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FAU's College of Education Awarded \$4.3 Million from the State of Florida to Establish Center of Excellence for Elementary Teacher Preparation

BOCA RATON, Fla. (January 22, 2015) — The State of Florida has awarded Florida Atlantic University's College of Education a \$4.3 million grant to establish a Center of Excellence for Elementary Teacher Preparation. FAU is one of four recipients to receive the grant, "Collaborative Transformation: Establishing Excellence in Elementary Preparation," which is an innovative partnership between FAU's College of Education, Charles E. Schmidt College of Science, Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, as well as Learning Sciences International and the New Teacher Center. Broward County Public Schools and the School District of Palm Beach County, the sixth and the 11th largest school districts in the nation respectively, will be partnering with the College of Education to enhance field experiences for undergraduate elementary education majors and better prepare K-5 teaching candidates for classroom success.

"This collaboration is a tremendous opportunity for us to develop and implement a cutting-edge program that will better prepare how our future teachers learn to teach and positively impact students' learning experience in today's complex global society," said Valerie Bristol, Ph.D., dean of FAU's College of Education and co-principal investigator of the award.

FAU's Center of Excellence for Elementary Teacher Preparation will combine content, teaching and assessment strategies in university coursework with clinical experiences and measurable outcomes. The project will advance pre-service teacher training in core subject areas such as mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts.

"We are extremely grateful to receive this award from the State of Florida, which will transform our undergraduate program so that we can continue our tradition of ongoing research and teaching excellence," said Barbara Ridener, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning in FAU's College of Education and principal investigator of the award.

The partnership will develop a strengthened, replicable, and sustainable elementary education teacher preparation program to equip novice teachers with individualized instructional competency profiles. Strengths and growth areas of the participants will be aligned with Broward and Palm Beach

school district evaluations to prepare new teachers for district employment requirements. New content courses and revised program coursework will increase candidates' core content knowledge, and the program will focus on practice at the center of teacher preparation with approximately 832 hours of practical experience in a variety of classroom settings.

The School District of Palm Beach County is the 11th largest in the nation and the fifth largest in Florida with 185 schools, serving more than 183,000 students who speak 150 languages and dialects. According to Palm Beach County's Department of Recruitment and Retention, it is estimated that the district will need approximately 6,000 new teachers over the next five years.

As the nation's sixth largest school district and the second largest in Florida with 260,000 students in 238 schools and 102 charter schools, Broward County Public Schools has diverse student socioeconomic, racial and cultural demographics with immigrants from 204 countries speaking 130 different languages. According to Broward's Office of Talent Acquisition, the district will need approximately 5,300 new teachers over the next five years (1,625 elementary teachers).

The College of Education at FAU offers numerous accredited undergraduate and graduate programs from the departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders; Counselor Education; Curriculum; Culture and Educational Inquiry; Educational Leadership and Research Methodology; Exceptional Student Education; Exercise Science and Health Promotion; and Teaching and Learning. Also housed under the College of Education are A.D. Henderson University School; FAU High School; Karen Slattery Educational Research Center for Child Development; Palm Pointe Educational Research School; and Pine Jog Environmental Educational Center. These schools and centers provide educational opportunities for those not yet in college, as well as university-wide research and hands-on experience for College of Education students.

Photo Caption: Kelsey Dougherty (seated) pictured with her fourth grade class at A.D. Henderson University School.

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About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.