

News Release

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NIU, DeKalb School District Officials Tell Wright Story Statewide

Wright Elementary School will take center stage Saturday, Nov. 18, during a joint annual conference of school board members and school district administrators from across Illinois.

More than 5,000 members of the Illinois Association of School Boards, the Illinois Association of School Administrators and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials are expected to attend the three-day event in Chicago. Representatives from Northern Illinois University and the DeKalb School District will present "On the 'Wright' Track: Expanding School and University Partnerships." Wright serves as a professional development school for NIU, with innovative programs for Wright students such as the integration of fine arts and technology across all subjects and the development of units designed to meet a variety of learning styles. The school opened in 2004 in Malta.

"Our partnership has expanded into this very comprehensive effort at bringing teacher education and the education of children together in an exciting and dynamic manner," said Sharon Smaldino, LD & Ruth G. Morgridge Endowed Chair in Teacher Education and director of School-University Partnerships. "We're trying to meet the needs of not only our NIU teacher candidates but also the children and the community – and it's going superbly."

"Wright Elementary is a great example of a work in progress. We continue to develop Sternberg units and work toward integrating the arts and technology into the curriculum," said Gina Greenwald, Wright principal. "It's exciting to work in such a strong community of learners. The teachers continue to develop their expertise, students are learning through many different avenues, and the NIU interns get hands-on experience in the classroom. We are really proud of the progress made during these initial 3 years."

The presentation will examine the process used in the development of Wright Elementary School, identify the advantages of such a partnership and the innovations that make Wright unique, outline the challenges and costs of a partnership school and examine the evidence that the Wright partnership is a success.

Panel members representing the DeKalb School District are Andy Small, school board president; Paul Beilfuss, superintendent; Linell Lasswell, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction; and Greenwald. NIU representatives are Christine Sorenson, dean of the College of Education, and Smaldino.

The panel will repeat the presentation in April at the National School Board Conference in San Francisco.

Visit <http://www.partnershipschool.niu.edu> or <http://www.dekalbpartnership.niu.edu> for more information.