EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

VOICES FROM THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

An Outreach Study Conducted by

Ronald Barnes
David Kinman
David Reetz

School of Education
Indiana University
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Part I. Introduction

It has been said, “more is often accomplished together than alone.” Recognition of this reality has created a rush among higher education institutions, particularly those that prepare education professionals, to hasten to form cooperative relationships with schools, school districts, community agencies and businesses. A single partnership could represent, for example, small and large school districts from both rural and urban areas, a School of Education, some businesses, and social service agencies. Whether the groups identify themselves as partnerships, alliances, extended services, or collaboratives, such efforts often result in achievements that otherwise might remain a distant goal for each organization to reach on its own.

In this study, we consider partnerships among schools and the School of Education an opportunity to bring together diverse organizations, each with its own cultures, resources, ways of working, and decision-making in order to strengthen, build and sustain healthy relationships that yield desired results. From this context it was decided to conduct a series of small group sessions to listen to perceptions from the education community regarding the School of Education at Indiana University and determine interest in partnership development and professional development activities needed by local school corporations.

Part II. Assumptions and Principles

The study’s basic assumption is that the School of Education has a mission to prepare the best possible educators for schools, and the schools have a primary mission to improve student learning. With this guiding principle influencing our efforts, we decided upon an inquiry approach by conducting small group sessions across the state of Indiana. The basic guidelines, although simple in words, become more difficult to implement; yet they form a basis upon which education professionals and community leaders may work together to further common interests.

The principles we followed and purport to utilize in further outreach activities may be described as:

- **Find Out** about each other’s interests and needs.
- **Reach Out** to potential partners on their own turf with specific offers of assistance.
- **Spell Out** collaboratively the purposes and terms of the joint effort.
- **Work Out** the kinks as they will surely arise and change the approach when needed.
- **Build Out** from success by sharing positive results from those successful beginnings.
Outreach is defined as a process of mutual information sharing between Indiana University’s School of Education and Indiana schools to match needs and services on a regular basis. The outreach initiative differentiates itself from consulting and service-learning by creating learning structures for both the University and Indiana school communities.

Part III. Process

During the Fall 2000 Faculty and Staff Retreat, the Dean of the School of Education, Gerardo Gonzalez, proposed five goals that could guide in the planning of future activities of the School of Education. During the retreat, the proposed goals were discussed thoroughly and were accepted by the participants (faculty, staff and students) as appropriate for guiding the mission of the School.

Among these goals was an initiative to strengthen the School’s partnerships with and outreach to P-12 schools and communities. Faculty, staff and students at the Fall 2001 retreat further developed the partnership and outreach theme in order to achieve the goals:

- Define partnership/outreach/community and establish goals.
- Understand current partnerships and outreach initiatives.
- Conduct a needs assessment of statewide stakeholders.
- Report partnership and outreach information.
- Acquire sources of funding and support.
- Establish win-win relationships with schools and communities.

Leaders in education consisting of state officials, superintendents, principals, university faculty and deans of education throughout the state of Indiana were invited to attend regionally-held luncheons and focus groups. A total of twelve focus groups were conducted. Group facilitators consisted of Gerardo Gonzalez, Ron Barnes, Dave Kinman and David Reetz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Leaders of Leaders</td>
<td>October 31, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana Public Schools/University Partnership</td>
<td>November 30, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern Indiana School Study Council</td>
<td>December 08, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana University Purdue University at Fort Wayne</td>
<td>January 11, 2001</td>
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<td>Indiana University at Southeast</td>
<td>January 23, 2001</td>
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<td>Indiana University at Kokomo</td>
<td>April 20, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis</td>
<td>October 22, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University at Richmond</td>
<td>October 30, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Hills Study Council</td>
<td>November 02, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana University at Gary</td>
<td>November 07, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Southern Indiana</td>
<td>November 13, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana University at South Bend</td>
<td>November 16, 2001</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part IV. Findings

The following pages detail the findings of the needs assessment conducted with schools throughout the state of Indiana. Five themes emerged that embody the primary issues discussed by focus group participants and provide direction for building partnerships and future outreach initiatives with Indiana schools. Following each theme, not presented in particular order, several suggested strategic directions and identified opportunities are presented. From the suggested strategies and opportunities, seven implementation recommendations are presented to guide the development of an action plan for building stronger partnerships and outreach opportunities with Indiana schools. Finally, a follow-up procedure will be discussed.

THEME 1: STRENGTHENING TEACHER PREPARATION

Several suggestions emerged concerning the training of future educators. Focus group participants stated a need for strengthening the preparation of candidates in the areas of data management, classroom management, standards-based teaching, technology, generalist skills, special education and literacy. Also expressed was a need for greater candidate diversity and increased attention to the recruitment of highly talented candidates for the teaching profession.

Strategic Directions and Opportunities:

- Evaluate teacher education curriculum according to state and national standards
- Recruit IST graduate students to provide both in-service and pre-service technology training
- Recruit Inquiry graduate students to provide data-management training for educational leaders
- Explore diversity initiatives including recruitment, support and retention for candidates from underrepresented groups

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The primary concerns regarding professional development involved assisting educational administrators with Indiana Public Law 221, getting teachers up-to-date on Indiana student academic standards, curriculum frameworks and providing more convenient professional development opportunities.

Strategic Directions and Opportunities:

- Provide workshops to assist in implementing PL221 educational professionals
- Provide workshops to help teachers become familiar with assessments for Indiana student standards
• Provide supervising teachers graduate credit for mentoring
• Provide best practices discussion groups
• Increase convenience by providing more distance education and summer school workshops and seminars
• Provide more locally based advanced master’s degree programs and courses
• Increase marketing for graduate programs

THEME 3:  FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Focus group participants emphasized a need for more minority faculty in the School of Education, additional content specialists, increased involvement of faculty in school classrooms and more user-friendly data production.

Strategic Directions and Opportunities:

• Develop initiative to encourage faculty to visit K-12 classrooms routinely, in order to observe and participate in best practices in teaching and learning
• Continue the emphasis on minority faculty recruitment practices
• Develop a forum to publish ready-to-use education research data for teachers, written in a clear, concise, jargon free language

THEME 4:  EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

The need to better understand charter schools, training teachers for positions in educational leadership and proficiency with data-management were suggested. Additionally, a need to market leadership programs more widely and the critical need to meet a shortage of building administrators were discussed.

Strategic Directions and Opportunities:

• Recruit inquiry and IST graduate students to assist in technology and data-management training for educational leaders
• Develop school administration ambassadorship to promote education leadership at teacher conferences and graduate programs. Consider recent alumni as potential resource
• Offer superintendent licensure programs regionally across the state
• Provide building level administration programs at regional locations (i.e. Richmond, Kokomo and Evansville)

THEME 5:  CONTINUE TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Participants expressed a significant need for the School of Education to develop and maintain open channels of communication with schools throughout Indiana. Moreover, emphasis was placed on creating a user-friendly, non-bureaucratic atmosphere. Education leaders stated a strong need for a personal IU contact.
**Strategic Directions and Opportunities:**

- Develop an electronic newsletter that would be distributed regularly to state superintendents and principals regarding feature articles on best practices, legislative issues, faculty spotlight, upcoming workshops and other relevant issues (i.e. implementing PL221). Education leaders would be asked to pass the newsletter along to their faculty. The information could be written in a ready-to-use format. Newsletter recipients could also be asked to submit pertinent information for future distribution
- Provide link between school corporations and licensing office
- Match each region with an IU faculty contact

**Part V. Implementation Recommendations**

1. Create an advisory council of superintendents and principals to meet each semester with teacher education faculty. (see APPENDIX A for action plan)

2. Expand partnerships with schools to recruit diverse students.

3. Expand the Office of Professional Development to include a School Services department that will coordinate outreach activities to address the mutual needs of the School of Education and school corporations. Additionally, the School Services department could coordinate the dissemination of outreach related information via an electronic newsletter. The office should have a cabinet level role. Lastly, School Services could assemble and coordinate a core of graduate students to assist with outreach activities in technology and data management. (see APPENDIX B for action plan)

4. Initiate a study of the School of Education’s incentive system for outreach involvement with a special focus on tenured faculty participation in developing relationships with and routinely visiting with K-12 schools. (see APPENDIX C for action plan)

5. Expand licensure opportunity to all regions of the state, with a focus on areas that are under-served and in need. Additionally, the School of Education should continue to build a stronger education leadership presence by ensuring participation at state and national meetings and annual conferences.

**Part VI. Follow-up**

Upon completion and approval of the final outreach report, each participant will be sent an executive summary of the report. Participants will be invited to provide feedback on the report findings and their focus group experience.
## APPENDIX A: Create Advisory Council

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OUTREACH INITIATIVE
Create Advisory Council
APRIL 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>PERSON(S) TO COMPLETE TASK</th>
<th>COMPLETION OF TASK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task I.</strong> Identify group of educational administrators, including superintendents and principals, to serve as advisory council members.</td>
<td>• Associate Dean for Teacher Education</td>
<td>November, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task II.</strong> Convene a dinner meeting for the council.</td>
<td>• Associate Dean for Teacher Education</td>
<td>December, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task III.</strong> Develop an agenda conducive to discussing ideas about improving teacher education.</td>
<td>• Associate Dean for Teacher Education</td>
<td>January, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task IV.</strong> Invite Selected School of Education faculty and administration.</td>
<td>• Associate Dean for Teacher Education</td>
<td>December, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task V.</strong> Prepare summary report for participants.</td>
<td>• Associate Dean for Teacher Education</td>
<td>February, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX B: School Services Action Plan

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Create School Services Department  
APRIL 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>PERSON(S) TO COMPLETE TASK</th>
<th>COMPLETION OF TASK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Task I. Expand the Office of Professional Development to create School Services Department with a presence on the administrative cabinet. | • Dean’s Office  
• Associate Dean for Graduate Studies  
• Director of Office of Professional Development | December, 2002 |
| Task II. Create an electronic newsletter for the disseminating outreach information throughout the state. | • Director of School Services Department  
• School of Education faculty as appropriate | Spring, 2003 |
| Task III. Strengthen communication between school corporations and School of Education licensing to assist with implementation of new licensing rules (Rule 2002) of the state. | • Director or School Services Department  
• School of Education license advisors | Not later than Spring, 2003 |
| Task IV. Assemble and coordinate a core of graduate students to assist outreach activities in technology and data management. | • Director of School Services Department  
• IST and Inquiry faculty and graduate students | Not later than, Spring, 2003 |
| Task V. Develop marketing plan and strategies for delivering accessible graduate education courses and programs. | • Director of Office of Professional Development  
• Director of Student Services Department  
• Members, Administrative Cabinet | Spring, 2003 |
## APPENDIX C: Incentive Study Action Plan

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OUTREACH INITIATIVE
Incentive Study to Encourage Faculty Involvement in Outreach Activities
APRIL 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>PERSON(S) TO COMPLETE TASK</th>
<th>COMPLETION OF TASK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Task I.** Assemble research team to investigate a potential incentive system for outreach involvement with a special focus on tenured faculty participation in developing relationships with and routinely visiting with K-12 schools. | • Policy Council  
• Faculty Affairs Committee  
• Program Chairs  
• Deans of School of Education | Spring, 2003 |
| **Task II.** Develop a questionnaire for faculty response that outlines various options, approaches and reward systems that may encourage increased involvement of faculty. | • Faculty Affairs Committee  
• Program Chairs  
• School of Education Dean | Spring, 2003 |
| **Task III.** Conduct study | • Faculty Affairs Committee | Spring, 2003 |
| **Task IV.** Present findings to Policy Council and Dean | • Faculty Affairs Committee | Fall, 2003 |
| **Task V.** Implement recommendations | • School of Education Dean | Fall, 2003 |