

CENTER CONNECTIONS

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

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News and Announcements

Center's Annual Symposium moved to larger quarters Register now for this high demand event

If you were denied access to or wait-listed for the *Center's* April 27 Symposium – or if you haven't tried registering yet—contact us immediately to reserve your space. Within days of distribution of the first email alert, the Symposium was “sold out,” leaving many *Center* partners without access to the event. Now, we have secured a larger room so that we can accommodate the extraordinary demand.

Developed around the theme *Future Vision: Prerequisites for Progress in High-Need Schools*, the *Center's* first Annual Symposium features keynote speaker Dan Fallon, along with panelists Kati Haycock, Penny Bender Sebring and Arne Duncan, on Thursday, April 27, 2006, 2:00-4:00 p.m., at Chicago's Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

Fallon is education chair at Carnegie Corporation of New York; Haycock is president of the Education Trust; Bender Sebring, Director of Chicago Public Education Fund and President, Lewis-Sebring Foundation; and Duncan is CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. Panelists will discuss the changes necessary to assist our neediest schools as public funding declines and the student population becomes increasingly diverse. ACI's 54th Annual Meeting and reception immediately follow the symposium, beginning at 4:30 p.m. *Center* partners are urged to call Samarah Greeves, 312-263-2391, ext. 27, or contact her by email at samarah.greeves@acifund.org. Please indicate how many people will attend, their names and

email addresses, and whether you plan to stay for ACI's Annual Meeting and reception. [Back to headlines](#)

Feedback Requested: Proposed Guidelines and Timeline for Center Grant Work Plan 2006-07

ACI members who are TQE, DATB or TTT partners are asked to review the attached guidelines and timeline for developing fiscal 2006-07 work plans and to provide feedback by Friday, April 7. The guidelines were discussed at the March 17 *Center* partnership meeting; the final version will be distributed in April. May 15 is a key date in the timeline: At that point, TQE and DATB partners must submit projections on key elements yet to be completed in their work plans for the *current* fiscal year, which ends September 30. These projections will be discussed at the May 19 *Center* partnership meeting. Finalized 2006-07 work plans and budgets are due September 11, 2006. If you have questions or need further information, contact Jan Fitzsimmons (jfitzsimmons@acifund.org, 312-263-2391, ext. 36) [Back to headlines](#)

Call for Manuscripts, *Success in High-Need Schools*

Submissions are invited for the next two issues of *Success in High-Need Schools*, the Center's new online journal (www.successinhighneedschools.org). Note themes and deadlines for upcoming issues:

Recruitment and Retention of Teachers for High-Need Schools

(Spring – May 2006)

Articles due by April 14, 2006 (original March 15 deadline extended)

Innovation: Collaborative Projects that Make Change in High-Need Schools

(Summer – August 2006)

Articles due by August 15, 2006 (new deadline to accommodate summer writing projects)

Authors should consult guidelines at www.successinhighneedschools.org/journal/editorial.

Unsolicited submissions and queries should be sent to journalforsuccess@acifund.org.

The premiere issue of *Success in High-Need Schools* remains posted at www.successinhighneedschools.org/journal, where subscribers can register to visit the site and to receive an email link whenever a new issue is published. [Back to headlines](#)

Culturally-Appropriate and Place-Based Practices Discussed at March Center Partnership Meeting

Donna Jurich and Jim Vandergriff, Department of Educational Studies, Knox University, presented "Diversity and Teacher Preparation: Culturally Appropriate and Place-Based Practices -

-- Pedagogy for all Students and Teachers” at the March Partnership Meeting, on March 17. Jurich and Vandergriff asserted that there are two primary challenges to culturally-appropriate and place-based teaching and learning practices:

Systemic and institutional challenges, e.g., conflicting mandates of K-12 education and teacher preparation education

Personal and local challenges, e.g., educator difficulties in recognizing one’s own culture and that of students

The Knox team stressed that knowing students and their cultures is the best way to approach closing the achievement gap. Teachers need to recognize their own cultures as well as their beliefs about culture and about learning. The challenges are 1) to continue to support the development of culturally-appropriate and place-based curricula in which the content is based in the students’ cultures while, at the same time, addressing state learning standards; 2) to develop teaching practices that do not contradict but build on cultural approaches to learning; and 3) to resist trends towards a homogenized curriculum.

Next Center Partnership Meeting: May 19, 2006

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

One North Franklin Street, Third Floor Conference Room
Chicago, IL

Topic: Technology in the Classroom

Julie Tonsing-Meyer, McKendree College

Please RSVP by May 15, 2006, if you plan to attend. Contact Akila Ruffin at 312-263-2391, ext. 37, or by email at akila.ruffin@acifund.org. All ACI *Center for Success* partners are encouraged to attend *Center* meetings to enable us to work together to improve teaching and learning in high-need schools.

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Recruitment and Retention Programs

ACI’s *Teacher Induction Academy* Summer Retreat, June 22-23, 2006 Registration Deadline: May 22, 2006

Invite all beginning teachers who work in partner school districts to attend ACI’s *Teacher Induction Academy* Summer Retreat on June 22-23, 2006, in Bloomington, IL. Featured topics at this year’s Summer Retreat will include: Ruby Payne’s *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*; The Importance of the Arts in High-Need Schools; Service Learning; Literacy; The Administrator-Teacher Relationship; Technology (High-Tech, Low-Cost & Podcasting); and a special presentation by the current Illinois Teacher of the Year, Jacqueline Bolger.

The retreat is open to teachers from across Illinois, with a special emphasis on those teaching in high-need schools. The event is FREE for all participating teachers (includes meals, resources,

and overnight accommodations). Space is limited. The deadline for registering is May 22, 2006. For more information and details about registration, contact: Lidia Han, lh@acifund.org or (312) 263-2391, ext. 38. [Back to headlines](#)

Alternative and Accelerated Certification Programs

Center seeks new partners for *Transition to Teaching Partnerships, Illinois Special Education Collaborative (I-SPED)*

ACI members wishing to propose 2006 cohort programs in special education and other high-need areas, such as mathematics, science, and bilingual education, should contact David Williams (david.williams@acifund.org, or 312-263-2391, ext. 44). Colleges proposing special education cohorts can receive support through ACI's *I-SPED* Collaborative. Candidates in these special education cohorts may receive funding through ACI's *Transition to Teaching* grant. Cohorts in other high-need fields also may qualify for *Transition to Teaching* funding.

ACI's *Illinois Special Education Collaborative (I-SPED)* is designed to address Illinois' shortage of special education teachers by disseminating a model developed by Saint Xavier University. Funded by USDOE's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education grant (FIPSE), *I-SPED* enables ACI to help members develop special education programs, to plan a professional development conference for later this year, and solicit input from ACI member special educators to communicate with the Illinois State Board of Education regarding policies that will advance special education in Illinois. [Back to headlines](#)

Innovation Projects

***Innovation Project* proposals due August 15, 2006**

The next deadline for *Innovation Projects* is August 15, 2006. Project ideas are invited from all ACI member colleges and partner LEAs. Up to \$10,000 is available to support partners working together to develop innovative and replicable curricular models, pedagogies, and program practices that seek to improve teacher education and quality for high-need schools. To request a copy of the project materials, contact centerforsuccess@acifund.org. (Akila Ruffin, 312-263-2391, ext. 37) [Back to headlines](#)

Curriculum Transformation Initiatives

**University of St. Francis
Curriculum Transformation Professional Development School**

Joliet Public Schools District 86 and the College of Education at the University of St. Francis (USF) have established a professional development school at Farragut and A.O. Marshall Elementary Schools. The mission of the Joliet Professional Development School Partnership (JPDSP) is collaboratively to enhance the professional preparation of teacher candidates and promote continuous exemplary professional development of all partners. The focus of the JPDSP is to improve student achievement through research-based practices carried out in an innovative teaching and learning environment. The JPDSP is dedicated to supporting a diverse community of learners at all levels of educational development through shared decision making, vision, goals and trust.

A disconnect often exists between theory and practice in teacher preparation programs, especially in urban settings or high-need schools. In response to this concern, the University of St. Francis and Joliet Public Schools District 86 have partnered to create a Professional Development School (PDS) that addresses the needs of the whole child.

The four cornerstones of the JPDSP are: action research, student achievement, teacher candidate preparation, and professional development. Several initiatives within each cornerstone are currently underway. Teachers have formed action-research teams and are being guided by faculty members from the University of St. Francis as they conduct projects within their classrooms. In fostering student achievement, the families of students from the partner schools are provided with services, including immunizations, physical examinations, and general medical evaluations. In addition, the Social Work Department at USF provides student interns to JPDSP partner schools. Teacher candidates also provide academic services and make recommendations for interventions and individual education plans at each school.

In the area of teacher candidate preparation, a combined content/pedagogy biology course at USF is being team taught by both Arts & Sciences and College of Education faculty. In addition, there is one field experience supervisor at each JPDSP school who is responsible for all of the teacher candidates at that school. In addition to supervising of pre-service teachers, supervisors also conduct monthly seminars for the candidates on a wide array of subjects regarding high-need schools.

Finally, several opportunities for professional development have been offered to all faculty, staff, and teacher candidates at the partner institutions. For example, the school and district faculty have conducted several technology in-services for University faculty and teacher candidates. In return, University faculty members have conducted workshops on a variety of subjects, such as reading assessment and math centers, for school faculty. Faculty and staff from all of the JPDSP member institutions jointly attend national and local conferences that have led to conversations about and implementation of new initiatives for the JPDSP. [Back to headlines](#)

Curriculum Transformation Summer Projects

Lead campuses participating in the *Center's Curriculum Transformation Initiatives* are invited to submit summer 2006 action-research and campus project ideas. The *Center* will invite projects of up to \$13,000 to support the work of up to eight faculty members, who will receive stipends of \$1,500 each to develop and strengthen collaboration of teacher education and arts and sciences faculty members, address issues of curriculum transformation to improve teacher preparation for teaching in high-need

schools, and implement an action research component for presentation at the September 29, 2006 *Center Arts and Sciences Colloquium*. **Projects must be submitted by email by Friday, May 19, 2006, and institutions will be notified of funding by Friday, June 2, 2006. To submit proposals or request additional information, contact Lidia Han, Center TQE program officer (lidia.han@acifund.org, 312-263-2391, ext. 38). [Back to headlines](#)**

Upcoming Events

View Center [Events Calendar](#)