



From left to right, Pat Payne, Director of IPS Office of Multicultural Affairs and Dr. JaDora Sailes.

“The greatest distance between people is not space...the greatest distance between people is culture.” The essence of this quote is a driving force behind Dr. JaDora Sailes’ research in multicultural education and work with local schools in the Indianapolis area.

Dr. Sailes is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the IU School of Education

and recently distinguished as a 2007 Profitt Summer Faculty Fellow. This research grant provides her the opportunity to explore factors schools struggle with in their efforts to support the needs of culturally different students.

Her commitment to high academic achievement for all students resulted in an invitation to co-chair the Indianapolis Public Schools Cultural Audit Task Force. Dr. Sailes and her team were responsible for creating a strategic plan to conduct a “pilot” culture audit. The purpose of the audit was to examine how diverse perspectives were reflected in the values and behaviors manifested in the overall school culture, to reveal cultural practices which contributed to an achievement gap, and to give recognition to practices which celebrated diversity. The benefits of her team’s culture audit were numerous and IPS is currently exploring ways to use this transformative tool at other schools in its district.

As a recipient of a Telluride Foundation 2007 Teaching Grant, Sailes was able to act upon her philosophical belief that children from culturally diverse backgrounds want to and can learn. The students in her seminar were bright and talented African American high school sophomores from around the country. Dr. Sailes challenged her students to seek and fill leadership roles in order to make a positive difference in their own communities.

When Dr. Sailes is not teaching her Diversity and Learning course in the Teacher Education Program on the IUPUI campus or pursuing her scholarly interests in school culture or cultural competency, she enjoys competing in track and field at the masters level and traveling with her husband, Dr. Gary Sailes, an Associate Professor at IUB and her two sons Grant and William.