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Winthrop University

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## Second U.S. Education Grant Awarded to Winthrop to Aid S.C. Schools

### Quick Facts

- The U.S. Department of Education grant will be used for a "school leadership program" to recruit, train and mentor principals and assistant principals.
- Faculty members with Winthrop's Richard W. Riley College of Education and the College of Business Administration will work with districts located in Chester, Cherokee, Dillon, Fairfield, Marion, Marlboro, and Union counties.



Jennie Rakestraw

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Winthrop University** has been awarded \$3.7 million in federal assistance to partner with 11 rural, high-need school districts to improve school leadership and thus student achievement.

The **U.S. Department of Education grant** will be used for a "school leadership program" to recruit, train, and mentor principals and assistant principals. Faculty members with **Winthrop's Richard W. Riley College of Education** and the **College of Business Administration** will work with districts located in Chester, Cherokee, Dillon, Fairfield, Marion, Marlboro, and Union counties.



Mark Mitchell

The five-year grant will provide \$749,972 in the first year of operation.

**Jennie Rakestraw**, dean of the education college, said these rural districts in the Piedmont and Pee Dee regions tend to serve poor areas and often have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers and school leaders. This education grant, called **NetLEAD for Network of Leaders for Equity, Achievement, and Development**, will help districts groom a new generation of leaders as many current principals and assistant principals reach retirement. It also will help prepare school

leaders to become better instructional leaders and give them opportunities to interact with principals in others districts.

The program will create and sustain a cadre of school leaders in the 84 schools of the Chester, Cherokee, Dillon 1-2-3, Fairfield, Marion 1-2-7, Marlboro, and Union school districts. The goal is for them to embrace educational equity, maintain focus on student achievement and engage in continuing growth as school leaders.

"This grant will allow us to work with school leaders to create problem-solving effective leadership and provide ongoing professional development to help fight teacher and principal attrition rates," **Rakestraw** said. Each leadership candidate will have the opportunity to undergo a year-long internship and to work with a corps of mentors, who are recently retired principals.

**Mark Mitchell**, coordinator of Winthrop's educational leadership program, will be directing the grant.

By the end of the five-year grant, Winthrop education faculty members hope to certify, hire and retain 70 percent of new school leaders in those schools, improve student achievement, improve teacher effectiveness and improve leadership skills of participating leaders.

The **NetLEAD grant** also fits in with the goals of another recent U.S. Department of Education teacher quality grant for more than \$7 million awarded last fall, called **NetSCOPE (Network of Sustained, Collaborative, Ongoing Preparation for Educators)**. It also extends and enhances

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