

Nicholas County Pre-K Teachers Integrate 21st Century Learning with Marshall University Collaboration

The June 5th Nicholas County Board of Education meeting provided the opportunity for 3 exemplary Nicholas County Pre-K classrooms to showcase the work they've completed as a result of a two-year professional development collaboration with the Marshall University Early Education Outreach Program (MUEEOP). Also on hand at the meeting was MUEEOP Director, Monica DellaMea, who shared accomplishments the group has achieved since beginning the collaboration.

“The Nicholas County Pre-K program has served as pilot for a statewide professional development program offered through the MU Early Education Outreach Program. The MUEEOP staff has experienced first-hand the tremendous development of the Nicholas County Pre-K initiative as they have been among the first counties in the state to align themselves with the West Virginia Department of Education’s 21st Century Learning Initiative,” noted DellaMea.

The Nicholas County Pre-K program has been working with Marshall University’s Early Education Outreach Program to learn about and implement strategies to integrate 21st Century learning skills into their classrooms since July 2006. “The tremendous support provided by Nicholas County Pre-K Coordinator, Marty Davis, has been an integral factor in the program’s success. She is a champion for young children and her commitment to ensuring the success of Nicholas County Pre-K educators as they’ve gone through the MUEEOP professional development has been clearly evident throughout this process,” noted DellaMea.

Some of the methods the group has integrated with children include utilization of technology with digital cameras in the classroom to promote increased literacy and communication; facilitation of problem solving and critical thinking; as well as self-directed learning among children.

“A major goal of the Project is to help Pre-K teachers develop a culture of young children who are prepared to become life-long learners and who are excited and curious about learning,” commented DellaMea. “Moreover, the teachers are working to help children establish positive dispositions to learning, which will help them succeed later on in their schooling.”

All Nicholas County Pre-K educators participated in the in-depth professional development program offered through the MUEEOP during the 2006-2007 school year. Three classrooms also participated in the pilot of the Year II MUEEOP professional development program, which concluded in June 2008.

The participating Pre-K teachers and assistants in the Year II Program include: Vickie Spencer and Melinda Coulter, Birch River Elementary; Peggy Sue Crowe and Sandy Perrine, Craigsville Elementary; and Sarah Keiper and Pam Shields, Cherry River Elementary.

Some of the results of the collaboration include integration of digital cameras into each Pre-K classroom, as well as heightened project-based experiences for children. The MUEEOP website, which will be launched in late July of this year, will offer synopses of some of the project work completed by the Nicholas County classrooms. Results and accomplishments of the Nicholas County Pre--K/ MUEEOP collaboration will be utilized in future MUEEOP workshops for Pre-K educators throughout the state of WV.

For more information, persons may visit the MUEEOP’s website after its launch in late July: www.marshall.edu/coehs/mueeop . Also, MUEEOP Director, Monica DellaMea, can be contacted at 304-696-6301.

PHOTO #1:

Nicholas County Pre-K Educators presenting to the Nicholas County Board of Education June 5 meeting: (from L to R) Sarah Keiper (Cherry River Elementary); Peggy Sue Crowe (Craigsville Elementary); Marty Davis (Nicholas County Pre-K Coordinator); Melinda Coulter and Vickie Spencer (Birch River Early Learning Center).



PHOTO #2:

(L to R) Sarah Keiper (Cherry River Elementary); Peggy Sue Crowe (Craigsville Elementary); Monica DellaMea (MU Early Education Outreach Program Director); Melinda Coulter and Vickie Spencer (Birch River Early Learning Center)

