

Florida Institute of Education  
at the University of North Florida  
Annual Report 2006



Imagination, by Justin Bergstrom (2007)

Mixed Media on Board

*Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were.  
But without it, we go nowhere.*

*~ Carl Sagan, astronomer*

## Florida Institute of Education Mission Statement

Established in 1982 as a statewide research center, the Florida Institute of Education (FIE) provides statewide leadership to improve education at all levels by working collaboratively with Florida's universities, community colleges, public schools, school readiness agencies, and communities to:

- Foster collaborative programs that address critical educational needs by supporting innovation and engaging in problem-focused research;
- Increase access to and use of the knowledge and skills needed to improve practice and inform decision-making; and
- Enhance achievement for all students, especially those at-risk.

*The disclosure of a new fact, the leap forward, the conquest over yesterday's ignorance, is an act not of reason but of imagination, of intuition.*

*~ Charles Nicolle, winner of the 1928 Nobel Prize in Medicine*

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

FIE's vision for educational excellence is aligned with our founding principles:

- Every child in Florida will enter kindergarten eager and ready to read, ready to learn, and ready to succeed in school regardless of the geographical location in which he/she lives.
- Florida's kindergarten through post-secondary students will rank at the highest levels of academic performance, and achievement will not be differentiated by race, gender, or socioeconomic status.
- Practitioners and researchers will view themselves as members of shared learning communities committed to collaboration, ongoing learning, inquiry, and continuous improvement.
- Families and communities will be fully engaged partners committed to improving children's learning and social, emotional, and healthy development.

Achieving this vision requires work on many fronts: research, collaboration, innovation and development, dissemination of successful tools and strategies, and data-informed policy- and decision-making.

But achieving this vision will require more than that. It will require imagination.

- The imagination to generate research and develop ideas from reviews of professional literature, collaboration with colleagues in the field and with other researchers, results of program evaluations, and the analyses of research studies.
- The imagination to translate research findings into viable initiatives and useful research questions. The imagination to design research and development projects that improve educational outcomes at all levels, with a special focus on students placed at risk of school failure.
- The imagination to employ the appropriate tool—experimental, quasi-experimental, program evaluation, or post hoc design—to rigorously evaluate programs and answer research questions.
- The imagination to secure funding to implement programs. The imagination to disseminate findings and tools to the persons who can use them.

Emily Dickinson wrote: "The Possible's slow fuse is lit/By the Imagination." This Annual Report provides information on the fuses that were lit by FIE and our partners during 2006—fuses that will ignite the vision of educational excellence across our state.

Cheryl A. Fountain

Executive Director

*Imagination has brought mankind through the dark ages to its present state of civilization. Imagination led Columbus to discover America. Imagination led Franklin to discover electricity.*

*~ L. Frank Baum, author of The Wizard of Oz*

## The Center for Early Literacy and Learning (CELL)

Columbus and Franklin found that imagination and hard work can lead to new worlds, new discoveries, new knowledge. The Florida Institute of Education (FIE) utilizes imagination and hard work to open up new worlds for learners at every level, in every corner of the state, beginning with our youngest learners.

**The Center for Early Literacy and Learning (CELL)** was established in 1999 with a significant gift by Betty and Tom Petway to the University of North Florida. The mission of CELL is to help young children acquire the skills needed to become eager and successful readers. Hosted by FIE and the UNF College of Education and Human Services, CELL funds are used to carry out research and development activities associated with improved literacy. Coaching and professional development programs, in particular, are designed to build early child care teacher and director expertise, thereby ensuring a higher level of literacy implementation in the classroom.

CELL's first practice-focused and action-oriented research initiative led to the development of the Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM), a curriculum and instructional support system geared toward giving children from low-income families the opportunity to engage regularly in purposeful literacy experiences during preschool—thereby preparing them to become successful learners. The second generation of that curriculum, ELLM/Plus, is now being implemented in hundreds of preschool classrooms across the state of Florida.

*Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions.*

*~ Albert Einstein, scientist*

## The Early Literacy and Learning Model/Plus

In 2005-2006, FIE researchers, writers, and graphic artists created a wide variety of curriculum materials and resources for early care and learning centers, preschools, and families.

The Early Literacy and Learning Model/Plus is a comprehensive curriculum that builds children's literacy knowledge and concept development through content and explicit instructional strategies designed to increase their opportunities to learn. Instructional strategies focus on intentional teaching and integration of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, social and emotional development, and motor development. The ELLM/Plus curriculum engages children in ways that promote persistence, creativity, and eagerness to learn.

**The meaningful engagement of families** in their children's development and learning is a crucial key to school success. In 2006, FIE adopted a family involvement agenda focused on identifying ways families

can be more effective as their children's first and most important teachers. Our family involvement specialists used external funding to field test an arts-based literacy program that targeted families in designated zip codes in Jacksonville. Participating families were invited to attend six 2-hour workshops and a children's performance. The workshops included family conversations, dinner, and an arts and literacy experience for adults while children enjoyed interactive activities, dinner, and an art class in Children's Club. Families left each workshop with a Family Arts and Literacy Bag which included two books, learning materials, and activities.

*Parents came for the books and materials, but when asked, they said that the family conversations were very helpful to them. For instance, they talked about the home environment, and how often the television was on. One grandmother said that the TV was on all the time, and when they talked about it at the workshop she decided to spend a weekend with the TV off. She forgot once and started to turn it on, but her granddaughter stopped her!*

*- The S. P. Livingston Family Involvement and Learning Community project field-tested promising family engagement strategies and disseminated effective strategies to Jacksonville child care centers and elementary schools.*

*Imagination is the beginning of creation.*

*~ George Bernard Shaw, playwright*

## FIE's Work at the State and Local Levels

FIE's work on behalf of Florida's youngest learners is not limited to the development of curricula and materials—we also participate in state and local programs designed to create a comprehensive safety net of school readiness support services.

**At the state level**, three offices oversee and support Florida's school readiness sector—the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning (AWI/OEL), the Florida Department of Education's Office of Early Learning (FLDOE/OEL), and the Head Start State Collaboration Office.

FIE provides AWI/OEL with information technology and staff to support Florida's 31 early learning coalitions. FIE also furnishes staffing and accounting support to Florida's Even Start program, which is administered by AWI/OEL. FIE works closely with the FLDOE/OEL to design, print, and distribute the state's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards and related support materials for parents of preschoolers.

FIE hosts the Head Start State Collaboration Office in Tallahassee in a partnership with the Governor's Office and the AWI/OEL. The Collaboration Office encourages cooperation among Head Start sites across the state and with other providers of educational, medical, and social services for Florida's young children.

**At the local level**, the Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership (JELP) is a city-wide collaboration of 13 community organizations convened by Mayor John Peyton to leverage efforts and share resources to

ensure that every child in Jacksonville enters kindergarten ready to read, ready to learn, and ready to succeed. FIE faculty chaired the JELP Accountability and Evaluation Work Team, charged with answering implementation questions, tracking and monitoring progress, and reporting results. FIE staff also provided technical assistance to JELP preschool coaches working with teachers to implement research-based curricula.

*The world is but a canvas to our imaginations.*

*~ Henry David Thoreau, author and naturalist*

The journey that students take from kindergarten through high school can be filled with excitement and the delight of the unexpected. FIE plays a role in making sure that this journey is safe and productive—and that it leads, in the end, to a better life and more prosperous community. FIE, in collaboration with state and local partners, implements three programs designed to create learning environments in which all students will flourish and succeed in middle, and high schools:

### **The Office of Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools.**

FIE continued its partnership with the Florida Department of Education and all 67 school districts through the Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Technical Assistance (SDDFS TA) Project. Funded by a grant from the FLDOE through Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the SDDFS TA Project seeks to eliminate drug use and violence (including bullying) among school children in Florida.

### **The PreCollegiate Program**

This program provides middle school students in three Florida counties access to special tutoring and support to help them succeed in Algebra I, a prerequisite course for future mathematics courses needed to meet college admission requirements.

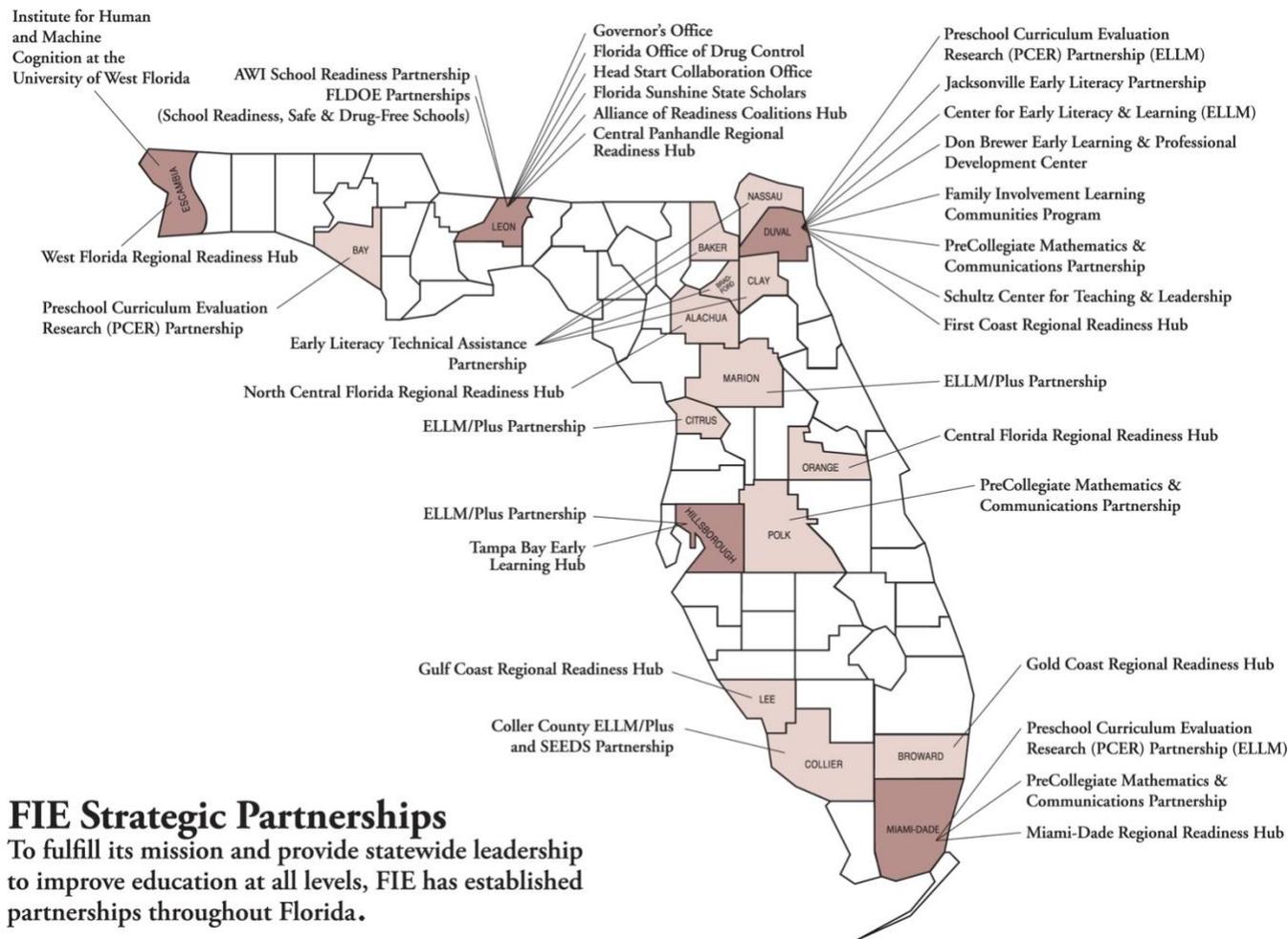
### **The Sunshine State Scholars Program**

To develop outstanding students, Florida must recognize and reward exemplary performance. The Sunshine State Scholars program encourages Florida high school students to acquire strong mathematics and science skills by rewarding outstanding achievement in these disciplines. High-achieving students in mathematics and science are nominated by their schools to participate in a rigorous competition at the district, regional, and state levels.

*Imagination makes you see all sorts of things.*

*~ Georgia O'Keeffe, painter*

Georgia O'Keeffe was right: Imagination really does make you see all sorts of things, including possibilities for collaboration in all sorts of interesting places. After all, no single institution can tackle our educational challenges alone—challenges such as improving early literacy, increasing graduation rates, and ensuring that more of our children pursue higher education. So we imagined how we might strengthen our projects and make them more successful, which helped us identify new colleagues and partners across the state.



**FIE Strategic Partnerships**  
 To fulfill its mission and provide statewide leadership to improve education at all levels, FIE has established partnerships throughout Florida.

*There are no days in life so memorable as those which vibrate to some stroke of the imagination.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist and poet

**FIE leverages resources** to advance knowledge, address educational challenges, and improve learning outcomes. In this way, FIE plays an important role in helping UNF fulfill its objective of increasing external funding to support research and to address pressing community needs. For the last five years, FIE has produced between 24% and 49% of the total grant and contracts awarded to UNF—the highest contribution of any single entity on campus (see Figure 1).

In 2005-2006, FIE employed 33 full-time Administration and Professional staff and faculty, six full-time support staff, and 44 part-time staff at its UNF and Tallahassee offices. The state-funded operating budget for the year was \$772,781. Grants awarded for 2005-2006 totaled \$6,537,205.

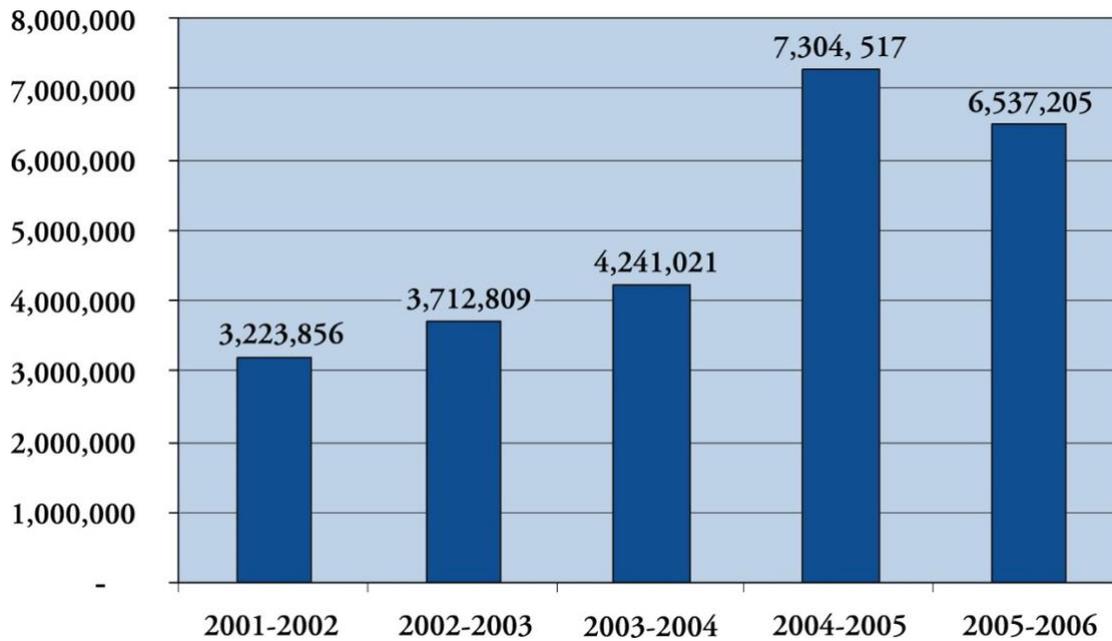


Figure 1 Florida Institute of Education Awards: 2001-2006

*As great scientists have said and as all children know, it is above all by the imagination that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope.*

*~ Ursula K. Le Guin, author*

## FIE Partners

Our vision for achieving educational excellence in Florida would not be possible without our partners, who bring so much expertise, creativity, and energy to the table.

- Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning
- Children's Board of Hillsborough County
- Citrus County School District
- City of Jacksonville – Mayor's Office
- Collier County Early Literacy and Reading Partnership for Educational Success
- Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center
- Duval County Public Schools
- Early Childhood Services (Bay County)
- Early Learning Coalition of Duval County
- Episcopal Children's Services
- Florida Department of Education
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Florida Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Florida Office of Drug Control

Fun Time Early Childhood Academy, Incorporated (Naples, Florida)  
Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, a not-for-profit research institute of the Florida University System  
Jacksonville Children's Commission  
Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership  
Jacksonville Urban League Head Start Program  
Marion County School District  
Miami-Dade School Readiness Coalition  
Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives  
Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership  
University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services

**Florida Network of Community-Based Early Learning and Professional Development Hubs:**

Florida A&M University/The Alliance of Readiness Coalitions Hub (ARCH)  
Florida Atlantic University/Early Learning Coalition of Broward, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and Sr. Lucie Counties  
Florida Gulf Coast University/Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida  
Florida International University/Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe  
Florida State University/The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region  
University of Central Florida/Early Learning Coalition of Seminole  
University of Florida/Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County  
University of North Florida/Early Learning Coalition of Duval, Inc.  
University of South Florida/Early Learning Coalition of Polk County  
University of West Florida/Santa Rosa County Early Learning Coalition

*The power of imagination makes us infinite.*

*~ John Muir, essayist and conservationist*

**Jacksonville Faculty and Senior Staff**

Dr. Cheryl Fountain, Executive Director, Professor of Education  
Dr. Afesa Adams, FIE Senior Research Associate, Professor Emeritus of Psychology  
Dr. William Caldwell, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, FIE Senior Faculty Fellow  
Dr. Madeleine Cosgrove, Associate Director for School Readiness  
Cindy Dickerson, Associate Director and Business/Project Manager  
Dr. Rebecca England, Family Involvement Specialist  
Brian Gifford, ELLM/Plus Literacy Specialist  
Dr. Gerry Giordano, FIE Research Associate  
Dr. Linda Goudy, Associate Director for Administration/Project Manager  
Dr. Janice Hunter, Research Fellow for Early Learning and Literacy  
Dr. Kathe Kasten, Senior Research Associate  
Dr. Bronwyn McLemore, ELLM/Plus Literacy Specialist  
Dr. Stephanie Wehry, Assistant Director for Research

Dr. Janice Wood, Crawford Faculty Fellow, ELLM/Plus Developer

*I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.*

*~ Albert Einstein, scientist*

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<http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie>

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