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*Private Capital Helping Public Schools Prepare All Students for College or Career*



## Jacksonville Teacher Residency Program Completes First Year, Graduates Placed in DCPS Schools

Nine residents from the Jacksonville Teacher Residency Program completed their residency year this June and were offered placement in Duval County's transformation region. The teacher residency program, or JTR, is one of the first QEA investments to be implemented and has yielded positive results both in DCPS schools as well as at the University of North Florida, where residents attend courses in the College of Education and Human Resources.

In the summer of 2014, the first cohort of residents began their journey to becoming effective teachers in science and math by taking master's level coursework at UNF. Most of their courses were taught jointly by UNF faculty and DCPS teachers, in order to give a

blend of theory and practice that research has shown results in high-performing teachers. In August of last year, the residents began to work as interns alongside some of the Duval Transformation Office's best and brightest teachers. Over the course of the school year, the residents worked in their classrooms perfecting the skills of teaching and classroom management, while also taking classes at UNF learning content and subject-based skills.

To officially culminate the end of their residency and the beginning of their careers as teachers of record, the JTR program staff and DCPS leadership held a "signing day" on May 26. At the signing day event, Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, spoke to the new teachers about his own experience as a new teacher and

assured them that they were in for the hardest but most rewarding work in the world. Region Superintendent Iranetta Wright, Dean of the UNF College of Education and Human Resources Marsha Lupi and Duval County School Board members Paula Wright and Connie Hall were also in attendance to give words of wisdom and welcome to the group.

"We could not be more proud of this group of individuals. They taught us so much more than we taught them," said JTR Program Director Chris White from DCPS. Several of the principals of the DTO schools where residents were placed as well as their master teacher mentors joined in the celebration and welcome of their new colleagues in the district.



## Spotlight: The Leadership Academies at Eugene J. Butler

The first single-gender academy in Duval County Public Schools is located in the Duval Transformation Office. Eugene J. Butler Leadership Academy opened its doors in August with young men and young women attending classes separately, with separate teachers and a separate administrative staff. In its first year under the single-gender framework, the Eugene Butler Young Men's and Young Women's Academy has already begun to see tangible, positive results.

Butler has been a school with several challenges over the years. High incidents of disciplinary action, "D" and "F" school grades and decreases in student performance have all led to a steady decline in enrollment at the school. Recognizing a need to do something different at Butler, not only to increase enrollment but also student

achievement, Superintendent Vitti and the school board made the decision to shift to a single-gender model this school year. And the impact on students, teachers and the surrounding neighborhood continues to draw attention.

This year, school discipline infractions are down 81 percent, student reading proficiency is steadily climbing, and Gallup data shows that students at Butler report feeling more engaged and encouraged. Much of this can be attributed to strong leadership (separate principals for each academy), effective teachers and an overall shift in school culture. In particular, the addition of mandatory uniforms this year for students. College preparatory uniforms, complete with khaki

pants, a white oxford shirt, tie and blazer with the school emblem engraved on the front is the standard uniform for students in the young men's leadership academy. As a motivator for continued good behavior, the young men are awarded their blazer only if they are nominated by a teacher. By midyear, all students had earned their blazers.

The increased focus on accountability and high expectations set forth at Butler's two academies this year has begun to turn around a school that for years has struggled. The Quality Education for All Fund has supported Butler in several ways this year, including providing performance incentives to teachers at the academy,



## Butler progress featured in Times-Union, Business Journal

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placing Jacksonville Teacher Residency program residents at the school in science and math classrooms, and using dollars leveraged from Qualified Zone Academic Bonds (QZAB) to bring technology into every classroom.

This spring, the school was the subject of a three-part series in The Florida Times-Union, which highlighted some of this progress and featured some of its incredible students.

Butler was also recognized this spring at the Jacksonville Business Journal's new Innovation in Education Awards. The school was honored in front of a large group of business and education leaders.

The emblem stitched on the front of each Butler academy blazer reads "Invenite Fatum" which translates to "discover your destiny." Students, teacher and leaders at Butler Leadership Academy are doing just that.



## Save the Date: Quality Education for All Fund Donor Luncheon Takes Place on October 19

Please save the date for our next donor luncheon, which will take place on Monday, October 19, 2015 at the River Club from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Duval County Public Schools Superintendent Nikolai Vitti, along with Nina Waters, President of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, and Trey Csar, President of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, will be sharing the impact and progress of the Quality Education for All Fund as we enter the third year of implementation. Come and learn more about how this transformational initiative is changing schools in Duval County.

Please RSVP to [CFleck@jaxcf.org](mailto:CFleck@jaxcf.org) if you are able to attend. A formal invitation is forthcoming.

## Collaboration with WJCT educates community about QEA, teacher quality

A spring collaboration with WJCT public broadcasting resulted in a [video](#) series and an event with a panel discussion of teachers and leaders from the Duval Transformation Office.



## QEA Advisory Board Approves Funding for 36 Reading Interventionists in the Duval Transformation Office

At the June 2015 meeting of the QEA Advisory Board, members heard a proposal from the Superintendent to utilize QEA dollars to bring more reading interventionists into the schools in the Duval Transformation Office (DTO). The Superintendent cited the low reading proficiency rates of schools in the DTO as the reason for this need. In the terms presented by Dr. Vitti, the QEA Fund would pay the salary and benefits for 36 reading interventionists in grades K-2 and 6-10. The district would support an additional 28 reading interventionists in grades 3-5.

The basis for this investment rests on the research that shows the importance of reading proficiency in

student achievement in all subject areas. In the 36 DTO schools, proficiency levels are chronically lagging behind the rest of the district. Many supports in place at the district and school level to bring student proficiency up to grade level are not implemented until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; arguably too late.

This investment would allow for reading interventionists to work in small groups with students needing additional time and attention. Utilizing reading interventionists in this fashion has been successful throughout the district in other schools, and replicating the model will allow for greater student outcomes in the DTO.

## District Hosts Parent Night for 36 QEA Schools

On May 19, Duval County Public Schools hosted a parent night at Andrew Jackson High School for parents, guardians, students, teachers and staff and community members. The event was hosted by Sabrina Hall and Michael Bostick Jones, the two teacher of the year finalists from schools within the Duval Transformation Office (DTO). Iranetta Wright, Region Superintendent for the DTO, was also in attendance and offered insight for parents into the various investments, programs and initiatives that have been implemented in the region this school year.

Following performances from students at several DTO schools, parents and other guests were invited to meet with the principal and assistant principal(s) of their children's school to discuss the interim proficiency data from the iReady and Achieve 3000 tests. Parents could also ask questions regarding the new Florida State Standards and the accompanying assessment. Many parents in attendance were particularly interested in finding out how they could become more involved in ensuring their students' success.

The district has continued to

place an emphasis on building parent participation and engagement in the DTO schools. Most schools have access to the Parent Academy program, and have very active PTA's and SAC's. In recognizing that parents play a crucial role in student performance and success, the district has adopted a practice of transparency and open communication with parents, and events such as parent night continue to be an effective means to improve parent buy-in and support.

## QEA Fund in the news

The Florida Times-Union

<http://jacksonville.com/files/butlerschool/index.html>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2015-04-12/story/years-community-service-bring-cindy-edelman-onejax-honor>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2015-03-26/story/duvals-transformation-schools-face-long-road-improvement>

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