters will be drawn from the CTU Quest Center, the CPS Office of Literacy and the CPS National Board Certification Program. A keynote address will feature Ruby Payne's "Framework for Understanding Poverty." The model will be shared at the July *Center* meeting.

St. Xavier University received funding for a project entitled "Creating Learning Communities using the Collaboratory Project," headed by Assistant Professor Kathleen Hanlon. Hanlon and **St. Xavier's** School of Education will use *Center* funding to create an online learning and discussion community that facilitates communication among the School of Education, teachers, administrators, and leaders from the communities the school serves. The online format is designed to counter barriers to face-to-face meetings, including travel and scheduling difficulties, and to increase possibilities for input and discussion among committee members. The model will be shared with all ACI colleges at a *Center* meeting.

Dominican University received the third grant for a project headed by Dr. Gail Bush, entitled "Teachers and Librarians in Collaboration." Through this project, school librarians and classroom teachers will receive joint professional development support and funding to develop collaborative programs and instructional units to be shared in workshops, online forums, and mentoring relationships with other teachers and teacher candidates. Teachers will discover how to use the library to support and supplement their core curriculum, and librarians will gain a better understanding of resources teachers and students need from the libraries. Dr. Bush will share this project at a spring *Center* meeting.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES

Aurora University sets the stage for a successful Curriculum Transformation Initiative, with strong partnerships with Aurora School Districts 129 and 131

Since becoming a *Curriculum Transformation Initiative* partner, **Aurora University** has engaged leaders and faculty from its College of Arts, Sciences and Business (CASB), College of Education, School Districts 129 and 131, and Family Focus, a local community-based organization, on a coordinating council overseeing its *CTI* project. The two school districts serve approximately 23,000 students in grades K-12 and employ almost 1,500 teachers. A guiding principle of the coordinating council is to establish a spirit of ownership and engagement of all stakeholders.

In keeping with its tradition of preparing future educators in partnership with area school districts, **Aurora University** launched its first-ever partnership with the Aurora East School District by working with O'Donnell Elementary School's principal and teaching staff. In spring 2005, 30 pre-teacher candidates were introduced to this high-need school by taking the required course "How Schools Work" on-site at O'Donnell. One student stated, "Thanks to this experience, I have completely changed my thinking about teaching and where I want to teach. I now know that I want to teach in a high-need school." College of Education faculty member Dr. Sandy Prolman observes, "Through this partnership, students learn real-time how schools are set up and how they 'really' operate. I also emphasize learning how to observe and how to analyze observations. My goal is to encourage our future teachers to become reflective practitioners, and to understand intellectually and emotionally that one person really does make a difference."

Plans are underway to offer the following activities this fall: an in-service event for 150 new teachers focusing on high-need students; a mentoring program for new university faculty starting fall 2005; and a resource center on teaching and learning, which will support university faculty as they develop and model innovative and effective teaching methodologies.

This summer, **Aurora University** teacher-educators and arts and sciences faculty are conducting action research, funded by ACI's *Center*, to learn how better to prepare secondary education teacher candidates to teach math and English language arts to English language learners. Faculty will present their findings on campus and at the ACI *Center for Success Arts & Sciences* Colloquium, September 30, 2005.

In the fall, **Aurora University** also looks forward to the final phase of construction on its \$12 million Institute for Collaboration, which will house the College of Education and 200 fourth and fifth graders from Aurora West School District. The Institute will showcase best practices in preparing future teachers ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the local communities' 21st century classrooms.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 13:** ACI's *Center for Success* Meeting with *TQE*, *TTT* and *I-SPED* partners. Special theme: "Partnering with Community Colleges to Improve Teaching in High Need Schools" (One North Franklin Street, 3rd floor conference room -- 11:45 am to 3:00 pm.)
- August 1-5:** Week 2 of **Lake Forest** Summer Academy. Contact Dawn Abt-Perkins via email at abtperkins@lfc.edu for more information.
- August 8-12:** *A Teacher-Friendly, Student-Friendly Approach to K-8 Science Teaching*, a professional development workshop for high-need school teachers, **North Central College**, coordinated by Professors John Zenchak, biology, and Mary Jean Lynch, psychology. For more information and to register, contact John Zenchak via email at jjzenchak@noctrl.edu.
- August 15:** Deadline to submit proposals for *Center Pilot and Demonstration Projects*. For more information email or call Jan Fitzsimmons, Center director (jan.fitzsimmons@acifund.org, or 312-263-2391 Ext. 34).
- August 24** ACI's *Center for Success* meeting, 9:00 am-2:30 pm; theme: "Business Partnerships to Improve Teaching in High Need Schools" (location to be announced)
- September 30:** ACI's *Center for Success Arts & Science Collaboration Colloquium* at ACI, 20 N. Wacker Dr., in Chicago. For an invitation or more information contact Jan Fitzsimmons at (312)263-2391 x 34 or jan.fitzsimmons@acifund.org.