



A Report on Three Initiatives

- 1. Seeds for Co-Teaching**
- 2. Partnership Exploration Grants**
- 3. Regional Task Force Summer Action Grants
from Summer, 2002**

sponsored by the

**Higher Education Support Center
for SystemsChange**

and the

Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling

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Introduction

As of October 1, 2002, the New York Higher Education Support Center (HESC) for SystemsChange had completed three initiatives toward the realization of its twofold purpose:

- to develop and sustain high quality inclusive teacher preparation programs, and
- to engage in and support the professional development efforts of selected high need schools and districts in the ten regions of New York State.

The HESC works with over fifty New York State institutions of higher education (IHEs), public and private, which provide graduate and undergraduate teacher preparation. Through high quality teacher preparation programs and through partnerships with high needs schools, we also prepare the next generation of teachers to be successful in these types of school settings. We collaborate with Regional School Support Centers (RSSC) and Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) to address the concerns of high needs schools. During the six year evolution of the organization, we promoted inclusive education practice by providing staff development, creating inclusive education materials, supporting projects, and publishing Standards for Inclusive Teacher Preparation Programs. The HESC, through the Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling seeks to develop collaboration between colleges and universities and high needs schools to understand and to address the root causes of student achievement and to plan and act to create improvement. Task Force member institutions contribute knowledge of research as it might apply to the interpretation of relevant district data; they bring cutting edge practice and the presence of an invaluable outside perspective on the work of schools.

These three initiatives distributed nearly \$80,000 among 29 participating institutions and individuals all of whom were members of the Task Force.

Initiative #1 helped to plan:

- strong intra and inter institution collaboration and increased dialogue through co-teaching; and
- significant exchange of ideas and reformulation of curriculum.

Initiative #2 helped to explore:

- “robust and mutually beneficial” partnerships between IHEs and high needs schools which were not identified as SIG districts; and
- increased opportunities for action research, professional development, and successful student teacher placement.

Initiative #3 helped to create:

- stronger regional identities and collaboration for groups of colleges and universities, RSSCs, and high needs schools;
- greater awareness of the task of providing quality inclusive education; and
- ownership of each represented region's collaborative process.

Initiative #1. Seeds for Co-Teaching

Initiative #1 was designed to encourage exploration of co-teaching partnerships. The Request for Proposals was directed toward teams of co-teachers with the lead applicant's being a member of the Task Force. Six of the ten State RSSC/HESC regions were represented including Long Island, New York City, West, Mid-West, Mid-State, and North Country/Mohawk. Grants for up to \$500 were administered through consultant agreements negotiated directly with the grant winners. Sixteen proposals were funded with a total of \$7,250 expended on the initiative. Awards averaged \$453 each. Four institutions were awarded two grants each. (See Appendix A.)

Summary of Proposals. The co-teaching activities planned in this initiative ranged from co-teaching activities developed between colleagues at Institutions of Higher Education to co-teaching activities developed between IHEs and high need schools. The funded proposals created opportunities for special education and regular education instructors and related service providers to plan to deliver curriculum together, for high needs school teachers to plan curricula at IHEs, and for professional development by IHE personnel at high needs schools.

Of the sixteen proposals for the "Seeds for Co-Teaching" initiative, eight focused on exploring and developing co-teaching models within the confines of IHEs. These initiatives included faculty from the same institution focused on co-teaching courses together, professionals from outside the institution co-teaching, and colleagues from different institutions teaching together. Eight focused on planning co-teaching relationships between college faculty and practitioners from high needs schools.

College Co-Teaching Relationships. The "Seeds for Co-Teaching" grant facilitated the exploration of various models of co-teaching at the college or university level. Seven funded models proposed exploring a relationship between special education and general education faculty. In two cases, mathematics was the general education content proposed for combination, with art and music also represented. In two cases, co-teaching relationships were proposed outside the purview of schools of education with physical, occupational, and speech therapies represented in combination with special education. Each proposal in this category planned to affect teacher

preparation programs directly with two models examining the development of field service opportunities. Two models (SUNY Geneseo, SUNY Potsdam) planned to create cohesiveness and rigor in their “block” program for teacher preparation, an added benefit of the dialogue engendered among faculty. SUNY Brockport, Utica College of Syracuse University, and Nazareth College planned to affect change in both graduate and undergraduate programs through their co-teaching combinations.

College-High Needs School Relationships. The Seeds for Co-Teaching grant assisted in creating closer IHE and high needs school connections. Of the eight funded proposals in this category, five sought to involve public school practitioners in teaching college level teacher preparation courses. One of the proposals remarked a change in the delivery of K-12 instruction, developed through a consultant relationship with an IHE (Nazareth College [Monroe-Baillargeon, Niles, Dininny]. Included in the team working on this proposal were several regular education teachers operating in grade level teams as well as a school district administrator. The remaining proposals sought to involve special education practitioners at public schools in conjunction with IHE faculty for planning purposes. In one case an entire inclusive team of three teachers was invited to collaborate with the IHE. Five “Seeds” proposals targeted urban school populations with two of those aimed at specifically understanding problems of urban poverty as they impact inclusive practice. One proposal sought to increase the number of high quality placements at the middle level (SUNY Fredonia [Maheady]).

Observations. There was a healthy and balanced mix of proposals that sought change at the college and university level and that create new models of co-teaching with high needs schools. In these initial stages, work at IHEs focused largely on the exchange of syllabi and the reformulation of curricula, although in several instances opportunity was provided for faculty to plan to actively co-teach. Planning for co-teaching was apparent in cases where practitioners outside IHEs collaborated in the proposals. Public school personnel were, for the most part, invited to participate in teaching teacher preparation courses and only twice did representative faculty from IHEs explore teaching in high needs schools. The emphases were clearly on tapping public school expertise to enhance the delivery of teacher preparation instruction and on collaboration within IHEs. The benefit to teacher preparation programs was clear because of the addition of public school practitioners. This goal of the HESC was well met. SUNY institutions involved in the block concept of instructional delivery to pre-service teachers benefited by strengthening collaboration at different levels of their programs. In only one case did the combination of professionals involved include an RSSC representative specifically (Kozak with SUNY Brockport [Slonski-Fowler]). The focus for co-teaching initiatives at high needs schools remained solely at the elementary/middle level with one proposal aimed as high as the sixth grade (SUNY Fredonia [Maheady]).

- Of the sixteen funded proposals, twelve resulted in proposals under Initiative #7. Co-Teaching.
- Co-teaching at IHEs enhanced an exchange of ideas and a reformulation of curricula.
- Co-teaching at the IHEs resulted in strengthening the delivery of instruction and the connections with outside practitioners.
- Public school teachers will likely benefit from teaching at IHEs.
- Secondary institutions (middle and high school levels) are under-represented in this round of initiatives.
- An evaluation, particularly of those proposals carrying through to Initiative #7, should investigate the impact of these projects on education at high needs schools.
- The planning money under this initiative should be incorporated into the Request for Proposals and the funding stream for Initiative #7. Co-Teaching, encouraging successful planning and implementation, and ensuring the follow-through proposed by the co-teaching teams.
- Evaluative feedback should be provided to assist teams in the planning stages of their co-teaching activities.

Initiative #2. Partnership Exploration Grants

Initiative #2 was designed to encourage the exploration of partnerships between IHEs and high needs public schools that were not receiving SIG funds. The Request for Proposals was developed to address disparities in matches between IHEs and schools that were either struggling and not identified, or had not been partnered because of geography or prior associations. Five of the ten HESC State regions were represented including Long Island, Mid-State, West, Mid-West, and North Country/Mohawk. The Request for Proposals focused on strengthening both the delivery of improvement efforts in high needs schools and the opportunity for quality pre-service teacher experiences. At a maximum award of \$1,000, six proposals were funded at an average of \$842 each for a total expenditure of \$5,050. The awards were meted out as consultant agreements with Task Force members. (See Appendix B.)

Summary of Proposals. Proposals for this initiative included professional development schools whose purpose is to ensure quality teacher preparation, professional development and in-service, and the coordination and consistency of these efforts. Also, action research to strengthen current practice was planned as a result of this initiative. The funded proposals reinforced the links between pre-service and in-service teacher experiences while integrating IHE personnel into the fabric of high needs schools for the

purpose of developing sound inclusive practice. The outcome was to be a set of proposals in response to Initiative #8. Partnership Enactment Grants.

Six proposals were funded under this initiative, designed to begin to cultivate partnerships between IHEs and public high needs schools and school districts, out of a possible seven interested writers. The initiative was successful in its stated goal of developing a “robust and “mutually beneficial partnership” between an IHE and a high needs school. The level of commitment as well as the clarity with which these relationships were articulated between stakeholders indicated that both parties understood the purpose of the Request for Proposals. Of the six funded proposals, three teams designed partnerships at the elementary level, one group (Syracuse University at Utica College) pledged to work at the middle level, and two IHEs joined with Pupil Personnel Services at the District level. Each proposed partnership was elaborated with strong support from district and building level administrative personnel.

The proposals, particularly in their descriptions of the partnerships and statements of agreement, are varied, and the combinations of shared interests are strong. Two proposals explored the creation of a Professional Development School on the campus of the host public institution to establish the delivery of professional development by university professionals. Two of the proposals planned to implement action research in the schools as part of the funding focus. One proposal offered a plan for the university professor’s teaching inclusive classrooms at the third and kindergarten grade levels. One proposal (Cazenovia [Leeds]) developed a plan for the shared governance of the efforts in collaboration. Stimulated by this planning opportunity, three proposals sought continued funding to allow the initiatives to continue. Five projects focused at least in part on the delivery of teacher preparation experiences within host schools and host school districts. One (Utica [Zoeckler]) proposed establishing a teacher preparation classroom in Donovan Middle School with teacher candidates woven into the fabric of school life through tutorials of children needing Academic Intervention Services (AIS). One proposal (Cazenovia [Leeds]) specifically identified the recruitment of minority talent into the teaching profession and the achievement of ongoing certification requirements as outcomes of the IHE/high needs collaboration. One group (St. Bonaventure [Lawrence-Brown]) proposed a research study in the Jamestown Public Schools to better understand and direct the district’s inclusive practices.

Observations. No single trend or group of trends emerged from the proposals funded under this initiative. The practitioners involved took wide and creative latitude in designing and developing their partnerships. The final reports for five of the proposals undertaken with this initiative were crafted with care and considerable detail. The links between pre-service and in-service education were evident in these proposals. IHEs, for the most part,

targeted their efforts to create lasting relationships with high needs schools by weaving their personnel and expertise into the fabric of life at these schools. Proposals for Initiative #8: Partnership Enactment sprang from this preliminary work.

- For a comparatively minimal investment (\$1,000), the creation of potentially fruitful and lasting partnerships between IHEs and high needs schools and districts benefit the Programs involved.
- Public high needs schools receive the benefit of faculty from IHEs helping to develop programs for action research, for professional development, for well placed student teachers, and for reflection on best inclusive practices.
- IHEs have been able to benefit by developing quality placements for their pre-service teachers, by tapping environments for continued research, by ensuring exposure for their institutions, and by fostering thoughtful links between theory and practice.
- Funding for next step Initiative #8 is important to secure. The HESC has made considerable impact with Initiative #2, and ways to sustain this momentum are critical.
- Partnerships with non-SIG schools should continue. Under the auspices of Initiative #7 efforts should be made to ensure that each SIG school has an IHE match. The consortium of services offered by the Mid-west Regional Task Force to SIG districts is an example of how coverage for all SIG districts is possible.
- In-service for the Task Force provided by Stephanie Leeds of Cazenovia, Lawrence Zoeckler of Syracuse University at Utica, and Karen Slonski-Fowler of SUNY Brockport may benefit other IHEs considering similar initiatives.
- Rather than separate the planning from the implementation, funding for this initiative should be included as part of the planning before implementation in the funding for Initiative #8.

Initiative #3. Regional Task Force Summer Action Grants

Initiative #3 was designed to encourage and strengthen collaboration within the designated task force regions in the state and to begin to develop IHE leadership on issues relating to the Task Force. The Request for Proposals was sufficiently broad to allow award recipients to design and to develop unique and idiomatic approaches to regional collaboration. Seven awards totaling \$66,496 averaged to each region receiving \$9,499. Three regions, the Lower Hudson, Mid-Hudson, and Mid-South did not participate. (See Appendix C.) Sub-contracts were developed with host IHEs and indirect costs to administer the grant were requested in the proposals that were funded. This method of payment increased task force visibility within the hierarchy of colleges and universities.

Summary of Proposals. This initiative focused on those efforts intrinsic to each region and its needs. The goals provided wide latitude for task force IHEs to pursue successful projects. The results of the initiative represent a broad range of institutional possibilities from summer institutes organized and implemented by participating IHEs for teachers in high needs districts to extended discussions about greater IHE collaboration in pre-service and teacher induction. The collaborative relationships forged from this initiative certainly appear stronger than the relationships undertaken prior to this initiative.

Of the seven regions participating in Initiative #3, two concentrated their efforts on bringing together representatives from colleges and universities to discuss greater collaboration and to reflect on professional efforts. The remaining five regions by invitation brought together teachers, administrators and institutional professionals as well as, in various cases, RSSC representatives, technologists, SETRC coordinators and, in one case, an outside presenter from the University of Southern Florida. Six of the seven grants went to regions that were specifically focused on “awareness,” asking questions of public schools and of one another that were designed for exploring collaboration and understanding needs. Only one (West) extended the process throughout a series of summer meetings in larger and smaller venues (focus groups) for the purpose of enhancing teacher preparation opportunities. This group became involved in long term strategic planning. Particularly in the West group there appeared to be on-going relationships and communication that were already strong.

One (Long Island) met to plan and then implement a weeklong institute for high needs schools on inclusive practice. Classroom technology was one of the workshops provided. In the Utica College segment of the North Country-Mohawk initiative, the focus was almost entirely on the use of technology for teacher mentoring. This group created a subcommittee to continue to pursue technology-based mentoring. Four of the projects emerged as “sponsored conversations;” one was facilitated, and one project was directed specifically at affecting high needs school districts. Three projects (Hudson-Mohawk, Mid-State, and North Country) made efforts to invite and incorporate institutions outside the Task Force with some success. The lasting impact of these efforts at drawing other IHEs into the Task Force has yet to be felt. However, the Mid-West Region has now developed a consortium model of IHEs for offering varied professional development services to targeted school districts.

Observations. The general trend in these projects is toward developing the broadest possible reach for the regions, including non-participating IHEs, and teachers and administrators from public schools. Several grantees remarked the narrow time frame with which to work to

implement their proposals, and, in some cases, the final report bore little resemblance to the originally proposed activities. The fact that so much effort was spent on “awareness” in the majority of projects indicates the strength of the results in providing a forum for pre-service and in-service opportunities and ensuing promises of collaboration. The weakness of the approach is in the tenuous follow-through for some of the collaborations developed, although the North Country-Mohawk and West documented plans to continue their work. Allowing groups to create their own activities and plot their own direction ensures some continued ownership of the process of collaboration. The Regional Task Force Summer Action Grants served to develop stronger collaboration among participating IHEs and in some cases high needs schools. The focus in all cases but one was on teacher preparation at graduate and undergraduate levels with discussions ranging to teacher induction and retention.

- Working in collaboration as engendered by the grant provides valuable cross-fertilization. Bringing professionals together for a day of discussions has significant positive impact.
- A follow-up, even one more modestly funded, for summer 2003 might be considered.
- Consider developing activities that have a strong evaluative components; the Long Island institute initiative was markedly different from the others because participant evaluations were included.
- Methods for sustainability should be considered. Summer meetings work particularly well for energizing professionals and for allowing times of reflection. The Western NY group may provide some insight into sustainability because they appear to be developing and maintaining broad relationships for longer.
- New York City suggests a unique set of problems; their collaborative efforts seemed the least successful. Encouraging the design of completely new models of delivery would seem appropriate.
- Three regions did not participate in the funding. Targeting these regions specifically with future initiatives might prove profitable.

The HESC under the auspices of the Task Force successfully undertook cultivating the planning of extensive partnerships and the implementation of collaborative efforts on the part of IHEs and high needs schools. Much learning has occurred as a result of these three initiatives, and the HESC anticipates building on the success of these initiatives in the future.

Appendix A

Initiative #1. Seeds for Co-Teaching

Lead Applicant	Institution of Higher Education	Co-Planning Partner	1	2	3	4
Carmody	St. Joseph's College	Related Service				X
Pace	Hofstra University	New York Institute				X
Schwartz	Hofstra University	Hofstra University			X	
Slonski-Fowler	SUNY Brockport	Rochester CSD	X			
Rinaldo	Niagara University	Niagara University		X		
Sze	Niagara University	Niagara University		X		
Monroe-Baillargeon	Nazareth College	Arkport CSD			X	
Monroe-Baillargeon	Nazareth College	Arkport CSD	X			
Leeds	Cazenovia College	Cazenovia College	X			
Leeds	Cazenovia College	Cazenovia College		X		
Raymond	SUNY Potsdam	SUNY Potsdam		X		
Jarzab	Utica College	Utica College		X		
Lava	LIU – Brooklyn	P.S. 372				X
Maheady	SUNY Fredonia	Dunkirk CSD	X			
Salmon	SUNY Geneseo	SUNY Geneseo		X		
Duncan	SUNY Cortland	Seymour Elementary Syracuse City SD	X			
Total			5	6	2	3

- Key:
1. LEA partner to teach at the college
 2. College faculty to co-teach
 3. College faculty to teach in high needs school
 4. Other

Appendix B

Initiative #2. Partnership Exploration Grants

Lead Applicant	Institution	Partner School
Burton	NY Institute of Technology	Central Islip UFSD
Duncan	SUNY Cortland	Dr. Martin Luther King School Syracuse City SD
Lawrence-Brown	St. Bonaventure University	Jamestown Public Schools
Leeds	Cazenovia College	Bellevue Elementary Syracuse City SD
Slonski-Fowler	SUNY Brockport	Rochester City School # 14
Zoeckler	Utica College of Syracuse University	Donovan Middle School Utica City SD

Appendix C

Initiative #3. Regional Task Force Summer Action Grants

Liaison	Institution of Higher Education	Region
Burton	New York Institute of Technology	Long Island
DeLuke	The College of St. Rose	Hudson-Mohawk
Dorow	Utica College of Syracuse University	North Country
Foote	Niagara University	West
Leeds	Cazenovia College	Mid-State
Monroe-Baillargeon	Nazareth College	Mid-West
Wolpert	Manhattan College	NYC – Bronx only