

Peoria Peoria



Cohort Member Marcy Lee, Paraprofessional Union head Debbie Chavez(Standing), Cohort Member Teresa Donley

The Peoria Grow Your Own Teachers effort is one of three projects that were funded in the second round of the Illinois initiative, using a planning grant in March 2007 to develop a program which officially began in August, 2007.

The partner organizations are:

Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity
Tri-County Urban League
Peoria School District #150
Bradley University
Illinois Central College
Peoria Federation of Support Staff

The school district is the lead organization and fiscal agent on the grant.

The Cohort: The Peoria Cohort has 40 active participants, including seven men; three-fourths are African-American. Their median age is 39. All of them have some previous college experience; 31 are currently working in the schools. 17 have dependent children in their households.

Our partners (Consortium) have done an outstanding job in offering support to our cohort members. Illinois Central College and Bradley University have been very supportive of the cohort in that they got everyone registered in short order so that they could begin class on time in August. They also keep in close contact with cohort members as to any problems/concerns. Progress reports have been gathered on each cohort member. The two institutions are working together to make sure that each candidate's transition from ICC to Bradley is smooth.

The two community organizations have made substantial contributions: The Tri County (Peoria) Urban League has built in an outstanding tutorial component for any and all cohort members who need academic tutoring and has offered their facility for meetings and get-togethers. PCCEO has taken to lead on mentoring. Workshops are held on a monthly basis with those cohort members who are working the Head Start programs of the organization. Outside speakers are brought in to address topics such as professionalism and customer service – an overarching concept which applies to candidate's current work as well as their future as teachers.

From the beginning, the union which represents school paraprofessionals has strongly supported the project, and the union's leadership is continuing to work to make sure that the transition from paraprofessional to certified teacher is a seamless one.



The forty member Peoria Grow Your Own Cohort! What a great looking group!!