

The Leading Force

PROJECT CHANGE: A PARTNERSHIP TO
PREPARE TOMORROW'S LEADERS

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST**

- To Do List—Cohort I Graduation
- A View from Cohort I
- Passing the Torch: Leads for Leaders

WELCOME BACK, PROJECT CHANGE

California State University
Northridge

MICHAEL D. EISNER
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



Dear Cohort I and Cohort II,

We are excited to begin our second year of Project Change. We are particularly pleased to welcome Cohort II, twenty-four candidates who have been selected by their site supervisors for their potential to become outstanding secondary administrators. At the same time, we congratulate Cohort I for their continued progress toward their August graduation. We thank our first cohort for their input and participation in pioneering our blended instructional model for the Project Change credential program.

We are looking forward to combining our cohorts for one of this year's Institutes. The combination will provide a new synergy and also provide an opportunity for our future secondary administrators to build further networks and relationships. The combined institute will feature a dynamic presentation by Steve Constantino from Family Friendly Schools.

We look forward to a successful year for both of our cohorts.

Sincerely,

Rick Castallo, Chair
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Debbie Leidner, Director
Project Change

"We have, then, many reasons for addressing inequality in schools. The goal is to raise the bar and close the gap. Closing the gap is crucial in the context of overall improvement for the system as a whole. . . . This is not just a matter of education policy and practice but also of social and economic policies, all devoted to the same end: improving the social environment as the route to greater prosperity, economically as well as for our health and well-being."

—Michael Fullan, *Turnaround Leadership*

C O H O R T I I J O I N S P R O J E C T C H A N G E

By Jim Gwin, Project Change Advisor

Project Change Cohort II began classes in late January at the site of Miguel Contreras Learning Center, fittingly a new high school based on the small school change model. The twenty-four administrative candidates of Cohort II were selected after an extensive recruitment process that began in October 2006. Students were hand selected by their school site principal or central office supervisor based on their experience and potential to become outstanding school administrators dedicated to secondary reform. Those recommendations were then reviewed and approved by the local districts.

Cohort II represents a wide geographic area of LAUSD, including 14 high schools and middle schools and five of the eight local districts. The cohort represents the diversity of the Los Angeles School District’s teaching staff.

Cohort II students bring many years of experience as teachers and support staff with an estimated average experience of over 10 years. A number of candidates are successful teachers working currently to build better curriculum and instruction and seeking to develop stronger leadership skills. The high level of instructional knowledge is represented by one candidate who was California Teacher of the Year for 2005-2006. In addition to teaching, Project Change students are serving in the following roles: dean, magnet coordinator, small schools coordinator and lead teacher, counselor, career advisor, math coach, department chair, athletic director, union chapter chair, and Title I coordinator.

Most candidates expressed a strong desire to develop leadership and team building skills to enable them to bring change to secondary schools. While most indicated their intention to continue building their current programs—such as small schools or departments—most also stated that they expected to gain administrative positions as assistant principals in the future. A number of students tentatively planned to focus their administrative skills on planning and developing curriculum. As a group, one of the most strongly declared interests was to learn the practical skills for leading and operating the day-to-day affairs of a secondary school.

S T U D E N T S S E L E C T E D F O R P R O J E C T C H A N G E I I

James Magee, Arleta HS	Lori Combs, Polytechnic HS	Maura Draheim, Monroe HS
Douglas Cousins, Canoga Park HS	Cesar Felix, Polytechnic HS	Kelly Hanock, Monroe HS
Jeanne Pollyea, Cochran MS	Adriana Maldonado-Gomez, Polytechnic HS	Robert Canosa-Carr, Secondary Literacy Branch
Henry Etheredge, Dorsey HS	Malka Tasoff, Madison MS	Walter Weronka, Secondary Literacy Branch
Stacey Meltzer, El Camino HS	Cristino Alcala, Manual Arts HS	Daisy Gamboa, South Gate MS
Seema Puri, Huntington Park HS	Sandro Gonzalez, Manual Arts HS	Diana Ortega, South Gate MS
Amy Harrison, Kennedy HS	Jose Kubes, Manual Arts HS	Sudha Venkatesan, South Gate MS
Glynetta Fletcher, King/Drew Magnet HS	Anthony Llorens, Manual Arts HS	Eric Peres, Sylmar HS

A VIEW FROM COHORT I

By Florence Culpepper
Palms Middle School

My decision to take the step toward a career in administration was not an easy one. I really love working directly with students. A teacher can have such an incredible impact on the students he/she instructs. The ability to develop relationships and rapport with kids when you are interacting with them for extended periods of time is something you can't get in any other role in education. However, as I reflected on my ability to impact the greatest number of children I realized that I had to be in a position to enact policy level changes. Thus, I decided to pursue my administrative credential, with a little push from my principal.

The hardest part of this change has been shifting my thinking process. I can no longer look at things that happen on my school site the same way. I have to evaluate situations with the eyes of a leader. This was one of the first and most lasting perspectives that I gained from my participation in the Project Change Cohort. As a teacher, it was so easy for me simply to ask "why don't they just change the policy? Why not create a new schedule? If I was in charge I would just do it this way." One of our first assignments was to reflect on a decision that was made by school leaders and analyze the reasoning behind it. Wow! My eyes were opened immediately. As a leader there are so many variables that must be addressed when making what, on the surface, seems like a simple decision. I gained a new respect for my administration. I now look at circumstances with a

more balanced perspective, that of a teacher and a leader.

The most valuable part of being in the Project Change Cohort is the networking. It starts with classmates and professors. Our instructors are former school superintendents and other high ranking administrators. Our classmates are district and school leaders as well. When I was chosen as my school's first Title I coordinator, I immediately reached out to my classmate Cheryl who holds that position at her school. She



The Project Change Logo

was able to give me insights and advice about what I can expect from my new role. It is invaluable to have those kinds of connections. As a member of the Project Change Cohort you participate in Leadership Institutes. Imagine a room full of former and current principals, directors, superintendents, business leaders, etc. The knowledge I gained from talking to these leaders was invaluable. When I started with the Cohort I was a full time teacher and department chair. After our first weekend institute, it became clear through my conversations with these incredible leaders that I had to get out of the classroom experience. This school year I am out of the classroom full-

time. The kind of access we are given to district leadership is phenomenal. We are learning from the current movers and shakers and constantly interacting with people who may be a future boss. Through the cohort I was linked with a mentor (a current secondary director). Needless to say this relationship has benefited me immensely. These networking possibilities would not have taken place if not for my participation in the Project Change Cohort.

I am now in a position to impact kids in a different way. As Title I Coordinator I oversee a budget that I will work with parents to decide how we can best assist our struggling students. As referral dean I can help teachers who may be struggling with classroom management to give their students a better learning environment. As a member of various leadership councils, I contribute to the creation of policies that impact our entire school community. Through the work in Project Change and the access to many school and community leaders, I am better equipped to tackle difficult challenges. Most importantly, I've learned that change doesn't happen because one person makes it happen. Change happens because one person knows how to inspire others to own it and make it happen themselves.

TO DO LIST - COHORT I GRADUATION

By Eliza Corpuz, Administrative Assistant

We all remember graduation—the academic culmination celebrating years of hard work and late nights studying, an event that signifies closure yet ushers in an exciting new beginning. As you work through your penultimate semester, there may be some loose ends that still need to be taken care of prior to actually walking across the stage:

1. Ensure that you have submitted all paperwork to change status to "formally classified." If you need to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE) do so as soon as possible; for more informa-

tion on the GRE log on to <http://www.gre.org>; for more information on the UDWPE log on to <http://www.csun.edu/udwpe>.

2. Ensure that you have filed an Application for Master's Degree and Diploma form with Admissions and Records. You can download the form on the Admissions and Records web site (<http://www.csun.edu/a&r>) under Student Forms. You must file this to receive your diploma—but if you haven't already done it by March 2nd you are no longer eligible to participate in Commencement.
3. If you are eligible and intend to participate in Commencement, you should plan to attend Grad Fest 2007 at the Matador Bookstore. The event is on March 14th from 10 am to 6:30 pm and you can rent your cap and gown as well as

make other graduation arrangements. Don't forget—if you have a GPA of 3.88 or higher as of Fall 2006, you are eligible to attend the Honors Convocation at the Oviatt Library on May 29th. For more information regarding graduation, log on to <http://www.csun.edu/commencement>.

4. Finally, you should download the Credential Request form at <http://www.csun.edu/education/cred/> and click on "Credential Forms." As summer semester graduates, you can submit this form as early as June 4th — a perfect time to visit the campus.

Feel free to call or email the ELPS office if you have any questions. Congratulations on your achievement!

PASSING THE TORCH: LEADS FOR LEADERS

By Jim Gwin, Project Change Advisor

This issue focuses on some web sites that you can use as resources:



The California Department of Education
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>

The CDE provides links to the two major data sources for schools: Ed-Data and DataQuest. While Ed-Data provides a number of quickly accessed charts and graphs, DataQuest provides the most useful raw data on the full range of school data including STAR tests, High School Exit Exams, attendance, graduation, demographics, physical fitness, special education, class enrollments, and SAT scores. Future administrators should become skilled at producing year to year comparisons.

Public Education Network
<http://www.publiceducation.org/index.asp>

PEN is a national independent public education support organization which coordinates the efforts of local education funds to “advance public school reform in low-income communities. PEN believes an active, vocal constituency is the key to ensuring that every child, in every community, benefits from a quality public education.” The web site provides publications and an excellent summary of No Child Left Behind. The most valuable resource from PEN is its weekly *NewsBlast* which provides summaries and copies of current national research and reports. A free e-mail subscription is highly recommended.

Just For Kids
<http://www.just4kids.org/en/california/>

Just for Kids provides several useful comparisons and charts for use in department or grade level staff development. Just For Kids provides a sound and useful strategy for using data in the school context. They cite five strategies and provide limited details. Those familiar with Richard Dufour will find similar strategies for using data to improve school performance. The most useful charts provide comparisons of performance to similar schools by subject or grade level test. Just For Kids also identifies California schools which exemplify best practices. These include a number of LAUSD schools.

This column will be dedicated to those who wish to build their own leadership library, and will consist of both print and online resources. Reader submissions of all types are welcome regarding both the format and content of this column; please send submissions to Eliza Corpuz or Jim Gwin. These links will be added to the Blackboard link section.

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

- March 14 Grad Fest 2007
- March 30 Cesar Chavez Day– CAMPUS CLOSED
- April 2-8 Spring Break—ELPS DEPT OPEN WITH REGULAR HOURS
- April 20-21 Project Change Institute II: The Leadership Challenge, Self-Assessment (Cohort II only)
- May 25 Deadline to register for April 20-21 Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE)
- May 29 Honors Convocation
- June 1 Commencement—Michael D. Eisner College of Education
- June 2 UDWPE

KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED:
ACTIVATE AND MONITOR YOUR
CSUN E-MAIL ADDRESS!

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The goal of this project is to strengthen our secondary schools by producing educational leaders who will act as "change agents" to lead the organizational, instructional and operational challenges of school reform. California State University, Northridge's Colleges of Education will team with the College of Business and Economics, the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce in a coalition to:

- 1) create a recruiting model to build a diverse pool of secondary candidates;
- 2) prepare fifty new secondary candidates trained as "change agents" available for placement in urban schools;
- 3) train mentors to support and develop current and future administrators;
- 4) build the capacity of current administrators to lead school reform and increase the administrator retention rate with multiple-level support resources; and
- 5) train CSUN faculty to sustain the new education-business-community model.

This project will immediately impact District training practices and student learning. The results from this program will be published and disseminated to guide best practices for leadership in school reform.

COHORTS COMBINE FOR INSTITUTE

By Jim Gwin, Project Change Advisor

A unique feature of Project Change has been the Institutes, weekend seminars provided by outstanding presenters from the University and from national organizations. Cohorts I and II will join together this year for Institute I. Family Friendly Schools will kick off Project Change Institute I on March 9 and 10 at the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

Family Friendly Schools is an organization dedicated to helping schools and districts around the country to increase student achievement through improved parent, student, and staff communication. FFS' goal is to create a family and school culture of high performance. Dr. Steve Constantino of FFS is known for his engaging and motivational presentations. For more information see <http://www.familyfriendlyschools.com/> on the web.

On the evening of March 15, Turning Points will provide Institute II for Cohort I. Turning Points, an educational agency associated with The Center for Collaborative Education, organizes The Turning Points National Leadership Conference, "Realizing the Turning Points Vision for Excellence and Equity in the Middle Grades." More information is available at <http://www.turningpts.org/>.

On April 20 and 21, Dr. Jim Riedl will return to Project Change to lead Institute II on the topic of Learning-Focused Supervision, The presentation for Cohort II will explore the relationship between leadership and instructional improvement and will describe quality forms of instructional supervision. Learning-Focused Solutions is on the web at <http://www.learningfocused.com/index.php?page=107>