

School of Education

Today is June 19, 2015

SBG

SBG=standards based grading, in case you forgot. Drake SOE's education leadership team held yet another packed-room at the HyVee Convention Hall featuring speaker Dr. Lee Ann Jung <http://www.lajung.com/> author of *Grading Exceptional and Struggling Learners*. The day-long session was mostly attended by special education teachers and consultants who learned about using standards-based grading for all students.

New building completely approved

The Board of Trustees completely

Drake SOE wins bid to provide masters degree program for DMPS alternative contract employees

We got it! See Des Moines register article below. Students will start in the spring of 2016. Congratulations and kudos to the hard work of all involved, especially Jill Johnson and Jerrid Kruse.

Media - one is enough this week

Drake University, Des Moines schools offer free master's program

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/education/2015/06/16/drake-university-des-moines-schools-offer-free-masters-program/28845609/>

Mackenzie Ryan, mryan@dmreg.com 9:43 p.m. CDT June 16, 2015

Drake University will partner with Des Moines Public Schools in offering what leaders say is an innovative new program that they believe will improve student achievement in school.

On Tuesday the Des Moines school board approved a contract with Drake to develop and offer a master's degree for free or reduced cost to Des Moines teachers. The first group, which includes 52 teachers, will start classes in January.

"It's a great opportunity for teachers, I don't know of another district in the country that's doing this," school board member Connie Boesen said.

But whether the master's degree will achieve the stated goal of improving student results — at a cost of \$500,000 a year, once the program is fully implemented — is yet to be seen.

Education research has found that a master's degree does not necessarily improve student learning, except in rare cases, such as when advance math teachers earn a master's in mathematics teaching.

It's a challenge school officials have acknowledged, and are tackling head-on with the program's focus on urban education, cultural competency and instruction for students learning English.

The program will use student data, plus teacher surveys and focus

approved a new School of Education/Mathematics and Computer Science Building. The plan, according to President Maxwell's email to faculty and staff, that this summer, a sub-committee of the Board will work with the administration on the selection of a contractor to begin value engineering prior to sending out bid packages. If all goes according to plan, construction will begin in early 2016, with the building completed and functional in time for the opening of the Fall 2017 semester.

groups, in designing courses that will help achieve Des Moines' goals of improving education for a diverse student body.

Students in the state's largest school district speak more than 80 languages at home, and come from various backgrounds, including immigrants who spent time in refugee camps and those who live in generational poverty.

"We think we can design a master's degree program that will actually produce results for students, and we're very much hoping will be a result of this," Superintendent Tom Ahart said at a previous board meeting.

In time, Drake will measure how students perform in classes taught by master's recipients, among other data that will help determine the program's success, said Jerrid Kruse, chair of the department of teaching and learning at Drake.

"If you're not impacting what's happening with the kids in the classroom, what's the point?" he said. "That's what our goal is, to actually impact what's happening with the kids in the classroom."

Jill Caton Johnson, a professor helping form the program, said that the public-private partnership is unique in higher education, because of how teachers and district staff members will have input into the courses created.

As part of the contract, half the classes will be taught by Drake professors and half by Des Moines school staff members who have been hired as adjunct professors. Classes will be held at night, on weekends and over the summer at both the university's campus and district schools.

"The classroom environment within the school is very different than the classroom environment within the college campus," said Jeri Moritz, director of teacher development in Des Moines.

That will allow master's degree students to go more in-depth in understanding students' backgrounds and how best to teach them.

Undergraduate degrees don't always provide that focus, Moritz said.

"You get the tree-top view, but that doesn't always happen," she said.

"It's not as in-depth as our teachers need."

Doug Smith, associate executive director with the Des Moines teachers union, said the master's degree will be a "beacon" that will help attract and retain the best teachers.

The district negotiated an alternative contract with the Des Moines Education Association as part of offering the master's degree for free. If teachers agree to work for eight years, as well as participate in a mentoring and support program that includes additional evaluations, their degree will be paid for.

However, if a teacher earns a degree without finishing an eight-year commitment, he or she will be required to pay the cost back.

"We understand that a lot of young teachers leave the profession after five years, so we would like to use it as a retention tool as well," Smith said. "It's almost 50 percent by year five."

The program will be open to other Des Moines teachers, who can enroll in the master's program for a reduced cost.

So far, more than 170 teachers have signed on to the alternative contract since it was first approved three years ago.

In its first year, the master's program will cost Des Moines \$150,000, which will grow to about \$500,000 once the two-year master's program

is fully implemented.

Money comes from the professional development part of the district's budget, which Chief Financial Officer Thomas Harper said is a small fraction of the total training budget of more than \$15 million.

Drake University School of Education 3206 University Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50311
T 515-271-3726 W www.drake.edu/soe

The logo for Drake University, featuring the word "Drake" in a large, white, serif font above the word "UNIVERSITY" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, all set against a dark blue background.

Drake
UNIVERSITY

Click here to [unsubscribe](#)