



NNER

National Network for
Educational Renewal



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2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE, "Looking Back to Inform the Future" ~ Sept. 19-21, Arlington, Texas !!!

NNER Launches Research & Evaluation Center

Assistance for NNER settings; operations begin May 2008

The NNER has long struggled with the complex task of evaluating and conducting research on its work. Although we advance practices, policies, and structures rooted in the values of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED), we have yet to develop appropriate and effective approaches for studying this work as an ongoing practice.

We can learn a great deal by studying local, cross-setting, and network-wide initiatives using the structure of the NNER as the theory of action and the AED as our philosophical grounding. With this goal in mind, the NNER will launch a center to work with and support NNER settings in their research and evaluation efforts. Through this

process, the NNER will begin to build a registry of research and evaluation studies that can be analyzed in the aggregate to explore the different kinds of impact that the NNER has had across all of its settings.

We can learn a great deal by studying local, cross-setting, and network-wide initiatives

The new center will be co-directed by **Brian Cobb**, professor in the School of Education at Colorado State University, and **Ann Foster**,

NNER executive director. Operations will begin in May 2008. The center will be modeled after the R&D center that Cobb and Foster co-directed in Colorado. It will operate as a service organization, contracting with NNER settings to design, facilitate, lead, and/or participate in a variety of local research and evalua-

tion efforts. For example, setting members might contract to have the center conduct external evaluations required for currently operating grants or grant proposals still being developed. Setting members might also contract with the center for research on other areas such as local unfunded initiatives, practices, or policy implementation.

The long-term benefit is that the NNER will collect credible and relevant data about the various projects that the Network can use as it sets goals, determines where resources are needed, and celebrates and disseminates successes. Impact studies and examples of change associated with our work will strengthen the NNER's position as we seek funds for new initiatives. For more information, contact Ann Foster or visit the NNER Web page for the research and evaluation center proposal. ♦

New Research Institute: A Promise to Carry on the Work and Contributions of the IEI

John Goodlad and **Tom Bellamy** are continuing to develop a research institute at the University of Washington that will lend permanence and continuity to the work that the Institute for Educational Inquiry has initiated and promoted over the last several years. John and Tom express optimism about the chances for the new institute to receive full approval, with start-up support, from the IEI before the end of this academic year. Tom believes this research institute will offer many exciting opportunities for

NNER settings to collaborate on inquiry and program-development projects that can influence national conversations about schooling at all levels. Watch for their article, "Continuity and Change in the Pursuit of a Democratic Public Mission for Our Schools," in the April *Phi Delta Kappan*, for some initial thoughts about directions for future work. We look forward to engaging in important discussions at the fall conference about collaborative opportunities in this next phase of our work. ♦

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New Online Journal Becoming Reality

John Anderson and **John Skillings** convened the first meeting, Feb. 22-23, of the steering committee for the NNER online journal. The committee began deliberations on the editorial philosophy, management, and business plan for the journal.

This new publication will provide opportunities for tripartite engagement; bring together writing from perspectives of the arts and sciences, schools, and education; and encourage collaborative work across the groups.

Other committee members include **Jean Eagle**, **Laura Nicosia**, **Linda Pitelka**, **Tom Poetter**, **Jim Tomlin**, **Caren Town**. The initiative has received critical support from **Miami University**. ♦

In the Spotlight

Individual Awards

Congratulations to NNER leaders, **Vern Henshaw**, superintendent of Alpine School District, who was named Utah's 2007 Superintendent of the Year, and to **Jim Lowham**, superintendent of Natrona County School District No 1, who was named 2007 Superintendent of the year for Wyoming. Vern served as the first school tripartite chair for the NNER; and Jim represents Wyoming on the governing council.

Jerry Bergstrom was selected as Nebraska's National Distinguished Elementary Principal for 2008. He is principal of Pershing Elementary School in Lexington, Neb., which was the recipient of the 2007 NNER Michelli award for promoting social justice. ♦

NNER Governance News Governing Council

Winter Meeting, Feb. 7 ~ Highlights

At a well-attended session held during the AACTE conference last month, the Governing Council received updates on a wide range of initiatives and projects. Perhaps most prominent was the report from **Jeanne Gerlach** and **Carol Sue Marshall** on the 2008 conference to be held in Arlington, Texas, Sept. 19-21. With its theme, "Looking Back to Inform the Future," the conference will blend historical perspective with future-orientated sessions grounded in the NNER application of the AED. Watch for the 'call for proposals' to be issued soon and posted on the NNER Website. The council also:

- approved a \$130,000 operating budget for the 2008 fiscal year and approved two changes to the by-laws as recommended by the executive board. One change makes explicit NNER's role in informing policy and advocating for policies that support our mission. The second clarifies the role of the IEI on the NNER governing council. The changes were then acted on by the executive board and are noted on the posted by-laws.
- agreed on NNER funding for: a limited number of registrations for the LTPS June conference, NNER school membership in iNET, and stipends for equity self-study critical friends visits (see details on p. 4)
- indicated support for establishment of an NNER research and evaluation center (article on p.1).
- had conversations on membership (recruitment and support for new members) and ongoing cross-setting support for current members. This initial conversation will be followed by executive board discussions.

Complete minutes of the meeting available on the NNER Web page. ❖

CALENDAR NOTE: Tripartite Council meets **Sept. 18, 2008**, at the annual NNER conference in Arlington, Texas.

Wright State Leads STEM-School Coalition

"In keeping with the mission of Wright State University to be a catalyst for educational excellence in the area, our institution is taking a leadership role in opening and operating the new Dayton Regional STEM School . . ." ~ David R. Hopkins, president, Wright State University.

The State Board of Regents announced last month that Ohio will provide \$600,000 for the development of a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) school. The Dayton Regional STEM School (DRSS) is intended to serve students, grades 6-12, who have high potential but who may lack access to advanced learning opportunities in

their local public schools. The DRSS also will serve as a STEM instructional resource for schools throughout the area.

The new school is slated to open in fall of 2009, initially in a facility provided by Wright State University, with funding and services donated by a coalition of partners. It will begin with a ninth-grade class of no more than 80 students. Several grades will be added each year through 2012.

The Dayton Regional STEM School is supported by an unusually broad coalition of partners, representing

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Take Note

Ann Foster
Executive Director

▣ As a network of educators committed to a shared mission, the NNER continues to create and identify new connections that will inspire its members to enact changes in practices and policies—changes that bring to life the AED.

▣ *Teacher Case Stories*, a new feature on the NNER Web page, is the result of the hard work of **Ken Jones, Frances Hitchens**, and the teachers who tell their stories. These stories vividly translate the ideals of democratic schools into the realities of daily life in schools today. (see related article on this page.)

▣ The Leaders for Teacher-Preparing Schools' (LTPS) third annual conference will be held June 25-27, in Seattle. Partner-school leaders, central administrators, and university partners will meet and work together, learn from each other, and interact with colleagues from across the NNER. **Lee Teitel, John Goodlad, David Chrislip, Tom Bellamy, and Angie Paccione** will facilitate the major interactive sessions.

▣ July 14-17, in Seattle! In its third year of NNER leadership, the summer symposium assumes a new dimension. To provide as much background as possible on the NNER mission and AED, the symposium will include a technology component: participants will engage in an online activity the week prior to arriving in Seattle for the interactive session. Based on feedback from last year, the session will start Monday morning and end Thursday

A Cordial Invitation to Join Us in Arlington, Texas, for the 2008 NNER Conference!

The 2008 conference planning team invites you to attend the NNER annual conference, to be held Sept. 19-21 (***tripartite council** meets Sept.18). We are proud to host this year's conference in Arlington, Texas, located between Dallas and Fort Worth, and home to the University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington University-School Network for Educational Renewal (AUSNER) project.

We envision a conference of many and varied opportunities to have

conversations about issues related to building, sustaining, and enhancing partnerships. Leaders from P-12 classrooms and districts, university partners from arts and sciences and education, and community constituents will share experiences and lessons learned in their partnership settings. Discussions will be framed by three conference strands: (1) Paving the way—revisiting our history; (2) Working together—reflecting on current

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Teachers' Stories Debut on NNER Website

NNER has launched a new Web offering: *The NNER Teacher Case Story Collection*. Personal narratives from practicing K-12 teachers describe issues and dilemmas resulting from efforts to "walk the talk" of equity and democracy in public schools. Often moving and provocative, these stories open windows into school and classroom realities, reveal the moral aspects of teaching, and give shape and personality to the complexities that make public schooling so demanding.

We hope to see these stories used as texts for reflection and discussion in courses and professional development for pre- and in-service teachers, school administrators, university faculty, and parent and community organizations. Although each story is accompanied by discussion questions, the *unwritten* questions, those that arise from conversation and memories sparked by the reading, will stimulate revealing conversations and focus on teachers, students, and school communities. To find the stories, go to the NNER Web page and click on "Teacher Stories."

This Web collection was initiated with 10 stories written by teachers from southern Maine who partici-

pated in a teacher leadership master's program titled, *Professional Teaching in a Democratic Society*. They were asked to write stories depicting the tension between their ideals about teaching and the practical realities of their public-school settings. Titles include: *Facing Fear; I Don't Care about the Tests, I Care about My Children; Transforming a Teacher that No One Aspires to Be*, and *It's Never as Simple as Black and White*.

These first stories touch on teachers' immediate concerns about nurturing relationships, empowering students, and cultivating skills and sensibilities needed to sustain a modern democracy. We plan to add more stories to the collection every semester. Already in the works are submissions about formative assessment and multicultural education. Please encourage teachers you know to submit a story for publication on our Website and help it become an indispensable resource, a singular library of teacher voices.

Stories should be submitted to **Ken Jones**, University of Southern Maine, kjones@usm.maine.edu. Please contact Ken if you are interested in assisting in the review and selection process. ♦

Creating Safe & Civil K-12 Environments Center for Social and Emotional Education Holds Annual Institute, July 10-12, NYC

The Center for Social and Emotional Education (CSEE) is pleased to announce its 11th annual summer institute for K-12 school teams and individuals, to be held, July 10-12, in New York City. This multifaceted event will present strategies and activities that K-12 schools can use to create safe and civil environments. Such environments are essential to positive youth development, student learning, and authentic engagement of democratic school communities. Engaging workshops, presentations by experts, and networking sessions will help participants to:

- Learn how to apply a continuous process of measuring and improving school climate in ways that promote academic achievement, student and parent engagement, and effective risk prevention/health promotion.
- Connect with and learn from local and national leaders in the fields of character education, social/emotional learning, school climate, risk prevention, and health promotion. Sessions will present the latest research, policy, and practices.
- Identify and use resources on classroom-based strategies and activities that develop students' core social, emotional, ethical and intellectual competencies.
- Learn about systemic strategies and crisis preparedness plans that foster a democratically informed climate for learning and safety.
- Begin developing action plans that build on a school's strengths and goals.

"CSEE is an organization that helps schools integrate crucial social and emotional learning with academic instruction to enhance student performance, prevent dropouts, reduce violence, and develop healthy and productively engaged adults."

"For almost a decade CSEE has worked with the entire academic community – teachers, staff, school-based mental health professionals, students and parents – to improve total school climate." (<http://www.csee.net/climate/aboutcsee/>)

The CSEE summer institute is endorsed and/or co-sponsored by many other educational organizations including The City University of New York, School of Professional Studies; Center for Social and Character Development, Rutgers University; New York State Center for Student Support Services, New York State Center for School Safety, Center for Character and Citizenship, University of Missouri-St. Louis– College of Education; Character Education Partnership, National Center for Learning and Citizenship, Education Commission of the States; and the **National Network for Educational Renewal**. ♦

Learn more about the institute at: www.csee.net/si2008

Opportunities

The third annual summer conference of Leaders for Teacher Preparing Schools will be held June 25-27 in Bellevue, Wash. This working conference focuses on support for principals new to partner-school leadership and for their district and university colleagues. Presenters include **John Goodlad** and **Lee Teitel**. Contact **Ann Foster** or log on to <http://research.uwb.edu/ltps/> for additional conference information. The NNER governing council has allocated funds to pay the registration fee for a limited number of participants from schools or universities wishing to attend.

Extending our collaboration with iNET (International Networking for Educational Transformation), the NNER will provide one-year memberships to iNET for seven NNER members schools. The membership allows access to online conversations for students and faculty. For information and application materials log on to the NNER Web page or contact **Ann Foster**, annf2@u.washington.edu. ♦

Wright State (continued from p. 2)

education, business and industry, and government, including the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Air Force Research Laboratory. Together, the partners have committed more than \$2.2 million in funding and services. **Gregory Bernhardt**, dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Wright State, who spearheaded the STEM school proposal to the State, will be chief facilitator in bringing DRSS partners together to establish the school.

Wright State will invest \$500,000 in the initial development of the DRSS and serve as fiscal agent, providing long-term administrative and operational support, along with access to university facilities such as its laboratories, arts facilities, and library. ♦



Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ, has been named one of the "Top 10" teacher preparation schools in the U.S. by Edutopia, a foundation established in 1991 by film-maker George Lucas. The university was recognized for its pioneering and innovative approaches to improving teacher education. The Lucas Foundation is committed to documenting and disseminating the most innovative practices in our nation's schools.

The following is an excerpt from an article published in Edutopia Magazine, November 2000, and is also posted on the Montclair University Website.

In 1908, what is now known as Montclair State University (MSU) began as a modest two-year college focused on helping young women become grade-school teachers. A century later, this New Jersey institution offers 16,700-plus students degrees in the arts, sciences, business, and K-12 education.

Universities such as this sometimes obscure their humble beginnings by eliminating teacher-education programs or turning them into cash cows. "That has never been the case at Montclair State," says Ada Beth Cutler, dean of MSU's College of Education and Human Services, which applies an interdisciplinary approach to innovations borne from the needs of public schools.

The college's Center of Pedagogy, for example, is where representatives from the education and arts and sciences colleges and the teaching program's 25 partner-school districts gather, primarily, to make policy decisions about teacher preparation at MSU.

"For our students to have a vision of teaching as an intellectually challenging and collaborative learning experience, they must have experiences in schools where teachers learn together," Cutler explains. Which means MSU faculty — aside from in-

structing and mentoring education students — often teach model classes and serve in-residence at partner schools. In reverse, K-12 teachers who complete courses on critical thinking, mentoring and coaching, and cultural responsiveness qualify as clinical faculty.

All teacher candidates must complete at least one urban field experience early in the program. During the senior or culminating year, two semesters are usually spent in one school.

Guiding the students throughout their education is the "Portrait of a Teacher," a 12-point declaration of what an educator should know and do. It is informed by a nurturing pedagogy adaptive to all learning styles and the notion that we live in an imperfect democratic society.

Teacher candidates are continually assessed for adherence to the portrait's standards. The result is a microscopic examination of strengths and weaknesses so that graduates "essentially have a portrait of themselves as teachers," says Jennifer Robinson, executive director of the Center of Pedagogy.

Most graduates end up working in New Jersey, and, in surveys, typically praise their preparation; any negative feedback serves as fodder for program improvement -- an ongoing process that has resulted in numerous awards. One award, from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in 2002, recognized MSU's work in diversifying the teaching.

Recent tweaks to the program have resulted in innovations such as the "backpack," a package equipped with a laptop, digital camera, MP3 player, and other technology tools used in partner schools by MSU students and cooperating teachers.

The college deliberately chooses partner schools where student teach-

ers are considered junior faculty and where new teachers — alumni among them — are nurtured and encouraged to assume leadership. It is through these partnerships, says Robinson, that MSU underscores "the whole continuum of teacher development." ♦

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NNER Conference (*contd from p. 3*)

research, policies and practices; and (3) Looking to the future — considering possibilities for the times ahead. The strands address the importance of what has been learned over time, how partnerships enhance the value and impact of our work, and what will be needed to stay the course while embracing change to strengthen the research, practices, and policies of our future work.

These strands and the conference theme, "Looking Back to Inform the Future," will help us consider the work of the NNER from its inception 21 years ago to the vision that will guide us into the middle of the 21st century.

The conference will include an impressive array of keynote speakers, including **George C Wright**, president of Prairie View A & M University and well-known southern historian; and **John Goodlad**, professor emeritus at the University of Washington.

Other events will include: school visits paired with visits to places such as the JFK Memorial and Museum (in the famous School Book Depository); a reception at the Ballpark of Arlington, home of the Texas Rangers; orientation for individuals new to the NNER; and presentation of the Richard W. Clark Award for exemplary partner-school work and the Nicholas Michelli Award for advancing social justice. ♦

More details forthcoming in the NNER spring newsletter!

Strong and Inspired LTPS Voices from Schools & Classrooms

Bring to Life the Daily Struggles, Dilemmas, and Triumphs

Now in its third year, the Leaders for Teacher Preparing Schools (LTPS) program has involved more than 60 partner school principals and teacher leaders. Their reflections and experiences most clearly and vividly represent the program's overarching goals: to help school leaders engage in new ideas and concepts, network with each other, and share strategies of effective leadership in a complex partner-school environment. In the reflections below, four cohort members describe how they translate these abstract goals, everyday, into classroom practice.

Peggy Burke, founding principal of Charity Adams Earley Academy, an all-girls school in Dayton Public Schools in Ohio, describes the impact of a network-wide cohort. "Being a participant in the LTPS was such an educating experience for me. I learned from other principals from around the country how their schools were benefiting from the partnership with universities. I learned to put in place a protocol concerning Phase I and Phase II students (from the university) who come to our school. I was able to have a panoramic view of the principalship and examine facets of this job that I had been neglecting. I found that sometimes in the course of the day or the week, I am in such a hurry to get the job done, that I am not mindful of the enormity of the work I do; and if a teacher affects eternity, then a principal affects eternity and a day."

Peggy continues, "I learned the importance of taking time to have conversations, build relationships, not only with the teachers, student teachers, students in my building, but academia as well. I have learned to be more thoughtful. To ask critical questions of myself and my staff. To take time to formulate answers."

Maria Uribe, a member of the teacher leader cohort, is an assistant principal and a former partner-school site liaison. She says, "The fact that I was part of a group with extraordinary people from around the nation better prepared me because of their learning and experiences."

Susan Fisher, a teacher-leader cohort member from Modesto, Calif., notes "how beneficial it is to have had the experience of working alongside both aspiring and experienced principals."

Lisa Minor from Dayton is someone I hope to maintain a connection with as well as James Mitchell in Newark, New Jersey. I think that is a wonderful side benefit that NNER offer: sharing of ideas beyond your state is wonderful."

The LTPS sessions continue to confirm that the collaborative leadership required in effective partner schools is complex at best. These school leaders' reflections constitute specific and locally relevant exam-

"This year, more than ever, I see the benefit of looking beyond test scores . . ."

ples. Peggy is creating a partner school with Wright State University and says, "I have learned to ask for help and that the universities are more than willing to provide whatever help we need. Although I feel we have a wonderful start to a fruitful relationship, I am looking forward to sharing information with Wright State to benefit not only our teachers, but new ones as well. Maria noted as she transitioned from teacher to assistant principal that during the last past year "I had the privilege to be part of the LTPS group. It gave me the essentials of what it takes to be a great administrator."

And Susan, a literacy coach, describes her work with the teacher

cohort: "This year more than ever, I see the benefit of looking for meaning beyond test scores for children and for teachers. I think my principal would be surprised to see me write that as well, since I'm kind of the squeaky wheel when it comes to the tests. But I think our Fairview children are so lucky to have teachers who care about so much more besides their academic progress. As Fairview continues to develop as a partner school, the importance of new perspectives became evident to Susan, as she explains with an anecdote:

Last spring, a student teacher, "Miss Jill," worked in a third-grade classroom. She made a special connection with a little guy, "Todd." New to the U.S. he was struggling in school. He was mischievous and always in the middle of problems at recess. Miss Jill's effect on him was amazing. He really cared about making Miss Jill happy. When she left he was heartbroken. I was talking to a paraprofessional who gives Todd some extra help, and she described the change in his effort and attitude since Miss Jill had arrived; he was just so sad about her leaving. While she was telling me this, big crocodile tears started rolling down his cheeks! You need to know that this is a tough little kid. Now as a fourth-grader he is very connected to his teacher. I think that Miss Jill was a big deal for Todd, because beyond really learning that someone cared about him, he learned that there are others like her.

While this is hard work, Peggy sums up why school leaders continue to learn, renew themselves and their schools: "The work we do here at Charity Adams Earley is very selfish work simply because it gives each one of us such great pleasure!" ♦

National Network for Educational Renewal



SETTING

STATE/PROVINCE

California State University, Chico	California
Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal*	Colorado
University of Connecticut	Connecticut
Georgia Center for Educational Renewal at Georgia Southern University	Georgia
University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Institute for Educational Partnerships	Hawai'i
Illinois State University	Illinois
University of Southern Maine and Southern Maine Partnership	Maine
The Brandon School-University Partnership (The Brandon School Division and Brandon University)	Manitoba
St. Cloud University and the St. Cloud School District	Minnesota
Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational Renewal*	Missouri
MU Partnership for Educational Renewal	Missouri
Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal*	Nebraska
Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal	New Jersey
University of New Mexico – Albuquerque Partnership	New Mexico
CUNY and the New York City Department of Education	New York
Miami University Partnership	Ohio
Wright State University	Ohio
South Carolina Network for Educational Renewal*	South Carolina
Arlington University-School Network for Educational Renewal (AUSNER)	Texas
University of Texas at El Paso	Texas
Brigham Young University and BYU-Public School Partnership	Utah
University of Washington	Washington
Benedum Collaborative at West Virginia University	West Virginia
University of Wyoming and Wyoming School-University Partnership	Wyoming

*denotes multiple IHE site settings

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