Winthrop University-School Partnership Network

Winter 2012   Volume #7

Partnership Sites

Cherokee County School District
   Alma Elementary

Chester County School District
   Chester Park COLT
   Chester Park School of Inquiry
   Great Falls Elementary
   Great Falls Middle/High
   Lewisville Elementary

Fairfield County School District
   Kelly Miller Elementary
   McCrorey Liston Elementary

Lancaster County School District
   Buford Middle
   Clinton Elementary
   Indian Land High
   Indian Land Middle
   South Middle

York School District One
   Cotton Belt Elementary
   Hunter Street Elementary
   Jefferson Elementary
   York Middle

Clover School District

Rock Hill School District
   Finley Road Elementary
   India Hook Elementary
   South Pointe High
   Sullivan Middle
   Sunset Park Center for Accelerated Studies

Fort Mill School District
   Gold Hill Elementary
   Riverview Elementary
   Springfield Middle
   Sugar Creek Elementary

Union County School District
   Buffalo Elementary
   Foster Park Elementary
   Jonesville Elementary/Middle
   Monarch Elementary

Partnership Goals

• Improve student academic achievement
• Improve professional learning for school-university faculty and student candidates
• Strengthen the pre-baccalaureate preparation of teacher candidates
• Increase support for new teachers

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The NetSCOPE project is funded by the US DOE Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Award CFDA 84.336S.
A Note from the Director

The collaborative expertise and committed efforts of our Partnership work has once again paid off as the Teacher Preparation Program at Winthrop University implemented a new, transformational core curriculum this fall. With courses envisioned and designed by classroom teachers, university faculty, and school and district administrators, the Education Core is characterized as clinically-based, with content knowledge development wrapped around key field experiences. The time candidates spend in schools now exceeds the norm with some programs pushing 1,500 hours over the course of eight semesters. As we tell other colleges and universities about the new curriculum, many ask just how we are able to implement such an approach for so many different programs. Of course, our first response is because we have a dedicated, engaged Partnership Network. We have worked not only to craft the curriculum but to create structures such as the new Host Teacher that provides a scaffold for teachers to start working with teacher candidates during early experiences before possibly moving to Mentor Teacher status. In addition, we are recognizing those Mentor Teachers who excel at supporting developing educators through the nominated process of being a Clinical Coach (visit www.winthrop.edu/netscope/mentor_process.htm for more information). So, as faculty and school partners, please encourage teachers with whom you work to get involved — our Partnership Network classrooms are definitely the foundation upon which our success is built!

Dr. Lisa Johnson
NetSCOPE Project Director

Ideas for our next newsletter?
Want students to contribute an article?
Contact Foster Hays, Editor:
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Fax: 803/323-4369
To view previous newsletters, visit: www.winthrop.edu/netscope/whatsnew.htm

New Professional Development Schools!

Alma Elementary School joined the Partnership Network in 2010 as a Partner School. The school draws students from a large, primarily rural area where the unemployment rate is high. In becoming a Professional Development School within the Partnership Network, Alma Elementary offers Winthrop teacher candidates the opportunity to work with diverse students such as the approximately 95 percent who meet the state criteria for living in poverty. Alma serves as a “Response to Intervention” (RtI) implementation site for the South Carolina Department of Education, and the faculty and administration of the school are active in many state organizations.

Sugar Creek Elementary School joined the Partnership Network in 2011 as a Partner School. This large, growing school draws students from many ethnic groups and offers Winthrop teacher candidates the opportunity to work with a significant number of gifted learners from those ethnic groups. The school has served as a “No Place for Hate” model site for South Carolina and is involved with the Healthy Schools initiative in a partnership with Carolinas Medical Center. The school offers students many clubs and activities to round out their educational opportunities.

Lancaster County School District New Teacher of the Year

Already off to a good start, Meredith Hill, South Middle School art teacher, was awarded the Beginning Teacher of the Year Award for Lancaster County School District at the start of the 2012-13 school year. Originally from Darlington, S.C., Hill began teaching and coaching cheerleading at South Middle in January 2011, immediately after completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in art education at Winthrop University. And, after her first year of teaching, she was nominated for one of Lancaster County’s annual Celebrate Great Teaching Awards by one of her students.

Once Hill was nominated, she began a series of observations conducted by a selection committee made up of community members, school board business partners, district instructional specialists, and last year’s award recipients. From 200 nominees, Hill was chosen to move forward as a serious contender for the award. In the next phase of the selection process, she presented a 15 minute sample lesson plan, instructing 12 members of the committee as if they were students. Opting to teach her OP Art/Bridget Riley lesson that she does with her 6th graders, Hill showed the committee “how to create depth on a two dimensional surface, how simple lines and shapes create movement in a piece of art, and how craftsmanship is key to success.” Following her mini-lesson, an interview was conducted with the inspirational new teacher answering questions concerning classroom management methods, her expectations as an educator, and how she would handle various scenarios in her classroom.

The committee must have been impressed. At the Celebration of Great Teaching event in the gymnasium of Lancaster High School on August 14, 2012, Hill was presented with the Beginning Celebrate Great Teaching Award, a Bob Doster trophy, and $500 to use in her classroom. Thrilled to be honored by her community members and colleagues, the young teacher expresses that “it’s an honor to be recognized; but regardless of whether you’re recognized or not, you get that kind of gratification every day teaching.” And she proudly admits that one of her biggest accomplishments besides receiving this award was “when my 6th grade art student won Best of Show for Lancaster County’s Art show in March 2011, winning over all the other middle school and high school art works.”

Putting her passion for teaching and her love of her students first, Hill is determined to make the most of this award. When asked how she will spend the award money, she claims, “I am always in search of new ideas or innovative ways of doing different projects so it will depend on what I stumble upon for inspiration.” We look forward to seeing what ideas she will bring to the Partnership next! Congratulations, Meredith!
Winthrop University - School Partnership Art Contest

And the Winner is...
Amanda Bilsky
8th Grade
South Middle School

Check out Amanda’s winning piece, the new cover art for the Partnership newsletter, on Page 1. Congratulations, Amanda!

Make sure to check out all of our contestants’ artwork presented on the NetSCOPE bulletin board at Winthrop University on the first floor of the W.T.S. Building!

Amirah Tolbert, 3rd Grade, Jefferson Elementary

Cruz Walker, 3rd Grade, Clinton Elementary

Maxine Cuarto, 5th Grade, Riverview Elementary

Brionna Michalak, 3rd Grade, Hunter Street Elementary

Sanaa Merchant, 4th Grade, Lewisville Elementary

Malik Beaver, 5th Grade, Kelly Miller Elementary

Kennisha Stinson, 2nd Grade, Clinton Elementary

Ashton Lewis, 4th Grade, McCroy-Liston Elementary

Matthew Vause, 3rd Grade, Jefferson Elementary
3rd Annual Partnership Conference for Educational Renewal

On Tuesday, June 12, 2012, the Winthrop University-School Partnership Network hosted its Third Annual Partnership Conference for Educational Renewal. With the theme “Innovation, Inquiry, Impact,” sessions were selected to highlight programs in Network schools and institutions, provide professional development on various classroom strategies, and inspire action research and innovative instructional methods that impact student learning and development. The morning began with an inspirational presentation titled “Teamwork Makes the Dream Work” by Latoya Dixon, Mt. Gallant Elementary School principal. Afterward, a variety of two-hour workshops and one-hour concurrent sessions were held in locations on the Winthrop University campus. To close the day, university and school faculty reconvened to hear Montrio Belton, director of the South Carolina Department of Education’s Office of School Transformation, provide a presentation on “Choices for Educators in this New Age of Dichotomies.”

Since this summer, educators throughout the Partnership Network have begun planning and implementing instructional methods and resources provided at the conference. Alma Elementary School teachers are using the research strategies from the session on Whole Brain Teaching offered by Jad and Amanda Griffin (teachers at Pleasant Knoll and Sugar Creek Elementary), and they plan to share these strategies with other teachers in their study group. Several schools have reported incorporating Professional Learning Communities after learning more from Mt. Gallant Elementary teachers during a two-hour morning workshop. Gold Hill Elementary, Great Falls Elementary, Lewisville Elementary, and Finley Road Elementary are researching and initiating Professional Learning Communities at their school. Project Based Learning is also taking off after this summer’s session led by Chester Park School of Inquiry (CPESI) teachers and Winthrop Faculty in Residence Sue Spencer on “How to Design and Implement Project-Based Learning in Your Classroom or School,” with Gold Hill Elementary planning future projects and Finley Road Elementary currently introducing a school-wide implementation. In return, CPESI gained some insight from their partner, Sugar Creek Elementary, with the “Words Their Way: Word Study in Action” session prompting several CPESI teachers to introduce this hands-on program in their classrooms. Stephanie Barber, Great Falls Elementary school liaison, reports that she is using the activities that she learned about educating the whole brain to help retain student knowledge, and Jeniffer Bierman, York County ESOL teacher, claims that Lancaster County’s Crystal Fields’ session, “Help! My Students Don’t Speak English!” has helped her become aware of the issues that affect her students. Hannah Wallace, eighth grade math teacher at York Middle School, reports that the administration at York Middle has implemented techniques gained from the session “Transforming New Teachers into Lifelong Educators” by Mary Martin, associate professor at Winthrop University. As Wallace relates, “the session was to explain the generational differences between administrators and new teachers, and how to bridge that gap with communication and constant feedback. For every teacher’s observations this year, the administrators are writing notes on their iPads and then sending them directly to the teacher. This instant feedback has been great!”

The use of technology in various ways was encouraged in many conference sessions this summer and quite a few have taken hold. Rock Hill School District’s Derek McQuiston led two technology sessions, “QR Codes in Action” and “Edmodo 101.” Algebra teacher at South Pointe High, Jennifer Stevenson, and her colleagues have already begun using QR codes in their classrooms, distributing class websites this fall. And Edmodo is now being explored throughout Lancaster, Union, and York County schools. Bierman, York County ESOL teacher, claims that she “did the Edmodo training at the conference, and I’m excited to be able to use some of these features with my students. I can use this site to check if students are using some of their time at home to practice school skills.” Abbigail Armstrong, assistant professor at Winthrop University, is also intending to incorporate the technology skills she picked up from the session on “Using iPod Touches to Increase Universal Design for Learning in Math and Science Lessons” to introduce her undergraduate majors to these iPod apps for their future use in the classroom.

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The various sessions on co-teaching and positive classroom management have also proved beneficial to schools throughout the Partnership Network. With Cotton Belt Elementary using the skills gained from Winthrop University’s Carolyn Grant and Kelly Costner at their session “Co-Teaching 101” and Alma Elementary working toward a co-teaching experience for their mentors and interns by using the tools from Hunter Street Elementary’s session “Team Up for Student Success,” cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and students alike hope to gain from the strategies shared. Similarly, PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is taking root throughout the Partnership, with Lewisville Elementary and The Learning Center benefiting from Winthrop University’s NetLEAD Grant Director Mark Mitchell’s session “A Good School Climate is Essential for Good Student Performance: An Overview” and Jefferson Elementary implementing the behavior plan shared by CPESI in “Positive Classroom Management Demystified.” With the goal of “Innovation, Inquiry, Impact” achieved by this summer’s conference, we look forward to another year of professional development through collaboration and partnership! Plan to join us for the Fourth Annual Partnership Conference for Educational Renewal on June 11, 2013!
A Series of Support

The First Year Experience: Jefferson Elementary Induction Teachers Tell All

In a unique situation, three former Winthrop interns have started the 2012-13 year as third grade teachers at Jefferson Elementary School. After completing internships at partner schools including McCreary-Liston Elementary, Sugar Creek Elementary, and Jefferson Elementary, they are now working side by side on the same hall and school team and with former mentor teachers as colleagues and induction mentors. Kimberly Whitestine, Kristi Ducote, and Katrina Wilkerson have enjoyed this new experience as teachers, especially building relationships with their students, developing classroom communities through activities like morning meetings, and watching their students grow with improvements in note-taking skills, development of effective studying habits, and a new love for reading. However, transitioning from student to teacher has been a big adjustment for these three educators, and having a strong foundation laid by Winthrop’s preparation program has been critical to their success. Wilkerson feels that, by Winthrop encouraging extensive lesson planning, she has been fully equipped to meet the demands of the classroom. Additionally, Ducote believes that the assessment component of the teacher education program has proved essential to meeting the needs of her students. And, although there are a few things these former interns would have liked even more of during their experience, they are pleased to see these needs addressed with the new curriculum.

According to Wilkerson, “with our internship, we had to move and start all over again. You had to learn a new community, learn a new set of kids, learn their needs, tweak things and differentiate for them, so I think it’s wonderful that they’re doing the year-long internship.” Another concern was not getting to experience a full week from start to finish. As Whitestine claims, “When you first start, you are only coming two days and a half day. I feel like at that time you don’t really get to experience how it really is. This is what you’re going to be doing the very next semester and to just throw you into it is very intimidating and scary.” With the year-long internship being implemented, teacher candidates will get to experience more time in the classroom with a “full time” schedule at the beginning and end of the semester to address this need. Lastly, literacy is a significant focus of the new Teacher Education Unit standards and has been added to the curriculum for elementary and early childhood programs. These two areas have completely transformed their program requirements to include multiple literacy courses that have the reading and writing components addressing feedback from teachers like Whitestine, Ducote, and Wilkerson.

For these three teachers, they have had an ongoing support network after graduating, through one another and their continued relationships with mentors and university faculty. With Wilkerson and Ducote’s present mentor, La Toya Lowry, coming to their classrooms to check on them regularly and always available to help answer questions and solve problems, Ducote describes her as “having our best interest at heart and a really great role model for my first exposure to real teaching.” Wilkerson also keeps communication lines open with her former supervisor, Dr. Linda Pickett, who stops by to talk, bounce around ideas, and “make sure that my transition has been somewhat seamless.” Ducote’s supervisor, Dr. Debi Mink, even stopped by recently to watch her teach and keeps an open and personable line of communication with her former intern via text messaging. And these teachers can use all the support they can get, with the multitude of surprises that come with being new teachers. One unanticipated hurdle was the constant time crunch. According to Whitestine, “we don’t have a lot of time throughout the day to get a lot of things done; even our planning period is really busy just to get everything throughout the day completed.” Agreeing with her colleague, Wilkerson has struggled with learning time management, “being able to fill in those extra little things that you weren’t aware going to be a problem.” For Ducote, the biggest surprise has been the amount of paperwork: endless printing, copying, stuffing of folders, sending materials home—and how much time it all took.

Adjusting to all the new ropes, these third grade teachers have accumulated some wisdom to pass down the line. Wilkerson offers three major pieces of advice to teacher candidates. 1) “I would say to make the most of your internships - do everything that you can possibly do and really utilize the resources that are available to you. If there’s somebody who’s willing to sit down with you, take advantage of that because you’re going to need it once you’re in a classroom. So really step out on that limb and ask, because if you don’t ask, people aren’t going to know that you’re interested or that you may not know.” 2) “Hoard everything you can get your hands on! Regardless of where you end up, you can adapt it to fit your class if it’s part of your standards. So really just hang on to your lesson plans that you’re writing as an intern and whatever books you’re using. Get some big totes and just keep stuffing them until you feel like you have a good foundation, because I think that’s been another challenge for us is that we’re basically starting with nothing. We had to create everything. Having that stuff already there to pull from is a blessing.” And, 3) “Stay in touch with your mentors. Utilize that resource. I can remember getting ready to do my IWS. I was doing English, and I was doing inferencing. I was like “Guys, I need stuff. Just give me ideas.” They were really open to bouncing things off of me that would get me to think. They never gave you anything. They would always ask you something that would make you think about it so that you would have to come up with it on your own. So, make sure you build that type of relationship where you can call them if you ever needed anything else.” And, if you’re anything like these ladies, you will get off to a great start!
Partners in Action
Winthrop Students Work with Alma & Clinton Elementary Schools

This fall, Winthrop University students have initiated some new collaborative projects with two schools in the Partnership Network: Alma Elementary and Clinton Elementary. As part of the freshman course, ACAD 101: Principles of the Learning Academy, all first-year Winthrop students participate in “The Reading Tent Project,” a project aimed at improving childhood literacy by visiting local elementary schools and reading and donating books to the children. After collecting books and fundraising to rent two vans, an ACAD class of 20 students visited Clinton Elementary on Friday, October 19th to spend a couple of hours with students in the after school program. The Winthrop freshmen donated the books they had gathered, read one-on-one with the elementary students, and led groups in playing fun literacy games of their own creation (including relay races, scavenger hunts, and word bingo). They also spent time answering questions about college the kids had prepared, hoping to inspire the children to aspire to be a college student themselves one day by promoting Clinton Elementary’s theme “Get Your Game On.”

In a similar initiative at Clinton Elementary, Winthrop’s student group SIFE, Students in Free Enterprise, began a Junior Achievement program for three of the fifth grade classes. Beginning on Friday, October 26th, eight SIFE students commenced the first of five planned sessions as part of a financial literacy program, teaching kids how to budget and save for their future. At the completion of the program, they hope to plan a pizza party with the students and their families, with the goal of garnering the support needed to continue and expand the program.

Winthrop University - School Partnership Writing Contest Coming in Spring 2013!

We would like to feature original writings by the students in our Partnership Network and will be conducting a spring writing contest with three winners to be published in an upcoming edition of our Partnership newsletter!

Here’s what you can do:

1. Hold a contest at your school where students have the opportunity to write original pieces. Each school may choose its own essay topics and contest guidelines. However, while there is no minimum for submission lengths, we ask that the longer submissions not exceed 250 words.

2. Using your school’s selection criteria, choose three winners to move forward to the partnership-wide competition. Each school may submit a maximum of three pieces by mailing or e-mailing the selected works to the Partnership address provided below by APRIL 15, 2013. Please make sure to include school name, student name, and grade level for each submission!

3. Once all submissions have been made, a winner will be selected from elementary, middle, and high school levels. In an upcoming edition, these three winners will have their work published for all of our Partnership Network to read and see what talent we have in our schools!

Contact for more information:

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803-323-3083

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Mail entries to:

NetSCOPE
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Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733

E-mail entries to:
haysf@winthrop.edu

Students engaged in writing with Winthrop interns at India Hook Elementary School.
Calendar of Events

January
Jan. 1: New Year, WU Offices Closed
Jan. 7: First Day of Classes, WU Spring 2013
Jan. 21: MLK, Jr. Day, WU Offices Closed
Jan. 24: Partnership Advisory Council Meeting
Jan. 29-31: Foundation in Mentoring Training

February
Feb. 1: Network Management Team Meeting
Feb. 4: Partner School Applications Due (tentative)

March
Mar. 7: Partnership Advisory Council Meeting
Mar. 15: Spring Break, WU Offices Closed
Mar. 18: Clinical Coach Nominations Due
Mar. 22: Network Management Team Meeting
Mar. 22: Mentor Teacher Award Nominations Due
Mar. 23: Poverty Workshop

April
Apr. 1-5: School Districts Spring Break
Apr. 11: Mentor Teacher Symposium Dinner
Apr. 15: Partnership Writing Contest Deadline
Apr. 17-18: Year Long Internship Meet & Greets
Apr. 22-23: Year Long Internship Meet & Greets
Apr. 22: Last Day of Classes, WU Spring 2013
Apr. 25: Partnership Advisory Council Meeting

For location & participant information, visit:
www.winthrop.edu/netscope/Upcoming_dates.htm

Professional Learning Opportunities

Winthrop University’s NetSCOPE grant established the Partnership Network to promote collaborative professional learning hosted by university and school faculty. The learning opportunities are open to all educators in the nine partner districts as well as university faculty and staff. Schools do not have to be a Professional Development School or Partner School to participate.

Please visit the PLO website, www.winthrop.edu/netscope/professional_learning.htm, to view professional development offerings, explore possible opportunities schools might consider hosting, and find directions for submitting requests for specific professional learning topics.

“This time like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.”
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson