

**Wyoming School-University Partnership
Governing Board Meeting
Thursday, February 28, 2008
10:00 – 2:20 p.m.**

**Herschler Building, Wyoming State Capitol Complex
Room B-63
Cheyenne, Wyoming**

Present

Board members in attendance: Ted Adams, Dave Barker, Greg Brown (for Audrey Shalinsky), Trish Cook, Jean Hayek, Mike Klopfenstein, Jim Lowham, Pat McClurg, Joy Mockelmann, Ray Schulte, and Kathryn Valido.

Also attending: Audrey Kleinsasser, Jenni Luckett, and Kelli Pribanic, Partnership staff; and guests, Jim Heck, Wyoming Community College Commission Deputy Director, Jim McBride, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joe Simpson, Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Representatives Patrick Goggles and Sue Wallis, , Joint Education Committee, Mark Lyford and Sylvia Parker, both from UW, and Aaron Merkin, President, Student Wyoming Education Association.

Introductions

Jim Lowham called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. After introductions, Lowham was briefly called away. In the meantime, Kleinsasser reported on her February 20 meeting with community college academic vice presidents and that the proposed Partnership member dues increase to \$500 per college was well received. The issue will be revisited at the May 1 meeting in Casper in conjunction with accepting the 2008-2009 budget. Board members reacted to the newly designed impact map. Suggestions included adding a scale bar and representing the geographic areas of school districts. Aaron Merkin discussed U.S. Senator Mike Enzi's February 21 visit to the UW campus. The Student Wyoming Education Association, Beta Alpha Psi and the Institute of Management Accountants, in conjunction with the UW College of Education and College of Business, coordinated a discussion with Senator Enzi focused on legislative policy updates around education.

Review and Approve

Today's meeting agenda and the October 18, 2007 Governing Board meeting minutes were approved with no discussion. No motion was made.

NNER grounding, Chapters 1-2 of *Small Districts, Big Problems* – Audrey

The Schmuck and Schmuck research study overviews and analyzes practices in small schools. Several attendees noted that their ability to identify caring teachers has improved through the use of a screening instrument prior to hiring. Most agreed with the Schmuck and Schmuck finding that small schools are "hubs" of entertainment and community identity.

The reading and discussion took the board and guests to issues of student engagement, its importance, and ways to promote and measure engagement. Several examples were provided, including one district with a goal that 90% of the students be involved in a school activity of some

kind. Several board members suggested a follow up with specific examples of engagement around democratic practice (e. g., student councils, other ways for students to be involved) at the May board meeting.

Review and approve bill payment

There were no questions or comments. Bills included all Partnership expenses between October 18, 2007 and today's meeting. Barker moved to pay the bills. Cook seconded. All concurred.

2008-2009 Proposed Budget

The chair asked Audrey Kleinsasser to explain the proposed budget in greater detail. Changes include an increase in school district dues from \$2,000 to \$2,500 and \$500 for each of the seven community colleges. The proposal also includes an increase in the communication consultant's contract from \$3,000 to \$3,500. The board will vote on the budget at the May 1 meeting.

Updates: Partnership Initiatives

The board reviewed the summaries of initiative updates included in the Governing Board packets. Cook expressed interest in the spring writing colloquium in Douglas, April 18-19. Kleinsasser reported slots for 70 with one or two remaining. Kleinsasser explained that the workshop features consultant Deborah Brandt, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who specializes in literacy, opportunities for cross-level and interdisciplinary teams to work on an issue they bring to the colloquium, and stipends for teams that want to continue work after the colloquium. University and PTSB credit will be available.

Jim Lowham inquired about follow-ups to the Big Read activities. There are none. The discussion shifted to Partnership membership and the importance of advertising the Partnership's activities, thereby adding value to membership.

Working Lunch; information sharing about the statewide and regional life sciences summits (discussion leaders, UW's Greg Brown, Mark Lyford, and Sylvia Parker)

Each attendee introduced him/herself to Representative Sue Wallis, the only Joint Education Committee member to attend the lunch. Kleinsasser began by explaining the purpose of the summits and that the meetings were made possible by the UW President Tom Buchanan's \$15,000 allocation toward easing high school to higher education transitions. Lyford, Brown, and Parker elaborated on meeting details, explaining each summit's collaborative nature and absence of "finger-pointing," as well as how small group work was used to identify problems shared across all levels of life sciences instruction. Brown cited an example of an instructor who had attended the first statewide summit in 2006 and evidence that she had changed her teaching as a result of the summit activities. The student work samples she brought to the third statewide summit on February 22, 2008 were significantly better than other samples. All three agreed that the meetings brought to issue the importance of teaching key concepts and essential learning, "raising the bar" across courses and communicating expectations to students, and the ability of students to think critically, solve problems in-context, and to develop quantitative skills, across all levels.

Board members asked about efforts to expand the summits to other content areas. Kleinsasser cited the April 18-19 writing colloquium. Ray Schulte commented on the success of the February 8 mathematics and statistics articulation meeting at Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington. Board

member Joy Mockelmann likened the meetings to the three to four day long “Traffic Signals” workshops around student work in reading and writing. Board members voiced interest in expanding to modern languages and social sciences. Administrative leads are necessary for any expansions. Rep. Wallis noted that the Joint Education Committee will be meeting in the first week of March to plan interim study topics and invited the Partnership to share information about the summits.

More regional summits, possibly four, will be planned for fall 2008, with the possibility of another summit occurring during summer 2008 (Powell/Cody, Rock Springs, Sheridan, and Cheyenne). The summits are viewed as an experiment that planners hope to see develop as a “go-to” model for life sciences instruction. Representing the summits’ work in a body of evidence will be important for moving the work forward. The major concerns voiced about summit planning were the pressures of time and focus on K-12 teachers and finding a day of the week for K-12 and higher education instructors to meet.

Improving the value of membership

Publicizing the work of the Partnership is crucial for maintaining and recruiting members. Ideas for disseminating information were discussed and included newsletter distribution to instructional facilitators, curriculum coordinators, past event participants, and key people in districts who could forward Partnership newsletters on to principals and teachers. Interactive elements on the Partnership website were also proposed as possible avenues for publicizing activities and will be discussed further with the communication consultant. Dave Barker suggested a “call to action.” The question remains, “How do we provide value to non-members, while also improving reach among members?”

NNER Summer Symposium, July 14-18 in Seattle, WA

Kleinsasser called for nominations. Past participants included attendees Pat McClurg and Ray Schulte, who shared information about their experiences in leadership associate programs. Lowham emphasized the opportunity to re-energize educators’ calling and commitment to the profession. Kleinsasser will collect nominations over the next two to three weeks and will send out more information about the meeting to possible participants. Mockelmann proposed sending representatives from schools in need of improvement. Joe Simpson supported the idea and emphasized discussing guiding beliefs in learning communities.

Evaluation of today’s meeting and check out

The next meeting is scheduled for May 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Casper College Center. The board will revisit the issue of student engagement in the context of the Partnership mission, forwarding an Agenda for Education in a Democracy. Kleinsasser will extend the discussion of “Small Districts, Big Problems” with an invitation to the full board to participate in a video-conference discussion of the book.

The meeting ended at 2:03 p.m.