

\$5 MILLION GRANT TO DEVELOP TEACHERS FOR A NEW CLASSROOM MODEL

Teaching in 21st century schools is about collaboration – with support from a \$5 million federal grant, the SCSU College of Education is setting the standard for the new model.



Elementary classrooms are becoming a complex mixture of children, paraprofessionals and volunteers. As leader of the group, the teacher must have the skills to coordinate, mentor and create harmony. "Today it's rare to have just one adult in an elementary classroom," said Dr. Nancy Bacharach, who helped write the landmark \$5 million grant that will be used to prepare future teachers to transition from student teacher to cooperating teacher to team leader in the classroom. As an example, on a Friday morning at St. Cloud's Talahi Elementary School, teacher Ruth Johnson orchestrated the learning activities of 26 second-graders and four adults. A foster grandparent, a parent volunteer and an SCSU student teacher had joined Johnson to help supervise morning lessons.

The grant funds also will be used to give new teachers the guidance and resources they need to stay and succeed. "Currently 50 percent of all new teachers leave within the first five years," Bacharach said, citing a study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. "The first year is incredibly difficult, and we need to provide support."

The grant, co-written with the SCSU Office of Clinical Experiences, Assistant Superintendent Gayla Holmgren of District 742 schools, and Kathy Dahlberg, District 742 grant writer, will help revamp tomorrow's schools with investments in technology and other resources to improve assessment and evaluation of teachers in a collaborative teaching model. For teachers, for students, for schools and for communities demanding accountability, it's a winning collaboration.

MENTORING PROGRAM TO HELP GIRLS OF COLOR REACH FOR THE TOP

A group of St. Cloud area junior and senior high school girls of color are exploring their potential through a Women and Girls Mentoring Project that pairs them with SCSU student role models.

With \$22,980 in grant funding from the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, SCSU Cultural Diversity Funds and SCSU Sponsored Programs, SCSU professors Dr. Niloufer Merchant, who teaches community psychology, and Dr. Lalita Subrahmanyam, whose field is teacher development, have organized the mentoring program aimed at building students' self-esteem and motivating interest in professional career fields.

Ten SCSU women students are serving as mentors in a structured service-learning program, sharing their experience and helping guide and advise younger girls to develop goals and plans for their future. Deontee Kofa, president of the student organization Today's Women, serves as student coordinator for the project.

The cross-generational, cross-cultural group meets weekly at the SCSU Women's Center to talk about issues and motivate each other, through personal stories and encouragement, to explore career fields and expand the students' expectations for the future.

"We want to help girls discover and make plans to achieve their potential long before they reach a college campus," said Merchant, project coordinator.

