



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
URBAN SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

The National Institute for Urban School Improvement

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Quarterly Report:

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Overview

The Institute expects to accomplish four outcomes through its efforts with schools and districts:

1. *Increased numbers of students with disabilities served effectively in general education settings.*
2. *Increased use of research validated, culturally responsive practices in early intervention, reading, behavior, and universal designs for learning.*
3. *Increased numbers of inclusive schools with records of effective, achievement oriented, culturally responsive success with students with disabilities.*
4. *Increased number of effective improvement strategies for special and general education professional development and technical assistance that are unified and coherent across schools with in large, urban school districts.*

Our work is predicated on the assumption that direct technical assistance for individual students and families will not be sufficient to influence changes in how districts, schools, and practitioners work so that inclusionary educational practices flourish in the nation's urban schools. Our work must help to build capacity through networking, technology, action research, information systems, professional development schools, model building, consensus building, and dissemination.



While we need to work with schools, and we will, our first priority was to engage in conversation with 11 urban districts. The following districts agreed to become Synergy Sites: Chicago, Clark County-Las Vegas, Denver, District of Columbia, Hacienda-La Puente, Houston, Long Beach, Miami-Dade, New York City Region 10 and District 75. From our proposal agreements, Boston and Tucson decided not to participate due to internal changes in goals and senior personnel changes. Tampa and Seattle agreed to participate but have done so on a limited basis. Our work with these

Synergy Sites and the local educational agencies must be linked to a national dialogue about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education standards-based curriculum and assessment. Further, the work that is done in each site must include dissemination of accessible, research-based products that reach families, students, and educators in all our urban areas.

Ultimately, it is the leadership of practitioners and families in schools, informed by each other's work and the challenge of high standards for all students that will improve our nation's urban schools. Yet, without a systemic framework to guide this work and align available resources in novel and effective ways, the move from pockets of excellence to large-scale reform will not occur. This is a race against time for the educational welfare of this generation of public school students amidst the political realities of a public crisis of confidence in public school performance.

In the following sections, we outline our progress towards the Institute's five goals, our conversations with the Synergy Sites, and a report of products that were produced in the first and second quarters of 2005.

Continuous Improvement: Increase knowledge and understanding through evaluation of current practice, change efforts and impact.

Objectives

- Collaborate with 13 Synergy Sites
- Develop a web-based, sensitive and responsive continuous improvement cycle
- Assist Synergy Sites in developing annual and triannual cycles of improvement

Summary of Quarter?

The work of the Continuous Improvement Core Team has focused on responding to the differing professional development needs of the nine Synergy Sites currently involved with the Project through a variety of technical assistance.

The nine Synergy Sites are: Chicago Public Schools, Clark County Schools in Las Vegas, Denver Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, District of Columbia Schools, Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, California, Houston Independent School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and New York, Region 10 and District 75. These districts and schools receive in-depth monthly coaching and mentoring along with national meetings, site visits, problem solving sessions, leadership academies, a variety of tools and materials developed through the Project and targeted assistance with locally identified issues related to a data-based, continuous improvement approach for inclusive practices.

The Online Data Team, led by David Gibson, made significant changes in the first quarters of 2005. The data request form was edited to include Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and new academic information, new site navigation tools were added, and a page was added for tracking the status of data files. The “Flash” tour of the data maps was completed and edited twice. Second rounds of data came in from district sites and new follow-up procedures were established so that data people in districts can more easily communicate directly with project’s Online Data Team.

Accomplishments

Assisted Synergy Sites with progress on Project work plans (see Appendix: 2005 - 2006 Goals for NIUSI Sites).

Completed School Profiles and District Profiles of Synergy Sites which will be uploaded to the Project website at <http://www.niusi.org>.

Completed migration of website to a new server. As a result of the move there are no hit counts at this time.

The Online Data Team provided support to NIUSI project staff on the use of the online campus, the e-folio and the data site.

The on-line library was re-coded for better searching and display. Entries were edited and shortened to conserve space. Over 5,300 resources are currently available.

Conducted and/or participated in 14 Technical Assistance Events including 3 Synergy Site Meetings.

- Synergy Site Meeting- held in Miami- included school site visit, emphasis on district level commitment and visibility, partnership planning and networking.
- Synergy Site Meeting, Washington DC, included updates of individual district progress planning of activities for 2005-2006

- Synergy Site Meeting in Denver included professional development in cognitive coaching and distribution of prototype NIUSI Toolkit.

Conferences

Conference	Date	Who attended	Presentation or Networking	Presentation title
NIUSI Synergy Site Liaison Meeting	Jan 27-28	NIUSI Staff, Synergy Site Liaisons, RRC representatives	TA Presentations, Networking	District level commitment, Partnership planning . Schoolsite visit.
NIUSI Synergy Site Liaison Meeting	May 5-6	NIUSI staff, Synergy Site Liaisons, RRC representatives	TA Presentations, Networking	Synergy Site Presentations, Evidence-Based Practices Site Planning for 2005-2006
NIUSI Synergy Site Liaison Meeting	June 30-July 1	NIUSI staff, Synergy Site Liaisons, RRC representatives	TA & Networking	Goal setting & Strategies for Success Assessing, Coaching & Building Leadership Teams.

Next Steps

- Priorities for the next three months include analysis of Least Restrict Environments (LRE) data with Miami, Las Vegas, and Denver, collecting new round of data from Chicago and collecting initial data from Cincinnati and Washington D.C.
- Exploratory analysis of importance of the initial school integration finding and creation of a new national aggregation statistical analysis on poverty.
- The On-line team efforts will also include updating the Data Status Tables, deploying a new interactive framework to make the Data Maps more dynamic. Adding trend data for relative risk compared with teacher certification. Adding a new feature called "Calculate Your Own" which will calculate data for user districts and states.
- The NIUSI Toolkit of continuous improvement materials for school level practitioners will be sent to partnership schools, through the site liaisons, for the 2005-2006 school year. The target date for delivery to school sites is the end of August.

Research and Development: Synthesize and expand research-based practices for linguistically and culturally diverse students

Objectives

- Using a conceptual framework for analysis & synthesis of available information
- Produce and update an accessible series of synthesis products and working papers
- Produce products grounded in the work of participating SEA and LEAs achievements
- Create materials and products and test research-based strategies

Summary of Quarter

The Research and Development Core Team has been busy with a number of tasks related to the development of research-based instruments and tools to be used in technical assistance and the change process.

On Points, developed by research scholars from a variety of universities on topics of interest to educators, parents and policy makers, is an ongoing series of materials at various stages of development. So far this year, topics under development include Inclusive Education in Urban Schools, Student Voice and Engagement, Teacher Quality, Teachers Reflections, Sustaining Innovation, School Choice, Universal Design, Funds of Knowledge/Cultural Knowledge and Urban Schools: Referral, Identification and Instruction.

Other research and development work accomplished in the first two quarters of 2005 include developing a prototype for the NIUSI Toolkit, reviewing literature for all of the elements of the Systemic Change Framework. and developing Rubrics for the Systemic Change Framework

Accomplishments

- ✓ Finalized protocol for testing the reliability and validity of the Culturally Responsive Assessment Tool. LEAs and SEAs have been asked to nominate schools to pilot the instrument.
- ✓ Conducted a literature review of the elements of the Systemic Change Framework and developed a set of rubrics for the framework.
- ✓ Identified, confirmed and established agreements with various university researchers for On Point topics to be produced during the year.

Publications

Chandler, S., Kozleski, E.B., Sobel, D., Utley, B., Sands, D., Howell, C., & Sobe, B. (In progress). The invisibility of inquiry: A look at the work of teachers in professional development schools. *Teachers and Change*.

Hess, R. S., Molina, A., & Kozleski, E. B. (In progress). Until somebody hears me: Parental voice and advocacy in special education decision-making.

Klingner, J., Artiles, A., Kozleski, E. B., Utley, C., Zion, S., Tate, W., Harry, B., Zamora-Durán, G., & Riley, D. (in press). *Conceptual framework for addressing the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education*.

Kozleski, E. B. (In progress). Educating special education teachers for urban schools. *Focus on Exceptional Children*.

Kozleski, E. B., Boland, P., Chandler, S., & Suelz, J. (In progress). What special educators face: A review of the research on teachers, teaching and special education. *Exceptional Children*.

Kozleski, E. B., Ferguson, D. L., & Smith, A. (2005). Paths for change: The systemic change framework and inclusive schools. *TASH Connections*, 31, 12-14.

Kozleski, E. B., Riley, D., Ferguson, D., Ferguson, P., Mbulelo, Suelz, J. & Draper, I. (In progress). Families' perceptions of inclusive education: Whose needs are being served? *Harvard Educational Review*.

Smith, A. & Kozleski, E. B. (in press). Witnessing Brown: Pursuit of an equity agenda in American education. *Remedial and Special Education*.

Utey, C., Obiakor, F., & Kozleski, E. B. (2005). Overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education in urban schools: A research synthesis.

In J. Flood & P. Anders (eds). *Literacy development of students in urban schools: Research and policy*, pp. 314-344. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Conferences

Conference	Date	Who attended	Presentation or Networking	Presentation title
AERA	April, 2005	Alfredo Artiles, Eliz. Kozleski, David Gibson & M. Knapp	Both	Re-presenting urban landscapes of practice: Artifact design to address minority dieproportionality in Special Education.
AERA	April, 2005	W. Wyman & Eliz. Kozleski	Both	A study of the practices of teachers prepared in two preparation programs.
AERA	April, 2005	E. Kozleski, P, Englebrecht, R. Hess, I. Eloff, & E. Swart	Both	A cross cultural study of inclusion and its impact on families and student with disabilities.
Chicago Grant Study	April 18	E. Kozleski	Networking	
Annual Leadership Conference IDEA	March, 2005	Kozleski, E. B., Garafalo, C., Jones, J. & Binford, B	Both	Improving the Performance of Students with Disabilities in

				Reading City School District
Annual Leadership Conference IDEA	March, 2005	Bollmer, J. & Kozleski, E. B.	Both	Disproportionality

Next Steps

- o Complete development and editing of all On Points products currently in progress.
- o Pilot a draft of the Accreditation Tool.
- o Complete On line Library Redesign.

Professional Development: Leverage continued improvement of Inclusive Practices in Urban Schools through regional technical assistance plans, collaborative work with Leading Urban Districts focusing on Research Validated Practices in early intervention, reading, behavior, and Universal Design

Objectives

- Support knowledge use thru Virtual & Real-Time symposia and Leadership Academies.
- Professional Development Planned and Personalized
- Online Mentoring and Critical Feedback: Our Professional Learning Portfolio (PLP)

Summary of Quarter

The work of the Professional Development Core Team focused on reformatting Professional Development Leadership Modules to NIUSI Project standards (initially produced under a contract with Delaware). To date three modules have been completed. These include Building Leadership Teams, Mining Data, and Inclusive Schools. In progress modules include Universal Design for Learning, Co-Teaching and Reporting Student Progress. Each module consists of several Academies.

Accomplishments

- ✓ Redesigned and reformatted Leadership Modules. Three modules are completed and available for use. Three modules are still in progress and under revision.
- ✓ Participated in Washington D.C. Principal’s Leadership Academy- 4 day professional development on Building Leadership Teams (BLT), Continuous Change and Planning. The event included site visits to schools.
- ✓ Delaware Train the Trainer workshops were conducted on the Inclusive Schools Initiative.
- ✓ Leadership Academies were held in Clark County, Las Vegas; Hacienda La Puente; Denver; Washington, D.C.
- ✓ Site visit to California, Hacienda La Puente Unified School District was conducted

Conferences

Conference	Date	Who attended	Presentation or Networking	Presentation title
Principal’s Leadership	Jan 11-14	NIUSI staff & state educators	Presentations	Building Level Teams. Change

Academy (Washington DC)				and Planning, Professional Learning Communities
Delaware Train the Trainer		NIUSI staff & district educators	Both	Inclusive Schools Initiative

Next Steps

- In the next three months the Core Team will complete work on redesign and new format of modules Universal Design for Learning, Co-Teaching and Assessing and Reporting Student Progress modules and their multiple Academies.
- Site visits are being scheduled.
- 11 Leadership Academies, led by NUSI staff, are scheduled for August.

Networking and Dissemination: Engage national discourse in local, professional practice, and policy communities on improving educational outcomes for linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Objectives

- Develop a strategic cycle for the Center's products and events
- Design, develop and maintain a technology infrastructure for the Institute
- Use the Center's technology infrastructure to collaborate

Summary of Quarter

The Networking and Dissemination Core team created a communications plan that focuses on our varied audiences including districts and schools, RRCs and other TA groups, parents, students and teachers in order to reach them more effectively. The main objectives of the communications plan are to increase visibility for the project, and position NIUSI as a leader in research, evaluation and technical assistance that benefits all students.

Accomplishments

- ✓ Revised communications plan to broaden dissemination of information to a wider audience of educators, policy makers, and advocacy groups.
- ✓ Created distribution lists of relevant organizations, media contacts, advocacy groups, publishers, and higher education organizations that we can network with and build relationships.
- ✓ Identified dissemination outlets including as listservs, professional associations, websites, etc. for project materials and events notification.
- ✓ Hired web designer who will facilitate and assist staff in branding NIUSI materials and products and maintain the Institute website.
- ✓ NIUSI homepage changed addresses and is transitioning to the new webserver.
- ✓ Distributed 500 copies of *TASH Connections*, January/February 2005 issue, in which PI, Elizabeth Kozleski and Project Officer, Anne Smith along with Diane Ferguson's article Paths for change: Framework and inclusive schools appeared.
- ✓ Designed new bookmarks and banners for disseminating information about the Project's website tools and resources.
- ✓ Two National Inclusive School Week (NISW) teleconferences were held.
- ✓ NISW videoconference with Howard Gardner was facilitated.
- ✓ Participated in NISW panel on inclusive practices.

- ✓ Education For All Week (week of October 14, 2005)
 - Developing materials for the event
 - Seeking community partners, such as local libraries and bookstores to hold Community Conversations.

Conferences

Conference	Date	Who attended	Presentation or Networking	Presentation title
TA&D Conference	June 6-7	E. Kozleski	Networking	
Cultural Responsiveness Sopris Educational Publications	June 17	E. Kozleski	Networking	

Next Steps

- The Core Team will finalize awareness materials for Education For All Week which include identifying distribution processes; establishing a website for the event and sending out press releases to Synergy Sites and others.

Participatory and Multi-Method Evaluation

Objectives

- Evaluate Impact

Summary of Quarter

The Evaluation Core Team completed the task of compiling baseline data in the form of Partner district and school profiles. A total of 125 schools and 9 partner school district reports are in the final phase of review by the Partner sites. Upon completion of this process all reports will be posted on the Project webpage. Each profile consists of data gathered from a broad spectrum of sources including the district’s website, the US Department of Education website, The Edison schools website, the Census websites and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) website. Additionally, site liaisons assisted by reading through working drafts and updating information as needed. Each school profile contains information on School Organizational Efforts, Professional Effort, and Student Learning and Effort. District profiles contain an Introduction, The Policy Environment, The Community, and The District with subcategories including systemic infrastructure and organizational support, resource development and allocation, district and community partnerships, inquiry practice, student services, and culture of renewal and improvement. National Institute staff developed and updated information as necessary including Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, Wendy Wyman, and Tamra Scheetz.

Accomplishments

- ✓ Completed and published the 3 + 2 Report
- ✓ Produced 125 school profiles and 9 district profiles.

Conferences

Conference	Date	Who attended	Presentation or Networking	Presentation title
NIUSI Advisory Board	May 4-5	E. Kozleski & NIUSI staff	Consulting & Networking	

Meeting				
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Next Steps

- The future focus of the Evaluation Core Team is to develop and submit regular Quarterly Reports in a timely manner.
- Assist Houston Independent Unified School District in evaluating and interpreting needs assessment data collected from ARD/IEP Instructional Service Delivery staff.

APPENDIX A

2005 - 2006 Goals for NIUSI Sites

The content included in this document was gathered from MOUs; Menu of Technical Assistance; What Site Liaisons Do?; Site Support Services, 2004; Data-Driven Action Plan; Action Planning Document, May 2004 and the Systemic Change Framework .

- **Build capacity within each district network to carry out the mission, vision and goals of NIUSI**
- **Increase the number of participating schools by 200 nationally during the 2005-2006 school year**
- **Increase the number of students impacted by inclusive practice strategies by 20%**
- **Make data-driven decisions to enhance implementation efforts and collect formative and summative data**
- **Facilitate ongoing professional development at district, school and classroom level using evidence-based materials**

	Communication/Visibility	Professional Learning Communities	Value Added	Processes	Outcomes	Evaluation
NIUSI	<p>National Exemplary Schools Identify and Support schools exhibiting exemplary inclusive practices</p> <p>Publications Maintain an effective, ongoing two-way communication system</p> <p>Marketing materials for distribution in each school</p>	<p>Provide facilitator’s guides and participant’s guides for Leadership Academies</p> <p>Provide updated – evidence based library on NIUSI website</p> <p>Provide evidenced-based research via website, library, and <i>Site Liaison</i></p> <p>Provide access to database of topic experts</p>	<p>Identify and disseminate information on model schools nationally</p> <p>Assist in designing customized “roll-out” calendar</p> <p>On-Site technical assistance</p> <p>Arrange two site visits per site to monitor implementation of work plan, visit participating schools, interact with District partners</p>	<p>Organize a summer and winter site liaison retreat</p> <p>Maintain links with Communities of Practice TA Providers</p> <p>Systemic Approach</p> <p>Assist with identifying links and making connections with other TA(like Access Center)</p>	<p>Clearly articulated objectives and benchmarks</p> <p>At least 10 effective model classrooms per site</p>	<p>Collect and collate formative and summative data</p> <p>Evaluate impact on student achievement</p> <p>Establish evaluation tools</p>

<p>NIUSI</p>	<p>Press releases for use with national media</p> <p>Encourage , recognize participants, groups and individuals Provide opportunities for celebrations and recognition</p> <p>Participate in a national awareness week for inclusive practices</p>	<p>Provide materials and support</p> <p>Provide “on-points” and topical briefs</p> <p>MOUs for each school</p> <p>MOPs for each district</p>	<p>Provide expert presenters for each leadership academy as requested</p> <p>Establish & facilitate Site Liaison sub-committees to conduct the work of the Site Team network</p> <p>Increase visibility within the district by providing: a one pager of what an inclusive school is in the district; website access for all educators; a plan for monthly communication at all levels of the district</p> <p>Utilize effective coaching & mentoring techniques weekly for weekly site liaison communication</p> <p>Data mapping/ Future Trend Analysis</p> <p>PLP</p> <p>Accreditation</p> <p>Networking</p> <p>University Connections</p>	<p>Develop ongoing communication with central administration and schools</p> <p>Complete data collection for district and school profiles</p> <p>Topical updates</p> <p>Information packet</p> <p>Data interpretation Data analysis</p> <p>Electronic network</p> <p>Networks with other districts</p> <p>Conference planning</p> <p>Facilitate mentoring among LEAs</p> <p>Web-based storage data</p>		
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<p>DISTRICT</p>	<p>Identify model schools at elementary, middle and high school levels</p> <p>Generate press releases for use with local media systems</p> <p>Create a local marketing plan</p> <p>Identify the methods and develop a pattern of regularity about how to inform and discuss district progress with special and general educators</p> <p>Set up a system of ongoing monitoring and feedback</p>	<p>Provide a list of inclusive practice strategies being utilized by schools, indicating the number of students impacted</p> <p>Empower administrators to provide quality leadership</p> <p>Provide support for partner schools</p> <p>Conduct a needs assessment</p> <p>Provide appropriate district level personnel to provide context</p> <p>Identify how NIUSI evaluation process aligns with district evaluation process</p> <p>Engage in ongoing conference calls</p> <p>Participate in site liaison retreats</p>	<p>Identify, and provide access to district model schools as a resource to all district employees</p> <p>Schedule site liaison trainings for district support staff to build capacity within each site</p> <p>Provide coaches to support implementation and conduct site visits</p> <p>Design district “roll-out” calendar</p> <p>Allocate/reallocate resources needed to cause change</p>	<p>Provide a site liaison who will assume identified responsibilities</p> <p>Collect information to map resources</p> <p>Issue challenge grants</p> <p>Conduct an annual needs assessment</p> <p>District goals are aligned to results of the needs assessment</p> <p>Provide appropriate approvals and commitments from appropriate levels to ensure success</p> <p>Designate a data contact person to provide data</p> <p>Disseminate Institute professional development material</p>	<p>Offer 4 Leadership Academies per school year</p> <p>Provide support to BLTs</p> <p>Clearly articulate objectives and benchmarks</p> <p>Coaches will visit model schools</p> <p>Identify personnel who will be accountable for implementation</p> <p>Set goal for the number of schools participating each year</p> <p>Utilize parent, family linkages</p>	<p>Evaluate impact on student achievement at each school</p> <p>Collect all relevant project evaluation data</p> <p>Develop and maintain regular entries on the district campus website</p> <p>Complete district profile data collection</p> <p>Assist schools in completing the school profiling process</p> <p>Develop a benchmarking/feed back instrument</p>
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<p>SCHOOL</p>	<p>Information and tools for school wide visibility</p> <p>Develop and disseminate a product that explains building governance and decision-making process for the building</p>	<p>Develop skillful leadership teams to guide the improvement process</p> <p>Appoint a collaborative team that will meet with Institute staff annually</p> <p>Attend scheduled in-district Institute Leadership Academies</p>	<p>Increase the number of students impacted by participation in the partnership by 20 schools per year</p>	<p>Identify key contacts at each sites</p> <p>Specify intended outcomes for each academy</p> <p>Identify target audiences</p> <p>Establish functional timetable for implementation</p> <p>Convene monthly BLT meetings</p> <p>Identify the scope of the work and develop a school improvement plan</p> <p>Adopt models and practices that will assist ALL students</p> <p>Develop and use a building wide communication system for disseminating the work of the BLT</p>	<p>Establish a protocol for school communication</p> <p>Establish a school climate that visibly supports inclusive practices</p> <p>Establish a group of research resource staff</p>	
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