

## **EXAMPLES OF K-16 COLLABORATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA** **S.C. Commission on Higher Education**

### **TEACHER AND OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

**Unique three-way partnership among the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), the State Department of Education (SDE), and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education** to ensure school personnel preparation programs meet most up-to-date, state-of-the-art standards; CHE requires public institutions to be NCATE accredited and individual programs to be approved by the relevant professional associations (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English, etc.); performance funding scores reflect attainment or non-attainment.

**Centers of Excellence in Education program:** With EIA funds, CHE sponsors a competitive grants program to establish university-based centers of excellence focused on one or more identified state priorities, ranging from content-specific (e.g., math; special education) to broader interest areas (e.g., instructional technology; assessment). Centers establish themselves as regional and state-wide resources for the K-20 community, conduct appropriate professional development and research, and model in their pre-service programs the best practices confirmed by research. In 2002-03, this program was redesigned to focus on developing partnerships with low-performing schools to enhance student achievement. The past three years (2005-2008) have been focused on content areas for middle level education.

**Professional Development Programs:** Through various federal programs, CHE has sponsored for many years a competitive grants program for public as well as independent colleges to collaborate with K-12 districts in offering professional development courses and other activities for practicing teachers. The newest program, "Improving Teacher Quality Grants," is made possible under the federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation. The grants are designed for improving the content knowledge of teachers in K-12 classrooms, with the goal being to improve student achievement. Grants require a three-way partnership between a School of Education, a division of Arts and Sciences, and a High-Needs school district (based on the federal poverty index). Grants are awarded for up to four years for projects.

**Policy Development:** CHE staff led an effort with institutional representatives and the State Department of Education staff to develop new policy and best practices guidelines to upgrade professional development offerings by colleges and universities for in-service, teachers, which was subsequently adopted by CHE as well as the State Board of Education as policy.

## **EARLY AWARENESS/OUTREACH**

**Gaining Early Awareness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP):** The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education received its first GEAR UP grant from the United States Department of Education in 1999. The seven-year, \$12 million grant supported early college preparation and awareness activities for rural and low-income students to ensure that they were prepared to take advantage of postsecondary opportunities. Business volunteers provided tutoring, mentoring, and career awareness, and tracked impact data on attendance, behavior referrals, grades, test scores, and attitudes. The Commission, along with the SC Governor's School for Science and Math, the State Department of Education, SC Educational Television, and the SC Department of Health and Human Services provided grade-specific, CD-ROMs, filled with early awareness and college information, to 261,500 students and their families.

The second GEAR UP grant awarded to the Commission, in 2005, shares the goals and purposes of the first grant but provides direct services to a specific cohort of over 4,000 students, for six years, from seventh grade through high school graduation. The \$15 million grant seeks to increase academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for students at 22 middle schools experiencing high poverty and low state test scores, along the I-95 corridor. The original partners, along with the SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, and the SouthEast Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence are committed to providing these students with the skills and support they need to prepare for, enter, and succeed academically in postsecondary education.

**Higher Education Awareness Program (HEAP):** This program is designed to increase student and parent awareness of higher education options, academic requirements and financial aid opportunities for eighth graders through partnerships with higher education institutions. Additionally, as the new academic year begins, eighth grade counselors are sent HEAP CDs to distribute to each of their students. This CD not only includes interactive information for students, but also contains separate sections for parents and educators. Schools wanting to increase their HEAP participation are encouraged to apply for mini-grants that can be used to fund higher education experiences.

**College Goal Sunday South Carolina:** Students and families in SC's most economically distressed areas are given professional help to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition to working with financial aid officers, families are provided information on state scholarship programs and other types of student aid. This program is made possible by a generous grant from the Lumina Foundation.

**Relevant Publications:** CHE compiles annually and publishes on its web site data of interest to college-bound students, including "Admissions Standards for First-Time Entering Freshmen" and AP test credits accepted.

## **K-16 CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND TRANSITIONS**

**Standards 4 Success:** This Pew Charitable Trusts and Association of American Universities-backed initiative developed a set of standards for what students entering colleges and universities should know. These standards have been framed in generic terms in the project's report, Understanding University Success. The standards cover English, math, natural sciences, social sciences, second languages, and the arts. They are appropriate for what American students should be prepared to do upon entry to college in the age of global competition. They were fully endorsed in March, 2004, by the Commission's Advisory Committee on Academic Programs, and transmitted to the State Department of Education.

**Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA):** The EEDA is a comprehensive piece of K-12 reform legislation which promotes curriculum reform around "career clusters," expanded career counseling, and improved alignment with higher education standards and requirements. The CHE staff serves on the Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council and its various committees and the Executive Director chairs the Articulation, Dual Enrollment, High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Alignment Committee.

This committee has or is in the process of reviewing all the career cluster curricula; developing statewide articulation agreements for engineering-based high school coursework (*Project Lead the Way*) and International Baccalaureate high school coursework; issuing an RFP to develop on-line degree audit and course audit systems; proposing a funding stream to increase enrollment in dual enrollment courses; initiating a curriculum alignment analysis of high school exit and college entrance general education courses; and collaborating with SDE to implement an electronic transcript capability as well as a longitudinal database that can track students PK - 20.

## **K-16 COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

The Commission staff serves on a large number of committees that involve K-12 and post-secondary education and have K-12 education, teacher education, or teacher recruitment as their focus. These committees include the: Charter School Advisory Committee (SDE), Early Care and Education Summit (USC), Education Deans' Committee, EEDA Articulation Committee, EEDA Marketing & Communications Committee, EEDA Regional Education Center Committee, EEDA Information Technology Committee, K-16 Longitudinal Data Initiative, New Carolina Workforce Education Task Force, Office of Teacher Quality, Professional Review Committee (SDE), South Carolina Partnership for Distance Education, SREB Educational Technology Cooperative, SREB Education Initiatives, State Board of Education, Teacher Recruitment and Training Committee (SDE), Articulation and Dual Enrollment High School Graduation and Postsecondary Entrance Alignment Committee, Transition to Teaching Coalition, South Carolina Recruitment and Retention Task Force, Middle Level Education Task Force, Board of Governor's School of Science and Math, Board of Governor's School of Arts and Humanities, State Superintendent's Commission on High School Redesign, and Task Force on Alternative Evidence and Procedures to meet Graduation Requirements.