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# MASS COALITION COURIER

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*'Working Together to Prepare Quality Teachers for Our Urban Schools'*

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(left to right): Angela Irving, Terry Haywoode, Susan Spurlock, Peter Murrell and faculty members at Northeastern University Partnership Retreat.

## Field Notes...

Welcome Back! I hope you had an enjoyable summer. The highlight of my work this summer was my participation in the Northeastern University (NU) School of Education School Partnership Retreat. Well-attended by professors, administrative staff, community partners and student teachers, we spent the day talking about their efforts over the year as well as thinking ahead to Year 3 of the Title II grant. During the conversation I was a "critical friend." I observed the process of the day including the information presented and gave feedback to the group. The conversation was exceptionally frank, engaging and refreshing, but what I found most stunning was the clarity of the goals of NU as a school of urban education and a Title II partner.

Three central questions framed the day: 1) How do the partnerships improve the preparation of our students – tomorrow's teachers? 2) How do the partnerships improve the learning and achievement of the young people in the community sites and schools? 3) How do we more effectively integrate NU faculty in these partnerships in ways that use faculty skills and support long-term faculty commitment? In addition, Dean Jim Fraser, levied ten challenges for the year ahead. They included understanding the three things teachers in urban settings need to know and be able to do, measuring the success of graduates, pulling school and community partnerships into the life of the school, bringing in more representatives from the communities to train as teachers and remembering to keep ethical conversations central to courses.

A high point of the day was the conversation led by next year's interns as they posed questions to the participants. Especially moving - how the internship would help them to communicate with students and make what is meaningful to them also meaningful to their students. This is the heart of urban teacher preparation. These students, and the NU staff, are moving forward candidly and, in my mind, courageously.

Here's to a productive year,  
Darlana

## Heating Up the Mass Coalition

By Dennis Shirley  
Director, Mass Coalition

Autumn is always an active time for the Mass Coalition. Our partnerships have hammered out their agendas for the new school year, our student teachers are bustling in the hallways and classrooms of our urban schools, and we're all busily translating our visions about education into reality. September is also a time of stops-and-starts; of coping with glitches that drain time away from the work of teaching and learning; and of recognizing yet again that it will take all of our stakeholders working together to transform our schools from islands of bureaucracy into centers of civic engagement. At the top of our agenda this autumn are our efforts to bring arts and sciences faculty in our higher education institutions into the work of improving teacher quality and student achievement. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Professional Development School Network, the Mass Coalition is sponsoring a conference on October 26<sup>th</sup> that will feature national leaders in this arena and bring together policymakers from throughout the Commonwealth. Would you like to see professors from mathematics, physics, and foreign languages working together in our urban schools to improve instruction for *all* learners? If so, make sure that you come to this conference, as we continue to forge bold new solutions for our most challenging educational problems. For more information, see the spotlight column on page 3.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Page 1: Editor's Field Notes**  
**Word from the Director**

**Page 2: Voices of the Coalition:**  
Summer Institute Report and Pictures

**Page 3: Coalition Connections: BC Telementoring**  
**Spotlight On...** the October 26 Conference

**Page 4: Calendar**

## Voices of the Coalition: Report of the Summer Institute 2001

After warm welcomes from Mary Brabek, Dean of the Lynch School of Education and Dennis Shirley, Coalition Director, the Summer Institute began with a rousing keynote speech on literacy for African-American and Latino children. Eighty participants listened to Michele Foster, Professor of Education Studies at the Claremont Graduate University and author of *Black Teachers*

*on Teaching* reference her research of the last five years in Oakland, California. She noted That African American and Latino children continue to learn in an atmosphere where strong cultural norms toward deficiency thinking exist even when educators recite, "All children can learn." That African-American children continue to do poorly in wealthy, predominantly white districts where students do well overall was cited as evidence of this phenomenon.



Part of the difficulty in addressing this challenge, stated Professor Foster, is that we believe "we can think people into new ways of acting" when we need to "act people into new ways of thinking." And, though we might be in favor of good literacy instruction, Professor Foster asserts that we need to find good classrooms where students are achieving and immerse ourselves in both the practice of the classroom as well as the underlying theory of instruction. Simply extracting strategies from one classroom and attempting to apply them in another is insufficient. Often, good individual strategies conflict when put together since they are based on differing theories. For example, you cannot use a strategy that requires students to be free to move around the classroom if you require students to be in their seats during class time.

Over the Institute's two days each partnership presented "problem-posing pedagogy", vignettes highlighting one of their past year's activities. During these sessions, participants learned about the activity while offering assistance for some of the challenges partnerships faced in its facilitation. They were "Universal Design for Enhancing Literacy for All Learners", "Using the Coalition to Shape Public Policy", "Engaging Arts and Sciences Faculty in a Teacher Preparation Immersion Program", "The Evolution of



the Donovan Urban Teaching Scholars Program", "Transforming Teacher Induction Practices Through Community-Based Field Experiences", Developing Technology Resources in Teacher Education: "Assessing Content Knowledge and Teaching Practices of Pre-service Teachers", "Empowering Youth through Education Reform". and

(Cont. next column)

"Performance Assessment of Teacher Candidates", a session co-facilitated by Carol Gilbert of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Moreover, two partnership case studies addressed how the Massachusetts Coalition is expanding the school- and community-based nature of teacher education to ensure that beginning teachers are prepared to develop culturally responsive curriculum and instruction. Clark University highlighted its partnership with the Working Coalition for Latino Students which reviews data on student achievement and is trains parents to advocate for their children despite a cultural norm that "teacher knows best". Northeastern University presented its partnership with the Black Ministerial Alliance which conducts after school literacy projects for children in the Boston communities of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan.

Partnerships also met to reflect on Year 2 and think about moving into Year 3 of this five-year grant. Issues addressed in these meetings included looking at the partnership's activities, thinking about the theoretical framework which underlie the activities, discussing what constitutes promising practices for the partnership and defining the one unique contribution the partnership makes to the Coalition. In addition, the five partnerships of the Boston region met to discuss the framework used in Professional Development School Network Evaluation sponsored by the Boston Public Schools. Several project directors expressed interest in having a Coalition-wide evaluation using a similar framework in order to clearly evaluate promising Coalition practices.

The Institute concluded with Ron Ferguson, senior researcher at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, addressing the achievement gap between white and Asian students on the one hand and African

American and Latino students on the other. Dr. Ferguson highlighted his research which showed that while the achievement gap had been narrowing throughout the 1980's it began to increase in the 1990's. In responding to why the achieve-



ment gap might be widening he presented his controversial theory surmising a relationship between the rise of rap music and the decline of African-American student achievement. He stated that the relationship of African American students to rap music is different than other students to other types of music because rap is not just music but a racial identity taken on by the kids. Dr. Ferguson concluded by connecting his work to the needs of teacher educators. He cited his work in schools that use the strategies of noted educator Marva Collins where he found that teachers initially believed that the strategies which worked in Ms. Collins' classroom would not work in their "unique" classroom setting. Yet,

(Cont. page 4)

## Coalition Connections



**Boston College Students Telementoring At-risk 9th Graders at Brighton High School in Boston.**  
By Melanie Goldman  
BC Learning Communities Technology Group

Boston College Professor Audrey Friedman conducts a teaching literacy course for pre-service and graduate student teachers. This year she has integrated a technology component into her coursework: Boston College students telementoring students at Brighton High School. The purpose of this effort is to use technology to 1) improve 9<sup>th</sup> grade Brighton High students' literacy skills in both reading and writing. Students considered at-risk are those who scored 1 on the MCAS, have special needs or are bilingual; and 2) to provide Boston College students with real experience working with students before they enter actual classrooms.

Telementoring is similar to other types of mentoring. An experienced person gives guidance, knowledge, and encouragement to a learner but with telementoring it is done online. Using a web-based telementoring tool, Mentor Center, developed by BBN Corporation in 1997, Brighton High School students post their written assignments on the Web and in return the BC students respond on the Web with support and helpful comments. One of the great benefits of this project for the pre-service and graduate student teachers is that having the experience of teaching through the online medium opens up a new world of possibilities about how they might use technology to deepen students' learning. In addition, Dr. Friedman's project will become a showcase for other faculty to see the potential uses of technology for their coursework. Most importantly, Brighton High School students will have further opportunities to improve their literacy skills.

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

## Spotlight On...



### TEACHER EDUCATION: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

October 26, 2001

Holy Cross-Worcester, Massachusetts  
9am - 3pm

#### Agenda

**8:15 - 9:00 Registration**

**9: 00- 9:15 Welcome, Peter Larkin**

House Chairman of the Joint Committee of  
Education, Arts & Humanities

**Introduction, Karen O'Connor,**

MA Field Center for Teaching and Learning

**9:15- 10:30 Keynote Speakers**

**Kati Haycock**, Executive Director,  
The Education Trust

**Sally Frost-Mason**, Provost  
Purdue University

**10:45- 12:00 Concurrent Presentations**

- 1) **Sally Frost- Mason**-Establishing University-wide Collaborations with P-12 Schools
- 2) **Kati Haycock**- Partnerships for Improving Student Learning
- 3) **Rob Baird**, President, the National Faculty-Preparing University Faculty for Conducting and Sustaining Effective Professional Development for K-12 Teachers.

**12: 00- 1:00 Lunch Speaker, William Bulger** (*invited*)  
President, University of Massachusetts

**1:15- 2:30 Facilitated Discussions**

- 1) Tenure and Promotion Policies that Enhance Collaboration
- 2) Creating Sustainable School-College Partnerships
- 3) Standards Alignment and Beyond: Sharing Responsibility for Student Achievement
- 4) Arts and Sciences and Education Faculty Working On-Site to Prepare Teacher Candidates
- 5) Collaboration to Reading Higher Education Courses for Teacher Candidates
- 6) Using Technology to Support Teacher Education and Curriculum Development
- 7) How to Prepare University Faculty for Conducting and Sustaining Effective Professional Development for K-12 Teachers.

**2: 30- 3:00 Recommendations for the MA Coalition from Kati Haycock and Sally Frost-Mason**

\*\*For registration information call the MA Field Center for Teaching and Learning at 617-287-7660.

believing in the strategies or not, after teachers changed their practice, student achievement improved. Only after practice changed and achievement improved did teacher expectations change. Dr. Ferguson, like Dr. Foster, believes that we must find classrooms with exemplary literary practice for students of color and use these to train our next generation of teachers.

The 2001 Institute was enhanced by the participation of a team of 14 visitors acting as critical friends to the Coalition. The ten representatives of the Georgia, Milwaukee, Ohio and St. Louis Title II Grants in addition to four federal Title II administrators participated in all facets of the Institute and held meetings with steering committee members to discuss specific questions of Coalition policy. At the conclusion of the Institute they offered feedback on the progress of the Coalition. Of particular importance were the suggestions that the Coalition develop a comprehensive dissemination strategy for its promising practices and become more assertive in using the higher education institutions' combined political clout to shape the education agenda in Massachusetts.

Evaluation of the Summer Institute was generally positive: An education veteran commented that he was able to have conversations of real substance. Other participants were energized by the words of our two speakers and are willing to take on the charge of seeking local classrooms with exemplary literary practice. Several of the Coalition's project directors have dedicated themselves to defining and disseminating our political positions. And, two deans of the Coalition's education schools have promised to rally other Coalition deans to support the Coalition's objectives. After two days of intense work the Coalition is well-prepared to enter Year 3.



## Calendar of Events

### Coalition-Wide Conferences

October 26—Teacher Education: Whose Responsibility Is It? (See page 3)

### Steering Committee Meetings

September 11—Clark University

October 15 – Clark University

November 27 – Clark University

### National Title II Meeting

September 12-14

San Diego, California

For more information about the Mass Coalition see our website at: [www.bc.edu/masscoalition](http://www.bc.edu/masscoalition)

You may also call the Editor, Darlene Martin, at (617)552-4237 to submit an article or add your name to our mailing list.

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