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Media Relations

September 24, 2012

UNH Partnering on National Technical Assistance Center for Inclusive Education

DURHAM, N.H. – The National Center on Inclusive Education (NCIE) at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability has received a \$825,000 subcontract as part of a five-year, \$24.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to the University of Kansas.

The NCIE will work with the University of Kansas and other national partners to establish the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Center, a national technical assistance center for inclusive education. SWIFT is dedicated to promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools while also increasing the academic achievement of all students. The center will assist educators, administrators, schools, and state education agencies in implementing evidence-based inclusive education practices.

The NCIE's Mary Schuh, along with colleagues from the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE), will lead the effort to create a national network of technical assistance providers and resources in inclusive education. Additional key partners include the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Institute of Education Leadership, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, TASH, and other universities and non-profit organizations.

"The NCIE team is thrilled to join this national effort to transform educational policies and practices so that all students, including those with the most significant disabilities, are presumed competent and receive the supports they need to learn in their neighborhood schools and general education classrooms," Schuh says. "Schools really are for all children, and this project is designed turn this vision—rooted in research, civil rights, and principles of social justice—into a reality."

"Almost 30 years of research and experience have shown us that all children, including those with significant disabilities, benefit from high expectations and practices that support inclusion," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "[SWIFT will] help ensure that educators have resources to address the needs of their students with disabilities."

During the first year, SWIFT project staff will visit model schools to gauge and document the characteristics which lead to achievement for all students. In the second year, SWIFT will expand its work to 64 schools in four states, in a mixture of rural and urban areas, with the goal of supporting school and district-wide inclusive education reform.

For more information on SWIFT, visit www.swiftschools.org.

The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire was established in 1987 to provide a coherent university-based focus for the improvement of knowledge, policies, and practices related to the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. Its mission is to strengthen communities to ensure full access, equal opportunities, and participation for all persons.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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