

**Francis Marion University**  
**Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty**  
**Grant Year 2**  
**2005-2006**

Although our second fiscal year does not officially begin until August, 2005, The Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty is proud to announce some of the activities planned for this second funding year that are directly related to the five key goals set forth in the Center grant. Each of the seven Partner Districts (Florence One, Florence Two, Darlington, Dillon Two, Marion One, Marion Two, and Marion Seven) have identified a district-level Center of Excellence Liaison, who will serve as the key contact with the COE on matters of general program administration, and a master teacher that will serve in partnership with the Center, serving as FMU Clinical Faculty, participating in virtually all Center activities, including service upon advisory boards, evaluation teams, web-site monitoring teams and in the day-to-day support and operations of Center of Excellence activities.

**Goal 1: UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION**

Our work will continue in the area of Undergraduate Teacher Education, revising courses to infuse fifteen modules of study in courses in both the College of Liberal Arts and the School of Education. These instructional units have been carefully designed to better prepare our undergraduates for a career of teaching in schools that serve high numbers of children who are at risk because they live in homes of high poverty. Regional school districts will benefit because FMU teacher candidates that will exit our program more skilled and better prepared for available instructional positions. The first pilot of these modules will begin in Fall 2005, and will continue each semester. On-going research studies are planned that will enable us to track our students and to monitor the success of these strategies.

**Goal 2: IN-SERVICE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**

Grant Year Two will signal a new focus upon In-Service Teacher Development. The Center of Excellence Colloquium Series initiated in Year One will continue, and speakers will soon be announced for the 2005-2006 school year.

Our informational and interactive website at [www.fmucenterofexcellence.org](http://www.fmucenterofexcellence.org) is expected to be active and available on August 5, 2005. Partner District teachers will have the opportunity to access Center of Excellence information and to participate in interactive, locally-driven web discussions that will focus upon the unique issues that are faced by teachers in rural South Carolina as they are challenged to meet the needs of children and families of poverty.

Research has proven that all children are more successful in school when their families and their communities are supportive of and involved in the work of the schools. The Center of Excellence will begin a partnership with the National Network of Partnership Schools of Johns Hopkins University beginning in Fall 2005. This collaborative project will enable COE Partner School Districts to join the National Network and to be trained in their research-driven strategies. Although the work of the National Network has been continuing for more than 10 years, it is based upon a school improvement council model and will meet requirements set forth by No Child Left Behind legislation. Partner Districts that choose to participate will have access to services of the National Network

through the FMU COE. Formal announcements of these activities will be released by mid-August.

The FMU Center of Excellence will hold two major activities in which Partner District teacher representatives will have the opportunity to participate. Partner Districts will determine how participating teachers will be selected for these activities. Each is formally announced under separate, attached cover.

The Action Research activity, led by Dr. Lorin Anderson, a nationally-recognized educational researcher and scholar, will enable two to three teachers from each Partner District to learn about and then to implement an individually-designed action research study in their classrooms. In this outstanding opportunity to work closely with Dr. Anderson, participants will focus their research upon the use of specific classroom management strategies to more successfully meet the needs of children of poverty that struggle in authoritarian and classroom management designs.

Partner Districts also will have the opportunity to nominate teachers from grades 1-8 to participate in a year-long Social Studies Curriculum Development project. Again led by Dr. Lorin Anderson, a student of Dr. Benjamin Bloom and the lead author in the revision of Bloom's Taxonomy, upon which the newly released Social Studies standards are based, this group of teachers will develop complete, self-contained instructional units for each grade level. Participating teachers will have the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Anderson on this project, and, in addition to the opportunities to enhance their individual professional development, they will receive an honorarium for their contribution to the development of these publications.

### **Goal 3: SCHOOL-PARENT-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

As the Center of Excellence moves into its second year, cultivation of linkages between and among potential partners will become a focus. As described above, the Center will partner with the National Network of Partnership Schools of Johns Hopkins University to assist Partner Districts in more effectively developing strong and position connections between schools, parents, and community partners.

Partner Districts will receive the Center of Excellence's first publication of our regional Health Resource Manual that outlines programs, services, and other resources that are available to support the needs of children and families that live in high poverty. These manuals will be distributed to Partner Districts, with approximately five manuals provided free of charge to each school. It is also expected that the manuals will be available to Partner District teachers on-line at our website. A brief training program (approximately 45 minutes in length) on the use of the manuals is strongly recommended, and it will be provided to each Partner District by Dr. Janis McWayne, Center of Excellence Health Resources Coordinator, at no charge. Partner Districts should contact the Center of Excellence to schedule this free training event. The manuals will be updated annually, and published bi-annually to ensure that the information remains accurate and that it reflects the changing needs of the communities for which it is designed.

Also led by Dr. Janis McWayne, community outreach activities will be initiated early in Year 2 to target community-specific persons that will be trained to survey their local areas to identify the unique problems and needs experienced by families living in poverty. The information gained from this research will be used to develop a parent-friendly version of the Health Resources Manual written from a "problem – resource"

perspective that may be easily and successfully used by families in need to identify resources and support services.

**Goal 4: MASTER’S DEGREE IN TEACHING CHILDREN OF POVERTY**

Slated to be a strong focus of Year 3, preliminary work will be initiated in the latter half of the second year of the Center of Excellence grant. Focus groups will be identified in each Partner District, in which teachers, administrators, parents, community, and State Department of Education representatives will discuss issues related to the development and delivery of a new FMU School of Education degree in Teacher Children of Poverty. A timeline for program development will be finalized at the beginning of Year 3, with anticipated program delivery expected to begin Year 5.

**Goal 5: PREMIER RESOURCE**

The Center of Excellence’s 5<sup>th</sup> goal is intimately related to the success of the previous four. Preliminary work for key activities planned under this goal is underway. The undergraduate education and in-service teacher development activities will provide initial research data that will be the source of extended publishing and professional presentations within the state and region. The Colloquium Series will continue to bring nationally-recognized researchers and speakers to the region and the collaboration with the National Network and other recognized programs will further contribute to the reputation of the Center. Community outreach through the health resources component, beginning with the initial publication of the resource manual will further facilitate community awareness.

Over the course of the next four years, these kinds of activities will ensure that the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty at Francis Marion University is known as the premier resource for research, support and services for teachers, schools and agencies that serve children and families that experience the challenges of living without necessary financial, health, social or support resources.