



**A Report on Three Initiatives
From 2007-2008:**

**Initiative # 5-8-3 Regional Task Force Structure and Leadership,
Partnerships, and Summer Symposia 2007-2008**

**Initiative #23 Study Groups for Literacy, Positive Behavioral Supports,
and Effective Special Education Practice in Schools 2007-2008**

Initiative #24: Investigating Effective Practices Pilot

sponsored by the

**Higher Education Support Center
for SystemsChange**

and the

Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling

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Executive Summary

The Higher Education Support Center (HESC) prompts and supports New York State colleges and universities in the pursuit of two goals through its Task Force (TF) on Quality Inclusive Schooling:

- ✍ To develop and sustain high quality inclusive teacher preparation programs, and
- ✍ To engage in and support the professional development efforts of selected high needs schools and districts in the seven regions of the state.

In mid 2007-2008, 70 of the institutions in the state with registered teacher preparation programs were TF members. That is, they had made commitments to work toward these two goals in their teacher preparation programs and in their regional work with high needs schools.

In 2007-2008, the HESC provided the TF and its members with a number of initiatives for professional development. These efforts represented a continued maturing of the relationships within the Task Force among institutions and high needs schools and with technical assistance networks and parent and advocacy groups. These initiatives ranged from regional task force groups developing partnerships for college and school district collaboration to studying the integration into teacher preparation programs of Quality Indicators prepared by the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). This report summarizes three initiatives offered by the HESC and undertaken by the TF and its members, representing 23 awards totaling \$177,279.

Initiative # 5-8-3 Regional Task Force Structure and Leadership, Partnerships, and Summer Symposia focused on a coordinated effort to link effective practices, high needs schools, continued pre-service and professional development, and the Statewide Task Force structure. TF members and their colleagues collaborated successfully in programs focused on implementing opportunities for improving inclusive teacher preparation programs by engaging data gathering and analysis and in professional development with high needs schools. All seven regions in New York State received awards. Among the approaches taken, regions developed on-going partnerships with high needs schools as consortia of institutions, distributed resources to schools seeking to utilize effective practices, and supported research into effective practices in high needs districts. Once again, at least three regions brought together public school administrators and teachers to describe and discuss effective practice. Finally, TF connections extended fully to counterparts in Special Education Teaching and Resource Centers (SETRC) and to Teacher Centers as well as to colleagues in the Sharing Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results project (S³TAIR), Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) providers, parents and advocacy groups, and to Regional School Support Centers (RSSC). The results in each region were powerful examples of professional development designed to understand effective special education practices as well as their at effective literacy practice and positive behavior supports. Initiative # 5-8-3 continued the development of more robust regional identities and an increase in efficacy among task

force members, institutions and schools alike, particularly in two regions that had previously not been represented by institutional liaisons at the state-wide level for several years.

Under this initiative, the liaisons continued to provide leadership in New York State's seven regions to build and sustain quality inclusive teacher preparation and to create successful collaboration focused on inclusion with high needs schools districts. Among other tasks, liaisons continued to assess regional needs, to provide technical support to institutions and to high needs districts, to foster communication among TF members, and to develop agendas for the TF at the statewide level. Their efforts helped shape the direction of the TF through its structure and processes. In several cases, the progress toward inclusion was enhanced by focused professional development activities. In response to VESID's emphasis on the State Performance Plan Indicators, the liaisons were also given the task of coordinating their regional activities to identify effective practices in schools and to begin to connect with the State-wide S³TAIR project. The effective practices that the regions began to identify would in turn be used to match with high need schools for these schools' potential improvement. 5-8-3 initiative awards provided stipends for liaisons, support for institutional faculty to further develop individual programs, support for high needs schools in partnership with TF institutions, summer symposia, and supplies and materials for enhanced communication within the regions. A total of \$165,830 was distributed among seven regions, with awards averaging \$23,690.

Initiative # 23. Study Groups for Literacy, Positive Behavior Supports, and Effective Special Education Practice. In coordination with the leadership at VESID, this initiative was designed to examine the potential integration of SETRC created Quality Indicators in Special Education Practice, Positive Behavior Supports, and Literacy into teacher preparation programs in New York State. Beginning with Task Force faculty attending SETRC Statewide meetings to understand the genesis of the Quality Indicators, 15 faculty members were active participants in the work of analyzing the Quality Indicators and recommending their utility to teacher educators. Faculty involved in Initiative 23 met in person, through the TF web site, and via telephone conference to discuss the Quality Indicators and potential strategies for the Study Groups. All three Study Groups distributed surveys to the faculty at TF institutions responsible for these areas in the curriculum. Based on the results, the Study Groups described a "geography" of teacher preparation programs regarding the Quality Indicators, analyzed the current use of these Quality Indicators in teacher preparation programs, and recommended areas in which the Quality Indicators might be better used. Three facilitators from various institutions oversaw the work, each receiving an \$800 stipend for the year. 12 remaining faculty members received \$400 each for their participation. Travel expenses were covered for participants in the initiative. The total cost of Initiative # 23 was \$9,184.

Initiative # 24 Investigating Effective Practices Pilot. This initiative was designed to support the S³TAIR Project site validation of nominated practices in literacy, positive

behavior interventions and supports, and special education instruction. The initiative provided support to IHE faculty site visit team members. Schools nominated practices in these areas that they believed were evidence based and effective for students with disabilities, and after completing a survey to provide more information, site visits completed the validation process. Two pilot site visits undertaken in the spring of 2008 included the State-wide S³TAIR Coordinator, a Regional Field Facilitator representing the local S³TAIR initiative, a TF institutional faculty member and a representative of a Parent Information and Training Center. Two site visits were completed for the pilot, one in the West Region and one in the Mid-West. Faculty and parents were paid \$250 per day for their services and travel expenses. The total cost of the pilots was \$2,265.

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Preface

The Higher Education Support Center (HESC) prompts and supports New York State colleges and universities in the pursuit of two goals through its Task Force (TF) on Quality Inclusive Schooling:

- ✍ 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 seven regions of the state.

In 2007-2008, 70 institutions in the state with registered teacher preparation programs were TF members.

Supporting their commitment to work toward these two goals, TF members and institutions designed inclusive teacher preparation programs, through which prospective teachers would learn to teach all learners. They brought cutting edge practices into college and university courses and associated K-12 classrooms, developing resources and materials for quality inclusive teacher preparation. They forged connections between the preparation of teachers and the continuing professional development needed for vital and responsive schooling systems. The HESC and the TF worked to build direct and strong links between these oft-separated components of the educational enterprise.

The HESC helped create professional development opportunities specifically targeted for teacher educators. These opportunities took the form of research into evidence based practice, school partnerships, program presentations, seminars and symposia, and the testing of innovative practices. The HESC supported networks of teacher educators in the seven regions of the state, congruent with the seven Regional School Support Centers (RSSCs). Regional Task Force groups facilitated partnerships with regional high need schools. They provided valuable outside perspectives on the work of schools, institutions, and teachers. The HESC facilitated relationships with local BOCES units, various staff development networks, parent and advocacy groups, related service providers, and the New York State Education Department.

In 2007-2008, the HESC provided the TF and its members with three initiatives for professional development. The initiatives ranged from developing partnerships for college and school district collaboration, to identifying and analyzing effective practice, to sponsoring symposia focused on describing and implementing effective practice. This report summarizes three initiatives offered by the HESC and undertaken by the TF and its members:

- # 5-8-3 Regional Task Force Structure and Leadership, Partnerships, and Summer Symposia
- # 23 Study Groups for Literacy, Positive Behavior Supports, and Effective Special Education Practice
- # 24 Investigating Effective Practices Pilot

Initiative # 5-8-3 Regional Task Force Structure and Leadership, Partnerships, and Summer Symposia

Introduction

Continuing to recognize that some of the most important work of the TF was taking place at the local level within the seven regions of New York State, the HESC continued to support a structure of local collaboration in the seven regions of New York State. This structure has developed through connections forged among institutions of higher education, high needs schools, technical assistance provider networks, and parent and advocacy groups. Fashioned to parallel the state's Regional Support Center (RSSC) network, these collaborations made possible the close interaction and shared efforts of geographically close institutions, schools, and districts dedicated to quality inclusive practice. Regional TF Liaisons were identified and modest fiscal support was provided for their work. As a result, regional activities were strengthened and institutional faculty were empowered. In addition, the needs of local schools in educating students in inclusive environments were addressed.

By developing and supporting leadership in the regions, this initiative served to ensure that issues at the local level were carefully considered and incorporated into the HESC's direction and actions. The regions were represented by their college and university faculty, personnel from local high needs schools and districts, staff from RSSCs and Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRCs), professionals from Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) and parents from organizations championing inclusion. Meetings of the liaisons were regularly held as a means to troubleshoot problems, to share actions and decisions being made at the regional levels, and to set the overall direction for the State-wide TF. Within the give and take of this model, regions built capacity among their constituencies, thereby making still stronger the larger state education system.

All seven regions in NYS were represented, and TF Liaisons undertook various tasks to provide voice, direction, and support to the work of teacher preparation institutions and high needs partner schools. (See Table 1.) Among the tasks overseen by the liaisons were: assessing the needs of regional institutions, fostering communication among all parties relevant to public school student achievement, recruiting and supporting teacher preparation programs, and orienting new faculty to the work of the TF. In addition, for the second year, VESID priorities with regard to State Performance Plan indicators became major focuses in regions around the state. Meetings were held in each region at least four times during the year when communications from NYSED, VESID, and the HESC were distributed, as was news of local initiatives and program developments at member institutions. Through the regional structure, VESID connected with the regions to continue aligning New York State's efforts at improving outcomes for students with disabilities and for identifying promising practices to ensure these outcomes. The initiative awards provided stipends or salary offsets to liaisons, support for local faculty and for public school personnel for pre-service and in-service opportunities, and material purchases and travel expenses.

Overview of the Regional Structure and Leadership, Partnership, and Summer Symposia Grants

In an effort to streamline its funding process and make HESC initiatives easier to administer for host institutions, initiatives traditionally representing the liaison regional structure, partnerships with high needs schools, and summer symposia were combined into this single initiative. The combination of three distinct initiatives into one award for the 2007- 2008 budget year afforded regions more flexibility in the use of their funds, assured the work of partnerships with effective practice/high needs schools, and made the summer symposium a regular fixture in the itinerary of regional work. This initiative built on the growing relationships among the TF, SETRC, and other technical assistance providers. Therefore, as part of the application process, regional liaisons developing proposals for this initiative were given the task of actively incorporating both partnership and summer symposium activities. This meant greater flexibility in working with high

needs and effective practice schools and encouraged results from the regions on a number of important levels. For several regions, partnership and summer symposium activities were combined; in others, partnership activities continued while summer symposia represented opportunities for continuing institutional and school district professional development.

The Regional Task Force Structure and Liaison Leadership portion of the initiative remained a critical asset to the work of the HESC. In 2007-2008, the TF liaison structure continued to strengthen the regional identities for which it was designed and allowed for work at the local level to flourish. Although regular, focused communication among liaisons continued to result in the sharing of many effective practices and strategies for collaboration, each region used its resources to create programs and to engage in activities that were unique. Each region functioned responsively and autonomously, continuing to broaden representation among various constituencies while answering the unique needs of local member institutions and high needs schools.

First, each region highlighted aspects of the State Performance Plan in its activities. The West region focused its efforts on implementing a three day regional event as well as continued needs assessment and broadening TF impact. The event focused on delivering research into practice in the three key areas of improvement identified by VESID for State-wide improvement: positive behavioral supports, literacy, and effective special education practice. In addition to continued regional dialogue and support for P – 16 professional development, the Mid-West Region explored elementary, secondary and bi-lingual inclusion and effective inclusive administrative practices. After laying the groundwork for revitalizing the region, the Mid-State Region identified high needs schools, explored promising practices among school districts, and developed a plan of regional connection for improving schools. It continued to focus its resources on its close collaboration with the MidState Regional Network Partnership, assisting with research and writing on effective practices for the group. The East Region, under new liaison leadership, revitalized itself with several meetings throughout the year that brought together institutions, technical assistance networks, parent groups, school districts, and

representatives from the State Education Department. The focus for the year was on orienting the reconstituted regional TF, developing close working relationships with technical assistance providers, assessing the region's professional development needs, and defining inclusion in anticipation of future professional development initiatives. The region also held a summer symposium focused on inclusion. The Hudson Region deepened the reach of TF institutions by developing a partnership between a consortium of institutions and a high needs middle school in the Yonkers City District. In addition, the region focused its efforts on professional development for secondary administrators with the help and support of the Hudson RSSC, several BOCES, and local SETRCs. The New York City region in 2007-2008 successfully distributed its inclusion book, *Supporting Inclusion Classrooms: A Resource* to teacher preparation programs and to 1500 schools throughout the New York City district. Several colleges and universities have begun using the resource in their teacher preparation programs. Moreover, the region responded with professional development on effective inclusion for the changing structure of the delivery of special education services in New York City and continued to work closely with parent and advocacy groups. Finally, the Long Island Region offered professional development opportunities to institutions and to high needs schools in the form of institutes and summits. It also completed work on an extensive study of inclusive practice among its high needs schools with the goals of documenting inclusion and of informing practice.

Second, Initiative # 5-8-3 continued to build capacity through innovative uses of available networks and by focusing regional efforts on issues of sustainable systems change. Regional liaisons continued to receive support for inclusion activities through various regional networks. RSSCs and SETRCs were again routinely present and active at regional meetings. In several cases, these networks provided logistical support for TF activities such as registrations and publicity for symposium and regional events. Parent groups regularly joined and expanded their representation at regional meetings in New York City and Long Island, and were represented at events in the East, Mid-State, Mid-West and in the West Regions. The emphasis in several of the more established regions was on research to practice and providing constituent groups and institutions information

on evidence based programs and initiatives. Moving regional meetings among different institutional venues became a mainstay of the groups in almost every region. New York City continued its collaboration at parent and advocacy group offices and at the United Federation of Teachers offices. Technical assistance providers, advocacy groups, teacher centers, and connections made through the Regional Network Partnerships streamlined the process of institutions providing support for high needs schools. Therefore, identifying and creating opportunities to address shared needs served to strengthen networks and to develop the greater sophistication necessary for the delivery of quality professional development. Finally, the TF regional groups strengthened the TF institutions they represented by continuing the conversation about how to ensure the best teaching for all learners.

Third, following a retrenchment of their work with high needs schools in 2006-2007, regions sharpened their focus on professional development through the evolution of the S³TAIR project. The TF helped infuse its regional membership with the ability to tailor professional development to high needs schools. The new S³TAIR grant process had designed within it both the identification of effective practice schools and the continued work with high needs schools. Having designed and developed the means to identify promising practice schools and to validate those schools' practices as effective, the regions engaged in partnerships with high needs schools and awaited the further progress of S³TAIR. Likewise, regions continued to build on work from previous years to sustain viable partnerships. In several cases regional TF leadership helped to leverage additional funding for institutions to affect public school professional development positively. The West Region combined its work for the summer symposium with the creation of partnership opportunities with high needs schools around research based practices. The Mid-West region continued to leverage community and institutional resources to maximize the impact of the professional development it provided. The Mid-State and East Regions also targeted high needs schools for summer symposia and out of these relationships, partnerships have begun developing. The Hudson Region designed, developed, and implemented a consortium model of institutions to engage in a partnership with Emerson Middle School in Yonkers around inclusive practice. This

partnership is continuing into the coming budget year. The consistency of Long Island's approach in providing regular professional development to partner schools models the notion of sustainability in practice. Central Islip, Amityville, and William Floyd are among the school districts with which the Long Island TF has partnered for several years.

Finally, the TF liaison structure, with its strong shared experience among the institutions and among the liaisons themselves, continued to advance the conversation about inclusion. Liaisons continued to share resources, activities, and strategies and blend these into efforts unique to each region. The liaisons continued to mature in their facilitation skills, in their ability to engender collaboration, and in their ability to communicate the TF vision. Liaisons' shared experiences were invaluable for the continued growth and sustainability of the TF. The Mid-State and East Regions developed strong capacity under new liaison leadership, welcoming ten to fifteen TF members to regional meetings regularly during the year. Through a process of soliciting leadership in the regions, the liaison structure in each region enjoyed votes of confidence from colleagues. The process also engendered conversation about the continuity and sustainability of leadership in the regions.

Through a portion of this initiative, the HESC supported for the sixth straight year the planning and implementation of collaborative pre-service and in-service opportunities for inclusive schooling during the summer, 2008 (Table 2). Because of the summer schedule and the availability of school district and institutional personnel, this part of the initiative has remained a mainstay of the work of the Task Force, offered in previous years as Summer Action Grants. The summer symposia that were developed through this initiative, however, focused specifically on "Effective Practices for the Academic and Behavioral Performances of Learners." The programs provided under this initiative varied depending upon the needs within each region. Led by the TF liaisons, these efforts included implementing summer institutes on Response to Intervention, successful inclusive practices, and on administrative support for co-teaching at the secondary level.

All seven TF regions participated and were funded through this initiative. (See Tables 1, 2.) A total of \$165,830 in awards was distributed, each award averaging \$23,690. Of this average, \$4,000 was reserved in each sub-contract for the summer symposia described above and \$4,000 went toward partnerships with effective practice/high needs schools. Symposia and Partnership awards provided payments for presenters, stipends for ihe and school district personnel to participate, and reimbursement for the costs associated with implementing large-scale programs (such as travel, clerical expenses, printing, and supplies).

**Table 1. Initiative 5-8-3: Regional Task Force Structure and Leadership
2007-2008**

Region	Institution	Liaison	Regional Focus
West	Niagara University*, SUNY Fredonia	Kathleen Gradel & Chandra Foote	Research into Evidence Based Practice; partnership with high needs schools
Mid-West	Alfred University	Ann Monroe-Baillargeon	Professional Development for Institutions and Partner Schools on the delivery of special education services in inclusive settings
Mid-State	SUNY Cortland	Kimberly Rombach & Susan Stratton	Regional needs assessment, locating and matching high needs and effective practice schools
East	College of St. Rose	Diana Straut	Regional needs assessment, definition for inclusion, locating promising practice schools and districts
Hudson	St. Thomas Aquinas	Joan Black	Locating and sharing Evidence Based practices among institutions and administrators from high needs secondary schools
New York City	Touro College	Brenda Dressler & Steve Levy	Support for CTTs and co-teaching in the NYC DOE, developing a network of partners focused on inclusion in NYC schools; distribution of inclusion resource to schools, institutions, and teacher centers
Long Island	New York Institute of Technology*, Hofstra University	Dolores Burton & Darra Pace	Administrative and Evidence Based Summits focused on inclusion and RTI in literacy, math, and parent collaboration.

* Holds subcontract.

The Regions

The West Region focused on developing capacity among its institutional researchers and its regional school districts with collaborative opportunities to determine and to encourage the use of evidence based instructional practices. In a first step, the Region offered a competition for mini-grants of \$1,500 to its institutional faculty members for outstanding collaborations with school districts in exploring effective inclusive practices. The RFP for the mini-grants was created by region-wide consensus. Once submitted, the mini-grant proposals were adjudicated by readers outside the region. Four mini-grants were chosen representing a broad range of successful evidence based inclusive practices that were occurring in local schools. Dr. Kevin Miller of Buffalo State College implemented a computer based self management system for assisting students with chronic behavior problems in the Cheektowaga School District. Drs. Marya Grande and Kimberly Leavitt-Noble of Canisius College developed take-home literacy bags with second grade classrooms in the Buffalo City School District to increase parental involvement and children's reading acquisition. Dr. Rene' Wroblewski of St. Bonaventure University studied a successful co-teaching relationship in the Jamestown Public School District and compared it to the available best practice research. Dr. Kathleen Gradel of SUNY Fredonia evaluated the impact of Reading 180 in the Silver Creek Central School District. The research for these projects was conducted in the spring, 2008. Reports on the research took the form of presentations, supported by the local teacher centers, attended over three afternoons in July, 2008 by institutional faculty and by 67 teachers and administrators from regional high needs schools and districts. Each presentation focused on the hands-on delivery of information from the research and provided the participants with opportunities for interaction and for engagement with the subject matter.

Identifying local promising practices in the West Region is ongoing. This program of mini-grants and presentations resulted in more robust partnerships and in the identification of local teacher leadership in several areas of inclusive practice. The outcome of the work was an emphasis on continuing mutual work between institutions and high needs schools as well as a contribution to the growing body of research

emphasizing evidence based practice. Training in Universal Design for Learning continued for faculty in the region. In addition, the West Region focused on timely dissemination of results to its programs. Noteworthy among the Western Region's efforts, too, has been its continuing effort to dovetail with other grant funded initiatives in New York State. Among these, Teacher Leadership Quality Partnership continued to help "grow" the Task Force and its efforts to affect regional connections. Also, the region connected with individual school districts to award hours toward professional development credit. Through this initiative, the West Region combined the creation of partnerships and the exploration of effective practice in a summer symposium seamlessly and effectively.

The Mid-West Region held a day-long summer symposium in May, 2008 that saw school district administrators and teachers in attendance along with parents and institutional faculty. SETRC Coordinators and the newly appointed Regional Field Facilitator in the Mid-West Region provided logistical support for over 100 participants who had registered for the one day event. For the first time in the history of the TF, BOCES, under the auspices of Monroe County 1, supported the activity through a co-ser and outside districts were able to cross contract to participate at a cost of \$70 per registrant. Dr. Mara Sapon-Shevin from Syracuse University provided the key note for the day. Participants were provided copies of her book, *Widening the Circle: The Power of Inclusive Classrooms*. Her presentation was followed by workshops on quality inclusive schooling which included sessions for administrators (Systems Change and Inclusion), for parents (Advocating for Inclusion), and for K-12 educators (Elementary and Secondary Co-Teaching and Including Bilingual Students). The sessions were provided by administrators and teachers from the Webster, Victor, Arkport, Rochester City, Alfred-Almond, and Naples School Districts as well by the Rochester Advocacy Center. With overwhelmingly positive feedback on the events, the region raised the profile of the Task Force significantly and benefited a wide range of its constituents. Simultaneously, the Mid-West Region enhanced and revitalized conversations about inclusion. Finally, with workshops provided by K-12 practitioners, the region

encouraged continued discussions surrounding institutional involvement with high needs schools and the region continued to identify promising practices.

The Mid-State Region also provided a day-long summer symposium in July, 2008. The focus at the event was quality inclusive schooling, and over fifty participants from institutions, local school districts, SETRCs, and NYSED School Improvement Services were engaged in meeting and planning the delivery of special education services. Participants in the Summer Symposium included educators from the Cortland City School District and several smaller area school districts. The centerpiece for the day was a presentation by a team from Salem Hyde Elementary in the Syracuse City School District focused on *Schools of Promise*, a method for redeploying teaching and support personnel to maximize opportunities for inclusion within a school setting. In addition, a screening of *Including Samuel* served to propel the conversation on inclusive schooling among the professionals present. The region identified high needs schools in the area and continued to access promising practices while developing methods of coordinating services for those schools. The Regional Network Partnership (RNP), on which the TF has played a role for the last three years, witnessed increased student achievement in literacy at its focus school, CASE Middle School in the Watertown District. The TF and the RNP have been seeking to add another partner high needs school this coming year.

After a two year hiatus, the East Region under new liaison leadership designed and developed opportunities for institutional professional development and for promoting inclusion among high needs schools and districts. The region focused on carefully assessing the professional development needs of the region and on discussing and describing inclusion among its constituents. In addition, the region allocated its resources toward sponsoring a summer symposium examining inclusion and locating promising practices in the area. Thirty participants including faculty from TF institutions, SETRC coordinators, and teachers and administrators from area schools connected for the half day event. After a screening of *Including Samuel*, participants assembled in small groups to discuss their successful experiences with inclusion as well as the barriers that exist.

Following this, schools described their inclusive programs, helping the region continue to locate promising practices to be vetted through the S³TAIR process.

The Hudson Region continued its professional development focus on inclusive classrooms at the 7-12 grade level. Under the auspices of the Northern Westchester-Putnam BOCES, Ulster BOCES, and with support from the Hudson RSSC, the Hudson Region TF provided a day long conference to secondary administrators on the subject of co-teaching as a means to successful inclusion. Participants included teachers and administrators from high needs school districts and from districts with promising practices. In addition, faculty from area institutions, SETRC professional developers, and RSSC representatives participated. Over forty administrators from the area joined the one day summit. Rotating breakout sessions covered topics which included an overview of co-teaching models, the hiring and supervising of co-teaching arrangements, and professional development for inclusion at the secondary level. Faculty from TF institutions provided the sessions. The day long event strengthened the collaboration between institutions and school districts, and focused regional efforts on creating greater awareness of inclusion among secondary administrators. Administrators from the region's local school districts were able to discuss specific strategies like outlining the development of successful matches for co-teaching relationships and the use of evidence based instruction. As a result of the summer symposium, administrators emerged with a sense of support for the development of co-teaching practices at the secondary level. Institutions emerged, too, having connected with decision-makers in various school districts in meaningful ways to support evidence based inclusive practices. Finally, partnerships in the region between institutions and high needs schools districts such as Yonkers, East Ramapo, and Newburgh on the one hand and effective practice schools like Clarkstown, Purchase, Rye, and New Rochelle on the other strengthened the region's pre-service connections.

The New York City Region created efforts to support school partnerships as well as to support the NYC Department of Education in striving for fuller inclusion among NYC schools. The introduction of the co-teaching model (CTTs) on a broad scale by the

Department required TF involvement with partner schools to assure timely professional development and support. Specific partnerships were continued by Long Island University – Brooklyn and P.S. 24 around the implementation of co-teaching and by Pace University – Manhattan and P.S. 226 for the education of individuals with autism. In addition, 35 NYC teachers participated in the region’s summer symposium at the UFT Teacher’s Center focused on the film *Including Samuel* and breakout sessions on co-teaching and inclusive practice. These educators formed a cadre’ representing a network of teachers to champion quality inclusive practices in schools throughout the system. Next, the region focused on distributing the resource it completed in 2007, *Supporting Inclusion Classrooms: A Resource*. With help for publication from the President of Touro College, the book was distributed to schools and teacher centers throughout the city, to the Department of Education and parent groups and to TF member institutions. The purpose of the publication is to highlight perspectives as well as strategies on inclusion. Teacher preparation programs almost immediately began using portions of the book which included templates for lesson planning and co-teaching and discussion questions on issues of inclusion. Several administrative members of the New York City Department of Education were contacted with copies of the book. The region continued to increase its cohesiveness and commitment to inclusion, inviting pre-service teachers to regional events particularly the Summer Symposium. Hence the region increased linkages between the Task Force and other groups advocating for inclusion, increased partnerships with high needs schools, and benefited the professional development of faculty.

The Long Island Region organized and implemented both an administrative summit and a Summer Symposium opportunity to professionally develop in-service teachers from high needs districts. The focus in the region was on Response to Intervention in seven high needs districts as well as in teacher preparation programs. In addition to providing timely and necessary information, the administrative summit successfully continued to raise the profile of the Task Force by providing assistant superintendents and directors of special education with critical professional development for inclusion. Districts were identified for partnerships with colleges and universities.

The summer institute undertaken in July, 2008, provided professional development for teachers specifically on Response to Intervention by examining progress monitoring, models of literacy, technology interventions, Response to Intervention in mathematics, and parent involvement in the RtI process.

Partnerships have continued to thrive in the region. The Region's work in Central Islip School District, for example, has resulted in raising elementary math test scores. St. Joseph's College has developed a professional development school for Universal pre-Kindergarten in the Patchogue-Medford School District. As in years past, a DVD of the summer institute, this one with three volumes covering the four day institute, is being created for distribution to Task Force members and interested parties as well as on the HESC web-site.

General Observations

For 2007 – 2008, the work of the regional task forces was strong and far reaching. For the first time in several years, all seven of the regions were funded and functioned well, helping to implement quality inclusive teacher preparation programs and distilling efforts at reaching high needs schools through professional development. In 2007 – 2008, much of the work of the Task Force continued to be focused on the identification of regional effective practices and the promoting of evidence based practice. It is fair to say, therefore, that the major focuses of this year's funded opportunities were on: 1) developing broader partnerships and professional development activities; 2) strengthening regional understanding of evidence based inclusive practices; 3) continuing a deeper understanding of inclusive practice at the secondary level; and 4) communicating the work of the Task Force and inclusive schooling to still wider audiences. Institutional faculty, school district personnel, technical assistance providers, and parent groups continued their fruitful thinking and reflection on the nature of inclusive practice and the infusion of their research and understanding into high needs schools.

2007 - 2008 was marked at the regional level not only by strong and purposeful leadership but also by flexibility and creativity. With funding still reduced for regional efforts, the regional liaison groups continued their work practically uninterrupted, largely due to the strong commitment of local institutions to the purpose and vision of the TF. In short, faculty continued to step forward to partner when the need arose. In addition, the regions shifted focus to outcomes sought by VESID and the New York State Education Department and aligned their efforts to preparing teachers to work toward these outcomes. Healthy attendance continued at the Statewide TF meeting in Albany, NY with at least 70 % of member institutions attending. Many individual members opted to attend regional meetings with 63% of participating institutions using this venue. Partnerships, professional development projects, research in the field, and tools to enhance school inclusion were represented by various presentations at the State-wide meetings. As meetings continued to move from place to place in several regions, new connections with faculty and technical assistance networks were established. The infrastructure remained in place for continued responsiveness to institutional and school district needs.

These initiatives carried significant impact for the TF in the 2007-2008 operating year. The retrenchment of needs, the redesign of partnerships, and the increased understanding of effective and evidence based practice advanced through the TF regional structure. The information and knowledge shared at the regional level continued to be enhanced by the liaisons' methods for implementing and communicating the work of inclusion. Strong institutional collaboration, utilizing network connections, and communicating through community resources ensured well attended regional events. The success of these efforts in the regions at implementing large scale events with scores of people in attendance points to the growing sophistication of faculty in the roles of liaisons. As has been true in years past, the TF Liaison structure engaged institutions and high needs schools in unprecedented ways. It empowered faculty and technical assistance networks and continued to ensure that the conversation about reaching all learners successfully continues P-16.

The liaisons, the liaison structure and its functioning remains worthy of focused study and further understanding, not only from the perspective of teacher preparation, but also from the perspective of management and organizational development. Their efforts need to be showcased during semi-annual NYSATE/NYACTE conferences or at national meetings and in publications outside and inside the traditional teacher preparation community. The Mid-West's extending its reach within its consortium model, the West's focus on evidence based practice, New York City's development of its inclusion book and its support of the NYCDOE, the Hudson's consortium partnership and in-service for secondary administrators, Long Island's in-service on Response-to-Intervention and parental collaboration, each included high needs public school professionals. Likewise, particularly in the case of New York City, parents continued to be active participants in Summer Symposia. The results of this initiative continue to point to the viability of regional identities that have been strengthened through on-going collaboration. Each region has continued to identify efforts at promoting inclusion through a deep understanding of the institutions and schools involved locally. These efforts advanced successful inclusive practice in New York State.

The sixth year for this Initiative witnessed a clear alignment of the goals of the Task Force and the goals for VESID. Regional liaisons, in charge of designing, implementing and reporting the summer work, took care to assure that outcomes reflected the priorities of New York State Department of Education. As had been true the year before, working in collaboration with HESC, more lead time for planning Summer Action allowed liaisons the opportunity to provide well attended and well received activities. As a result, TF members, in several cases, made contact with new constituencies and designed and developed methods of dissemination that were regionally unique. Collaboration with BOCES in two of the regions and teacher centers in three of the regions served to extend the reach of the TF. Communicating successfully with various constituencies, while challenging, was a hallmark of these regional endeavors.

Future Considerations

- ✍ The TF group structure represents great creativity, expertise in collaboration, and broadening perspectives on inclusion at institutions and in schools. Ensuring the liaison structure and remaining close to liaison thinking to fashion future structures and initiatives are essential. Also, the fact that the professional development provided by the regional TF is locally driven enhances the success of Initiative 5-8-3.

- ✍ Late in the 2007-2008 school year, the momentum for S³TAIR and for identifying evidence based effective practice increased. Documenting these processes regionally is becoming critical as the means to understanding further the science of implementation and to ensuring the sustainability of TF and VESID efforts.

- ✍ In at least two regions, local community colleges, many of whom provide education for early childhood teachers and teaching assistants, have expressed interest in joining the TF. These connections should be cultivated since they represent critical areas on the P – 16 continuum where quality inclusion and inclusive practice require a professional development presence.

- ✍ The Summer Symposium program continues to provide unique and necessary opportunities to the seven regions of New York State. The broadest possible representation should be considered regionally for these events as they provide unique opportunities for collaboration and for communicating research to practice.

**Table 2.
Initiative # 5-8-3: Summer Symposia**

Region*	Liaison	Institutions Represented	Symposium Focus
West	Chandra Foote, Kathleen Gradel	Niagara University, SUNY Fredonia	Evidence Based Practice in Literacy, Positive Behavior Supports, and Special Education Practice
Mid-West	Ann Monroe- Baillargeon	Alfred University	Elementary and Secondary Inclusion, Systems Change, ESL Inclusion
Mid-State	Kimberly Rombach, Susan Stratton	SUNY Cortland	<i>Schools of Promise</i> and inclusion in high needs school districts
East	Diana Straut	College of St. Rose	Definitions of Inclusion, Effective Inclusive Practices
Hudson	Joan Black	St. Thomas Aquinas College	Co-teaching for Secondary Administrators
New York City	Brenda Dressler, Steve Levy	Touro College	Developing a network of support for inclusive practices city-wide
Long Island	Dolores Burton Darra Pace	New York Institute of Technology, Hofstra University	Response to Intervention, Parent and Family Collaboration

Initiative # 23: Study Groups for Literacy, Positive Behavior Supports, and Effective Special Education Practice

Introduction

In the summer of 2007, the HESC learned of efforts underway through the SETRC Technical Assistance Network to capture effective evidence-based practices as Quality Indicators for Positive Behavior Supports, Literacy, and Special Education Practice. The HESC reasoned that pre-service teachers, especially those becoming employed at schools in New York State, would need first hand knowledge of these Quality Indicators in order to practice effectively. Therefore, the TF designed study groups to review and analyze the documents themselves and to recommend ways in which these Quality Indicators could be integrated into teacher preparation programs at TF institutions.

The three study groups encompassed 15 faculty members and school district professionals, including three facilitators from different institutions. Participants and facilitators met and communicated in various venues: at State-wide TF and SETRC meetings, via email, through forums designed specifically for the study groups on the website, and on telephone conferences. Study Group participants were paid modest stipends for their work along with travel expenses. The total cost of the initiative was \$9,184.

The results of this six month effort were a series of recommendations that were presented at the TF Statewide meeting in the fall, 2008 and that were included on the project web site www.inclusion-ny.org. All three study groups circulated surveys to TF members to understand the present level of integration of these three focus areas. Likewise, these three study groups drew on information and support from a broad range of sources including local and national professional development organizations, curricula

and syllabi from institutions across the nation, and colleagues at their own institutions. The recommendations of these three study groups follow:

Study Group 23: Quality Indicators for Positive Behavior Supports.

The Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Study Group participated in the winter, 2008 SETRC meeting to understand the genesis of the Quality Indicator documents. Four faculty members participated in the study group. Following this, the study group met regularly, mostly by telephone conference and in person to develop its TF survey and circulate it, and to gather curricula and course information using PBS. The group developed a 29 item survey asking faculty about how and where PBS was taught and integrated into teacher programs at their institutions. Using the SETRC Quality Indicators as a springboard, the group also sought information about faculty familiarity with the levels of intervention in a behavioral approach, with the teaching of social skills, and with Functional Behavior Assessments. The survey had a 66% return rate. Analysis continues. Faculties were invited to send program outlines and syllabi for analysis and compilation. The Study Group also gathered syllabi and course descriptions from colleges and universities around the country as well as from national organizations and clearinghouses representing PBS. Among other things, the Study Group has recommended developing web-based resources because PBS is insufficiently represented among teacher preparation curricula in New York State.

Study Group 23: Quality Indicators for Literacy. First, the Study Group for the SETRC Literacy Quality Indicators developed its vision for bridging the gap between IHE literacy instruction and K-12 practice. Then, it used the purposes delineated in the Quality Indicator document to frame its work: assessing instructional programs and practices in the area of literacy; determining priority needs; and prescribing and planning activities to improve outcomes for children with disabilities. The steps in the process of analyzing the Quality Indicators and their potential integration into teacher preparation programs included gathering input from the Task Force, circulating the Quality Indicators to “critical friends” at colleges and universities, conducting a survey on literacy instruction among TF institutions, and analyzing and reporting the findings of the survey. The survey itself followed the levels developed in the Quality Indicators

from early literacy instructional practice to adolescent literacy to systemic support for literacy in institutions. In addition, the Quality Indicators were broadly compared to International Reading Association and to National Association for the Education of Young Children standards. Among the findings from the survey were discoveries about the strong emphasis in teacher preparation programs on “phonemic awareness” in early literacy programs and on reading in the content areas, writing, and research skills at the adolescent level. Attention paid to opportunities for more differentiated instructional strategies such as those utilizing multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and Universal Design for Learning were used in significantly fewer teacher preparation programs. Recommendations included more emphasis on multiple pathways to successful reading instruction and on more rigorous assessments of pre-service teachers.

Study Group 23: Quality Indicators for Special Education Practice. The Special Education Practice Group gathered course information from participants at colleges and universities; however, its emphasis fell primarily on the development and distribution of a survey to TF institutions. The survey garnered a 38% response rate and outlined areas of strength and weakness in the teaching of inclusive special education practice to both general educators and special educators in teacher preparation programs. Again, the components of the Quality Indicator document were used to frame the survey results and analysis. All surveyed institutions included strong responses to the incorporation of teaching strategies like Direct Instruction, Response to Intervention, and Universal Design for Learning. However, the continuous and rigorous *demonstrated* assessment of these instructional strategies was less evident. Results indicated, too, that, although special education and general education pre-service teachers learned together in dual certification programs, there was comparatively little dialogue between the groups. Translating the principles of inclusion and good teaching generally into everyday practice was often left to cooperating teachers. Among the study group’s recommendations is a greater coordination of effort between institutions and public schools to educate teachers as well as course requirements in data analysis and progress monitoring.

General Observations

Because these study groups started after the mid-point in 2007-2008, the conception of their work was limited and the responses to the surveys that were circulated less robust than might have been anticipated. Nevertheless, the study groups emerged with important insight into teacher preparation programs and their focus on the areas of PBS, literacy, and Special Education practice. Several factors surfaced among all three groups:

- ✍ A significant disconnect exists between classroom instruction in teacher preparation programs and the field based experiences of pre-service teachers.

- ✍ Although models exist for assessing pre-service teacher performance in the institutional classroom, clear and rigorous assessment of the application of the knowledge gained in classrooms is lacking.

- ✍ The need for strong partnerships with schools is clear. In designing programs, the development of like-minded professionals to serve as cooperating teachers and the nurturance of partner schools with strong inclusive visions to improve the quality of field experiences is critical.

Future Considerations

The HESC has looked forward to continuing this initiative focused on actively integrating these SETRC Quality Indicators into teacher preparation programs. The study of whether and how these Quality Indicators can be consciously established not only in classroom instruction but also in field experiences and with mentor teacher relationships needs to be explored. Their effect in the areas of public school cooperation with institutions and rigorous assessment of teacher candidates should also be considered.

Table 3.
Initiative # 23: Study Groups for Literacy, Positive Behavior
Supports, and Effective Special Education Practice

Study Group:	Members	Institutions and Organizations Represented	Study Group Results
Positive Behavior Supports			
	Amanda Fenlon*	SUNY Oswego	Recommendations: investigate the potential for specialization in PBS; utilize the high level of PBS expertise among TF members; implement future needs assessment of PBS at institutions; exchange PBS curricula and syllabi; design a PBS consortium within the TF; further explore PBS in teacher preparation; develop web-based PBS resource
Kevin Miller	Buffalo State College		
Candace Mulcahy	Binghamton University		
Bud Buckhout	Cazenovia College		
Study Group: Literacy			

	Sarah McPherson*	New York Institute of Technology	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>specify critical competencies in literacy education for Special Educators;</p> <p>provide structured courses and supervised field experiences to support the development of key competencies;</p> <p>design and implement performance assessments for candidate decision-making in key beginning professional competencies;</p> <p>utilize</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Universal Design for Learning, 2) assistive, instructional and productivity technologies, 3) authentic real-world relevant instruction 4) Multiple intelligences 5) Project-based learning 6) Pre-service programs with more intense field experience 7) More rigorous assessment of pre-service teachers.
	Roberta Schnorr	SUNY Oswego	
	Rene Wroblewski	St. Bonaventure University	
	Lynn Burke	International Dyslexia Association	
Study Group: Special Education Practice	Members	Organizations Represented	Study Group Results

	Howard Weiner*	Hofstra University	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>link teacher development and student achievement in inclusive classrooms in dual certification programs;</p> <p>have general and special education candidates learn together;</p> <p>have access to inclusive public school classrooms where all students are learning well;</p> <p>consider the critical role of field placements and the value of selecting classrooms and schools that are successfully using the indicators of quality instruction, especially for student teachers;</p> <p>use the SETRC Quality Indicators as a readily available measure of whether teachers use evidence-based practices and create a classroom environment that supports inclusion;</p> <p>use the Quality Indicators to serve as themes for a semi structured interview of teachers who are observed teaching during a literacy lesson.</p>
	Margaret McLane	College of St. Rose	
	Denise Simard	SUNY Plattsburgh	
	Corinne Morris	Canisius College	
	Elizabeth Haller	Touro College	
	Caroline Willis	Mattituck High School	

* Study Group Facilitator

Initiative # 24: Investigating Effective Practices Pilot

Introduction

Originally designed to sustain several dozen site visits to validate effective practices in schools, Initiative 24 created the opportunity for two faculty members, one representing parents, to participate in two pilot site visits in the West and Mid-West Regions of NYS. These pilot site-visits were designed to test a protocol for validating effective practices prior to more full scale implementation of the S³TAIR project. Faculty were joined by S³TAIR Regional Field Facilitators, the Statewide Coordinator for S³TAIR, a representative of a Parent Information and Training Center, and an outside evaluator whose task it was to modify the protocol. One site visit took place at an elementary school to validate a literacy practice in the Buffalo City School District. A second visit analyzed a PBS intervention in the Wayne-Cohocton School District. The site visits saw to the successful development of a protocol for the coming year. Faculty response was immediate and powerful. Faculty who were engaged in the site visits reported that the experiences informed their teaching substantially and affected their curricula and their delivery of instruction. The cost of this initiative was \$2,265.

General Observations

- ✍ The focus on determining effective practices in schools has continued to develop capacity within institutions as well as within the technical assistance networks and

high needs schools that are part of the TF. This capacity has been developed by a better understanding of research on evidence based practice and by analyzing exemplars that are now accessible to institutional faculty and to teacher preparation programs.

- ✍ Clearly, one of the significant benefits of utilizing faculty expertise in these site visits has been the unintended positive effect on teacher preparation programs. Because the visits involve evidence-based practice, the lessons provided practitioners at all levels are only beginning to be felt and understood.
- ✍ With limited resources, focusing these efforts on connections with New York State and S³TAIR bridges the gap between research and practice. Likewise, this focus connects research and practice to policy in ways that are unique among the fifty states by continuing the conversation at the level of VESID leadership. Even with the slow start to the S³TAIR program, these benefits are clear and the connections among research, practice, and policy are being strengthened and highlighted.

Future Considerations

- ✍ The S³TAIR model of bringing research to practice in the identification of effective practices developed in the regions provides a deeper understanding of successful implementation among high needs schools and should be continued.
- ✍ This continuing initiative, funded at levels that make support of faculty involvement possible, may increase connections between institutions and K-12 schools. Moreover, the presence of parents in vetting effective practice adds unique insight to the process and provides an aspect of professional development through collaboration that is rare and potentially powerful.