



Central Education Renewal Zone Strategic Plan

Consortium Members:

University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Little Rock School District

Elementary Schools:
Bale, Franklin, Watson

Middle Schools:
Cloverdale, Southwest

High Schools:
Hall, Fair, McClellan

Students

Community Members

South Central Cooperative
Magnolia Public Schools

Elementary Schools:
Eastside, Central

Parents

Business Leaders

Presented to:
Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Education Renewal Zone
Little Rock, Arkansas

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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.

The Seven Guiding Principles

Trust-trust emerges as relationships are built and sustained through open dialogue and respect for those involved in the change process. To establish a trusting environment, the Central ERZ Director will continuously work to keep open the lines of communication through face-to-face encounters as well as through written correspondence, whether it is through email, letters, or formal documents.

Common Goals-common goals have been identified by stakeholders of the Central ERZ, and have sprung forth from the shared vision of improving the overall educational system for all children.

Parity-an environment of respect and validation must exist as Central ERZ stakeholders work together to creatively reach solutions to identified areas of concern. Voices of those that are often disenfranchised will be heard, as opportunities for dialogue among parents, community members, teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and regional education service cooperatives continue to expand.

Commitment of Resources-partners that comprise the Central ERZ will make equitable contributions of resources. The Central ERZ Director will continue in her search for cost effective, viable resources which will be made available to participating schools, communities, and education service cooperatives. The process of managing and sharing available resources will result from collaboration among key stakeholders.

Ongoing Dialogue-ongoing dialogue is the foundation from which change will originate. Therefore, the Central ERZ Director will engage in continuous dialogue with all key stakeholders, and will encourage and expect the conversations to broaden from within the schools and include neighboring communities, businesses, and parents.

Shared Knowledge Base-to accomplish the overall goals of professional development, school performance, and academic achievement, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock will assist key stakeholders in developing a shared knowledge base of ongoing practice and research. With the coordination

Vision and Mission of the Central ERZ (continued)

and assistance of the Central ERZ Director, all partners will have opportunities to share in and contribute to an ever-increasing knowledge and awareness of resources to specifically target addressed educational issues.

Public and Professional Accountability-with the input of all key stakeholders, the Central ERZ Director 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.

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.

Introduction

Kisner, Mazza, and Liggett (1997) noted that “partnerships between all levels of education and local business and industry are essential components of today’s school reform initiatives” (p. 1). Further, the importance of recognizing and supporting families and community members as partners in learning was identified as critical to the success of a school. Therefore, a working definition is needed to determine specific characteristics that comprise community partnerships, as well as key factors in successfully fostering such partnerships to enhance learning and support reform.

Definition of Partnership

McCoy, Malick, and Leighninger (2003) asserted that fostering school-community connections or partnerships is an essential part of creating educational cultures where students can flourish. Epstein (1992) shared that a partnership is forged through the creation of a formal agreement to work towards common goals and to share in the profits or benefits of the created alliance. Building on this concept, Kisner, et al. (1997) described it as a continuous cooperative effort in which ideas are generated and resources are pooled with the purpose of accomplishing a common set of goals. Colgan (2003) believed that to capitalize on the strengths of the school, the community must experience the positive aspects of the school. Thus, educational leaders must promote interactions to inform the community that “educators lead students from their hearts and that the welfare of the students come first in the school” (p. 39). Building on this partnership, a balance of support can be achieved (Colgan, 2003).

Epstein (2001) presented a framework of six types of involvement that support school improvement efforts—parent education, communication with parents, recruitment training and scheduling parent volunteers, involving families in academic learning situations at home, including families in decision making, and collaborating with the community. Often, a community partnership will result in expectations that exceed traditional attitudes in the areas of professional development, participation, and student enjoyment. More importantly, partnerships can provide opportunities for improved teaching strategies as well as enhanced student learning, which can have long range effects on successful participation in secondary and higher education classes.

Colgan (2003) noted that building these types of relationships can create lasting partnerships in which every constituent has the common goal of student success. Further, Tangri and Moles (1987) noted that additional benefits include an expanded expertise on specific topics and subject areas, expanded contacts for teachers and administrators with resources in the community, direct financial contributions resulting from business support, and donation of equipment from businesses (p. 48). However, building successful partnerships require educational leaders who have “big picture thinking,” providing the available energy and resources needed to make “true symbiotic relationships between schools and communities a reality” (Colgan, 2003, p. 6).

The Re-Birth of Partnerships

Duffy (2003) noted that “the problems we face in public education are dynamically complex, multifaceted, and ever changing” (p. 101). In response to these problems, educational leaders are compelled to shift their focus from solving problems to seeking opportunities (Duffy, 2003). Evidence supporting this notion has dramatically risen in concert with the number of educationally-based partnerships in the American.

Administrators, teachers, and community leaders must work together to find innovative reform methods ensuring successful learning environments for all students (Kisner, et al., 1997).

Epstein (2001) noted that although the change process sometimes seems slow and arduous, steady progress is being made and beneficial strides are revealing themselves through increased test scores and stronger links to neighborhood issues. Connections are made through real-world application, problems are shared, and solutions are developed cooperatively among schools and community groups. Further, according to Kisner, et al. (1997), the nature of partnerships has transitioned from a strictly advisory capacity to more of a collaborative effort, conveying whole communities towards an effort of reform.

Relationship Initiation and Endurance

How are school-community partnerships created? Bringle and Hatcher (2002) extensively researched campus-community partnerships, and found that there are definite beginnings, either through planned events or through serendipitous occurrences. Crises may create the need for the formation of certain partnerships, as can net-working opportunities in and among party members. Even community agencies seeking assistance from

Historical Narrative (continued)

volunteers can hold a potential partnership relationship.

To build these emerging partnerships, Kisner, et al. (1997) identified the following elements necessary to build effective community partnerships:

Selection of strategic partners—partners should be chosen for their ability to build a synergy with the school, resulting in a successful, productive partnership.

Definition of clear goals—goals should be set at the beginning of the relationship that define the objectives and time frame for all participants.

Continuation of the partnership—this partnership agreement needs to be formal with the participants and their responsibilities clearly delineated, a timeline for the project and clear expectations of the outcomes established.

Creation of an evaluation process—the evaluation process needs to be completed providing members of the partnership valuable feedback.

An additional factor required for effective partnerships to thrive involves the synthesis of freedom and relationships—the participants must experience the freedom necessary to build healthy relationships.

Members must identify the collective needs of all constituents, ensuring valuable, sustainable support for future endeavors. According to Richmond (1996), for significant change to take place in our schools, there must be interaction between those individuals that understand community resources and their availability and those with an understanding of schools and the students found within its walls. Further, Epstein (1995) added that trust and respect enable partnerships to reach and maintain healthy relationships. Through the foundation of trust and respect, partnerships can withstand problems, disputes, and disparities. If structures and processes are created and maintained throughout the relationship that allow for solutions to be determined, then the chance increases for a partnership to succeed and strengthen over time.

According to Houston (2001), education critics contend that the system has failed, even deteriorated over time without any possibility of reenergizing or reshaping itself. In response to this criticism, Houston (2001) contended that the system has not deteriorated; instead its mission has changed. Further, Bullard and Taylor (1993) noted that “America’s children have entrusted us with their dreams. They come to us able, brave and

willing. We are the stewards of their future, as they are of ours” (p. 410). Educational leaders in the new century must create opportunities to “reenergize and reshape” our schools (Bullard & Taylor, 1993, p. 410). School-community partnerships are one aspect of this important mission.

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 which 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*. Therefore, based upon existing partnerships between the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the Little Rock School District, and the Magnolia Public Schools, and on continuing dialogue among key stakeholders, a more formalized document has emerged that will serve as the strategic planning document for the Education Renewal Zone. Understanding that the document is a living entity, we expect and appreciate change as we become more familiar with specific needs, expertise of those involved, and available resources found within the community. This serves as a beginning point towards implementation of processes necessary in effecting systemic change within participating schools, as well as for the students in attendance.

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Partner Identification

The Central Education Renewal Zone Steering Committee Members consist of key stakeholders representing each of the identified partners, as described below. These members include: Dr. Angela Sewall, Dean the College of Education; Ms. Terri R. Hebert, Director of the Education Renewal Zone; Dr. Marian Douglas, College of Sciences and Mathematics; Dr. Shirley Freeman-Turner, Department Chair and member of Middle Childhood Education; Dr. Anne Lindsay, Coordinator and member of Early Childhood Education; Dr. David McAlpine, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; Dr. Amanda Nolen, Education Foundations; Dr. Sharon Richardson, Education Administration and Supervision; Dr. Barbara Stanford, Secondary Education; Dr. Carol Thompson, College of Professional Studies; Ms. Deborah Webster, PTA President of Bale Elementary; Dr. Betty Wood, Middle Childhood Education; Dr. Olivine Roberts, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for the Little Rock School District; Mr. Junious Babbs, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction for the Little Rock School District; Dr. Sadie Mitchell, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction for the Little Rock School District; Dr. Lloyd Sain, Associate Superintendent of Professional Development for the Little Rock School District; Dr. John Moore, Superintendent of the Magnolia Public Schools; Ms. Nancy Lewis, Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator for the Magnolia Public Schools; and Ms. Sonya Lanus, Professional Developer for the South Central Service Cooperative. Additional members may be asked to join the committee, as they are identified as possible representatives of the local community.

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock 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

Partner Identification (continued)

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.

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

Partner Identification (continued)

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.

The Little Rock School District

Within the Little Rock School District, eight schools have been identified as Central Education Renewal Zone partners. These include: Bale Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Watson Elementary, Southwest Middle, Cloverdale Middle, Hall High, Fair High, and McClellan High. Prior to the existence of the Education Renewal Zone and currently, Bale Elementary, Franklin Elementary, and Southwest Middle continue to participate in the University District Excellent Schools Initiative; while Watson Elementary, Cloverdale Magnet Middle, Hall High, and McClellan High serves as feeders to or from the participating schools. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock maintains an existing partnership with Hall High via the concurrent enrollment program.

Bale Elementary

The mission of Bale Elementary 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.

Priority One: To improve student achievement in writing

Goal: To improve written responses to open-ended questions in reading and to improve written expression across the curriculum

Benchmark: To meet the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To improve student achievement in reading

Goal: To improve reading skills, answering open-ended questions and reading comprehension skills across the curriculum skills across the curriculum

Benchmark: To meet the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Three: To improve student achievement in mathematics

Goal: To improve students' math achievement in content standards in all five mathematical strands as well as in their ability to answer open-ended questions

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria set by the Arkansas Department of

Partner Identification (continued)

Education

Franklin Elementary

The mission of Franklin Elementary is to provide for every child an education that will enable them to develop speaking, reading, writing, and mathematical skills.

Priority One: To improve mathematical skills and strategies

Goal: to improve student mathematics performance in the areas of measurement, geometry and spatial sense, patterns, algebraic functions, and all strands making up the open response items

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To improve the students' performance in literacy

Goal: To increase student proficiency in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, mechanics, usage, and writing from the content

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Watson Elementary

The mission of Watson Elementary is to provide a data driven, integrated educational curriculum, including a child-centered, parent-involved, teacher-directed program in a positive learning environment.

Priority One: To improve literacy skills in pre-K through 5th grade students

Goal: To improve students' proficiency in reading vocabulary in context and functional reading comprehension

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To improve math skills

Goal: To improve students' proficiency in data analysis, statistics, and probability and measurement

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) criteria set by the Arkansas Department of

Partner Identification (continued)

Education

Southwest Middle

The mission of Southwest Middle is to provide equitable learning opportunities that will help to ensure the educational success of every child. The staff shall respond to the needs of students and establish partnerships with parents and the community in order to increase academic success and reinforce high expectations for all students.

Priority One: To improve student achievement in reading and writing literacy

Goal: To improve reading comprehension and writing skills across the curriculum

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria in literacy as set by the Arkansas

Department of Education

Priority Two: To improve student achievement in mathematics

Goal: To improve problem solving strategies as well as the ability to respond to open response and multi-task items

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria in math as set by the Arkansas

Department of Education

Cloverdale Middle

Cloverdale Middle provides an academically challenging program in applied technologies of economics, multimedia, and engineering within the state frameworks. Students will focus on Reading to Achieve within the contextual framework of the core curriculum while developing the whole child through building character.

Priority One: To improve literacy skills and strategies

Goal: To improve reading and writing in the area of written and open response across the curriculum, as well as to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary

Benchmark: To show a 10% increase in total reading by 2007 on the criterion reference test for 7th grade

Benchmark: To show a 10% decrease by 2007 in the number of students scoring below proficient on the 6th and 8th grade literacy exam

Partner Identification (continued)

Priority Two: To improve mathematics skills and strategies

Goal: To improve mathematics skills in the areas of measurement, algebraic patterns, data analysis, problem solving, number and number relation, number systems and theories, patterns and functions, and math procedures

Benchmark: To show a 10% increase by 2007 in the number of students performing at or above the proficient level on the math portion of the primary benchmark

Hall High

It is the mission of Hall High 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.

Priority One: To improve literacy skills

Goal: To improve reading comprehension and writing across the curriculum

Benchmark: To increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency or higher by 10% on the end-of-course literacy exam by the year 2005

Priority Two: To improve mathematical skills

Goal: To improve mathematical problem solving skills and the ability to respond to open response items

Benchmark: To improve by 10% the number of students performing at or above the proficient level on the algebra I and geometry end-of-course exams

Fair High

The mission of Fair High surrounds the production of quality graduates through academic excellence using a

Partner Identification (continued)

multi-systems approach of environmental science, information science and systems engineering, and medical science, to ensure that each student achieves at or above the proficient level of academic performance.

The vision focuses on the pursuit of academic excellence and personal integrity of the students. Excellence will be defined by the quality of graduates and the professional commitment and ethical conduct of the educators.

Priority One: To improve literacy skills

Goal: To improve students' reading comprehension and written communication skills

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To improve math skills

Goal: To improve problem solving skills in mathematics

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) set by the Arkansas Department of Education

McClellan High

The staff of McClellan High recognizes that our world is increasingly diverse and technological. Therefore, the staff are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment from which we will prepare students for their roles in society.

The staff will seek to promote mastery of a comprehensive curriculum, responsible citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity, resourceful habits, and physical and emotional well-being.

Priority One: To improve student achievement in reading and writing literacy

Goal: To improve written responses to open-ended questions, reading comprehension, and writing skills across the curriculum

Benchmark: To increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency or higher by 10% on the end-of-course exam in literacy each year

Priority Two: To improve student achievement in math

Goal: To improve the written responses to open-ended questions on district end-of-quarter exams and state end-of-year exams

Benchmark: To increase the number of students demonstrating proficiency or better by 10% on

Partner Identification (continued)

algebra and geometry end-of-course

Priority Three: To improve the amount of parental involvement in the areas of communication, parenting skills, student learning, volunteering, decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating

Goal: To increase parental involvement in the areas of communication, parenting skills, facilitating student learning, volunteering, decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating with the community

Benchmark: To increase the number of parents in the PTSA by 10%

Benchmark: To increase the number of teachers in the PTSA by 10%

Benchmark: To increase the number of parental involvement hours recorded with VIPS by 10%

Benchmark: To increase the number of parental responses to school climate surveys by 10%

Benchmark: To increase PCEP attendance by 10%

Benchmark: To increase the amount of community collaboration by 10%

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 being discontinued from the Reading Recovery program. In addition, the partnership will allow for further investigation of possible grant and foundation support opportunities, as well as additional partnering with business and community members while maintaining the focus towards literacy achievement improvement and professional development opportunities for the teachers as they extend literacy across the curriculum.

Eastside Elementary

Eastside Elementary, 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.

Priority One: To increase mathematical achievement for all students.

Goal: To demonstrate improvement on open response questions in the number sense, properties and operations, and geometry strands

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To increase literacy achievement for all students

Goal: To improve all students' reading comprehension and writing skills

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Central Elementary

Magnolia Central Elementary 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 with an emphasis on reaching proficiency in literacy and mathematics.

Priority One: To increase mathematics achievement for all students.

Goal: To demonstrate improvement on open response questions in the number sense, properties and operations, geometry, and measurement strands.

Benchmark: To meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Priority Two: To increase literacy achievement for all students

Goal: To demonstrate improvement for all students in literacy, content, and practical multiple choice questions, as well as in content and practical open response writing across the curriculum

Benchmark: To meet the AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) criteria as set by the Arkansas Department of Education

Planning Context

A series of preliminary meetings were held during the 2004-2005 school year to provide the groundwork necessary for the Education Renewal Zone initiative. Principals, representative school officials, higher education members, education service cooperative members, parents, and community members met to discuss specific needs targeted by each campus. Common threads were extracted from these discussions, and served as a foundation towards the creation of over-arching goal statements that were to be addressed through the Central Education Renewal Zone. These meetings were held at each campus, and presentations given by the building principal were provided to the attending constituents. Tours were then given, allowing each stakeholder to see the school in its current state.

The 2004-2005 Arkansas Consolidated School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) for each representative school provided a guiding reference as targeted needs were addressed by the team members. Successful long term, sustained solutions to existing areas of need depend upon close collaboration among all parties; therefore, each team member committed themselves to the Central Education Renewal Zone initiative in its entirety. New, innovative means at dispensing funds, providing professional development, and improving parental involvement were discussed, and methods of working to further develop successful practices were captured. Meetings were scheduled to broaden the scope by including additional teachers, parents, students, and community members.

The partners for the Educational Renewal Zone have since systematically met to continue the discussion of the role, the responsibility, and scope of the Central Education Renewal Zone. Additional support has emerged through the systematic approach to community involvement, as the Central ERZ Director has met with such entities as the Museum of Discovery, the Clinton School for Public Service, the Public Education Foundation, Pinnacle Mountain State Park, and Children's International. The goal of the strategic plan has been to balance the needs of the Little Rock School District, the Magnolia Public Schools, the South Central Education Service Cooperative, and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, as a cohesive, collaborative approach to increasing student achievement through sustained, high quality professional development for all participants (i.e. preservice and inservice teachers, faculty and staff at the IHE, parents, and community members). The steering committee was organized to oversee the creation, implementation, and evaluation processes for the

Planning Context (continued)

processes of the Central ERZ. To ensure equity and participation among all stakeholders, the steering committee was comprised of a broad representation reflecting the participating schools:

Dr. Angela Sewall, Dean (College of Education)

Dr. Marian Douglas (College of Sciences and Mathematics)

Dr. Shirley Freeman-Turner, Department Chair (Middle Childhood Education)

Dr. Anne Lindsay, Coordinator (Early Childhood Education)

Dr. David McAlpine (College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences)

Dr. Amanda Nolen (Education Foundations)

Dr. Sharon Richardson (Education Administration and Supervision)

Dr. Barbara Stanford (Secondary Education)

Dr. Carol Thompson (College of Professional Studies)

Dr. Betty Wood (Middle Childhood Education)

Little Rock School District

Ms. Deborah Webster, PTA President (Bale Elementary)

Dr. Olivine Roberts, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Mr. Junious Babbs, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Sadie Mitchell, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Lloyd Sain, Professional Development

Magnolia Public Schools

Dr. John Moore, Superintendent

Ms. Nancy Lewis, Curriculum and Instruction

South Central Educational Service Cooperative

Ms. Sonya Lanius, Professional Development

It is anticipated that the next phase will focus on the implementation of the mentoring program designed to assist new and experienced teachers as they shift their teaching skills to include a growing diverse population.

Planning Context (continued)

Activity	Personnel Involved	Month/Year				
		August-October 2005	November 2005-January 2006	February-April 2006	May-July 2006	August-October 2006
Meetings with UALR Provost/ Deans	Provost Deans Central ERZ Director					
Meetings with LRSD, MPS, and Coops	School administrators Teachers UALR faculty Members Central ERZ Director					
Meetings with Central ERZ Steering Committee members	Central ERZ Steering Committee members Central ERZ Director					
Development of strategic plan	Central ERZ Director					
Submission of strategic plan to stakeholders	Central ERZ Director Central ERZ Steering Committee members School officials Cooperative associates					
Submission of strategic plan to ADE	Central ERZ Director					
Implementation of strategic plan for school improvement	All stakeholders					
Assessment and data collection	All stakeholders					
Yearly report of progress	Central ERZ Director					

Planning Context (continued)

Funding 2004-2005		Funding 2005-2006	
Central ERZ Director's Salary		Central ERZ Director's Salary	\$ 60,000.00
Fringes/Benefits (29%)		Fringes/Benefits (29%)	\$ 15,600.00
Administrative Secretary Salary		Administrative Secretary Salary	\$ 9,000.00
Fringes/Benefits (29%)		Fringes/Benefits (29%)	\$ 4,680.00
Travel/Mileage		Travel/Mileage	\$ 10,220.00
Maintenance/Operations		Maintenance/Operations	\$ 5,000.00
Equipment		Equipment	\$ 2,500.00
Planning Grant	\$ 3,000.00	Planning Grant	
Total for 2004-2005	\$ 3,000.00	Total for 2005-2006	\$107,000.00
Total Grant Funding			\$110,000.00

Emergent Themes: Explanation of House Bill 1056, Minimal Provisions of the ERZ

Section I (m) (A)	Section I (m) (B)	Section I (m) (C)	Section I (m) (D)	Section I (m) (E)	Section I (m) (F)	Section I (m) (G)	Section I (m) (H)	Section I (m) (I)
Collaboration between and among the higher education institution partners, education service cooperatives, schools, and communities participating in the education renewal zone, including within the academic departments within the higher education institution partners	A comprehensive program of professional development to assure the practical knowledge base of pre-service and in-service teachers with respect to pedagogical practice, content knowledge, and competent use of distance learning technology	Enhancement and expansion of local school curricula offerings through the use of two-way interactive television to include advanced placement, dual-credit, and advanced high school courses	The sharing of faculty for core course offerings when schools are unable to hire highly-qualified teachers in core subject areas required for college entrance or teachers necessary to meet state accreditation standards	A strategy to recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers with particular focus on hard-to-staff schools	A system for mentoring teachers with three or fewer years of professional service	Active participation of the community in the work of the school	Active involvement of parents in the academic work of the students	A means of collecting the data necessary to evaluate the progress of each participating public school and the education renewal zone in its entirety

Educational research is conducted to advance our understanding of critical components of education, such as teaching strategies, connections made between professional development and student learning, and the impact of a strong parental and community presence in the school setting. The purpose of action research is for scholar-practitioners to investigate and improve practices, through in-depth, scientific studies of best practices and personalized approaches to working within the individual's own environment. Action research provides an avenue for scholar-practitioners to systematically investigate pertinent issues, as it seeks to involve all stakeholders in the process of change.

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 and the Magnolia Public Schools, the director has chosen to conduct 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 Education Renewal Zone 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:

Did the institutions of higher education (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) and education service cooperatives (Little Rock Public Schools and South Central Service Cooperative) increase their connection to the public schools and the community?

Did the institutions of higher education (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) and education service cooperatives (Little Rock Public Schools and South Central Service Cooperative) make their resources more available to the schools?

Did the schools take advantage of those resources?

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, retainment, 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.

Evaluation Strategies (continued)

The number of new teachers enrolling in and completing revised teacher preparation programs

The number of K-12 students impacted by the Central Education Renewal Zone 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

Evaluation Strategies (continued)

Time Frame	Evaluation Task	Responsible Party
Fall 2005	Collection of quantitative data begins (i.e. teacher demographic, student demographic, teacher qualifications, student test scores, course listings, socioeconomic) and compilation into pie graph format	School representatives ERZ director
Fall 2005	Collection of qualitative data begins (i.e. school climate surveys, school visits, principal meetings, teacher meetings)	School representatives ERZ director
Fall 2005	Creation of school needs assessment survey	ERZ steering committee ERZ director
Fall 2005	Creation of formative evaluation piece	ERZ steering committee ERZ director
Winter 2005-2006	Distribution of formative evaluation of Central ERZ work done in the fall of 2005	ERZ director
Winter 2005-2006	Continuation of qualitative data collection (i.e. school visits, principal meetings, teacher meetings)	ERZ director
Winter 2005-2006	Distribution of school needs assessment survey during teacher meetings	ERZ director
Winter 2005-2006	Compilation of data gathered through school needs assessment surveys	ERZ director ERZ support staff
Spring 2006	Creation of summative evaluation piece	ERZ steering committee ERZ director
Spring 2006	Distribution of summative evaluation of Central ERZ work done during the school year 2005-2006	ERZ director
Spring 2006	Collection of updated quantitative data (i.e. teacher demographic, student demographic, teacher qualifications, course listings, socioeconomic) and compilation into pie graph format	School representatives ERZ director
Spring 2006	Codification of qualitative data in search of emergent themes (i.e. school climate surveys, school visits, principal meetings, teacher meetings)	ERZ director

