

**NNER SETTING ANNUAL REPORT\***  
**2010**

**SETTING NAME WYOMING SCHOOL UNIVERSITY-PARTNERSHIP**

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**\* FINAL DRAFT APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BOARD, NOVEMBER 4, 2010, AT ITS REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING.**

**DESCRIBE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES ACROSS THE SETTING (IN PARTNER SCHOOLS, EDUCATION AND ARTS AND SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS AND COLLEGES) ON WORK, INITIATIVES, AND ADVANCES RELATED TO ASPECTS OF THE NNER MISSION THAT ARE MOST CENTRAL TO YOUR SETTING'S CURRENT FOCUS.** This may include progress toward engaging with community, advancing equity and excellence for all learners, providing nurturing pedagogy for all (P-12 and IHE students), advancing stewardship of the profession, and/or promoting education for participation in the democracy. Provide descriptive information that will help colleagues learn from your successes as well reflections on challenges.

## **Successes:**

### **Statewide Convenings and Co-sponsored Events**

#### ***1<sup>st</sup> Wyoming In Praise of Education conference***

Casper, 78 registrants, January 28-29, 2010

Featured a panel and follow-up online book discussion of Hugh Hecklo's *On Thinking Institutionally*, guided by John Anderson from the Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal, as well as multiple Wyoming sessions reprised from the 2009 Bellevue In Praise of Education conference. The Partnership sponsored an online book discussion with 16 individuals as a conference follow-up; four individuals enrolled for one-hour UW graduate credit for participating in the book discussion.

#### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Wyoming In Praise of Education conference***

Casper, 55 registrants, November 3-5, 2010

The conference featured Donnan Stoicovy, State College, Pennsylvania, as keynoter and also facilitator of a principals' working dinner. Breakout sessions featured Wyoming presenters from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary.

#### ***Rocky Mountain/Plains Chapter, League of Democratic Schools conference***

Casper, 48 registrants, March 25-26, 2010

Jennifer Grooms, Wyoming's 2009-2010 League coordinator, organized the meeting. Along with several plenary sessions, one featuring Joel Dvorak, Casper superintendent of schools, registrants visited Casper classrooms, including Woods Learning Center and Star Lane Center. Five registrants enrolled for the 1.0 PTSB continuing credit.

#### ***14<sup>th</sup> Shepard Symposium on Social Justice***

University of Wyoming, Laramie, April 7-9, 2010. Provided marketing for the event and sponsored the K-12 teachers' tea. This year's focus was environmental justice. Symposium co-chairs included Angela Jaime, Sylvia Parker, and Kate Welsh.

#### ***2<sup>nd</sup> UW, College of Education Literacy Conference***

Laramie, 170 registrants, September 24-25, 2010

Hosted at the University of Wyoming, the College of Education and the Partnership co-sponsored the two-day event featuring David Pearson.

#### ***2<sup>nd</sup> eVolution Technology Conference***

Laramie, 123 registrants, September 30-October 1, 2010

The conference is unique in that an online component is featured along with a face-to-face component. We also arranged for PTSB continuing credit. Four people registered for .5 credits. The forum's onsite (University of Wyoming) registration equaled 123 participants with 10-20 visitors a day accessing videos.

### **High School to Higher Education Transitions Initiative**

This work is, perhaps, the Partnership's shining light and represents a strong, positive relationship with the state's P-16 Education Council. The work is supported by the Qwest Foundation's gifts of \$15,000 awarded May, 2009 and \$10,000 awarded in November, 2010. We are focusing on the five content areas of the state's Hathaway Scholarship program: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social science, and world languages. The initiative also connects to an examination of the state's dual/concurrent enrollment practices and a strong emphasis on equity and access. A consensus process was used to assemble stakeholders, identify issues, collect information, and make recommendations. The work was funded through Senate Enrolled Act 52, with significant implications for all Wyoming secondary and postsecondary institutions.

#### **1. English/Language Arts:**

- a. With the College of Education and the UW Art Museum, co-sponsored a visit of Shirley Brice Heath, March 30, 2010.
- b. Hosted the "Institute for Reading and Writing Instruction: Developing Social Media Across the Curriculum" in Sheridan, April 16, 2010, for 46 registrants.

#### **2. Life Sciences:**

- a. Site swap with Carbon County #2 School District, where high school teachers and administrators came to UW to participate in biology lab and lecture classes, met lab TAs, life science faculty and others. Then, UW returned the visit to two Carbon #2 high schools. February 18-19; April 20, 2010.
- b. Hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> annual "Life Sciences Summit" May 5, 2010 in Casper for 37 registrants. Work in the life sciences, thanks to the leadership of Mark Lyford, sets a high standard for other transition projects and a strong, positive model of collaboration across levels using democratic practices.

3. **Mathematics:**
  - a. Co-sponsored with ACT the statewide mathematics and statistics articulation meeting, Cheyenne, February 19, 2010 for 47 registrants. The group focused on ACT data and ways to help students improve their understanding of mathematical concepts.
4. **Social Studies:**
  - a. 2010-2011 planning includes social studies, specifically, geography, history, and political science. These are the three concurrent social science secondary majors supported by the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education.
5. **World Languages:**
  - a. Hosted a statewide, two-day meeting for 37 predominantly French, German, and Spanish language teachers in Casper, April 17-18, 2010.
  - b. From that larger group, a small work committee convened via conference call over the summer and fall to develop a common set of student learning expectations for French, German, and Spanish 1010, courses taught via dual, concurrent, and university options. The work group also began the task of making recommendations about a statewide placement process. Then, on October 22, at the statewide meeting of language teachers (n=77), the 1010 documents were discussed further and overwhelmingly supported. Next steps include developing learning expectations for the subsequent course, 1020, and continued work on a transparent and effective placement process.

### **League of Democratic Schools**

The Partnership pays for one-half of the \$500 yearly membership fee for each school. Three Wyoming schools are members: Guernsey-Sunrise High School (Platte #2), University of Wyoming Lab School (Albany #1), and Woods Learning Center (Natrona #1). During the 2009-2010 school year, retired Woods Learning Center teacher, Jennifer Grooms, was engaged as a paid consultant to forward the Wyoming League work.

### **Professional Development Renewal and University of Wyoming Credit**

The Partnership arranges for Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board continuing credit and/or University of Wyoming graduate credit whenever possible. During the 2009-2010 school year, 103 teachers earned 67.5 PTSB renewal credits and 23 University of Wyoming graduate credits for professional development sponsored or co-sponsored by the Partnership.

## **Challenges:**

### **League of Democratic Schools**

We were hopeful that the identification of a coordinator would grow the number of schools from three to nine. We were unsuccessful in that goal and will not have a coordinator for the 2010-2011 school year. However, we will use this experience to examine other civic and citizenship building models and conduct a small inquiry and, perhaps, initiate a small grants program. The inquiry will be kicked off during the November 4-5 In Praise of Education conference.

### **Teacher Education and Partner Districts**

It is a challenge to engage mentor teachers in Partner districts to participate in the statewide In Praise of Education conference. Being a member of the Partnership is different from being a Partner district host site for student teachers.

## **DESCRIBE SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO AT LEAST ONE OF THE NNER PRIORITIES LISTED BELOW.**

Provide information that will help colleagues learn from your successes as well as proffer suggestions or resources for the challenges listed.

- Research and inquiry related to advancing the Agenda for Education in a Democracy

Hutchison, L., Buss, A., Ellsworth, J., and Persichitte, K. (2010). Soothing Cerberus: The Wyoming Odyssey. In L.Erickson and N. Wentworth (Eds.) Tensions of Accreditation. Emerald Group Publishing, Ltd.

Trent, A. (2010). *Collaborative Artmaking and Installation: Fostering Creativity and Democratic Thinking*. National Art Education Association Annual Conference (Baltimore, MD).

Trent, A., Perry, S., Johnson, R., Hanks, R., Hockley, D., Heuschkel, P. (2010). *Doing Action Research In Your Classroom*. UW Fall 2010 Literacy Education Conference (Laramie, WY).

Trent, A., Cho, J., Rios, F., Mayfield, K. (2010). Democracy in teacher education: Learning from preservice teachers' understandings and perspectives. *Education in a Democracy: The Journal of the NNER*, 2, 183-210. Available at: <http://www.units.muohio.edu/nnerjournal/currentissue.html>

- Influencing policy at local, state, and/or national level and Collaborative work with other organizations and/or within the setting that advance the NNER mission locally

The Partnership's high school to higher education initiative is well-supported by the state's P-16 Education Council and also represents a strong collaboration. The transition work is in concert with the P-16 Council's two-fold goal a) increase the number of Wyoming students completing high school, and b) increase the number of Wyoming students in postsecondary study.

### Successes:

The Partnership's singular success continues to be its high school to higher education initiative which focuses on access, equity, and ground-level up democratic practices and collaboration. The initiative has had a statewide impact in four of the five Hathaway Success Curriculum areas (English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) with faculty across K-12, community college, and university participating.

### Challenges:

Wyoming distances and geography are an ongoing challenge.

Despite a concerted effort to grow more League of Democratic School sites with the help of Jennifer Grooms who was hired to direct the initiative, we are holding at three schools and will be evaluating our continued participation in the initiative.

Rebuilding and building meaningful connections with partner sites for student teaching/other field experiences in concert with inservice professional development.

### OTHER SETTING INFORMATION:

**(Provide any additional information including celebrations, acknowledgements, awards, accomplishments, challenges at the setting, changes in personnel, etc. that provide additional background. )**

The Partnership is comprised of 22 school districts, all seven Wyoming community colleges, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Wyoming Education Association, and the UW College of Arts & Sciences and College of Education. Membership represents 74% of Wyoming's PK-12 student population, 46% of Wyoming school districts, and all of Wyoming postsecondary education. The Governing Board is composed of 29 members and meets four to five times a year, usually in a central location such as Casper. In between meetings, the director updates and consults with the executive committee on some actions and expenses via telephone and email.

Membership and benefits are dues-driven. School districts pay annual \$2,500 by mid-August for the school year. Dues vary for other institutions. The director's nine-month salary is paid by the College of Education with a two-month summer stipend paid by the Partnership. The office associate is three-quarter time with salary and benefits paid by the Partnership. The Partnership offices are on the campus of the University of Wyoming, representing significant in-kind support by the college and university.

### Celebrations and Accomplishments

#### *Hosted, Sponsored or Co-sponsored*

- 1 Online book study, Hugh Hecló's *On Thinking Institutionally*
- 2 Statewide Wyoming *In Praise of Education* conferences
- 2 Blogs and Wiggio social networking sites
- 3 League of Democratic Schools building sites
- 3 Agenda for Education in a Democracy scholars (A. Kleinsasser, F. Rios, A. Trent)
- 3 Participants in the 2010 NNER Summer Symposium (P. Fenton-Hughes, F. Rios, K. Roxas)
- 5 UW lectures made available and public through WyoCast online
- 8 Statewide transition to higher education institutes, summits, and symposia and other meetings hosted or co-sponsored (English/language arts, literacy, math, science, world languages, technology, social justice)

- 22 \* Wyoming school districts belonging to the Partnership
- 24 UW s/u graduate credit hours
- 67.5 Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board continuing education renewal credits (n=103 teachers)
- 100% percentage of Wyoming Community Colleges belonging to the Partnership
- 41% \* percentage increase, Wyoming's 48 school districts belonging to the Partnership since 2005 (n= 13, 2005; n=22, 2010)

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Preparation of the annual report began with a draft prepared by Partnership staff. Executive committee members then contributed to the document. Finally, the Governing Board at its November 4, 2010 regular meeting examined, amended, and approved the report.