

CENTER CONNECTIONS

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

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[Call for Manuscripts, *Success in High-Need Schools*](#)

[Arts and Sciences Colloquium, September 29, 2006](#)

[Center Partnership Meeting July 19, 2006](#)

[Teacher Induction Academy Summer Retreat Highlights](#)

[Principals' Forum Summer Retreat Highlights](#)

[Center seeks new partners for *Transition to Teaching* and *Illinois Special Education*](#)

[Collaborative \(I-SPED\)](#)

[Innovation Project Proposals Deadline](#)

[College Profiles for Website](#)

[Aurora University: Putting Relationships at the Center of Professional Change, Renewal and Support](#)

News and Announcements

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

Issue 2 of *Success in High-Need Schools*, the online journal of ACI's Center for Success in High-Need Schools has been posted at www.successinhighneedschools.org. The new issue focuses on alternative and accelerated certification programs and partnerships. Issue 3, now being reviewed and edited for late August posting, will address recruitment and retention of teachers for high-need schools.

Articles now are being sought for Issue 4, *Innovations: Collaborative Projects that Make Change*, which has a submission deadline of August 15, 2006. Center partners and colleagues are invited to submit articles on a range of topics related to high-need schools. Manuscripts addressing the themes of upcoming issues are particularly welcome. Future issues will address:

Action Research to Improve High-Need Teaching (Issue 5)
Articles due by October 30, 2006

Collaborations: Building Strong P-20 Partnerships (Issue 6)
Articles due by January 15, 2007

Toward a Diverse and Culturally Competent Teacher (Issue 7)
Articles due by April 15, 2007

Transforming Teacher Education Curricula for High-Need Schools (Issue 8)
Articles due by July 15, 2007

Authors should consult guidelines at www.successinhighneedschools.org/journal/editorial. Unsolicited submissions and queries should be sent to journalforsuccess@acifund.org.

The premier issue of *Success in High-Need Schools* remains archived at www.successinhighneedschools.org/journal. Subscribers who register on the site will receive an email link whenever a new issue is published. [Back to headlines](#)

Annual Center Arts & Sciences Colloquium, September 29

The Center's second annual Arts & Sciences Colloquium will be held Friday, September 29, 2006 at Fountain Blue, 2300 S. Mannheim Rd., Des Plaines. Open to ACI members and school partners, the *Colloquium* provides a forum at which arts and sciences and teacher education faculty and teachers can present action research and institutional case studies and discuss best practices in collaborating to improve teacher preparation for high-need schools. Alma Clayton-Pedersen, senior policy director at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), will deliver opening remarks at 9:00 am. Continental breakfast will be served at 8:30 am.

Participants are asked to register by September 20. Contact Lidia Han (lhan@acifund.org, 312-263-2391, ext. 38) for registration information.

Each ACI member that sends an institutional team of at least four members (at least two arts and science faculty and two teacher education faculty) to the colloquium will receive a professional development grant of \$1,000 from the Center. For information about the grants, contact Jan Fitzsimmons at Jan.fitzsimmons.acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 34. [Back to headlines](#)

Inner-City Practicum featured at July 19 Center Partnership Meeting

The Inner-City Practicum programs at North Central and Greenville Colleges were featured at the July 19 Center partnership meeting at North Central College. *Inner-City Practicum* is designed to provide teacher candidates interested in high-need schools with an exciting immersion experience and to motivate more pre-service teacher to choose high-need schools. Meeting participants had an opportunity to visit informally with *Inner-City Practicum* interns and heard presentations from high-need school teachers who had mentored them. Anne Deeter, the Center's evaluator for *Inner City Practicum*, noted that a high percentage of participants go on to teach in high-need schools, and that the program increases interns' confidence and enthusiasm for making a difference in the lives of students, in part because of the emphasis on classroom practice as well as teaching and learning theory.

North Central's Inner City Practicum, directed by Center Director Jan Fitzsimmons, is a four-week summer program, which placed 30 college students from 10 ACI member colleges and the University of Illinois in teaching internships serving 150 K-12 students from Chicago and East Aurora. **The Greenville practicum**, directed by Teresa Holden, was based in East St. Louis, in partnership with the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center.

Funding is available to ACI members interested in offering an Inner-City Practicum program in 2006-07. Deadline for proposals is November 17, 2006. Contact Jan Fitzsimmons (jfitzsimmons@acifund.org, 312-263-2391, ext. 34) for more information. [Back to headlines](#)

Center partners begin "visioning" process

Center partners attending the July 19 Partnership Meeting participated in brainstorming sessions aimed at formulating a vision for the Center, as well as for choosing the vocabulary required to communicate Center programs through tabletop exhibits, brochures and other media. Leslie Millenson, ACI's director of Public Education and Dissemination, outlined a planning process for the participants and introduced four key concepts as a framework for discussion: 1) Diversity (the whole universe of races and ethnicities, in proportion to student body); 2) Excellence, innovation, achievement;

3) Longevity in the field, commitment, passion; 4) Teachers as change agents for social justice. Participants divided into two brainstorming groups: one addressing the *Center's* vision, and another addressing key concepts for a tabletop exhibit about the *Center*. Each group considered the validity of the key concepts and developed their own list of words and concepts they believed best communicate the essence of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*.

Group One-Vision, facilitated by Cindy Yang and Jerry Berberet, identified a list of words that contribute to the *Center's* vision: transformation; innovation; collaboration, non-traditional; emerging; ambitious; lifeline; a passion for possibilities to close the achievement gap; equity; equal opportunity; vision keepers, maintaining the flame; authenticity. They asked: Why do we still have high-need schools? We should be wiping high-need schools out of existence.

Group Two-Tabletop Exhibit, facilitated by *Center* Director Jan Fitzsimmons and Leslie Millenson, focused on *Center* partners' shared approach to teacher education: internships that directly engage teacher educators, teacher candidates, and K-12 students in high-need classrooms; setting aside the traditional divisions between theory and practice to create a "guided mentorship;" providing teacher candidates with diverse and flexible ways to learn, including professional development schools, *Inner-City Practicum*, etc.; working with student at their point of need; cohort culture that challenges everyone to achieve higher levels, but without excessive competition; the emphasis placed on networking; the *Center's* collaborative, reflective process. The *Center*, commented the participants, "walks the walk."

Center staff will build on the results of these brainstorming sessions to begin developing a permanent set of public education materials for the *Center* and its programs. [Back to headlines](#)

Next Center Partnership Meeting: August 16, 2006 Mystic Blue Cruises at Navy Pier, 12:30-4:30

Celebrate the *Center's* first full year in operation and help ACI thank all our partners for the hard work and dedication that has made the *Center* a true success. The *Center's* August 16 Partnership Meeting will literally sail away from Navy Pier for a relaxing afternoon on Lake Michigan. After some brief updates, we'll spend the rest of the meeting enjoying each other's company and the lake breezes. As always, all ACI *Center for Success* partners are encouraged to attend.

Deadline for reservations for ACI's Mystic Blue Cruise is Monday, August 14, 2006. Contact Akila Ruffin at 312-263-2391, ext. 37, or akila.ruffin@acifund.org. [Back to headlines](#)

Recruitment and Retention Programs

Teacher Induction Academy Summer Retreat Highlights

ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*' 4th Annual Summer Retreat for educators (June 22-23, 2006 gave teachers and principals the opportunity to hear motivational speakers and network with professionals from across the state. Nearly 100 educators from Quincy, Decatur, East St. Louis, Aurora, Waukegan, and the Chicago area attended the retreat in Bloomington, IL.

Jacque Bolger of Rockford, IL, opened the event on June 22. Named the Illinois Teacher of the Year, Bolger shared her enthusiasm for learning and teaching. Dr. Maurice Byrd, assistant superintendent of

Zion Elementary District 6, revealed several of the strategies he used as a principal to transform his high-poverty, high-minority school. Some of the common traits of high-performing, high-poverty schools (HP/HP) include: a focus on clear standards; comprehensive systems to monitor individual student progress; habits of reflection, revision and improvement; increased time-on-task; and shifting the administrative focus from office details to the classroom.

The session on *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* received high marks from all who attended the retreat. Karen Miller, a consultant for aha! Process, Inc. presented some startling information about children living in poverty. This was such a well-received session that the *Center* will extend it into an all-day workshop next year.

Mark your calendars now for the 2007 *Summer Retreat* (June 21 and 22, 2007, in Springfield, IL), and pass the information along to pre-service and in-service teachers. In addition to the day-long workshop on *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, Gloria Ladson-Billings, author of *The Dreamkeepers*, will be a featured speaker. For more information about the retreat or to register for the first *Teacher Induction Academy* of the 2006-07 academic year on September 22, 2006, please contact Lidia Han at lhhan@acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 38. [Back to headlines](#)

Principals' Forum Summer Retreat Highlights

The first *Principals' Forum Summer Retreat* sponsored by ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* attracted 12 CPS principals and area instructional officers. Gathering in Bloomington on June 22 and 23, administrators enjoyed networking, interacting with teachers, and reflecting on compelling issues that impact their schools, such as staffing, differentiated instruction, community relations, and student achievement.

Kristine Servais and Kellie Sanders, North Central College instructors and authors of *The Courage to Lead*, facilitated the retreat. Participants worked on team-building strategies, analyzing school culture issues, cultivating shared visions, mentoring, and team improvement plans. A follow-up session on September 22, 2006, will center on development of professional learning communities within schools. [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 2007 cohort programs in special education and other high-need areas, such as mathematics, science, and bilingual education, should contact Jan Fitzsimmons at Jan.fitzsimmons@acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 34. Candidates in these shortage areas may receive funding through ACI's *Transition to Teaching* grant. Cohorts in other 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. Colleges proposing special education cohorts can receive support through *I-SPED* and their candidates can receive funding through *Transition to Teaching*. [Back to headlines](#)

Innovation Projects

Innovation Projects deadline

The next deadline for Innovation funding proposals is August 15, 2006. Proposals are invited from all ACI member colleges and partner LEAs. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to support partners working together to develop innovative and replicable curricular models, pedagogies, and program practices designed to improve teacher education and quality for high-need schools. To request a copy of the RFP, contact centerforsuccess@acifund.org. [Back to headlines](#)

College Profiles for Website

If you haven't already, please turn in your college profile so that we can post the information on the *Center* website. If you have questions or need a copy of the college profile form, please contact Samarah Greeves at samarah.greeves@acifund.org. [Back to headlines](#)

Curriculum Transformation Initiatives

Aurora University: Positioning Relationships at the Center of Professional Change, Renewal and Support

Year Two of the *Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE)* grant at Aurora University (AU) has strengthened ties between the University and its K-12 partners—Aurora West School District 129 and Aurora East School District 131. Since its inception, the TQE steering committee has sought to establish a climate for partnership-building with its school district partners that would be based on support and challenge. Monthly meetings of the coordinating council foster an extremely rich exchange of ideas, concerns, and opportunities. The coordinating council, composed of deans and faculty from AU's colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education, and administrators and principals from partner school districts, is proud of its accomplishments to date. Here are just a few:

First, K-12 partners made a strong case for the support of New Teacher Induction and Mentoring projects in their schools. In District 131, slightly more than 100 new teachers were able to receive mentoring and extra in-service training that would not have been available to them had it not been for the TQE grant. District 129 was able to pair up new teachers with master teachers for regular meetings, classroom observations, and participation in team-building activities.

Second, AU was able to offer for the first time its "How Schools Work" course at O'Donnell Elementary School in Aurora East District 131. Last spring, AU held this class with 30 pre-teacher candidates. "Through this partnership, students learn in real time how schools are set up and how they really operate," explains Dr. Sandra Prolman, assistant professor in the College of Education. Prior to this, AU had offered this course only on its campus.

Third, a faculty mentoring program for first-year university faculty was developed to ensure a smooth transition into the university environment, establish peer-to-peer relationships and emphasize the importance of modeling best teaching practices for the large number of pre-service candidates enrolled at AU. This program featured monthly brown bag presentations. Topics included effective teaching practices, disability awareness, alienation of students through academic language, and how library resources enhance student learning.

In looking to the future, a new teachers academy is being planned for September 2006. Topics include: preparing for one's first parent/teacher conference, professional expectations of new teachers, revisiting classroom management, and how changing demographics impact K-12 classrooms. The audience for these workshops will be AU pre-service candidates and new K-12 teachers in local districts.

Finally, Aurora University is pleased to announce that Dr. Sherry Eagle, AU's Executive Director of the Institute for Collaboration, has added to her portfolio the management of ACI's *Teacher Quality Enhancement* grants. She is eager to build on the foundation in place and "ramp up" grant activities that will lead to greater curriculum transformation at AU. Dr. Eagle comments, "I look forward to working with our TQE partners in finding ways to better prepare our teacher candidates for the challenges and opportunities of 21st century classrooms in our local districts." [Back to headlines](#)

Upcoming Events

[View Center Events Calendar](#)