

**CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN NORTH CAROLINA:  
Examples of Initiatives at the University of North Carolina**

**A Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee  
January 2001**

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***PART I:***

***The University of North Carolina Deans' Council on Teacher Education has implemented a "diversity initiative" whereby each College/School/Department of Education will establish goals and assessment measures that focus on closing the achievement gap. The mission statement adopted by the Deans' Council is as follows:***

**Closing the Achievement Gap in North Carolina:  
The Deans' Council's Initiative**

The University of North Carolina Deans' Council on Teacher Education reaffirms its commitment to high achievement for all students and its professional responsibility to prepare teachers, administrators, and other school personnel with the knowledge, skill, and dispositions to work toward the elimination of the correlation among achievement, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, in North Carolina's schools. This commitment requires the members of the Council to work with one another, their faculties, their cooperating schools, and other state and national organizations, who are committed to the proposition that all children can learn and achieve at high levels.

To achieve our goal of "*Closing the Achievement Gap*" the Council pledges its commitment to the following actions:

1. Design and implement a program of professional development for the members of the Council to provide the necessary knowledge base on the relationship among school culture, pedagogy, cultural diversity, and student achievement.
2. Assess the alignment of the learning outcomes in our various curricula with the diversity standards from DPI, INTASC, CACREP, ISLEC, and NCATE and develop action plans to improve the alignment where necessary.
3. Utilize the collective resources of the Council, our university faculty, other relevant organizations, and experts in assessment and cultural diversity to strengthen the candidate assessments by which we evaluate the impact of our programs on students.

4. Work collaboratively to provide online discussion, virtual meetings, and regional seminars for faculty, new teachers, veteran teachers, administrators, and counselors led by researchers and practitioners who have demonstrated successes in closing the achievement gap and related cultural diversity issues.
5. Seek the funding required to implement the recommendations specifically related to diversity included in the 1994 Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee of the General Assembly of North Carolina, titled, *Preparing Teachers for Today and Tomorrow*.
6. Develop strategies at our various institutions that work toward the infusion of content and pedagogy that is drawn from various cultures (such as African, Asian, Latin American/Hispanic, and Native American) into Teacher Education.
7. Monitor and evaluate campus and collective actions for this initiative annually.

***PART II:***

***Through the University-School Teacher Education Partnerships, in which schools of education work collaboratively with local public schools to better prepare and support teachers, initiatives have been developed in several categories:***

- (1) Conducting and disseminating research (testing of interventions/strategies)
- (2) Preparing teachers, administrators, and other educators to respond to diverse learner needs
- (3) Direct engagement with high-need schools
- (4) Preparing more teachers from underrepresented groups
- (5) Professional development, including public school teachers and administrators, and IHEE faculty
- (6) Community involvement/engagement

*Following are examples of the types of diversity initiatives already underway at various colleges/schools/departments of education in the University of North Carolina.*

**(1) Conducting and disseminating research (testing of interventions/strategies)**

Appalachian State University, through the research interests of one of its faculty members, has carried on in-school research for several years dealing with the factors that

cause special education students to be at-risk of dropping out at the high school level. As a result of this research, schools who have adopted the recommended strategies which have emerged from this project have been able to reduce their drop-out rates among special education students almost 85 percent.

Four faculty in the School of Education at East Carolina University have designed a comprehensive, school-based research project to study a variety of factors that appear to be influencing the achievement gap. This project has been submitted to the Spencer Foundation for funding; but the first phase of the project is underway, supported by the School of Education. The researchers are conducting interviews with principals and teachers in schools that evidence wide achievement gaps.

At North Pitt High School, a high minority school, two ECU faculty liaisons assigned to this Professional Development School are orchestrating several action research projects to study the impact of particular instructional interventions on the achievement of low income, minority high school students. Presently, a writing project is the focus of the action research.

The Fayetteville State University School of Education Special Education faculty in collaboration with the Principals' Executive Program (PEP) conducted a workshop for inservice and preservice administrators in December. The purpose of the workshop was to disseminate research information on specific issues related to special needs students including federal and state laws related to disabilities, assessment regulations, discipline strategies, and collaborative decision-making. The special education faculty presented research findings related to teaching at risk and special needs students. Several sessions focused on prevention, early intervention, and remediation strategies for improving learning for special needs and at risk students. Doctoral and MSA students participated in research initiatives related to teaching at risk students. Students in Reading 320 Teaching Reading in content areas participated in the Undergraduate Research Conference in November in Winston Salem and disseminated research on math achievement and authentic motivation, teachers' perception of school violence and strategies to improve reading achievement in middle and secondary schools.

The research focus of Dr. Fran Jackson, Professor in the School of Education at North Carolina Central University, is on the impact of culture on the teaching/learning process, and the development and assessment of culturally responsive instructional strategies. She has worked with classroom teachers and colleagues to develop curricular units that infuse a multicultural and global perspective. Jackson's travels and experiences have informed her research, as co-director of two Fulbright-Hays study-abroad programs in the Caribbean, as director of a travel abroad program to several West African countries and varied Western European countries and as an exchange university representative in Australia. She has published in several educational journals including *The High School Journal*, *The Journal of Reading*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Educational Digest*, *Learning Magazine*, *Multicultural Perspective and Reading*, *Research and Instruction*. She currently serves as associate editor of textbooks with *Multicultural Perspectives*, the official journal of the National Association of Multicultural Education.

Jackson has consulted with a number of school districts nationally and internationally. The twofold goals of the workshop are to increase the teacher's awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of cultural diversity issues in the educational process and to enhance the teacher's preparedness to teach culturally diverse student populations. Specifically, the workshop is designed to provide attendees with guided opportunities to: analyze different approaches to implementing a multicultural educational program, examine the various "isms" and their impact on student achievement, examine personal perceptions regarding racism, sexism and classism, develop strategies that reflect an understanding of, appreciation for and sensitivity to the cultural differences that exist in the classroom. Jackson indicates that her strongest focus is finding ways and means to best educate students for whom the system has not adequately served.

Other faculty members at North Carolina Central University, including Dr. Ellen Bacon, Dr. Pamela George and Dr. Sheila Bridges, have found very effective ways to respond to the call for university faculty to combine their research, service and teaching agendas in support of the state and nation wide mandate to assist in eliminating the achievement gap.

In a joint effort among the Departments of Mathematics and Science Education, Counselor Education, and Computer Science, the Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Education at NC State University has initiated a three-year NSF-funded program *Girls on Track* which focuses on the underrepresentation of females in careers in mathematics, science, engineering and technology; additionally this population of students is 30% African-American and 10% Asian. Working with girls in middle grades who take Algebra 1, the Co-Principal Investigators are investigating factors that affect girls' decisions to take advanced mathematics and computer science through high school and into college. Preliminary findings show a strong correlation between proportional thinking and scores on End-of-Grade (.71) and End-of-Course (.81) tests. Parent attitudes and expectations were examined and tentative findings suggests the African American and Asian parents hold higher academic expectations for their daughters than white parents; mores study is need to understand this factor. The three-year, multi-institutional intervention program will eventually involve 200 middle-schools girls, 50 in-service Algebra teachers, 16 guidance counselors, and 30 pre-service teachers.

Partners in Learning, a UNC Asheville tutoring program, has four equally important goals. These include: 1) to improve the literacy skills of a middle school population identified as reading below grade level; 2) to improve teacher effectiveness through training, enhancing clinical teacher experiences through tutoring and preparing teachers for using effective strategies with students who are reluctant readers and writers; to prepare teachers who can successfully meet the demands of diverse school populations and improve the achievement for all students; and 4) to recruit minority students to pursue post-secondary education and become future teachers. Trained tutors are placed in three middle schools, one urban and two rural. Tutors are selected from Teacher Education students, the African-American Colloquium, Black student organizations, and students majoring in Spanish.

From 1990-1999, end of grade reading test results and sub-tests of Woodcock Johnson indicate that 55% of students tutored at Asheville Middle School have moved from reading below grade level to reading at grade level. Since 1999, the tutoring program has become embedded in the teacher licensure and middle schools' curriculum.

Faculty at UNCA have been active in dissemination of research through participation in various conferences such as the Teacher Education Forum; Partnership for Excellence in Education: Research, Policy, and Practice-Partners for the Third Millennium; Closing the Achievement Gap: Improving Minority and At-Risk Student Achievement Conference; and the Education Trust 2000 National Conference.

UNC-Chapel Hill faculty are participating in a nationwide project, The Minority School Action Network, to address the achievement of minority students in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. Faculty from the School of Education serve on the district's project committee and are taking part in a national research study addressing the achievement gap in mathematics and science.

In studying schools and school reform, UNC-Chapel Hill conducted an evaluation of all 86 charter schools in North Carolina and provided 90 days of work through site visits and evaluative feedback to 15 charter schools. This evaluation of the NC charter schools will have an explicit emphasis on achievement and differences in achievement for different students.

Faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill have launched a collaborative research agenda to address the achievement gap. At a retreat in August 2000, the achievement gap and other equity issues emerged as a research theme to be addressed. Interested faculty held an Equity Forum, where faculty identified research presently underway concerning equity issues and began collaborative research endeavors to address the achievement gap.

Literacy Studies faculty at UNC-CH recently designed lesson formats and participated in educating volunteer tutors for an America Reads program. Tutors work with students in grades kindergarten through third who are reading below grade level. A faculty member also studied: a) the children's outcomes in reading as a result of the program and b) tutors' learning about teaching reading. These studies are now being disseminated nationally (through an international journal, *Reading Research Quarterly*, and a chapter in a forthcoming book) to provide others with examples of successful lessons in assisting underachieving readers.

UNC-CH faculty initiated and continue to direct the "Leadership for Social Justice" project, a nationwide leadership project to create ways to encourage school administrators, professors, and administrator licensure boards to address the achievement gap and other equity issues.

Through a Spencer Foundation grant, faculty at UNC-CH are conducting a study entitled, "Marketing of the South and the Education of African Americans," seeking an economic and historical explanation for the achievement gap.

The SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE), founded at the UNCG School of Education in 1990, has been awarded a \$36 million, five-year federal grant to study the achievement gap. During this five-year cycle, SERVE will utilize research and analysis on comprehensive school reform, class size reduction, early childhood education, literacy, charter schools and strategies to improve teacher quality to design models for transforming low-performing schools into high-performing learning communities.

The Center for Educational Research and Evaluation at UNC Greensboro has been involved in a three-year evaluation of the Guilford County Schools Paideia program that involves linking the Paideia process to student achievement.

Working in collaboration with Dr. Charles Thompson, Director, NC Education Research Council, School of Education personnel actively participated in drafting pre-proposal documents to the Spencer Foundation as part of an effort to secure funds to support research and intervention initiatives designed to close the achievement gap between Black and White middle grades students. (UNC Greensboro)

UNC Pembroke faculty demonstrate their belief that action research can contribute very positively to improved educational practices and student learning. The action research methodology involves an iterative approach embracing problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection. Action research therefore, allows teachers to improve their practice by empowering the teacher as a catalyst for change within the school. Using University-School Partnership funds, UNCP awarded eight competitive mini-grants to public school teachers designed to specifically address achievement gap needs in their schools. The research topics include: improving and extending grade level skills in language arts and mathematics at the elementary level, strengthening "instruction-intensive" learning classrooms, increasing parental involvement in the classroom, improving reading skills at the middle school level, and improving transitional services for high school students with disabilities. Teachers from Bladen, Cumberland, Hoke, Scotland, Columbus, and the Public Schools of Robeson County are participating in this project.

A comprehensive research study initiated by a faculty member in the Watson School of Education at UNC Wilmington provided information about the work cultures in schools engaged in the Professional Development System partnership. Over 1,300 teachers responded to a detailed questionnaire ascertaining their perceptions of the work culture in over 42 partnership schools, and the results were analyzed and reported back to the individual schools. This preliminary research continues to spawn additional research by faculty and graduate students.

A major research initiative was undertaken by faculty in the UNCW Watson School of Education working on a grant from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. Faculty conducted two-day evaluation visits to twenty North Carolina Comprehensive School Reform sites. Faculty participated in a week-long training in a Comprehensive School Reform evaluation model and have worked in teams throughout the fall and spring

semester to provide pre and post assessment data. Site visits included extensive interviews with school and district administrators; site teachers, staff, parents and students; and classroom observations. Analysis of classroom observation and teacher interview data was a important role for team members, as well as providing insights to the team leader related to overall perceptions of the school reform.

The UNCW university/school partnership is examining the academic performance of students in the classrooms where interns are placed. The Watson School believes that it is imperative that interns be held accountable for the impact they have on the learning of their students, and particularly to realize the differences in performance outcomes of diverse populations. To help accomplish this, interns are expected to complete an INTASC project that is similar to what an Initially Licensed Teacher (ILT) will complete in his/her first years of teaching. The interns complete activities from the NC Performance-Based Licensure handbook where they must meet many of the standards in this activity. Interns share this product/portfolio in small groups at the end of the semester and receive feedback from their instructor and peers. This process allows important dialogue that continues to inform their thinking about assessment of student learning and the impact of teacher instruction on that learning. A Data Collection Assignment is part of this product and is based on the intern collecting assessment data in the form of a pre- and post-assessment of student learning during the internship. Interns are asked to disaggregate these data by subgroups within the classroom setting and to reflect on how this information impacts further instruction.

## **(2) Preparing teachers, administrators, and other educators to respond to diverse learner needs**

Curriculum revision for elementary education and middle grades programs at Appalachian State University has incorporated more direct attention to cultural diversity as it affects classroom learning; practicums with a similar focus have been added to provide connection between theory and practice. Through a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the Reich College of Education has appointed a minority practitioner-in-residence. This person, an urban classroom teacher of color works directly with faculty and students in the teacher preparation program to assist them in understanding the diversity of today's classrooms, the differences in learning styles found among students, and to model effective teaching/learning strategies. At present, this position is filled by a middle grades teacher from Wake County.

Every course in the East Carolina University School of Education's teacher education curriculum has been reviewed to ascertain whether culturally responsive teaching strategies are present. As a follow-up, student portfolios are reviewed to document evidence of individualization and differentiated instruction.

The Dean of the School of Education at East Carolina University appointed a Diversity Task Force to design professional development programs around culturally responsive teaching and the achievement gap, in particular. In November, the faculty retreated for a

day and a half to develop an action plan for the School of Education which looked at recruitment of diverse students and faculty, instructional strategies, and assessment strategies.

At Elizabeth City State University, faculty, staff and administrators are required to participate in a diversity in the workplace-training workshop and a sexual harassment workshop. Students are required to take multi-cultural education classes. The Human Resource Office requires that all employees must adhere to the disclaimer on equal opportunity and affirmative action. Faculty is currently available in developing a module of self-directed, web-page curriculum on working with special needs students. Faculty is available through the speaker's bureau to speak on Diverse Learner Needs when requested.

Inservice and preservice teachers and administrators attend workshops related to issues of diversity that are sponsored by the School of Education Faculty at Fayetteville State University. Graduate students are offered a course EDUC 610 Planning and Implementing Instruction for Diverse Learners. This course addresses the origins, concepts and principles of diversity as it relates to education. It also exposes the students to a critical conscious approach to diversity across the curriculum. Discussions focus on explication of the concepts and development of strategies for conflict resolution and situational leadership, thus enabling students as a change agent to learn appropriate actions in dealing with the contradictions that shape the education system from economical social, and political perspectives. An undergraduate course EDUC 311 Foundations of Multicultural Education and Diversity is an elective designed to explore the historical development of diversity, the intercultural conflicts from philosophical cultural differences and principles guiding diversity issues in education. Another elective course EDUC 626 Applied Strategies for Safe and Peaceful Schools is designed to enhance students' knowledge related to safe schools, violence and conflict resolution. This course provides participatory, experiential and hands on training in conflict resolution, resiliency strategies and peer mediation for preservice and inservice educators. Promoting pro-social behavior and improving learning in K- 12 settings for all students emphasized . A supervised field experience in educational settings is required.

The School of Education at FSU has received a planning grant to host a town meeting of business leaders, public school teachers, administrators, and parents to design strategies for bridging the achievement gap.

The first cohort of twenty-five Edmonds Scholars at North Carolina Central University were recruited and provided scholarships during 1999-2000 and began as freshmen during 2000-2001. Our Edmonds Scholars program introduces students during their first year on campus to achievement gap issues, literature in the field and work in these communities. The Edmonds Scholars sign an agreement to teach in high need schools upon graduation. High need schools and school districts in our partnership will employ these Edmonds Scholars who will already be familiar with the school districts in which they will be employed, having completed their summer work internships in these districts and made other preservice contacts. Edmonds scholars will receive a portion of their

training with the fellows and associate fellows of the Center for the Elimination of Achievement Discrepancies. Additionally, rather than connect with the School of Education after formal admission to the School of Education, they will connect as freshmen with the Center as junior fellows will they will address from day one best practices in preventing and closing the achievement gap. This initiative will also facilitate closing the achievement gap by demonstrating that high quality high school graduates of color can be attracted to the teaching profession with the proper recruitment approaches and incentives. Of the first cohort of Edmonds Scholars, twenty-two are African-American; six are male; one is Asian and one is Caucasian.

The faculty in Math and Science Education at NC State has initiated a project to develop the skills of in-service and pre-service teachers for using innovative instructional technology for teaching science and math to diverse populations. Partially funded by the Triangle East Partners in Education, NC State's university-school partnership, a local middle school team of 24 science and math teachers has purchased a mobile computer lab with laptops, calculators, and data collecting devices. NC State faculty and pre-service teachers will work cooperatively with these teachers in learning skills in the use of instructional technology and in developing lessons for teaching concepts in math and science using these technologies. The target population is 28% minority and 23% students scoring 1 or 2 on the End-of-Grade tests. University faculty and graduate students will co-teach middle grade classes to examine the impact of technology on understanding.

Tutor and Mentor training is delivered by UNC Asheville Teacher Education faculty, Arts and Science faculty, public school teachers and administrators, and tutors and mentors. The current training modules are as follows:

Partners in Learning/AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Training for Tutors in Middle Grades Schools

The Role of a Mentor and Understanding the Young Adolescent

Teaching Writing to the Reluctant Writer

Teaching Reading to the Reluctant Reader

End of Grade Tests: How Tutoring Can Best Prepare Students

Lesson Planning and Teaching Study Skills

AVID Training

Tutoring English as a Second Language

North Carolina Serve and Learn and Young Scholars Program Training for Tutors in Elementary Schools

Understanding the Elementary Student

Teaching Reading and Writing to the K-2 Student

Tutoring in Grades 3-5

Tutoring Skills I Have Needed

Asheville to Asheville Mentoring Program Training for Mentors in High School

The Asheville to Asheville Model-Continuing Partners in Learning

Mentoring the High School Student

Senior Projects

Financial Aid and Scholarship and the College Application Process

With Chatham County schools, UNC-CH faculty are conducting a project to assist principals in operating a transition program for the three high school feeder patterns. More specifically, the K-8 and middle schools identify 25 students whose academic performance is precarious. These students are placed in the three high school transition programs where they receive intensive remedial and mentoring services. We are assisting in organizing the remedial services, monitoring the progress of the students and providing program evaluation services.

In Lee County schools, UNC-CH faculty are providing consultation in developing plans and implementing strategies to address the achievement gap through a project sponsored by the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE), a regional education laboratory for the U. S. Department of Education. This project focuses on reading data from several schools which experienced a decline in third-grade reading achievement scores.

Faculty at UNC-CH are providing training for ESL add-on licensure for 90 teachers from 13 schools in Wake County and 10 surrounding counties, enabling these teachers to serve Limited English Proficient students more effectively.

With Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools, UNC-CH faculty offer a Reading Clinic each year at an elementary or middle school, within our School of Education Reading and Language Arts teaching licensure program. Teachers in the licensure program work with children at the school who are reading below grade level.

In partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, UNC Charlotte is offering four field-based master's degrees programs (in Curriculum & Supervision; Reading; Elementary Education; and Middle/ Secondary Education) to cohorts of teachers who are committed to teaching in "EquityPlusII Schools," Charlotte-Mecklenburg's designation for high need schools at risk for achievement gap issues. A topics elective has been developed for these cohorts: "Critical Issues in High Need Schools" which involves intense engagement with the achievement gap literature and an action research project designed to identify/ implement "gap closing" strategies.

The Guilford Initiative for Training and Treatment Services (GIFTTS) Project has developed a wrap around system of care in Guilford County Schools. GIFTTS involves UNC Greensboro faculty from the birth-kindergarten, counseling education, elementary education, middle grades education, music education, and special education programs in collaboration with other university and community-based professionals to meet the needs of at risk students in elementary and middle schools.

Modules on diverse learner needs are integrated in all initial teacher education programs at UNC Greensboro. Some programs also require a stand-alone course on the needs of diverse learners. A course on diverse learners is required as part of the core of the M.Ed./advanced competencies programs.

The Department of Specialized Education Services (SES), UNC Greensboro, has developed a new undergraduate program to prepare teachers to work with students who have learning disabilities or behavioral-emotional disabilities. New developments in the field related to technologies available to young children with hearing impairments served as the impetus for SES to also develop a specialized program leading to licensure in both early childhood and deaf education that emphasizes auditory-verbal approaches.

All students in teacher preparation programs in the UNCW Watson School of Education take required courses that encompass content and competencies on diverse learner needs. Core or foundation courses also incorporate information on cultural differences. EDN 200: Teacher, School and Society, EDN 203: Psychological Foundations of Teaching, and EDN 301: Instructional Design and Evaluation include information on social and political influences on education, cultural differences, and various factors impacting achievement.

All of the M.Ed. programs at UNCW have competencies addressing cultural differences and diversity of learners. Courses such as EDN 509: Education in Multicultural Context specifically address this area, but other courses on human development, instructional design, exceptional children, and curriculum incorporate related theoretical concepts and pedagogy for students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Two courses in the Professional Education Sequence at Western Carolina University address diversity specifically, EDCI 231 Historical, Social, and Philosophical Foundations of Education and SPED 335 Teaching Exceptional Children. A new graduate course in the Professional Core was developed to address diversity, SPED 620 Education in a Diverse Society.

At Western Carolina University, efforts made to expose candidates to diverse students in P-12 schools include the requirement by the Special Education Program for all undergraduates to complete a one-semester practicum in the Cherokee Central School systems where there is a high percentage of American-Indians.

The Office of School Services at Winston-Salem State University has developed in collaboration with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools a program to assist teacher assistants become certified teachers. The needs assessment has identified a160 participants in Forsyth County. The program l emphasizes the recognition and effective use of community and cultural assets to facilitate effective instruction for all students.

The School of Education at WSSU has a small grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to support professional development on the use of moral education to create and maintain ethical classrooms. The group involves university faculty, teachers, counselors, and administrators

### **(3) Direct engagement with high-need schools**

As a result of a federal GEAR-UP grant, Appalachian State University along with the university's Upward Bound program is working with a middle school, focusing on at-risk students to provide them with academic and social skills support; the project is designed to follow a group of 70 7<sup>th</sup> graders through their schooling to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and to emphasize the career possibilities that can be attained through further education.

East Carolina University is working with several high-need schools. At Teachers Memorial School in Kinston, faculty are working on a project entitled, "Acceleration of Minority Achievement through Direct Instruction." At Pinkston Street School, a faculty member serves as a technical assistance partner for the Comprehensive School Reform plan and implementation of direct instruction programs. School of Education faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership are assisting Roanoke High School to achieve the goals outlined in the school improvement grant with the State Department of Public Instruction. Among the goals is closing the achievement gap. School of Education faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership are also assisting Perquimans County High School to achieve the goals outlined in the school improvement grant received from the State Department of Public Instruction, one of which is closing the achievement gap.

Elizabeth City State University has several on-going project with Halifax, Roanoke Rapids and Weldon City School Districts designed to address the Level 1 and 2 standards as determined by the EOG (End of Grade Testing).

The Minority Women in Science and Math Program takes public school students from 23 LEA's to the campus for a 6 weeks summer residency. The program preps them in Science and Math with hopes of leading these students into the Science and Math fields. The Saturday Follow-Up Academy is designed to provide opportunities for yearlong contact. In addition, programs such as MSEN (Math Science Educational Network), Talent Search, Upward Bound, Northeastern North Carolina Communications Skills Enhancement Program – (test taking skills), and NYSP (National Youth Sports Program) provide an opportunity for direct engagement with students from high-need schools. (Elizabeth City State University)

The following initiatives are provided by Fayetteville State University to close the achievement gap and foster a culture that promotes academic success and high educational achievement for students in high needs schools.

*Project Success* is a volunteer tutoring program designed to provide individualized or small group instruction for students at Pauline Jones Elementary School. The tutors are students who are enrolled in general and special education courses and faculty in the School of Education. The inclusion model and effective teaching strategies are used throughout the experiences.

Fayetteville State University students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate mathematics courses provide tutoring in mathematics for students from low performing schools. Students enrolled in reading classes provide instruction in reading

comprehension and study skills for students who are performing below grade level. The School of Education also sponsors a Young Writers Contest for students who are enrolled in low performing schools to improve performance on end of grade tests.

Special education faculty and students conduct workshops on University faculty serve as consultants and workshop presenters for public school teachers on issues related to classroom management, effective teaching strategies and evaluations, individualized instruction and inclusion.

*The Mathematics and Science Educational Center* coordinates in collaboration with education faculty, in-service training and continuing education for public school teachers of low performing students in the fields of technology, mathematics and science.

The School of Education sponsors a Young Writers Contest for students who are enrolled in low performing schools to improve performance on end of grade tests.

Fayetteville State University School of Education, in a collaborative effort identified as the Coastal Rural Systemic Initiative, is committed to improving the scientific and mathematical literacy and achievement of all students, providing the mathematics and science fundamentals that will permit students to participate in a technological society; empowering a greater number of students to pursue careers in mathematics, science, engineering and technology and promoting alterations in the methods by which science and mathematics are taught and assessed. The program is designed to support and sustain implementation of standards-based mathematics and science in all classrooms in a tri-state initiative.

The GEAR-UP Program at NC A&T State University seeks to assist low-income students in gaining an awareness of and beginning preparation for undergraduate education beginning in middle school; thereafter, to augment that preparation during high school by completing college preparatory courses. Further this program will provide support to students, parents, and educators in its endeavor to increase under privileged children's chances of enrolling in and succeeding in post-secondary education. The targeted high schools are in Guilford and Davidson Counties where as many as 35% of student enter the ninth grade having failed the NC Competency Test. The goals are:

- to increase the number of low-income students that attend post-secondary institution of higher education,
- to increase low-income parental involvement in the schools
- to increase student/parent knowledge about careers and their college requirements, and
- to provide support services for students such as counseling, tutoring, summer activities, and to provide financial support for student to attend college.

North Carolina Central University has continued its extensive involvement with the Algebra Project in the Weldon City Schools with three NCCU teacher education faculty serving as major trainers. Last year, fifth through ninth grade teachers were trained in the initial curriculum and receive periodic follow up support on-site throughout the year. Algebra has long been the traditional and historical gatekeeper, preventing students perceived as lacking potential and presenting low level achievement profiles from attaining high mathematics achievement.

Students and faculty from the College of Education at NC State are directly involved with students who need special assistance in understanding content concepts. Approximately 125 university students participating in ED 310 (Tutoring of Adolescents) spend 10 consecutive weeks in the schools providing tutoring services to middle grade and high school students. Many of the students had low scores on EOG/EOC tests, qualified for ESL assistance or were otherwise at risk of failing. One of the tutoring sites was an outreach center in a public housing development. Additionally a mini-grant from TEPIE enabled a local high school to develop a tutoring program for students with low scores in math and reading; the sessions were held during the students' lunch period to accommodate those who were unable to stay after school because of transportation problems. Ninety-five percent of the students who stayed with the program improved their English and/or math grades in the subsequent marking period.

UNC Asheville has several Elementary School Initiatives:

The Young Scholars Program, funded by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, is an extended learning program aimed at building the academic and personal capacity of promising elementary and middle school youth.

CREED (Citizenship, Responsibility, Empowerment, Excellence, Dignity) uses the underlying principles of praise, pride, academic preparedness, social skill building, and service, in providing at-risk rising 4th grade African American males from Asheville's City Schools with nurturing and supportive environments in which to live, study, work and explore.

North Carolina Serve and Learn enables Freshman Teaching Fellows trained by elementary teachers, university professors and seasoned tutors to work with students in the Young Scholars Program at two Buncombe County elementary schools.

Middle School Initiatives at UNC-Asheville include:

Partners in Learning is a University/Public School/Community partnership and tutoring program that addresses student literacy and student achievement on end-of-grade tests, provides preservice field experiences and aids in the recruitment of minority students into the teaching profession. Middle school students from Asheville Middle, North Buncombe Middle and Erwin Middle Schools are tutored by trained UNCA tutors.

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) A Program for promising youth who are underachieving students in middle school and high school.

Communities in Schools believes the solution to student underachievement and school dropout requires a commitment from all community members--parents, social service providers, businesses, civic organizations, local government and educators. It connects resources with students and their families at the school site

The Young Scholars Program is an extended learning program aimed at building the academic and personal capacity of promising elementary and middle school youth.

High School Initiatives at UNC-Asheville include:

Asheville to Asheville-UNCA works collaboratively with Asheville City Schools to encourage minority and socio-economically disadvantaged students toward post secondary education, careers in teaching, and application for the Legislative Opportunity Grant. This Asheville High mentor program bridges Asheville Middle School, Partners

In Learning tutoring program and the Asheville High Teacher Cadet Program as it provides service and learning opportunities for future teachers.

Legislative College Opportunity Grant-This North Carolina legislation provides scholarship assistance that will cover the cost of tuition, fees and books, to students who meet academic criteria and participate in the University/Public School collaborative program during middle school and high school.

The Teacher Cadet Program enables high school students to experience first hand what it is like to be a teacher. In a course team-taught by a secondary teacher and a university professor, students are introduced to the theory and methods of teaching while spending time observing and tutoring in area schools.

Faculty from UNC Chapel Hill are conducting a mathematics education project with five counties in northeastern NC, the Mathematics Improvement Through Problem Solving Project, helping teachers implement reform-based mathematics curriculum, K-8. The schools served include low-performing Creswell Elementary School in Washington County. These initiatives will help teachers serve low-performing students more effectively.

The Pre-College Program of the Center for Mathematics and Science Education (CMSE) at UNC-Chapel Hill works with eight teachers from Eastway, Watts, and Pearson elementary schools in Durham Public schools through the Literacy Acquisition through Science Teaching Project. In addition, tutors are provided to students those schools, provided by English as a Second Language faculty.

UNC-CH faculty conducted a site visit to Aulander School in Bertie County, designated as low-performing in 2000. Faculty provided evaluative feedback regarding ways to address the achievement gap at Aulander School.

An intense commitment and intense effort to assist low-performing schools characterizes the College of Education at UNC Charlotte. Thomasboro Elementary, designated low performing, is the focus of a major, sustained effort by nineteen members of the UNC Charlotte faculty. Efforts are occurring both at the individual level – UNC Charlotte faculty and students serve as lunch buddies and tutors – and at the systems level, with major professional development initiatives to help the school strengthen reading and math instruction, build stronger family and community ties, and develop a supportive school-wide discipline policy. UNC Charlotte faculty offer undergraduate courses in the elementary education curriculum on-site at Thomasboro so that future teachers have the opportunity to apply what they've learned in class immediately in real-life settings. Under the leadership of UNC Charlotte faculty, the Thomasboro faculty systematically revised math curriculum and instruction last year resulting in significantly higher math scores.

Faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UNC Greensboro regularly provide literacy support to elementary, middle and secondary schools in the Thomasville City, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County and Caswell County Schools.

The UNC Greensboro School of Education's Duke Energy Innovations in Education grant program has supported an interactive homework project for elementary ESL students and an academic and personal development mentoring program at a Title I elementary school.

UNC Pembroke is involved in a collaborative with the Public Schools of Robeson County and the Web Academy of Cumberland County to close the achievement gap. The 1999 graduation class for the PSRC reflected only a 42% graduation rate (2209 ninth graders in high school in 1996 and 932 graduates in 1999). The school system, parents, business and industry leaders, governmental leaders, and representatives form the community college and UNCP collaborated to expand the existing Career Center into an alternative technology high school – Robeson County HighSchool.Com. Specifically, university faculty received a grant from the Department of Public Instruction in the amount of \$177,000. The funding was applied toward expanding the services of the Web Academy to the technology high school. The school is now able to offer the core academic courses via the Internet in a supervised computer lab. Students in each of the six traditional high schools are able to enroll in AP courses offered by the Web Academy. Currently, more than 200 students are being served by this project.

A UNCW faculty member has led an initiative to help address the achievement gap issue in a regional school district. A number of school reform and research projects have resulted in the district's adoption of Direct Instruction curricula. These include summer 1999 training of teachers in 22 elementary schools, the creation of instruments for teachers related to their own work and their students' development, and research that assesses the impact of the program on student achievement and socio-affective development.

A Middle School Math Teacher Training Eisenhower grant was received by the UNCW Watson School of Education. The project has an instructional first phase with a total of 32 middle grades math teacher leaders in teams, 3 teachers and 1 principal, from the six at-risk middle schools (one per grade level), and teachers from private and parochial schools. The training will focus upon increasing knowledge in assessment strategies and math curriculum. A strong implementation phase will follow with the teacher leaders disseminating instructional strategies to colleagues in their schools through monthly study groups, on-line chat sessions, and school-level instructional sessions with university and project consultants resulting in participation and professional development for a total of 143 middle school math teachers.

Mountains to the Sea Project was a cooperative learning experience involving 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in Jackson, Wake and Gates County and sponsored in part by the University-School Teacher Education Program at Western Carolina University.

The School of Education at Winston-Salem State University has entered a collaborative arrangement with Parkland High School, which is the only high school among the 21 "equity plus" schools in the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, to create a computer-assisted reading laboratory for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who are reading below grade level. The intervention is being led by a nationally board certified teacher who will help

supervise secondary education interns and work with WSSU faculty in the strengthening of our secondary reading instruction. The School of Education has used the Matching Incentive grant funds to support this initiative.

The Maya Angelou Institute for the Improvement of Child and Family Education has received funding through the Historically Minority College and University Consortium, which is Sponsored by the NC Department of Public instruction, for PASS, Partnership for Academic and Social Success at Mineral Springs Elementary School. Mineral Spring is an "equity plus" school. PASS is a comprehensive, school-wide, parental involvement program that will lead to the development of an academic and social expectation guide for the Mineral Springs community. (Winston-Salem State University)

#### **(4) Preparing more teachers from underrepresented groups**

The Dean of Education at East Carolina University appointed a minority staff person to design and implement Project Excel, which is aimed at recruiting more minority students into teacher education. Project Excel, which is aimed at eighth grade and up students, was originally funded by DuPont and is now being funded out of partnership resources focused on recruitment initiatives.

The Elizabeth City State University faculty is committed, well prepared, and comprised of individuals with varying national origins and ethnic backgrounds, making ECSU one of the most diverse universities in the region. Originally, an institution serving African Americans, the university's heritage provides a rich background for serving its increasingly multi-cultural student body. The university provides a challenging and supportive environment that prepares its student for knowledgeable, responsible participation and leadership in an ever-changing technologically advanced global society.

The CD Turnage Pre-College Awards for Excellence and the Dr. CD Turnage pre-college award for excellence in mathematics, science, engineering, technology program (PACE/MSET) are currently available at Elizabeth City State University. The Turnage Science, Math, and Technology Scholars Program for Girls is a research, teaching and learning program for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade girls.

The Special Education Department at Elizabeth City State University is collaborating with five historically minority universities to provide on-line courses. The NC Distance Education Partnership for Certification Programs in Behavioral and Emotional Disorders and Specific Learning Disabilities will prepare 100 new certified teachers in SLD and 40 new certified teachers in BEH by the end of the fourth year of the grant. With the increase in the number and percentage of minority teachers, services for minority students with SLD and BEH will be improved.

ECSU has just finished a national grant-writing workshop as a part of the ECSU National Sponsored Programs Training Conference designed to prepare faculty, administrators, and staff for proposal and grant writing. In their quest to prepare more teachers from the

underrepresented groups, ECSU has submitted proposals in excess of \$2.1 million dollars that will seek to prepare minority males in teacher education.

The enrollment at North Carolina A&T State University is 90% minority. From recruitment through licensure, the program is designed to bring perspective teachers into the University who do not necessarily score high on traditional entrance requirements, but have the potential to become successful classroom teachers. However, once admitted to the University, support is provided through various opportunities that are designed to help candidates achieve high standards in communication skills, test taking skills, analytical and critical thinking skills. Individual mentors are available to ensure that students complete the various requirements. Computer assisted instruction is provided to help students acquire content, pedagogy, and appropriate dispositions. Service activities in diverse settings are encouraged for all students. Each activity ensures that prospective students from underrepresented groups will become licensed teachers.

With grant support from the US Department of Education, Dr. Richard White, Professor of Special Education at UNC Charlotte, has developed personnel preparation projects that have recruited minority students into teacher education. Accessible coursework and tuition stipends are hallmarks of these projects. The "Showcase Paraprofessional to Professional Project" recruits high achieving, experienced paraeducators into licensure programs in special education; of the 30 students supported by the grant this year, 55% come from underrepresented ethnic minority backgrounds. The "Careers in Special Education Through Committed University Collaboration Project" recruits to the special education profession liberal arts graduates from historically black universities and colleges; 100% of the 30 project participants are African American.

The School of Education at UNC Greensboro and the Guilford County Schools collaborate in a program that enrolls Teaching Assistants in the District in a university teacher-education program that leads to a baccalaureate degree and teacher licensure. The Teaching Assistants, overwhelmingly members of ethnic minority groups (mostly African Americans), in many cases have worked for years in local schools. They are people committed to the local community and to long-time careers in education. This program allows them to draw their regular salaries while completing degree and licensure requirements. In turn, they pledge to work in schools in Guilford County for a number of years following completion of the program. The Guilford County Schools also credits them on the salary schedule for some of the time they have spent in the classroom as Teaching Assistants.

UNC Pembroke received a grant award from the Department of Education in the amount of \$991,439 over a three-year period. The funded program is designed to recruit and retain American Indians in teacher education. Additionally, a post graduation transition program will be offered in year three of the grant. Participants are being provided with funds to pay tuition related expenses with qualifying students also receiving monthly stipends and childcare expenses. Students are also being provided a number of support services, such as tutorials. To date, 38 American Indian students are enrolled in the program.

Through the North Carolina Model Teacher Education Consortium, UNCW offers courses for targeted rural school district personnel. One graduate course and four undergraduate courses were delivered to MTEC students in Kenansville at James Sprunt Community College. In addition to arrangements for faculty to teach these courses, the Watson School of Education provided advising and registration support for MTEC and their students. Since funding has been renewed, the Watson School and MTEC are sponsoring 10 course sections in the Spring, 2001 semester.

A special initiative was undertaken to engage Education and Arts and Sciences faculty at UNCW in a partnership with public school partners to work on a number of major issues that impact all of these organizations. These were categorized into four major strands: 1) teacher recruitment (minority and high need areas), 2) Praxis II (issues in student/ lateral entry teacher performance on specialty area tests), 3) retention of teachers (linking pre-service programs and partnership efforts to support program graduates and lateral entry teachers), and 4) a classroom assessment initiative. Throughout the year and into the summer, faculty members and public school partners have engaged in a variety of activities related to these issues.

A summer initiative brought educators from the UNCW Watson School, College of Arts and Sciences, and partnership districts together for a week-long work session. Teams continue to work together during the 2000-2001 academic year to develop common understandings, recommendations and to carry out an agreed upon strategic plan.

The College of Education at Western Carolina University hosted a daylong recruitment program called Reach to Teach where middle and high schools students who were either African-American or American-Indian were brought to campus for a day in the Spring Semester 2000. The Dean of the College spoke to high school Future Teachers of American organizations encouraging students to pursue teaching including those groups with minority members.

### **(5) Professional development, including public school teachers and administrators, and IHEE faculty**

A faculty member from East Carolina University is designing and implementing professional development programs under an initiative called Project Enrich, located in one middle school in the following school systems: Pitt, Guilford, and Forsyth County. The main focus of the program is to identify academic at-risk students and provide a structured environment that utilizes middle school faculty in the remediation and enrichment of academic skills.

The Diversity Task Force, along with clinical faculty in the ECU School of Education, have offered diversity workshops during the past two summers for teachers in the 15 school systems served by the Latham Clinical Schools Network. These sessions have been well attended by teachers and have served to jump start particular initiatives in specific counties.

The ECU School of Education worked with Carteret County to develop a diversity plan that is specific to addressing the achievement gap. A cadre of Carteret County principals, teachers, and central office staff attended a two-day Diversity Institute in June 2000. The same cadre then attended a Diversity Level II Workshop at ECU. In September, the Carteret County cadre trained school improvement teams from every school in a one day Diversity Workshop. Each school improvement team will have 30 hours of Diversity Training over the next three years.

The School of Education at Elizabeth City State University has implemented several interactive technological innovations that will enhance teacher education majors via electronic classroom, instructional technology lab, virtual college, and web course in a box. Two grants, NC Catalyst and the "Tek Connect" School Service Matching Incentive Grant, have been funded to provide technology staff development for faculty and LEA Teachers.

Fifteen teachers from six high schools were recruited to participate in a two-week workshop on "The Use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in Teaching Earth Science to Public School Teachers in Northeastern North Carolina" for a one-year period. This workshop is designed to instruct teachers in the use of GIS and computer mapping, to enhance their comprehension of earth science content. (Elizabeth City State University)

The Fayetteville State University School of Education faculty conducts workshops for educators related to teaching diverse and special needs students. Two School of Education faculty members conducted a diversity workshop for elementary and middle grades teachers in Cumberland County Schools. The workshop was designed to introduce public school teachers and instructors to the new DPI Diversity Standards and workshops participants designed lesson plans based on the Standards. Two FSU faculty members participated in the development of the Diversity Standards.

The School of Education Special Education faculty serve as consultants for the DPI school improvement initiative for training special education reading instructors in Cumberland County. Special emphasis will be placed on training public school special education teachers on the use of the Wilson Reading Program. Special Education faculty and reading methods faculty and university students are receiving training on the use of other effective reading and math programs designed for special needs and at risk students. (Fayetteville State University)

The University faculty also conducted Classroom Management, Technology, and Reading Improvement Workshops for teachers and administrators in Cumberland and Robeson Counties. (Fayetteville State University)

Principals in the University-School Teacher Education Partnership have organized with North Carolina A&T State University to pursue objectives in closing the Achievement Gap. The organization includes 19 schools, business partners, and community leaders. The primary goal is to provide professional development for staff, teachers and

administrators in addressing and understanding the overall impact of the achievement gap on teaching and learning in the public schools. Four areas of concern that the schools want to address include: (1) define and understand the "gap" through analysis of data and application of data to specific schools and students, (2) involve faculty from the university in providing professional development, (3) provide educational opportunities for parents about how to help children achieve and succeed in the school, and (4) select, prepare, and assign mentors to the schools. Through the University-School Teacher Partnerships, NC A&T is working to improve the learning of minority students.

A systemic initiative designed and funded last year at North Carolina Central University is underway in six elementary and middle schools in Durham. This new action research project titled *Teachers Effective with Student Assessment* focuses on raising student performance on end-of-grade tests required by the state's 'ABC program.' Eastway Elementary, one of the seven low performing' schools in the' state, is included in this group of schools and is the primary target. Underlying this initiative is our belief in its potential to contribute to closing the achievement gap.

In support of veteran teachers who are expected to take all students to grade level proficiency and above, the faculty at NCCU has shifted its research and service focus to projects that will provide teachers with the additional skills they need to ensure that all students attain grade level. Another major initiative, the North Carolina Middle School Achievement Project, included several high need schools with large African American student populations. All nine schools in the project improved their ABC performance. proficiency. The NC Middle School Achievement Project, designed and implemented by a professor in the School of Education, has reached more than 700 veteran teachers. Based on research supported by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, this initiative identified essential characteristics of exemplary middle schools in North Carolina and followed up by training veteran middle school teachers to enhance curricula, motivation and ABC test score performance. Further, ongoing technical assistance is provided to more than 500 of these teachers serving on core teams in their schools. All nine target schools improved their ABC performance and three improved African Americans' student' achievement. Veteran teachers are also the focus of a three-year federal grant.

The centerpiece of NCCU's Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant is the *Center for Elimination of Achievement Discrepancies*. The business plan for the Center has been completed and the conceptual model is soon to be submitted to General Administration for their approval. Our partnership districts have provided their input on how the Center can assist them with low performing schools and in preventing and eliminating the achievement gap. Teachers who have been successful in teaching African-American, Latino, and Native American students to high levels of achievement will be associates of CEAD and will teach at the center during the summers.

NCCU's *Community Partners* grant in the area of special education is focussing on reducing the number of African-American students, especially males, who are referred to and placed in special education classes for the behaviorally and emotionally disordered. This project has focussed on helping veteran teachers understand the culture and learning

styles of all learners and powerful instructional strategies shown to have been successful with these groups. Additionally, this initiative recognizes the professional and moral obligation of educators to create caring communities for children who are thusly labeled and removed from the mainstream so that they can improve their academic functioning and return to the regular classroom.

The UNC-CH Research Triangle Professional Development School (PDS) Partnership conducted professional development activities and other initiatives at five sites in four school districts, many of which address the achievement gap. The four school districts are Chatham County, Durham County, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City, and Orange County. PDS program initiatives addressing the achievement gap included promoting improved reading and writing of low-performing high school students through the High School Literacy Project, development of a family resource center in an elementary school, and early intervention with low literacy first and second graders.

Workshops on ways of increasing language production and fluency to teachers from low-performing schools in Durham County were conducted by English education faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Through its Educators-on-Loan program, LEARN NC at UNC Chapel Hill has served high-need schools which have been able to purchase computers via the e-rate discount, but whose teachers lack the knowledge of how to use software or the Internet to enhance their students' learning. LEARN NC has employed three educators on loan to work with teachers in such schools to reduce this "knowledge gap." The educators-on-loan step into a teacher's classroom for a day, modeling best practices in technology integration that fit the constraints of available technology. Each of the educators-on-loan is working with 15 to 20 school systems this year, for an average of 5 days each. LEARN NC is a statewide network of educators using the Internet to improve K-12 education.

"Bright Beginnings" is a highly acclaimed prekindergarten program for 4-year olds at educational risk that is currently serving 2000 young children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. UNC Charlotte provides on-site professional development coursework leading to the Birth-Kindergarten teaching license to over 100 "Bright Beginnings" teachers each year. The professional development efforts center on a literacy-rich curriculum and a deep understanding of the developmental needs of 4-year-olds and their families. The "Bright Beginnings" program is demonstrating powerful positive outcomes for children as they move on to kindergarten and first grade.

Reading Together USA, established at UNC Greensboro in 1995 through the efforts of the School of Education, Guilford County Schools, and Israel Hebrew University of Jerusalem currently involves university faculty and public school personnel in literacy training for 75 schools in eleven states.

During 1999-00 the Office of School Services at UNCG sponsored a 3-1/2 day workshop in developmental writing involving 142 teachers and university faculty; as follow-up

faculty visited public school classrooms to review student writing samples and meet with teachers to discuss their assessments.

During the current academic year, several faculty members from UNC Pembroke have offered a number of professional development opportunities to the area public schools. These faculty members are representative of the School of Education, the School of Business and Mass Communication, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Topics have included strengthening student performance on the SAT, increasing the technology skills of teachers in at-risk schools, and topics related to specific academic content.

Through the Office of University-School Programs at UNCP, a series of professional development training workshops designed for the lateral entry teacher have been offered. A daylong workshop on classroom management was provided to initially licensed and lateral entry teachers from Hoke and Robeson, two school systems with high numbers of lateral entry teachers. Two three-hour workshops on stress management and test preparation for the PRAXIS were also made available. Approximately 150 teachers have benefited from these professional development activities.

The Watson School of Education at UNCW has established an institute for dynamic and responsive leadership, The Executive Leadership Academy for Middle School Principals. This Academy is designed to address the critical need to help mid-career principals develop the skills to efficiently and effectively face challenges that are specific to middle grades education. With funding from Carolina Power and Light Company, the Academy brings together assistant principals and principals to engage in seminars, workshops, and research on topics such as technology, educational change, standards and accountability, middle school curriculum, performance standards /teacher evaluations, marketing, and communications with constituents.

The College of Education at Western Carolina University sponsored a colloquium on diversity with a presentation by Dr. Don Locke of NC State University in Spring Semester 2000. The University sponsors several diversity programs throughout the year.

The Office of School Services at WSSU has received funding through the Historically Minority College and University Consortium, which is sponsored by the NC Department of Public instruction, for a staff development initiative reading at Mineral Springs Elementary School. The project is called "Direct Instruction: An effective Teaching strategy for students who are at-risk of school failure" The staff development initiative is focused on all the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers in the school. This project also provides a rich clinical experience for our pre-service teachers.

## **(6) Community involvement/engagement**

The Mountaineer Millennium Project, funded by a federal grant to Appalachian State University, has enabled the college, public schools, and community agencies to focus on after-school enrichment programs for students at-risk; more than 700 elementary school

students are involved in this project over a 7 county region in the ASU-Public School Partnership; students receive special academic assistance as well as cultural and creative activities to encourage them to stay in school and improve their academic performance.

The arts outreach program at Elizabeth City State University has worked with the Boy's Club, Girl's Inc., The Scouts, Albemarle School of Arts and other community groups and has hosted workshops involved with the National Youth Sports Program. Although these programs are highly populated with underrepresented groups, they are not limited to any particular group. The Piano Weekend Workshop, which is sponsored by the piano faculty, provides students in the area community schools with added piano instruction and concludes with a piano recital. The University Jazz Ensemble performance provides the university and the community with an array of jazz music. Area school teachers and students are invited to perform with this ensemble.

The Language, Literature and Communications Department each year sponsors an On-Line Writing Lab and a High School Media Workshop designed to assist students with writing skills and media relations, respectively. The HMCUC (Historical Minority College and University Consortium) recently hosted a community forum for the 24 LEA's, churches, civic organizations, and political leaders on "Closing the Achievement Gap." (Elizabeth City State University)

The School of Education and Psychology at Elizabeth City State University hosted a 24 LEA Praxis workshop for public school teachers; two SAT workshops for 132 students during the fall of 2000; and a test-taking skills workshop for teachers from the 24 LEA's.

The School of Education at North Carolina A&T State University has initiated two new projects designed to close the minority achievement gap in public schools. The two projects are designed to: (1) attract high talent minority high school students to pursue teaching mathematics and science as a career, and (2) improve student academic performance by mentoring.

Attracting high talented students to teach mathematics and science will provide more role models for public school students. The basic strategy of this project is to establish a cohort of 40 students from two Alamance-Burlington high schools, bring them to campus to participate in career development workshops and expose them to campus life and culture. A unique feature of this program is that the students are cooperatively selected by high school mathematics and science teachers with participation of the counselor and school administrators at each school. During the students' visits to campus, they engage in hands on activity in science, engineering and mathematics.

The goal of the mentoring project is to improve students' academic performance by leveling the learning environment through improved behavior. According to Dr. Andrew Tobias, project CO-PI, many minority students have problems with relationships that cause them to not be able to take full advantage of the learning environment. The strategy of this project is to train participating teachers and students at selected schools about the mentoring process. Older peer mentors will be trained to mentor younger students. When the project is fully operational, we anticipate implementing the peer

mentoring project in ten (10) elementary and middle grade partnership schools. This program will also be shared with other school districts.

Juniors who are enrolled in inner city schools and partnership high schools come to the NC A& T campus for SAT preparation in November and or prior to taking the SAT. Faculty and staff provide tests analysis, vocabulary study, mathematics instruction, and practice tests to help students review the content, and become familiar with the format of standardize tests. Students are also provided specific information and applications for the tests and admission to the University.

UNC Charlotte is a community partner, along with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Central Piedmont Community College, Johnson C. Smith University, the NC Public School Forum, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation on a major grant from the Ford Foundation, *Collaborating for Educational Reform Initiative*, which seeks systemic school reform in the West Mecklenburg Feeder Area around such issues as increasing access to higher education for West Mecklenburg students and reducing teacher turn-over.

The Piedmont Triad Education Consortium (PTEC), housed in the UNC Greensboro School of Education, regularly brings together university administrators and public school superintendents from 16 school systems to address critical issues related to student achievement.

The Partnership Council of UNCG's University School Teacher Education Partnership (USTEP) includes university-based educators, school-based educators, representatives from the business and wider communities, and student members. The Council meets 2-3 times a year to set strategic directions for USTEP. Major USTEP initiatives include: (a) funding ten to twelve collaborative research projects involving university-based and school-based educators in the design and implementation of projects that connect teacher performance to P-12 student achievement and (b) an annual Summer Leadership Institute for P-12 teachers that focuses on facilitating teachers' understanding of the links between best practices, assessment, and student achievement.

The Maya Angelou Institute for the Improvement of Child and Family Education at Winston-Salem State University has implemented initiatives in community involvement and engagement:

- Sponsor and host video conferences from the Department of Education and the HOPE Foundations on the importance of the community and the family in education

- Work with the Forsyth County Library and the Forsyth County faith community to recruit and train tutors from Winston-Salem State University to work with K-12 students

- Work with the Forsyth County Early Childhood Partnership, the Winston-Salem Neighborhood Association, and the Search Institute to plan and implement a geographic mapping of perceived community needs.

***PART III:***

***Further Challenges on the Issues of Diversity and Closing the Achievement Gap***

The above listing of University initiatives is only a preamble to what must become a more systemic approach to addressing the issues of diversity and closing the achievement gap. Much more focus is needed – and there needs to be greater alignment with other initiatives. There is a body of knowledge related to the issue of closing the achievement gap. However, long-term deep studies need to be designed related to North Carolina students.

- The Universities can and should be key players in conducting the research and support for programs and services on school achievement for children of color.
- University researchers, public school educators and state policymakers need to convene for more effective examination and conceptualization of educational issues related to “the achievement gap.”
- There is a limited set of answers being proposed related to resolving the achievement gap: smaller class size; the utilization of technology; data-driven instruction, aligned curriculum and assessment of teaching and measures of high standards; and most central to the work of schools of education, the availability of highly qualified teachers who are prepared and supported to help all students achieve to high standards.
- Issues of teacher preparation, development, and teacher assignment and support must be more purposefully addressed.
- University researchers, public school educators, and state policy makers need to develop a joint agenda related to closing the achievement gap in North Carolina's schools.