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Upcoming Events for 2014:
• EEIP Grant Awardee Announcement - April 2014
• TTIPS Cycle 3 due May 20th, 2014 (NCAS is an approved TTIPS provider)
• Summer Institutes June and August

Better test scores, improved teacher retention and quality, reduced disciplinary problems and better school climate. These are just a few of the improvements that schools can achieve with the newly designated National Center for Accelerated Schools at UTSA (NCAS). A dinner symposium and ribbon cutting ceremony, held on Jan. 31, included keynote speaker and founder of the Accelerated Schools Project, Dr. Henry Levin. Also in attendance were Dr. Ricardo Romo, UTSA’s President and Dr. Betty Merchant, Dean of the College of Education & Human Development, which houses the new national center. “The overall goal of this event was to build capacity for establishing accelerated schools locally so that expertise in transforming schools can begin to permeate throughout the San Antonio Community and other Texas schools,” said Joan Vasbinder, Director of the NCAS.

Highlighted Accelerated Schools and Their Results...

Former schools and districts that utilized the Accelerated Schools process such as Eagle Pass ISD, Mercedes ISD, Weatherford ISD, showed substantial gains over the state during their partnership with Accelerated Schools and are still demonstrating great success. Our current schools are showing many of the same results.

Several of our charter schools, Shekinah Radiance Academy West Columbia and Higgs, Carter, King Gifted and Talented Charter Academy are deep in the inquiry process as they test all possible hypotheses to determine the root causes to their challenges. Shekinah West Columbia, as a virtual pilot campus, is engaged in weekly online meetings with their NCAS team and are able to discuss and plan for upcoming cadre meetings. These hour-long sessions provide opportunities for teacher leaders to dialogue about campus needs and ways in which they will ensure the growth of teachers and students.

To prepare seniors for college readiness, HCK students visited several local colleges and universities. Mr. Ray Landry arranged a day long session with the UTSA Architecture and Design Department. The students gained valuable information on the programs offered and were able to meet with various department personnel. Many are looking to enroll in additional dual credit courses.

As both campuses develop their systemic action plans, they have included all stakeholders and have analyzed and synthesized various data sources. This process has increased student engagement and rigor in instruction as seen in their TTIPS Snapshot Report.
Highlighted Accelerated Schools and Their Results Cont...

EEP Commendations: Southwest Preparatory campuses have been strategic in combining resources and planning the use of their support days with NCAS. An innovative training schedule was designed that focused on the unique needs of elementary, middle and high school teachers and for follow-up for each of the attendees. George Gervin campuses, Por Vida and Cesar Chavez continue focusing on Powerful Learning in the classrooms and making their students’ needs a priority. Radiance Academy Westlakes has shared their expertise in rigor and student engagement by offering teachers from surrounding schools the opportunity to observe their teachers. Teachers are sharing “best practices” across campuses from the powerful learning trainings they have attended. These EEP campuses have embraced a culture and climate of powerful learning which has shown significant results as seen by the accountability report.

Accelerated Schools Supports TTIPS, EEIP, Priority and Focus Campuses...

The Accelerated Schools Center is built on the premise that unified, coherent, and integrated strategies for teacher improvement throughout their career, together with a comprehensive support system, will increase school and educator effectiveness. Advancing teaching instruction without attending to on-going and on-site professional development, improving culture without emphasizing all stakeholder’s involvement, or focusing on rigor without addressing the barriers to learning that affect so many students becomes insufficient to educator excellence. The Accelerated Schools approach is different from other efforts by addressing each of these and is especially compelling in schools where the need to improve educator effectiveness and increase innovative systemic practice is urgent and embraced. Accelerated Schools offers services to TTIPS, EEIP, Priority and Focus Campuses as well as any other campuses or districts interested in implementing a successful and purposeful systems approach.

National Center for Accelerated Schools supports Center for ELPPD Multidisciplinary Workshop...

The NCAS helped fund the Multidisciplinary Workshop held on March 22, 2014, at the Downtown Campus. This workshop provided a professional development opportunity for UTSA students to dialogue with principals, counselors, and school psychologists. Dr. David Thompson provided opening remarks and introduced Dr. Betty Merchant, Dean COEHD. A panel discussion was facilitated by Dr. Michael Moyer, followed by three breakout options facilitated by Dr. Billie Joe Rodriguez – elementary team; Dr. Elias Zambrano – middle school team; Dr. John Folks – high school team. Dr. Jeremy Sullivan facilitated the closing discussion.