Overview

As part of the Florida Master Teacher Initiative, The University of Florida College of Education is partnering with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, The Early Childhood Initiative, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education to offer a graduate program to prekindergarten through third grade teachers in selected partner schools. This is an extraordinary opportunity to develop and retain a cadre of high quality Master Teachers with outstanding pedagogical skills and demonstrated ability and commitment to improve the achievement of all students in their respective schools.

Research-based and firmly grounded in the context and practice of teachers, the Teacher Leadership for School Improvement (TLSI) Program is a job-embedded, early childhood-focused graduate program, offered on-site to cohorts of teachers from these schools. The emphasis of the program rests on enacted practice, applying and demonstrating mastery of the core elements of powerful instruction as evidenced by measurable improvements in student learning and achievement.

A major priority of TLSI is to develop educators with the pedagogical skills, content knowledge, and demonstrated ability to produce high levels of reading and writing achievement in their students. Recognizing the critical importance of early learning, the TLSI Program places a premium on helping teachers engage parents and apply effective strategies to ensure children’s early success in school, particularly in developing literacy skills.

TLSI is designed specifically for educators who have a profound passion for the teaching profession, a commitment to excellence and equity, and a deep appreciation for diversity. This program is only for those educators who have the desire and courage to engage in a collaborative, inquiry-based learning community where practice is made public, and craft knowledge is shared freely.

A full tuition scholarship – valued at over $20,000 – will be provided to each teacher accepted into the program. Books and program fees (approximately $100-$150 per semester) will be the only costs paid by TLSI participants. The scholarship is only offered while you are employed in a partner school and teaching in a prekindergarten through third grade classroom. In return for receiving a full tuition scholarship, participants must make a good faith commitment to remain in one of our partner schools for 2 years following graduation and continue to be a teacher leader at their school.

This is a 2 ½ year, 39-credit hour graduate degree program. Courses will combine the best of on-line learning with face-to-face course and professional development meetings as well as classroom support from on-site UF faculty members. In addition, each summer will include a 3-day institute, focused on developing your teacher leadership skills.

There are 4 online terms a year (Fall, Spring 1, Spring 2, Summer). You will take one course each term, except for Summer when you will take 2 courses, so that you can also concentrate on your teaching and apply your learning immediately. There is no spring break, and you should not plan to travel during the terms. This will be challenging and this will be a rigorous graduate program. But it will also be one of the greatest learning experiences of your career.