

**PORTRAITS OF SECONDARY PARTNER SCHOOLS
IN THE
NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL
1996-1999**

**Reflections on Practice Series no. 3
Center for Educational Renewal
University of Washington**

*Expanded and Updated
June 1999*

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ROOSEVELT ORIGINAL PORTRAIT:

Roosevelt High School's Partnership with Harris-Stowe State College and Maryville University

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Defining Terms

Partnership: When two or more parties establish a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Question: What happens when three diverse populations enter into a partnership when the parties have little prior knowledge and or experience with each other?

The Partners

Roosevelt High School opened its doors February 2, 1925, as a neighborhood school that served the predominately German population on the south side of St. Louis. Its motto was and remains, "Striving to provide the best training and educational experiences possible for its students." It was designed to accommodate enrollments of up to 2,800 students. Roosevelt continued operating as a neighborhood school until 1981 when the St. Louis Public Schools came under a desegregation order. Shortly thereafter, African-American students were bussed from the north side of St. Louis (more ethnically African- American) in order to integrate the all-white school. In the ensuing years, magnet schools were created in the district, the neighborhood around Roosevelt became integrated, and bussing was no longer necessary to achieve racial balance. Today, Roosevelt High School is one of twelve high schools in the St. Louis Public Schools. It is one of four non-magnet or general high schools and it is the only non-magnet high school considered naturally integrated. This

is significant in that naturally integrated schools, because of the court order surrounding desegregation, have the least allocations of resources in the district. At the close of the 1996-97 school year, the student population was classified 75 percent African-American, 17 percent Caucasian, 6 percent Asian, and 2 percent Hispanic.

One of the greatest challenges today at Roosevelt is servicing a constantly changing population. For example, at the beginning of the 1996-97 school year, 1,493 students were enrolled. By spring, only 1,017 students were enrolled. However, from September until June, 1,327 students were withdrawn. Indeed, only 109 students who enrolled the first week of school completed the year without ever having been withdrawn. This turnover can be attributed to a highly mobile population, a high dropout rate, disciplinary transfers and expulsions, acceptance of students into magnet schools, acceptance of students into other school districts as part of the voluntary transfer (desegregation) program, and students returning to school after a prolonged absence. The result is that the composition of most classes is in constant flux. This, combined with sometimes poor attendance patterns of those students who are enrolled, is often a challenging factor for faculty as they plan for and deliver instruction.

Enrollment at Roosevelt could be termed "bottom heavy." Freshman classes average in the mid 500s, while senior classes average in the mid 100s. In June 1997, 164 seniors graduated. Just under 30 percent of those students enrolled at Roosevelt as freshmen,

more evidence of the mobility factor.

Another factor that shapes the character of Roosevelt is that over 25 percent of the population is enrolled in special education classes. These students are enrolled in resource classes, self-contained learning disabled/behavior disordered classes, or STEP (Students Towards Employment Program) classes. The special education department is the largest in the building, claiming 27 of the 84 teaching positions last year. There are strong academic opportunities for students. A number of students earn college credit in Advanced Placement classes in English Literature, German, and American History. Next year, psychology will be added to the list of Advanced Placement classes, in part because of resources provided through this partnership.

Roosevelt is situated in an ethnically rich area. Because of this and its English as a Second Language program, the school is very diverse. In June of 1997, 12 percent of the school was designated ESL. Many countries like Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia are represented, with the largest group coming from Vietnam. Many of these students and others from Roosevelt are from low-income families. One measure of this is that 70 percent of the population receives free or subsidized lunches.

Roosevelt shares the problems faced by most large, urban high schools today. Roosevelt is no stranger to drugs, violence, teen pregnancy, poor attendance, and apathy. Students enter school through metal detectors and are subjected to searches of their bags and persons. Video cameras and security guards are also a part of the Roosevelt environment. But, in essence, there is little violence in the school itself and the building for many is a beacon of hope and a place where one will find many dedicated educators. There are many programs in place that do work and many of the students do succeed. For example, Roosevelt's Vocal Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Mr. Dello Thedford, performs at events throughout the city and is recognized for its excellence.

Roosevelt students have placed first in the citywide math contest three times in the last four years. Students enter and win awards in the St. Louis Post Dispatch Science Fair each year. Every year, students earn money to participate in a Close-Up trip to Washington, DC; in 1996-97, eight students made the trip. Furthermore, many students participate in speech and drama events, mock trials, dances, sports, band performances, the German club, the Garden Club, cheerleading activities, and student council. While there is not a computer in every room, technology is a part of the Roosevelt experience.

New in the 1996-97 school year was a \$90,000 Distance Learning Lab. This lab is equipped with monitors, cameras, a VCR, and microphones. It allows classes to be taught simultaneously at Roosevelt and other sites in the district. This year, German was taught at Roosevelt to a group of thirty-four Roosevelt students and four students at Vashon High School, another school in the district. Another district school shared calculus with Roosevelt via technology. Roosevelt also has three new computer labs, one used for business classes and two open to teachers for other classes. Internet access will be the next step at Roosevelt.

The faculty is almost as diverse as the student body. One common factor that crosses race, gender, and ethnic diversity, however, is that the Roosevelt faculty is aging. In some cases, the faculty members are out on sick leave and must substitute in their place. It is often difficult to secure qualified substitutes for both those teachers on leave and those who may miss only a day or two. A majority of teachers are within five or six years of retiring. This is due primarily to layoffs by seniority that occurred when the district lost thousands of students to county districts through court ordered desegregation. It is just within the past few years that new, younger teachers have begun to replenish the ranks as senior faculty members retire. The majority of older faculty remains dedicated to the task of educating their students despite the many challenges. They are a group who has experienced many changes in the last few

years, yet has endured.

Indeed, there have been many changes in the last ten years. In 1991, Soldan High School's staff and students were blended into Roosevelt while they awaited a renovation of the Soldan building. This blending was sometimes difficult. In 1993, when the Soldan renovation was completed, applications were accepted district-wide to staff the school. A number of Roosevelt faculty, many of whom had been on the faculty for up to thirty years, applied for and got jobs at Soldan. At this time, Roosevelt lost its previously held International Studies Magnet component to Soldan, a school-within-a-school program believed to attract academically talented students. At the same time, Roosevelt also lost the Air Force ROTC to Soldan. There was a sense of loss among the faculty at Roosevelt about these changes.

Roosevelt has also coped with many changes in administration. Principals and assistant principals have come and gone. In the last ten years, Roosevelt has had four principals and one acting principal. This fall, Roosevelt will begin the year with its third principal in the last year.

As an urban high school, Roosevelt has a rich history; it has served this ethnically diverse area well. It currently has a core of dedicated but aging faculty members who are striving to deal with the primary problems of mobility among students, limited resources, and turnovers in administration.

Harris-Stowe State College has a rich and continued history in the St. Louis region, reaching back 140 years. In 1857, Harris Teachers College was founded as the first public teacher-preparation institution west of the Mississippi, and in 1891 Stowe Teachers College was established. The two institutions, which comprised an arm of the St. Louis Public Schools, prepared white and black teachers respectively for the public schools of St. Louis. In 1954, the two colleges merged into one institution, making it the first fully integrated unit of the St. Louis Public Schools. It continued as a city teachers college until 1979 when it entered the Missouri system of state colleges and

universities.

Since its inception, Harris-Stowe has been located in the city core; it continues to have an urban base and commitment. The College is a coeducational commuter college with no branches. Its original mission of preparing competent teachers for elementary schools in the City of St. Louis was broadened in 1986 to include early childhood, elementary, and middle-level preparation, and in 1993 to include secondary teacher education.

Harris-Stowe State College currently averages an enrollment of 1,700 students. In the spring of 1997, the Department of Education had approximated 350 full-time and 320 part-time students. Of that number, 68 were full time in secondary education, while 92 were part time. The authorization for a secondary program at Harris-Stowe is only a few years old. The College employs 46 full-time faculty members; the Department of Education has 19 full-time faculty. There are many adjuncts from the St. Louis Public Schools. Students at Harris-Stowe State College are enrolled in NCATE-accredited undergraduate programming.

Maryville University began its tradition in St. Louis City in 1872 as a Catholic women's college. One of the oldest private institutions in the St. Louis area, Maryville was originally an academy for young women and was located in the heart of South St. Louis. The academy evolved into a junior college and became a four-year college in 1923.

Maryville moved to its current location in West St. Louis County in 1961 and became Maryville University of St. Louis in 1991. Maryville University has become a community-based, independent, coeducational liberal arts institution with a mission to blend the liberal arts with professional programs in education, business, and health careers.

The School of Education at Maryville offers a wide variety of undergraduate programs leading to certification in early childhood, elementary, and middle-level education. The secondary certification program, collaboratively redesigned in 1994-

95 with high school faculty and staff, is now a post-baccalaureate program.

Maryville averages an enrollment of 3,200 students. The School of Education (SOE) enrolls students in both undergraduate and graduate programming. The SOE programs have been accredited by NCATE. In the spring of 1997, 400 students were enrolled in classes in the School of Education—100 undergraduate students (mostly full time) and 300 graduate students (mostly part time). There were 11 full-time faculty members and administrators in the School of Education in 1996-97.

The Beginnings of Partnership

Harris-Stowe State College and Maryville University have been working together since 1993 when they applied together to become members of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). To join the NNER, they formed a collaborative called the Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational Renewal which includes the two higher education institutions and their partner schools. Before that time, there had been no real professional collaboration between the teacher education units of these institutions even though both had begun partnerships with elementary schools and both had individual renewal agendas for themselves and those other elementary schools. As part of their goals with the Consortium, Harris-Stowe and Maryville have begun to collaborate in some areas of their programming in an effort to enhance the renewal agenda. This has begun in the early childhood program and is advancing to the middle-level area. As part of their mission with the NNER, both institutions expressed interest in working with an urban high school. The St. Louis Public Schools suggested collaboration with Roosevelt High School and the then-principal of Roosevelt, Tom Daly, agreed to the arrangement with his school.

Previously, Tom Daly had been working with Emelda Harris from Harris-Stowe on a

summer Academy for College Preparation for eighth-grade students coming into Roosevelt. This Academy, though delivered at Harris-Stowe, was facilitated by Roosevelt teachers in tandem with Harris-Stowe faculty. The goal of the program was to help students who had demonstrated potential for success make a positive transition into Roosevelt. This program was delivered in the summers of 1995 and 1996. In 1995, sixteen Roosevelt students were served; in 1996, eighteen students participated in the program. Though it has been changed, this program served as a beginning step for Harris-Stowe State College's involvement with Roosevelt. In the spring of 1997, students from Harris-Stowe's secondary program were placed at Roosevelt as part of a reading class requirement. These Harris-Stowe programs were designed and delivered by Harris-Stowe faculty and staff.

In the summer of 1995, faculty members from Maryville University and Parkway South High School were putting the finishing touches on a new secondary teacher education program. This jointly planned postbaccalaureate program was to be delivered over the course of fifteen months and involve much work at Parkway South. One module of the program, however, was designed to be delivered in a more diverse, urban setting. After securing permission from Principal Daly to place students in Roosevelt in the fall of 1996, teachers from Roosevelt (Mary Weber, English, and Larry Versey, math) attended a meeting of the program design team to discuss some of the possibilities for placing Maryville students at Roosevelt. And indeed, in the fall of 1996, nine students from the Maryville University Masters in Secondary Teaching and Inquiry were placed at Roosevelt High School.

At this point there were three partners, but each institution of higher education had worked with its own program with Roosevelt. In the summer of 1996, through the application process for the Arthur Vining Davis Secondary Partner School Project, all partners saw the potential of creating goals that would help us establish a

“communication and governance” structure and design programs that would bring these three diverse groups together to work toward simultaneous renewal. The tripartite membership met in October 1996 at Maryville as a joint group to do some of the initial planning and again in November at Roosevelt when the Institute for Educational Inquiry advisor visit was held. Faculty and staff from all partners were in attendance at these meetings. Three broad goals were established for the 1996-97 school year. These goals were to establish a collaborative, long-range plan that would extend the conversation with our secondary partners and continue the process of engaging all partners in simultaneous renewal; to extend the dialogue about teaching and learning; and to provide support for Roosevelt teachers to join teachers from Parkway South in a leadership program focusing on high school issues.

In October 1996, the Roosevelt principal, Tom Daly, unexpectedly left the building because of health concerns. Gene Gladstone, an assistant principal at Roosevelt who then knew very little about the partnership, was named acting principal. It should also be mentioned that at the same time, the St. Louis Public Schools had a new superintendent who was under a Board directive to reorganize and re-prioritize within the district. In the spring, Mr. Gladstone was affirmed in his leadership and named principal of Roosevelt. He was open to dialogue about partnership.

The change in leadership caused regrouping throughout the fall, but the nature of the partnership also contributed to the awkward beginning. We were three very different groups from three different “cultures” beginning to work with each other. We had few previous lines of communication. One might imagine a freshman dance where students from different “feeder schools” all look at each other and wonder what the other is all about. Nobody wanted to take initiative for fear of being seen as aggressive. Scheduling the next “dance” was difficult because each person involved had many and diverse obligations. Communication within

groups was possible, between two partners was a little more difficult, but among the three was an incredible challenge. The challenge was perhaps greatest for faculty at Roosevelt who also had to figure out all of the new acronyms and their meanings and implications for them (PDS, PDSC, NNER, AVD, translating to Professional Development School, PDS Collaborative, National Network for Educational Renewal, and Arthur Vining Davis!). Also, because some of our first initiatives engaged only two of the partners, Roosevelt faculty and staff were sometimes confused about the nature of the three-way partnership. This confusion was justified.

Consequently, in the spring of 1997, the chairperson of the Department of Education at Harris-Stowe, Dr. Nancy Gammon, and the dean of the School of Education at Maryville, Dr. Mary Ellen Finch, met with Mr. Gladstone to recommit to the mission. Mr. Gladstone affirmed his strong commitment to continue with the project. We thought perhaps we were ready to move to the second verse of “Getting to Know You” when we learned, early in the summer of 1997, that Gene Gladstone had decided to retire to take another position in another district.

The Relationship: Goals and Observations of the Year

Three goals were established for this year by the group that met in October 1996. These goals, some of the intended outcomes, the results, and comments about lessons learned follow.

- **Goal #1: To develop a collaborative, long-range plan that will extend the conversation with our secondary school partners and continue the process of engaging all partners in simultaneous renewal.**

Inherent in the goal above was the need to develop a form of governance, to set and hold regular meetings, to broaden the commitment

from constituents, to connect with teachers in the building – all in an effort to create a long-range plan.

The initial AVD meeting was held in October, with meetings following in November, December, January, February, and April. It took much of this time for the partners to get to know each other and to identify procedures for communication. We have tried e-mail, but some partners are not yet connected. Some partners at Harris-Stowe and Maryville are connected, but we are still working to activate the link with Roosevelt. The hardware and software are there; we need the appropriate phone line to make quick communication possible.

Because no one person volunteered or was designated chairperson for the group, some initial confusion existed about who could and would call meetings and establish the agenda. This was not for want of mission for the project, but probably out of deference for the other. In

In March 1997, Dr. Keith Trautwein from Harris-Stowe assumed the role of meeting convener.

There was initial confusion among the Roosevelt staff about the nature of the partnership. The trip to Phoenix in February 1997 really helped to clarify for those attending the potential held by collaboration. Constituents from Roosevelt and the St. Louis Public Schools benefited greatly from their dialogues with teachers from other schools. They especially enjoyed their discussions with teachers from Aiken High School in Cincinnati, a school much like Roosevelt.

In April, as previously mentioned, the chairperson of the Department of Education at Harris-Stowe State College, Dr. Nancy Gammon, and the dean of the School of Education at Maryville, Dr. Mary Ellen Finch, thought it would be best to gain a reaffirmation from Gene Gladstone, the newly appointed principal of Roosevelt, for the project. The reaffirmation was strong.

Many things were discussed as possibilities at that first April meeting including finding out from Roosevelt teachers what they think the institutions of higher

education could provide for them; exploring the possibility of designating Roosevelt as a magnet for high school students interested in becoming teachers; and noting the need for Roosevelt faculty and staff to become more involved in the Professional Development School Collaborative and other meetings. These suggestions were forwarded on to the governance group.

The governance group, during its next meeting in April, agreed to Dr. Gammon using a survey to collect data from teachers and faculty at Harris-Stowe about joint needs and offerings. The group decided to check out the possibility of making a trip to Cincinnati to visit Aiken High School (overtures were made, but it was too late in the year for such a trip); Mr. Gladstone reported that there was interest in his building among students for a career in teaching. Much was talked about at this meeting, but no clear goals emerged at this time for further work. To achieve such a thing, it is believed that the group may need to have a retreat where significant time is spent together working on a plan. Our “after school/late in the day” meetings have not been a vehicle achieving significant planning. Roosevelt teachers have had trouble finding substitutes so they might attend day meetings away from the building. This is a problem in many high schools where teachers hate to leave their classrooms; it is exacerbated at Roosevelt where it is difficult to find substitutes to replace teachers who are gone for a day. Strategies for securing this release for them will need to be found.

Also, a more significant number of people from all settings are going to have to be involved for this to work. Few teachers at Roosevelt probably know much about the partnership, other than working with the students from the teacher education programs who worked in their classes. Perhaps the survey of the RHS faculty members’ needs will be a first step in involving the faculty at Roosevelt in a broader sense. Much will depend on the commitment of the new principal as well. Much also depends on helping the teachers at

Roosevelt learn that this is a project in which they will have voice.

The year was much like a chronology of “process” which appears to lack substance. The goal conceptually talks of “extending the conversation with our partners” and “continuing the partners in simultaneous renewal,” but in reality we were nowhere ready for that. The words sounded nice on the page but, in many ways, we were learning to trust each other enough to have a conversation. This must be seen as a prerequisite to forming a partnership. And for renewal to be simultaneous (for the tough issues to be addressed together), it seems the partnership has to be securely established and well. Perhaps the first goal should have been, in retrospect, just to “unpack” the term “partnership” and to examine those implications for each participant, and/or to examine the perceptions we had of each other.

There is, now, more trust and knowledge of each other. It is amazing sometimes how long it can take to make these initial inroads to each other. The formal “beginnings” of relationships – the filling out of joint applications – is one thing. But getting to know and trust each other, especially those from different institutional cultures, takes time. This seems to be even truer in high schools and colleges that can be so insular in nature because of the department structure inherent in both. We must acknowledge the time and energy required to begin renewal agendas where no prior relationships existed. We must be patient with those in the beginnings, helping them to identify those issues and questions which must be addressed first and understanding that those beginnings look more like process than substance, especially when trust and commitment need to be developed.

• **Goal #2: To extend the dialogue about teaching and learning, engaging preservice teachers with experienced teachers and university and college faculty in the process.**

Some of the end was achieved here, but

possibly not through the vehicle initially intended and not as a partnership of the whole. Both preservice teachers from Maryville and Harris-Stowe were engaged independently in dialogues about teaching with Roosevelt teachers as they talked about individual classrooms and the teaching/learning occurring there. Those discussions were mostly one-on-one discussions, occurring when practicum students were placed in classes with teachers. Maryville students, Harris-Stowe students, and the faculty of Roosevelt and the higher education institutions never met jointly for conversations.

In the fall, Maryville had nine students in the building for four mornings a week for approximately seven weeks. These students were assigned to one teacher in a classroom where they tutored and taught lessons. They also took a class that was delivered on site at Roosevelt. No Harris-Stowe students were involved in the discussions during this seminar. In the spring, eight students from Harris-Stowe spent one hour a week in the building in conjunction with a course they were taking back at Harris-Stowe. Much rich discussion occurred in their class about their learning at Roosevelt.

The following section includes some information extrapolated from course evaluation forms, student journals, and notes from the college supervisors about the time spent at Roosevelt. Included here are events, observations from the students, and some actual quotes from both college students and students at Roosevelt.

Reflections of Maryville Interns Placed at Roosevelt:

These students were Maryville graduate students working towards a Master’s degree in secondary education and certification. These students were placed in Roosevelt in the fall in their second practicum placement. All of these students were Caucasian and grew up in families where English was the first language. Some had attended private high schools, others had attended primarily

suburban public high schools. A few of the nine were somewhat apprehensive about venturing into an urban high school. It was the first time Maryville students had ever been placed at Roosevelt.

Observation #1: Roosevelt lost its physics teacher during the first weeks of school and could only locate a substitute who really knew little about physics. A Maryville intern helped the substitute plan and deliver many lessons in the fall. When the intern “went in,” the substitute was having the students learn the concepts through vocabulary tests and memory work. The intern devised as many meaningful demonstrations as she could to help explain concepts like friction, inertia, mass, weight, and gravity. Though she still experienced frustration in getting kids to write things down, they often became very engaged in active experiments. She talked about how this helped her understand the need for engaging demonstrations around concept learning.

Observation #2: One intern was intrigued by “Mr. Q.” Mr. Q. would plant himself at his door between classes. He would not let any student enter without a greeting of some sort. This teacher impressed upon the young intern the importance of getting to know every student. The intern remarked, “He knows all about the lives of these kids. They come to him some days when they don’t go to other classes . . . just to talk.” The intern placed with this teacher was himself struggling with rapport. He saw first hand the importance of getting to know the students.

Observation #3: Although uncertain about Roosevelt before they spent time there, MU interns became great defenders of the school to others. On the MU campus, during a program about the St. Louis desegregation program, the interns challenged local educators about the inequities in the court order that puts naturally integrated schools (Roosevelt) on the low end of the totem pole. These schools receive fewer resources and

fewer “breaks.” Students really saw first hand the issues of access to knowledge through access to resources. They stated that they never would have understood this had they not experienced it “up close and personal.”

Observation #4: Teachers at Roosevelt have the challenge of working in classes where some students exhibit irregular attendance patterns. As one science teacher put it, “We are working to help kids understand that every day counts.” Preservice candidates from Maryville concluded one day in seminar that maybe teachers overuse worksheets in these urban schools because after a while it just becomes easier for make-up . . . and becomes a habit which is too hard to break.

Observation #5: At a debriefing between one teacher and an intern, the teacher commented that for urban teachers, it is sometimes difficult not to lose hope right along with your students. He commented about how refreshing it was to have the interns in the building. In fact, he talked about going back to school for a course.

Observation #6: As stated before, students were apprehensive about Roosevelt. But after the experience, some concluded that students at Roosevelt on the whole were more appreciative than students in more suburban settings. They also felt some had better manners.

Observation #7: Words from an intern: “I don’t think I would have fully understood the complexities of an urban school from reading literature, watching movies, or hearing stories. Our time spent at the school was the main reason I know what an urban school truly is like. I know that most kids want to learn, and they care about their learning. Just because kids come from a lower socioeconomic status doesn’t mean they don’t care about school. I also saw that these kids need variety. This teaching by worksheet doesn’t get it. I know what it feels like to stand in line and go through a metal check . . .

to see security guards all over. I've seen kids struggle who don't understand English . . . who plagiarize because they don't have strategies. But I know they care. I have observed teachers who can no longer care, and have observed those who will never stop caring and trying . . . who will always be there for these kids. I know I am a better teacher because I spent time with the students at Roosevelt."

Observation #8: One student felt that teachers in suburban schools seem more interested or able to appeal to kids' interests in the classroom. She felt that suburban teachers may "cover" less in their efforts to engage students – while the urban teacher covers more, but engages less. Students would do the work, but this student did not feel students acquired a depth of meaning.

Observation #9: During one of our seminars, a student was stabbed in the hall outside our door. Within seconds, there were newscasters and news trucks on the grounds of the school. The interns noticed that the urban schools get much more of this negative coverage. They observed that things like this happen in suburban schools, but are often kept quiet and out of the news. They started monitoring more closely the types of articles about urban vs. suburban schools.

Reflections of Harris-Stowe Students Placed at Roosevelt (and from students with whom they worked):

Eight Harris-Stowe students observed and worked with students at Roosevelt in the spring in conjunction with their reading course.

Observation #1: "There were two boys, both in the ninth grade, who seemed to have hard shells on the outside. The longer I was there, the softer they became. They talked to me more and smiled back often." (Harris-Stowe preservice teacher)

Observation #2: "This broadened my

concept of what teaching is all about. It's hard to reach these kids. They basically think they are adults in many ways. Some have children; some work and deal with many of the things adults do, so I guess they are." (Harris-Stowe preservice teacher)

Observation #3: "Some of these kids find it hard to care about schooling. You have to work hard to find ways to show them why it is going to be important to them." (Harris-Stowe preservice teacher)

Observation #4: "When Harris-Stowe students come to help us, it provides a good example for us." (Roosevelt student)

Observation #5: "I like it when the college students get more involved. It helps with classroom participation. I think we could also teach them some things." (Roosevelt student)

Observation #6: "These students from Harris-Stowe are a lot like us. They can teach us about life." (Roosevelt students)

There was other dialogue about teaching and learning at Roosevelt this year though the discussions may not have been held broadly throughout the building. Nancy Williams and Kathe Rasch from Maryville University talked with the Roosevelt teachers after the Maryville students were there. Some of these teachers talked about the power that came from once again talking about their craft, and about how having new blood in their classroom had helped them see themselves again in relationship to their students. The higher education partners feel that these initial steps into the building helped them to develop beginning relationships with some teachers and staff.

The power of the lessons learned by the preservice students, however, should not to be forgotten. Much was learned about equity and the equal access to educational opportunity. Let's face it – few take their teacher preparation programs into urban schools. We did, and many benefited from

the experience. We did not achieve our goal completely, but we may be more ready, now, to actually work toward it. Only through this sort of “inclusive of all partners” conversation will we take needed steps toward understanding, then addressing, how we can all help each other understand issues of teaching and learning and access to knowledge.

• Goal #3: To provide support for Roosevelt teachers to join teachers from Parkway South High School in a “Leadership Program” focusing upon high school issues only. This dialogue will include readings and conversations about the Coalition of Essential Schools’ principles and how these principles have been played out in other urban, as well as suburban, schools. Also part of this conversation will be readings on school reform, site- based management, and the teaching/learning process.

In short, we were not ready for this to happen. Four Roosevelt teachers began the Consortium Leadership Program (based on the Institute for Educational Inquiry’s Leadership Associates’ Program). Two of these teachers left Roosevelt and did not complete the program, but two did finish. These two teachers (one in special education and the other a computer specialist) did not know each other well before they began, but formed a linkage during the program and have now completed an inquiry project together which will improve computer learning for learning disabled students at Roosevelt. We did not achieve, however, our goal of forming a group specific to the two high schools. In short, we were overly ambitious, especially considering the nature of high schools and the intricacy of bringing three, let alone four, institutions together in a meaningful way.

Conclusions

What happens when three diverse

populations enter into a partnership when the parties have little prior knowledge and experience with each other? Initially, there can be what appears to be superficial process as the parties (not yet ready to be partners) establish lines of communication, get to know and trust one another, and work toward a time when they are actually ready to establish goals they jointly understand and are ready to pursue. In this “partnership,” we created goals that were too ambitious for our context. Perhaps because the two higher education partners had been engaged in this type of work in other contexts before, they came in thinking “further down the line” than was realistic for this site. It may be time to back up and work first on the complexity of the concept of partnership in this specific site – to converse about and investigate what that means.

• The trust needed to have those conversations began to develop this year through the multiple meetings held by the new governance group and through the placement of preservice students in Roosevelt by both higher education partners.

• Conversations began to emerge between various parties about teaching and learning; these conversations were neither joint nor broadly held, but they were a necessary beginning.

• The faculty at Harris-Stowe has surveyed teachers at Roosevelt about their needs; this could lead to more joint conversations and programming.

• Through a Consortium Leadership Program, two teachers at Roosevelt “found” each other and began a “partnership” which will benefit learning disabled students.

• Preservice teachers experienced the workings of an urban high school, walking away with positive things to say about the teaching there and also understanding better the issues of equal access to knowledge which sometimes plague urban settings.

Working with any three institutions is difficult, but when one is also experiencing continued changes in leadership the effort is slowed. We will again need to seek commitment from the new high school leadership. But we know that we have begun the job of building bridges and strategies for communication. The work is difficult and time consuming; egos must be placed aside as we focus on the prize. Difficult work . . . but real in that we are working together. Together. A new concept full of complexities . . . but the only road to partnership and simultaneous renewal.

ROOSEVELT UPDATE:

Roosevelt High School/Harris-Stowe State College/ Maryville University

Nancy Williams, Maryville University

The Roosevelt High School/Harris-Stowe State College/Maryville University partnership began in 1995. At that time, few of the faculty or administrators in any of the three settings had ever worked together. Roosevelt is an urban high school in the St. Louis Public School system. Harris-Stowe State College has a rich history of preparing teachers who serve this and other districts, but has just begun to prepare teachers for secondary schools. Maryville University has been preparing secondary school teachers for many years, but has not actively placed practicum and student teachers in the St. Louis Public School District, at least not at the high school level. Though Harris-Stowe and Maryville began to collaborate with each other in 1993 when they both applied for and became members of the National Network for Educational Renewal, they had never worked together in one school, although each had formed individual partnerships with elementary schools.

In short, the work that began in 1995 was in many ways a new endeavor. The early years, as reflected in the previous portrait and the second Arthur Vining Davis Secondary Partner School Project proposal, had high and low points. Between 1995 and 1997, Roosevelt had three principals. There was also a significant turnover with other administrative positions. This posed some problems for maintaining a commitment to the partnership and a continuity in understanding. Principal Steven Warmack, however, who was assigned to the building in September 1997, is very committed to the partnership. Just one year of consistency in

leadership has helped tremendously.

Also, as stated in the 1997-98 portrait, our initial goals were too ambitious. Those of us from the higher education institutions who had worked previously with partnership schools forgot the time it takes to build trust, especially in a high school. We also initially tiptoed around the issue of who might be in charge until we learned how to work with, and not defer to, each other. This was especially true of the college/university partners. We spent a significant amount of time on process and conversation, which might have appeared to lack substance or evidence of things accomplished. In short, time and energy were needed to begin renewal agendas where no prior relationships had existed.

We also began the first year with a goal to have conversations with a suburban high school partner on Coalition of Essential School (CES) principles. This was a goal written primarily by the higher education faculty associated with the partnership. While we believe in the principles of CES, Roosevelt had other agendas that were more immediate and real to it. This also would have meant adding a fourth institution to the mix. Because of the mutual knowledge and trust we have now developed, we can clearly suggest that this goal, though well intended, was inappropriate at the time.

Our goals for the second Arthur Vining Davis Secondary Partner School Project grant were much more realistic in terms of our development as a partnership. After we developed and submitted these goals, other opportunities for working together in the

partnership have also emerged: more participants from the partnerships are now working on the goals and various projects; members from all constituencies are participating in the local Consortium leadership program; various individuals are attending the local Professional Development School Partnership meetings; participants are taking part in the newest class in the Center for Inquiry; others are working to create the Roosevelt Teaching Career Academy. The various threads of activity are weaving a stronger partnership cloth.

As stated earlier, the commitment of Roosevelt Principal Steven Warmack, and his Assistant Principal Barbara Fisher (who is assigned to work with the partnership), has helped the school and partnership establish purpose and focus. The partnership has also gained wider credibility in the high school as the school leadership team has invited university faculty to participate fully in the school. For instance, Dr. Keith Trautwein from Harris-Stowe State College serves on the North Central Association's reevaluation steering committee for Roosevelt. Dr. Jackie Dillon from Harris-Stowe has worked with the Roosevelt faculty and staff to investigate the best use of their technological resources, including their distance learning facility. Dr. Nancy Williams from Maryville University will also be working with Roosevelt in the spring of 1999 when she serves part of her sabbatical in the building.

Another example of university involvement occurred in January 1998 when Mr. Warmack asked faculty from Maryville University and Harris-Stowe State College to help him prepare the Roosevelt faculty for the Missouri Assessment Plan. Drs. Trautwein and Dillon from Harris-Stowe and Drs. Williams and Rasch from Maryville prepared and facilitated an in-service day for Roosevelt faculty, held on January 21, 1998. Follow-up reports from Roosevelt faculty members indicated that while the faculty and staff have some concerns about the implementation of the state testing plan, they felt the in-service day represented a useful tool. Later in the spring, the higher education

faculty from both institutions also met and conferred with faculty interested in working more closely with the university practicum and student teachers. Plans for more thorough training were announced at that time for those working with preservice teachers during the fall of 1998. There were nine practicum students from Maryville University in the building during the fall of 1998. They spent ten weeks working in classrooms, with full days on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Data will be collected to gauge the impact of this involvement. Student teachers and practicum students are expected from Harris-Stowe State College in the spring.

The Governance Council met consistently during the 1997-98 school year to establish goals and plan renewal efforts. Partners participated in seven partnership council meetings, which occurred between September and June of 1997-98, and four Professional Development School Collaborative meetings between October and March of 1997-98. The focus of our efforts from 1997 through early 1998 was to develop a realistic set of goals for the partnership. To do this, we needed to get the faculty and staff members of all institutions together to determine collectively the goals that would be molded into our action plan. We wanted to provide an opportunity for more of the Roosevelt High School faculty to voice their desires for the students and community of Roosevelt High School and for the partnership. We also hoped to develop collectively a plan that would enhance the renewal of both Roosevelt High School and the work of the schools of education at Harris-Stowe and Maryville.

A Saturday retreat was planned as the vehicle for gathering thoughts and feelings from the constituents. The retreat, entitled "Venture into Renewal," was held on Saturday, March 21, 1998, at the Carondelet Center in St. Louis. The facilitator, Dr. Wayne Walker, director of the St. Louis Regional Professional Development Collaborative, worked with participants to develop vision statements that could be used to direct our work. Twenty-four teachers and three

administrators from Roosevelt High School, three faculty from Maryville University, and four faculty members of Harris-Stowe State College attended the retreat, which was supported by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant.

Participants discussed the benefits of collaboration and, through a visioning exercise, established twelve themes of action for the partnership in the future. Some of the vision statements (not prioritized), were as follows:

- Improved staff morale demonstrated by an empowered faculty and staff
- Student commitment to the completion of high school
- Improved student attendance
- School to Future focus for the school
- Technologically rich school curriculum
- School recognized for improved student achievement
- Mind and body interventions present in the school
- School climate is improved
- Cultural diversity is celebrated
- School day has been restructured to provide time for conversations among educators, student interns, etc.

Conversations held by the partnership council after the retreat focused on how to blend the visions from the retreat into the Missouri School Improvement Plan and the North Central Association goals. It was the desire of the partnership to avoid the mistake of multiple competing agendas in the building. Based on the integration of the various efforts at Roosevelt,

the following goals and plans have been formulated:

Goal One: RHS students will achieve enhanced academic performance by 2002— (focus initially on math)

Objective: Work to improve math achievement

Activities: Plan and implement math club; coordinate participation in state and national math competitions; investigate pairing the Harris-Stowe Math Club with the Roosevelt High School Math Club

Goal Two: Students will achieve proficiency in reading achievement

Objective: 5 percent increase in reading achievement levels

Activities: Create a faculty group to explore reading strategies; develop reading club for students; promote SSR and incentives for increasing student reading habits

Goal Three: Students will be better prepared for their school/work futures

Objective: Increase scores on ACT and SAT

Activities: Establish ACT/SAT tutorial program; establish precollegiate Academy for those interested in teaching— starting with entry-level ninth-graders in 1999 (this is a primary objective for the 1998-99 year)

Goal Four: Students will increase educational persistence

Objective: Decrease dropout rate by 5 percent
Explore strategies to make students in a diverse environment feel valued

Activities: Targeted faculty will investigate concept of resiliency; the resiliency wheel six-step strategy will be implemented

Goal Five: All in-service and preservice professionals on the school and higher

education levels will engage in ongoing professional development

Objectives: Increase number of staff and faculty from site involved in the partnership, thus extending knowledge of various participants; help RHS faculty in working with preservice teachers; enhance instruction of students at RHS, HSSC, and MU

Activities: More MU and HSSC faculty will visit RHS and familiarize themselves with the programming; more RHS faculty will work with HSSC and MU students; a RHS teacher will coordinate the work with preservice professionals; RHS faculty will participate in a Parsons Blewitt-supported leadership program to enhance their work as cooperating teachers; work will be done to increase the use of technology in the building

The goals for the second Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant were: (1) to develop a vehicle to establish an action plan; (2) to work to develop the action plan; and (3) to determine our action steps through that process. As you can see from the goals that appear above, we are on our way. We are not naïve, however. We know that these goals will take both joint effort and time to accomplish.

One of the objectives, the development of a Career Teaching Academy, will indeed take a good bit of time and energy. Representatives from the three partners have taken this project as their problem in the Institute for Educational Inquiry Leadership Teams Program. (This team is comprised of a teacher from Roosevelt, a liberal arts faculty member from Maryville, and a teacher educator from Harris-Stowe). An additional shadow team comprised of a teacher educator from Maryville, a teacher from Parkway South High School, and a liberal arts faculty member from Harris-Stowe are also on a larger team working on this plan. In December, the principal from Roosevelt, the teacher educator from Maryville, and the liberal arts teacher from Harris-Stowe will

visit a high school in Cincinnati, which has a Teachers Academy already in place.

To be specific, some of the tasks currently being performed in relation to this objective include determining the student selection criteria for the academy; determining and planning recruitment strategies; recruiting students for 1999; determining the criteria for the teachers in the Academy and selecting the teachers; determining the curriculum; screening and selecting the students, etc. We are hoping that this Academy will help add a dimension to Roosevelt that will enhance the achievement of students in the high school. Having the Academy in place next fall is a rather large challenge for the partnership and will take a good bit of our focus and energy. We believe, however, that the Academy will provide the opportunity to personalize learning and address the issue of scale in a large high school.

The Challenges

In this work, however, we are not unlike a developmentally-challenged child. We came into this partnership not having had the prior enrichment experiences of other partnerships. Some of our systems were also challenged. A high proportion of the high school students of our partnership have special needs. We serve students of limited English proficiency and students who have little persistence to task. We have had recent turnover in both the faculty and administrative staff of the high school. The university partners are also learning to work with each other and with the high school faculty and staff. Those in the partnership from Maryville are working for the first time in an urban high school.

And though we have high expectations for ourselves and appreciate the same from those outside of our circle, we need the patience and understanding of our external constituencies. We are starting at a different place than others . . . and we should be measured against ourselves, not against the gains of other partnerships that may have more advantage or access to resources. We

now know personally how challenged students may feel when some look at them with pity, and some look at them seeming to question effort being made. We have to expect that and strengthen our own resolve to be true to the agenda we have set for ourselves, and all this within the partnership. Part of that agenda is about our own efficacy. Through this work we know that we can impact our levels of confidence and partnership esteem. Through this partnership, we know we can make a difference in the lives of the students at Roosevelt High School.

Indeed, our agenda, as it is written, seems to focus mostly on the students of Roosevelt High School. We have been questioned about this, since in a renewal partnership all constituents should benefit. There has been concern that our goals do not reflect how the college and university partners and constituencies are engaged in renewal. At this time, our response is that through focusing on the students at Roosevelt, together we will all learn about what is necessary in order to enhance student achievement in this diverse but rich setting. When we say all, we mean the faculty and staff of Roosevelt, the faculty and staff of Harris-Stowe State College and Maryville University, and the teacher education students of both institutions who will be placed at Roosevelt as we work together on these projects— we will all benefit. We have chosen to measure our success, however, by focusing mainly on the benefits to Roosevelt students which, granted, is only one part of the system. The growth and development of the other parts of the system will have to be inferred at this moment if the project is to remain manageable and doable. We will, of course, be monitoring the journals of our preservice teachers to see what they are gaining from being engaged in the work of this partnership, and we will be monitoring the growth and development of those in the building who are engaged in the various components of this partnership. We must be careful, however, not to overwhelm those working together with so many goals to be

addressed and monitored, that the doing can never get done. We do not want our peers to select isolation over collaboration because the agenda takes them too often from the classroom and students they have chosen to serve. So much is about balance.

We are eager at this time to move on. We feel a sense of accomplishment for having identified some tangible goals that we can address through action steps. We realize these steps might change as we monitor our progress and reflect upon our practice, but we feel we have worked to create an environment where we can be critical friends to each other.

