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Education Grant Will Help Improve Struggling Schools

Winthrop University

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Education Grant Will Help Improve Struggling Schools

Quick Facts

- The U.S. Department of Education announced first-year funding of \$1.4 million for what will ultimately be a \$13 million five-year program.
- Winthrop is one of only 28 institutions nationally to be chosen to participate in the five-year Teacher Quality Partnership grant program.



Jennie Rakestraw

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University's **Richard W. Riley College of Education** has been awarded the largest federal grant in the institution's 124-year history.

The **U.S. Department of Education** today announced first-year funding of \$1.4 million for what will ultimately be a \$13 million five-year program expected to bring more than \$7 million in federal funds to Winthrop. The federal dollars will support collaborative work Winthrop will undertake with five South Carolina school districts in Cherokee, Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster and Union counties, as well as other partners, including the statewide Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement, which is headquartered at Winthrop. Winthrop is the only institution in South Carolina, one of only six institutions across the Southeast, and one of only 28 institutions nationally to be chosen to participate in the five-year **Teacher Quality Partnership grant program**.

"This grant is especially important to South Carolina in that it will provide both support for schools with high-need populations to help boost our state's overall education attainment, and for development of long-term strategies for preparing future teachers to work successfully over time in these and similar settings," **President Anthony DiGiorgio** said in an e-mail announcing the grant to the campus, adding, "As such, it is affirmation that Winthrop continues to be the flagship of teacher preparation for South Carolina and the region."

Named **NetSCOPE – Network of Sustained, Collaborative, Ongoing Preparation for Educators** - Winthrop's program will focus on five goals: improving student academic achievement in targeted high-need schools; improving professional learning for school-university faculty and teacher candidates; strengthening the pre-baccalaureate education of teacher candidates; increasing support for new teachers in the high-need districts; and implementing ongoing, accessible school leadership programs.

Winthrop will extend this initiative beyond the College of Education and the involved districts to include other academic departments and programs at Winthrop, as well as local school districts, regional and state organizations. Areas to be explored will include curriculum development, recruitment alignment with school district needs, new strategies for identifying and mentoring teaching candidates, connecting research to teaching practices, and school leadership development strategies.

Jennie Rakestraw, dean of the Riley College of Education at Winthrop, said that she and her colleagues "are thrilled with this opportunity to support quality education in South Carolina, especially as we help tackle the tough challenges faced by rural schools in our area. Critical to the success of our grant proposal and the implementation of this comprehensive project is the dedication and talent of our faculty and of our school district partners. We expect to witness major reforms in teacher preparation and the success of schools as a result of this significant collaborative endeavor."

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced **the 28 new five-year grants** this week.

"The Obama Administration is committed to giving teachers the support they need to succeed in the classroom," Duncan said. "The Teacher Quality Partnership grants will improve student academic achievement by strengthening teacher preparation, training and effectiveness and help school districts attract potential educators from a wide-range of professional backgrounds into the teaching profession."

[\[Back to Previous Page\]](#)

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Alumni & Friends	Directions	Employment	Library	Records & Registration	Visitors Center
Arts	Directory	Family Programs	Majors & More	Residence Life	Wingspan