

**Wyoming School-University Partnership
Governing Board Meeting
Monday, July 21, 2008
10:00 – 1:00 p.m.**

**UW Outreach Center, Room 105
951 North Poplar
Casper, Wyoming**

Present

Board Members in attendance: Dave Barker, Trish Cook, Judy Ellsworth, Jean Hayek, Mike Hejtmanek, Kay Persichitte, Ray Schulte, Audrey Shalinsky, and Dennis Wilson.

Also Attending: Audrey Kleinsasser, Jenni Lockett, and Anna Davison, Partnership staff, and guests: Superintendent Paige Fenton-Hughes, Fremont County #1, Superintendent Bob Gates, Carbon County #2, and Jennifer Grooms, teacher at Woods Learning Center, Casper.

Introductions

Chair Trish Cook called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. She thanked members for taking time from their summer work schedule to make the meeting. Introductions followed.

Review and Approve

Today's meeting agenda and the May 1, 2008 Governing Board meeting minutes were approved. Mike Hejtmanek moved to approve with a second from Dennis Wilson. All concurred.

NNER grounding activity, Jonathan Kozol's *Letters to a Young Teacher*, reading reactions and discussion

Kay Persichitte reported to members that the UW College of Education has invited Jonathan Kozol for the second annual Ellbogen Teaching and Learning Symposium, October 10, 2008 in Laramie. The event is scheduled around Homecoming weekend to encourage participation. Kozol will speak Friday, October 10 at 4 p.m in the Education Building Auditorium.

Trish Cook began the discussion by asking members why they became a teacher. Members talked about the influence of past educators both positive and negative as well as past experience in shaping those who become educators. The group discussed the importance of experience and finding those who have worked with children and youth in the past and those who have had diverse experiences in settings serving children and youth.

When asked about a new hire's level of understanding related students' socio-economic-status, the group responded with a consensus that many new hires do not have a great understanding. The members talked about a core level of understanding, but that theory, forms of assessment, and instruction also are areas of concern. Dennis Wilson identified the glossy or fantasy view many new hires have of being able to influence every student. He went on to explain the importance of district trainings and mentoring to develop instruction and shape the new employee. There was a discussion about experience and the need for new teachers to experience and work with those struggling socio-economically. Judy Ellsworth and Kay Persichitte reported what UW is trying to do to ensure that

student teachers have more experiences with diverse student populations, including teaching experiences in a city like Denver.

Kay Persichitte then went on to talk about the importance of community. The group agreed that it was important for new teachers to find a mentor or connection at the school itself, but also connections to the community. The members talked about how this was especially true in the smaller, more rural areas of Wyoming. This led to a discussion of what superintendents can do within a district to assist new hires. Paige Fenton-Hughes explained that her district has a handbook created by mentor teachers for new hires and a yearly “Soup and Support” meeting she facilitates with new teachers in the fall. Dennis Wilson added that his district has one person in district whose job it is to work with new hires.

Members then moved on to discuss how many new hires they will have in their districts. Districts had a range from nine to thirty new hires. Audrey Kleinsasser questioned if members saw the book as a catalyst and if they wanted to do anything further as a Partnership. The members were unsure after only reading the first two chapters. Ray Schulte suggested doing something regionally for those new to the profession with a neutral facilitator. Many in the group seemed to agree with this suggestion, but there was concern about attendance to such an event. Judy Ellsworth mentioned the possibility of doing something online or on the WEN. Trish Cook ended the discussion with the suggestion of staff development sessions for new teachers. Continued discussion of possible regional events may be necessary.

Review and approve bill payment

Audrey Kleinsasser began by explaining some of the recent expenses. She highlighted the travel reimbursement costs, copying, and explained that the Partnership sent three individuals to the NNER Summer Symposium in Seattle. Audrey also explained the Partnership’s \$5,000 membership dues paid to the Institute for Educational Inquiry and the expenses related to the office associate and director’s salary. Audrey asked if there were any questions about the expenses. Trish Cook asked about the concern of travel costs increasing. Audrey said that travel costs were expected to increase 60-70%. Trish Cook asked for any thoughts on adjusting the budget for travel. Audrey said that the Partnership has to be out and about and when there is a meeting, we need to make sure people attend. Audrey is looking for additional resources and working to recruit new membership. With no more discussion, Ray Schulte moved to accept and pay May and June Partnership bills, with a second by Mike Hejtmanek. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Updates: Partnership initiatives and related projects

Dave Barker shared with the group his experience at the NNER Summer Symposium in Seattle, July 14-17, 2008. Dave reported that the symposium was a great experience. He mentioned two discussion points: bringing democracy to schools and community; and helping students participate in being a part of democracy. The symposium surrounded four moral concepts, which Dave said brought out different perspectives and a good amount of discussion. John Goodlad was in attendance and spoke about inequality and the movement to equity in schools. Dave stated he had a unique perspective being from one of the smallest schools. He said the most important things he took from the symposium were to increase communication and learn how to listen better. Dave also mentioned that he had a very interesting Democracy Walk where he realized that one can listen to and give others a voice, but that does not always mean all ideas are taken.

Ray Schulte reported on Roger Humphrey's experience at the symposium. Ray stated that Roger thought it was interesting, and enjoyed the theoretical aspects presented. Roger also reported that the moral dimensions were interesting perspectives and had ties to what Goshen #1 does as a district. He stated that access issues are crucial in smaller schools.

Audrey Kleinsasser reminded the group that the Partnership supported the event and paid registration in full for Barker, Humphrey, and Ed Janek, UW College of Education. Trish Cook noted that she would be attending the NNER Annual Conference coming up September 19-22, 2008, in Arlington, Texas. She encouraged all members to look at information and attend one of these national conferences.

Audrey Kleinsasser reported on the High School to Higher Education Transitions, in particular content areas of life sciences, mathematics, and writing. Secondary and postsecondary instructional features comparison charts are being developed by the Wyoming P-16 Council for life sciences, mathematics, modern languages, social studies and writing. Materials will be distributed to teachers, at the September 29-30 School Improvement Conference in Cheyenne.

When discussing the upcoming UW Fall Assessment Forum, October 20-22, Ray Schulte asked about the intended audience. Audrey Shalinsky reported that the focus would be on science education for post-secondary teachers. Kay Persichitte explained that the university is working on assessment for UW accreditation. Audrey Kleinsasser talked about having a follow-up event for those who participated in the writing meeting held in Douglas. The Partnership will work on special invitations to those who could benefit, and continue to update board members.

Mike Hejtmanek questioned who was involved in the Wyoming State Scholars Initiative and the Wyoming P-16 Council. Audrey Kleinsasser reported that there are 15-16 members on the board including former Natrona County Superintendent Jim Lowham and two teachers, Bernie Schnorenberg from Sundance and Carol Kirkwood from Laramie. The group is having a retreat at Centennial, August 4-5. Audrey will provide a list of those serving on the council to members.

Recruitment and membership update

Members were given a revised dues paid sheet. Audrey Kleinsasser reported that only a few districts had not paid dues yet. The Partnership office will send out reminders next week with a goal to have all dues by August 15, 2008.

Dave Barker mentioned the benefits of being part of the Partnership to guests. Specifically, he reported the benefits to teachers who attend Partnership events.

2008-2009 meeting calendar

Trish Cook stated that the Partnership usually has five meetings per year and asked those in attendance if it met the governing board's needs. Audrey Shalinsky reported that she enjoyed sharing ideas and meeting as a group. Many agreed. The group agreed on five meeting dates: Wednesday, September 24, 2008, Friday, November 14, 2008, Monday, January 26, 2009, Friday, April 17, 2009, and Wednesday, July 22, 2009. All meetings are scheduled for Casper except the January meeting in Cheyenne to coincide with the Wyoming Legislature. Audrey Kleinsasser mentioned that the meetings would continue to take place from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the UW Outreach Center unless otherwise specified.

Lunch

Jennifer Grooms, teacher and member of League of Democratic Schools through Woods Learning Center in Casper, joined board members for lunch. She shared her experiences at the Washington D.C. Day on the Hill events. When asked what her biggest learning from Washington DC trip was, she expressed how impressed she was with the intelligence level of the staff, and how time-consuming the legislative process is. Jennifer went on to talk about the League of Democratic Schools and explained projects and ways Woods Learning Center incorporates democracy in the classroom.

Kay Persichitte shared with the members the UW College of Education Accreditation Review. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) conducted an onsite evaluation of the teacher education program in February. The program met all expectations and was outstanding in several. Kay reported that the Partnership allows all to remain connected and continues to support the College of Education. Kay also reported on the changes in the College of Education. Kay became dean, July 1. Suzie Young will be the associate dean and Judy Ellsworth will serve as the interim director of teacher education.

Evaluation of today's meeting and check out

The group agreed that the meeting was well run and beneficial. Trish Cook closed by thanking members and guests for their attendance and wished all a safe travel home. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 24 at the UW Outreach Center in Casper from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting notes prepared by Anna Davison.