

Supporting Educators' Academic Literacies and Enhanced Discourse (SEALED)

The University of Miami (UM) along with partner Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) propose to work together to support teachers and improve K-12 student learning in schools serving high-needs populations (H-NPs; defined as culturally and linguistically diverse and/or Special Education students) in inclusive, regular, or special education secondary classrooms. The Supporting Educators' Academic Literacies and Enhanced Discourse (SEALED) Project addresses:

- Absolute Priority 1: Supporting effective teachers in schools with high concentrations of high-needs students: b) Providing professional development activities to current teachers that will improve pedagogy or content knowledge; and c) Providing professional enhancement activities to teachers, which may include activities that lead to an advanced credential.
- Competitive Preference Priority 1: Promoting Diversity in the Educator Workforce: a) Providing educator development activities designed to improve cultural competency and responsiveness skills that contribute to an inclusive school culture; and b) Improving the recruitment, support, and retention of educators from diverse backgrounds.
- Competitive Preference Priority 2: Support for Personalized Learning Environments: Improving teachers' college and career ready strategies to: a) systematically use student data to inform instructional decisions; and b) increasing students' engagement, voice, and choice in their learning.

From 2002-2007 UM and M-DCPS collaborated to implement an Applied Graduate Education (AGE) model of professional development which included job-embedded support to practicing teachers enrolled in a Reading/ESOL M.S. Ed. program. The SEALED Project builds on this established partnership to include a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the AGE model, and incorporates two interventions demonstrating *Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness* as defined by the What Works Clearinghouse for increased engagement ([Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011](#)) and for academic literacy instruction ([Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, & Kelly, 2010](#); [Lesaux, Kieffer, Kelley, & Harris, 2014](#)).

Goals: SEALED aims to increase: 1) the number of diverse and highly qualified teachers serving H-NPs in high-needs secondary schools to improve academic achievement and engagement in school and community; 2) teachers' knowledge and use of targeted instructional practices for H-NPs; and (3) to support and enhance teachers' facilitation of their H-NPs' engagement with school and community.

Outcomes:

1. Recruit 120 practicing teachers (60/cohort during Years 1 and 2) in targeted schools to enroll in UM's Education and Social Change, TESOL, or Special Education M.S. Ed. programs;
2. Provide job-embedded supports to 60 randomly selected participating teachers (30 per cohort) to empirically investigate M.S. Ed. programs as teacher professional development;
3. Improve teachers' knowledge and practices of reading/academic literacy instruction for H-NPs, emphasizing data-driven, culturally responsive, and problem-based learning driven by the Florida Standards;
4. Improve H-NPs' academic achievement and engagement in school and community;
5. Better understand the obstacles and affordances of teacher-CLDS engagement practices;
6. Quasi-experimental study of M.S. Ed. degree programs.

Contact: Dr. Mary A. Avalos, Project Director/PI, University of Miami, Teaching and Learning Department, P. O. Box 248065, Coral Gables, FL 33124; 305-284-6467, mavalos@miami.edu