

## **EC/ELE/MLE Department Receives Two Grants**

The Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education received two grants for the 2013-2014 school year. One grant written by **Drs. Brian Reid and Joy Russell** is to implement **Response to Intervention (RtI)** into coursework for pre-service teachers and to develop partnerships with local schools where pre-service teachers can observe and practice RtI strategies. RtI is the name given to a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data (RtI Network, 2013). The Department is in their fourth year of a five year grant. The **\$20,000** received this year is earmarked to provide faculty with additional training on RtI strategies, provide resources to faculty and students, and to develop partnerships with local schools.

The Department is also in receipt of an **Early Childhood Educator Preparation Program Innovation Grant** for **\$39,500**. The grant, written by **Drs. Sham'ah Md—Yunus and Joy Russell** is funded through federal monies from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge and is a collaborative effort of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois State Board of Education, The Center; Resources for Teaching and Learning, and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development. The purpose of the grant is to redesign our early childhood program in collaboration with community colleges, early childhood education agencies and school districts in order to meet teacher licensure regulations and needs of today's early childhood classrooms.