



Year Four Quarters Two through Four January 16, – September 15, 2006
CFDA: 84.326B *The National Institute for Urban School Improvement*

THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

(NIUSI) is to partner with Regional Resource Centers to develop powerful networks of urban local education agencies and schools that embrace and implement a data-based, continuous improvement approach for inclusive practices. Embedded within this approach is a commitment to evidence-based practice in early intervention, universal design, literacy and positive behavior supports.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), of the U.S. Department of Education, has funded NIUSI to facilitate the unification of current general and special education reform efforts as these are implemented in the nation's urban school districts. NIUSI's creation reflects OSEP's long-standing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all children, specifically those with disabilities, in communities challenged and enriched by the urban experience.



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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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Project Overview

IDEA '04 mandates that students with disabilities receive their education with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The national trend is toward this goal: In 1998-1999, according to the U.S. Department of Education, 47.42% of students with disabilities nationally were being educated for more than 80% of the day in general education classrooms. In contrast, for most urban school districts the average percentage is about 30%. The National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) has eight years of experience and success in supporting capacity building in urban schools and school districts so that students with disabilities are engaged in high quality curriculum and learning experiences that improve their ability to succeed in school and in post-school opportunities. Headquartered at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, the mission of NIUSI is to partner with Regional Resource Centers to develop powerful networks of urban local education agencies and schools that embrace and implement a data-based, continuous improvement approach for inclusive practices. Embedded within this approach is a commitment to evidence-based practice in early intervention, universal design, literacy and positive behavior supports. The work addresses five broad goals that together support the capacity of urban schools and school districts to engage students with disabilities in high quality curriculum and learning experiences that improve their ability to succeed in school. These goals include (1) a focus on Continuous Improvement; (2) continued Research and Development; (3) coherent and culturally responsive Professional Development; (4) national Networking and Dissemination; and (5) Participatory and Multi-Method Evaluation.

Established in 1997, NIUSI has been effective at accomplishing its goals and establishing itself as a source for technical assistance on issues related to inclusion in special education. The activities of the Institute are designed to affect the 100 largest urban school systems in the United States. Nine districts of these 100 urban school systems comprise our Synergy Sites where NIUSI has memorandums of understanding that create partnerships with the districts to engage in all five project goals through shared resources and joint planning for professional development and technical assistance. We have linking sites in Delaware and Louisiana where we have memorandums of agreement to share products, coach change agents, and share data from our collective work. Finally, through our dissemination efforts on the web and in collaboration with professional organizations like TASH, CEC, the American Association of Superintendents, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Council of Urban Boards of Education, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the like, NIUSI markets our work and our results to the other urban districts in the country.

NIUSI OUTCOMES

1. Increased number 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 number 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 in large urban school districts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS YEAR 4, QUARTERS 2 – 4

- 142,481 web hits
- Completed the SPP/APR analysis for all 50 states and 6 territories on indicator 5
- 6720 unique visitors to website
- Hosted a 70 person Synergy Site meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Hosted an annual synergy site liaison meeting in Denver, CO.
- 1392 NIUSI documents and tools downloaded from website
- 2 site visits and technical assistance provided to district partners
- 9 technical assistance and professional development visits
- 7 new OnPoints completed and posted to the website
- 2 publications in scholarly journals
- 1 presentation at a national conference
- Memphis, TN and Madison, WI applied for Synergy Site status and were accepted into our work

Continuous Improvement

Goal 1: Increase knowledge and understanding through evaluation of current practice, change efforts, and impact.

- 1.1 Collaborate with 9 Synergy Sites.
- 1.2 Develop a web-based, sensitive and responsive continuous improvement system.
- 1.3 Assist Synergy Site in developing annual and triannual cycles of improvement



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCES, JANUARY 16 – SEPTEMBER 15

CONFERENCE	DATE	WHO ATTENDED	PURPOSE	TITLE
Synergy Site Meeting	May	NIUSI staff, Synergy Site representatives	TA & PD	Great Urban Schools: Success for All through Early Intervention
Liaison Summer Retreat	July	NIUSI staff, Synergy site representatives	TA & PD	Inclusive schooling – Clarifying the message

SUMMARY

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 4 and Region 10. 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.

NIUSI hosted a Synergy Site meeting, “Great Urban Schools: Success for All through Early Intervention”, in Washington, D.C. in May 2006. The meeting brought together 53 participants from NIUSI Synergy Sites who are committed to an agenda to achieve educational excellence for all students. Activities centered in reviewing district and school LRE data profiles, reflecting on the years’ accomplishments and challenges, exploring cultural responsiveness as it applies to creating equitable

opportunities for all students, and developing strategic approaches to early intervention to prevent referrals to special education. The participants developed their NIUSI project management plan of action for professional development and technical assistance for the 2006-07AY.

The annual NIUSI Summer Liaison meeting was held in Denver, CO in July 2006. The three day meeting provided an opportunity for the nineteen participants to engage in conversations examining their understanding of inclusive schooling. Participants utilized numerous NIUSI tools in an effort to identify gaps between current practice at their district and school levels and NIUSI’s concept of inclusive school practices. NIUSI leaders facilitated a messaging discussion that united the mission of inclusive schooling with decreasing disproportionality in special education, in an effort to help the district liaisons effectively clarify and communicate the message back to their district teams.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided regular coaching for most synergy sites in face-to-face site visits or through email or phone contact.
- Interactive city maps for Memphis, Madison, Miami, and Las Vegas were updated.

NEXT STEPS

- Planning the final NIUSI meeting for October 2007.



CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

CONFERENCE	DATE	PRESENTERS	PRESENTATION OR NETWORKING
Council for Exceptional Children, Annual Convention, Salt Lake City, UT	April	Ron Felton & Elizabeth Kozleski	Urban Contexts and Their Impact on the Risks of Disproportionality
OSEP Project Directors' Conference	July	Elizabeth Kozleski & Beth Harry	Future research on minority placement in special education: Theoretical and methodological challenges
OSEP Project Directors' Meeting	August	Beth Harry, Donna Ford, Elizabeth Kozleski	Directions in research on the disproportionate placement of minorities in special education

Research and Development

Goal 2: Synthesize and expand research-based practices for linguistically and culturally diverse students.

- 2.1 Use a conceptual framework for analysis and synthesis of available information.
- 2.2 Produce and update an accessible series of synthesis products and working papers.
- 2.3 Produce products grounded in the work of participating SEAs and LEA's achievement
- 2.4 Create materials and products and tests research-based strategies.

SUMMARY

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. OnPoints, 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. In addition to completing and publishing 7 OnPoints during Quarters 2 through 4, all titles have been uploaded to the NIUSI website ready for consumer use. Authors of the various titles include Dianne Ferguson, Gwen Meyer and Deb Staub.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Distributed NIUSI Inclusive Schools Toolkit to 10 Synergy Sites and 150 schools.
- Completed and uploaded new OnPoints to website:
 - » Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait
 - » On Time and How to Get More of It
 - » Reconceptualizing Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Planning
 - » The School Improvement Process
 - » The Building Leadership Team
 - » Preparing Teachers for the Future
 - » Inclusion and Other Kids: Here's What Research Says so Far about Inclusion's Effect on Non-disabled Students
- Research and development of 4 new OnPoints
- 2 publications in scholarly journals
- 1 presentation at a national conference
- NIUSI PowerPoint template completed

PUBLICATIONS

Artiles, A., Kozleski, E. B., Dorn, S., & Christensen, C. (In press). Learning in inclusive education research: Remediating theory and methods with a transformative agenda. *Review of Research in Education*, 30, 1-30.

Hess, R., Molina, A., & Kozleski, E. B. (2006). Until Somebody Hears Me: Parental Voice and Advocacy in Special Education Decision-Making. *British Journal of Special Education*, 33, 3, 148-157.

NEXT STEPS

- Complete development and editing of all OnPoint products currently in development.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

CONFERENCE	DATE	PRESENTERS	PRESENTATION TITLE
Washington, DC	March	Elizabeth Kozleski	Making LRE a reality: Whole school change
State of Tennessee Professional Learning Conference, Nashville, TN	March	Elizabeth Kozleski	Creating a context for professional learning
Big Ideas: From Classrooms to Systems, Tempe, AZ	March	Elizabeth Kozleski	Big ideas: From classrooms to systems – A journey in Progress
Tennessee Annual Conference on Special Education	March	Elizabeth Kozleski	Creating context for culturally responsive practice through professional development
State of Pennsylvania Professional Learning Conference, Hershey, PA.	March	Elizabeth Kozleski	Improving outcomes for students with disabilities
Montana State Department of Education Annual Higher Education Meeting, Red Lodge, MT	May	Elizabeth Kozleski	The state of special education
D.C. Public Schools	August	Cathy Kea	Collaborative Teaching Overview
Hacienda La Puente Public Schools, Hacienda, CA	August	Suzanne Arnold & Shelley Zion	Collaborative Teaching Training
Memphis Public Schools, Memphis, TN	August	Suzanne Arnold & Denise Weems	Building Leadership and Inclusive Schools Training
Memphis Public Schools, Memphis, TN	September	Elizabeth Kozleski & Suzanne Arnold	Collaborative teaching overview
Memphis Public Schools, Memphis, TN	September	Elizabeth Kozleski	An agenda for change
Memphis Public Schools, Memphis, TN	October	Suzanne Arnold & Elizabeth Kozleski	Differentiated Instruction Training

Professional Development

Goal 3: Leverage continued improvement in 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.

- 3.1 Support knowledge through Virtual and Real-Time symposia and Leadership Academies.
- 3.2 Professional Development planned and personalized.
- 3.3 Online mentoring and Critical Feedback: Our Professional Learning Portfolios (PLP).



SUMMARY

The work of the Professional Development Core Team focused on providing Synergy Sites with professional development on topics of collaborative teaching, cognitive coaching and building leadership teams at the district and school levels. Assistance in moving towards work plan goals was also a priority. Professional development materials continue to be researched and designed; in particular, Universal Design for Learning.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided professional development workshops and presentations to school districts and state departments of education.
- Provided professional development materials to D.C. public schools, Memphis Public Schools, Hacienda La Puente Public Schools and Madison Metropolitan School District.
- All professional development modules were updated and posted to the website.
- PLP accounts added to website for 211 schools.
- Co-hosted the conference, “Accommodating Students with Disabilities on State Assessments: What Works?” in March in Savannah, GA with ETS, the College Board and the Council for Exceptional Children.

NEXT STEPS

- Madison Metropolitan School District – Building Walkthroughs of NIUSI schools in November, 2007 and Collaborative Leadership Training, April, 2007

Networking and Dissemination

Goal 4: Engage national discourse in local, professional practice and policy communities on improving educational outcomes for linguistically and culturally diverse student.

- 4.1 Develop a strategic cycle for the Institute’s products and events.
- 4.2 Design, develop and maintain a technology infrastructure for the Institute.
- 4.3 Use the Institute’s technology infrastructure to collaborate with institutions.

SUMMARY

The Networking and Dissemination Core team created a communications plan that focuses on our varied audiences including districts and schools, RRCs and other TA&D 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 benefit all students.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 142,481 web hits
- 6720 unique visitors to website

NIUSI TOOLS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF USERS

PROFESSIONAL STATUS	DOCUMENT DOWNLOADED	INTENDED USE
512 Classroom Teachers 236 Students 185 School Administrators 117 District Staff 111 Faculty Members 110 Other 59 TA Providers 53 Researchers 51 State Department Staff 23 Advocacy Groups 14 Family Organizations 68 No Response	799 Improving Education Bklt 319 Leadership Academies 117 Transformed Schools 19 Topical Summaries English 25 Understanding Culture 113 Others	522 Group PD 461 Personal Use 243 Classroom Instruction 254 Other 70 No Response



NETWORKING AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

CONFERENCE	DATE	WHO ATTENDED	PRESENTATION TITLE
NCCRESt National Forum, Denver, CO	February	Alfredo Artiles, Teresa Dias, & Elizabeth Kozleski	Data driven decision making: A systems approach to disproportionality
LRE Part B Teleseminar	June	Elizabeth Kozleski and Shelley Zion	Difference does NOT equal disability: creating culturally responsive educational systems
OSEP Project Directors' Conference	July	Donna Ford, Elizabeth Kozleski, Beth Harry, Stan Trent & Cathy Kea	Future research on minority placement in special education: Theoretical and methodological challenges.

- 1392 NIUSI documents and tools downloaded from website
- Distributed 6 set of On Points to school districts
- Presented NIUSI marketing materials at the NCCRESt National Forum, Synergy Site Meeting, OSEP Leveraging

- Resources Conference, OSEP Project Director's Conference
- 100 NIUSI bookmarks sent to AERA.
- All PD modules provided to BOCES.
- Distributed e-newsletter, NIUSI Liaison, with updates, resource and events to synergy sites on a bimonthly basis.
- Distributed 50 NIUSI banners and 500 posters to NIUSI districts and schools.

ELECTRONIC MONITORING OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FROM JANUARY 16– SEPTEMBER 15, 2006

INDIVIDUAL COMPUTER HITS	TOOLS DOWNLOADED (PD MODULES, PRACTITIONER BRIEFS, AND RUBRIC TOOLS)
January: 34,860	January: 134
February: 22,927	February: 163
March: 19,680	March: 181
April: 21,905	April: 204
May: 15,642	May: 143
June: 8,512	June: 124
July: 6,731	July: 142
August: 5,761	August: 162
September: 6,463	September: 139

NEXT STEPS

- Complete NIUSI bookmark revisions.
- Complete NIUSI website restructuring.

Synergy Site Updates

HACIENDA LA PUENTE

Hacienda La Puente's representatives from Los Altos High School presented at the National Forum on "Co-Teaching in a Successful Inclusive Model". The presentation focused on successful collaborative teaching in a fully inclusive high school setting. To ensure accountability in schools, full inclusion is becoming an invaluable tool in education. The focus of the presentation was on how to prepare your school for transition to full inclusion: how to implement the practice; how to maintain effective learning communities; and how to deal with challenges that collaborative



teachers might face. Student testimonials and supporting data were included to demonstrate the effectiveness of the collaborative model.

Hacienda La Puente Unified School Districts Special Education Services Department collaborated with NIUSI on a three-day summer institute in their efforts to improve the educational experiences for all students. The institute was designed to bring together building teams consisting of a principal, general and special education teachers and district coaches for training. The teams were introduced to features of effective collaborative teaching and explored the role of personal teaching styles in collaborative classroom environments. Participants also explored strategies that focus on speaking and listening across the curriculum to enhance student learning.

Staff from the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) spent three days in Hacienda La Puente Unified School District conducting training for middle and high school teaching teams on co-teaching for inclusive schools. 25 co-teaching teams attended the three day session, and learned how to plan and implement co-teaching in their classrooms. The district is using co-teaching as one tool to create more inclusive school and classroom environments.

NEW SITE ... MEMPHIS AND MADISON

The National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) would like to welcome Memphis City Schools and Madison Metropolitan School District to our growing NIUSI team. Celia Moore from Memphis and Kathy Lyngaas from Madison are the new Site Liaisons. Both sites will be at the upcoming Synergy Site Meeting in Washington D.C. and we look forward to partnering with them to build more inclusive schools for ALL students.

Staff from the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) spent two days in August with Memphis City Schools conducting training for 10 elementary Building Leadership Teams around inclusive school practices. Each BLT developed an action plan that would create more opportunities for special education students to access the regular education curriculum. The BLT training was followed up with a district-wide presentation to all district principals of the Memphis City Schools in September with a brief overview of inclusive schooling practices and collaborative teaching. During the principal training, four district principals passionately shared their positive experiences with inclusive practices, encouraging their peers to join them in the journey.

GREAT URBAN SCHOOLS:

❖
Produce high achieving students.

❖
Construct education for
social justice, access and equity.

❖
Expand students' life opportunities,
available choices and community contributions.

❖
Build on the extraordinary resources that
urban communities provide for life-long learning.

❖
Use the valuable knowledge and experience that
children and their families bring to school learning.

❖
Need individuals, family organizations and communities to
work together to create future generations of possibility.

❖
Practice scholarship by creating partnerships
for action-based research and inquiry.

❖
Shape their practice based on evidence of what
results in successful learning of each student.

❖
Foster relationships based on care,
respect and responsibility.

❖
Understand that people learn in different
ways throughout their lives.

❖
Respond with learning
opportunities that work.



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