
MASS COALITION COURIER

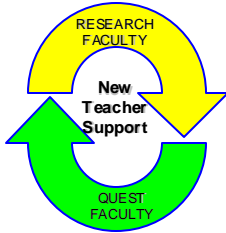
'Working Together to Prepare Quality Teachers for Our Urban Schools

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Spring 2003

Project QUEST Beginning Teachers Focus Groups Meet

By Pauline Hargreaves



Recently the MassCoalition was funded for Project QUEST from a U.S. Department of Education Title II Teacher Quality Recruitment grant awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Education. Project QUEST stands for Quality Urban Education and Support of Teachers and is designed to advance our understanding,

through inquiry and practice, of how the Coalition's seven school-college partnerships can work together to support beginning teachers and address the growing issue of teacher retention. QUEST's Director is Dennis Shirley and the Associate Director is Darlene Martin. The project will be funded for three years and, over the course of that time, will involve up to 82 beginning teachers from Coalition partner schools, along with 7 QUEST Faculty/Mentors and 7 QUEST researchers representative of the partnerships.

The first year of the QUEST is well under way with the inquiry phase of the project. On two Saturdays in March we held focus groups with 14 beginning teachers. These were designed to solicit their comments on the challenges they have encountered in the classroom. We were very pleased with the number who participated and were prepared to spend time with us on both Saturdays. Their enthusiasm, willingness to share and dedication to their students were all much in evidence and greatly appreciated. Those focus group discussions will form the basis for a pilot beginning teacher support program in Year 2 of Project QUEST.

During the second year the number of participating beginning teachers can increase to 42, and the QUEST faculty will provide them support in the form of Saturday meetings, e-mail contact, classroom visits and the like. The QUEST researchers will continue to analyze the data coming out of these discussions and interactions, and that analysis will allow us to refine Project QUEST for the third year.

By Year 3 we will be developing an increasingly clearer notion of what is the most effective kind of support for beginning teachers in our partnership schools, and from that we expect will emerge replicable ways of how higher education, schools and districts might all work together to support the professional growth of new teachers and enhance their efficacy in the classroom.

For more information or questions about Project QUEST, contact Darlene Martin at (617)-552-4237 or by e-mail at: martacz@bc.edu.

Word from the Director

By Dennis Shirley

Director, MassCoalition

After the coldest winter in 63 years, crocuses are pushing out of the ground and research projects are springing up all over our beloved Massachusetts Coalition for Teacher Quality and Student Achievement. The Coalition has been developing a "Teacher Perception Survey" to be disseminated to teachers in all of our partnership schools this spring which will tell us how well classroom teachers think their college and university partners are preparing new teachers. Project QUEST (Quality Urban Educators in Support of Teaching), our new mentoring and induction program, has held two focus group meetings this spring to begin designing our intervention and support strategies for new teachers. Our harvest of new data will be presented at our Summer Institute on June 30 and July 1 entitled "Building Networks of Powerful Support for Urban Teaching." We strongly encourage you to come to the Institute to share experiences and ideas from your work. Together, we will continue to collaborate to improve teacher quality and student achievement in our three Coalition districts of Boston, Springfield, and Worcester.

I recently ventured south of the Mason Dixon line to meet with a group known as the "Teacher Quality Enhancement Forum." The TQE Forum is a group of Title II directors from projects from across the US who are developing a research and publication agenda for our diverse school and university partnerships. The TQE Forum committed itself to three publications: a themed issue of "Action in Teacher Education," the professional journal of the Association for Teacher Education; a book-length anthology of case studies of Title II projects; and a second book composed of thematic chapters on Title II Teacher

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Voices of the Coalition

Clark University Pilots an "E-folio" Project

By Tom del Prete

Clark is piloting an electronic portfolio or "e-folio" with this year's Master of Arts in Teaching candidates. The goal of the e-folio project is not simply to reproduce a paper portfolio in electronic form. We are exploring the potential of an electronic portfolio for promoting reflection and analysis, for going beyond basic documentation.



Helena Gaffin with students from the University Park Campus School

We are customizing the e-folio by developing our own template for students to use. Essentially, the e-folio will have different chapters, as in a book, but the chapters can be linked to each other. Students will be able to integrate text, digital video, and voice to portray the growth of their teaching practice and their students' learning. They will also be able to hyperlink from one section of the e-folio to another, allowing them to use the same material to illustrate more than one point, and to show connections between different sections, such as those addressing the state professional standards for teachers and curriculum framework learning standards.

What are Teacher Perceptions of Coalition Teacher Preparation Programs?

By Nicole Guttenberg

Truth be told, *we don't know*. Teachers are in the closest contact with our student teachers, interacting on a daily basis, witnessing first hand their initial attempts in the classroom, and yet, as a collective group, we do not know what they think of their student teachers' preparation, skills and abilities, the support they and their student teacher receive, and of our efforts to prepare them.

To answer this question, the MassCoalition, together with Abt Associates, a research consulting firm, has created a survey to answer this question. Approximately 1400 school-based educators across 21 partnership schools will be asked about their perceptions of student teachers and what is most important for successful urban teacher preparation.

Information gathered will be analyzed, responses across teacher preparation programs will be compared, and the data will inform future initiatives of school/college partnerships.

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Quality work. The first book will be co-edited by myself with Jane Zenger, the Director of the 'Partners for the Enhancement of Clinical Experiences in Teacher Education' based at the University of South Carolina. We hope that these endeavors will provide us with additional sharing and learning opportunities that will improve the preparation of teacher candidates as well as preK-12 pupil achievement.

Lesley-Dever Partners in Full Swing for 2003

By Rebecca Corwin

All eight Lesley University interns are currently in their semester-long placements in the Paul A. Dever elementary school in Boston. During this semester they are also taking a special needs/inclusion course as well as conducting their classroom inquiry research project. They've conducted neighborhood mapping projects and shared them, so we know much more about the school neighborhoods than we learned on the fall's tour. Eleanor Roffman and Veda Reilley (our video producer) selected books for our "Shelf of Culturally-Based Novels", which is a great seed for our collection of culturally rich reading.

This spring we look forward to seeing extensive science projects planned for grade 3, done by the "Traveling Road Show" of 3 interns planning together; in fourth grade, interns have hit the ground running, teaching mathematics and writing (who ever said fractions were easy to understand?); in second grade, they're planning and teaching a variety of content units, and in first grade, the focus on literacy continues to build. In one class a child who's been attending Reading Recovery for a month just produced a five-sentence story that he wrote himself. Miss Cooke was delighted!

Rebecca, the program director, is teaching algebra to 9 fifth grade students on a daily basis. Dalia Llera, from the A&S program, is running a group for fifth grade girls that is becoming a fixture in the school, and Eleanor Roffman, also from A&S, is working with the interns as they develop more understanding of the effects of poverty on the children and the school community. We've just learned that 91% of our children are low-income; the figure has increased dramatically in the past three years. And, of course, the current economic climate has everyone tense.



Sarah McGinty working with a student in the first grade

UMASS Boston Supports Annual CAPAY Conference



UMASS Boston CAPAY student leaders at the College Fair

The Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth, CAPAY, sponsors yearly conferences to educate Asian youth and their teachers. CAPAY aims to improve race relations, support youth-led activism in schools and communities, and provide leadership training to APA youth. Ongoing projects focus on issues such as APA civil rights, history, culture, community organizing, and immigration concerns.

To learn more about CAPAY, visit the website:
<http://www.angelfire.com/freak2/capay4ever/capay.html>



Virtual Community of Inquiry & Practice (VCIP)

In sync with the Boston's Big Dig as it finishes construction of major pieces, the MassCoalition has also completed its own digital highway construction project. Now online and running, the MassCoalition has a "Virtual Community of Inquiry and Practice". Unlike the Big Dig, MassCoalition's project finished without cost overruns.

This new addition to the MassCoalition was achieved through utilizing Boston's College's contract with WebCT system which normally provides an online forum for professors & students to conduct classes.

The MassCoalition has adapted Boston College's WebCT to enable threaded discussions between Partnership members. With WebCT at its fingertips, members of the MassCoalition also have centralized access to a password protected environment where sensitive documents, like workplans, meeting notes and powerpoint presentations can be posted.

The MassCoalition is speeding quickly along the information highway. Everyone buckle your seatbelts for the upcoming year!

4 MassCoalition Partners to Nominate Candidates for MA New Teacher Signing Bonus Program

By Molly Elliot

Four of the eight teacher education programs chosen across the state by the MA Department of Education to nominate their top teacher candidates for the New Teacher Signing Bonus Program for 2003-2004 are partners of the MassCoalition. The four selected MassCoalition partners include: **Clark University's Jacob Hiatt Center for Urban Education** that works with five Worcester Public Schools, **Northeastern University's Community Teacher Institute** at City on a Hill Charter School in Boston, **University of Massachusetts Boston's "Teach Next Year"** program based at Dorchester High School, and **University of Massachusetts Amherst's "180 Days in Springfield"** based at Chestnut Accelerated Middle School for the Visual and Performing Arts and Springfield Central High School.

Each of the eight chosen teacher education programs nominates six teacher candidates. Candidates must have strong academic backgrounds, demonstrated excellence in their subject matter knowledge, and leadership in their career and extracurricular activities. Priority is given to candidates showing interest in teaching in a high need area such as math, science, special education or foreign languages, and a commitment to work in urban districts.

The New Teacher Signing Bonus Program provides a \$20,000 bonus to the chosen candidates paid out over the teacher's first four years of teaching.

Begun in 1998 as part of Massachusetts "12 to 62 Plan" - the New Teacher Signing Bonus program was designed to attract talented mid-career professionals, recent college graduates, and graduating seniors into the teaching profession. Originally, only participants in the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT), were eligible for the Signing Bonus Program. This past fall, however, the program was changed to include other Massachusetts teacher preparation programs. All teacher education programs in Massachusetts were invited to submit proposals to become nominating institutions for the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program. The eight teacher education programs chosen were recognized in the selection process for having the following strengths: accelerated training, a rigorous field-based training experience, a commitment to recruiting a diverse and academically talented candidate pool, and a partnership with high-need school district. Notably, these program characteristics exemplify the 5 Objectives of the MassCoalition.

The New Teacher Signing Bonus awards will be announced in this summer. We will keep you posted.

To learn more about the MA Signing Bonus Program, visit the website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eq/bonus>

You can write to me about your program or invite me to participate in events at your school.

Call or email **Darlene** at:

(617) 552-4237 or martacz@bc.edu

SAVE THE DATE!



MassCoalition Summer Institute

June 30-July 1, 2003
The Publick House
Sturbridge, MA

**Building Networks of Powerful Support
for
Urban Teaching:**

**A working conference
to collect, look at & present evidence**



Calendar of Events

Steering Committee Meetings:

April 30, 2003 Grace Room, Clark University
May 14, 2003 Hiatt Center, Clark University
June 13, 2003 Lurie Room, Clark University

National Conferences:

AERA 84th Annual Meeting
"Accountability for Educational Quality:
Shared Responsibility"
April 21-25, 2003
Chicago, IL

Assoc. of Teacher Educators (ATE) Summer Conference
"Strengths of ATE to Promote Quality Teachers in a
Supportive Environment"
August 9-13, 2003
Santa Fe, NM

National Title II Teacher Quality Conference
September 18-20, 2003
Washington, D.C.

For more information about the Mass Coalition,
visit our website at: www.bc.edu/masscoalition

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