



Central ERZ Strategic Plan

Consortium Members

Little Rock School District

Bale Elementary School
Hall High School

Magnolia Public Schools

Walker Pre-Kindergarten Center
West Side Kindergarten
East Side Elementary School
Central Elementary School
Magnolia Junior High School

Parents

Pulaski County Special School District

Oakbrooke Elementary School
Sherwood Elementary School
Sylvan Hills Elementary School
Sylvan Hills High School

South Central Educational Service Cooperative

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Business

Community Members

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Division of Education Renewal Zone
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Central Arkansas Education Renewal Zone Strategic Plan

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Part I—ERZ Planners and Planning Process

A. Creation of the Education Renewal Zone

In response to the need for successful school-community partnerships, Arkansas 106 (House Bill 1056) passed by the 84th General Assembly during the Second Extraordinary Session in 2003 stated *that schools and educators who serve them could benefit from a more focused and sustained collaboration with each other, the regional education service cooperatives, and the institutions of higher education engaged in teacher and school leadership preparation.*

Existing partnerships between the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock School District, and Magnolia Public Schools and ACSIP plans of the schools served as an underpinning for the original planning group of the Central Education Renewal Zone (ERZ). As a dialogue continued among these original key stakeholders, and as formal and informal meetings occurred with these schools and the South Central Co-operative, community groups, parent representatives, and business people, a more formalized plan emerged for the Central Education Renewal Zone.

Partners representing these entities comprised the Central ERZ steering committee. This group met systematically throughout the 2005-06 school year to refine the Central ERZ planning process. The ERZ Director met with school superintendents, principals, faculty and staff members, UALR administrators, Dean's Council, faculty and staff, and with area business leaders and community groups in an ongoing process of networking.

B. Evolution of the Partnership; Planning Expansion

As the year moved into its final quarter the original Central ERZ Director resigned and was replaced briefly by another, who also resigned, leaving the Central ERZ adrift for much of the first two quarters of the 2006-07 year. Lacking a Director, and refusing to lose forward momentum, the Dean of the College of Education, working with ERZ and Department of Education staff, convened the newly re-constituted and expanded Central ERZ Advisory Council in December of 2006, proving that the newly adopted slogan “Whatever It Takes To Make A Difference” was more than mere words.

The more specific plans developed at this meeting laid the groundwork necessary to begin the implementation of processes necessary in effecting systemic change within participating schools and for the students attending these schools. A new Central ERZ Director began work in January.

Other changes occurred after the first year as well, including a change of the composition of the partnership. The Little Rock School District cut its participation to focus on Bale Elementary and Hall High Schools; Magnolia Public Schools expanded by bringing its kindergarten, pre-kindergarten and junior high schools on board; and Pulaski County Special School District joined the partnership, bringing three of its elementary schools and a high school into the partnership.

- The initial steering committee of the Central Education Renewal Zone consisted of 19 key stakeholders representing each of the identified initial partners. During the 2005-2006 year, this group expanded to embrace 53 members and was renamed the Central Education Renewal Zone Advisory Council. The Advisory Council continues to meet quarterly and the University, the Educational Cooperative and the public schools work collaboratively to make plans and necessary revisions.

C. Partnership Vision, Mission and Goal Statements

The Mission and Vision statements were created during a series of preliminary meetings during the 2004-2005 school year. Discussions provided the formative groundwork of the Central ERZ initiative. Principals, school officials, higher education members, education service cooperative members, parents, and community members met to discuss specific needs as determined by participants. Common threads were extracted from these discussions and served as the foundation of the over-arching goal statements. Realizing that successful long term solutions to existing areas of need depend upon close collaboration among all members, each participant committed to the Central ERZ Initiative.

The partners of the Central ERZ have met regularly since that time to continue the dialogue regarding the role, responsibility, and scope of the Central ERZ.

a. Vision Statement:

The members of the Central ERZ envision that every participating school will be a thriving, dynamic and inspiring educational environment that produces self-directed learners and stimulates citizens of all ages to trust in, invest in, and benefit from public education.

b. Mission Statement:

The mission of the Central ERZ is to work in partnership with students, families, and the community to ensure that each student acquires the knowledge, skills, and core values necessary to achieve personal success and to enrich the community.

c. Goal Statement

The goal of the Central ERZ is to identify and link the needs of participating public schools with the resources of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the South Central Cooperative, the community, parents, and the community's business leaders in a cohesive, collaborative approach to improve school performance and student achievement through sustained, high quality professional development for all participants.

The goals of the Central ERA will encompass and embrace the following:

- Co-teaching
- Enhancing leadership through the Scholastic Audit training
- Providing leadership in the area of science
- Partnering university professors with schools
- Providing professional development utilizing expertise of university professors and education service cooperatives

D. Guiding Principles:

Trust-Trust emerges as relationships are built and sustained through open dialogue and the development of mutual respect for those involved in the change process. To foster a trusting environment, the Central ERZ will work to maintain lines of communication to facilitate a mutual exchange of information, both formally and informally.

Common Goals-Common goals identified by the Central ERZ have emerged from the shared vision of improving the overall educational system for all children.

Parity-ERZ stakeholders will work together to reach innovative solutions to identified needs. Dialogue among parents, community members, teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and regional education service cooperatives will continue to expand.

Commitment of Resources-Central ERZ partners will make equitable contributions of resources. The Central ERZ will continue to identify cost effective, viable resources and make this information available. The process of managing and sharing available resources will occur through extensive collaboration among key stakeholders.

Ongoing Dialogue-The continuing dialogue between partners provides both the basis and framework for change. The Central ERZ's facilitation of interaction and discussion among all key stakeholders will expand beyond the schools to include neighboring communities, businesses, and parents.

Shared Knowledge Base-The University of Arkansas at Little Rock will assist key stakeholders to develop a shared knowledge base of ongoing practice and research to accomplish the overall goals of professional development, improved school performance, and academic achievement. The Central ERZ will store and disseminate resource information available to address educational issues.

Public and Professional Accountability-With input of all key stakeholders, the Central ERZ will research a variety of measurement instruments designed to evaluate partnership operations and measure outcomes against professional standards. A sampling of data will emerge from Benchmark test scores, Advanced Placement test scores, Accelerated Reader test scores, Iowa Basic Skills Test scores, and a number of other quantitative sources. Qualitative methods will include teacher journaling, interviews, observations, and surveys provided to teachers, parents, and students.

E. Legislative Purposes:

The partnership vision, goals, and mission will be accomplished through the successful fruition of the purposes identified by the Arkansas Legislature. These purposes are listed below with examples. These purposes reflect the common needs of the partners and have been expanded in the logic model and in tables 1-9.

- *To identify and implement educational and management strategies designed specifically to improve public school performance and student academic achievement throughout the state of Arkansas, with special focus on schools in some phase of school improvement. Special focus*

schools:

- Hall High School-Year 3
- Sylvan Hills Elementary School-On Alert
- Sylvan Hills High School-Year 2
- *Provide for collaboration among the state's smaller schools and districts in order to achieve some of the economic and other advantages (economy of scale) realized by larger systems in providing educational and related service:*
 - Partnering with Southwest B and River Valley Education Renewal Zones to offer Scholastic Audit Training to School Administrators via CIV
- *Maximize benefits and outcomes of public schooling by concentrating and coordinating the resources of Arkansas's higher education institutions, the expertise of the regional educational service cooperatives and the technical assistance of other service providers to improve public school performance and student academic achievement:*
 - K-5 Smart Start Science Institute-Professional development for six days of grade level specific science content and pedagogy, emphasizing inquiry, administered by the Little Rock School District. PD trainers consist of University faculty and science specialists from Math-Science Partnerships at Henderson State University, University of Central Arkansas, and University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
 - Summer Science Institute Grant-A three year NCLB grant administered by the College of Education to provide professional development emphasizing content and pedagogy for middle school science teachers. College of Mathematics and Science faculty and the University of Arkansas School for the Medical Arts faculty will be instructors.
- *Enable small, rural, and low-wealth schools to make the best use of the latest cost-effective distance learning technology to enhance professional development and, where appropriate, curricula, through two-way interactive learning environments:*

- Scholastic Audit Training for School Administrators via CIV August 6-7, 2007
- Dual Credit and Early College High School courses offered through Distance Learning

Part II—Partnership Work Plan

A. Partners

a. University of Arkansas at Little Rock

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) is the institution of higher education that was designated to host the Central Education Renewal Zone. UALR is a dynamic metropolitan university with a mission to extend its expertise beyond the campus to solve community problems and involve students in real world learning experiences. Through partnerships with Central Arkansas business, medicine, and government, UALR creates a unique learning laboratory balancing traditional classroom methods with opportunities in the field. The urban setting also positions UALR students to help meet community needs through service learning projects.

College of Education

The mission of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock College of Education is to promote and strengthen the professional development of individuals concerned with education and human resource development in a variety of settings such as schools, colleges and universities, private and corporate organizations, and government agencies. Within the umbrella of the College of Education are found the Center for Applied Studies in Education; the Center for Developmental Skills; Counseling, Adult and Rehabilitation Education; the Department of Educational Leadership; and the Department of Teacher Education. Each of these departments offer specialized instruction based upon their unique offerings. As such, it is logical that the Central ERZ be housed within the Dean's Office of the College of Education.

The Center for Applied Studies in Education (CASE) seeks to improve the quality of education and human services in Arkansas and globally through a number of inter-related activities: conducting research on the effectiveness of programs and practices in education and human services; providing technical

assistance in statistics, research design, measurement methodologies, data management, and program evaluation to students, faculty, and external groups and agencies; providing formal and informal consultation, technical assistance, and instruction to students, faculty, programs, and external groups and agencies; as well as offering professional advice and consultation to the education and human services communities.

The Department of Counseling, Adult and Rehabilitation Education (CARE) provides a quality education to a heterogeneous student body at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The goal is to prepare students with the special knowledge and skills for professional work in education and human service fields, and to enhance students' abilities to be successful in their chosen fields of study.

The Department of Educational Leadership serves as an academic department housing five graduate programs and also as a supporting unit for all programs within the College of Education specifically in the areas of historical, philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations of education, educational research, educational statistics, and instructional technology. Housed in this department is an emphasis area under Special Education which offers licensure endorsement courses for educators, as well as a full Master's degree program for teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Department of Teacher Education seeks to provide a balanced teacher education program that embodies institutional and college goals, the Arkansas Department of Education teacher licensure requirements, guidelines of learned societies and professional associations, and contemporary educational philosophies and practices.

In addition to the College of Education, UALR hosts the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science; the Clinton School of Public Service; the College of Business; the Donaghey College of Information Science and Systems Engineering; the College of Professional Studies; the College of Science and Mathematics; the Graduate Institute of Technology; the Graduate School; the Sequoyah Research Center; and the School of Law.

b. Little Rock School District

Within the Little Rock School District, two schools, Hall High School and Bale Elementary, will participate as Central Education Renewal Zone partners in the 2006-2007 school year. The partnership between the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Hall High via the concurrent enrollment program had previously cemented the relationship between them. Bale Elementary had a previously-established relationship with UALR through the University District

Excellent Schools Initiative and, as with Hall, the relationship becomes stronger within the ERZ partnership.

Bale Elementary School

The mission of Bale Elementary School is to provide a safe, nurturing environment in which all children will develop academic, emotional, and social skills that will lead them to be productive citizens in the new millennium.

Bale's priorities are literacy; improving student achievement in content standards in all five mathematical strands; improving reading skills, answering open-ended questions and reading comprehension skills across the curriculum.

Hall High School

It is the mission of Hall High School to provide each student with opportunities and the guidance necessary to develop skills for accessing and processing information; dealing with change, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving; developing creativity; positive human relationships; and positive cultural values in order to serve their community and society and achieve personal fulfillment. It is believed that learning is a lifelong process in which students are expected to take personal responsibility, that there are no limits on what students can learn, and what learning must take place in a nurturing, safe environment that recognizes the diversity of individuals while assuring equity for all.

Hall's priorities are to improve literacy skills and math skills; increase parent involvement and participation; and to have students show improvement in their overall health, wellness and academic performance

c. Magnolia Public Schools

The partnership with East Elementary School and Central Elementary School has been in existence prior to the development of the Education Renewal Zone initiative. Previously, the Reading Recovery program on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock worked closely with the Magnolia Public Schools, specifically with the two identified schools, to address identified needs in the area of reading and in the training of literacy coaches.

All of this work was founded upon the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy Model, which was developed on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Data are and will continue to be collected and analyzed with regard to student progress and student continuation at grade level after investigation of

possible grant and foundation support opportunities, as well as additional partnering with business and community members while maintaining the focus on literacy achievement improvement and professional development opportunities for the teachers as they extend literacy across the curriculum.

Eastside Elementary School

Eastside Elementary School, recognizing students as citizens of tomorrow in cooperation with the family and community, is committed to preparing each child for the future by meeting, not only their academic needs with a focus on proficiency in literacy and mathematics, but also their technological and social needs within a nurturing environment which enhances lifelong learning.

Eastside Elementary School's priorities are to increase mathematical and literacy achievement of all students.

Central Elementary School

Magnolia's Central Elementary School is working to bridge the gap between early childhood and adolescence. The commitment is to provide an environment which fosters a respect for learning that will promote success. Students are expected to reach their full potential in all educational endeavors. Priorities are on increasing literacy and mathematics achievement for all students.

Walker Pre-Kindergarten Center

Walker Pre-Kindergarten Center, recognizing students as citizens of tomorrow in cooperation with the family and community, is committed to preparing each child for the future by meeting, not only their academic needs with a focus on proficiency in literacy and mathematics, but also their technological and social needs within a nurturing environment which enhances lifelong learning.

Priorities are to increase mathematical and literacy achievement for all students.

West Side Kindergarten School

West Side Kindergarten School, recognizing students as citizens of tomorrow in cooperation with the family and community, is committed to preparing each child for the future by meeting, not only their academic needs with a focus on proficiency in literacy and mathematics, but also their technological and social needs within a nurturing environment which enhances lifelong learning.

Priorities are to increase mathematical and literacy achievement for all students.

Magnolia Junior High School

A partnership will be established among students, faculty, staff, the family, and the community within a safe learning environment which allows students to grow in personal responsibility and in academics, with an emphasis on proficiency in literacy and mathematics, enabling them to become productive lifelong learners.

Priorities are to improve student performance in mathematics and reading comprehension; to achieve grade level proficiency in science; to reduce the percent of black students in the special education program; and to improve the overall wellness of students.

d. Pulaski County Special School District

Sherwood Elementary School

Sherwood Elementary School's mission is to educate all students to their fullest potential in a safe and orderly climate. Sherwood Elementary will provide a standard based curriculum inclusive of technology integration which will enhance skills, confidence, and compassion to contribute to a diverse society.

Priorities are improved literacy, math, and school climate, and to create a healthy school environment that supports wellness.

Sylvan Hills High School

Sylvan Hills High School provides each student with an educational foundation including technology, guidance, and opportunities necessary to lead a successful and productive life. This is accomplished by encouraging students to perform above or at the level of proficiency while respecting the diversity of all.

Priorities are improved achievement in math and literacy improved climate, and improved student health and well-being.

Sylvan Hills Elementary

Sylvan Hills Elementary School's mission includes creating a safe, healthy, and caring environment and educating all students to achieve at the proficient academic level. School staff and parents are committed to preparing students for a technology rich world, where respect, good character and self-discipline are evident.

Priorities are improved literacy and mathematical skills, to improve school climate, and to increase wellness.

Oakbrooke Elementary School

It is the mission of Oakbrooke Elementary School to educate all students to become lifelong learners, provide a standards-based curriculum, develop higher level thinking, working, and social skills in order for all students to become responsible citizens in an ever-changing technological world.

Priorities are to increase performance in literacy and in mathematics strategies and skills; to provide a safe and orderly environment and to improve the health and academic performance of students.

e. South Central Education Service Cooperative

The mission of the South Central Service Cooperative is to empower our schools and community to meet their educational goals through all available resources. By linking our schools together for success, our spirit of cooperation guides us to practice what we teach.

South Central Education Service Cooperative services the four-county area including Ouachita, Union, Calhoun and Columbia Counties. There are thirteen school districts in the Co-op’s service area: Bearden, Camden-Fairview, El Dorado, Emerson-Taylor, Hampton, Harmony Grove, Junction City, Magnolia, Norphlet, Parkers Chapel, Smackover, Stephens, and Strong-Huttig School Districts.

f. Advisory Council Partner Representation

The steering committee which was initially organized to oversee the creation, implementation, and evaluation processes of the Central ERZ has been re-constituted, re-vitalized, and renamed. Participating partner representatives who serve on the Central ERZ Advisory Council are listed below:

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Angela Sewall, Dean (College of Education)

Rene’ T. Carson, NCATE Coordinator (College of Education)

David McAlpine, Graduate Programs Coordinator (College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences)

Neelie Dobbins, Math Specialist, Teacher Education (College of Education)

Ken Galchus, Department Chair, (Economics & Finance)

Mark Giese, Assistant Professor, (School of Mass Communication)

Keith Harris, Science Education Specialist, Teacher Education (College of Education)

Jason Kushner, Assistant Professor, CARE (College of Education)

Janet Lanza, Professor, (College of Mathematic and Science)

Michele Linch, Assistant Professor, Teacher Education, (College of Education)

Stacy Pendergraft, Visiting Assistant Professor, (Theater Department)

Sharon Ann Richardson, Assistant Professor (Educational Leadership)

Ann Robinson, Professor, (Education Leadership)

Mark Workman, Dean, (Extended Programs)

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Olivine Roberts, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Junious Babbs, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction

Sadie Mitchell, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction

Lloyd Sain, Director, Professional Development

Barbara Anderson, Principal, Bale Elementary School

Ramona Geurin,, Consultant Teacher, Bale Elementary School

John Bacon, Principal, Hall High School

MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

John Moore, Superintendent

Nancy Lewis, Curriculum and Instruction

Kim Wyrick, Curriculum Coordinator

Laurie Chandler,, Coordinator, West Side Kindergarten Center

Chris Hurley, Principal, Magnolia Junior High School

Kerry Keith,, Literacy Coach, East Side Elementary School

Ethel King, Principal, Central Elementary School

Kathy Loper, Literacy Coach, Central Elementary School

Lynetta Roberts, Walker Pre-Kindergarten Center

LaNita Talley, Principal, Eastside Elementary and West Side Elementary

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

James Sharpe, Superintendent

Beverly Ruthven, Deputy Superintendent for Learning Services

Rhonda Harnish, Director, Elementary Education

Doug Ask, Director, Staff Development

Josie Brazil, Principal, Sherwood Elementary School

Marilyn Conley, Principal, Oakbrooke Elementary School

Lou Jackson, Principal, Sylvan Hills Elementary School

Danny Ebbs, Principal, Sylvan Hills High School

In addition, other partners are actively involved to include the communities; the South Central Education Service Cooperative; distance learning; business representatives and parent group representatives.

COMMUNITY

Barrett Allen, Office of Community Engagement, UALR

Ron Copeland, Director, Office of Community Engagement, UALR

Walker Sloan, Chairman, Tri-District Partners

Dorothy Nayles, Director, Community Programs, City of Little Rock

BUSINESS

Erma Colding, Assistant Manager, Twin City Bank

DISTANCE LEARNING

Michael Lar, Program Coordinator, Distance Learning Center

Shirley Pickle, Instructional Coordinator, Distance Learning Center

PARENTS

Dawn Miller, PTA President, Sylvan Hills High School

Marshall Sladyen, Parent Center Coordinator, Hall High School

Debra Webster, PTA Treasurer, Bale Elementary School

SOUTH CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Marsha Daniel, Director

Debbie Cearley, Coordinator

B. COLLABORATION and COMMUNICATION

The Advisory Council will meet at least once per quarter each year to provide a structured forum to facilitate collaboration and communication that is necessary to plan and evaluate ERZ activities. These meetings will bring each entity into the important dialogue that is essential to identify school partners'

needs and the available resources of UALR, the educational cooperatives, parents, and the community.

A wide array of academic departments is represented by the 17 UALR representatives on the Central ERZ Advisory Council. This participation will likely be expanded as ad hoc committees begin working on specific tasks.

Communication is also furthered through the use of listservs, whereby relevant information is distributed to the full council, individual work groups, school principals and superintendents, and others as deemed necessary. Listservs allow immediate feedback and facilitates an ongoing dialogue. This type of communication can serve as a stimulant for finding creative solutions to common problems.

Regular visits to partner schools and districts, phone calls, and emails will form the backbone of all communication efforts.

A quarterly newsletter composed and distributed by ERZ staff provides information about ERZ projects, activities, and other matters of interest to teachers, academic leaders, parents, business people, and the community. This method of communication complements the ERZ website.

The ERZ website is expanded and updated as additional resources are identified. In this way, partners can keep abreast of newly identified resources and other helpful information.

The ERZ Director and staff will continue to build capacity among partners in order to maintain and to expand the ERZ collaborative effort begun under the Central ERZ initiative. On-going needs assessments will continue to identify needs. If resources are not readily identifiable or available, a search for additional resources will begin.

C. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A vast collaborative effort to model in-service best-practices training will be implemented. This pioneer effort will include three components: Co-Teaching & Mentoring, a Summer Science Institute, and the K-5 Smart Start Science Initiative.

Input from UALR Deans, Provost, and the faculty and staff will be solicited to assess level of interest. Inventory-assessment will be conducted to determine levels of experience and areas of expertise of university faculty/staff and to determine training needs prior to implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of these activities will continue throughout the 2007-08 year. These efforts will facilitate discussions for the implementation of any necessary

revisions to pre-service programs.

Co-Teaching & Mentoring

A comprehensive program of professional development will be developed based upon the needs identified in the Central ERZ needs-based survey included as an appendix to this document. Logistics will be planned for co-teaching following a study of ADE pre-training guidelines. Trained UALR staff will develop onsite professional development experiences for teams from ERZ schools and one on one mentoring will be provided on-site. Co-teaching is also expected to occur in Higher Ed and Special Ed Department. These professional development activities are expected to meet needs identified by partner schools in a recent survey conducted by the ERZ. Repeating themes of need in the survey results included designing instruction and assessments for special needs students, assisting students with special needs more geared to grade level, classroom and behavior management, technology usage, obtaining resource and materials, student progress evaluation, diagnosing student needs, and connecting core content to real-life experiences.

Evaluation will be conducted at the end of the year and the model will be re-designed as needed for the following year. Professional development is planned for university staff, and elementary and secondary teams will be recruited for the following years' training.

Summer Science Institute

A collaborative effort between the Little Rock School District ESC, the Math/Science Partnership, and the UALR College of Education plans to conduct a summer science institute to develop inquiry science lessons to implement the new state science frameworks with Grades K-5 with inservice teachers in the LRSD. Training will occur at the beginning of 2007-08 with follow-up sessions scheduled in November 2007 and January 2008.

Distance Learning Technology & Economies of Scale

A data base matrix will be developed which will communicate professional development opportunities, identify areas of overlap, and provide information on areas of overlap which can be used to achieve economies of scale. Alternative methods of delivering professional development such as the use of CIV will be explored as well.

D. EXPANSION OF CURRICULA

In an effort to enhance and expand local school curricula offerings through the use of two-way interactive television and other ways in which technology can be utilized, a technology audit of ERZ member schools will be conducted. Upon confirmation that technology is available and completion of an assessment of the competence and comfort level of faculty/staff, a plan will be developed to address the identified needs. In addition, a comprehensive course audit of each high school in the ERZ will be conducted with results charted on a matrix for use in developing an action plan for technology-delivered advanced placement, dual credit, and advanced high school courses. The University does offer on-line courses each semester for pre-service and in-service teachers. The selection varies from semester to semester.

E. SHARING OF FACULTY

In order to determine the need for faculty sharing across the Central ERZ, an intensive effort will be made to identify the particular needs of each partner school. Exploration activities will also be conducted within the Institution of Higher Education to determine how its faculty can be used in the partner schools.

Outcomes expected to facilitate the faculty sharing process include the development of a matrix projecting the staffing needs of each partner school and a list of IHE faculty and staff which will contain credentialing information and willingness to participate in faculty sharing.

F. RECRUITING AND RETAINING TEACHERS

The strategy for recruiting and retaining highly-qualified teachers will embrace a two-pronged effort. Teachers of Tomorrow Clubs will be established or strengthened in partner high schools and a system developed to allow meaningful interaction between those Clubs and the TOT of the University.

An assessment of the recruitment strategies of University and ERZ partner schools will be used to evaluate the methods and resources used to attract teacher-program candidates. In addition, the ERZ will facilitate roundtable discussions with partner school district personnel to brainstorm “out-of-the-box” recruitment and retention ideas. Research will be conducted to identify successful programs in other hard-to-staff areas and to discover incentives that may be available to encourage teachers to migrate toward hard-to-staff areas. This will include legislatively-introduced incentives designed to attract teachers and the researching of grants, loan-forgiveness programs, and other monetary incentives that are available.

G. MENTORING TEACHERS

In order to develop a system for mentoring teachers with three (3) or fewer years of professional service as well as career status teachers whose performance indicates the need of help, the ERZ in consultation with its partner school superintendents, principals, counselors, and Pathwise mentors, will use various methods and tools to assess the degree of need for mentoring and work with partners to determine the effectiveness of Pathwise mentoring. In addition, the ERZ will identify and list mentoring programs being used other than Pathwise. These will be listed and will include participants and copies of materials or curriculum used.

In an effort to measure retention, the ERZ will consult with school principals and superintendents about using HR departments to conduct an exit interview process to identify and document reasons teachers give for leaving.

A survey will be conducted to determine the need for content-area mentoring by career teachers. Once gathered and analyzed, this data will be used in conjunction with that gathered on novice teachers to design a sustainable long-term mentoring plan designed to meet the needs of both novice and career teachers. This effort will be supported by ongoing research of successful mentoring programs.

H. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Efforts will be redoubled to stimulate increased participation of parents and members of the community in the academic work of the schools.

The Advisory Council presently contains three parent representatives. Three additional representatives will be recruited, provided orientation to the ERZ purpose, and added to the Council membership. A similar initiative will be conducted to add members from the community. Three additional representatives from partner communities will be added to the Advisory Council.

In addition, research will be conducted to determine which community and parent activities may be supported by the ERZ and, from that, a plan of action will be developed, implemented, evaluated, and adjusted as necessary to accomplish the goal of increasing involvement of parents and communities in the partner schools.

The partnership will work together with the Little Rock Zoo to formulate a plan to involve parents and PTA members as docents with the Zoo. These docents would be able to bring the Zoo's educational materials and programs to schools at a reduced cost to the schools.

Part II—Evaluation Strategies

As a means of collecting valuable data concerning the impact of the Central Education Renewal Zone initiative upon the participating schools found within the Little Rock School District, the Magnolia Public Schools, and the Pulaski County Special School District, the Central ERZ has opted to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research in an attempt to accurately document the process of change. Formative and summative evaluations will also provide information specifically targeting participants' feedback on the Central ERZ initiative, as well as final program outcomes. The four over-arching questions that will remain as the focus of all data collection and analysis include:

1. Did the institutions of higher education (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) and education service cooperatives (Little Rock Public Schools, Pulaski County Special School District and South Central Service Cooperative) increase their connection to the public schools and the community?
2. Did the institutions of higher education (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) and education service cooperatives (Little Rock Public Schools, Pulaski County Special School District and South Central Service Cooperative) make their resources more readily available to the schools?
3. Did the schools take advantage of those resources?
4. Did the ERZ develop a strategic plan that encompassed collaboration among institutions of higher education, education service cooperatives, public schools, parents, and community; economies of scale; technology; and teacher recruitment, retention, and preparation?

Quantitative Research—this information will be collected statistically through test score data and surveys, as well as teacher and student data provided by the schools and utilized by local, state, and national agencies.

- The number of new teachers enrolling in and completing revised teacher preparation programs
- The number of K-12 students impacted by the Central ERZ initiative
- The number of K-12 schools and communities impacted by the project

- The number of current teachers enrolled in and completing new and revised coursework for certification in their present teaching area(s) and additional certification(s) in other areas
- The changes in the number of uncertified staff and unfilled teaching positions in participating K-12 school districts as a result of project involvement

Qualitative Research– this data will be collected through the use of journals, one-to-one and group interviews, observations, and surveys.

- The extent and pattern of the interaction and collaboration among the partners
- The nature and quality of leadership that emerges among the participating constituents
- The extent to which school and community linkages are strengthened and serve to sustain and improve education
- The extent to which project efforts are integrated into the ongoing work of the partnering institutions and organizations.

All data collected will be used to guide the development of future Central ERZ planning and initiatives.

Part III—Appendices

A. STRATEGIC PLAN MATRIX

B. ERZ Map

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