

FAU Awarded \$3.5 Million Grant to Implement Intensive Job-embedded School Leadership Development Program

Florida Atlantic University was awarded a \$3.5 million Race to the Top grant for Job-embedded Principal Preparation Programs through the Florida Department of Education. The grant will provide funding for an innovative leadership development partnership between FAU's College of Education's Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology and Broward County Public School's Department of Human Resource Development.

The grant will fund the Principal Rapid Orientation and Preparation in Educational Leadership Program (PROPEL), which will be based at FAU's Davie campus. The program will institute streamlining and reform of current educational leadership and research methodology and of human resource development programs to develop a model of professional development that will facilitate qualified, motivated teachers to move into the role of successful principals within the Broward County School District.

"FAU's College of Education and Broward County Public Schools have been collaborating for some time on developing an innovative educational leadership program," said Valerie J. Bristor, dean of the College of Education at FAU. "We look forward to working together to move teachers into the role of principals who will successfully improve student achievement."

Daniel Reyes-Guerra, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology at FAU, will serve as the principal investigator for the program and will have overall programmatic and fiscal responsibilities. He also will chair a steering committee of FAU faculty and Broward administrators who will oversee the co-construction, development and delivery of the academic program.

PROPEL is designed to address the need for principals who can effectively respond to the challenges faced by urban school leaders in today's challenging environments. Its purpose will be to build a joint educational leadership program to improve student achievement by implementing research-based strategies and concrete evaluative measures centered on job-embedded experience. It will accomplish this by starting groups of 30 highly qualified teachers each year and, through a rigorous and accelerated program, prepare them to be principals of high-need schools.

The first two groups of 30 will be grant-funded. The first cohort will act as the pilot of the newly developed program. The second cohort will run through a reformed model based on the experiences of

the first cohort, thus developing continued program improvement. The program has built-in measures to become self-sustaining by the third cohort.

Broward County Public Schools is the nation's sixth largest school district, running 232 traditional schools, 76 charters, and one virtual school with diverse socio-economic, racial, and cultural demographics including immigrants from 173 countries, speaking 53 languages

Through the creation of this redesigned principal preparation program, the partners will be aligning the recruitment, selection, preparation, and evaluation systems to create an accelerated program for teachers aspiring to be principals. PROPEL plans to build internal capacity of both partners for mentoring, training, evaluation and implementing sustainable systems that will be viable into the future and replicable in other districts. The program will endow Broward County Public School's aspiring and novice principals with the knowledge and skills to effectively respond to the challenges faced by urban school leaders as they skillfully and strategically strive to increase student achievement..

Not only will this program meet Broward County Public Schools leadership needs through the preparation of 30 principals each year, but through these reforms it will provide a model - using research and evaluation - of enhancing student learning through the program's design based on best practices for aspiring principals in urban school districts.



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