Partnerships in Education

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) and the Michael D. Eisner College of Education continue to forge new partnerships with our surrounding public school districts. By all accounts the on-going commitment of the CSUN faculty to meet the needs of our partnership schools is greatly appreciated by both the faculty and staff at the schools. However, as the number of partnerships grow, so too must the number of participating CSUN faculty in order to meet the myriad needs. Moreover, because each school is unique in its needs, working with schools presents excellent opportunities for faculty to conduct field-based research in a variety of professional development target areas. Barbara Charness, School Partnership Liaison for the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, looks forward to working with CSUN faculty university wide. It is exciting to see this work strengthen CSUN’s reputation as a relevant university that provides cutting-edge knowledge to our region’s schools, as well as assists them in translating this knowledge into classroom practice.

New Chair for CSUN’s Elementary Education Department

Dr. Marilyn Joshua Williams became the Department of Elementary Education (EED) chairperson at the start of this spring semester. Having earned her BA from UCLA and her MA and PhD from the Claremont Graduate University, she teaches credential and graduate-level courses in reading/language arts.

In a recent interview with Marilyn, she emphasized her support for our Partnership Projects, and she is eager to assist in the development of strong relationships between the EED faculty and the region’s elementary schools. Marilyn states:

“Our Elementary Education faculty have expertise in a range of professional development areas that schools are seeking. Our faculty are very capable of providing high-quality workshops for schools.”

Moreover, Marilyn has learned from our supervising teachers that they would value faculty development on the supervisory process. This includes methods of collecting data and providing useful feedback to student teachers. She believes that we need a CSUN Elementary Education model of supervision that is understood and applied consistently.

We ended our meeting with a discussion of the benefits to faculty who provide professional development in schools. These include:

- Keeping current with school policies, procedures, and practices.
- Gaining school-based examples to share with CSUN students.
- Experimenting with new ideas in schools, leading to published articles.
- Receiving stipends from school districts as extrinsic rewards.
- Seeing positive changes in teaching and learning as intrinsic rewards.

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New Partnerships in Education

Mary Melvin is Principal of the new Porter Ranch Community School, located at 12450 Mason Avenue in Porter Ranch. Mary is an experienced Principal, formerly Principal at Lanai Road Elementary School and Assistant Principal at Woodland Hills Elementary School. Porter Ranch Community School is a span school. A span school is one that maintains an equal number of students in each grade level. The school will open in fall 2012, with grades K-7 the first year. Thereafter, it will be a K-8 school. The school will have a dual language program in Korean, where their goal is for all students to become fluent in both English and Korean.

The focus of the school is Global Studies; hence, they would like to bring in other languages in addition to Korean. However, Principal Melvin said that this would depend upon funding. Principal Melvin stated that the immediate challenges would be to have the school ready to open in the fall and that the school soon becomes an integral part of the community.

When asked about her expectations from CSUN as a partnership school, Mrs. Melvin responded by saying:

“The job of the Principal has changed; we no longer just prepare students for the next grade. We are now insuring their readiness for college and beyond.”

Mrs. Melvin looks to our partnership to bring focused professional development to Porter Ranch Community School and hopes that students will have opportunities for enrichment on her campus as well as at CSUN. In addition, she would like CSUN to provide programs in service-related areas to the parents of her students, such as computer skills, or classes that would help parents to support their child’s growth and academic success.

Two important aspects of the partnership will be to help them facilitate a Science Lab for elementary students at the span school, and Mrs. Melvin clearly stated that she would be willing to reciprocate in the partnership by opening her school to research opportunities for CSUN faculty. An idea that she had is to conduct a longitudinal study of the K-8 multi-cultural, multi-generational, and first generation families at the school.

CSUN is excited to welcome Principal Melvin and the Porter Ranch Community School to our partnership community.

CSUN Literacy Students Read to Children at Korenstein Elementary School

On Friday, March 2, students from CSUN’s Literacy Classes had the opportunity to read to elementary school students at the Julie Korenstein Elementary School. Korenstein Elementary is one of CSUN’s Partnership schools. Participating CSUN students included Doreen Austad, Selene Hernandez, Jennifer Ruffin, Carla Schaefer, and Anna Taschyan. A special thank you goes to professors Lynn Gordon and Nancy Prosenjak for encouraging their students to participate in Read Across America Day at Korenstein.
This experience was rewarding for our CSUN students as their comments illustrate:

"I really enjoyed reading to the students. I wish I had the opportunity on a regular basis. One of the teachers asked me if I would be interested in volunteering as a reading specialist, and I said YES!"

~ Carla Schaefer

"I wanted to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Read Across America Program. I really enjoyed reading my favorite Dr. Seuss book to the students, and they were excited to have us as volunteers in their classroom. Today was another great example of why I want to become a teacher. The excitement in the students’ eyes was the best reward."

~ Anna Taschyan

"Volunteering at Julie Korenstein Elementary School for Read Across America was a wonderful experience. I read the book Green Eggs and Ham to four second-grade classrooms. The students were well behaved and enthusiastic. As I was reading, the students were predicting what would come next and filling in the end of the sentences. I hope to have the time to participate in the event next year!"

~ Doreen Austad

"I wasn’t expecting the reaction that I received from the kids, and it was really so much fun. I’m glad that I participated, and I appreciate the opportunity! Thank you so much."

~ Jennifer Ruffin

Message from the Dean

Michael E. Spagna
Dean, College of Education, CSUN

One of our core values in the Michael D. Eisner College of Education is to develop collaborative partnerships with P-12 colleagues to ultimately fulfill our mission of serving the educational needs of our community. Many of you already participate in significant reciprocal partnerships, including work with Northridge Academy High School, Vaughn Next Century Learning Center, the CHIME Institute and affiliated schools and programs, to name a few. As we explore new and exciting future possibilities, I encourage all interested faculty to contact Barbara Charness at, Barbara.charness.56@csun.edu, for information on how you can share your expertise in on-going and future partnership activities.