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## Information Meetings Set for New Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education

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ROCK HILL, S.C. - The **Richard W. Riley College of Education** at Winthrop University plans to launch a new **master of arts in teaching in early childhood education** next year. The program is scheduled to begin in January 2009 pending final approval by the South Carolina Department of Education.

The main purpose of the degree is to prepare **highly qualified teachers** to enter pre-kindergarten through third grade classrooms. The new degree is developed to specifically address all **National Association for the Education of Young Children standards** for initial certification programs. The program will be accelerated to better meet the needs of working adults, as well as career-changers who desire to achieve a teaching certificate in the most time-efficient manner.

"The new program will help to fill a void of initial certification at the graduate level for personnel desiring to teach in elementary schools," said **Sue Peck**, chair of the **Department of Curriculum and Instruction**. "The University routinely receives inquiries asking about an initial certification program in early childhood education or elementary and this program will have broad appeal for those who desire a new degree in education."

The new degree offers a unique opportunity to join a cohort of peers in a carefully sequenced full-time course of study that features **peer collaboration** and a **full year of field experience and internship** in local schools.

The proposed program is expected to initially enroll 20-22 students.

The Riley College of Education will be hosting two information sessions for those interested and needing more information. The two meetings are scheduled on Tuesday, **May 20** at 5:30 p.m. and Thursday, **May 22** at 6:30 p.m. in the Plowden Auditorium, Withers/W.T.S. Building on the Winthrop campus on Eden Terrace Ave. Information packets will be distributed at these meetings.

For more information, contact Dr. Christine Ferguson, graduate program advisor, at 803-323-2595 or at <u>fergusonc@winthrop.edu</u>.

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