

Delta State University College of Education

Project 21: DELTA Project Summary for 2008-09

The DELTA Project for 2008-2009, funded as part of the Delta Health Initiative of the Delta Health Alliance, continued to focus on developing and enhancing leaders and teachers for achievement of healthy, high achieving schools in the Mississippi Delta area. The Leadership Development program component was composed of the Leadership Study program which includes both initial and advanced programs to prepare leaders for schools, and the Superintendent's Academy and Delta Leadership Institute which were designed to provide continuing professional development for practicing administrators and leadership teams in Delta area schools. The Teacher Education/Shortage program included the Teacher Scholarship and Dean's Scholars program and the Literacy Enhancement Clinic which focused on pre-service teacher education and the Teacher Retention Initiative which provided continuing professional development for beginning teachers (graduates from Delta State and Mississippi Valley State) who were employed in Delta area schools. The following information provides an overview of major activities and accomplishments of the DELTA project which was implemented with funds awarded through Delta Health Initiative.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Leadership Study Program

- Dr. Tom Taylor joined the Leadership program faculty in July, 2008 and Dr. Kathleen Jenkins, Dr. Dan McFall and Dr. Lynn Varner continued as program faculty supported by DHI funds.
- Thirteen (13) members of Cohort 10 completed the 14-month fulltime leadership program in July 2008.
- Nine (9) members of Cohort 11 accepted for the 14 month program began in June, 2008 and progressed through courses and internships to completion of the program in July, 2009
- Program faculty conducted 28 regional and district meetings which included the 34 DAAIS member districts to recruit students for the initial and advanced programs. Advanced program applications increased by 9% and average course enrollment increased from 14 to 23 students.
- Six newly designed Educational Specialist courses began in August, 2008 and old courses were retired
- Curriculum development/revision included incorporating content and projects related to the eight components of healthy schools into MEd. and EdS courses
- Various resources, including books, DVDs, and hand-held devices with software designed to be used in teacher observations, were purchased for use in leadership programs
- 2 faculty attended the Mississippi Association of School Administrators and collaborated with school district personnel
- 17 training activities were provided for faculty and/or students during the year including topics such as implementing components of healthy schools, safe/orderly schools, APA style, writing for publication, using Blackboard and other technology

- 9 cohort members and 2 faculty attended the ASCD conference in Orlando, FL and visited the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi Legislature as field experiences related to the program curriculum
- 21 persons applied and 15 were selected as members of Cohort 12 that began the program in June, 2009; 9 enrolled as part of the newly developed EdS track while 6 enrolled in the MEd.track . All 15 are receiving tuition scholarships and 8 are receiving living /sabbatical leave stipends with DHI funds
- Continuous collaboration existed between program faculty and the 34 district members of DAAIS which includes schools in the 18 counties served by DHA
- Cohort members continue to receive above average ratings from internship supervisors and both initial and advanced program graduates receive very positive ratings from employers, both of which are indicators of program quality and success

Superintendent's Academy

- 14 district level administrators participated in the 5-day academy sessions in July, 2009 and in 2 follow-up sessions on Saturdays in August and February. Additionally, 9 Cohort 11 members participated in the 5-day sessions in July and 3 Leadership Faculty served as presenters of sessions
- One Saturday session was devoted to development of School Health Councils, local school wellness plans and implementing the eight components of healthy schools
- Materials, supplies and coordination of the 8 activities were provided.
- 9 of the 14 district personnel participated in the field experience to the ASCD conference in March, 2009
- Participant ratings of the training sessions were very positive indicating the information was timely and beneficial to participants

Leadership Institute

- The Delta School Health Institute was held on May 27, 28, and 29, 2009 with 37 persons participating; participants included school administrators, nurses, counselors, food service directors and others constituting school teams
- Five College of Education faculty participated in the three day training for professional development and as training to provide future sessions for area schools
- Staff of the Office of Healthy Schools in the Mississippi Department of Education conducted the three days of training. Topics included: school health councils, wellness policies, funding and marketing school health programs, child nutrition, mental health programs, physical and health education programs, staff wellness and family/community partners in school health.
- Participants ratings for the Institute were extremely high and comments indicated the training was extremely beneficial for school teams in implementing comprehensive school health programs

TEACHER SHORTAGE PROGRAM

Teacher Scholarship Program

- Supported full-time, 12-month scholarship coordinator who also directed Dean's Scholar program
- 14 scholarships were awarded to students in the Master of Arts in Teaching program
- 51 semesters scholarships were awarded to 26 students in the undergraduate teacher education program
- 7 undergraduate teacher education students were selected as Dean's Scholars and participated in biweekly meetings, assigned readings and discussions with faculty mentors, and design of a research project related to health and wellness to be conducted in local schools
- 21 meetings were held with Dean's scholars
- Five (5) faculty served as mentors for Dean's Scholars
- Two faculty and 7 Dean's Scholars attended ASCD conference in Los Angeles as an educational field experience in the program
- Dean's Scholars made presentations to Cleveland School District administrators about the proposed research project (Student use of exercise balls in classrooms to promote posture and core strength)
- Dean's Scholars presented proposal to teachers at 6 elementary schools in April, 2009; project will be implemented during the 2009-2010 project year
- Teacher Scholarship Coordinator made recruitment visits in Delta area and to the 2x2 year program operated by Delta State University and Hinds Community College
- Nine (9) scholarship recipients graduated during 2007-08 year and were employed as teachers in Delta Area schools
- Four (4) scholarship recipients graduated during 2008-2009 year; 1 is employed in Delta school, 1 is enrolled in Master's program, and two will have employment verified in September.

Literacy Enhancement Clinic

- The Literacy Enhancement Clinic provides a unique opportunity for teacher education students to gain experience in teaching literacy skills using nutrition and health related text materials while providing tutorial services for Delta area K-12 students.
- 24 K-10 students received clinic services during fall and spring semesters; 21 of the 24 completed 25 weeks of instruction
- 22 K-10 students participated in summer sessions 2 hours per day, 3 days a week in June, 2009.
- Clinic staff included
 - Dr. Corlis Snow, Literacy Clinic Coordinator
 - Dr. Kathy Davis, Nutrition Coordinator
 - 1 literacy coach (graduate student) and 1 research assistant (graduate student)
 - 12 literacy tutors (undergraduate & graduate level students)
 - 5 nutrition tutors
- 3 days of training were provided by consultants for 12 literacy tutors in September, 2008

- 4 faculty/clinic staff attended the International Reading Conference in February, 2009 for continuing professional development
- 1 day of training was provided by a consultant for 5 area teachers and 22 DSU students and faculty in early June, 2009
- Collaboration with the Cleveland School District was on-going for recruitment of students and progress monitoring and an open house for district teachers and parents of students served by the clinic was held
- Results of pre-post assessments indicated that significant gains in letter identification, word attack, vocabulary and passage comprehension were made by the 21 students who received 25 weeks of services; additionally, a nutrition pilot study of 12 students indicated that 10 of the 12 demonstrated significant increases in making healthy food choices over the course of the year

Teacher Retention Initiative

- The Teacher Retention Activities focused on providing field experiences to exemplary schools for senior level teacher education majors and continuing professional development and support for beginning teachers who were graduates of Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University
- Collaboration for activities involved Delta State, MVSU, and Blue Mountain College and the Cleveland, New Albany, Grenada and Starkville school districts
- 4 training sessions were held during the year and 119 beginning teachers participated: topics identified by a needs assessment included: Health School components, nutrition and modeling a healthy lifestyle, differentiated instruction, and classroom management
- 113 students participated in 5 field experiences involving the collaborating partners designed to include observation of aspects of school health and staff wellness programs
- Participants rated the trainings and field experiences as very helpful and noted the relationship of health and academic achievement and the teacher's role in modeling proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle

Administrative Support

This component of the DELTA project provides overall support to all program components across the College of Education. Significant activities during the current year included:

- Support for the Center for Teaching and Learning (technology lab/classroom equipment/faculty services) available to all students in the COE as well as faculty to individual or class use
- Project management services contracted through DAAIS
- Travel and/or training for COE faculty related to NCATE and the COE's assessment program required for continuing education
- Outreach for COE recruitment of faculty and students
- Advertisement/marketing activities to promote COE programs
- Contract with external evaluator to conduct summative evaluation activities and provide written report at the end of the project year