

Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report

State Program Development

April 2016

Arkansas Co-Teaching Project

During October 2015, the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project formally began its partnership with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education (JHU CTE) to offer a blended, job-embedded co-teaching professional development package. The 2015-16 package includes:

- One traditional face-to-face session
- Six facilitated online learning modules
- Electronic learning communities for co-teachers and administrators
- Six virtual meetings with administrators
- Onsite coaching
- Co-teaching implementation evaluation

Co-teachers and administrators from 10 school buildings in 7 school districts are currently participating. The 10 school buildings include Cooper Elementary (Bentonville District), Elm Tree Elementary (Bentonville District), Crossett High (Crossett School District), Mountain Home Junior High (Mountain Home School District), Jack Robey Junior High (Pine Bluff District), Belair Middle (Pine Bluff District), Pine Bluff High (Pine Bluff District), Rivercrest Junior High (Rivercrest School District), Marshall High (Searcy County District), and Osceola High (Osceola School District). The ADE School Improvement status for these schools varies with 4 schools rated as Priority, 5 as Needs Improvement, and 1 as Achieving.

After the traditional face-to-face Kick Off session in October, co-teachers began completing their 6 online modules and sharing their work in the electronic learning community (ELC). Each module required co-teaching partners to work together to learn new content and create electronic products that reflected the application of the learning in their classrooms. The co-teachers were also required to individually respond to questions related to the module's content by posting responses in the ELC and completing online assessments. In addition, the co-teachers were required to rate their participation and the participation of their partnership after they completed each module. The JHU CTE and the AR Co-Teaching Project teams provided co-teachers with feedback to their postings and products in the ELC. They also kept co-teachers up-to-date on their completion status with regular emails and telephone calls. At this point, 27 of the 32 co-teachers have completed the 6 online modules.

In addition to the expectation that co-teachers would complete the module, there was also the expectation that the new learning would be applied within their co-taught classroom. The Boundless Learning Co-Teaching professional development package included formal supports for co-teachers for this purpose. Supports included 6 one hour webinars for their building administrators and onsite coaching visits. During the administrators' webinars, the teams from JHU CTE and the AR Co-Teaching Project provided an overview of the modules' content and led discussions on implementation issues and strategies for providing co-teachers with non-evaluative performance feedback. Administrators also received weekly status reports updating them on their co-teachers' online progress.

The focus of the onsite coaching visits was differentiated based on the needs of the co-teachers. In several sites, co-teachers who had never had an online learning experience had problems learning how to operate the computer modules. The AR Co-Teaching Project team assisted these co-teachers by providing hands-on assistance during onsite coaching visits and telephone, email, and text messaging technical assistance. Co-teaching partners also received classroom feedback/observation sessions that focused on the Team Based Cycle of Instruction (TBCI) and the 6 co-teaching instructional formats during the onsite coaching visits. At this point, all of the participating schools have been provided with at least two onsite coaching visits. Schools in ADE Priority status will continue to receive additional onsite coaching visits as their schedules permit.

The JHU CTE team has been invited back to provide a final face-to-face session on May 10, 2016. The session will focus on applying the TBCI in the co-taught classroom, utilizing tools that have been included in the online modules, and celebrating the achievements of the participants. In addition, all participants will engage in an end of the year co-teaching implementation evaluation process designed to measure changes in the co-taught classrooms, building/district level support for the co-teaching programs, and the impact on students with and without disabilities. Once this process is completed, participating schools will receive an end of the year report which will enable them to review pre/post co-teaching implementation data.

In addition to the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching professional development activities, the AR Co-Teaching Project team has provided support to schools interested in starting a co-teaching program or addressing fidelity implementation issues in an existing program. To address the concerns of several districts/schools targeted for improvement by the ADE School Improvement and the Special Education Units, the team provided a number of different activities at the Great Rivers Cooperative. These activities included a co-teaching presentation at the cooperative's monthly superintendents' meeting, an hour long implementation planning webinar, and a one day in-depth planning session for interested schools. At the request of the Pine Bluff School District, the team provided a ½ day planning session for 4 elementary schools interested in implementing next year. The team also continued with its telephone and email technical assistance to other interested districts.

Plans are being made to provide another cadre of the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching professional development package during 2016-17. Information should be available within the next few weeks. The AR Co-Teaching Project team is also in the process of scheduling co-teaching overview sessions at interested cooperatives this summer.

Children and Youth with Sensory Impairment and other disabilities (CAYSI)

- The Census has been sent out to all LEAs and will be sent to the national center
- Two families are being sponsored by the CAYSI Project to participate in the Southeast Regional Transition Institute in Athens, Georgia
- The parent groups in Siloam Springs, Little Rock, and Osceola are continuing with monthly meetings and are gaining leadership skills
- Technical assistance by the Educational Consultant consists of:
 - Ongoing Intensive TA with three teachers in Sherwood, Greenbrier, and Russellville

- Initial visits for newly qualified to Clinton, Little Rock, Percy, Lonoke, Trumann, and Stuttgart since January 2016
- Targeted TA has occurred in Vilonia, Maumelle, and Forrest City
- 8 New Teacher packets have been distributed since January, 2016

Professional Development Activities

- The ADE-SEU's Committee on the revision of the Arkansas **Paraprofessional Training** Modules has proposed six (6) new Modules that will be developed, recorded and housed on the Arkansas IDEAS Portal. Work on the Modules will begin this Spring and should be completed by the end of 2016. These Modules will be available to and provide high quality professional development for not only to paraprofessionals but also certified Arkansas educators through the Portal system.
- The ADE-SEU **Tuition Reimbursement programs** continue to support students seeking certification as Speech Language Pathologists and Visual Specialists for Arkansas public schools. The ADE's Memorandums of Understanding with out-of-state programs allow certified Arkansas teachers to work toward licensure as Visual Specialists and Hearing Specialists.
- SEU Professional Development continues to actively participate with the ADE's Teacher **Recruitment and Retention** program and the ADE Licensure Unit to attract and support persons interested becoming special education teachers. The next event is the ADE's "Become an Arkansas Teacher" on Saturday, April 16, at Heifer International, Little Rock.
- The ADE-SEU supports **Educational Interpreters** in Arkansas through TASK12, an assessment program for interpreters working in educational settings. Participation in TASK12 is a key support to the new standards for Educational Interpreters working in Arkansas schools.