

**Wyoming School-University Partnership  
Governing Board Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2009  
10:10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Present**

Chair David Barker called the meeting to order at 10:10. Board members in attendance included Karen Bard, Paige Fenton-Hughes, Bob Gates, Tracey Kinney, Mike Klopfenstein, Gracie Lawson-Borders, Rick Luchsinger, and Ray Schulte.

On telephone conference call were Judy Ellsworth and Kay Persichitte.

Other attendees included guests Sue Belish, Gregory Cox, and Joe McCann, and Audrey Kleinsasser, director. Bard will be representing the WEA through July, 2010 and Lawson-Borders was sitting in for Audrey Shalinsky.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Barker welcomed all and invited each, in turn, to introduce him or herself and share background or experiences with the Partnership.

**Review and Approve**

The first order of business was reviewing and approving today's meeting agenda, along with consent agenda items including the July 22, 2009 meeting minutes and Partnership bills since July. Rick Luchsinger moved to approve and Mike Klopfenstein seconded.

**NNER Grounding**

The board's NNER grounding activity focused on the October 15-17 annual meetings in Bellevue, WA. As many board members and others attended the meeting, Barker invited reactions and questions, especially as they related to the NNER's future work and expanded work of the Wyoming School-University Partnership.

- Board packet materials included reports from the NNER Governing Council, Tripartite Council, and League of Democratic Schools. Barker noted the under-representation of K-12 educators on the Governing Council at the October meetings.
- Observations from the NNER conference included the opening panel featuring James Comer, John Goodlad, Henry Levin, and Deborah Meier. Carl Glickman edited the volume, *Those Who Dared: Five Visionaries Who Changed American Education*, and moderated the panel which included these visionaries. Ted Sizer was portrayed in the book as well, but ill health kept him from participating and, in fact, he passed away a few days after the conference.
- Schulte noted Goodlad's three-part description of a good and just society: a wise and healthy people and structures that support both. Schulte noted that this is one way to frame our thinking.
- Klopfenstein asked if panelists or keynoters addressed current educational trends in any way. This opened a lengthy discussion exploring the tensions of compliance and a commitment, through standards, to what is important and lasting for children and youth. What, in essence, is the difference between compliance and commitment, especially in the context of democratic schools?
- During the NNER annual conference, an expert study panel including Wyoming superintendents discussed small, rural schools. One issue the panel addressed was the importance of finding ways for students and parents to voice all variety of issues, especially those groups who seem least

powerful. Several board members and guests described strategies to involve students and parents. They included focus group interviews and asking for volunteers on committees. Here, an important concern was making sure that a wide variety of students are engaged, not just the honor society students and those routinely anxious and interested in having their voice heard.

- A recent development in the NNER over the last 4-5 years has been including a fourth partner, community, to the K-12, teacher education, and arts and science focus. Involving the community is another way to value student and parent voice.
- Board members noted survey options like the National Survey of High School Student Engagement <http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm> and the Gallup Student Poll <http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com/home.aspx>.
- One NNER conference session featured a school that, once a year, invited community members to interview, observe, and report out. Community observers produced a straight-forward report about what they observed and what students told them.
- Meeting a wide range of student ability levels and learning styles through acceleration or even virtual school highlighted concerns about out-moded funding models that do not support best instructional practices. That includes Wyoming's Average Daily Membership calculations. Put another way, it is industrial age funding for an industrial age model.

### **Updating Partnership Constitution**

Barker closed the grounding discussion and moved the discussion to information about updating the Governing Board Handbook (accessed online at [www.uwyo/wsup](http://www.uwyo/wsup)). Specifically, the constitution has not been updated since 2001. Barker reported that he appointed board members Michelle Hofmann and Kevin Mitchell to work with the chair and the director. He asked board members to examine the constitution and send suggestions to the director in the next week. Then, the full board will discuss the recommendations at the January board meeting. Persichitte suggested involving NNER director, Ann Foster, in the discussion and revisions.

### **Action to ratify 2009 NNER annual report**

Next, Barker asked for a motion to ratify the 2009 NNER annual report. Ray Schulte moved to ratify the report as presented in the board materials. Mike Klopfenstein seconded. With no changes suggested, the director will submit the report to NNER director, Ann Foster.

### **Information: Updates around the Partnership**

The board next discussed items included in Updates around the Partnership, a document in the board packet. Klopfenstein noted the transitions work and the importance of continuing and expanding the effort. Schulte suggested that the Partnership respond to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jim McBride's invitation to comment on the re-authorization of NCLB legislation. After considerable discussion of possible problems and solutions, the director will invite input from board members, summarize and work with the executive committee to draft a letter signed by Barker. The deadline is December 14. Following the governing board meeting, Barker conferred with Kleinsasser, and advised that the invitation for comments really didn't lend itself to a letter from the Partnership about its purpose and work.

### **Meeting evaluation and adjournment**

With no further business, Chair Barker asked board members to complete their meeting evaluation forms. Fenton-Hughes made a motion to adjourn and the board meeting closed at 12:30. Board members then ate lunch together.