Does Our Partnership Make a Difference?
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Does membership in the MU Partnership for Educational Renewal make a difference in our schools? Do schools that are more involved in the partnership do better academically? Are there other factors in our schools influencing student achievement? These are a few of the questions I had when I started my doctoral program and thus became the focus of my dissertation study.

Therefore, the purpose of my study was to examine, through statistical analysis, the relationship of the elementary partner schools' level of involvement in the MU Partnership for Educational Renewal (MPER) to academic achievement of the third and fourth grade students in the areas of communication arts and mathematics, as measured by the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). This study also explored the relationship of school demographic variables (e.g., SES, percentage of minority population), and profile characteristics (e.g., teacher experience, teacher educational level, attendance) to academic achievement. These factors were identified in previous research as having an influence on student achievement. The research on school-university and professional development schools provided the conceptual framework for this study. This study hopefully extended the knowledge base in regards to the impact of school-university partnerships, and professional development schools in particular, have on student achievement. This area of research is very limited at this time.

This study investigated six years of achievement data for 77 of the 81 elementary partner schools that maintained membership in the MU Partnership. Data collected from the administrative office of the MPER pertained to the participation (level of involvement) of the schools within four program components of the partnership including Fellows, study grants, teacher release, and student teachers. The Office of Socioeconomic Data Analysis provided the data for academic achievement in communication arts and mathematics according to the Missouri Assessment Program, as well as the demographic and profile characteristics.

Important Upcoming Dates

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<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>TFP Mentor/Liaison Meeting</td>
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<td>January 23</td>
<td>MPER Operations Council Meeting</td>
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<td>February 1</td>
<td>TFP Mentor/Principal Dev. Day (East)</td>
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<td>February 6</td>
<td>MPER Governing Board Meeting</td>
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<td>February 8</td>
<td>TFP Mentor/Principal Dev. Day (West)</td>
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<td>February 13</td>
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<td>February 20</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td>TFP Mentor/Principal Dev. Day (Central)</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
<td>Teaching Fellow Interview Day</td>
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Second Year for St. Louis New Leaders Project
Megan Ryder, Director of External Relations
College of Education, University of Missouri—Columbia

In its second year, the New Leaders Program (NLP) in St. Louis aims to prepare aspiring principals for the St. Louis School District. The University of Missouri-Columbia College of Education delivers an extensive yearlong principal preparation program and master's curriculum in collaboration with leadership professionals from the St. Louis public schools. This preparation plan is modeled after the innovative New York Leaders Academy's Aspiring Principals Program and the Danforth Educational Leadership Program at the University of Washington. The program, which successfully served 22 aspiring principals during the first year, is now serving ten in its second year.

The program hosted an honorary dinner to recognize the participants in Cohort II at the Reynolds Alumni Center in Columbia, Missouri. Michael Middleton, the Deputy Chancellor at the University of Missouri, welcomed the ten new aspiring principals and noted the challenges and rewards that lay ahead. Middleton stated the importance of the partnership between the University of Missouri-Columbia and the St. Louis School District, noting the resources and faculty the university has dedicated to the program's success.

Other dinner special guests included Randy Maier, Community and External Relations for Boeing; Charles

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MPER’s Impact (continued from page 1)

The results of this study demonstrated that level of involvement with the MU Partnership did explain academic achievement, which means the greater involvement with the Partnership, the higher the academic achievement. The analysis also indicated certain school demographic variables (SES, school size, minority population) and school profile characteristics (teacher experience, teacher education, teacher/student ratio) also explained academic achievement for the schools selected in the MU Partnership.

For more information on the study, contact Katie Lampitt (lampittk@missouri.edu).

Study Group and Teacher Inquiry Funding

A combination of twenty individual schools and partner districts have received Study Group and Teacher Inquiry Funding awards of up to $1,000 for implementation of their projects during the 2006-2007 school year. Congratulations!

Chillicothe R-II School District: Dewey Elementary, Chillicothe R-II School District
Columbia School District: Fairview Elementary, Lange Middle, Mill Creek Elementary, Paxton Keeley Elementary, Russell Boulevard Elementary
Independence 30 School District: Glendale Elementary, Mill Creek Elementary
Lee’s Summit R-VII School District: Cedar Creek Elementary, Lee’s Summit Elementary, Longview Farm Elementary, Pleasant Lea Elementary
Moberly School District: Gratz Brown Elementary
Parkway C-2 School District: Pierremont Elementary
Pilot Grove C-4 School District: Pilot Grove Middle
Sedalia 200 School District: Skyline Elementary
Southern Boone County R-1 School District (Ashland): Southern Boone Elementary, Southern Boone Middle, Southern Boone High School

For More Information on MPER Programs...

Remember, the MU Partnership for Educational Renewal web site (http://mper.missouri.edu) provides extensive information on the history, composition, and mission of the Partnership. The site also includes detailed information on MPER programs, publications, and a calendar of events and deadlines. Links to other College of Education resources and partner districts make the site an easy launching point for research on the Partnership.

St. Louis New Leaders Program (continued from page 1)

Brown, Assistant Commissioner of Teacher Quality and Urban Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Shirley Brown, University of Missouri-Columbia Liaison to the St. Louis Public Schools; Sheila Smith-Anderson, Director of the LEAD Program, St. Louis Public Schools; Audrey Jackson, Program Coordinator for the Wallace Foundation LEAD Grant; Mike Pullis, Associate Dean, MU’s College of Education; and Margaret Grogan, Professor and Department Chair, MU’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

“This program is about bettering our community — we are your client and I am speaking on behalf of St. Louis — we need to develop honorable, workable students who can go off to college and then contribute to St. Louis’ economy. This type of change is not possible without real leadership,” said Randy Maier of Boeing. “Thank you for saying you want to be a leader, and wanting to make a difference in the St. Louis School District.”

The ten participants in this year’s cohort include: Rosemary Bruce, Phyllis Cornelius, Carmela Davis, Danielle DeLoatch, Chauncey Granger, Bonita Jamison, Donna McGilberry, Hollie Russell-West, Deborah Stevens-Peebles, and Brenda Smith. These students will participate in the intensive program, which is designed to enable them to become effective instructional leaders in urban settings. After the summer preparation program, which takes place on MU-Columbia’s campus, participants continue sessions in St. Louis while serving their yearlong residency under the guidance of an experienced mentor principal from the St. Louis school district. Betty Porter Walls and Juanita Simmons, who are faculty members in the College of Education’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, teach the principal preparation courses.

The New Leaders Program is based upon six working assumptions: 1) equity and excellence; 2) leadership; 3) organizational change; 4) collaboration; 5) inquiry and reflective practice; and 6) teaching and learning. Each participant receives a $3,000 stipend and is designated as an MU Leadership Fellow. Each receives 30 hours of tuition-free graduate level credit from the University of Missouri, leading to a master’s degree and principal certification.

After completing the NLP, those selected as new principals receive continued mentoring and individualized assistance from mentors during their induction year. This ongoing professional development is designed to further enhance their leadership skills while in the field.