

Summer 2008 Update

The summer of 2008 has proven to be very busy for the Marshall University Early Education Outreach Program. In May the Outreach Program learned of its \$300,000.00 award from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. This is the second \$300,000 award provided by the Benedum Foundation since the Outreach Program's expansion in 2006. Benedum's award of \$300,000.00 over the next three years will assist with the sustained professional development model utilized by the Outreach Program. The Benedum award, coupled with sponsorships from participating West Virginia County School Systems and Head Start Agencies, will provide the opportunity for over 150 pre-k educators and administrators to participate in the Inquiry Support System Professional Development Program. The full press release regarding the Benedum Foundation's award to the MUEEOP can be found on the program's website at www.marshall.edu/coehs/mueeop. A timeline of current and upcoming workshops and meetings, as well as additional program information and participant work samples from the past year are featured on the website.

Pre-K educators identify increased reflection, technology integration as key results of participation in 2007-2008 Year I ISS Program

A final evaluation synopsis of the 2007-2008 Year I Inquiry Support System reveals that participating educators were overwhelmingly pleased with the experiences they received from the ISS. The final evaluation, which was completed by participants at the Year I final follow-up workshop, May 16 at the Clay Center, found that 98% of the participants surveyed would recommend the ISS to other Pre-K educators. The participants consistently noted that they now engaged in the reflective process as a professional educator in order to help meet the needs of all children, and to evaluate their own philosophy on a more frequent basis; they also shared that the utilization of technology integration has led to increased inquiry-based and literacy experiences occurring in their classrooms on a regular basis.

Moreover, the participants shared personal experiences of successes and challenges they encountered as they went through the year-long professional development process. One educator noted that the most significant aspect of participation in the ISS was that she has "learned to value children's opinions...and that children learn whether I 'teach' it or they learn it through experiences or activities." Another participant noted that the ISS has "given justification to her work in Pre-K", while another shared that the ISS has "allowed us to think about children's curiosities, and what children are capable of if they are allowed to explore their own interests."

The final evaluation synopsis of the 2007-2008 Year I ISS can be found on the MUEEOP's website at the address shown above.

Year II ISS Participants Present Projects to Nicholas County BOE

Pre-K educators from three Nicholas County, WV classrooms recently completed the first Year II Inquiry Support System offered by the MUEEOP. Over the past year the participants expanded their knowledge base of 21st Century learning for Pre-K children by offering project based learning experiences and increased technology integration into their classrooms. Children from these classrooms were offered opportunities to engage in their own learning processes by investigation of topics initiated by interests which were identified through their conversations, play, and questions posed. Teachers from these classrooms were provided the opportunity to articulate the importance of offering project-based experiences for children to the Nicholas County Board of Education at its June 5 meeting.

During the Board meeting, MUEEOP Director, Monica DellaMea, also discussed 21st Century learning at the Pre-K level with board members and others in attendance. "The Pre-K educators recently completing Year II of the ISS should be applauded for their dedication to providing the young children they serve with quality, inquiry-based learning experiences," noted DellaMea. "The support from the county, particularly Nicholas County Pre-K Coordinator, Marty Davis, has resulted in a strong collaboration with the MUEEOP to help provide teachers with the competencies they need to facilitate 21st Century learning experiences in their classrooms."



Year II Nicholas County Pre-K Team (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).